

CLASSIC KUBRICK

Bijou kicks off Kubrick retrospective with The Killing

Perhaps, like Bauhaus furniture or the beauty of shallow people, Stanley Kubrick's movies are meant to be admired but not loved. Kubrick, who died in 1999 at the age of 70, was a master stylist, a director whose films are as quickly identifiable as those of Alfred Hitchcock or Michael Mann. Steely, distanced, full of hard angles and wide vistas, a Kubrick movie is a study in formal technique, like looking upon a painting that magically, and rather sinisterly, animates itself.

Because of this, it's not attractive, if you are a film buff, to admit you "love" Kubrick's work: It seems too obvious a claim, too easy, like saying you love hamburgers or Ernest Hemingway. Duh! Of course Kubrick is great: Once witnessed, it's impossible to shake scenes like Danny pedaling his toy tricycle around the Overlook Hotel in *The Shining*, or the murderous raising of that Neanderthalic fist clutching a thigh bone in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. These are iconic images from a director who, also like Hitchcock, was obsessed with the extremes of the human experience.

Beginning Friday, Aug. 9, the Bijou Metro kicks off its new Bijou Classics Series with a long look at Kubrick (the series runs through Nov. 13 and will screen nearly all of the director's films). Really, there is no better movie to inaugurate the series than with *The Killing* (1956). Listen: Whatever you think of Kubrick — even if, like some folks, you find his films misanthropic — don't miss a chance to watch *The Killing* in all its boxy, black-and-white 35-mm glory.



Despite being an early work, *The Killing* reveals something more than a promising director in the process of hashing out his style; this movie is evidence of a young filmmaker on fire yet fully in control of his medium, captured in those precious moments before talent calcifies into technique. *The Killing*, even more than *A Clockwork Orange* or *Eyes Wide Shut*, gives us Kubrick as Kubrick, executed with sophistication and sly artistry. It's a great movie.

On paper, *The Killing* sounds like a standard crime caper about the elaborate heist of a racetrack, complete with scheming cons, crooked cops and kniving vamps. As it unspools, however, the film becomes an anatomy of human fiasco, a glimpse into the tragedy of tangled motives and emotional greed. Jim Thompson's wicked

hard-boiled dialogue is completely mannered and utterly nasty, and every line is a gem (my favorite belongs to Marie Windsor, whose character refers to her life as "just a bad joke without a punchline"). The cast, which includes Sterling Hayden, Coleen Gray, Elisha Cook Jr. and Vince Edwards, is loaded with great character actors.

But it is Kubrick's direction, in league with cinematographer Lucien Ballard (*The Wild Bunch*) that will blow you away. It's all here: the long, swooning tracking shots, the cockeyed close-ups, the jarring compositions and moments of jumpy disorientation, the way the play of light and shadow signal the arrival of banality, sexuality or plain old evil. *The Killing* is Kubrick playing subtle games with film noir, making the genre do new and surprising things, and it's a killer to behold. ■

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THE KILLING (1956) Fri-Wed 3:00, 7:30
 Monday night hosted by Tom Blank

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THE BLING RING (R) Noon, 9:30
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DESPICABLE ME 2 (3D) PG SPECIAL EVENT PRICING: \$3.00 UPCHARGE ALL TICKETS 11:10
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