

AU professor has hand in creating iconic film to be shown at festivals

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In 1973, as a undergraduate at Harpur College at Binghamton University, Peer Bode - now a professor of video art in the School of Art & Design at Alfred University -- was among the students who enrolled in a class on collaborative film-making, taught by Nicholas Ray, a legendary director whose credits include *Rebel without a Cause*, *Johnny Guitar*, *They Live by Night* and *55 Days at Peking*. As a class, the students collaborated on what turned out to be Ray's last film, *We Can't Go Home*, "an experimental, multi-narrative film bordering on cinema and visual arts" that is also described as "Ray's posthumous masterpiece." It was an experience that had a profound effect on Bode, as an artist and as a teacher. "Working with cinema auteur Nicholas Ray for two years was remarkable," Bode said. "I was fortunate to have had the opportunity. As a student, I saw a very large project being built up piece by piece. We learned filmmaking, moving image making, by making the film. I experienced being active in camera work, lighting, and editing. Learning was embedded in doing. "I know that discovery has entered into my own teaching. Learning the richness of ideas and the richness of one's medium by engaging in it, is an immersive material making and thinking. The ideas have agency. The materials have agency. This practice is empowering and rewarding. We were making a multi image, multi narrative using 35 mm, 16 mm and 8 mm film and also " video using the Paik-Abe video synthesizer. The project was an adventure. Art can be that.," he said. To mark the centennial of Ray's birth in 1911, the Nicholas Ray Foundation worked with the EYE Film Institute Netherlands and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science's Film Archive, with the support of Gucci, Martin Scorsese's The Film Foundation, the Gulbenikian Foundation, Cinematheque Francaise, Rai Cinema and Museo Nazionale del Cinema to restore and reconstruct the film; the world premiere of the new version will be Sept. 4 at the Venice Film Festival. The film will also be screened during the 2011 New York Film Festival, Masterworks, at 9 pm. Sunday, Oct. 2, in Alice Tully Hall, 1941 Broadway, New York, NY. Earlier this year, Bode and other students in the Harpur College class were interviewed and filmed by Susan Ray, Nicholas Ray's widow, for a documentary about the making of *We Can't Go Home*. The documentary, *Don't Expect Too Much*, will be shown at 9 p.m. Monday, Oct. 3, at Francesca Beale Theater, 144 W. 65th St., New York, NY. Susan Ray writes: "Nicholas Ray's last film, *We Can't Go Home Again*, is the result of three experiments undertaken simultaneously by the director: 1) that of teaching collaborative filmmaking to a class of college students by making a full-length feature film; 2) that of using multiple images to integrate multiple, contemporaneous narratives into one larger story; 3) that of using a new form of journalistic film that would document the political events and culture of its time through their impact on the daily lives, emotions, and spirits of individuals and their communities. "The guiding intention of the film's restoration, achieved in collaboration with the EYE Film Institute Netherlands and the Academy of Motion Pictures Film Archive, with the support of the Venice Mostra, Gucci, The Film Foundation, and the Cinmathque Franaise and Rai Cinema, was to repair the damage of time to both sound and picture; to clarify the soundtrack by returning to the original recordings and augmenting it with Ray's narration; while tampering as little as possible with the 'home-made' and expressive spontaneity of the multiple imagery. "The restoration is based on the picture of the version of *We Can't Go Home Again* first shown at the Cannes Film Festival in 1973, the most complete version of the film screened publicly. We have integrated the 1973 picture with a narration created by Ray and recorded in his own voice as he continued to work on the film after the Cannes '73 screening until his death in 1979."

On *We Can't Go Home Again* Victor Erice writes: "The passage of time has done nothing but confirm the value of *We Can't Go Home Again*, in spite of the fact that nobody seems to remember it, and in spite, too, of its unfinished condition. "Time has confirmed this film as an exceptional cinematographic experience, one that disregards every rule and risks the extreme limit. "It stands as a testament to the social conflicts that afflicted America in the early 1970s. It is a portrait both of that particular time, and, as few films can claim, it is simultaneously a portrait of the filmmaker's soul."Bode graduated with a B.A. in cinema from Binghamton University in 1974, and earned a master's degree from the Center for Media Study at the University of Buffalo in 1978. A professor of video arts in the School of Art & Design at Alfred University, Bode has been a member of the faculty since 1987. He was a co-founder and continues to be a co-director of the Institute for Electronic Arts, which was formally established in the School of Art & Design in 1997. Since 1974, he has been researching, producing, exhibiting, lecturing, writing and conducting workshops on video and new media art, bodies, cultures and tools. He has been an artist-in-residence at the Experimental Television Center at Binghamton and Owego since 1972, and has been a part of the Jitter Software Working Group, a joint venture between the Institute for Electronic Arts at Alfred and the Experimental Television Center in Owego.