

Beat: Arts

STUDIO GHIBLI HONORARY PALME D'OR OF THE 77th FESTIVAL DE CANNES

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USPA NEWS - The Festival de Cannes is honoring a cinema legend, awarding its Honorary Palme d'or for the first time to a group: Studio Ghibli.

Alongside the Hollywood greats, the Japanese studio embodied by two superb storytellers, Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata, and a host of cult characters, has unleashed a fresh wind on animated film over the past four decades.

"I am truly honored and delighted that the studio is awarded the Honorary Palme d'or," declares Toshio Suzuki, co-founder of the Studio Ghibli. "I would like to thank the Festival de Cannes from the bottom of my heart. Forty years ago, Hayao Miyazaki, Isao Takahata and I established Studio Ghibli with the desire to bring high-level, high-quality animation to children and adults of all ages. Today, our films are watched by people all over the world, and many visitors come to the Ghibli Museum, Mitaka and Ghibli Park to experience the world of our films for themselves. We have truly come a long way for Studio Ghibli to become such a big organization. Although Miyazaki and I have aged considerably, I am sure that Studio Ghibli will continue to take on new challenges, led by the staff who will carry on the spirit of the company. It would be my greatest pleasure if you look forward to what's next."

With this Honorary Palme d'or, Studio Ghibli joins those who have inspired cinematography, whom the Festival de Cannes celebrates every year. "For the first time in our history, it's not a person but an institution that we have chosen to celebrate," said Iris Knobloch, President of the Festival de Cannes, and Thierry Frémaux, General Delegate. "Like all the icons of the Seventh Art, these characters populate our imaginations with prolific, colorful universes and sensitive, engaging narrations. With Ghibli, Japanese animation stands as one of the great adventures of cinephilia, between tradition and modernity".

The Festival de Cannes was an early explorer of the animated film adventure. In the early years, Walt Disney productions presented short films (1946) and the feature *Dumbo* (1947). In 1953, Walt Disney himself took *Peter Pan* to the Croisette, where René Laloux won a special Jury Prize in 1973 for his first feature, *Fantastic Planet*. After a long absence, animation returned to Cannes in force with *Shrek* (2001) and *Shrek 2* (2004), *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence* (2004), *Persepolis* (2007), *Waltz with Bashir* (2008), which all received awards in the Competition, or even *Up*, which opened the Festival in 2009. Many other films, such as *Kirikou and the Wild Beasts*, *Inside Out*, *The Summit of the Gods* and more recently, *Elemental*, and *Robot Dreams* have also left their mark. Moreover, *Un Certain Regard* welcomed *The Red Turtle* (2016), Studios Ghibli's first collaboration with a European production company.

It all began 40 years ago. The success of Hayao Miyazaki's *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* in 1984 enabled him to establish Studio Ghibli with Isao Takahata in 1985. They achieved what seemed to be an impossible feat: independently producing pure masterpieces and conquering the mass market. Producer Toshio Suzuki, a key studio member from the start and soon assuming a full time role, he managed the studio with formidable efficiency, establishing perfect complementarity between the projects of Miyazaki and Takahata, by turns producers and directors.

In 1988, with the simultaneous release of *Grave of the Fireflies* and *My Neighbor Totoro*, these outstanding creative artists achieved a double success. In 1992, Studio Ghibli was able to begin financing its own feature films with *Porco Rosso*. In the early years, only the two founders directed their films, but gradually young auteurs such as Goro Miyazaki and Hiromasa Yonebayashi distinguished themselves and joined the Studio.

In four decades and over twenty feature films, Studio Ghibli won over its audiences with works imbued with poetry and with humanistic and environmental commitments. With *Porco Rosso*, *Pom Poko*, *Princess Mononoke*, *My Neighbors the Yamadas*, *The Wind Rises* and *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya*, Studio Ghibli has delivered stories that are as personal as they are universal. They have won prestigious awards, including both the Golden Bear and the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature for *Spirited Away*, and more

recently another Oscar for The Boy and the Heron.

In Europe as in the United States, these films are among the animators' most acclaimed work, between art for art and the commercial challenges of the industry. They are true models, as much for the quality of their writing, directing and animation as for their commitment to extensive aesthetic aspirations. In 2001, the Ghibli Museum, Mitaka opened on the outskirts of Tokyo to showcase the animators' work and rich heritage, as well as to show short films created for the museum, thus asserting the Studio's cultural importance. In 2022, the Ghibli Park, a hybrid park facility expressing the world of Studio Ghibli, opened in Aichi Prefecture. Goro Miyazaki, the first Director of the Ghibli Museum, was appointed the Creative Development Director to oversee the park construction. "

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