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"ROAD RAGE" ON THE BIG SCREEN: *TWO-LANE BLACKTOP*

Starting July 2nd at Sag Harbor Cinema

"[I]t's like a drive-in movie directed by a French new wave director [...] Two-Lane Blacktop *goes all the way with its idea. And that's a rare thing in this world: a completely honest movie."* - Richard Linklater

In conjunction with the *Road Rage* exhibition at The Church (June 25-September 19; sagharborchurch.org), Sag Harbor Cinema presents an ongoing series highlighting the powerful relationship between culture and cars. This special programming will be inaugurated by a run of the '70s cult film, *Two-Lane Blacktop*, starting Friday, July 2. Described by filmmaker Richard Linklater (*Dazed and Confused, Before Sunrise*) as "the purest American road movie ever," Monte Hellman's greatest film is a tribute to a celebrated U.S. highway, Route 66. *Two-Lane Blacktop* is a boldly minimalistic, existential classic shot in gorgeous widescreen compositions, casting a sophisticated look at American male obsession. Sag Harbor Cinema honors the memory of the late Monte Hellman, who died this past April, with a special 50th Anniversary run of this critically acclaimed film. *Two-Lane Blacktop* was originally released on July 7th, 1971.

"Film is movement -which makes a car a natural cinematic tool. The brilliant show at The Church offers a great opportunity for us to revisit a few of the most memorable moments of the love affair between cinema and cars, of which *Two-Lane Blacktop* reflects the very essence," says Sag Harbor Cinema Artistic Director Giulia D'Agnolo Vallan.

Banking on *Easy Rider*'s success and Hollywood's newly found appreciation of untested, young filmmakers, Hellman convinced Universal to finance his cross-country drag race movie, with James Taylor in the lead role. Hellman, captivated by the folk singer's face as displayed on a Sunset Boulevard billboard, felt compelled to cast him in the role. In the script by novelist Rudy Wurlitzer, Taylor plays the young Driver of a customized 1955 Chevrolet 150. Dennis Wilson of the Beach Boys is Mechanic and Laurie Bird is Girl, the hitchhiker they pick up on the way. Sporting colorful sweaters aboard a Pontiac, Warren Oates plays the driver they challenge in a race from New Mexico to Washington DC. At stake are each other's cars.

Film critic Kent Jones emphasizes the youth culture that the film inspired, saying, "*Two-Lane Blacktop* is a great film devoted to nailing the particulars of something far less likely to launch magazine think pieces or talk-show digressions. It is a movie about loneliness, and the attempts made by people to connect with one another and maintain their solitude at the same time—an impossible task, an elusive dream."

As part of its Road Rage on the Big Screen sidebar, starting July 2nd, SHC will also be showing *The Fast and the Furious*, Rob Cohen's high octane cops and robbers 2001 film, set in the world of LA illegal car races that spans a 20 year old franchise, now in its 9th chapter, *F9.*

Sag Harbor Cinema Arts Center, a not-for-profit organization established to rebuild, maintain, and operate the historic Sag Harbor Cinema, is dedicated to showcasing the past, present, and future of the moving image. Sag Harbor Cinema is located at 90 Main Street, Sag Harbor, NY. For tickets go to sagharborcinema.org.

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Two-Lane Blacktop
Dir. Monte Hellman
USA, 1971; 103 mins, in English
Rated R

Drag racing east from L.A. in a souped-up '55 Chevy are the wayward Driver and Mechanic (singer/songwriter James Taylor and the Beach Boys' Dennis Wilson, in their only acting roles), accompanied by a tagalong Girl (Laurie Bird). Along the way, they meet Warren Oates's Pontiac GTO–driving wanderer and challenge him to a cross-country race—the prize: their cars' pink slips. But no summary can do justice to the existential punch of *Two-Lane Blacktop*. With its gorgeous widescreen compositions and sophisticated look at American male obsession, this stripped-down narrative from maverick director Monte Hellman is one of the artistic high points of 1970s cinema -- and possibly the greatest road movie ever made.

The Fast and the Furious
Dir. Rob Cohen
USA, 2001; 107 minutes, in English
Rated PG-13

An undercover cop infiltrates a Los Angeles street-racing crew suspected of big-rig hijackings and unexpectedly falls for the gang leader's sister.