

# Stanley Kubrick photography exhibit collects the filmmaker's NYC creative start

From 1945-50, the Bronx-born director trained his still camera on the city.

By JORDAN HOFFMAN

Though most associated with movies set in the Colorado mountains, Vietnam and halfway to Jupiter, legendary filmmaker Stanley Kubrick got his creative start right here in New York City.

At the age of 17, the crafty Bronx-born kid snapped a photo of a forlorn newspaper vendor framed by headlines announcing the death of President Franklin Roosevelt. He sold the picture to *Look Magazine*, the bi-weekly general interest magazine that positioned itself as a smidge sexier than the all-American periodical *Life*. He soon landed himself a full-time gig and, luckily for all of us, 13,000 of his images during that period are bundled with the Museum of the City of New York's complete *Look Magazine* archive.

Highlights of that collection are being displayed by the museum from May 3 through October.

"Through A Different Lens: Stanley Kubrick Photographs" is the first U.S. exhibition dedicated to the "2001: A Space Odyssey" director's work as a photographer. The images, from 1945 to 1950, fit somewhere between photojournalism and fine art. Framed prints, including many that were not used for publication, hang above cases displaying the vintage magazines. The crisp black-and-white pictures from boxing rings, television studios,



Stanley Kubrick's 1947 photograph "Life and Love on the New York City Subway" is part of the "Through a Different Lens" exhibit. Photo Credit: Museum of the City of New York

nightclubs, subways, Times Square, Aqueduct Racetrack, Palisades Park and everyday places like Laundromats, supermarkets and a dentist's waiting room are remarkable time portals. That goes double for the accompanying period advertisements. (Boy, there sure was a lot of hair tonic back then.)

One could wander into the second floor gallery at the Museum of the City of New York with no knowledge of "Spartacus," "A Clockwork Orange" or "The Shining" and

still get swept up in the street scenes and curious characters. But for Kubrick fans who love to root around his oeuvre looking for clues, you'll be hearing the revelatory "Also Sprach Zarathustra" theme once you enter the building on Museum Mile.

One of the first images in the collection is of a monkey in a zoo, staring directly at the camera. With hindsight, it is clearly reminiscent of the early sequences of "2001," which Kubrick would film two decades later.

A Look feature about life at Columbia University spotlights a scientist with slicked back hair and sunglasses, eerily similar to Peter Sellers in "Dr. Strangelove." A shot of Professor Eugene Booth, who worked on the Manhattan Project, shows him dwarfed by an enormous cyclotron. This absurd visual had to have been rattling in Kubrick's mind when he made that 1965 atomic satire.

Images of couples in elegant eveningwear from a spread called "Midsummer Nights in New York" foreshadow scenes from "Barry Lyndon" and "Eyes Wide Shut." High-contrast shots from the interior of a police van, as well as a series of "caught" lovers on fire escapes, look plucked from Kubrick's heist picture "The Killing"

Kubrick published two series about boxers. One of Rocky Graziano and another of Walter Cartier's pre-match preparation routine, which led directly to his first short documentary film "Day of the Fight."

Moments from "Day of the Fight" were essentially restaged for Kubrick's first successful feature "Killer's Kiss," and clips from both movies are on display at the museum. Additionally, two pieces Kubrick worked on ("What Every Teenager Should Know About Dating" and "Jealousy: A Threat To Marriage," both from 1950) are important connective tissue from photographer to director, as all the images were deliberately orchestrated to match the accompanying text.

Stanley Kubrick remains a favorite for film buffs because he had command of every genre. This finely curated exhibit shows the early stages of his perfectionism. The roots of his sarcasm are evident, particularly in the celebrity profiles of Guy Lombardo, Montgomery Clift, Betsy von Furstenberg and a pack of very well-groomed Manhattan pooches. At a time when we are inundated with cellphone pics, it's refreshing to take a look back at a master.



Kubrick's 1947 photo, "Shoeshine Boy." Photo Credit: Museum of the City of New York



Kubrick's "Park Benches: Love is Everywhere," from 1946. Photo Credit: Museum of the City of New York