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Stanley Kubrick: A Biography

By Vincent Lobrutto



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Stanley Kubrick, director of the acclaimed films *Path of Glory*, *Spartacus*, *Lolita*, *Dr. Strangelove*, *2001: Space Odyssey*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Shining*, and *Full Metal Jacket*, is arguably one of the greatest American filmmakers. Yet, despite being hailed as “a giant” by Orson Welles, little is known about the reclusive director. *Stanley Kubrick*—the first full-length study of his life—is based on assiduous archival research as well as new interviews with friends, family, and colleagues. Film scholar Vincent LoBRutto provides a comprehensive portrait of the director, from his high school days, in the Bronx and his stint as a photographer for *Look* magazine, through the creation of his wide-ranging movies, including the long-awaited *Eyes Wide Shut*. The author provides behind-the-scenes details about writing, filming, financing, and reception of the director's entire output, paying close attention to the technical innovations and to his often contentious relationships with actors. This fascinating biography exposes the enigma that is Stanley Kubrick while placing him in context of film history.



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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

In 1962, an MGM trailer teased its audience by asking "How Did They Ever Make a Movie Out of *Lolita*?" Readers of this book, which recounts the life of *Lolita*'s director, might ask, "How Did They Ever Write a Biography of Stanley Kubrick?" Kubrick is the most reclusive of celebrities, a man who seems mysterious even to those who have known and worked with him. Vincent Lobrutto's engrossing and beautifully researched biography succeeds in tracing this meticulous and brilliant visionary from his childhood and early career as a photographer for *Look* magazine to his creation of masterpieces such as *Dr. Strangelove*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *A Clockwork Orange*, and *Full Metal Jacket*. Lobrutto concludes his book by discussing projects that have not yet been realized: *Eyes Wide Shut*, a film about sexual obsession, the Holocaust drama *Aryan Papers*, and the most eagerly awaited of Kubrick's prospective movies, the science fiction film *A. I.*

From Publishers Weekly

Despite making only 12 feature films in 40 years, Stanley Kubrick (b. 1928) is arguably the greatest living American filmmaker, the principal creative force behind such movies as *Paths of Glory*, *Dr. Strangelove*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Shining*. He is famous for his reclusiveness and eccentricity. Although this biography falls short of its stated purpose to be the first complete account of Kubrick's private life, it succeeds in presenting a convincing portrait of a man who is utterly devoted to every aspect of filmmaking, down to poster design. LoBrutto (Elia Kazan: Film Director), a film professor at the School of Visual Arts in N.Y.C., provides an exhaustively researched and detailed account of the making of Kubrick's films, including long interviews with many of the actors, writers and film craftsmen who have worked with the director over the years. Kubrick comes across as a soft-spoken tyrant in full command of every detail who somehow manages to win and keep the respect of those who work for him. For the true film buff, there's an astonishing amount of technical information, but there's also a good deal of illuminating backstage human interest?Kubrick cutting Kirk Douglas's final close-up in *Spartacus* as a joke, beating George C. Scott at chess between takes of *Dr. Strangelove*, asking Malcolm McDowell if he knew any songs he might sing during the rape scene in *A Clockwork Orange*. The tone of the book is a bit gee-whiz at times, but it's hard to fault LoBrutto for that: from the evidence here, Kubrick's boundless energy and passion for film are as breathtaking as the best of his movies. Photos and filmography.

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From Library Journal

Perspectives on Stanley Kubrick. Stanley Kubrick is the acclaimed Bronx-born, British-based director of such notable films as *Paths of Glory*, *Spartacus*, and *Dr. Strangelove*. Among those who have admirably analyzed his oeuvre are Michael Ciment (Kubrick, 1980. o.p.) and Thomas Allen Nelson (Kubrick: Inside a Film Artist's Maze, LJ 4/15/82). Because Kubrick has directed only *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) since those books were published, these new evaluations will supplement rather than supersede them. Falsetto's work contains an introduction to Kubrick's career, a complete filmography, 22 essays (one by Kubrick himself), and four interviews, including the 1968 *Playboy* discussion of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Academic evaluations are complemented by nuts-and-bolts articles about the groundbreaking special effects of *2001* and use of the Steadicam camera on *The Shining*. The only sour note is "Full Metal Jacket: The Unravelling of Patriarchy," used by its author to snipe at Margaret Thatcher and a British commission on language. Contrast this with its intelligible companion piece, Thomas Doherty's "Full Metal Genre: Kubrick's Vietnam Combat Movie." LoBrutto's book is the first full biography of its subject. Although the reclusive director did not grant him an interview, LoBrutto gained the cooperation of childhood and adult friends and associates and gathered a truly vast amount of background material from primary sources (school records, marriage

certificates, letters) and secondary sources (books, obituaries, reviews). Regrettably, his editors have allowed every bit of the information LoBrutto collected to remain in the text. Although much of the detail is welcome, the needless adjectives ("masterful Hamlet"), minutiae (hour of birth of his first wife), and plot synopses that should have been in the filmography often make this tedious reading. Buy where completeness is a goal. Kim R. Holston, American. Inst. for Chartered Property Casualty Underwriters, Malvern, Pa. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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