

Strangelove's Weegee

June 15 – July 26, 2013

Opening reception: June 14, 7PM
Curator: John O'Brian

Screening:

Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964)

Wednesday, July 10, at 7PM

Empire Theatres Esplanade, 200 Esplanade Ave, North Vancouver

Presentation House Gallery is pleased to announce *Strangelove's Weegee*, an exhibition featuring photographs by the infamous press photographer Weegee taken on the set of the film *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. The exhibition also includes publicity stills, posters, lobby cards and other material related to the film, and is accompanied by an illustrated catalogue that includes an essay by John O'Brian.

Legendary filmmaker Stanley Kubrick once thought about living in Vancouver, but unlike Howard Hughes never acted on the idea. Both men were obsessed with the subject of war, particularly with the threat of nuclear catastrophe. Kubrick brought a sense of humour to this subject, dark though it was. "Gentlemen, you can't fight in here! This is the War Room," protests President Merkin Muffley in *Dr. Strangelove*. Among the photographs taken by Weegee on the film set are fight scenes in the War Room, including the famous pie fight scene cut from the final version of the film. These photographs are in the exhibition.

Kubrick began shooting *Dr. Strangelove* in February 1963, just months after the Cuban Missile Crisis brought the world to the brink of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD for short). He shot the film in black and white and hired Weegee as a special consultant, specifying that he take flash pictures on the set. The exhibition explores Weegee's tabloid aesthetic and Kubrick's interest in them. An audiotape of a hilarious conversation between the photographer and the main actor, Peter Sellers, reveals the photographer's role extended to teaching Sellers an American/European accent.

Weegee aka Arthur Feelig (1899 – 1968) was a New York press photographer best known for graphic images of violence and crime. He also produced photography books and films. His photographs are in major museum collections. In 2012 a major survey of his work, *Murder is My Business*, was organized by the International Center of Photography in New York, who have loaned material for this exhibition.

Starting out as a photojournalist, Stanley Kubrick was one of the most significant and influential filmmakers of the twentieth century. He was a director, editor and cinematographer. His films include *Lolita* (1962), *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), and *The Shining* (1980), amongst others.

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John O'Brian is a professor, writer and curator. He has taught art history at the University of British Columbia since 1987 and published more than a dozen books. His current research is on the engagement of photography with the nuclear era in North America and Japan. He is presently working on an exhibition for the Art Gallery of Ontario, *Camera Atomica*, which explores interconnections between the camera and nuclear events.



Unidentified Photographer, Weegee and Peter Sellers after the famous pie scene on the set of *Dr. Strangelove*, 1963, courtesy International Center of Photography, New York



Weegee, Stanley Kubrick making frame with his hands on the set of his film *Dr. Strangelove*, 1963, © Weegee/International Center of Photography, New York



Weegee, Stanley Kubrick directing his film *Dr. Strangelove*, 1963, © Weegee/International Center of Photography, New York



Weegee, Stanley Kubrick directing Tracy Reed as Miss Scott on the set of *Dr. Strangelove*, 1963, © Weegee/International Center of Photography, New York