

Document Citation

Title	Zabriskie Point
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Film Society of Lincoln Center</i>
Date	1992 Nov
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Zabriskie Point, Antonioni, Michelangelo, 1970

ZABRISKIE POINT

USA, 1969; color, 110 minutes

LINCOLN GR
11/92

David Thomson called this film Antonioni's "most beautiful inspection of emptiness." A college radical (Mark Frechette) kills a cop, steals a plane, makes love to a girl (Daria Halprin) in Death Valley, and dies in L.A. The director is clearly seduced by the sun- and wind-scoured widescreen landscape in which he positions human beings as though they and their goods existed only to be desert decor, anachronistic artifacts from another time. In the film's final, silent, repeated explosions, Antonioni celebrates the end of the world, like some cinematic shaman welcoming the void.

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