



The Main Feature

Season 43 – Issue 3 – Screening 12 October 2023

Three Colours - Blue

France/Switzerland/Poland 1993
94 mins. Certificate 15

Director	Krzysztof Kieślowski
Writer	Krzysztof Kieślowski, Krzysztof Piesiewicz
Cinematography	Sławomir Idziak
Music	Zbigniew Preisner

Cast

Julie	Juliette Binoche
Olivier	Benoît Régent
Sandrine	Florence Pernel
Lucille	Charlotte Véry
Journalist	Hélène Vincent
Estate Agent	Philippe Volter
Doctor	Claude Deneton
Mother	Emmanuelle Riva



The writer and director of tonight's film *Three Colours Blue* is the Polish filmmaker Krzysztof Kieślowski. Born in Warsaw, he grew up in several small towns, moving wherever his engineer father, a tuberculosis patient, could find treatment. He was raised Roman Catholic and retained what he called a "personal and private" relationship with God. Without any career goals, he entered the College for Theatre Technicians in Warsaw in 1957 because it was run by a relative. He wanted to become a theatre director, but lacked the required bachelor's degree for the theatre department, so he chose to study film as an intermediate step.

Leaving college and working as a theatrical tailor, Kieślowski applied to the Łódź Film School but was rejected twice. To avoid National Service he briefly became an art student, and also went on a drastic diet to make himself medically unfit for the military. After several months of avoiding the draft, he was accepted to the school's directing department in 1964, on his third

attempt. He attended Łódź Film School until 1968 and lost his interest in theatre and decided to make documentary films.

Kieślowski's early documentaries focused on the everyday lives of city dwellers, workers, and soldiers. Though he was not an overtly political filmmaker, he soon found that attempting to depict Polish life accurately brought him into conflict with the authorities and he turned to dramas based on social realism.

Celebrating the 30th anniversary of *Three Colours Blue*, France's best-selling daily Ouest France said: 'In 1993, after his films *Decalogue*, and more particularly *The Double Life of Véronique*, had received public and critical acclaim [outside Poland], the director Krzysztof Kieślowski proposed a



trilogy – *Blue*, *White* and *Red* – little knowing they would be his last films (he died in 1996 aged 54). *Blue*, the first part of the trilogy, features a woman who rebuilds her life after the death of her composer husband and their daughter in a car accident. The film is infused with an unexpected grace avoiding the darkness and unhealed wounds and instead tending to softness and light. Winning the Golden Lion at Venice, it also brought Juliette Binoche her first (and only) César. She had turned down the offer from Stephen Spielberg for a part in *Jurassic Park* to play this role, the finest and deepest in her career to date, and a role coveted by Isabelle Adjani.'

Blue, white, and red are the colours of the French flag, and the story of each film is loosely based on one of the three political ideals in the motto of the French Republic: liberty, equality, fraternity. However, as Kieślowski noted in an interview with an Oxford University student newspaper: 'The words [*liberté, égalité, fraternité*] are French because the money [to fund the films] is French. If the money had been of a different nationality, we would have titled the films differently, or they might have had a different cultural connotation. But the films would probably have been the same'.

Derek Malcolm, reviewing the film in the Guardian concluded '*Blue* remains an intense and moving tribute to the woman at its centre who, in coming back from tragedy, almost refuses, but ultimately accepts the only real love that's on offer.'

Michael Hipkins



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Club website: www.wncc.org.uk. Prefer to leave your comments on the film and your score online rather than on paper? Email to reactions@wncc.org.uk by Wednesday 18 October 2023

Juliette Binoche

Juliette Binoche has made over 60 films during her career. Following *Three Colours Blue* (1993) here is a selection:

The English Patient (1996)



The BBC review of the film says 'From the opening scene of a plane flying low

over the Sahara to the depiction of violence and war, *The English Patient* sweeps you up and captures your heart. It's the end of the Second World War in Italy and Hana (Juliette Binoche), an exhausted, emotionally scarred young nurse, decides to care for her dying patient through the end of his days at an abandoned monastery. Suffering from amnesia, the patient's memory is jogged by a battered copy of Herodotus found with him, and by the arrival of an allied spy (Willem Dafoe), who appears to know who he is. Slowly the pieces of his pre-war past come together, and the tragic love story of Count Almásy (Ralph Fiennes) and Katherine Clifton (Kristin Scott Thomas) unfolds.' Binoche won the Academy Award (the first French actress to do so since Simone Signoret in *Room at the Top*) and the BAFTA for Best Supporting Actress

