

Encounters 2012

“The invention of 3D and colour animation in Soviet Russia”

Soviet innovation in film technology is an often neglected theme in film histories, which tend to focus on American inventions. However, in the 1930s Soviet engineers and cinematographers developed a system for making colour films that produced amazing results – and was applied to animation. Yet these beautiful cartoons were only screened at the time of their creation: with changes in projection equipment they disappeared from the screens and were soon relegated to the shelves of the archives. From there, they have been resurrected and digitised in an amazing effort by “pioneers” of restoration at the Russian State Film Archive Gosfilmofond – to have their international premiere in Bristol.

At around the same time, the first experiments in stereoscopic cinema allowed the making of a film in 3D – with three reels made in colour as well –, which was released in 1941 and is shown here in a restored, digital version. With limited access to American inventions during the Cold War, Soviet inventors continued their search for a method of making stereoscopic films to high quality. The Scientific Institute for Photography and Film (NIKFI) invented the Stereo-70 system, which was used to make several animated films – including puppet animation – in the 1970s. For this invention NIKFI received the Academy Award for Technical Achievements in 1991. And once again, nobody could watch those films after the collapse of the Soviet Union and its cinematic infrastructure in 1991, because the special projectors and screens needed for the system disappeared when the old movie theatres were refurbished and turned into multiplexes.



Wednesday 19 September, 16.00-17.30

Programme 1 – 3D and animation

Watershed Cinema 1. Introduction by Sergei Rozhkov and Alexander Melkumov (NIKFI)

This programme shows some early 3D films, starting with a colour fragment from the first stereoscopic film. This is followed by three animated films made in Stereo-70 in the 1970s, which have been specially digitised and will be shown at Encounters for the first time internationally.

- Land of Youth (a concert film), 1940. Part 6 (7 min.)
- Elbert Tuganov, The Souvenir, Nukufilm 1977 (10 min.)
- Heino Pars, When Men Sing, Nukufilm 1979 (23 min.)
- Ivan Ivanov-Vano, The Magic Lake, Soyuzmultfilm 1979 (21 min.)

- Andres Tenusaar, Aleksandr Melkumov: *The Scarecrow*, Nukufilm 2007, (5 min.)
Restoration has been made possible thanks to Gosfilmofond, NIKFI and Nuku-Film (Estonia), with support from the Estonian Ministry of Culture.



Wednesday 19 September, 18.30-20.00

Programme 2 – three-colour animation

Watershed Cinema 1. Introduction by Oleg Bochkov (GFF) and Nikolai Mayorov

This programme presents five animated films created during the 1930s in a three-colour technique developed by Pavel Mershin. They have been digitised at Gosfilmofond of Russia to mark the centenary of Russian animation in 2012 and are shown here for the first time outside of Russia.

- Aleksandr Ptushko: *The Fox and the Wolf*, 1936 (21 min.)
- Aleksandr Ptushko: *Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish*, 1937 (30 min.)
- Aleksandr Sinitsyn, Vitalii Siumkin: *Teremok*, 1937 (8 min.)
- Georgii Elizarov: *The Miraculous Traffic Light*, 1938 (10 min.)
- Sarra Mokil', *The Wolf and the Seven Goat Kids*, 1938 (13 min.)

Restoration has been made possible thanks to Gosfilmofond, personally Nikolai Mayorov and Vladimir Kotovsky.

Thursday 20 September

9.30-12.00 Workshop on film restoration. Watershed Cinema 2.

This workshop brings together some experts on film restoration who will discuss their experiences: David Cleveland will talk on the Kinemacolor system; Oleg Bochkov will present the preservation work at Gosfilmofond; Nikolai Mayorov and Vladimir Kotovsky will talk on problems of restoring three-colour films; and Sergei Rozhkov will explain the Stereo-70 system, then and now.

Thursday 20 September

12.30-14.00 Roundtable on 3D in animation today. Watershed Waterside.

Participants – including David Sproxton, Aardman Animation; Peter Lord, Aardman; Edith Sepp, Ministry of Culture of Estonia; Alexander Melkumov, NIKFI Moscow – will discuss the impact of 3D on puppet animation and technologies used.

This event is curated by Birgit Beumers and funded by the University of Bristol's Research and Enterprise Development Office with support from the British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies (BASEES).