

August 29, 2012

HUFFPOST ARTS & CULTURE

Edition: U.S. ▾

[FRONT PAGE](#) [POLITICS](#) [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [MEDIA](#) [ARTS](#) [TV](#) [BLACK VOICES](#) [LATINO VOICES](#) [RELIGION](#) [COMEDY](#) [LIVE](#) | [ALL SECTIONS](#)[Culture](#) · [Arts](#) [Books](#) [Film](#) [Architecture](#) [Music](#) [TV](#)

Featuring fresh takes and real-time analysis from
HuffPost's signature lineup of contributors

HOT ON THE BLOG

[Bill Moyers](#)
[John Hillcoat](#)[Dean Baker](#)
[Bobby Bowden](#)

HuffPost Social Reading

**Michael Giltz**

Freelance writer

GET UPDATES FROM MICHAEL GILTZ

[Like](#) [102](#)

Movies: MOMA Has *The Right Stuff* (And *Unbearable Lightness*)

Posted: 04/10/2012 3:33 pm

React ▸ [Amazing](#) [Inspiring](#) [Funny](#) [Scary](#) [Hot](#) [Crazy](#) [Important](#) [Weird](#)Follow ▸ [Movies](#) , [NASA](#) , [Video](#) , [Museum Of Modern Art](#) , [The Right Stuff](#) , [The Unbearable Lightness Of Being](#) , [Film Adaptations](#) , [Moma](#) , [Philip Kaufman](#) , [The Right Stuff Film](#) , [The Unbearable Lightness Of Being Film](#) , [Culture News](#)

SHARE THIS STORY

Get Culture Alerts

[Sign Up](#)[Submit this story](#)

Certain movies simply must be seen on the big screen. When people say that, they're usually referring to a spectacle, a widescreen epic like *Lawrence of Arabia* or *2001: A Space Odyssey*.. That's certainly the case with *The Right Stuff*, a terrific 1983 look at the U.S. space race and the Mercury astronauts at the heart of it. Cutting edge special effects, brilliant acting, the desire to capture America at a particular point in time -- *The Right Stuff* is a grand film that deserves the silver screen.

But it's just as true for movies that are ambitious in their ideas. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* is the other masterpiece from director Philip Kaufman and both of them are being [screened this week](#) at MOMA, with Kaufman in attendance both Wednesday and Thursday night to introduce these two movies (along with Walter Murch at the *Right Stuff* screening, one of the team of editors that worked on that film).

I love both these movies and yet I haven't seen them in many years. Why? No matter how big my TV may be, no matter how good my BluRay player or DVD copy, these are films I want to experience in a darkened theater with a live audience. It's been well over a decade and I can't wait to see them again.

Kaufman is no stranger to the big screen hits: he was an integral part of creating the story for *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*. Indeed, coming on the heels of a western and his (unnecessary but acclaimed) remake of *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers*, *The Right Stuff* was hotly anticipated. Some even fretted that its straight arrow presentation of astronaut John Glenn might give him an unfair advantage in the upcoming Presidential elections. (No dice. Ronald Reagan knew how to play the President better than Glenn ever would.) Despite rave reviews and a clutch of Oscar nominations, *The Right Stuff* performed modestly at the box office, failing to even match its budget.

The trailer doesn't help: its rah-rah sensibility is a far cry from the movie's nuanced, subtle and complex take on these men and their mission.

FOLLOW US

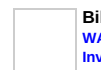
MOST POPULAR ON HUFFPOST

1 of 2

[Chipotle Busted For Cheating Customers Out Of Pennies](#)[Like](#) [975](#)[Republican Attendees Thrown Out After Racist Attack On CNN Worker](#)[Like](#) [11k](#)[MAP: Hurricane Isaac's Path Aims For Gulf Coast](#)[Recommend](#) [274](#)[RPatz Agrees To Meet KStew But Is Selling Their Home](#)[Like](#) [70](#)[PHOTO: The Queen Rolls In A Range Rover Wearing A Hoodie](#)[Like](#) [1k](#)[Deaf Boy Asked To Make Controversial Change \(VIDEO\)](#)[Like](#) [4k](#)[GOP Approves Abortion Ban](#)[Recommend](#) [9k](#)[Limbaugh's Wild Isaac Conspiracy](#)[Like](#) [7k](#)[Isaac Balloons Into A Hurricane, New Orleans Threatened](#)[Recommend](#) [689](#)

