



50 YEARS AGO | FILMS OF 1966

A TIME CAPSULE

In 1966, the New Hollywood that would fully flower over the next decade was foreshadowed in certain releases that signaled a new creative freedom and permissiveness associated with European art-house cinema, not to mention the tumult of our own changing times. Films like *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *The Group* pushed the boundaries of language and sexuality in major studio fare, while *Blow-Up* introduced a celebrated stylist from overseas to American audiences with his provocative first English-language feature. Two years later, the MPAA would implement a ratings system, partly as a way of staving off government censorship, and to guide audiences about “mature” content in movies that were increasingly reflective of the complexities of contemporary society.

PHOTOS: PHOTOFEST

WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?

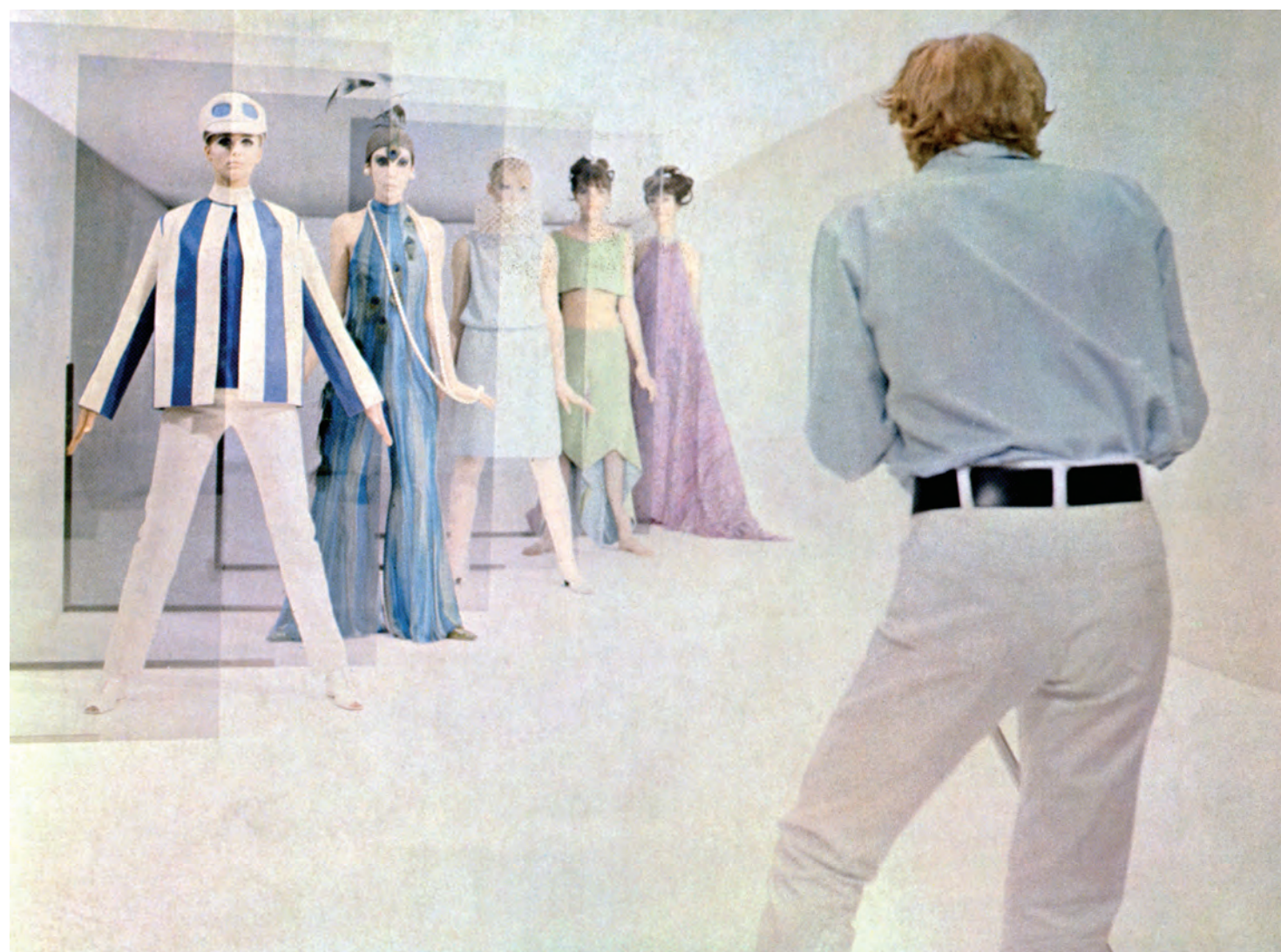
Mike Nichols

It is in no way hyperbolic to say that Mike Nichols' directorial debut with *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* was a sign of changing attitudes in Hollywood. With its controversial language and subject matter, the film was key in sealing the fate of the Production Code and helped usher in a more progressive movie ratings system.

