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SALLE BUÑUEL  
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OFFICIAL SELECTION  
**CANNES CLASSICS**  
FESTIVAL DE CANNES



Cannes Competition 1957,  
Best Actor Award for  
**John Kitzmiller**

# THE VALLEY OF PEACE

BY FRANCE ŠTIGLIC

## synopsis

Slovenia, WWII: two young orphans, a German girl Lotti (Eveline Wohlfeiler) and a Slovenian boy Marko (Tugo Štiglic), escape from a town which has been just been bombed in a US air-raid. They have heard someone talk about a lost valley where there is always peace and they set out to find it. Right above them, an African-American pilot parachutes from his fighter plane shot down by the German army. Sergeant Jim (John Kitzmiller) discovers the children, but he can't bring himself to leave them to their fate – even if they slow down his escape. Both Germans and partisans know that the pilot has survived. Which one of them will find him first?

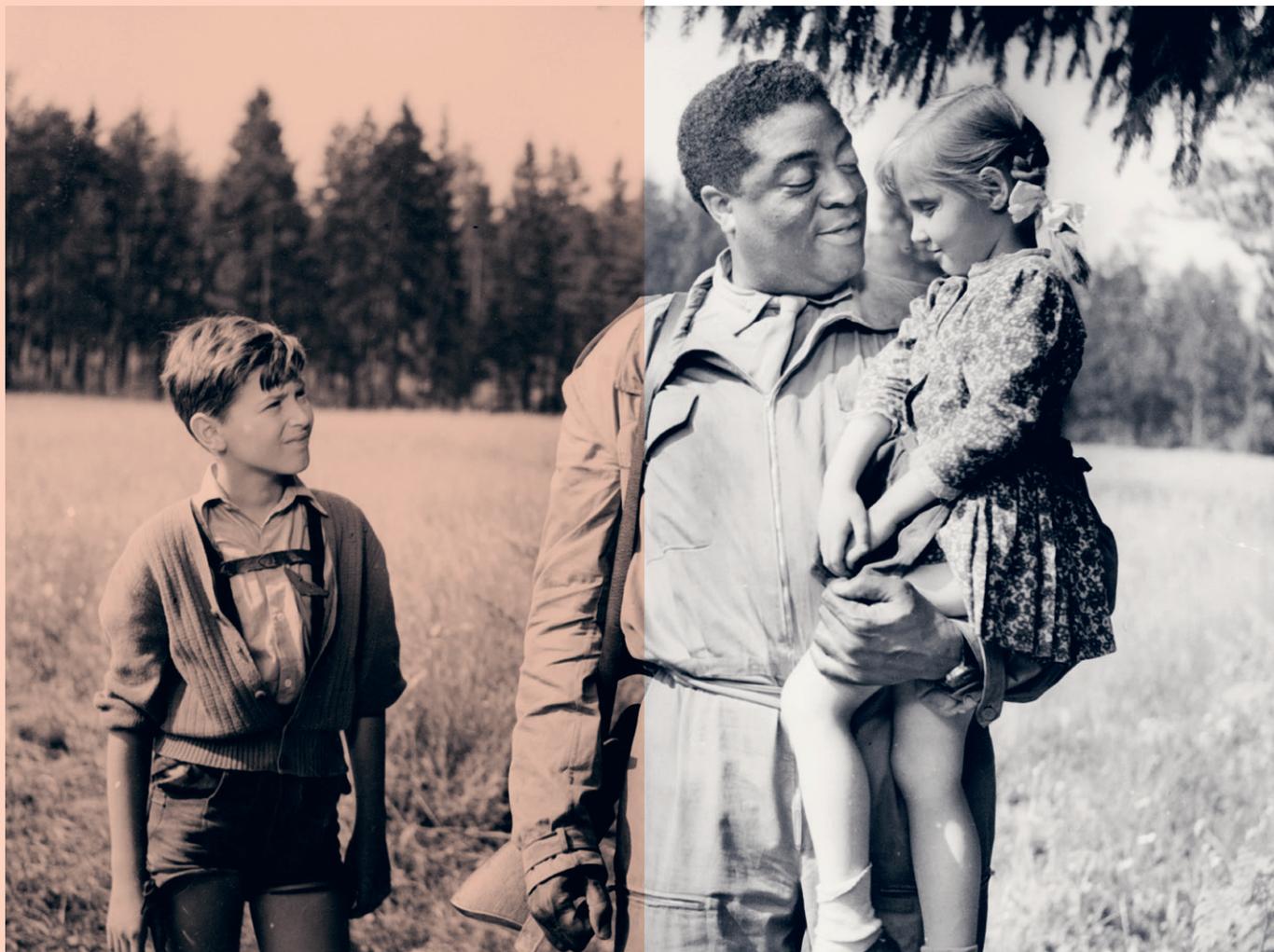
## the story

**For the first time ever, Cannes Classics has selected a Slovenian film to be included in its programme - a newly-restored version of France Štiglic's THE VALLEY OF PEACE (*Dolina miru*). Selected for the official competition in 1957, the film was awarded Best Actor for John Kitzmiller, the first-ever black actor to win at the festival.**

Kitzmiller (1913-1965) was a former captain in the US Army liberating Italy who started his acting career in Italian neorealist dramas (*SENZA PIETA, Without Pity*) after being discovered by Luigi Zampa playing poker in an officer's club. The first black actor to pick up an award in Cannes, Kitzmiller went on to play many more roles, eventually starring as Quarrel in the iconic Bond film *DR. NO* (1962).

In *THE VALLEY OF PEACE*, he plays the role of Sergeant Jim, whose fighter plane is shot down by the Germans. Trying to escape them, while partisans are looking to save him, he runs into 4-year-old Lotti (Eveline Wohlfeiler) and 9-year-old Marko (Tugo Štiglic, the director's son - now a filmmaker himself) who have just lost their families in the air-raid. They are looking for a valley where they were told it's always peaceful, possibly the valley where Marko's uncle has a house.

Sergeant Jim takes the shell-shocked children under his wings, even if it means risking discovery by the Germans. The uncle's abandoned house is not the safe place they hoped it to be, as it becomes a battleground between the Germans and the partisans trying to save the sergeant, who urges the children to escape.



