



PRESS RELEASE

09/25

EMBARGOED until 21.00hrs SATURDAY 21 MARCH 2009

21 March 2009

Ridley Scott receives BFI Fellowship

BFI celebrates the work of the great British director and producer

The BFI is delighted to announce that **Ridley Scott** today became the 62nd recipient of a BFI Fellowship, joining other distinguished names in cinema history such as **David Lean**, **Clint Eastwood**, **Bernardo Bertolucci** and **Bette Davis**, and **Sir Denis Forman**, **Verity Lambert** and **Lord Bernstein** from the world of television. Created in 1983, the BFI Fellowship is the highest accolade the BFI can bestow and is given in recognition of the outstanding achievement of those who have helped shape film and television culture in the UK.

Director of ***Thelma & Louise*** (1991), ***Gladiator*** (2000), and ***American Gangster*** (2007), Ridley Scott's first film ***Boy and Bicycle*** (1965) was made with the help of the **BFI Experimental Film Fund**. His career began in television in the mid-1960s, when he worked as a set designer, then director, on series such as ***Z-Cars*** and ***The Informer***. He later moved into commercial advertising where he was renowned for his technical prowess and dazzling visuals. His debut feature film was ***The Duellists*** in 1977, which went on to win the Special Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival; two years later he received universal acclaim with ***Alien*** (1979), which has since become a classic in the sci-fi genre.

Following an on-stage discussion and celebration of his career to date at the **BFI Southbank**, the BFI Fellowship was presented by acclaimed director and former BFI Governor **Stephen Frears**. There was also a screening of Ridley Scott's magnificent sci-fi thriller ***Blade Runner*** (1982) which took first place in the BFI's recent **75th birthday poll Visions for the Future**. The poll asked people to vote for one of 75 nominated films that they'd wish to preserve for future audiences.

Greg Dyke, Chair of the BFI Governors said:

"Ridley Scott is one of the foremost directors of his generation. For me, *Thelma and Louise* is among the most outstanding films of my lifetime. The scope and sweep of Ridley Scott's ambition, the astonishing detail in his portrayal of different worlds and different eras, is remarkable and unforgettable. Nearly all his films have become classics as his story-telling never fails to engage a huge range of audiences. But it is for his whole body of work that we celebrate with this BFI Fellowship."

- ENDS -

Press contact: Rachel Cook

Telephone: 020 7957 4833

Email: rachel.cook@bfi.org.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS:

BFI Fellowships

The Fellowship of the British Film Institute was created in 1983, coinciding with its 50th anniversary and a Jubilee banquet at the Guildhall. It was at this event that Fellowships were conferred on six of the most eminent film-makers in the world – Marcel Carné, David Lean, Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger, Satyajit Ray and Orson Welles. A full roll call of recipients can be found at: <http://www.bfi.org.uk/about/people/fellows/>.

In 2008 the Fellowship was given a new lease of life with a visually striking redesign by **Haberdashery London LLP**, a creative direction and development agency based in East London. Tracing the historical foundations of the moving image, the award is made up of 24 layers of blue Norwegian glass and a single clear 25th layer, interacting with natural light, casting colour and dynamic lines across its setting. This award is the inspired embodiment of film-making, reminiscent of both the director's lens and the number of frames per second used in both traditional celluloid (24 fps) and digital (25 fps) film formats.

BFI Visions for the Future

Created specifically to generate a nationwide debate on the future of film, the BFI's **Visions for the Future** poll was launched as part of its 75th birthday celebrations in September 2008. The poll has generated spirited discussions and reams of nominated films from the public and film commentators since. More than 20,000 people participated, voting in ballot boxes across the UK and online through the BFI website and YouTube. First-place winner *Blade Runner* was nominated by **James Christopher**, film critic of **The Times**. The runners-up were *Stalker* (1979) nominated by Cate Blanchett and *Quadrophenia* (1979) nominated by Jaime Winstone.

There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archival collections, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you.

***** PICTURE DESK *****

A selection of images is available for publication. Contact rachel.cook@bfi.org.uk.