

A Future for 65mm filming..!

Quentin Tarantino's latest movie "THE HATEFUL EIGHT" has been released at Christmas Day 2015 in 100 cinemas in the USA and Canada, who have been equipped with 70mm film projectors. It is Tarantino's great hope that his 70mm movie, filmed in Ultra Panavision 70, will be the start of a rebirth of the original 65mm filming and 70mm film projection.

The great question now rises: Is there a Future for 65mm (analogue) filming and 70mm film prints?



Side by Side: Interviews with film directors, cinematographers, etc

In 2012 Keanu Reeves directed a documentary **SIDE BY SIDE** (subtitled: Can Film Survive Our Digital Future) in which he had nearly 70 interviews with film directors, cinematographers, writers, engineers, artists and producers, about their thoughts about digital filming. Among them were James Cameron, Anne V. Coates, David Fincher, Robert Rodriguez, David Lynch, Steven Soderbergh, Christopher Nolan, Vittorio Storaro, Vilmos Zsigmond and many others. Questions about their experiences and feelings about working with film and digital — where are we now and what the future may bring. Martin Scorsese who was also interviewed by Keanu said, that he thinks that celluloid film will always be there!

According to the **Side by Side** website:

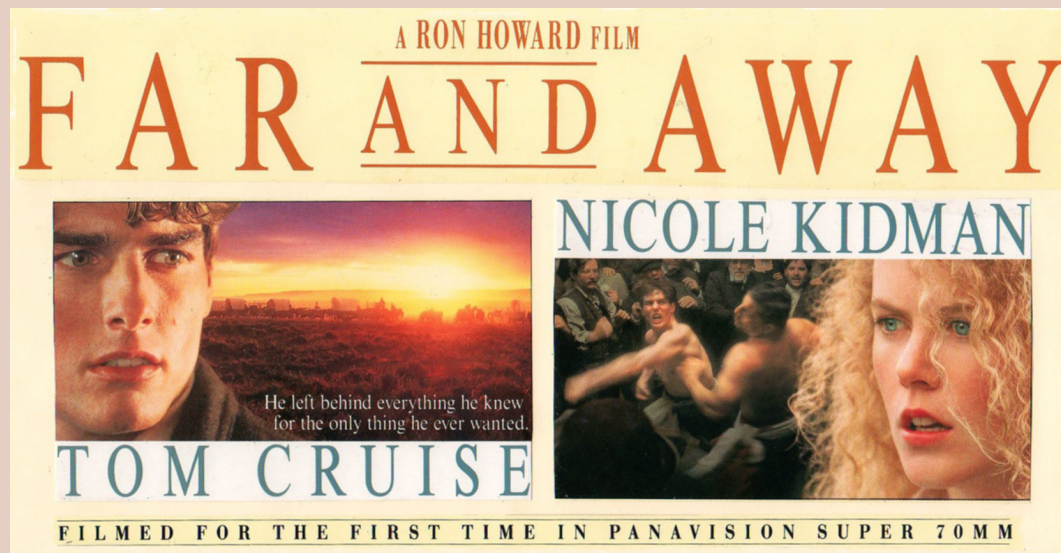
"The documentary investigates the history, process and workflow of both digital and photochemical film creation. We show what artists and filmmakers have been able to accomplish with both film and digital and how their needs and innovations have helped push filmmaking in new directions. It is really a miracle that for almost one hundred years there was only one way to make a movie — with film. Movies were shot, edited and projected using photochemical film. But over the last two decades a digital process has emerged to challenge photochemical filmmaking. **Side by Side** takes an in-depth look at this revolution, what has been gained, what is lost, and what the future might bring."

The most surprising of the **Side by Side** documentary was, that different producers said that they still would prefer the "old" way of using film instead of the

digital possibilities, because the colours of film are different (warmer).

