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# Hong Kong's Very Own Hollywood

Hong Kong has gained a reputation as the 'Hollywood of the East' and our films once swept across Asia. Everyone knows who is Bruce Lee and his philosophy on martial arts still influences us today. Brad Pitt adapted *Infernal Affairs* (2002) into a Hollywood movie. The remake *The Departed* (2006) gained worldwide recognition at the Oscars, marking a milestone for Hong Kong films.

From black and white to colour, from market domination by Shaw Studios, to a blooming film market and later to decline in the industry, Stanley Wong comments: "Film leaders such as Shaw, Golden Harvest and Cinema City have emerged and disappeared. Afterwards came a new wave of young directors. These are all very representative of Hong Kong." Meanwhile, Alan Chan admires the aesthetics of film director Li Han-hsiang who used small props to build a big story. He was also known for starting the boom of epic palace movies, historical films, Huangmei opera movies and even erotic films. In the 80s, the efforts of the group of 7 of Cinema City paved the way towards a golden film era.

Shaw's movie kingdom is an important cornerstone in Hong Kong's local film history. Between 1958 and 1980, Shaw Brothers produced more than 800 films, from comedy, art, kung fu films to costume drama. In the 70s, following the success of the Shaw movie *72 Tenants*, Golden Harvest launched a series of comedies by Hui Brothers in which *The Private Eyes* swept the territory and paved the way for the golden age of Hong Kong comedy.

Lawrence Cheng's *The Yuppie Fantasia* was produced during Hong Kong's economic prosperity in the 80s. The storyline was about women entering the workplace and their economic independence changed the relationship between men and women. A sequel of the film made 30 years later still made headlines. In the mid-90s, Johnnie To who previously worked in television formed Milkyway Image. Together with several screenwriters, the studio made a whole series of refreshing Hong Kong gangster films including the 2003 *PTU*. It was a breath of fresh air among mainstream movies.

*Aces Go Places* and *All's Well, Ends Well* represent the golden age of Hong Kong comedy. In the 90s, Stephen Chow 'nonsensical' jokes rewrote the history of comedy films, pioneering a new form of humour with rich local flavours, unique to Hong Kong with its own distinct language. In 2001, Chow's *Shaolin Soccer* conquered the world. Meanwhile, director Tsui Hark created a fantastic range of martial arts action films and epitomised the lone hero. After the millenniums, a new wave of gangster films such as *Infernal Affairs* with its own dose of suspense and psychological maneuvers continued to fascinate audiences. It was a turning point for gangster films, taking this genre onto the global scene.

Wong Kar-wai and Peter Chan's art-house and romance films rewrote Hong Kong's movie scene of storytelling in the 90s. Wong Kar-wai broke away from traditional methods of film making and

created his own distinctive style. His use of music, character, editing style and art direction created symbolic narratives. Peter Chan explores gender identity and the anxiety of the local people during the 1997 transition period, successfully capturing Hong Kong's desolate urban aesthetic in his romance films. He is also known for creating a 'pan-Asia' production model which opened up a new path for the Hong Kong's film industry.

In recent years, the number of Hong Kong films and box offices has declined rapidly. Yet there is always a wave of new creative films. Extraordinary movies are still produced during difficult times. In the movie *Love in a Puff*, director Pang Ho-cheung explores modern relationships and urban changes through rich dialogue and intriguing scenes, highlighting the realism of life in the film that led to sequel after sequel. Chun Wong produced *Mad World* with a low budget of 2 million and tells the story of a family tragedy to highlight the public's disregard and ignorance of mental illness.

From black and white films to special effect colour movies, from market domination by Shaw Studios, to a flourishing of new production houses during the economic take-off, Hong Kong films have seen its ups and downs. Whether our films are respected internationally relies on the creativity and dedication of many Hong Kong talents. Hong Kong International Film Festival brings the world's high quality movies to Hong Kong while Hong Kong Film Awards recognise the hard work of outstanding professionals in front and behind the camera. Both these industry events play an important role in the history of Hong Kong films.

