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**AFI FEST 2006 PRESENTED BY AUDI ANNOUNCES
THE WORLD PREMIERE OF "CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER"
AS CLOSING NIGHT FILM**

AFI FEST ALSO ANNOUNCES ITS 2006 JURY PANELS

LOS ANGELES, CA, October 11, 2006—AFI FEST 2006 presented by Audi: AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival announces that Zhang Yimou's *CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER* has been chosen as the Festival's Closing Night Gala presentation. Written and directed by Zhang Yimou, *CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER*, stars Chow Yun Fat, Gong Li and Jay Chou. The film is set during China's Tang Dynasty of the 10th century on the eve of the Chong Yang Festival. The Imperial family reunites as the volatile balance of power unfolds between the King (Chow Yun Fat), the Queen (Gong Li) and their three sons. Pitting King against Queen and father against sons, betrayal, deceit, passion, and secrets are revealed. This presentation will mark the film's World Premiere.

CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER, which was recently announced as China's official selection to the 79th Oscar Best Foreign Film category and completed its qualifying run there, will screen at ArLight's Cinerama Dome during the Festival's Closing Night, November 12. After the film, AFI FEST's Rooftop Village, an interconnected suite of hospitality pavilions adjacent to the theater, will be transformed for a lavish gala event in keeping with the spirit and look of the film.

"Without a doubt, Zhang Yimou is one of the finest filmmakers of his generation. His stories, characters and stunning imagery have captivated audiences worldwide. To host the World Premiere of his newest masterpiece in our 20th year is truly an honor," said Christian Gaines, Director of AFI FEST.

"We are thrilled to be presenting Zhang Yimou's magnificent new epic drama *CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER* as the Closing Night presentation at AFI FEST. This is one of Zhang Yimou's very best films and commemorates his reunion with actress Gong Li in one of her finest performances as well," said Michael Barker & Tom Bernard, co-presidents of Sony Pictures Classics.

CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER begins on the eve of the Chong Yang Festival, a celebration of family, ancestry and escape from evil fortune that is traditionally associated with chrysanthemum blossoms. On the eve of the event, the Emperor (Chow Yun Fat) returns unexpectedly with one of his sons under the pretext of celebrating the holiday with his family. However, given the chilled relations between the Emperor and the ailing Empress (Gong Li), this appears disingenuous. The Emperor and Empress both harbor equally clandestine plans. The Emperor senses a looming threat and soon a tumultuous sequence of surprises and secrets are revealed amid the glamour and grandeur of the festival.

Since his directorial debut, RED SORGHUM (1987) won the Golden Bear Award at the Berlin Film Festival, Zhang Yimou has established his reputation as one of the most talented and influential directors today. He began his film career as a student of cinematography in his native China at the Beijing Film Academy. He became a leading member of China's Fifth Generation Filmmakers, the first group to graduate following the turbulent Cultural Revolution. As a skilled cinematographer, his credits include YELLOW EARTH (1984), OLD WELL (1986) and THE BIG PARADE (1986).

Yimou has received multiple honors as a director. He is the first Chinese filmmaker to receive Motion Picture Academy recognition, being nominated for Academy Awards in the Best Foreign Film category for JU DOU in 1990, RAISE THE RED LANTERN in 1991 and HERO in 2003. HERO went on to sweep the 22nd Hong Kong Film Awards, winning awards for Best Action Choreography, Best Art Direction, Best Cinematography, Best Costume Design, Best Music, Best Sound and Best Visual Effects. Yimou's box office hit HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS is the recipient of multiple international awards as well as BAFTA and Golden Globe nominations for Best Foreign Film. Future projects go beyond the big screen to the stage of New York's Metropolitan Opera. In December 2006, he will direct Placido Domingo in the world premiere of composer Tan Dun's original opera *The First Emperor*. Yimou has also been named chief director of the opening and closing ceremonies of the 29th Olympic Games in Beijing, 2008.

AFI FEST is also pleased to announce its feature film jury selection. This year the Festival has brought together a dynamic group of jurors that represent a diverse cross-section of the international film community. The features, documentaries and shorts of the International Competition programs at AFI FEST have the opportunity to garner prizes awarded by a group of distinguished jurors, who will be among the audience watching the Competition films.

The heart of discovery at AFI FEST, the Competition films recognize first and second-time filmmakers who present a distinctive cinematic voice. All AFI FEST Competition films are U.S. or World premieres. Recent films in competition have included: TSOTSI, NO MAN'S LAND and IN THE BEDROOM.

