



Press Release

Special Berlinale Series to Mark the 40th Anniversary of Berlin's Vietnam Congress: "War at Home" - The Vietnam War in U.S. Cinema

In February 1968 the Socialist German Student Association (SDS) staged the 'Vietnam Congress' in Berlin. This event marked the beginning of the student protest movement which went down in history as 'May 1968'. The congress triggered the German student movement which gradually switched its main focus from the war in the Middle East to concentrate on the young Federal Republic and its own post-war history.

The Berlinale and the Federal Centre for Political Education have taken the fortieth anniversary of the Vietnam Congress to retrace the American perspective of the Vietnam War in a compact film programme. Hollywood produced critical feature films, such as *M.A.S.H.* (Robert Altman, 1970) and *Catch 22* (Mike Nichols 1971) which simultaneously marked the beginning of New Hollywood. The programme also includes documentaries and protest films depicting the trauma that the war unleashed at home. Screenings of the War at Home series take place from 8 to 15 February in the Filmpalast Berlin.

Film Programme:

M*A*S*H USA (1970) by Robert Altman

In his black comedy about three wacky draftee surgeons who stitch back together whatever comes their way, Altman saw the only adequate response to the Vietnam War - and with it won the Golden Palm at the Cannes Festival in 1970.

The War at Home USA (1979) by Barry Brown and Glenn Silber

This spirited film closely chronicles the anti-Vietnam movement in the 1960s and 1970s, when large sections of the U.S. population sharply opposed their own government. Glenn Silber, one of the two authors, will present the film at the Berlinale.

Catch 22 USA (1971) by Mike Nichols

with Anthony Perkins, Orson Welles, Martin Sheen, Alan Arkin, Jon Voight
Joseph Heller's anti-war novel was considered unfilmable until young star director Mike Nichols (*The Graduate*) took up the project: set during World War II, this movie tells of the madness of war and the inflexibility of bureaucracy.

**58. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
07. - 17.02.2008**

Press Office

Potsdamer Straße 5
10785 Berlin

Tel. +49 • 30 • 259 20 • 707
Fax +49 • 30 • 259 20 • 799

press@berlinale.de
www.berlinale.de

Ein Geschäftsbereich der
Kulturveranstaltungen des
Bundes in Berlin (KBB) GmbH

Management:

Dieter Kosslick
(Intendant Internationale
Filmfestspiele Berlin),
Dr. Thomas Köstlin
(Kaufmännischer Geschäftsführer),
Dr. Bernd Scherer,
Dr. Joachim Sartorius

Vorsitzender des Aufsichtsrats:
Bernd Neumann

Handelsregister: Amtsgericht
Charlottenburg Nr. 96 HRB 29357
USt ID DE 136 78 27 46



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Winter Soldier USA (1972) by the Winterfilm Collective

The Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) invited vets to a conference in Detroit in 1971. The film documents their reports of rape, torture and murder committed by American soldiers against civilians in Vietnam.

In the Year of the Pig USA (1968) by Emile de Antonio

This political experimental film ironically strings together archive footage, interviews and television clips and sets it all to rather patriotic music. To be understood as “anti-imperialistic cinema”, it portrays Ho Chi Minh as hero of the Vietnamese people.

Basic Training USA (1971) by Frederick Wiseman

Daily life in a boot camp where young recruits are turned into soldiers: the film documents their training and loss of individualism, as well as depicts how a system of submission and absolute conformity dominates in the barracks.

The Green Berets USA (1968) by Ray Kellog with John Wayne

This was probably the only Hollywood film that tried to justify the war in Vietnam. It fashioned its narrative on the familiar structures of the Western, with the Vietcong in the role of the Indians and a hero always beyond reproach. The story was based on real events at the Battle of Nam Dong.

Coming Home USA (1978) by Hal Ashby with Jane Fonda

Without actually showing the war, this powerful tale of a love triangle speaks of the injuries and wounds of those who remained behind and those returning home. Jane Fonda won an Oscar for her portrayal of Sally in 1979.

The film programme complements a series of events accompanying the exhibition “’68 - Brennpunkt Berlin” organized by the Federal Centre for Political Education at Amerika Haus in Berlin. The programme extends through to May 2008 with readings, panel discussions and eye-witness talks about the consequences of the student movement. The events also embrace a comprehensive series of 1968 films which include repeat screenings of a number of the films from the Berlinale programme.

Press Office
January 21, 2008