Children of the Century (*Les Enfants du Siècle*, 1999)



This costume drama is based on the true tale of the tumultuous love affair between two French literary icons of the 19th century, the novelist known by her pen name of Georges Sand (Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin de

Francueil, played by Juliette Binoche) and poet Alfred de Musset (Benoît Magimel). When asked about her inspiration for the film, director Diane Kurys mentioned that Musset's account of the affair in his book *La*

Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle was her starting point. The film suggests he was the love of her life, whereas he was just one of a number of significant lovers and romantic allies – including a seven-year liaison with Frédéric Chopin. Binoche said that her attraction to the part was due to 'Sand's combination of strengths and weaknesses'.

Chocolat (2000)



A romance, based on the 1999 novel of the same name by Joanne Harris. It

tells the story of Vianne Rocher (Binoche) who arrives in the fictional French village of Lansquenet-sous-Tannes at the beginning of Lent with her six-year-old daughter, Anouk. She opens a small chocolaterie. Soon, she and her chocolate influence the lives of the townspeople of this repressed French community in different and interesting ways. Also starring Jonny Depp, Alfred Molina and Judi Dench, it was commercially successful, except in France. Nominated for five Academy Awards and seven BAFTAs but without success.

The Widow of St Pierre (*La Veuve de St Pierre*, 2000)

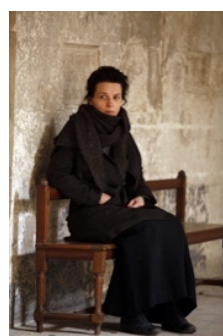


Set in Saint Pierre et Miquelon, a small (population 6,000) and remote French overseas archipelago off the north-eastern coast of Canada. Traditionally, the main occupation was deep-sea fishing and the film opens with a remarkable sequence on board a trawler that makes the viewer feel cold and wet just watching it. It is a costume drama set in 1849 based on a true story about a convicted murderer Nél

(Emir Kusturica) who cannot be executed because there is no guillotine or executioner on the island. The island is governed by an army Captain (Daniel Auteuil): whilst waiting for the guillotine to arrive, his wife (Juliette Binoche) begins to redeem Néel who does various good deeds and wins the respect of the islanders. When the guillotine finally arrives the Captain refuses to fire on those islanders who try to prevent the execution and is himself condemned for disobedience and executed.

Camille Claudel 1915 (2013)

Camille Claudel was a distinguished sculptor and elder sister of the French poet, dramatist and diplomat Paul Claudel. She studied with sculptor Alfred Boucher, and then started working in Auguste Rodin's workshop in 1883 and became a source of inspiration for him. She acted as his model,



his confidante, and his lover. She never lived with Rodin, who was reluctant to end his 20-year relationship with Rose Beuret. After a brilliant and scandalous career she suffered a breakdown, and in 1913 was incarcerated in an

asylum for the remaining 30 years of her life – deprived of all artistic materials – at the evident insistence and instigation of her devoutly Catholic brother. The Guardian said of Binoche's performance: '[Claudel] is played with passion by Juliette Binoche who shows that in a role really worthy of her, she is still a compelling star.'

Michael Hipkins

Comments and reactions to: **Mrs Harris Goes to Paris**

No of reaction slips received = 23

Average score = 7.57

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	~	~	~	~	~	2	2	4	12	2	1

Sterling performance by Lesley Manville

Light, feel-good film. Lesley Manville superb, as she usually is

Very entertaining, feel-good movie

Second viewing – loved it

An enjoyable film but would not want to see it again

Nice feel-good film!

Good period feel

Very involving, feel-good film

Very enjoyable

Good fairy tale for the older woman

Position	Film	Average score
1	Mrs Harris Goes to Paris	7.57
2	The Banshees of Inisherin	7.06

Forthcoming attraction: 26 October 2023 – **Rams**



A remake of the 2015 Icelandic film of the same name, 'Rams is a lovely, even-tempered drama about men and rural life, gentle but firm of spirit, with a down-to-earth pith and a way of entertainingly and unpretentiously exploring potentially difficult subjects such as masculinity. (...) [It] develops into an interesting perspective on loneliness and masculinity, with messages blokes in particular may relate to: how men often shrink inside ourselves; how we so easily shy away from expressions of feelings; how we deploy various techniques to shield ourselves from the stabs of memory. (...) It's funny at times – but also tender and touching: the cinematic equivalent of a gently

moving turn of phrase. Guardian