There are 12 films in the International Feature Competition, 12 Documentaries in the International Documentary Competition and four feature length shorts programs in the International Shorts Competition. Three jurors in each category are invited to select the winner of the Grand Jury Prize. Three audience awards are also presented at the close of the festival. Past AFI FEST Award winners include Jim Sheridan (IN AMERICA),

Fernando Meirelles (CITY OF GOD), Stacy Peralta (DOGTOWN AND Z-BOYS), Gavin Hood (TSOTSI), Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu (AMORES PERROS), Kenneth Lonergan (YOU CAN COUNT ON ME), Eiji Okuda (AN ADOLESCENT) and Jean-Marc Valée (CRAZY).

The International Narrative Competition sets out to discover the best and the brightest upcoming talent in the world. The Documentary Competition celebrates today's newest voices using the power of film to engage, inspire and entertain audiences with compelling true stories from around the world. In 30 minutes or less, the shorts filmmaker is challenged with presenting a clear and developed idea with a significant time limit. The AFI FEST Shorts Competition sets out to present the most innovative films that best use this format to push the edge of traditional storytelling.

The International Competition Jury:

John Anderson, Film Critic

Anderson's reviews and features appear regularly in Newsday, Variety, Screen International and The New York Times. He has also contributed to the Los Angeles Times, the Los Angeles Times Magazine, The Nation, Christian Science Monitor, as well as Film Comment, LA Weekly, Artforum, Interview, Out, Ms. and The Washington Post. He is a past member of the selection committee of the New York Film Festival and the author of *Sundancing*, *Edward Yang* and, with Laura Kim, *I Wake Up Screening*. He is a member and two-time past chair of the New York Film Critics Circle, a member of the National Society of Film Critics and a member of the National Book Critics Circle.

Vondie Curtis Hall

Actor/director/screenwriter Vondie Curtis Hall has had success in both film and television, and on both sides of the camera. His most recent feature film as a writer/director was the summer hit *WAIST DEEP*, which earned him a Black Film Award nomination for Outstanding Direction of a Motion Picture. Hall's previous film *REDEMPTION: THE STAN TOOKIE WILLIAMS STORY*, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival. Hall was also the writer/director of the feature film *GRIDLOCK'D*, starring Tim Roth and the late Tupac Shakur, for which he received the National Board of Review Award for Excellence in Filmmaking. As an actor he has appeared on television in *SOUL FOOD* and *I'LL FLY AWAY*, and as a series regular on *CHICAGO HOPE*. Trained at Juilliard, Hall has appeared on Broadway in a number of musicals including the original Broadway production of *Dreamgirls*. Hall has appeared in many feature films such as, *COMING TO AMERICA*, *MYSTERY TRAIN*, *PASSION FISH*, *CROOKLYN*, *WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S ROMEO + JULIET* and *EVE'S BAYOU*. Most recently Vondie has co-starred in Kasi Lemmons's *TALK TO ME*, and John Sayles's *HONEYDRIPPER*.

Lisa Gay Hamilton

A graduate of the Tisch School of the Arts and the Juilliard School of Drama, Hamilton's film credits include *THE TRUTH ABOUT CHARLIE* and *BELOVED* for director Jonathan Demme, Clint Eastwood's *TRUE CRIME*, the independent films *PALOOKAVILLE*, *DRUNKS* and as Ophelia in director Campbell Scott's independent film version of *HAMLET*. Hamilton's latest film credit, *NINE LIVES* directed by Rodrigo Garcia, premiered at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival. She co-starred for seven years on the

Emmy Award winning, David Kelley drama THE PRACTICE. Hamilton made her prime-time directorial debut on THE PRACTICE, and BEAH: A BLACK WOMAN SPEAKS marks her documentary directorial debut. BEAH: A BLACK WOMAN SPEAKS is the recipient of numerous prizes including the 2003 AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival Grand Jury Prize in Documentary Competition.