DON'T MISS HUFFPOST BLOGGERS

1 of 5

**Bill Moyers**[WATCH: Both Parties Give Invisible Americans the Silent Treatment](#)**Dean Baker**[Poverty: The New Growth Industry in America](#)

That makes it all the more remarkable that Kaufman was given such a free rein with his next movie. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* is a remarkably intelligent film that showcased three powerhouse new talents: Juliette Binoche, Lena Olin and of course Daniel Day-Lewis hot off his one-two punch of *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *A Room With A View*. I hope someone asks Kaufman how he was ever able to get the green light to make this sexy, adult, philosophical tale about young lovers caught up in the Czech spring for a U.S. studio. The trailer offers the promise of what every foreign film used to embody for cineastes trapped in puritanical America: sex!

Of course, they came for the sex and they stayed for the philosophy. Both films are based on books. *The Right Stuff* is based on Tom Wolfe's famed nonfiction work and *Unbearable* on Milan Kundera's "unfilmable" masterpiece. I've seen the movie and read Kundera's book and *still* can't fathom how anyone would ever even attempt to turn that work into a movie. And yet somehow Kaufman did it and managed to capture the playful, essence of the work. It is wholly faithful to the spirit of the novel by being wholly true to its own needs. Neither author was happy with the films made from their books, which may explain why they're authors and not filmmakers. See either film and you'll be sent right to the books they're based on (not to mention the music of Leos Janacek after *Unbearable*) and find very different, rich works of art that inform the movies you've seen. And see the movies if at all possible on the big screen, where their scope, their vision and above all their ideas demand to be aired.

If you're interested, here is [my original review of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*](#) back in college, along with my inclusion of the film on [my best of the year list](#) and a passing nod to *The Right Stuff*. (It made my 1988 list because art films took a long time to reach the rest of the country back in those days.) Kaufman's next film is an HBO movie about the fiery relationship between Ernest Hemingway and Martha Gellhorn, one of the best war correspondents there ever was. I can't wait to see it. On my TV.

Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the cohost of *Showbiz Sandbox*, a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's [available](#) for free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his [website](#) and his [daily blog](#). Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called *Popsurfing* and also [available](#) for free on iTunes. Link to him on Netflix and [gain](#) access to thousands of ratings and reviews.

Follow Michael Giltz on Twitter: www.twitter.com/michaelgiltz

Comments 0 Pending Comments 0 [View FAQ](#)

Comments are closed for this entry

View All

Recency | Popularity



You're Doing It Wrong: Fish Tacos



Stop Asking This Real Swedish Chef About the Swedish Chef



Death, Explained

[Slate Articles »](#)

HOT ON FACEBOOK

1 of 2



10 Plays That Protest Power



Azealia Banks Smokes A Condom, Gets Banned



HOT ON TWITTER

1 of 2



ricky_martin

Make Room for (the New) Daddy
<http://t.co/Q6etDokm> via
[@huffingtonpost](#)

[Retweet](#)



feliciaday

Think on it: Cambridge scientists say all mammals, birds, many others including octopi, have human-like consciousness.
<http://t.co/aF6W2ZQh>

[Retweet](#)

HUFFPOST'S BIG NEWS PAGES



Celebrity babies



Elections 2012



News and Trends



Abortion



Ann Romney



LDS Church



Poverty



Art In America



Paul Ryan

[MORE BIG NEWS PAGES »](#)

[Advertise](#) | [Make HuffPost your Home Page](#) | [RSS](#) | [Careers](#) | [FAQ](#)

[User Agreement](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Comment Policy](#) | [About Us](#) | [About Our Ads](#) | [Contact Us](#)

