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The Creative Worlds of Powell & Pressburger

Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger enjoyed huge success with films such as *The Red Shoes* (1948), *Black Narcissus* (1947) and *I Know Where I'm Going!* (1945). Eye Filmuseum presents the first ever extensive retrospective of Powell & Pressburger's work in the Netherlands, comprising of fifteen films including seldom-seen early and late works by Michael Powell. An homage to an influential European filmmaking duo who continue to inspire contemporary makers today.

The Creative Worlds of Powell & Pressburger, 12 September – 9 October 2024. Peeping Tom will receive a nationwide release from 5 September, and can be seen on Eye Film Player. In cinemas from 5 September: Made in England: The Films of Powell & Pressburger, released by Cinéart.

Brit Michael Powell (1905-1990) and Hungarian-Jewish émigré Emeric Pressburger (1902-1988) met in the late 1930s through film producer Alexander Korda, also originally from Hungary. In 1942 they founded The Archers, the production company that would bring them fame through classic films such as *The Red Shoes* (1948), *Black Narcissus* (1947), *I Know Where I'm Going!* (1945) and *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943).

'Written, Produced and Directed by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger' not only became a mark of quality, but also a reflection of European film history. Prior to fleeing the Nazis, Pressburger had worked for UFA studios in Berlin, and together with Powell he worked intensively with fellow émigrés such as Alfred Junge and Hein Heckroth, veterans of the German theatre and film industries who exerted great influence as production designers on the visual aspects of the duo's films. British talent such as editor David Lean and cameraman Jack Cardiff also played a significant role in the look and feel of the films produced by The Archers.

Extravagant

From 1942 to 1956 Powell & Pressburger wrote, directed and produced seventeen films which, with their opulent art direction, extravagant use of colour (Technicolor) and spirituality at times tending towards mysticism, were diametrically opposed to the realism predominant in British (postwar)

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cinema.

Powell had a preference for allegorical fairy and folk tales, often with a melodramatic setting; Pressburger had worked at the UFA studios in Berlin and was seen as an inventive screenwriter with a love of fantastic storylines and imaginative plot twists.

Martin Scorsese, a great fan of Powell & Pressburger's work, described their films as 'grand, poetic, wise, adventurous, headstrong, enraptured by beauty, deeply romantic, and completely uncompromising.'

Indebtedness

The biggest Powell & Pressburger retrospective, organised last year by the BFI, has led to (renewed) interest in the pair's oeuvre, and made this accessible through many restorations (both analogue and digital). Not only has Martin Scorsese – the first to advocate restoration of their work – acknowledged his indebtedness to them, but the work of Powell & Pressburger has also influenced filmmakers including Derek Jarman, Joanna Hogg and Wes Anderson. Choreographers (Matthew Bourne), singers (Kate Bush, IU) and musical directors (Stanley Donen) have also been inspired by films such as the inventive dance film *The Red Shoes*.

Eye Retrospective & nationwide release of Peeping Tom

Eye is screening a selection of the works of Powell & Pressburger made up of eleven films, alongside early and late films by Michael Powell, including titles seldom or never seen in the Netherlands such as *Bluebeard's Castle* (1963) and *The Spy in Black* (1939). Seven of the (35mm) films are taken from the Eye collection. This retrospective in Eye is the first ever large-scale retrospective of the work of Powell & Pressburger in the Netherlands.

Special attention will also be devoted to *Peeping Tom* (1960), the film that led to Michael Powell's fall from grace. His portrait of a troubled camera assistant who seduces women and then films them at the moment he murders them, was dismissed upon its release as 'sick' and 'irresponsible'. Later, the film came to be recognised as an ingenious treatise on voyeurism and the power of the camera. Eye is releasing the digital restoration in several cinemas throughout the country.

A sidebar programme within the retrospective will also show films by directors influenced by Powell & Pressburger's work. These include *Age of*

Innocence (Martin Scorsese, 1993), *Breaking the Waves* (Lars von Trier, 1996) and *The Tempest* (Derek Jarman, 1979).

Documentary with Martin Scorsese

Made in England: The Films of Powell & Pressburger (David Hinton, 2023) will be released around the same time in the Netherlands by distributor Cinéart. In this exceptional documentary, Martin Scorsese explores the cooperation between Powell and Pressburger on the basis of an abundance of archival material. Scorsese celebrates the duo's ability to make 'subversive commercial films' and describes how deep an impact their films have had on his own work. The documentary was produced by Michael Powell's wife Thelma Schoonmaker, a celebrated producer of American films ranging from *Woodstock* (Michael Wadleigh, 1970) to Scorsese titles such as *Goodfellas* (1990), *Raging Bull* (1980) and, more recently, *Killers of the Flower Moon* (2023).

Films

The Edge of the World, Michael Powell (1937)
The Spy in Black, Michael Powell (1939)
49th Parallel, Michael Powell (1941)
The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp, Powell & Pressburger (1943)
A Canterbury Tale, Powell & Pressburger (1944)
I Know Where I'm Going!, Powell & Pressburger (1945)
A Matter of Life and Death, Powell & Pressburger (1946)
Black Narcissus, Powell & Pressburger (1947)
The Red Shoes, Powell & Pressburger (1948)
The Small Back Room, Powell & Pressburger (1949)
Gone to Earth, Powell & Pressburger (1950)
The Tales of Hoffmann, Powell & Pressburger (1951)
The Sorcerer's Apprentice, Michael Powell (1955, short film)
Peeping Tom, Michael Powell (1960)
Bluebeard's Castle, Michael Powell (1963)

Made in England: The Films of Powell & Pressburger (2023, David Hinton)

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Note to editors, not for publication

Press and screen screening of Powel & Pressburger.

Friday 5 July, screenings to be requested at Filmbeurs -
Verkadefabriek (Boschdijkstraat 45, 5211 VD 's-Hertogenbosch)
Peeping Tom & Made in England: The Films of Powell and Pressburger

For more information, bookings, screeners and footage:

Booking Peeping Tom: Justine Knijn, justineknijn@eyefilm.nl

Booking Made in England: Anne van der Pol, anne@ceneart.nl

Image material: [Filmdepot.nl](https://www.filmdepot.nl)

Screeners and press inquiries: Rachel Voorbij, rachelvoorbij@eyefilm.nl

Press questions Made in England: Julia van Berlo, julia@ceneart.nl

DCP catalog: www.eyefilm.nl/distributie

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