

## Press Release

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### Homage and Lifetime Achievement Award for Kirk Douglas

Kirk Douglas, an extraordinary actor who became a screen legend early in his career, will be honored by the Berlin International Film Festival with a “Golden Bear for Lifetime Achievement” during the upcoming Berlinale 2001. Festival Director Moritz de Hadeln has invited the American actor, producer, director and author to come to Berlin to receive his award on February 16<sup>th</sup> at the Berlinale-Palast Theatre in Potsdamer Platz. A special Festival showing of *Paths of Glory* (1957) will also take place that evening.

It is the 12<sup>th</sup> time in the Festival's 51-year history that a performer has been so honored. Previous recipients were James Stewart (1982), Sir Alec Guinness (1988), Dustin Hoffman (1989), Gregory Peck (1993), Sophia Loren (1994), Alain Delon (1995), Jack Lemmon (1996), Kim Novak (1997), Catherine Deneuve (1998), Shirley MacLaine (1999) and Jeanne Moreau (2000).

In making the announcement de Hadeln stated: "Kirk Douglas unmistakably embodies the quintessence of 'the pioneering spirit and typical American individualism'. His characters are marked by a tremendous drive for independence. They are tough and uneven, and at times difficult. Not unlike Kirk Douglas himself when, for instance, he engaged Dalton Trumbo – who was on McCarthy's 'Black List' – as screenwriter for *Spartacus*, and insisted that Trumbo should also be included in the film's opening credits. By honoring Kirk Douglas, a personality is singled out who, beyond his screen work, has been extremely committed to social issues and America's democratic ideals."

De Hadeln noted that during his 55-year career, Douglas has effectively portrayed a broad spectrum of roles ranging from adventurers to cowboys and from military officers to cops and gangsters. "He played the Roman slave Spartacus, the Viking Einar, and Homer's Odysseus. His heroes have been incorruptible and egocentric, his villains merciless and intense – sometimes without scruples, and other times idealistic men who, without relenting or weakening, courageously fight for their right to individual freedom," de Hadeln added.

Since beginning his career in Lewis Milestone's *The Strange Love of Martha Ivers* with Barbara Stanwyck in 1946, Douglas has performed in over 80 films. He has worked with legendary directors such as Jacques Tourneur, Joseph L. Mankiewicz, Billy Wilder, William Wyler, Howard Hawks, Stanley Kubrick, Otto Preminger, Elia Kazan and Brian de Palma, among others. He is a very

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dedicated actor who prepares his roles with the utmost intensity. For his very first box-office hit, *Champion* (1949), a Stanley Kramer Production directed by Mark Robson, Douglas trained 'till he could box like a pro; for Michael Curtiz' jazz film *Young Man With A Horn* (1950), Douglas took trumpet lessons; and before he made his first Western, *Along the Great Divide* (1951), directed by Raoul Walsh, he learned how to ride and shoot – an investment which paid off well when Douglas became, along with John Wayne and Robert Mitchum, a top-ranking Hollywood cowboy of the '50s, '60s and '70s.

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Douglas has been nominated for three Academy Awards®: for his performance as the ruthless and brutal boxer Midge Kelly in *Champion*, for his poignant portrayal of the painter Van Gogh in Vincente Minnelli's *Lust For Life* (1956), and for his depiction of the driven producer in *The Bad and the Beautiful* (1952), also directed by Minnelli. In 1996 the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences presented him with an Oscar® in recognition of both his outstanding cinematic achievements and his personal integrity.

As part of its homage to Kirk Douglas, the Berlin International Film Festival will present a retrospective of his films including the aforementioned screening of Stanley Kubrick's *Paths of Glory*. It was Douglas, who adamantly interceded for Kubrick, an almost unknown director at the time, making this film become a reality.

The Filmmuseum Berlin - Deutsche Kinemathek, is producing the Kirk Douglas Retrospective. The Berlin Jovis Verlag is publishing a richly illustrated monograph with essays and a comprehensive filmography, which will trace the life and career of this brilliant American film star.

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