Daryl Hannah

Daryl Hannah's career has spanned over a 20-year period appearing in over 40 feature films. From her early start as a teenager in Brian De Palma's THE FURY starring Kirk Douglas, she set a pattern of working with some of the most talented and accomplished actors and directors of our time including Woody Allen, Neil Jordan, Oliver Stone, Robert Altman and John Sayles to name a few. As well as the big studio films, Hannah has become a strong supporter and advocate of independent cinema, not only with her acting, but also by producing many films. Hannah can be seen in Quentin Tarantino's highly successful KILL BILL Vol. 1 & Vol. II, in which she played the one eyed samurai assassin "Elle Driver." She recently completed John Sayles's political satire SILVER CITY. Hannah wrote, directed and produced a 12-minute short, entitled THE LAST SUPPER which received the Berlin International Film Festival's Jury Award for Best Short. Hannah also directed, produced and shot the documentary STRIP NOTES — inspired while researching her role for DANCING AT THE BLUE IGUANA—which was shown on HBO and UK's Channel 4. Hannah is an environmental activist, living on solar power, adopting animals and driving a clean-burning vehicle.

Christine Lahti

Critically acclaimed stage, screen and television actress Christine Lahti has left an indelible mark on the theater and film community with her bold, inspiring and very rich performances. For her role in JACK & BOBBY, the acclaimed WB series in 2004, Lahti earned both a SAG and a Golden Globe nomination and received a Prism Award. In 2000, she directed her first feature film, MY FIRST MISTER. The film, which stars Albert Brooks and Leelee Sobieski, was chosen as the opening night presentation at the Sundance Film Festival that year. In 1995, Lahti won an Academy Award for her direction of the Live Action Short Film LIEBERMAN IN LOVE, in which she also starred. She has also directed several episodes of CHICAGO HOPE, in which she starred for four years as Doctor Kathryn Austin. For her work on CHICAGO HOPE, Lahti was awarded both the Emmy and Golden Globe Awards.

Susan Petersen

Susan Petersen is an internationally recognized leader in short film distribution. Petersen has over 15 years media experience in television research and marketing, traditional and new media advertising, as well as corporate business development. Currently, Petersen is the Vice President of Global Film Sales and Acquisitions for SHORTS INTERNATIONAL, the largest short film entertainment company with a library of over 3000 films that includes the prestigious American Film Institute short film library. Her responsibilities include film sales, business development, overseeing acquisitions, and programming the company's iTunes short film channel SHORTS. She handles selling films to TV, Broadband, Mobile, VOD, DVD, and new media channels around the world including HBO, Sundance, Canal+ France, and Comedy Central.

Prior to SHORTS INTERNATIONAL, Petersen developed the short film distribution division for HYPNOTIC films into a successful and renowned entity.

Don Roos

Don Roos is the screenwriter of LOVE FIELD, SINGLE WHITE FEMALE, BOYS ON THE SIDE, and the 1996 remake of DIABOLIQUE. In 1998 he made his directorial debut with THE OPPOSITE OF SEX, and won two Independent Spirit Awards for best first feature and best screenplay. He recently directed his script, HAPPY ENDINGS, which starred Lisa Kudrow and Maggie Gyllenhaal and opened the 2005 Sundance Film Festival. He is currently adapting the New York Times bestseller *Marley and Me* for Fox Films.

Wash Westmoreland

Wash Westmoreland wrote and co-directed QUINCEANERA, which screened at the Berlin International Film Festival following its Sundance Film Festival world premiere, where it won both the dramatic grand jury prize and the narrative audience award. It was subsequently acquired by Sony Pictures Classics and released in theatres this past summer. Westmoreland previously directed the documentary GAY REPUBLICANS, about the dilemma faced by gay Republicans considering President Bush's opposition to gay marriage.

Wilmer Valderrama

Best known for his role as 'Fez,' on the hit series THAT 70's SHOW, Wilmer will be seen on the big screen this year in multiple upcoming feature films and as creator, producer and host of the hit MTV show, YO MOMMA which is currently filming its second season. Valderrama can be seen in Richard Linklater's FAST FOOD NATION, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival this year. In early December, Valderrama will star in UNACCOMPANIED MINORS. Valderrama was recently seen in the Sundance 2006 hit film THE DARWIN AWARDS. Additionally, Valderrama will star in the feature film version of CHIPS in which he'll play 'Ponch' and the independent feature EL MUERTO based on the successful comic book. In April 2005 Wilmer performed in the Actor's Fund of America one-performance only all-star reading of the Paramount Pictures screenplay SUNSET BOULEVARD opposite Anjelica Huston and Sir Ben Kingsley. He recently completed filming the Wim Wenders produced short film LA TORCEDURA in which he plays the lead.

