KINONIK

ROPE (1948)

Directed by Alfred Hitchcock

Wednesday March 5th 2pm & 7pm
Saturday March 8th 7pm
ROPE (1948) directed by Alfred Hitchcock



Brandon Shaw and Philip Morgan have it all: taste, money, smarts. Living together in their Manhattan penthouse (and they were roommates!), they decide to prove their superiority to others by committing the perfect murder. Together they strangle their former classmate David and, absolutely confident, throw a dinner party with his body stashed in the room. The dinner guests, many of whom are David's friends or family, party unawares – but Philip's moody conscience, the men' s obnoxiously inquisitive professor, and increasingly worried partygoers threaten their "perfect" plan.

Kept from the movie-going masses for over thirty years, Alfred Hitchcock's **Rope** (1947) – one of his "five lost films" and his first Technicolor production – is a tight single-location thriller enhanced by novel camera tricks. A seminal moment in the evolution of one-shot films, Hitchcock uses the form to create a tense, real-time dramatic experience. Due to the fact that the physical length of film reels limited shots to ten minutes, and accounting for the natural interruption of the projectionist changing reels, it is not actually "one shot" (nor does it pretend to be – there are four obvious cuts). However, it is one of the closest examples in physical film, and many of the techniques he used: choreographing actor movements down to the beat, a fluid set with moveable walls, and so on, would go on to be used by digital filmmakers in true one-shots.

Based on the play **Rope**, which was in turn based on the real-life 1924 murder of Bobby Franks by friends and lovers Leopold and Loeb, Hitchcock's adaptation narrows the story down to its essential elements: the hubris of its leads and the insanity of their decisions. Starring Jimmy Stewart (who did not believe the long-shot experiment was worth it), John Dall (Spartacus), and Farley Granger (Strangers on a Train), **Rope** is an excellent demonstration of Hitchcock's skills both narratively and technically – not to mention an important piece of queer film history. While Brandon and Philip's crime may not have escaped notice, their relationship sure escaped that of the 1940s film censors, and the intentional subtext survived. With its stacked significance, **Rope** manages to pack a lot of film history into its one hour twenty minute runtime.