

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Museum of Modern Art

OLIVER STONE RECEIVES MID-CAREER RETROSPECTIVE AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

For Immediate Release

August 2000

Oliver Stone, Filmmaker

September 14-28, 2000

The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 1

The Museum of Modern Art presents a mid-career retrospective of Oliver Stone from September 14 to 28, 2000. ***Oliver Stone, Filmmaker*** includes mint 35mm prints of all 14 feature-length films—from the premiere of the Director's Cut of his most recent film, *Any Given Sunday* (1999), to a newly struck copy of his first film, *Seizure* (1974). All films will be shown in the Museum's Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 1. ***Oliver Stone, Filmmaker*** was organized by Laurence Kardish, Senior Curator, Department of Film and Video.

Perhaps the most audacious and least complacent writer/director/producer working today, Stone obliges audiences to engage with his films. His works initiate social arguments, unsettle the status quo, and spiritedly posit fresh perspectives on recent history and the commonweal. Mr. Kardish states, "Boldly conceived and brilliantly cast, Stone's films are deeply disquieting. They move with a breathtaking velocity, propelled by astonishing shots. His cinema proves that Hollywood, given a brave and determined talent, can sustain a filmmaker of fierce independence whose works are at once viscerally entertaining and intellectually provocative."

Stone was born in New York City in 1946. He went to Vietnam in 1965 as a teacher of English, history, and mathematics in the Chinese Cholon district of Saigon. He left that post and after a stint as a "wiper" in the American Merchant Marine, returned to the United

States, then traveled to Mexico where he wrote the novel, *A Child's Night Dream* (St. Martin's Press, 1997). Stone then volunteered for the draft and served in the U.S. Infantry in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968. Decorated for valor, he returned from Vietnam and studied filmmaking at New York University. There he completed the film short based on his homecoming, *Last Year in Vietnam* (1969), which is included in this exhibition.

Stone's military experiences and the experiences of others in Vietnam informed the trilogy he directed over six years—*Platoon* (1986), *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989) (both of which won Stone an Academy Award, a Directors Guild of America Award, and a Golden Globe for Best Director), and *Heaven and Earth* (1993). Although *Platoon* brought Stone national celebrity, it was Stone's third feature, *Salvador*, released earlier that same year, that first drew serious critical attention to the filmmaker.

Excess in American life forms the basis for Stone's fictions, whether satiric or melodramatic, and the narratives of *Wall Street* (1987), *Talk Radio* (1988), *Natural Born Killers* (1994), and *Any Given Sunday* (1999) reflect current events so acutely that their narratives seem like kinetic documentaries. In contrast, *JFK* (1991) and *Nixon* (1995), Stone's investigations into historical record—the assassination of one president and the destiny of another—pose so many questions they render truth mutable.

Stone's films provoke passionate debate among the public and critics alike. *JFK*, for which he received a Golden Globe for Best Director, sparked a national dialogue about the Kennedy assassination. This controversy prompted then President George Bush to pass a bill to open millions of pages of government documents that had been sealed for decades—an unprecedented government reaction to a motion picture.

Oliver Stone, Filmmaker

is a part of the exhibition *Open Ends* which celebrates the extraordinary richness of MoMA's holdings in art since 1960. Along with familiar masterworks by some of the most influential artists of the past 40 years, *Open Ends* presents an impressive number of recently acquired works by emerging artists, reaffirming MoMA's ongoing commitment to contemporary creativity. In many respects, *Open Ends* offers a preview of the fresh emphasis on contemporary art anticipated in the installation of MoMA's new building, scheduled to be completed in 2004.

The Museum of Modern Art acknowledges the kind cooperation of Arthur Manson in making this exhibition possible.

Oliver Stone, Filmmaker

Screening Schedule:

Thursday, September 14, 6:00 p.m.; Saturday, September 16, 2:00 p.m.