# Hong Kong International Film Festival and Hong Kong Film Awards

Good movies need a good audience. The Hong Kong International Film Festival (HKIFF) and Hong Kong Film Awards have been two of the biggest supporters of the local film industry. HKIFF offers many events and is one of Asia's oldest and most reputable platforms for film professionals. Screening over 250 titles from more than 55 countries in over 11 major cultural venues across the territory, the festival brings outstanding movies around the world to the Hong Kong audience. On the other hand, the festival provides exposure for Asian movies to international professionals and movie-goers, strengthening their appreciation towards film culture in Asia, Hong Kong and China. Committed to discovering new talent, the festival premieres the breadth of Chinese cinema and showcases Asian talents. HKIFF has also produced and premiered anthologies of short films by well-known award winning filmmakers from Asia such as Ann Hui, Kurosawa Kiyoshi and Tsai Ming-liang among many others. Besides watching world-class films, festival-goers can participate in talks with leading filmmakers, visit film exhibitions and attend parties celebrating the festival community.

Founded in 1982, Hong Kong Film Awards has been honouring outstanding work in Hong Kong and Asia-Pacific cinema. The Board of Directors comprises of thirteen Hong Kong professional film bodies from the Hong Kong Chamber of Film to Hong Kong Cinematography Lighting Association. Winners are chosen by registered voters from the professional film bodies to ensure only the best of the best will be awarded. Therefore, the results often accurately reflect the artistic standard of Hong Kong cinema. The award, which is held annually, provides unparalleled exposure for the winners, encourages professional development and promotes Hong Kong film culture.



*“Over the past 40 years, the Hong Kong International Film Festival has brought the most contemporary and pioneering films from Hong Kong and all over the world. Both mainstream and independent movies broadened our horizons as we reference Hong Kong’s film-making standard to re-examine our present and future trajectory. The Hong Kong Film Awards is not only a form of recognition for film practitioners; it also subtly influences the general public by guiding them to appreciate the aesthetics and values of a good film.” — Stanley Wong*



# Peter Chan Ho-sun

## Career as Director / Producer



He's a Woman, She's a Man, Comrades, Almost a Love Story, Perhaps Love, Peter Chan has directed many hauntingly poetic tales of urban romance. The 90s movie He's a Woman, She's a Man, featuring Leslie Cheung and Anita Yuen tells a story of a sassy girl who cross-dresses as a man to approach her idol only to find herself falling in love with the idol's boyfriend. Chan was able to play on the ambiguity of gender and rather realistically encapsulate a pseudo-homosexual relationship — a rather edgy topic at the time. The movie was an instant success, earning positive comments from critics. In Comrades, Almost a Love Story, Chan used the love story between two Hong Kong immigrants as an entry point to re-examine the city on the verge of the Handover. Comrades, Almost a Love Story won a total of 9 awards in the Hong Kong Film Awards including Best Picture and Peter Chan was awarded Best Director. In June 2017, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences officially welcomed Peter as a new member to 'The Oscars 2017'.

*“Peter Chan is one of the few all-rounded directors who finds the perfect balance between art house and commercial films. He is capable of mastering a diverse genre of films and delivering great work consistently both as a director or producer.” — Alan Chan*

