

For Immediate Release

Through a Different Lens: Stanley Kubrick Photographs at the Museum of the City of New York



Stanley Kubrick, Self-Portrait from Rosemary Williams – Showgirl, 1948

***Revelatory Exhibition Explores the Acclaimed Director's Formative Years as a
Photographer for Look Magazine Between 1945-1950***

***Demonstrates that while Kubrick's photographs were usually in sync with the
magazine's populist perspective, he deviated from its mainstream approach,
indulging his idiosyncratic taste for the eccentric and offbeat.***

ON VIEW: Thursday, May 3, 2018 – October, 2018

(New York, NY) On Thursday, May 3, 2018, the Museum of the City of New York will open [Through a Different Lens: Stanley Kubrick Photographs](#), a photography exhibition exploring the iconic director's formative years as a photographer for *Look* magazine between 1945-1950 and revealing the foundations of his creative transformation from photojournalist to cinematic legend. In May, TASCHEN will publish a

332-page [large format book](#) to accompany the exhibition. The curators of the exhibition, who edited and contributed to this book, are Donald Albrecht, Museum Curator of Architecture and Design, and Sean Corcoran, Museum Curator of Prints and Photographs.

Stanley Kubrick's early career as a photojournalist for *Look* magazine is a revelation for most people who know him as a filmmaker. In 1945, the future director of such films as *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *A Clockwork Orange* was just a teenager – but one with an uncanny photographic sensibility, who was already scouting human-interest stories for *Look* magazine.

Turning his camera on his native city, Kubrick found inspiration in New York's characters and settings, sometimes glamorous, sometimes gritty. He produced work that was far ahead of his time and focused on themes that would inspire him through his creative life. Most importantly, his photography laid the technical and aesthetic foundations for his cinematography: he learned through the camera's lens to be an acute observer of human interactions and to tell stories through images in dynamic narrative sequences. Kubrick's early years at *Look* proved to be the start of his celebrated career as one of the 20th century's great artists – a time when he honed his skills as both a storyteller and an image maker, albeit through a different lens.

Through a Different Lens: Stanley Kubrick Photographs tells the story of how a 17-year old amateur photographer from the Bronx took the first steps towards becoming one of the most important film directors of the 20th century. The exhibition will display over 130 photographs by Kubrick from the Museum's extensive *Look* magazine archive, all captured during his tenure as a photographer between 1945 and 1950. In his photographs, many unpublished, Kubrick explored the grit and glamor of the city, turning his lens on the nightclubs, street scenes, and sporting events that made up his first assignments, and capturing the pathos of ordinary life with a sophistication that belied his young age. The exhibited photographs will be accompanied by the *Look* magazines in which they appeared, providing the journalistic context in which Kubrick's photographs were received by the general public.

Through a Different Lens is a wonderful opportunity for fans of Stanley Kubrick's iconic films to get to know a stage of his career that is lesser known but similarly brilliant," said Whitney Donhauser, *Ronay Menschel* Director of the Museum of the City of New York. "The photographs on display in this exhibition are works of art in and of themselves, and the hints they offer regarding Kubrick's future success make them all the more fascinating. We are proud to have put together a show that reveals as much about post-WWII New York City as it does to celebrate the perspective of an uncannily talented young photographer who would go on to become one of the 20th century's most accomplished artists."

Through a Different Lens first introduces visitors to four key themes that shaped Kubrick's early work as a photographer and would pop up time and again throughout his career. These are:

Looking

Kubrick's work for *Look* advanced his ways of seeing and his fascination with human relationships. He sometimes photographed unsuspecting subjects engaged in intimate interactions or caught others in the act of looking.

Mastering the System

Postwar observers were obsessed with the impact of organizations on American life, and Kubrick encountered many complex organizations while working for *Look*, both at the magazine itself, as well as on his various photo shoots. 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 explorations of media. His personality profiles gave him firsthand experience of the ways that celebrities crafted their public personas, and he was often on the set, seeing the production process up close.

Visual Style

At *Look*, Kubrick mastered the skills of framing, composing, and lighting compelling images. While *Look*'s editors often promoted straightforward composition and natural lighting typical of contemporary photojournalism, Kubrick frequently imitated the brooding style of the Hollywood film noirs he admired.

The show then proceeds chronologically through his time at *Look* magazine with assignments published and unpublished, framing Kubrick as an artist investigating the powerful narrative capabilities of photography and showcasing his aptitude for translating an individual's complex life into visual form.

Stanley Kubrick sold his first photograph to *Look* magazine in 1945: an image of a dejected newsstand vendor the day after the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. For a burgeoning 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 William Howard Taft high school in 1946, *Look* hired him as an apprentice. Kubrick's name first appeared on the magazine's masthead as a staff photographer in its January 7, 1947 issue. 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 extended, narrative-based assignments. By 1949 he had fully hit his stride on the pages of *Look* magazine. His contributions ranged from quirky "only in New York" stories about an innovative paddy wagon and pampered city dogs to extended profiles of celebrities. Especially valuable experience for an aspiring filmmaker were stories covering a range of post-war American entertainment: publishing (cartoonist Peter Arno), movies (Montgomery Clift), and popular music (bandleader Guy Lombardo), as well as the 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, covering composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein, television personality Faye Emerson, and boxer Rocky Graziano, among others. While finishing his tenure at the magazine, Kubrick began work on his first independently produced documentary, *Day of the Fight*. The film, which will be on view in the final section of the exhibition, was based on his 1949 article on boxer Walter Cartier, "Prizefighter," which premiered in 1951.

The exhibition culminates with an epilogue that reveals connections between Kubrick the photographer and Kubrick the director. In 1950, he produced essays that explored themes of teenage love, teenage dating, and marital jealousy. He effectively directed these proto-cinematic articles, for which he posed high-school students "starring" in the teenage stories, and actors in the marital story. In addition to featuring these magazines, this section of the exhibition will screen his first film, the Cartier documentary *Day of the Fight*. His photographic work for *Look* became the storyboard for the film, enabling Kubrick to work out the scenes, camera angles, framing, and lighting. Kubrick maintained this practice of storyboarding from photographs throughout his life. This section will also include an excerpt from his second feature film, *Killer's Kiss* (1955). The latter owed debts to the film noir aesthetic and themes—boxing, crime, nightclubs, and showgirls as well as ambition and alienation—that he explored at *Look*.

Through a Different Lens: Stanley Kubrick Photographs is made possible in part by Ann G. Tenenbaum and Thomas H. Lee, The Hilaria and Alec Baldwin Foundation, The Andrew and Marina Lewin Foundation, Daryl Brown Uber/William E. Weiss Foundation, and George A. Kellner.

This exhibition is organized by the Museum of the City of New York in collaboration with SK Film Archives LLC.

About the Museum of the City of New York

Founded in 1923 as a private, nonprofit corporation, the Museum of the City of New York celebrates and interprets the city, educating the public about its distinctive character, especially its heritage of diversity, opportunity, and perpetual transformation. The Museum connects the past, present, and future of New York City, and serves the people of the city as well as visitors from around the world through exhibitions, school and public programs, publications, and collections. To connect with the Museum on social media, follow us on Instagram and Twitter at @MuseumofCityNY and visit our Facebook page at [Facebook.com/MuseumofCityNY](https://www.facebook.com/MuseumofCityNY). For more information please visit www.mcnyc.org.

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