Salvador

. 1986. USA/Great Britain. Directed by Oliver Stone. Screenplay by Stone and Richard Boyle. Cinematography by Robert Richardson. Edited by Claire Simpson. Music by Georges Delerue. With James Woods, James Belushi, Michael Murphy, John Savage, Elpedia Carrillo, Tony Plana. A drama about the moral education of a cynic, *Salvador* remains one of the rare American narratives about the catastrophic nature of politics in Central America. 123 min. Preceded by Stone's student film, *Last Year in Vietnam*. 1969. USA. 10 min. (Print courtesy New York University, Tisch School of the Arts, Maurice Kanbar Institute of Film and Television.).

Friday, September 15, 2:30 p.m.; Sunday, September 17, 5:00 p.m.

The Hand

. 1981. USA. Written and directed by Oliver Stone. Based on the book *The Lizard's Tail* by Marc Brandel. Cinematography by King Baggot. Edited by Richard Marks. Music by James Horner. Special Effects Consultant: Carlo Rambaldi. With Michael Caine, Andrea Marcovicci, Annie McEnroe, Bruce McGill, Viveca Lindfors, Rosemary Murphy. In the seven years between his first film and this, his second, Stone wrote about a dozen screenplays, one of which, *Midnight Express*, won him an Academy Award for Best Screenplay (Based on material from *Another Medium*). Like the writer in *Seizure*, the leading character of *The Hand* is an artist—this time a cartoonist—surprised and distressed by a failing marriage. In an accident he literally loses his drawing hand, and nasty things begin to happen. Vincent Canby in *The New York Times* wrote that the film was "about anger so profound that it goes unrecognized." 104 min.

Friday, September 15, 6:00 p.m.; Monday, September 18, 2:30 p.m.

Talk Radio

. 1988. USA. Directed by Oliver Stone. Screenplay by Eric Bogosian and Stone. Adapted from the play of the same name created by Bogosian and Tad Savinar, and from the book *Talked to Death: The Life and Murder of Alan Berg* by Stephen Singular. Cinematography by Robert Richardson. Edited by David Brenner. With Eric Bogosian, Ellen Greene, Leslie Hope, John C. McGinley, Alec Baldwin, John Pankow. After *Wall Street*, Stone chose to work on a "small, contained" feature by collaborating with Eric Bogosian on *Talk Radio*, the play Bogosian performed on stage in 1985. They created a chamber biography of Barry Champlain, a Jewish Dallas talk show host whose dark celebrity resides in his merciless responses to those who call into his program. *Talk Radio* was suggested by the 1984 murder of Denver radio personality Alan Berg by a white supremacist group. 110 min.

Friday, September 15, 8:15 p.m.; Sunday, September 17, 2:00 p.m.

Seizure

. 1974. USA/Canada. Directed by Oliver Stone. Screenplay by Edward Mann and Stone. Cinematography by Roger Racine. Edited by Nobuko Oganessoff and Stone. With Jonathan Frid, Martine Beswick, Joe Sirola, Christina Pickles, Herve Villechaize, Anne Meacham. Stone's first feature, made in Canada, is about a writer whose bad luck it is to see his horrid characters materialize. 93 min.

Saturday, September 16, 5:00 p.m.; Tuesday, September 19, 2:30 p.m.

Wall Street

. 1987. USA. Directed by Oliver Stone. Screenplay by Stanley Weiser and Stone. Cinematography by Robert Richardson. Edited by Claire Simpson. Music by Stewart Copeland. With Michael Douglas, Charlie Sheen, Daryl Hannah, Hal Holbrook, Terence Stamp, Martin Sheen. Stone's father, Louis, who worked on Wall Street most of his life, introduced Oliver to "many people of all value systems, creeds, and greeds." The driving force of *Wall Street* is one of Stone's most seductive creations—the corporate raider Gordon Gekko (Douglas), a man whose rapaciousness is so smooth and whose ideas so eloquent, that he became, in spite of his heartlessness,

an emblem for American business. 120 min.

Monday, September 18, 6:00 p.m.; Thursday, September 21, 2:30 p.m.

