

# Letter from the Editors

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**Letter from the Editors**  
**Ana Maria Sapountzi and Peize Li**

Dear Reader,

Welcome to Issue 17 of *Frames Cinema Journal* 'The Politics of Colour Media', guest-edited by Dr Kirsty Sinclair Dootson.

This issue responds to the exciting and rapidly blooming field of chromatic scholarship in film, screen, and media studies – specifically, the study of colour as a technology, material, and apparatus.

The advents and evolutions of colour technologies across the globe each have complex histories that have been shaped by and are telling of their specific industrial, social, political, cultural, and ideological negotiations. It is the importance of these, and other, intersections that drove the creation of this issue. By exploring the power of colour beyond its aesthetic realm, we wanted to spotlight how colour technologies are revealing of critical forces and hierarchies that have been key not only to the development of cinema, film, and other media technologies, but to their respective national, international, and social histories.

Indeed, philosophical inquiries on the presence, use, and composition of colour in film have made significant contributions to the world of screen studies, and within the broader discourses of identity, race, gender, sexuality etc. However, with this issue we wanted to shift the conversation's attention away from reading colour-as-symbol or colour-as-representation and focus on colour-as-apparatus.

We are pleased to announce that this issue is packed with a dazzling array of examinations of colour technologies from a variety of viewpoints and contexts. Each piece questions, challenges, and revises a different example of colour application in film and cinema, thus offering fresh and unique contributions to this developing field.

Our Features section's articles explore divergent uses of colour in different levels of mid-century filmmaking in Europe. Sarah Street explores how the medium of film critiqued and satirised the phenomenon of advertising in Britain in the 1960s, by examining the politicised use of colour in Don Levy's *Herostratus* (1967) and Peter Watkins' *Privilege* (1967). Elena Gipponi calls attention to the early adoption of colour film in the work of amateur filmmakers in Italy during the 1950s and '60s, to investigate their role in the country's transition from black-and-white to colour media.

Both articles in our POV section consider how camera technology implicates the materiality, currency, and visual representation of the human body, via its capturing and reading of colour. Lida Zeitlin Wu reflects on her visit to the Color Factory pop-up exhibition in Houston, Texas, to offer thought-provoking realisations about the digitally mediated infrastructure of such spaces – mainly the commodification and quantification of the physical self through algorithmic colour. As an international cinematographer, Yu-Lun Sung provides professional insight on the technical and aesthetic decisions contemporary cinematographers make with regards to light when working with actors of different skin tones, specifically Asian ethnicities, using *Columbus* (Kogonada, 2017), *Crazy Rich Asians* (Chu, 2018), and *The Farewell* (Wang, 2019) as examples.

Our Film Featurette section is abundant with a diversity of work, each investigating undermentioned films in screen scholarship. Lucia Szemetova discusses the political commentary of the drab colour palette employed in Nimród Antal's *Kontroll* (2003), to argue that the film's

vision of Hungary recalls aesthetics linked to the country's Cold War past despite its new capitalist present. Tamara Tasevska places Claire Denis' use of intensified, fluorescent hues, and digital colour in *High Life* (2018) in dialogue with critical, but divergent, approaches to colour by Gilles Deleuze and Olafur Eliasson, to argue for the philosophical inquiries they prompt. Louisa Wei reflects on her experience of making the documentary film *Havana Divas* (2018), by ruminating on how the chromatic decisions deployed in the film were inspired by the Chino-Cubano histories and cultures being investigated.

Paul Frith and Keith M. Johnston's video essay for this issue examines the advent of the Eastmancolour in Britain. Through a series of interviews with a variety of professionals in the British film industry, it discusses the creative and technological agency that chromogenic monopack offered British filmmakers and creatives at the time, and more.

Our Book Review section features reviews of Ewa Mazierska's *Poland Daily: Economy, Work, Consumption and Social Class in Polish Cinema* (2017), Sheila Skaff's *Studying Ida* (2018), Hunter Vaughan's *Hollywood's Dirtiest Secret: The Hidden Environmental Costs of the Movies* (2019), Catherine Russell's *Archiveology: Walter Benjamin and Archival Film Practices* (2018), Mallory O'Meara's *The Lady from the Black Lagoon: Hollywood Monsters and the Lost Legacy of Milicent Patrick* (2019), and Sarah Street and Joshua Yumibe's *Modernity: Color, Cinema, and Media of the 1920s* (2019), along with the edited collections *Prostitution and Sex Work in Global Cinema: New Takes on Fallen Women* (2017), *Thai Cinema: The Complete Guide* (2018), and *The Colour Fantastic: Chromatic Worlds of Silent Cinema* (2018).

With this issue, we are delighted to also be publishing the dossier 'Preserving and Restoring Asian Cinema: The Transnational Dimension', curated by Dina Iordanova. With this dossier, Iordanova wishes to draw attention to the important restoration work being done in Asian film archives – that has, at its essence, a transnational scope and reach – as well as highlight the importance of Asian archives to academic scholarship on the subject. The dossier comprises a preface written by Iordanova; articles by Sanchai Chotirosseranee, Director of the Film Archive (Public Organization), Thailand, and Karen Chan, Executive Director of the Asian Film Archive (AFA), Singapore; and interviews with Bede Cheng, Managing Director at L'Imagine Ritrovata Asia by Andrea Gelardi, and Nick Deocampo, Associate Professor at the Film Institute, University of the Philippines, by Anushrut Ramakrishnan Agrwaal.

Happy reading!

Ana Maria Sapountzi and Peize Li

Co-Editors-in-Chief

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\* This letter's [thumbnail image](#) is a film still from *Herostratus* (Don Levy, 1967), featured and discussed in Sarah Street's article 'Colour and the Critique of Advertising: *Privilege* (Peter Watkins, 1967) and *Herostratus* (Don Levy, 1967)'

\*\* The issue's [banner image](#) is a coloured black-and-white photograph featured in Louisa Wei's article 'The Memory of Colour: *Havana Divas*, Cantonese Opera'. Courtesy of Blue Queen Cultural Communication Ltd.