The making of magic

How Stanley Kubrick revolutionized science fiction and the art of cinema
In the spring of 1964 Stanley Kubrick set out to make what he called “the proverbial good science-fiction movie.” "The Making of Stanley Kubrick’s 2001: A Space Odyssey" marks the 50th anniversary of the moment when Stanley and his co-screenwriter, noted futurist Arthur C. Clarke, first sat down to brainstorm one of the greatest landmarks in the history of cinema.

Created with the collaboration of the Kubrick family and Warner Bros., this book includes unique concept artworks and behind-the-scenes photographs, many of them never previously published. The extensive text draws, also, from direct interviews with Arthur Clarke, and the principal actors, senior production designers, and key special effects experts who helped to realize Kubrick’s futuristic vision.

Stanley’s brother-in-law Jan Harlan explains the genesis of the Kubrick family’s latest collaboration with TASCHEN.

“Piers Bizony had published an essay on 2001 some years ago—a simple paper-back—but it demonstrated that he is genuinely knowledgeable about this film and the thinking behind its creation. Other partners in the project were, of course, essential. From the start, in proposing this new book, and indeed, throughout the writing and production process, we worked very closely with Warner Bros.”

Of course the Kubrick family has worked with TASCHEN before, as Jan explains.

“The Stanley Kubrick Archives project led directly to the next book, about Stanley’s great, unrealized project. Taschen called it Stanley Kubrick’s Napoleon: The Greatest Movie Never Made and I don’t think they exaggerated. Napoleon is not just a historical figure. His genius and folly, his charisma and poor judgment, his brilliance hampered by vanity and ego, are elements relevant for our leadership today around the globe.”

In 2001 Kubrick suggests that intelligent machines might also become capable of expressing such Napoleonic qualities as brilliance, ego and vanity. There is very little dialogue in this epic space film. Kubrick’s ambitious philosophical speculations are conveyed by his unforgettable imagery. The destinies of prehistoric man- apes are intertwined across millions of years with those of computers, humans and alien entities whose nature and intentions are thrillingly ambiguous. So many science fiction films became dated almost as soon as they are made. In contrast, 2001 is just as compelling as when it was first screened, especially given the fact that NASA space probes have discovered countless new planets in our galaxy. The search for extra-terrestrial intelligence is a very real and active science today.

2001’s visual effects established groundbreaking standards of excellence. Kubrick and his crew built, from scratch, special projectors, automatic animation systems and motorized camera rigs controlled by banks of electronic switches and timers. But some of the grandest effects were also the simplest. Christiane remembers work...
The Making of Stanley Kubrick’s 2001: A Space Odyssey

“Cinephiles and Kubrick fans alike are sure to have a field day.” —Acquiremag.com

An experimental photo of Dullea in his space suit, contrasted with the unsuccessful makeup test for a primordial human. Kubrick’s 2001 is a story of evolution from a “primitive” to an “advanced” species. In shedding our fearful and uncertain animal origins, and adopting a cool, organized technological culture, do we lose as much as we gain?

“In shedding our fearful and uncertain animal origins, and adopting a cool, organized technological culture, do we lose as much as we gain?”

—Piers Bizony

Kubrick was renowned as an obsessive and relentlessly hard-working director. His legendary attention to detail certainly helps explain why 2001 still looks so crisp and believable today. But the typical outsider’s image of her husband as a workaholic is not one that Christiane understands. “To Stanley, and I suppose to any artist, working is more like playing, because what you do is also what you enjoy. Always there is enthusiasm, an open mind to limitless possibilities, and then you narrow it down to what will actually work.”

Jan says, “This of course is what Stanley’s film is all about – limitless possibilities.” Jan and Christiane are delighted to share the story of how 2001: A Space Odyssey was created, both from a technical standpoint and in terms of the early scripting process. The deeper meaning of the film, however, is something that Kubrick always wanted to let his audiences explore without the guidance of mere words. As he explained in 1968, when the film was first released, 2001 was “essentially a nonverbal experience” designed “to communicate more to the subconscious than to the intellect.” This book describes, in compelling detail, how he set out to achieve this. The rest is up to you, the audience.

2001: A Space Odyssey
TM & © Turner Entertainment Co.

Above: One of several Mitchell cameras adapted to handle two reels of film simultaneously in order to accomplish matte work.

Above: Oliver Rennert’s artwork shows the general layout of the front projection system. From the camera’s point of view, the man-ape actor precisely paints his own shadow on the screen behind him.
“Hard work shouldn’t feel like hard work. To Stanley, and I suppose to any artist, it’s more like playing, because what they do is also what they enjoy.” — Christiane Kubrick

The Making of Stanley Kubrick’s 2001: A Space Odyssey

Four volumes contained in a monolith-shaped metal case, designed by M/M Paris:

Volume 1: Film stills
Volume 2: Behind the scenes (including new interviews with lead actors, senior production designers, and key special effects experts)
Volume 3: Facsimile of original screenplay
Volume 4: Facsimile of original 1965 production notes

Plus a small comic surprise

Art Edition No. 1–500
Limited to 250 copies each, all signed by Christiane Kubrick and with a signed print by Brian Sanders, delivered in a ready-to-frame passepartout, 60 x 60 cm (23.6 x 23.6 in.).

Art Ed. A
“Exploration team moving down moon pit ramp” (top left)

Art Ed. B
“Revolving camera and control panel” (left)

Collector’s Edition No. 501–1,500
Limited to 1,000 copies, all signed by Christiane Kubrick

“FEW LEFT”

“SOLD OUT”

“It really is an achingly handsome collection of work, exquisitely designed, bound and printed... it’s a timely reminder of how captivating a piece of print can be.” — Den of Geek, London