The Doors

. 1991. USA. Directed by Oliver Stone. Screenplay by J. Randal Johnson and Stone. Cinematography by Robert Richardson. Edited by David Brenner and Joe Hutshing. Music by The Doors. With Val Kilmer, Meg Ryan, Kevin Dillon,

Kathleen Quinlan, Kyle MacLachlan, Frank Whaley. Stephen Schiff mused in *The New Yorker* that *The Doors* was a personal film that allowed Stone to exorcise "a Morrison-like narcissism, pursuing his own demons and death, and attempting himself to 'break on through to the other side.'" Perhaps *The Doors* is a personal film, but it is also the chronicle of an extraordinary and self-destructing personality, Jim Morrison, and the tumultuous 1960s in which he lived. 135 min.

Tuesday, September 19, 6:00 p.m.; Sunday, September 24, 2:00 p.m.

U-Turn

. 1997. USA. Directed by Oliver Stone. Screenplay by John Ridley, based on his book *Stray Dogs*. Cinematography by Robert Richardson. Edited by Hank Corwin and Thomas J. Nordberg. Music by Ennio Morricone. With Sean Penn, Jennifer Lopez, Nick Nolte, Powers Boothe, Claire Danes, Joaquin Phoenix. With an unusual color palette and a nod to Native American wisdom, *U-Turn* is Stone's comic riff on film noir. The automobile of a young hood (Penn) driving through Superior, Arizona, at desert's edge, breaks down, and he is obliged to spend one hellacious day in a town where every one of his existential choices is called into question and whose population makes his stay more permanent than he had originally intended. 125 min.

Thursday, September 21, 6:00 p.m.; Tuesday, September 26, 2:00 p.m.

Nixon

. 1995. USA. Directed by Oliver Stone. Screenplay by Stephen J. Rivele, Christopher Wilkinson, and Stone. Cinematography by Robert Richardson. Edited by Brian Berdan and Hank Corwin. Music by John Williams. With Anthony Hopkins, Joan Allen, James Woods, J.T. Walsh, Powers Boothe, David Hyde Pierce. Stone: "Nixon remains one of the most compelling, frustrating and fascinating figures of 20th century American history. In fact, Nixon is, in the truest sense of the word, a man of the century... It's almost as if he embodies everything that's right and wrong about America in general and American politicians in particular... His potential was limitless, but ultimately was limited by powers that even he couldn't control. To some degree, *Nixon* is about the illusion of power." *Nixon*, a tragedy about a man undone by ambition, is considered by some critics to be Stone's most gratifyingly complex film. The fact that in the mid-1990's a three-hour-plus meditation on "the illusion of power" was made in Hollywood is an accomplishment in itself. 190 min.

Friday, September 22, 2:00 p.m.; Thursday, September 28, 6:00 p.m.

JFK

. 1991. USA. Directed by Oliver Stone. Screenplay by Zachary Sklar and Stone, based on the books *On The Trail of the Assassins* by Jim Garrison and *Crossfire: The Plot that Killed Kennedy* by Jim Marrs. Cinematography by Robert Richardson. Edited by Joe Hutshing and Pietro Scalia. Music by John Williams. With Kevin Costner, Sissy Spacek, Joe Pesci, Tommy Lee Jones, Gary Oldman, Kevin Bacon. In terms of ambition, construction, and tension there is nothing in contemporary American cinema quite like *JFK*. With this film, Stone does not so much as rewrite history as create one. Stone does not subscribe to the findings of the Warren Commission, and posits a "countermyth" that he believes is not only plausible, but also an accurate reflection of the 'spiritual meaning of the [Kennedy] assassination.' 188 min.

Friday, September 22, 6:00 p.m.; Sunday, September 24, 5:00 p.m.

Natural Born Killers

. 1994. USA. Directed by Oliver Stone. Screenplay by David Veloz, Richard Rutowski and Stone, based on a story by Quentin Tarantino. Cinematography by Robert Richardson. Edited by Hank Corwin and Brian Berdan. With Woody Harrelson, Juliette Lewis, Robert Downey, Jr., Tommy Lee Jones, Tom Sizemore, Rodney Dangerfield. The phantasmagoric *Natural Born Killers* is, unfortunately, one of the most reviled American films. Detractors contend that its cartoonishly violent couple, Mickey and Mallory, encouraged some viewers to go on murder sprees and that consequently, Stone and Warner Bros. should be held responsible for damage presumably caused by unstable audiences. This argument suggests a chilling disregard for freedom of expression, and it is surprising that *Natural Born Killers*, a wild excursion into America's media fetish for the celebrity outlaw—as well as break-through film technically—caused such offense. 120 min.

