

# Globe British Columbia

ON CULTURE

## Oliver Stone brings his American history lesson to Canada



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VANCOUVER

The Vancouver Biennale – which brings public art such as *A-maze-ing Laughter* to the city – wanted to go big with the launch of its new film program. So it found a legendary Hollywood figure to help.

Earlier this year, Biennale founder and artistic director Barrie Mowatt was at a documentary film festival in Palm Springs with Oliver Stone, and asked the director whether he might come to Vancouver to inaugurate CineFest Live.

“He was most persuasive,” Mr. Stone said this week ahead of his visit to Vancouver, where he’ll lead a master class Saturday at SFU Woodward’s, followed by an event at the Vogue Theatre.

Mr. Stone is driven by concerns about social justice, making provocative films that have re-examined familiar chapters in history – the war in Vietnam, the JFK assassination – and ignited often heated debates.

His next project will take on Edward Snowden and the

National Security Agency.

On Saturday night at the Vogue, Mr. Stone will screen and discuss the final instalment in his 10-part televised documentary series *The Untold History of the United States – Bush & Obama: Age of Terror*.

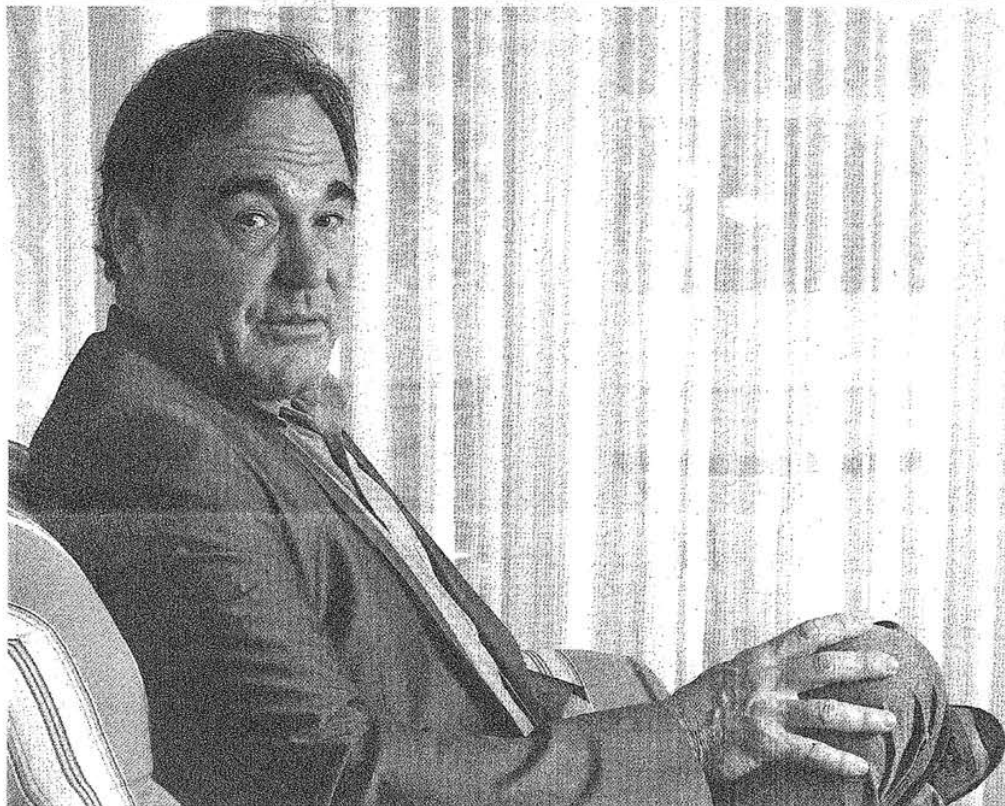
Mr. Stone spoke with The Globe from Santa Monica.

**Were you interested in the potentially different reaction the film might get from a Canadian audience?**

Yes. Generally speaking, the foreign reaction has been less cluttered by some of the establishment myth.

**Did it take some courage to present a different narrative about the “age of terror” than the one an American audience might expect?**

Who knows what they might expect? But we are definitely in the counternarrative aspect. Culture, Page 3



Oliver Stone, seen here in Los Angeles in 2008, will screen the final instalment in his 10-part televised documentary series *The Untold History of the United States – Bush & Obama: Age of Terror* in Vancouver Saturday. MARIO ANZUON/REUTERS

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### Culture: ‘There’s this self-love that has distorted our own history’

» I think many people view us as being on the progressive side of the equation down here. But mainstream media in this country has a commercial bias. There’s no possibility of this thing ever getting out on American television. Public television won’t play it. In fact, we could not get an interview on National Public Radio. It’s that bad in America now. It’s become so politically sensitive.

**In addition to having trouble getting mainstream media attention, did you find yourself under fire? And how have you dealt with that?**

Well I’ve been dealing with a lot of that my whole life. That’s what we do: We look at things from all eyes – from other coun-

tries’ points of view. It’s not all seen through American eyes, which is a problem with American history. It’s very narrow, our perception of the world. American exceptionalism prevails. There’s this belief, there’s this self-love that has distorted our own history but also our present behaviour. We assume that we’re right, that we have the right to tell other people how to live, and what to do, to intervene and to overthrow governments constantly. It’s beyond arrogant. It’s very dangerous. Very self-destructive.

**Your next film I imagine will tackle another subject from a different viewpoint. Edward Snowden has been portrayed in some circles as the enemy of the American people. I take it**

**you’re going to look at it differently?**

You’re right, and I cannot go much beyond that at this point. All I can do is confirm that I am making the movie. I’m writing it now, and that we hope to shoot in the fall. Definitely he’s an amazing turning point, we hope. We’re going to tell the story from the inside-out, from the man out.

**In the climate of mass media homogeneity and big-screen blockbusters, how important is it for you to keep making projects like these?**

I’m trying. I’ve had some setbacks, but I managed to stay out there. This *Untold History* was a huge victory for me. That was

basically financed by private investors and television, but we sold it all over the world, except for a few countries. It’s the culmination of all my work. And I’m working on a personal movie that’s very interesting, but I can’t talk about it.

**Something from your own life?**

Yes, semi-autobiographical.

**You said you’re planning to shoot the Snowden project in the fall and you’re writing it now. That’s quite a deadline.**

We’re trying, we’re trying. Every day counts. I am looking forward to two days off in Vancouver.

*This interview has been condensed and edited.*