

## **SPECIAL CINEMA PRIZE FOR THE CULTURE OF PEACE AWARD- GIVING CEREMONY, OCTOBER 18**

Paris, October 5 {No.2000-97} - The Special Cinema Prize for the Culture of Peace will be awarded on October 18 (6.30 p.m., Room I) by French actress and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Catherine Deneuve to Chinese director Zhang Yuan for his film *Seventeen Years* in a ceremony to be followed by a screening of the film in its original Chinese-language version with subtitles in French. This will be the first French preview of the film which won the Best Director Award at the 1999 Venice Film Festival.

The laureate was elected by a 10-member international jury, presided by French film critic Michel Ciment. Other jury members are: Irene Bignardi (Italy), Fjrid Boughdir (Tunisia), Jos Carlos Avellar (Brazil), Dan Fainaru (Israel), Richard Ishmail (South Africa), Yasushi Kawarabata (Japan), Zsolt Kezdi-Kovacs (Hungary), Richard Peca (United States) and Alexander Walker (United Kingdom). The jury declared that *Seventeen Years* is "a remarkable work for peace and for bringing people closer together". It also awarded two special mentions: to Samira Makhmalbaf of Iran (for *Blackboard*) and to Amos Gitai of Israel (for *Kippur*).

The Special Cinema Prize for the Culture of Peace was created by UNESCO for the year 2000, International Year for the Culture of Peace, and is organised in partnership with Radio France. The Prize consists of a work by the Tajik sculptor Amri. The award-giving ceremony will take place in the presence of the President of UNESCO's General Conference, Jaroslava Moserova, the Chairperson of its Executive Board, Sonia Mendieta de Badaroux, and of the Permanent Delegate of China to UNESCO, Chongli Zhang. Addresses will be given by the Director-General of UNESCO, Konchiro Matsuura, the Chief Executive Officer of Radio France, Jean-Marie Cavada, and the President of the jury.

Over the last few years, Zhang Yuan has made his mark as one of China's leading directors with very realistic films set in an urban environment. The prize-winning film, *Guonian Huijia* (*Seventeen Years*) tells of the tragedy that befalls an ordinary family. Relations between two half sisters turn sour and lead to a fight in which one of the sisters dies. The killer is jailed and, seventeen years later, is released from prison for a few hours and finds herself all alone outside the prison gates. She is only able to find her family at the end of the day for a fleeting emotionally charged moment. The film was largely shot in the prison of Tianjin, an old jail 200 kilometres from Beijing with 5,000 male and female inmates serving sentences of ten years and more.

Regarding this film about a family reconciliation, Zhang Yuan says: "The project started with a television programme in which I saw a moving scene of prisoners meeting their loved ones. Having visited a number of prisons myself, I discovered that each prisoner has a complicated story and that his or her experience is much more complex than that of people outside prison."

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