BLOW-UP

Michelangelo Antonioni

For his first English-language film, Italian director Michelangelo Antonioni caused quite a stir with the sensual and then-taboo depictions of nudity and sexuality in *Blow-Up*. Antonioni shot the scene below in the real-life studio of acclaimed London photographer John Cowan, who also served as advisor and inspiration, along with David Bailey, for the character of Thomas played by David Hemmings.



THE GROUP

Sidney Lumet

TV protégé Sidney Lumet seemed like an odd choice to direct a feature film about the intersecting lives of eight Vassar women in *The Group*, but to the producers' surprise he was not only capable, but also quick and economical. Lumet was adamant that most of the film be shot in and around New York, still a rarity in 1966.

“Sometimes, on particularly good takes, I’m so moved that I stop ‘doing’ the scene and just watch in awe at the miracle of good acting. That’s life up there. When it flows like that, that’s when I say ‘Print.’” —SIDNEY LUMET

PHOTOS: PHOTOFEST; (OPPOSITE) EVERETT



THE SAND PEBBLES

Robert Wise

Riding off the commercial and critical darling that was *The Sound of Music*, the ever-versatile Robert Wise was finally greenlit to commence production on his dream project: the three-hour roadshow epic *The Sand Pebbles*. Although set in 1920s China, it wasn't hard for moviegoers at the time to draw parallels to the U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

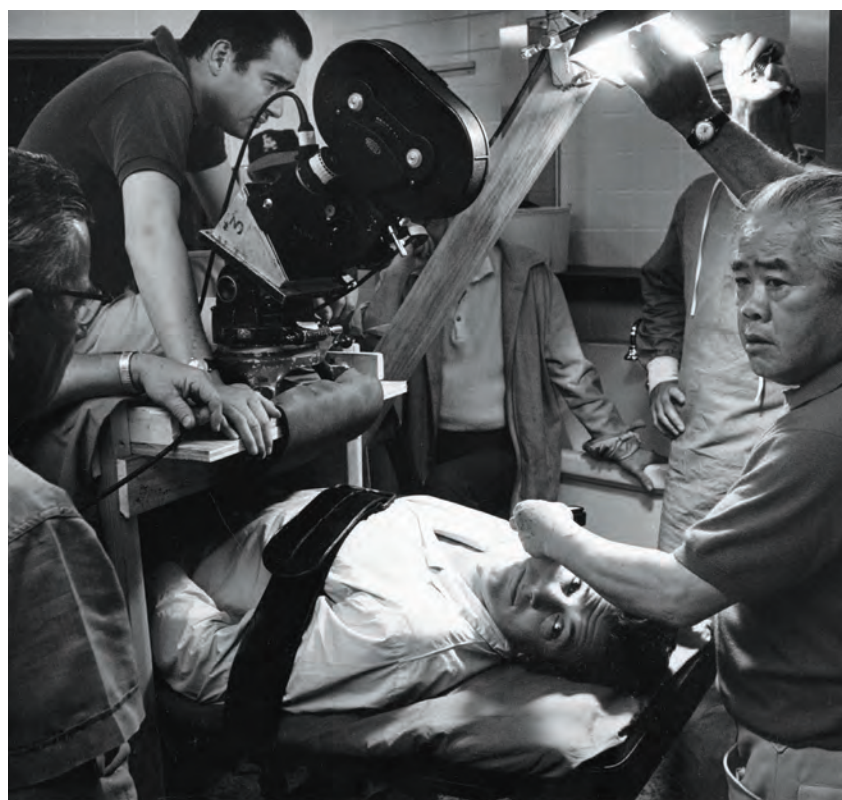
“When we talk about life, my philosophy is that you have to live your life the way it is. That’s what *Seconds* was about.”

—JOHN FRANKENHEIMER

SECONDS

John Frankenheimer

Matinee idol Rock Hudson wasn't director John Frankenheimer's first choice for the tortured, youth-obsessed protagonist in *Seconds*, but quickly proved his mettle with a career-defining performance. Frankenheimer and DP James Wong Howe photographed real medical operations as prep for Hudson's pivotal transformation sequence.



PHOTOS: PHOTOFEST; (OPPOSITE BOTTOM) AMPAS

