

Press Release



Homage and Honorary Golden Bear for Claude Lanzmann

French documentary filmmaker and producer Claude Lanzmann will be honoured with a *Homage* and awarded the Honorary Golden Bear for his lifetime achievement at the 63rd Berlin International Film Festival.

“Claude Lanzmann is one of the great documentarists. With his depictions of inhumanity and violence, of antisemitism and its consequences, he created a new kind of cinematic and ethical exploration. We feel honoured to honour him,” said Berlinale director Dieter Kosslick.

Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah* (1985) made cinematic history as an unparalleled masterpiece of commemorative culture. The nine-and-a-half hour documentary on the genocide of European Jews was screened in the Berlinale *Forum* in 1986 and received numerous international awards. The preparation and film work for *Shoah* lasted nearly twelve years. In the film, Lanzmann shows only interviews with survivors and witnesses of the Shoah, including perpetrators, and visits sites of extermination, vividly calling into consciousness the unfathomable horrors of the Nazi genocide.

Born in Paris in 1925 to Jewish parents, Claude Lanzmann fought in the Résistance, studied philosophy in France and Germany, and held a lectureship at the then newly founded Freie Universität Berlin in 1948/49. He was an active supporter of the Algerian independence movement in the early 1960s.

His exploration of the Shoah, antisemitism and political struggles for freedom infuse both his cinematic and journalistic work.

Lanzmann worked primarily as a journalist until the early 1970s, and remains the publisher of the magazine “Les Temps Modernes”, founded by Jean-Paul Sartre, to this day. During the 1960s he belonged to the circle of intellectuals surrounding Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir.

His first cinematic work was made in 1972, the documentary *Pourquoi Israël* (*Israel, Why*; France 1973), in which he illustrates the necessity of Israel's founding from the Jewish perspective. In the film *Tsahal*, which screened in the 1995 Berlinale *Forum*, he focuses on women and men who serve in the Israeli Army. *Sobibor, 14 octobre 1943, 16 heures* (France 2001), about the 1943 revolt in the Sobibor extermination camp in Poland, was also screened in the Berlinale *Forum*, in 2002. Among Claude Lanzmann's cinematic works are further films dealing with the genocide of European Jews and its living witnesses.

63. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
07. – 17.02.2013

Press Office

Potsdamer Straße 5
10785 Berlin

Phone +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:

Prof. Dieter Kosslick
(Intendant Internationale
Filmfestspiele Berlin),
Charlotte Sieben
(Kaufmännische Geschäftsführung),
Prof. Dr. Bernd M. Scherer,
Dr. Thomas Oberender

Vorsitzender des Aufsichtsrats:
Bernd Neumann

Amtsgericht Charlottenburg
HRG Nr. 96 · HRB 29357
USt ID DE 136 78 27 46



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Claude Lanzmann is one of the most important protagonists of the political-intellectual life of our time. He published his memoirs in 2009 under the title "The Patagonian Hare" ("Welt"-Literaturpreis 2010, awarded by German newspaper "Die Welt"), in which he elaborates with striking literary skill on his personal and political life story, including the years-long development process of his cinematic masterpiece *Shoah*.

The Berlinale will pay tribute to Claude Lanzmann and his extraordinary oeuvre with the Honorary Golden Bear. The award ceremony will be commemorated with a screening of *Sobibor, 14 octobre 1943, 16 heures*.

During the 63rd Berlin International Film Festival, Claude Lanzmann's complete body of work will be presented in the *Homage* dedicated to him. The *Homage* will also feature the debut screening of the restored and digitized version of *Shoah*.

Films in the *Homage*:

Pourquoi Israël (Israel, Why; France 1973)

Shoah (France 1985)

Tsahal (France/Germany 1994)

Un vivant qui passe (A Visitor from the Living; France 1997)

Sobibor, 14 octobre 1943, 16 heures (France 2001)

Le rapport Karski (The Karski Report; France 2010)

Press Office
November 29, 2012