A little 70mm history

In May 1992, *Variety* wrote: "The Future of 65mm productions is fuzzy." A whole story about the release of **FAR AND AWAY** (with Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise). The first film shot with 65mm cameras since Disney's **TRON**

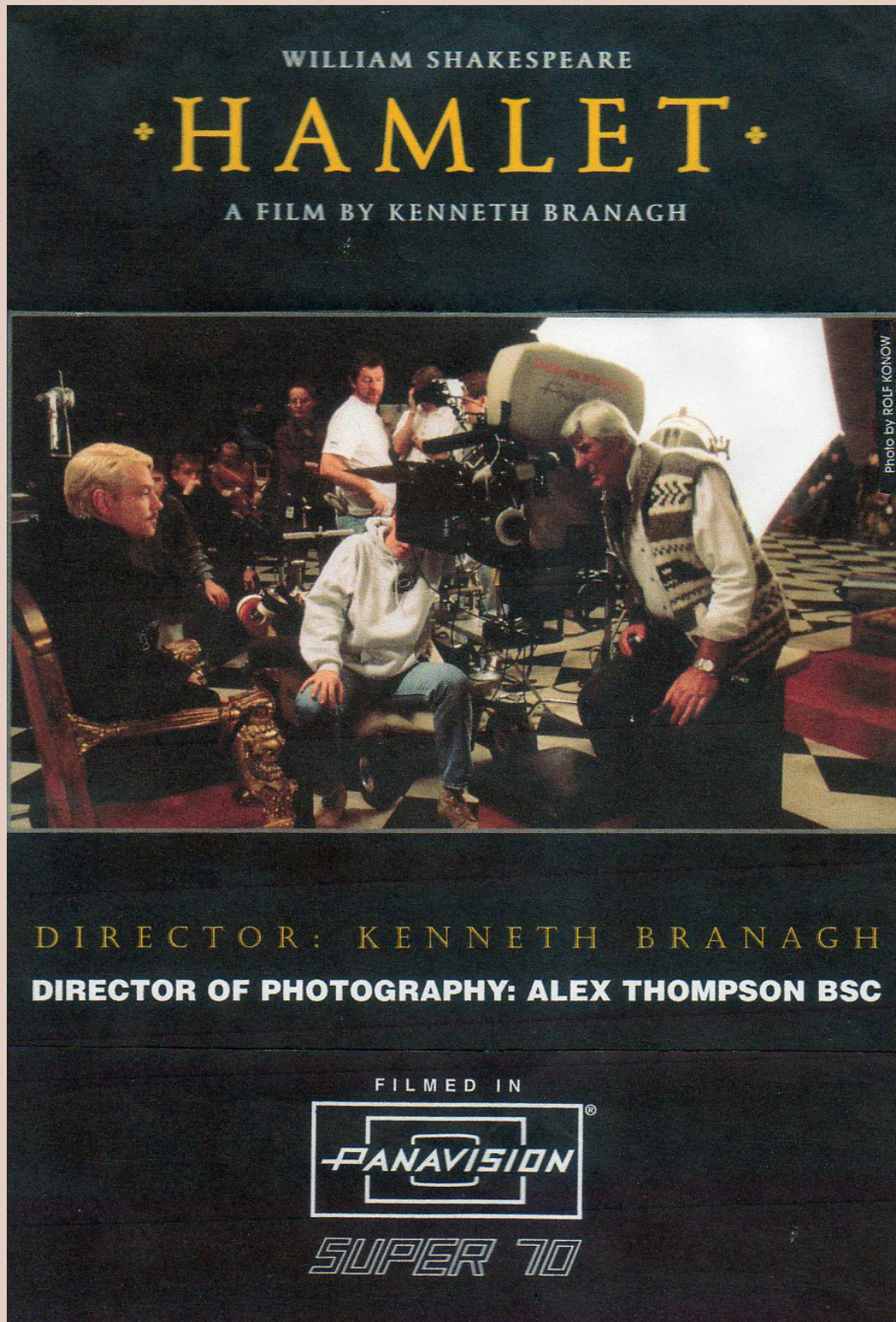


in 1982. For the release of *Far and Away* in May 1992, Universal had 1500 35mm prints available for national release in the US and 163 70mm prints. Producer Brian Grazer and director Ron Howard said that their movie was a test case for 65mm production. Michael Salomon, their Director of Photography added: "People do notice the difference: the definition, the clarity, the color saturation - even if it's on a subconscious level." Was the added cost of shooting in 65mm worth it? Grazer said that the decision to make **FAR AND AWAY** in 65mm has raised the budget by only \$ 700 000, an inconsiderable sum for an already high-cost film. (See "Digital & 65mm", © 2010 International 70mm Publishers, The Netherlands).