Tugo Štiglic, John Kitzmiller (Best Actor, Cannes '57), Eveline Wohlfeiler

Shooting began on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1956. The screenplay was written by Ivan Ribič, then a young Slovenian writer who initially set the story somewhere in North Korea. However, they soon found the heaven on earth, sought by the children and the American soldier, right here at home among the Slovenian hills.

On July 24<sup>th</sup>, 1956, at the end of the shooting of *The Valley of Peace*, an article in the main Slovenian newspaper announced “Good prospects for Slovenian and Yugoslavian film production”. And they were right. Due to its symbolism and universal message, the film became an instant classic.

The “new Slovenian art film” had its premiere at the Pula Film Festival, and after a few changes were made to the editing, it entered into domestic distribution. A shorter version of the film was screened locally, the longer version – more spectacular, was intended for foreign markets under the title *Sergeant Jim*. The newspaper *Naši razgledi* (*Our views*) reported that *The Valley of Peace* had reached 50 thousand spectators within the first month in Slovenian cinemas, more than any other film that year.



**Louis Chavet – Le Figaro (1957):**  
“A moving and sincere adventure.”

**Roger Regent – Le technique cinématographique (1957):**  
“Any Yugoslav film is such a rarity that one should not miss a single shot. This one offers even more: it’s truly excellent. [...] The symbols that leap up from this brief description are in reality much more discretely woven into this film by director France Štiglic, who deserves the highest praise for his restraint and his technical skills.”

THE VALLEY OF PEACE was not the first time at the festival for director France Štiglic (1919-1993) whose previous work ON OUR OWN LAND - the first Slovenian sound feature - premiered in Cannes in 1949. His film THE NINTH CIRCLE was nominated for the 1961 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Academy Awards.

In Cannes’ 1957 competition line-up, THE VALLEY OF PEACE was up against such other future classics as Wyler’s FRIENDLY PERSUASION starring Gary Cooper, Fellini’s NIGHTS OF CABIRIA, winner of the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, Bresson’s A MAN ESCAPED, Dassin’s HE WHO MUST DIE and Bergman’s THE SEVENTH SEAL.



