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From the director of
BLOW-UP and **L'AVVENTURA**,
Connoisseur/ Shadowfax Releasing
presents
a beautiful restoration of a cinematic landmark.

Monica Vitti
Richard Harris



Michelangelo Antonioni's

RED DESERT

"One of the most breathtakingly lovely color films ever made..."

LIFE MAGAZINE

Michelangelo Antonioni's

RED DESERT

Credits

Directed by	MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI
Produced by	ANTONIO CERVI
Script by	MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI TONINO GUERRA
Cinematography by	CARLO DI PALMA
Edited by	ERALDO DA ROMA
Art Direction by	PIERO POLETTI
Music by	GIOVANNI FUSCO
Conducted by	CARLO SAVINA
Electronic Music by	VITTORIO GELMETTI
Vocal Music by	CECILIA FUSCO
Costumes by	GITT MAGRINI

1964; Italy/France; Technicolor; 116 minutes; 1.85:1
An Angelo Rizzoli Presentation

Cast

MONICA VITTI RICHARD HARRIS
CARLO CHIONETTI
XENIA VALDERI
RITA RENOIR

A SHADOWFAX/CONNOISSEUR RELEASE

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RELEASE

RED DESERT

NOTES:

Modern Italy has become an industrial wasteland run by technocrats who have misplaced life's meanings. Monica Vitti, the factory engineer's wife, is recovering from a recent automobile accident, an event which has heightened her sense of confusion and loss. Neurotically sensitive to her physical environment and alienated from modern society, she seeks a basis for hope. In desperation she takes a lover, Richard Harris.

The ambiguities of the lovers' personal drama and relationship are set against precise cinematographic composition and art direction. As with several great films of the 1960's such as "2001: A Space Odyssey" and "Lawrence of Arabia", "**Red Desert**" is constructed as a visual work which relies as heavily on elements of abstract art as it does upon traditional motion picture syntax. The careful use of color, form and image composition surround the characters with physical and emotional landscapes.

In his first color motion picture Antonioni expended enormous efforts to create a grand visual concept:: factory sets, landscapes, a desert beach, hair color and even fruit were painted and dyed to convey an eerie, almost surreal, relational atmosphere. These environmental indicators reveal the emotional makeup of the characters, whose lives, like the planet, are being stifled by their failure to adapt to an industrial predominance and related social ills which they cannot control. As depicted in the dementia of Monica Vitti's character, modern man's technological capabilities may have by now outstripped his humanity.

Sensing that a major classic had been missing from the screen far too long, Connoisseur Video Collection and Shadowfax Film Company commissioned Technicolor Rome to strike a brand new copy to original color specifications. Using a highgrade wetgate process and printed directly from the pristine internegative, the film will again be shown as it was intended, not just editorially complete, but complete in its rich visual power -- a power integral to the vision of a filmmaker who has been aptly called "one of the most important of the second half of this century."

Red Desert received its revival debut at the 1990 San Francisco International Film Festival, and will open in New York at the Film Society of Lincoln Center's distinguished summer retrospective dedicated to Italian film. The film will then be offered to theatres nationally. For more information about distribution plans for the **Red Desert** please contact us at telephones (213) 455 2810 or fax (213) 455 3890.

A SHADOWFAX / CONNOISSEUR RELEASE

MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI

Biography

Michelangelo Antonioni, one of the most influential and successful of post-war filmmakers, was born in Ferrara, Italy on September 29, 1912. He studied business and economics at the University of Bologna before becoming involved with films.

He went to Rome to study film seriously after experimenting with 16mm pictures, and for a time writing film criticism. Despite a period of academic study at Rome's Centro Sperimentale Cinematografico in 1940, he made his first entrance into film with his screenplay contributions and work as an assistant director to Roberto Rossellini in 1942, and later with Marcel Carne.

He directed his first film GENTE DEL PO (People of the Po) a documentary begun in 1943, but not finished until 1947. He collaborated on screenplays and directed six short documentaries until 1950. At the age of 38 he made his entrance into feature films when he directed CRONACA DI UN AMORE (Story of a Love Affair) (1950), which even today is largely unseen, but which gave evidence of the style he would later develop. For the next ten years he would direct four feature films: I VINITI (The Vanquished) (1953); LA SIGNORA SENZA CAMELIE (The Lady Without Camellias) (1953); LE AMICHE (The Girlfriends) (1955); and IL GRIDO (The Outcry) (1957); he also collaborated on the screenplay for Fellini's LO SCEICCO BIANCO (The White Sheik) (1952), and directed an episode of L' AMORE IN CITTA (Love in the City) (1950).

