

RICHMOND PRODUCTIONS, INC.

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PETITION AGAINST THE ELIMINATION OF KODAK PLUS-X FILM

May 11, 2010

To The Kodak Team,

I am an independent filmmaker and have been using Kodak film stocks exclusively since I was in college. I began with Tri-X Super 8 and eventually graduated to 16mm black & white. I have been the proud owner of an Arriflex 16 S/B and a 16mm Steenbeck ST-900W for over two years, and I write this letter with the utmost respect for Kodak's history of artistry.

On behalf of the undersigned filmmakers, educators, students, film lovers and myself we emphatically protest Kodak's decision to discontinue the Plus-X stocks, 5231, 7231 and 7265. This announcement has struck a significant blow to the global film community which has embraced Kodak in a symbiotic relationship for so many years. It is important that Kodak realize the implications of such an historic decision.

In the midst of this digital era, when technological determinism appears to be at hand, young and enthusiastic filmmakers are lacking any sense of film history. In order to have a chance at producing thought-provoking films, one must first have an appreciation for what came before. Italian Neo-Realist filmmakers, like Roberto Rossellini, influenced the French New Wave filmmakers. French New Wave filmmakers, like Jean-Luc Godard, influenced Martin Scorsese and so on. Looking back and then innovatively infusing a new generation of film-goers with vitality by paying homage to the past has been a proud tradition in film for over half a century.

In 1938, Kodak replaced Super-X with Eastman Plus-X film. In over 70 years of use, filmmakers all over the world (including myself) have at one time or another photographed a moving image on Plus-X. The word that the stock is inextricably linked to is "beautiful." Many landmark films have been photographed on this stock and those films will stand the test of time. But when a young filmmaker is influenced by some of those films one day and wants to capture that contrast and texture for his or her own film, what will be Kodak's answer when that enthusiastic person asks, "What happened to Plus-X?"

By discontinuing Plus-X, Kodak is in effect stating to all filmmakers that the vital role which this particular stock played for so many years is unimportant. Plus-X cemented itself into film history many years ago. As the pressures of the digital age come to bear, will filmmakers and film lovers be the only ones charged with the responsibility of keeping film history alive? Shouldn't film manufacturers such as Kodak, a company rich in history, take that initiative as well by preserving a legendary analog format that so many filmmakers cherish?

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Finally, with the elimination of Plus-X reversal film (7265,) Kodak is making a socio-economic decision which affects all film students. Reversal film is often used in college film classes since it is less expensive for students to purchase and develop. The only negative film we are left with now is Double-X (5222/7222) which is more expensive to purchase, process and print. Although this is a company that prides itself on educating the film student, the discontinuation of 7265 leaves only Tri-X reversal (7266,) severely limiting that education. Furthermore, Double-X is not a fair replacement for Plus-X. While its latitude is useful in certain instances, the increased grain and lack of contrast (especially on a 16mm negative) is quite noticeable to the artist's eye.

In closing, my colleagues and I again urge Kodak to reconsider this drastic and unfortunate decision. Eliminating Plus-X from Kodak's motion picture film catalog will severely limit filmmakers' creative choices. Keep the film and the history alive.

Respectfully,

William DiPietra
Richmond Productions, Inc.
Founder/President