

A black and white photograph of a woman with dark hair, looking slightly to the right. She is holding a large, dark, heart-shaped leaf in front of her face, partially obscuring it. Her hands are positioned near her chest. The background is a dense, out-of-focus forest. The word "Extase" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font in the upper right corner.

Extase

Extase

Extase (1932) is one of the foremost Czechoslovak films of the 1930s. In his most controversial creation, Machatý explores the theme of erotic desire, present already in his *Erotikon* (1929) and *Ze soboty na neděli* (1931). *Extase* follows the newlywed Eva as she has her first experience of infatuation not with her elderly husband Emil but with Adam, a young engineer. Against this simple plotline, Machatý together with his cinematographer Jan Stallich unfold an extravagant visual feast of passion and human labor rich in symbolism. Accompanied by music of one of the most sought-after film composers of the time, Giuseppe Becce. Thanks to her involvement, Hedy Kiesler, an emerging actress cast in the role of Eva, would go on to become the Hollywood star Hedy Lamarr. *Extase* was made in Czech, German and French versions, each with a slightly different cast. Daring and sensual for its period, the film caused an uproar at the 1934 Venice International Film Festival. While it was eagerly embraced by the audience, with Machatý awarded the Cup of the City of Venice as Best Director, Pope Pius XI subsequently condemned it as pornographic and replete with immoral parables. *Extase* was later shown in France, Germany, Great Britain, USA and fifty other countries across the globe.

Czechoslovakia 1932

Director: Gustav Machatý • **Author of the original story and script writer:** Gustav Machatý, František Horký • **Photography:** Jan Stallich • **Production design:** Bohumil Heš • **Editing:** Antonín Zelenka • **Sound:** Josef Zora • **Music:** Giuseppe Becce • **Cast:** Hedy Kiesler, Aribert Mog, Zvonimir Rogoz, Leopold Kramer



Digital restoration

Extase was originally produced in three language versions, Czech, German and French. Numerous later versions appeared due to censorship cuts, editorial decisions and other reasons. The goal of this digital restoration was to make the film available in the original Czech language version released in 1933 and screened at Venice Film Festival in 1934. Therefore, many different elements needed to be combined both for the image and sound reconstruction.

The image and sound restoration aimed at harmonizing the various sources without introducing digital artifacts or using elements not present in the original Czech release. Most of the Czech dialogue sequences have not been preserved in their original image aspect ratio 1:1.19, and had to be substituted by elements from later releases with ratio 1:1.37. To achieve a continuous experience of the film, these sequences were further adjusted by means of cropping for this presentation.

Partners contributing to the restoration were British Film Institute, Cinémathèque16, Cinémathèque suisse, CNC, Danish Film Institute, Filmarchiv Austria, Filmmuseum München, Gaumont, and Slovak Film Institute.

Three prints preserved by the Cinémathèque suisse, the Danish Film Institute and the Filmmuseum München served as sources for the restoration, together with a duplicate negative and a duplicate positive preserved by Národní filmový archiv, Prague. A print which is a courtesy of Gaumont, preserved by CNC, was used for the opening title.

The digital restoration of this film was made possible by a donation from Mrs. Milada Kučerová and Mr. Eduard Kučera and was realized in 2019 at L'Immagine Ritrovata in Bologna, under the supervision of Národní filmový archiv, Prague, with the support of Karlovy Vary International Film Festival.



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