The Slovenian Film Centre is responsible for the digital restoration of THE VALLEY OF PEACE, the second film to have been awarded financing for restoration following last year's FUNERAL FEAST (1969) by Matjaž Klopčič. After the Cannes Classics screening, the restored version of THE VALLEY OF PEACE will be screened on Ljubljana's main square on August 23<sup>rd</sup> to celebrate Slovenia's 25<sup>th</sup> year as an independent country.

As Slovenian Film Centre director Joško Rutar comments, "THE VALLEY OF PEACE is a masterpiece of Slovenian cinema, which we felt absolutely needed to be restored so it could continue to find new audiences and appreciation at home and abroad. Having our restored version premiere in Cannes Classics as the first Slovenian film in the programme is truly an honor for us, since their programme is so carefully curated and followed by cinephiles all over the world."



**France Štiglic**

## film crew

DIRECTOR: **France Štiglic**

SCREENWRITER: **Ivan Ribič**

DIALOGUES: **Ivan Ribič**

SCREENPLAY ADAPTATION: **France Jamnik, Vladimir Koch, France Štiglic**

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: **Rudi Vaupotič**

COMPOSER: **Marijan Kozina**

PRODUCTION DESIGNER: **Ivo Spinčič**

EDITOR: **Radojka Ivančević**

COSTUME DESIGNER: **Relly Dular**

MAKEUP ARTIST: **Hilda Jurečič**

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: **France Jamnik, Jelka Potokar, Mako Sajko**

CAMERAMEN: **Dušan Hočevar, Srečko Pavlovčič, Viki Pogačar, Žaro Tušar**

PHOTOGRAPHER: **Lado Sazonov**

SOUND RECORDIST: **Marjan Meglič**

PRODUCTION MANAGER: **Mladen Kozina**

PRODUCTION COMPANY: **Triglav film**

## cast

**Tugo Štiglic, John Kitzmiller, Eveline Wohlfeiler, Boris Kralj, Janez Čuk, Polde Dežman, Aleksander Valič, Franc Drogenik, Maks Furijan, Tone Homar, Rudi Kosmač, Franjo Kumer, Pero Škerl**

## technical data

**90 min, Yugoslavia/Slovenia, 1957** (restored version 2016), **Slovenian + German dialogues, English + French subtitles**

FILM FORMAT: **35 mm, DCP**

ASPECT RATIO: **1:1.37**

COLOURS: **b&w**

SOUND: **5.1**

## john kitzmiller

John Kitzmiller was born in Battle Creek, Michigan, on December 4<sup>th</sup> 1913, and was commissioned in the US Army reaching the rank of Captain in the Corps of Engineers serving with the 92<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division during its liberation of Italy in World War II.

At the end of the war, he chose to remain in Italy where he was discovered in 1946 by Luigi Zampa and producer Carlo Ponti, who instantly liked the way he looked and laughed and persuaded him to appear in *Vivere in pace* (*To Live in Peace*, 1947). This began his acting career in Italian neorealist films. He made Italy his permanent residence and ultimately starred in more than fifty European films, often portraying an angry black man fighting racism.



He played the leading role of “Jerry” in the film *Senza pietà* (*Without Pity*), from a screenplay by Federico Fellini, Alberto Lattuada and Tullio Pinelli. *Senza pietà* briefly gave Kitzmiller the status of a movie star in Italy. The film was also enjoyed in American art houses and was popular on the university circuit, particularly among black students. He received awards commemorating both his role as an actor and as a soldier. In 1957, he was the first black actor to win the best actor award at the Cannes Film Festival for his role in the Yugoslavian (Slovenian) film *Dolina miru* (*The Valley of Peace*).

Kitzmiller is most famous for his role as Quarrel in the 1962 James Bond film *Dr. No*.

He died on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1965, aged 51.



## tugo štiglic

Tugo Štiglic was born on November 8<sup>th</sup> 1946, in Ljubljana, Slovenia. He graduated at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana (1974), receiving a bachelor's degree in Art History. During and after his studies, he worked as an assistant director to practically all the film directors in Slovenia and make fiction films for TV, ethnographic short films and documentary programmes.

His first feature film *Poletje v školjki* (*A Summer in a Sea Shell*, 1986) won the Grand Prix at the Giffoni Film Festival as well as the Grand Prix at the Saint-Malo Festival. In 1988, he made *A Summer in a Sea Shell 2*.

