

Document Citation

Title	Il mistero di Oberwald
Author(s)	Gene Moskowitz
Source	<i>Variety</i>
Date	1980 Sep 10
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Il mistero di Oberwald (The Oberwald mystery), Antonioni, Michelangelo, 1981

Il Mistero Di Oberwald

(The Mystery of Oberwald)
(ITALIAN-COLOR)

Vari
9-10-

Venice, Sept. 9.

RAI release of Rai Rete 2 production. Stars Monica Vitti. Directed by Michelangelo Antonioni. Screenplay: Antonioni, Tonino Guerra from "The Eagle Has Two Heads" by Jean Cocteau; camera (color): Luciano Tovoli; editor: Francesco Grandoni, Antonioni. Reviewed at Venice Film Fest. Sept. 3, '80. Running time: 123 MINS. La Regina Monica Vitti Sebastian Franco Branciaroli Fohn Paolo Bonacelli Di Berg Elisabetta Pozzi Willenstein Luigi Diberti Tony Amad Saha Alan

Backed entirely by Italian television, this is basically a telefilm. Made by noted director Michelangelo Antonioni and so shown as a film at the recent Venice Film Festival, it is essentially a fairly inconclusive experiment on the use of video in filmmaking today.

Film is more a technological than aesthetic problem. Antonioni has not made a film since his 1975 "The Passenger," and perhaps was tempted by the offer from Italo tv when several feature projects fell through. The idea was to make it entirely by electronic means and then put it on film.

All this seems to be begging the question. For actually, what emerges from the film is an attempt to make video seem like film. So why not shoot it on film and avoid all the intricate problems? Theoretically, video is supposed to do things with color that might add to film technique.

But not much of this is in evidence.
(Continued on page 36)

Il Mistero Di Oberwald

dence in this hoary Ruritanian romantic melodrama about a queen whose husband was assassinated on the day of their marriage and lived hidden from her country ever since.

One night a man breaks in who has been selected to kill her due to unrest among many factions in the country. But they fall in love. (He is also a dead ringer for the dead King.) However, his attempt to help her take over the country and do good is foiled by the police chief's blackmail and he ends up taking poison and then killing the Queen when she goads him into it.

Monica Vitti does not quite have the regal stature and bearing to make much of the role of the bereaved and then lovesick queen and others are adequate in stereotyped roles. And how about the color?

A reddish hue in the early sequences of the would-be killer being chased by police is effective but could just as easily been done with film. There are times when one character is bathed in blue or in b&w lensing while another part of the screen is in regular color. Perhaps it does give some color indication of a character or of a scene or mood but does not seem worth all the trouble.

Video appears most effective when it is just put right on film with its wavy definition making vegetation look like expressionistic paintings.

Video has been used before by Jean-Luc Godard in his "Number Two," albeit with much use of split and multi-screen frame.

Antonioni does have his deft directorial feelings intact and there are some scenes that are effective as those depicting the kitchen life in the castle.

The late Jean Cocteau also filmed his play, "The Eagle Has Two Heads," and memory serves, it was more aptly kitchy and melodramatically outrageous than this one. Film has some interest as an attempt to wed electronic and film techniques but is too inconclusive and finally too mannered to give this old-hat tale more than curious interest at festivals and for tv use on the Antonioni name. —Mosk.