



## Exploded View | The George Kuchar Reader

BY CHUCK STEPHENS IN COLUMNS, CS61, FROM THE MAGAZINE

Like   Share Share



By Chuck Stephens

*"I make moving pictures..."*

*My dad smoked and didn't like the movie Ben-Hur because it*

### CURRENT ISSUE



### SUBSCRIBE AND SAVE

#### Subscriptions

*Subscribe and save worldwide*

#### Digital Edition

*Any device, PC, Mac or phone*

#### Back Issues

*Instant download back issues*

*was lacking in simulated humping sequences. My mom liked Barbara Stanwyck and I don't think she (Stanwyck) ever simulated humping either. My mom respected her.*

*In the 1950s everybody was making 8mm movies. You'd develop them cheap at the camera store and in five or ten years the emulsion would get cracked or chip in time for the 1960s, avant-garde film explosion. No need to bake your footage in an oven like so many artists were doing. Your home movies had already deteriorated into art."*

—"Gazing Back," George Kuchar, 1994

The ideal belated gift for that cinephile who may have slipped your mind during the seasonal savagery, *The George Kuchar Reader* might as well be the book beneath the burning Christmas tree at the climax of Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks* (1947). It even features Santa Claus on its cover, seated next to the titular GK—the filmmaker most likely to appreciate the sight and scent of a burly, bearded man dressed entirely in red and sporting a conspicuously enormous sack. Published by Primary Information and edited by Anthology Film Archive's Curator of Collections Andrew Lampert, the 300+ page *Reader* is a colossal compendium of comics, handwritten autobiographical sketches, scribbled script notes, lovelorn late-life emails, and myriad other mucilaginous miscellany. It's the size of a small phone book. It also features a sexy, fold-out centrefold, which automatically makes it the best film book ever published—a sexy, fold-out, full-colour centrefold of *George's dog Bockko*, which makes it probably the single greatest book ever made. No artist in the history of the world has treated with such tenderness and emphasis, such robust sensuality and paradisiacal detail, the cock and balls of a capricious canine as did the late George Kuchar, filmmaker, godstar, man.

*Dog Star Man*: an altogether different film with that title could have been made to immortalize the relationship between Kuchar and Bockko, a love story chronicled in Kuchar's *The Mongreloid* (1978). An autumnal tone poem shot on both coasts, the film is a Bronx-to-Bay Area meditation on

## YOU ARE HERE:

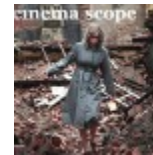
[Cinema Scope](#) > [From The Magazine](#) > [CS61](#) >

[Exploded View](#) | [The George Kuchar Reader](#)

## SEARCH

## FROM THE MAGAZINE

### Issue 61 Table of Contents



Christian Petzold's Phoenix, Andrei Konchalovsky's

The Postman's White Nights, Peter Strickland on The Duke of Burgundy and more... [More](#)



### Issue 61 Editor's Note



By Mark Peranson It's taken an abnormally long while for

me to find the will to pound out the missive this time around, due to [More](#) →

### Film/Art | Carlos Amorales, Roberto Bolaño, and Amorality Within the Avant-Garde



By Andréa Picard "We dreamed of utopia and we woke up

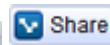
screaming."—Roberto Bolaño, First Infrarealist Manifesto

companionship, mortality, and the occasionally itchy “mookie” of man’s best friend, flush with jarring music cues and jagged editing decisions that presage Kuchar’s shift from film to edited-in-camera videotapes in the decade to follow. Bocko, beyond just that stunning centrefold—a gorgeous Kuchar painting of the splay-legged pooch and his mookie—is also at the heart of much that is recounted in and revealed by the *Reader*. He’s the star of a 1973 Kuchar comic strip entitled “Herzog Holiday: The Wonderful Story of a Woman and Her Dog” where, as “Bonzo,” he whizzes on his hapless owner’s broken carcass. And he’s the subject of Kuchar’s moving and wholly oneiric “Farewell, My Pet,” a tribute to Bocko and a portrait of the eerie events surrounding his death: visions of strange lights in the sky over Mission Dolores Park, the spooky apparition of a pigeon in the house, a screening of *The Wolf Man* on TV, the sudden passing of Bocko, and the arrival of a previously unknown “cousin” who, in Kuchar’s view, might well have been “vacationing” in San Francisco from outer space. Hardly an isolated incident, this confluence of extraterrestrial possibilities and altogether mortal concerns (the death of a loved one) confirmed Kuchar’s conviction that somehow The Movies were naturally aligned with other mysterious signs in the sky (UFOs, heavy weather phenomena), and that all of it was united by love. Smelly, funky, sloppy, gooey, passionate love.

There is much, much more to be discovered in this extraordinary volume, but we’ll leave those discoveries to you, along with these simple words: this is the most important film book of 2014, an essential addition to any cinephile’s collection. Alas, *The George Kuchar Reader* is published in a limited edition of 1500 copies, so if a gift copy still hasn’t materialized under your tree by the time you finish reading this sentence then by all means, **take matters into your own hands.**

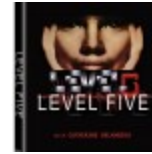
Like

Share



Last year, Vogue Paris published an issue devoted [More →](#)

### Global Discoveries on DVD | Conspicuously Absent or Apt to be Overlooked



By Jonathan Rosenbaum  
For now the truly shocking thing was the

world itself. It was a new world, and he’d just discovered it, just noticed [More →](#)

### Exploded View | The George Kuchar Reader



By Chuck Stephens “I make moving pictures... My dad smoked

and didn’t like the movie Ben-Hur because it was lacking in simulated humping sequences. My [More →](#)

### The Babadook (Jennifer Kent, US)



By Adam Nayman A semi-surprise winner of the New York Film

Critics Circle’s Best First Film award, Jennifer Kent’s Sundance breakout The Babadook feels very [More →](#)

### Force Majeure (Ruben Östlund, Sweden/France /Denmark/Norway)



By Angelo Muredda With