# Stephen Chow

## Shaolin Soccer

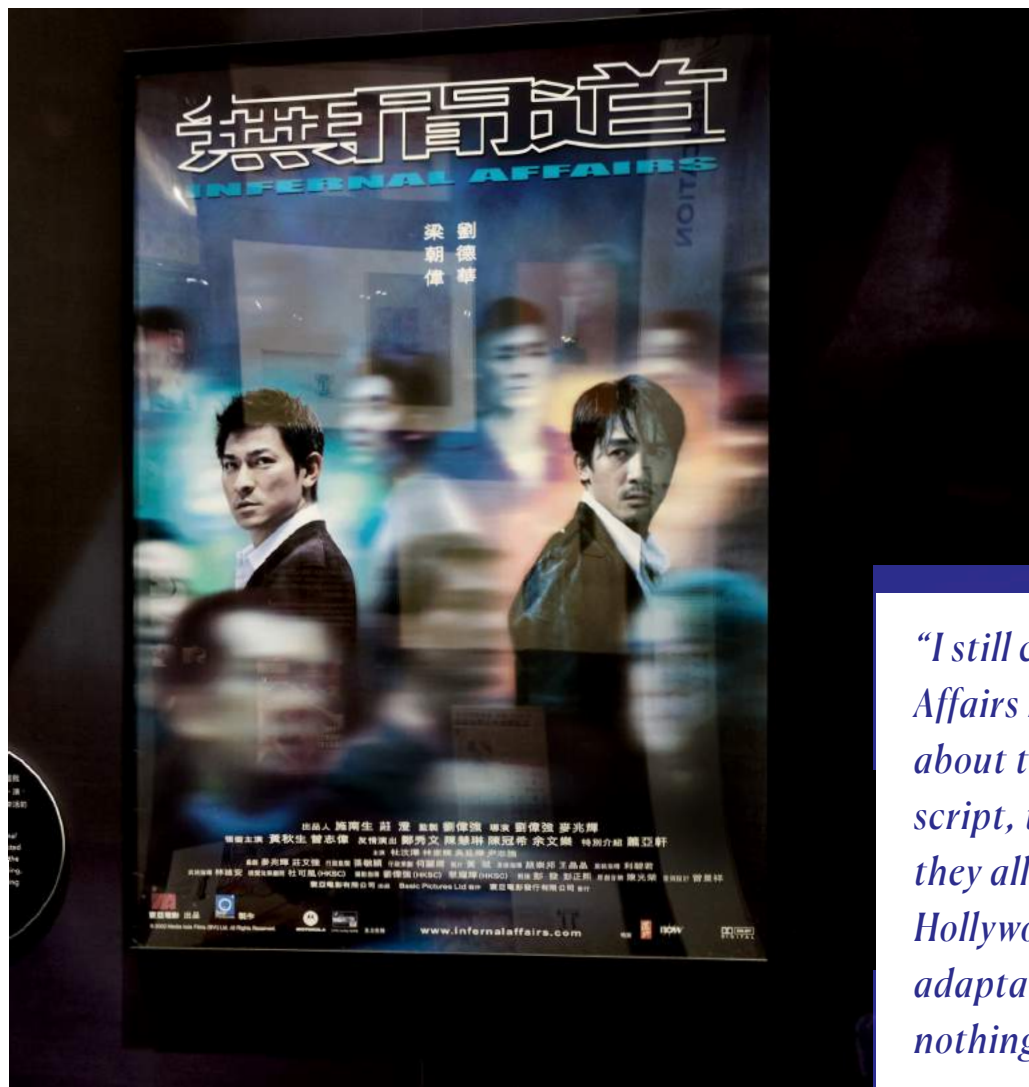
If the 70s were the decade of The Hui Brothers' sarcastic comedies, the king of 90s comedy would definitely be Stephen Chow with his absurd gags and slapstick humour. In his directorial debut in 2001 Shaolin Soccer, Chow continued his distinctive comedic style. In one scene, Wong Yat-Fei and Stephen Chow dressed in Shaolin monk robes serenaded a bar crowd and getting bottles thrown at their heads. In another, Chow told his admirers, played by Zhao Wei, to "go back to Mars" as he tried to talk her away from taking part in the football match against demon-like opponents. Both of these scenes were some of the most unforgettable in Hong Kong cinema. These scenes had become a cultural phenomenon, inspiring creative parodies across different media. His movies centres around the stories of small town heroes and are often filled with obscure pop-cultural references, and Shaolin football is no exception. The football motif and exaggerated physical traits are reminiscent of the Japanese teen comics Captain Tsubasa and old Cantonese heroes movies, both beloved by generations of Hong Kongers, making the movie especially appealing to the audience well versed in Hong Kong life.

*"There is a fine line between trashy and tasteful. In Shaolin Soccer, Stephen Chow skillfully put out a tasteful movie using kitsch elements. This movie reminds me about the goals of commercial design: Elevating the public taste through the most banal happenings" — Alan Chan*



# Andrew Lau/ Alan Mak Siu-fai/Felix Chong

## Infernal Affairs



Infernal Affairs is the groundbreaking crime movies of the 2000s, particularly acclaimed for its narrative details. The trilogy, directed by Andrew Lau and Alan Mak, tells a story of an undercover cop and a police officer secretly working for a triad. The film breaks away from the traditional action-filled cop movies and carves a storyline that built on psychological suspense and mystery. The movies starred some of the biggest movie stars in Hong Kong such as Tony Leung, Andy Lau, Anthony Wong and others. The movie was incredibly well received, making the line 'three years after three years' a cultural reference. The movie was later acquired by Brad Pitt's production company, and remade into the Hollywood blockbuster The Departed. It is fair to say that Infernal Affairs has set the milestones for the local crime thrillers that followed, re-capturing global attention on Hong Kong films.

