

DER MÄRCHENWALD – EIN SCHATTENSPIEL (GER 1919)

An early tinted live-action film, **DER MÄRCHENWALD – EIN SCHATTENSPIEL** was secured in collaboration with Martin Koerber from Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek (SDK) in Berlin as one of the additional case studies when it became clear that the expected constant revenue stream from the Cinematheque Suisse was not happening (see gallery on the *Timeline of Historical Film Colors*: <http://zauberklang.ch/filmcolors/galleries/der-marchenwald-ein-schattenspiel-1919/>).

The total budget for the SDK films was CHF 10,000. In December 2013, Manuel Joller (UZH) spent four weeks at the Deutsche Kinemathek in Berlin to identify several early film titles that could be of interest to the ongoing colour research interests in DIASTOR. In consultation with Barbara Flueckiger a final list was established and multiple early nitrate titles were shipped to Switzerland.

Image

Initially, scan work was performed at reto.ch but when Reto Kromer left DIASTOR as a partner the DIASTOR team decided in consultation with Martin Koerber of the SDK to scan some of the films at cinegrell postproduction.

Based on interesting cross-fertilisation processes and shifting research interests, **MÄRCHENWALD** ended up being one of the two main film titles that were utilised for the research into Digital Desmet, mainly after the DIASTOR conference workshop in June 2014.



Markus Mastaller, senior scanner operator of ARRI Media in Munich was invited for an intense two-day scanning workshop at cinegrell postproduction. The 35 mm nitrate copy of MÄRCHENWALD was subsequently scanned by Nicole Allemann at cinegrell postproduction based on the specialist settings for the ARRI that Mastaller had explained in the workshop. A mpeg4 reference video was sent to Daniel Meiller at SDK for pre-inspection. It needed to be determined whether the title would require stabilization, and particularly of what nature. There were several kinds of movements happening within the frame, which weren't necessarily easy to pick apart. Stabilizing one might exacerbate another. The decision was made to focus on slightly stabilizing the frameline and perforations. It was also decided to not perform any digital retouching as the scratches added to the historical appearance of the film. Daniel Meiller oversaw final grading at cinegrell postproduction by colorist Nicole Allemann, but the color correction was not completed within the tight timeframe that was available to Daniel Meiller in Zurich. The work was continued in collaboration with colorist Timo Inderfurth at cinegrell postproduction without Meiller's supervision and video references were sent to him for final approval. Color references of the film were captured photographically with the calibrated camera set-up from the nitrate print. The DIASTOR team had previously elaborated an approach for the color transfer in a workshop in collaboration with EYE Film Museum, Haghefilm Digitaal, and Sound and Vision scanner operator and colorist Paulo Fonseca (see <https://diastor.ch/2015/01/21/3rd-digital-desmet-session/>).

New Elements

When Claudy Op den Kamp's DIASTOR contract ended in June 2015, this title was still a work-in-progress. The raw scans of the other SDK titles, including the scans made by reto.ch were sent as digital files to Daniel Meiller at SDK. The physical elements were returned to Berlin by Barbara Flueckiger.

The digital version of MÄRCHENWALD had its première at the Giornate del Cinema muto in Pordenone in October 2015 and has also been successfully screened at the First International Conference Colour in Film in London in March 2016.

Claudy Op den Kamp, Melbourne, September 2015, edited by Barbara Flueckiger in July 2016

For more extended information on the approach see the two publications:

Flueckiger, Barbara; Op den Kamp, Claudy; Heller, Franziska; Pfluger, David (2016): "Digital Desmet". Translating Early Applied Colors. In: *The Moving Image*, 16,1, pp. 106–12. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/640570>

Flueckiger, Barbara; Op den Kamp, Claudy; Pfluger, David (2016, in press): A Material-Based Approach to the Digitization of Early Film Colors. In: Giovanna Fossati, Victoria Jackson, Bregt Lameris, Elif Rongen, Sarah Street, and Joshua Yumibe (eds.): *The Colour Fantastic. Chromatic Worlds of Silent Cinema*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press (in press).