But the success was not what they had expected and 70mm was still not back in the front lines. In 1993 Bernardo Bertolucci and his DOP Vittorio Storaro decided to use Arriflex 65mm cameras for parts of their **LITTLE BUDDHA** production (with Keanu Reeves as Prince Siddhartha) that were shot in the Kingdom of Bhutan. The rest of the film was shot in 35mm anamorphic Technovision. A small number of 70mm prints was available for the release. The film was not a success. In 1996 Kenneth Branagh showed his love for 70mm by using new Panavision 65mm cameras for his 4 hour production of **HAMLET** together with his DOP Alex Thomson. The process was renamed Panavision Super 70 because of the new lighter cameras. However **HAMLET** was not a success, despite many 70mm screenings. In the meantime producer Mark Magidson had used the Todd-AO 65mm cameras for his famous non-verbal film production **BARAKA** (1993) released with 70mm prints, in 2010

followed by **SAMSARA** filmed with Panavision 65mm cameras, but only released with DCP (Digital Computer Package).

Years of silence until 2012 when Paul Thomas Anderson decided to shoot his production of **THE MASTER** with 65mm Panavision cameras. A pity he didn't



use the full frame of the 65mm image! Anderson said: "The 1.85:1 aspect ratio sprang from how I saw things in my mind's eye while I was writing". But the release of some 70mm prints didn't work well, as it didn't have the impact of being 70mm! Another fan of 70mm Christopher Nolan decided to use the Imax 65mm camera for parts of his **INTERSTELLAR** movie in 2013. Cinemas had the choice to screen it with DCP or with 35mm film anamorphic (1:2.35), 70mm 5 perf (1:2.2) or IMAX 70mm (1:1.44)! And in September 2015 Toronto Film Festival had the DCP premiere of Terence Davies **SUNSET SONG**, filmed with Arriflex 65mm cameras, but not released in 70mm, a missed chance .

But now in 2015 a lot of publicity for Quentin Tarantino's decision to shoot his new production **THE HATEFUL EIGHT** completely with 65mm Panavision cameras. And not the normal Panavision 65, but the Ultra Panavision 70 (anamorphic) process that was used for the last time 50 years ago for **KHAR-TOUM** in 1966 and for **BEN-HUR** in 1959. And although the film has had its premiere around Christmas 2015, a lot is already written about Tarantino's wish to release it the first two weeks only in 70mm and starting in January 2016 with the "normal" release. But even then with a choice of 35mm film or DCP!

Tarantino initially stated that he wanted to have 100 cinemas get his movie in 70mm. And indeed: recently the Weinstein Company has announced that 96 cinemas in the US and 4 in Canada will have 70mm prints on the first day of Christmas! The Weinstein Company had been looking for 70mm projectors in silence for nearly a year in close coöperation with Chapin Cutler, president of Boston Light & Sound Company. Some projectors, dated from the fifties, were in working condition. Some others had to be refurbished and some pieces had to be manufactured anew. Nowadays, some famous Philips (Norelco) DP 70's from the fifties, are still in use in the new EYE filmuseum in Amsterdam! Every 70mm projector also needs a special anamorphic 70mm lens for the Panavision Ultra process! Boston Light & Sound was also involved in training staff and projectionists with the knowledge of running 70mm, as nearly every film projectionist in the world has been laid off and is working in other jobs (or not working, or is retired).

However, in Europe, not only in museums but also in cinemas there are still some 70mm machines waiting, covered with dust, for the things to come! And many are trying to get involved in the Tarantino's 70mm stream. In the meantime prices of second hand 70mm projectors went up to unbelievable heights! Fortunately 65/70mm film services are still alive and well at FotoKem in Burbank, CA, the World's Only Complete 65/70mm Film & Digital Post Facility. They remain a solid resource for filmmakers interested in shooting their films in any format, from 16mm to 65mm, as well as on the latest digital cameras. They share with us the commitment to film origination and exhibition, and a particular love of 65mm capture and 70mm print exhibition. And the Kodak

Factory in New York has been saved as the only facility still producing 65 and 70mm film. FotoKem so far has produced 120 seventy mm prints of **THE HATEFUL EIGHT**.