His role as Marko in *The Valley of Peace* was his first and last acting experience.

## eveline wohlfeiler

In her young years, she was an actress in Slovenian films: *Dolina miru* (*The Valley Of Peace*) by France Štiglic in 1956, *Dobro morje* (*The Good Sea*) by Mirko Grobler in 1958 and *Tri četrtine sonca* (*Three Quarters Of The Sun*) by Jože Babič in 1959. At the age of 16 she moved to Munich (Germany), where she later worked in picture and sound editing.



## restoration notes

The initial search for materials showed that the original negative has been lost, and cannot be found. It was probably left in the lab which produced the American version of this film, called "Sergeant Jim" in 1962, six years after the original release. All that we found was: an interpositive, an internegative and five copies. The plan was to fix all the damage that was caused by the overuse of the materials and the damage caused by time. We also wanted to render the film as closely to the original look as possible. A special group of experts was established with members of the Slovenian film directors and directors of photography societies. The internegative and interpositive materials were scanned in 4k resolution, and we tried to use the better parts of both materials in the final copy. The files were scaled to 2k resolution and prepared for the restoration process. The images were strikingly sharp, with the exception of a few archive shots that were placed in the film as they did not have the financial support to shoot the American airplanes and the bombing of the city. These shots were restored and sharpened to be close to the original materials. The internegative had many issues, from tears and dirt, to warping and total loss of information on some frames. In these cases, we used the interpositive as a source, as it was better preserved. Some scenes, particularly the ones with the Yugoslav airplanes were shot on very grainy stock. These shots were slightly de-grained in order to better blend with the other footage. The color grading was done by Janez Ferlan under the supervision of the director of photography Lev Predan Kowarski. The colors were approved by the group of experts. The sound was digitized from the internegative and the interpositive as well as from the "Sergeant Jim" materials - from the optical soundtrack. The sound was in really bad shape, as the years have left big teeth marks on the materials. The quality of the recording itself was at a very high level for that time, since there are almost no dubbed scenes in the film. However, the restoration of the sound was very difficult, due to the fact that almost all scenes have some kind of music and that does not allow much interference with the sound.

Iridum Film (Bojan Mastilović & Janez Ferlan)

## a few references (selected from more than 150 restored films):

- ♦ **Surogat** (Ersatz, or The Substitute), a short animated film directed by Dušan Vukotić (1961); Oscar award winner
- ♦ **Procesija svetoga Duje** (The Procession of Saint Domnius), a short documentary film directed by Josip Karaman (1911)
- ♦ **Ljubav u Sarajevu** (Love in Sarajevo), a short film directed by Nikola Drakulić and Edo Ljubić (1936)
- ♦ **Lutka** (Dream Doll), a short animated film directed by Bob Godfrey and Zlatko Grgić (1979); Oscar Award Nominee
- ♦ **Sedmina** (Funeral Feast), a feature film directed by Matjaž Klopčič (1969)
- ♦ **Gipsy Magic**, a feature film directed by Stole Popov (1997)
- ♦ **Crveniot konj** (The Red Horse), a feature film directed by Stole Popov (1981)
- ♦ **Sretna nova 49** (Happy New Year), a feature film directed by Stole Popov (1986)
- ♦ **Tetoviranje** (Tattoo), a feature film directed by Stole Popov (1991)
- ♦ **Karaula** (The Border Post), a feature film directed by Rajko Grlić (2006)

## SLOVENIAN FILM CENTRE

The Slovenian Film Centre, a public agency of the Republic of Slovenia, was established in 2011 as a successor to the Slovenian film fund - a public fund.

The goal of the Slovenian Film Centre is to encourage creativity in the film and audiovisual field in Slovenia by creating suitable conditions for film, audiovisual and cinematographic activities. It cofinances all programmes dealing with the development, production, promotion and distribution of films. In addition, it also supports film festivals, industry associations, the promotion of film locations, film literacy and other initiatives.

The Slovenian Film Centre owns the catalogue of Slovenian films from 1946 to 1991 and in the last few years has consequently begun the restoration of film prints.



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1957, restored version 2016 (90 min)

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