

Press Release



Berlinale 2007: Homage and Honorary Golden Bear for Arthur Penn

The Homage of the 57th Berlin International Film Festival in 2007 is dedicated to the renowned American film director Arthur Penn. Arthur Penn is considered one of the precursors of the New Hollywood and made cinematic history with movies such as *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) and *Night Moves* (1975). As part of the Homage, Arthur Penn will be awarded the Golden Bear for Lifetime Achievement on February 15, 2007.

"Arthur Penn's films of the 1960s and early 1970s reanimated the crisis-ridden American cinema. He is a great director, who deeply influenced the American cinema d'auteur", festival director Dieter Kosslick comments on the Homage.

Arthur Penn belongs to a generation of American directors who emerged out of the television industry, demonstrating the experimental edge which marked the *Golden Age of Live Television*. He worked with Hollywood stars such as Anne Bancroft, Warren Beatty, Marlon Brando, Faye Dunaway, Jane Fonda, Gene Hackman, Dustin Hoffman, Paul Newman and Jack Nicholson. Eight actors were nominated for Oscars for their performance in his films. The Homage will present a selection of ten films which provide an overview of his oeuvre.

His first feature film *The Left-Handed Gun* (1958), starring Paul Newman in the leading part, demystifies the myth of the western and was followed by *The Miracle Worker* (1962), an adaptation of material he had already produced for theatre and television. For this film, Penn was nominated for an Oscar, while Anne Bancroft and Patty Duke were honored for their outstanding performances.

After *Mickey One* (1965) and *The Chase* (1966), Arthur Penn established his worldwide reputation with *Bonnie and Clyde* in 1967, which propelled Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty to international stardom and earned him another Oscar nomination. With its fragile characters and unconventional production, far from the big Hollywood studios, the film marks the beginning of the New Hollywood era. Further renowned movies from this creative period are *Alice's Restaurant* (1969, third Oscar nomination), a film about the popular country singer Arlo Guthrie, and the western *Little Big Man* (1970) with Dustin Hoffman playing the leading part. The detective film *Night Moves* starring Gene Hackman, a laconic neo-noir farewell to the revolutionary mood of the 1960s, and the western *The Missouri Breaks* (1976), with Jack Nicholson and Marlon Brando, followed. Another masterpiece, *Four Friends* (1981), authentically depicts the ideals, moods and hopes of the 1960s.

In the 1990s, Arthur Penn focused on his work for the *Actors Studio*, of which he was president from 1992 to 2000.

"The fascination of Arthur Penn's films is the way they find new expressions – in terms of subject matter and form – and often within genre constraints", states Dr. Rainer Rother, Artistic Director of the Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen, the organization which conceives and organizes the Homage.

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American cinema owes numerous debts to Arthur Penn. His films possess the spontaneity and freedom that was characteristic of the unconventional production patterns of the *Nouvelle Vague*. It is no coincidence that his biggest success was *Bonnie and Clyde*, this mythical transcription of a gangster romance, material that was also offered to Truffaut and Godard. The director Arthur Penn is a careful observer who takes a critical look at American society and operates beyond the usual studio conventions. He is considered one of the most innovative American filmmakers of his time.

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