

# NEWS RELEASE

2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90049-6833

TEL: (310) 440-4500  
FAX: (310) 440-4595

E-MAIL: [communications@skirball.org](mailto:communications@skirball.org)  
WEBSITE: [www.skirball.org](http://www.skirball.org)



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 15, 2019**

**Media Contacts:**

Emma Jacobson-Sive, (323) 842-2064, [emma@ejs-media.com](mailto:emma@ejs-media.com)

Mia Cariño, Skirball Cultural Center, (310) 440-4544, [communications@skirball.org](mailto:communications@skirball.org)

**Skirball Cultural Center announces**

## **THROUGH A DIFFERENT LENS: STANLEY KUBRICK PHOTOGRAPHS October 17, 2019–March 8, 2020**

**Exhibition reveals how the filmmaker's formative years photographing for  
*Look* magazine laid the groundwork for his storytelling and visual style**

LOS ANGELES, CA—For those who know him as a filmmaker, Stanley Kubrick's early stint as a photojournalist is a revelation. In 1945, the future director of iconic films such as *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), and *The Shining* (1980) was just a teenager—one with an uncanny photographic sensibility who began scouting human-interest stories for the pictorial magazine *Look*. This fall, the Skirball Cultural Center presents *Through a Different Lens: Stanley Kubrick Photographs*. This exhibition explores this formative phase in Kubrick's career, during which he cultivated his innate talent for storytelling and image-making. On view will be more than 130 photographs that serve as clear indicators of how an amateur photographer from the Bronx would come to make some of the greatest movies of all time. The exhibition will be on view at the Skirball from October 17, 2019 through March 8, 2020.

Stanley Kubrick (1928–1999) was only seventeen when he sold his first photograph to *Look*. It was an image of a dejected newsstand vendor the day after the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In his subsequent photographs, many of them unpublished, Kubrick trained his camera on the nightclubs, street scenes, and sporting events that made up his first assignments. Capturing everyday life with a sophistication that belied his young age, he produced work that was far ahead of his time and focused on themes that would inspire him throughout his creative life. As the exhibition illustrates, Kubrick's photography laid the foundations for his cinematography: through the camera lens, he learned to be an acute observer of human interactions and tell stories through images in dynamic sequences.

Organized by the Museum of the City of New York (MCNY) in collaboration with the SK Film Archives LLC, *Through a Different Lens: Stanley Kubrick Photographs* draws from the museum's extensive *Look* magazine archive. The photographs are exhibited alongside the *Look* issues in which they appeared, providing the journalistic context in which Kubrick's photographs were viewed by the general public. The exhibition follows along as Kubrick took a kaleidoscopic view of city life, from the gritty to the glamorous. In these images of celebrities and everyday people alike, Kubrick revealed the hundreds of human dramas unfolding at any moment.

## Exhibition Overview

Photography opened Stanley Kubrick's doors to the world. Growing up in a predominantly Jewish neighborhood in New York City, young Kubrick was immersed in an urban setting that was the backdrop for everyday stories acted out by everyday people. His parents, who were the children of Jewish immigrants, had hoped Stanley would excel in school, but he was indifferent to academics. Stanley was thirteen when his father bought him his first camera, a Graflex, and he dedicated himself to the pursuit of photography.

*Through a Different Lens: Stanley Kubrick Photographs* introduces visitors to four key themes that shaped Kubrick's early work as a photographer and to which he would return time and again throughout his film career:

- **Looking**—Kubrick's work for *Look* advanced his ways of seeing and his fascination with human relationships. He often photographed unsuspecting subjects engaged in intimate interactions or caught others in the act of looking.
- **Mastering the System**—Post-war observers were obsessed with the impact of organizations on American life, and Kubrick encountered many complex organizations while working for *Look*. These experiences prepared him for success in the motion picture industry.
- **Media Savvy**—Of the topics Kubrick covered for *Look*, none aligned more closely with his interest in film than his exploration of media and entertainment. His celebrity profiles exposed him to the ways that famous people crafted their public personas, and he was often on set, witnessing the production process up close.
- **Visual Style**—At *Look*, Kubrick mastered the skills of framing, composing, and lighting. While the magazine's editors preferred straightforward composition and natural lighting typical of contemporary photojournalism, Kubrick frequently imitated the brooding style of the Hollywood film noirs he so admired.