Friday, September 22, 8:15 p.m.; Saturday, September 23, 12:00 p.m.

Platoon

. 1986. USA/Great Britain. Written and directed by Oliver Stone. Cinematography by Robert Richardson. Edited by Claire Simpson. Music by Georges Delerue. With Tom Berenger, Willem Dafoe, Charlie Sheen, Forest Whitaker, Francesco Quinn, John C. McGinley. On September 14, 1967, the night before his twenty-first birthday, Stone, who had dropped out of Yale and was distressed by his inability to write, was en route to Vietnam to "experience life fully and perhaps emerge another person." Although two veterans of former Vietnam tours are the protagonists of *Platoon*, the narrative focus is a newly arrived young soldier, Chris Taylor (Sheen), who, like Stone, enlisted for combat—a decision that confounds the other platoon members. 113 min.

Saturday, September 23, 2:30 p.m.; Monday, September 25, 6:00 p.m.

Born on The Fourth of July

. 1989. USA. Directed by Oliver Stone. Screenplay by Ron Kovic and Stone from the book by Kovic. Cinematography by Robert Richardson. Edited by David Brenner. Music by John Williams. With Tom Cruise, Kyra Sedgwick, Raymond J. Barry, Caroline Kava, Jerry Levine, William Dafoe. Stone had

written the screenplay to Kovic's book in 1978 but the project fell through. Ten years and five films later, *Born* was produced.

Kovic (Cruise), an all-American youth from Massapequa, Long Island, enlisted as a Marine to fight the Communists in Vietnam and returned from his second tour of duty a paraplegic, soon to be radicalized by what 'greeted' him during rehabilitation. He became a powerful and persuasive spokesperson for Vietnam Veterans Against the War. 145 min.

Saturday, September 23, 5:30 p.m.; Monday, September 25, 2:30 p.m.

Heaven and Earth

. 1993. USA. Directed by Oliver Stone. Screenplay by Stone based on the memoirs *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places* by Le Ly Hayslip and Jay Wurts, and *Child of War, Woman of Peace* by Le Ly Hayslip and James Hayslip. Cinematography by Robert Richardson. Edited by David Brenner and Sally Menke. Music by Kitaro. With Hiep Thi Le, Tommy Lee Jones, Joan Chen, Haing S. Ngor, Debbie Reynolds, Dustin Nguyen. *Heaven and Earth* is a film adapted from the turbulent life story of Le Ly Phung Ti, whose childhood on the border of a divided Vietnam came to an end with a series of physical abuses visited upon her by South Vietnamese, Vietcong, and American forces. She then marries an American soldier traumatized by his experiences in Vietnam, and goes with him to America as an immigrant. Le Ly's autobiography is one of suffering, transformation and forgiveness within a Buddhist framework. 140 min.

Tuesday, September 26, 6:00 p.m.; Thursday, September 28, 2:30 p.m.

Any Given Sunday

. 1999. USA. Directed by Oliver Stone. Screenplay by John Logan and Stone. Cinematography by Salvatore Totino. Edited by Tom Nordberg, Keith Salmon, Stuart Waks, Stuart Levy. With Al Pacino, Cameron Diaz, Dennis Quaid, Jamie Foxx, L.L. Cool J, James Woods. A canny and sensational assemblage of Oliver Stone themes—recreation as Big Business, the social tensions that drive American society, combat, camaraderie, grizzled mentors and naïve protégées, parents and children—*Any Given Sunday* is more than just football, it is an American opera. Director's Cut, approx. 156 min.

Note: All programs are subject to change without notice. The public may call

212/708-9480 to confirm schedule.

The Museum's film programs are made possible by grants from the New York State Council on the Arts, The National Endowment for the Arts, and The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art.

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