With the international triumph of his film L'AVVENTURA (1960), Antonioni had fully matured as a singular director with a cinematic style and narrative theme which dealt with the emotional isolation of modern man in his futile search to communicate with others and to assert himself in a hostile technological world. The next two films LA NOTTE (The Night) (1961) and L'ECLISSE (Eclipse) (1962) rounded out what was to become his "trilogy." His films moved at a leisurely pace. His shots lingered to allow the viewer to feel the weight of loss the characters were experiencing. The viewer could absorb the landscape surrounding the actors which contained keys to their emotional states of mind. His films were mostly plotless, narratively vague and mysterious, yet always compelling. The center of attention was usually a female character moved to change by a catalytic male. To this end, he relied greatly on the sensuous beauty of Monica Vitti. As his antiheroine, Vitti surely extended the commercial appeal and range of his motion pictures.

In 1964 Antonioni enlarged on his thematic concerns while stylistically shifting to the use of color in a tour de force film, RED DESERT. Here Antonioni found a new outlet for his skill at manipulating time and space in his metaphysical world by using the physical world surrounding the protagonists to set the mood and psychological scheme of the film. The RED DESERT won first

prize at the Venice Film Festival and expanded his international public and artistic renown.

His next film was to be a major departure. BLOW-UP (1966) was released at the height of the social and cultural changes largely induced by contemporary pop culture. The film was shot in English and starred David Hemmings and Vanessa Redgrave. Antonioni shifted his character focus from the experiential female to the observing male (Hemming's non-committal photographer); he also adopted a quicker pace and editing style. Still the exploration of the landscape, Michelangelo Antonioni's evocation of alienation and ambiguities filled the narrative. BLOW-UP became a cinematic icon for many young viewers, a definitive film which even today seems a seminal cultural artifact film of the 1960's.

His success in defining English pop culture of the '60's did not carry over to his next film ZABRISKIE POINT (1970), but his fascination for the landscapes of the imagination and of the American Southwest certainly did. A commercially lukewarm reception accompanied his singular interpretation of radical American politics, and despite the numerous memorable qualities of the film, it's lack of success prompted him to return to his more personal themes of the early 1960's.

His next film was the American-produced THE PASSENGER (1975). It starred Jack Nicholson, as a frustrated American journalist who swaps identities with an arms dealer in North Africa, and Maria Schneider as the mysterious woman he encounters in Barcelona. The film received substantial recognition and relatively broad distribution by MGM/UA. But always closer to the cutting edge of film than to the commercial edge, he backed away from Hollywood and was taken with new technology. In 1981 he made the experimental film IL MISTERO DI OBERWALD (The Mystery of Oberwald) (1981) based on a Jean Cocteau work. In it he continued to explore relationships of color and form while using video effects to recreate the type of psychic landscape he had envisioned in RED DESERT. But the later film did not meet with the same kind success as its predecessor.

After years of filming around the globe and exploring his fascination with new technology, Antonioni returned to his Italian roots in his most recent film IDENTIFICAZIONE DI UNA DONNA (Identification of a Woman) (1982). In this film, which has not yet found its audience, Antonioni came to reassess his alienation period of the 1960's, but this time through the conscience of a man in love with two women, a narrative device which permitted him to investigate his own inner dilemmas onscreen. Antonioni has announced his intention to start another project entitled THE CREW.

MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI

Filmography

IDENTIFICAZIONE DE UNA DONNA	1983	Italy
Identification of a Woman		
IL MISTERO DI OBERWALD	1981	Italy
The Mystery of Oberwald		
THE PASSENGER	1975	U.S.
CHUNG KUO CINA (doc.)	1972	PRC/Italy
ZABRISKIE POINT	1970	U.S.
BLOW-UP	1966	U.K./Italy
I TRE VOLTI	1965	Italy
DESERTO ROSSO	1964	Italy/Fr
Red Desert		
L'ECLISSE	1962	Italy
Eclipse		
LA NOTTE	1961	Italy
The Night		
L'AVVENTURA	1960	Italy
IL GRIDO	1957	Italy
The Outcry		
LE AMICHE	1955	Italy
The Girlfriends		
L' AMORE DI CITTI	1953	Italy
Love in the City (one episode)		
LA SIGNORA SENZA CAMELIE	1953	Italy
The Lady without Camilias		
I VINTI	1952	Italy
The Vanquished		
CRONACA DI UN AMORE	1950	Italy
Story of a Love Affair		
LA FUNIVIA DEL FALORIA (doc.)	1950	Italy
LA VILLA DEI MOSTRI (doc.)	1950	Italy
SETTE CANNE UN VESTITO (doc.)	1950	Italy
L'AMOROSO MENZOGNA (doc.)	1949	Italy
SUPERSTIZIONE (doc.)	1949	Italy
NETTEZZA URBANA (doc.)	1948	Italy
GENTE DEL PO (doc.)	1943-47	Italy

MONICA VITTI

Biography and Films

The quintessential star of Michelangelo Antonioni's films is Monica Vitti born Maria Luisa Ceciarelli in Rome, Italy on November 3, 1931. She began appearing in amateur plays at the age of fifteen, and was then encouraged to attend the Rome Academy of Dramatic Arts, graduating in 1953. She began both her professional stage and film careers in 1955.

The pivotal point in her film career came as a result of her encounter with Antonioni who cast her in L'AVVENTURA in 1960. So compelling was her



performance and its contribution to the success of the film that the director cast her in his next three films: LA NOTTE (1961), L'ECLISSE (1962) and RED DESERT (1964). In the last film Vitti once again proved to be the ideal Antonioni heroine, beautiful and passionate, distant and anguished. RED DESERT became a major commercial and artistic success for each. Today many consider that the film is Antonioni's most masterful manipulation of the delicate interrelationships of character and setting. RED DESERT marked the last time that the actress and the director were to work together.

Always a delight to watch, even in the hands of inferior commercial directors, or with undemanding materials, Vitti became a popular boxoffice star; her very presence was sufficient to make a film profitable. And when given the opportunity, she could deliver fine performances in more ambitious material directed by Luis Bunuel (THE PHANTOM OF LIBERTY) and Joseph Losey (MODESTY BLAISE) among others. This year (1990) she attended the Cannes Film Festival with her first film as a director. The film, SCANDALO SEGRETO (Secret Scandal) stars Vitti and Elliot Gould.

Films Include:

RIDERE, RIDERE, RIDERE	1955
L'AVVENTURA	1960
LA NOTTE	1961
L'ECLISSE	1962
LES QUATRES VERITES	1962

MONICA VITTI; Films p.2

DRAGEES AU POIVRE	1963
CHATEAU EN SUEDE	1963
ALTA IFIDELITA	1964
RED DESERT	1964
LE BAMBOLE	1965
MODESTY BLAISE	1966
LE FATE	1966
TI HO SPOSATO PER ALLEGRIA	1967
LA CINTURA DI CASTITA	1967
ON MY WAY TO THE CRUSADES I MET A GIRL WHO...	1967
LA RAGAZZA CON LA PISTOLA	1968
LA FEMME ECARLATE	1969
DRAMA DELLA GELOSIA	1970
LA PACIFISTA	1971
TERESA LA LADRA	1972
TOSCA	1973
LA FANTOME DE LA LIBERTE	1974
A MEZZANOTTE VA LA RONDA DEL PIACERE	1975
L'ANITRA ALL'ARANCIA	1976
MIMI BLUETTE	1976
LA GODURIA	1976
L'ALTRA META DEL CIELO	1977
LA RAISON D'ETAT	1978
AMORE MIEI	1978
TAKE TWO	1979
LETTI SELVAGGI	1979
PER VIVERE MEGLIO	1979
AN ALMOST PERFECT AFFAIR	1979
SCANDALO SEGRETO (as director)	1990

RICHARD HARRIS

Biography and Films

Richard Harris, born in Limerick Ireland on Oct 1, 1932, is one of the best known and established British stars of stage and screen. Audiences around the world recognize the strong male presence of the unconventional rebel which he brings to his roles.