The exhibition then proceeds chronologically through his time at *Look*, where he worked on assignments both published and unpublished. It frames Kubrick's investigations of photography's narrative capabilities and showcases his aptitude for translating an individual's complex life into visual form.

For an emerging photographer like Kubrick, there was no better place to be at that time than New York City, home to the nation's two leading pictorial magazines, *Life* and *Look*. After Kubrick graduated from high school in 1946, *Look* hired him as an apprentice. Kubrick's name first appeared on the masthead as staff photographer in the issue dated January 7, 1947. His first extended assignment, "Life and Love on the New York Subway," was published two months later.

In the fall of that year, Kubrick began working on more narrative-based assignments. By 1949, he had hit his stride on the pages of *Look*. His contributions ranged from quirky, only-in-New-York stories—on pampered city dogs or an innovative paddy wagon, to name just two examples—to extended profiles of famous cultural figures. For an aspiring filmmaker, what was especially valuable was the chance to cover post-war American entertainment—from cartoonist Peter Arno, actor Montgomery Clift, and bandleader Guy Lombardo to the rising new medium of television. In 1950, the last year in which he published his photographs extensively in *Look*, Kubrick created a series of celebrity profiles. His subjects were composer-conductor Leonard Bernstein, late-night television personality Faye Emerson, and boxer Rocky Graziano, among others.

*Through a Different Lens: Stanley Kubrick Photographs* culminates in an epilogue that probes the connections between Kubrick the photographer and Kubrick the director. In 1950, he produced photo-essays that explored

themes of teen love, teen dating, and marital jealousy. He directed these proto-cinematic articles, for which he posed high-school students to “star” in the teen stories and actors to dramatize the marital story.

This final section also gives visitors the chance to watch Kubrick’s first independently produced documentary, *Day of the Fight* (1951), which he began working on while completing his tenure at the magazine. The film was based on his 1949 *Look* article titled “Prizefighter,” on boxer Walter Cartier. Kubrick’s photographic work for the article became the storyboard for the film, enabling him to work out the scenes, camera angles, framing, and lighting before he began shooting. Kubrick maintained this practice of storyboarding from photographs throughout his career. This is evident in an excerpt from his second feature film, *Killer’s Kiss* (1955), which will also be screened in the gallery. *Killer’s Kiss* owed a great debt to the film noir aesthetic and subject matter that Kubrick explored at *Look*.

### **Related Publication**

The exhibition *Through a Different Lens: Stanley Kubrick Photographs* is accompanied by a 332-page large-format book published by TASCHEN in 2018. The book’s authors are the curators of the exhibition—Donald Albrecht, MCNY Curator of Architecture and Design, and Sean Corcoran, MCNY Curator of Prints and Photographs—as well as writer and critic Luc Sante. The book will be available for sale at Audrey’s Museum Store at the Skirball.

###

*Through a Different Lens: Stanley Kubrick Photographs* was organized by the Museum of the City of New York in collaboration with the SK Film Archives LLC.

The exhibition and its related educational programs at the Skirball Cultural Center are made possible by generous support from the following donors:

**Hillside Memorial Park and Mortuary  
Sauvage Family Foundation**

### **About the Skirball**

The Skirball Cultural Center is a place of meeting guided by the Jewish tradition of welcoming the stranger and inspired by the American democratic ideals of freedom and equality. We welcome people of all communities and generations to participate in cultural experiences that celebrate discovery and hope, foster human connections, and call upon us to help build a more just society.

### **Visiting the Skirball**

The Skirball Cultural Center is located at 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90049. Museum hours: Tuesday–Friday 12:00–5:00 pm; Saturday–Sunday 10:00 am–5:00 pm; closed Mondays and holidays. Museum admission: \$12 General; \$9 Seniors, Full-Time Students, and Children over 12; \$7 Children 2–12. Exhibitions are always FREE to Skirball Members and Children under 2. Exhibitions are FREE to all visitors on Thursdays. For general information, the public may call (310) 440-4500 or visit [skirball.org](http://skirball.org).