The Jury and Audience Awards will be announced at the Filmmaker Awards Presentation on Sunday, November 12 at the AFI FEST Rooftop Village, located at the Festival's Headquarters, the ArLight. More than \$70,000 worth of prizes will be awarded to the winning filmmakers of the International Jury and Audience Awards. AFI FEST acknowledges those sponsors who generously support the Festival filmmakers by providing award prizes including: Eastman Kodak Company, Avid Technology, Best Buy, DALSA Digital Cinema, Entertainment Partners, IndieWire and Variety. The Aquafina Pure Vision International Documentary Grand Prize of a \$10,000 unrestricted grant will go to the recipient of the Grand Jury Prize in that category.

As previously announced, AFI FEST will open with the US premiere of BOBBY, host the Gala premieres of VOLVER, INLAND EMPIRE and THE FOUNTAIN, before closing with CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER.

AFI FEST 2006 will also be celebrating 20 years in 2006, with plans to celebrate AFI FEST and 15 years of FILMEX through a series of commemorative events, series and special programs throughout the 11-day Festival.

AFI FEST 2006 presented by Audi will run November 1-12, 2006. Passes are on sale now and individual event tickets go on sale on Friday, October 13, 2006. AFI Members enjoy a special pre-sale window for tickets from October 9-13, in addition to significant ticket/pass discounts, two free daytime screening tickets and an invitation to a members-only party held at the Festival. To order passes, tickets or for more information, visit www.AFI.com or call 1.866.AFI.FEST.

About AFI FEST

AFI is a national institute providing leadership in screen education and the recognition and celebration of excellence in the art of film, television and digital media. Celebrating 20 years as a program of the American Film Institute, AFI FEST 2006 presented by Audi will span 11 days in November, featuring international competitions of brand new films from emerging filmmakers, global showcases of the latest work from the great film masters and nightly red-carpet gala premieres.

In 2005, with 129 films from 44 countries, AFI FEST was host to 522 filmmakers and guests from 35 countries. More than 60,000 attendees gathered at the AFI FEST Village in the heart of Hollywood for hundreds of screenings, receptions and special events, with the majority of activity headquartered at the state-of-the-art ArcLight Hollywood complex.

The American Film Market (AFM), November 1 – 8, 2006 is the market partner of AFI FEST. Together, AFI FEST and AFM provide the only concurrent festival/market event in North America. As the largest motion picture trade event in the world, AFM draws film community leaders from around the globe. Each year over 8,000 attendees converge on Santa Monica for deal making, screenings, seminars, networking and parties. For more information, visit www.americanfilmmarket.com.

AFI FEST 2006 presented by Audi is supported in part by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, the Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles and the Hollywood Sign Trust. AFI FEST is proud to continue its collaborative partnership with the Skirball Cultural Center.

AFI PROJECT: 20/20 is presented in cooperation with the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, supported by a partnership of the Department of State, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

AFI FEST 2006 presented by Audi is sponsored in part by American Airlines, ArcLight Hollywood, Absolut Vodka, Aquafina, Best Buy, Charriol, Eastman Kodak Company, Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, Midway Car Rental, Moviefone, NEC and Stella Artois.

The Los Angeles Times is the Festival's Presenting Media Partner. Additional media partners include Current TV, Indie 103.1, LA Weekly and Univision.

Additional information about AFI FEST is available at www.afi.com.

About Audi of America

Audi's history in America dates to 1969, when the brand was first introduced to the U.S. market. Today, a network of over 260 Audi dealers currently offers a line of premium vehicles that include the Audi A3 compact; the sporty A4 sedan, Avant and Cabriolet models; the high performance S4 sedan, Avant and Cabriolet models; the high-revving RS 4 sports sedan; the design-leading A6 sedan and Avant; the V10-powered S6 sport sedan; the all-new Audi Q7 performance SUV; and the all-aluminum Audi A8 and S8 sedans.

Audi of America is headquartered in Auburn Hills, Michigan, and markets a line of luxury cars built in plants in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm, Germany; Bratislava, Slovakia; and Győr, Hungary.

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AFI FEST photos are available at:

<http://www.afi.com/about/press/afifest06/index.asp>

Getty Images is the Official Photographer of AFI. Daily imagery from AFI FEST 2006 will be available at www.gettyimages.com/AFIFEST.

Additional images—including select daily hand-outs from Getty Images—as well as press information, production notes, archival materials and film stills are available at www.image.net.

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