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SCARLETT FEVER!

HITCHCOCK HEROINE
SCARLETT JOHANSSON
GOES PSYCHO
BY JEAN-PAUL GOUDE



IN FOCUS

AS LACMA MOUNTS EXHIBITIONS OF STANLEY KUBRICK AND ED RUSCHA, TRUSTEE EVA CHOW—COCHAIR OF THE GUCCI-SPONSORED OPENING GALA—DISCUSSES WITH THE ICONIC L.A. PAINTER WHY CINEMA IS ALWAYS IN STYLE

Vivid, arresting, and profound. The oeuvres of Stanley Kubrick and Ed Ruscha, two of the past century's most prolific and revered artists, are often described as such, but in many ways the similarity ends there. The legendary Kubrick, who passed away in 1999, is survived by his uncompromising arsenal of cinematic triumphs—*Paths of Glory*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Shining*, and *2001: A Space Odyssey* among them—known for their exacting and visually dazzling depictions of themes common to the human experience, including violence, sexuality, war, the future, science, and revenge. Ruscha, continuing his practice of painting, drawing, printing, and photography to the present day, has achieved his own vibrant aesthetic through his reflections of Californian urbanity, which uniquely capture its saturated hues and sense of isolation with a canny humor suggestive of the Pop Art movement.

In October, dedicated exhibits of each artist opened at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, as part of this year's Art + Film Gala (presented by Gucci), the second such event since the museum began a new film initiative. LACMA trustee Eva Chow, alongside Leonardo DiCaprio, cochaired the evening, which featured a Kubrick tribute by Steven Spielberg and a performance by Florence and the Machine. Before the big night, Chow sat down with honoree Ruscha to talk about why it's important to stay focused on film. **PATRIK SANDBERG**

EVA CHOW You've been so busy with museums lately!

ED RUSCHA Well, I've done this show in Austria and many works,

probably 250 works. So it's coming along, I just got back from it. But I don't mind being busy. What are you up to?

EC I'm doing the Mr. Chow bakery next door to Mr. Chow. Or maybe it's going to be Mrs. Chow's bakery! That'll be fun, no?

ER Sure, a bakery, what's wrong with that?

EC I love that. Let's talk about how your relationship with LACMA began, Ed.

ER I did a painting called *The Los Angeles County Museum on Fire* in 1968 that was a protest against the authority figure in my life, as I felt like maybe museums were at that time. It's become something much different today. I've watched that museum change physically, and also in its programming. I've had two, possibly three shows there, so I've always had a connection with LACMA. I was disappointed when they did certain things, like when they dropped their film program, but now they're restoring it in a big way, which your gala is a part of, and that's good to hear. Maybe it was a budgetary consideration at that time. You know, the world of film is more important than some people think. Art is not all just painting and sculpture.

EC What's happening is that the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is going to be housed at the May Company building with LACMA. I think you put it right, that film is such an important art form. Artists, fashion designers, musicians, everybody—we are all influenced by film in one way or another. Being in Los Angeles, I think it is very, very important to preserve and honor that, and that's what we're doing. Do you agree?

ER Oh yeah. I was probably attracted to this place when I was a kid in Oklahoma because I knew movies were made in Hollywood and that was almost enough for me. Add in the vegetation growing out here, palm trees and everything...When I first came out here it was heavenly because it was like a scratchy black-and-white movie. I still look back on my early days here as being connected in some metaphorical way to old scratchy black-and-white movies.

EC That's beautiful to visualize! You know, we have Elvis Mitchell, who's an amazing film curator—

ER Great guy.

EC Amazing guy, and his knowledge of film is just incredible. We're doing a lot with restoring old films and honoring great filmmakers, which is what this gala is. We're honoring incredibly creative people. And I think there's a real artistic community growing here that really wants to support film preservation.

ER No doubt about that. There are more artists than there were

10 years ago, or even five years ago. People are actually coming here as a destination, as artists and filmmakers have for the last 100 years. It's an ever-moving thing.

EC Every artist influences the way we see things and the way we see life. That's what great artists do, and great filmmakers do that as well. We are so happy you agreed to do this. I know I had to kind of...

ER Coerce me.

EC Yeah, coerce you a little bit. So we've got Ed Ruscha, Kubrick, Spielberg, and Florence is going to sing. I wanted a female because it's all so male-dominated...except for me. How do you feel about being paired with Kubrick as honoree?

ER It wasn't a choice of mine, but I love his movies. Especially the older ones like *Paths of Glory*. He also did still photography that not many people know about. There are some beautiful still photographs that he took. He would pose people together, like frozen scenes from movies. Not many people have done that.

EC Well, everybody knows you are one of the most amazing artists, and you've lived and worked in Los Angeles for so long, I think for Los Angeles to honor you is really great! But you're so busy, you have so many show openings, you have to go travel the world.

ER The trick is keeping your sanity. I take a philosophical approach to everything. I figure that everything is just a bump on the highway and we're all just little bumps playing our role. It's certainly an honor.

EC It's just fun having good, creative, talented people come together. I like to do this as if I'm entertaining at home. I like to pay attention to who's going to sit next to whom, what the food will be, and if everybody is going to be happy. Good entertaining, in my book, is just making sure that you love the guests that are coming.

ER Just remember you'll never have perfection. [laughs]

EC Right? I think those little imperfections that happen accidentally are what makes it all really fun, don't you think?

ER Well, Eva, you're already having fun, and the party hasn't even happened!

EC I just love to produce things and see what happens. ♪

ER Now the real work begins.

ED RUSCHA AND EVA CHOW AT HIS STUDIO IN CENTURY CITY, AUGUST 2012
PHOTOGRAPHY CARLOS SERRAO

ED RUSCHA: STANDARD AND STANLEY KUBRICK ARE NOW ON DISPLAY AT LACMA