He was trained at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. He made his stage debut in 1956, and his film debut in *ALIVE AND KICKING* in 1958. As a man of obvious talent, his film career began to flourish with successful films like

THE WRECK OF THE MARY DEARE,
THE GUNS OF NAVARRONE and
MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY. But it

was his marvelous performance as a crude rugby player in *THIS SPORTING LIFE* (1963) that catapulted him to fame and celebrity. He won the best actor award at the Cannes Film Festival as well as an Oscar nomination. Harris had long been a favorite of European filmmakers and his next film was to be Michelangelo Antonioni's most ambitious to date, *RED DESERT*. Harris was used to great



effect by Antonioni who wisely cast him against character type, providing a neurotic Monica Vitti with a passive male catalyst required to stimulate her character's desire for a love alternative. Antonioni and Harris joined efforts again in their next film *I TRE VOLTI* (1965), which today is considered a lost film (the producer, reportedly dissatisfied with the film, suspended the production and destroyed the unfinished negative.) Harris continued to take roles in high-budget commercial films, and stage productions, and dabbled in popular music, but it was his brutal role as an aristocrat explorer captured and tortured by Indians in *A MAN CALLED HORSE* (1970), which expanded professional recognition as a major movie star. His films include:

<i>ALIVE AND KICKING</i>	1958
<i>SHAKE HANDS WITH THE DEVIL</i>	1959
<i>THE WRECK OF THE MARY DEARE</i>	1959

RICHARD HARRIS; Films ; p. 2

THE NIGHT FIGHTERS	1960
THE GUNS OF NAVARONE	1961
THE JUNGLE FIGHTERS	1961
MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY	1962
THIS SPORTING LIFE	1963
RED DESERT	1964
THREE FACES OF A WOMAN	1965
MAJOR DUNDEE	1965
THE HEROS OF TELEMARCK	1965
THE BIBLE	1966
HAWAII	1966
CAPRICE	1967
CAMELOT	1967
THE MOLLY MAGUIRES	1970
A MAN CALLED HORSE	1970
CROMWELL	1970
THE LADY IN THE CAR WITH GLASSES AND A GUN	1970
BLOOMFIELD	1971
MAN IN THE WILDERNESS	1971
THE DEADLY TRACKERS	1973
99 44/100% DEAD	1974
JUGGERNAUT	1974
ECHOES OF A SUMMER	1975
ROBIN AND MARIAN	1976
THE RETURN OF A MAN CALLED HORSE	1976
THE CASSANDRA CROSSING	1977
GULLIVER'S TRAVELS	1977
ORCA	1977
GOLDEN RENDEZVOUS	1977
THE WILD GEESE	1978
THE NUMBER	1979
GAME FOR VULTURES	1979

RED DESERT

Commentary

Antonioni, like Bergman and Resnais, has now reached the stage where only the most faithful adherents will follow him. *DESERTO ROSSO* is another masterly, pessimistic study of a neurotic woman. Whereas Antonioni's previous heroines have been seemingly frustrated by their sterility, Giuliana's child only makes her life more difficult. Unable to draw understanding from her dispassionate husband, she turns hopefully to a newcomer, Corrado. But he, like Pontono in *LA NOTTE*, can offer merely physical love. Giuliana's malaise is ostensibly the aftermath of a car accident but the film shows, in a series of extraordinarily imaginative scenes among the tangle of factories and marshland outside Ravenna, that it stems in truth from her failure to yield to a scientific age. She has visions of drowning in quicksands; her longing is for "a wall" of loving people to shield her from inscrutable machines that are invading modern life.

Antonioni balances this mental turmoil with a piercing style. The soundtrack consists of weird electronic whines and hums. The color is at once unprecedentedly real and consciously artificial. The yellow of the poison gas and of the quarantine flag would lose its disturbing symbolism in monochrome. Grey ships drift like preternatural monsters through the misty estuaries; even the gum-trees in a hotel foyer are whitened for clinical effect. Antonioni's world has become a ravaged mineral landscape where human beings must either adjust and be drained of dreams and emotions or, like Giuliana, wander distraught in search of love and sympathy.

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