However it may further be asked if we are going to be seeing some vast renaissance of 70mm exhibition all over the place? Robert Richardson, Director of Photography of **THE HATEFUL EIGHT** is very optimistic, saying: "And this is just the beginning, as Gareth Edwards' **Rogue One: A Star Wars Story** is reportedly being shot also with Ultra Panavision 70 lenses"! And Christopher Nolan will start in July 2016 in France with his new epic film **DUNKIRK** which will be shot with a combination of IMAX 65mm and 65mm large format photography for maximum image quality and 70mm releases.

If you have the possibility of seeing **THE HATEFUL EIGHT** in 70mm, go for it! And watch the six-horse stagecoach in beautiful snow landscapes and the razor sharp close-ups of the actors in an old roadhouse and of course there great acting. And listen to the music composed by great Italian composer Ennio Morricone, famous by his music for western movies. In a review in the Los Angeles Times, 24 December 2015, Michael Phillips wrote: "**THE HATEFUL EIGHT** is an ultrawide bore. But if you have the option, you should see it in



one of its 100 so-called limited release "Roadshow" screenings, projected on film, complete with overture from great composer Ennio Morricone. Writer-director Tarantino has described his post-Civil War picture set largely in a Wyoming roadhouse with a snow blizzard raging outside, as an Agathie Christie western. I am all for the old-school, 70mm whomp of **THE HATEFUL EIGHT**.

Having seen it both digital and on film, to me it's clear the 70mm roadshow film version looks bigger, brighter, clearer and movie-er!"

Let us hope and emphasize that all cinema directors, their projection supervisors and other staff members will do their utmost to handle the new 70mm prints with the highest possible care to prevent any damage on these new unique 70mm prints with Datasat (DTS) time code. So we will be able to watch these for a long time without any scratches ! Not only in the United States, but also in Europe there is still a lot of interest in 70mm film, regarding the many yearly 70mm Festivals in Bradford, UK, Karlsruhe, Germany and Krnov in the Czech Republic.

There is still a glimmer of hope on the horizon and I do believe and really hope THE HATEFUL EIGHT will be the beginning of a kind of rebirth of 65mm filming with 70mm prints. But like FAR AND AWAY it could also be another swan song of the beautiful 70mm processes. But let's wait and see what happens: where there is hope, there is life!

30 December 2015, Johan C.M. Wolthuis, International 70mm Publishers, The Netherlands (www.70mmpublishers.nl).

***** **MGM Camera 65 (1957) + Ultra Panavision 70 (1959)** *****

Before any screening of a **Todd~AO 70mm** film had taken place, in April 1955 MGM decided to produce all their top productions with 65mm cameras. Lenses for MGM Camera 65 were designed by the Panavision company. They had developed a totally new optical system in which they had incorporated an anamorphic element and a spherical lens with a slight horizontal squeeze with a compression ratio variable from 1.25x1 to 1.33x1. Thus the system had the widest single-film aspect ratio ever achieved for commercial films projected at 2.76:1. Projection needed the same anamorphic lenses to create this extra-wide screen image. The cameras were rebuilt old Mitchell Realife cameras from the thirties (**BILLY THE KID**, 1930) which were heavy and difficult to handle. So Panavision decided to build their own new cameras and the process was renamed **Ultra Panavision 70**. 'Ultra' stands for the anamorphic element in the system. The process was introduced in 1962 with **MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY**. Many of the action scenes in **HOW THE WEST WAS WON** were photographed in Ultra Panavision 70 and then optically converted into 3-strip Cinerama.

***** **Super Panavision 70 (1959) from 1994 called Panavision Super 70 because of new cameras** *****

After the research for MGM Camera 65 and Ultra Panavision 70 the company started with developing their own new 70mm process. They designed new spherical lenses (without anamorphic elements) and had new cameras build to their own specifications. Panavision lenses were with varying focal lengths, this was the only difference between their system and the famous Todd~AO 70mm process. Both had six-channel magnetic sound on the filmstrip.