

THE STANLEY KUBRICK ARCHIVES

THE DEFINITIVE HISTORY OF THE ICONIC DIRECTOR

WORDS ALEX GODFREY

There are some photos in this mammoth tome documenting the late Stanley Kubrick's research on his unproduced Napoleon film. He was trying to get it made for years, with numerous false starts and setbacks (mostly due to the enormous budgets and failure of other movies about Napoleon) and never managed to get it fully off the ground. Which is a shame, because it seems this was, if nothing else, the most meticulously researched film of all time. He had more than 500 books on the subject and 5,000 illustrations, had samples of earth from Waterloo to be emulated for the production, and an exhaustive filing cabinet full of index cards documenting every known fact on Napoleon, categorising "everything from his food tastes to the weather on the day of a specific battle".

Made in cooperation with the Kubrick Estate, this is a fittingly anal retentive book, which weighs a ton and costs £100, and ventures deep into the heart of St Albans to delve into Kubrick's archives, unearthing many cinematic treasures. The first half of the book is purely visual, presenting 800 pristine camera shots for each of his 12 films (discounting his debut *Fear And Desire*, which he disowned as a "student film"), from the opening of 1955's *Killer's Kiss* to the close of 1999's *Eyes Wide Shut*. The second half gives an inside look at the making of each film, including hundreds of

behind-the-scenes photos, sketches, interviews, Kubrick's early published newspaper photos, essays from collaborators, Kubrick's own script notes, and more.

Alison Castle, who put all this together, spent two years trawling through the material in the Estate. "Hunched over hundreds upon hundreds of contact sheets with my loupe [magnifying glass], I was able to select images that had never been printed before, let alone seen," she says. "Rifling through screenplay drafts I found references to scenes that were never filmed, and among the photos I found images of sequences that were abandoned." Among the highlights are a bunch of stills from *Fear And Desire*, a letter from Nabokov to Kubrick accompanying the former's own four-hour screenplay adaptation of his book *Lolita*, alien concept sketches for *2001: A Space Odyssey* (before it was decided they should look like a big black door), and material on the director's three unfiled projects: *Napoleon*, WWII drama *The Aryan Papers*, and *AI*, which Spielberg made after Kubrick's death.

For your £100 you also get a CD containing a fascinating hour-long interview with Kubrick from 1966, and books in the first print run include a 12-frame strip from one of his own prints of *2001*. Not so much a coffee-table book as something you can actually smash the coffee table up with, it's monolithic, the definitive chronicle of all things Kubrick, and there won't be another.

The Stanley Kubrick Archives (ISBN 3822822841), edited by Alison Castle, is available now from Taschen priced £100. See www.taschen.com for more

KUBRICK EVEN HAD SOIL SAMPLES FROM WATERLOO TO HELP RECREATE THE SCENE

