

Piotr Sobocanski

Photo: Piotr Jaxa-Kwiatkowski



**Slawomir Idziak,
Director of
Photography on
Three Colours: Blue**

"In solving this, Kieslowski gave me a rare opportunity; the chance of being allowed into the very core of the film from the moment of its creation. We decided the crux was to remain absolutely consistent in our use of light and in that way define our 'reality', so tying the viewer into the film's story. Once we had found a suitable location in Geneva we began the detailed planning. There was no storyboard of course, just associations whose meanings must be hidden rather than disclosed. We had to superimpose our own 'standard plot' to explain the screen action whilst avoiding any premature meeting between August and Valentine. Having then defined a network of subtle associations we reversed the usual cinematic logic. Instead of omens forewarning of some future happening we designed later scenes to show that some earlier, apparently casual events, were important to the story.

"I visualised brown (a derivative of red) as the dominant colour. There were three reasons. Red has a specific meaning in the film; brown reflects the legal environment of much of the film, (over half the action takes place in the Judge's apartment); and its darkness and density does not disperse but, as in Dutch paintings, gives good contrast and deep shadows which can show just the important issues and leave everything else shadowy and unspoken"

"Together with Art Director Claud Lenoir we set out to explore the range of colours between brown and red. First we tested with EXR 5293 and 5296 to determine the best shade of brown, then further experimented for optimum effect by softening in the lab. We established the correct lighting to give deep shadows while still keeping the blacks, and then checked the threshold tolerance of the films by testing a grey scale and a swatch of 'our' colours — browns, greys, yellows, oranges and reds — through the range of stop values. Both stocks showed

surprising width and they intercut excellently.

"One of our major lighting decisions was to maintain uniform contrast on each actor's face irrespective of circumstances. I tried to keep the darker side of the face at background value whilst maintaining its legibility, either by placing a bright fuzzy component in shot or by bouncing light off the walls coated with a satin varnish. We also did tests with a slow 360° pan of complete interiors and certain outdoor scenes under available light, and so knew what to add and what to take away to maintain photographic continuity, and kept lighting for interiors and exteriors soft throughout, both in colour and contrast, to help the imaginary world seem more real."

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"I established the lighting 'climate' and atmosphere by shooting the interiors first and then used that experience when

shooting outdoors. Exteriors are always more difficult, being affected by natural conditions and the lower effectiveness of film lighting, so we tried to eliminate natural light from the actors' faces by using black material over the scene and diffused side lighting to give the required parameters. That approach allowed me to maintain the climate throughout, in a way which proved quite flexible in practice."

Typical of the linking shots tying Valentine to August, but one of the more technically and physically testing was one described as follows: "The camera follows August as he leaves his house and goes down the street to the Red Gardenia (a café). The camera then moves up to Valentine's window on the first floor and enters through it, to focus on a ringing telephone which Valentine enters the room to answer. She walks back to the kitchen still talking, then re-enters the room, closes the window and walks out of shot whilst the camera moves to the window and films August returning home." This quasi-continuous shot — which took 11 hours to complete — used an Orion Technocrane and 8 people; the operator — M.Hume — outside in the truck — the zoom controller, three managing the jib movement, the focus puller (H. Jedynak) coping with a great deal of movement, and one man physically protecting the camera from harm." A very imaginative and impressive exercise.

All of which, brings us back to the judges at Cannes and, in the critics' eyes, their inexplicable decision totally to ignore the film in any category. The language of film is but much enriched by local accents, local variations of dialect and grammar. Was the accent, so acceptable to the critics, too thick for the judges? ●

Note: The film numbers 5298 and 5296 mentioned in the text refer to Eastman EXR 500T film 5298 and EXR 500T film 5296 respectively.



**Edward Klosinski,
Director of
Photography on
Three Colours: White**

Photo: Piotr Jaxa-Kwiatkowski