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Colour Films in Britain: The Negotiation of Innovation 1900-1955 (Bfi)

Sarah Street

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Colour Films in Britain is the first nationally-focused study of colour style and technology. Unlike the coming of sound, colour did not revolutionise the film industry overnight, and charting the British experience of colour offers fascinating insights into the complex network of issues that accompany the introduction of new technologies.

This book reveals how the introduction of colour into British film was controversial - greeted by some as an exciting development with scope for developing a uniquely British aesthetic, while others feared its impact on audiences accustomed to seeing black-and-white films that were frequently praised as being superior. Yet many British inventors and filmmakers were captivated by the possibilities created by colour, exploiting different processes and producing films that demonstrated remarkable experimentation and quality.

Beautifully illustrated by stills from a range of important short and feature films and with analyses of many celebrated and lesser known films including *The Open Road, The Glorious Adventure, This Is Colour, Blithe Spirit, This Happy Breed, Black Narcissus, The Red Shoes, The Tales of Hoffmann* and *Moulin Rouge*, this book details the unique contribution of the many British technicians and directors who negotiated their way through the various economic, technical and aesthetic challenges posed by colour in the first half of the twentieth century. A new history of British cinema is mapped - a history in which colour played an important role throughout several decades. The book includes a Technical Appendix by Simon Brown, providing further details of the large number of colour processes highlighted in the book.

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