*"I still cannot forget how emotional I was watching Infernal Affairs in the theatre. For the first time, I was flabbergasted about the quality of a local production. Whether it was the script, the directing, the acting, cinematography or editing, they all demonstrated Hong Kong is capable of producing Hollywood-quality movies. Although the Hollywood adaptation was a box-office hit too, the sensation was nothing like the Hong Kong original." — Alan Chan*



# Bruce Lee

## Kung Fu Philosophy

"Be water my friend", Bruce Lee is more than just the grandmaster of martial art. Majoring in philosophy at university, he is a philosopher in his own right. Born in 1940 in San Francisco while his parents were on tour with the Chinese Opera, Lee spent his childhood years in Hong Kong. At the age of 13, Bruce took up the study of Wing Chun kung fu under the renowned master, Yip Man. He dedicated his whole life studying martial arts. He opened his kung fu studio in the United States and taught students Jeet Kune Do, a combat philosophy he founded. A philosopher, a martial artist, Lee also took on acting, with his breakthrough portrayal of Kato in Green Lantern. In the early 1970s, Lee returned to Hong Kong and starred in 'The Big Boss', 'Fist of Fury', 'The Way of the Dragon' and many action masterpieces. His yellow jump suit and nunchucks has acquired the status of a cultural icon that signifies Asian excellence. Bruce Lee is synonymous with Chinese kung fu. His wisdom 'be like water' reminded the world to take on challenges creatively according to different situations. Despite his short life, the philosophy he preached has left a profound cultural influence in martial arts and around the world.

*"During his cultural exchange in the United States, the young Bruce Lee did not mindlessly adopt the Western culture. Instead he was able to create a new martial art language, Jeet Kune Do, under the cultural clash of Chinese philosophies and Western systems. This 'Crossover' of ideas deeply influences the way I design."* — Alan Chan



# Li Han-hsiang

## Cinematic Aesthetics



The Chinese director Li Han-hsiang is most well known for his historical epics and erotic movies. His most successful movie 'The Warlord', starred Michael Hui and Tina Leung, feature several provocative scenes of nudity. Born in 1926 in China, Li studied western painting in Beijing. He is also an avid reader of Chinese literature with Jin Ping Mei and Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio being his favourites. Drawing inspiration from literature and painting, he directed The Golden Lotus and A Chinese Ghost Story. He excelled at constructing spectacular mise en scene, whether is a king's palace or a warlord's mansion, Li is able to communicate the epicness of historical events either through his cinematography or his marvellous set. Well versed in art direction, Lee is very fastidious about props, sometimes even putting real antiques in his set. In this way, Lee utilises small props to build up bigger stories Li is a frequent winner in the Asian Film Festival, Golden Horse Awards and others.

*"The art direction of Li Han-hsiang's movie is impeccable. With meticulously crafted mise-en-scène, he recreated the beauty of Chinese classical palaces that deepens my affection for Chinese culture and gradually influences my design direction."* — Alan Chan



# Masterminds Behind Cinema City

Founded by Raymond Wong Pak-ming, Karl Maka, Dean Shek and friends in 1980, Cinema City Group is the definitive production company of Hong Kong blockbusters in the 70s and 80s. Following the economic boom, Wong saw the rising demand for entertainment in the market as the movie industry flourished in the 80s. In the first five years, Wong kept the production relatively small, he worked on the script and passed it to a team of talents for polishing. Team members include Tsui Hark, Teddy Robin and Eric Tsang; many are now distinguished personnel in the industry. Success followed success from the first film *Laughing Times* (1980) to the 8th movie *Aces Go Places* (1982) which grossed over HK\$27 million in box office billings, demonstrating that entertaining the audience should be the primary goal. Adopting a method of collective production and collaborative script writing out-of-the-box is conducive to exploring new innovative perspectives that is well received by the audience. Because of the compact production and rigorous script screening, the company was able to continuously produce great movies like *Aces Go Places* and *Prison On Fire*, establishing itself as the factory of blockbusters. Later, as the company grew, many of the original staff started their own businesses and working on individual movie projects, the most famous one being Tsui Hark's *A Better Tomorrow*. The company has also collaborated with many now-renowned directors such as John Woo and Ringo Lam, providing them much-needed breakout chances. Indeed, Cinema City Group was the cradle for cinematic talents in Hong Kong.



*“The seven masterminds behind Cinema City came from a wide range of professional background as administrative officers, film producers, playwrights, actors and musicians — each an expert in their fields. A young creative energy shone through as the team worked together and bounce around ideas. Their efforts in creating this unique movie formula, as well as the power of their cross-disciplinary collaboration were very admirable. From them, we see that making movie is truly teamwork.” — Alan Chan*

# Ng Hui

## Ten Brothers



Ten Brothers was a Chinese fable that revolves around a couple who gave birth to ten brothers, each possesses superhuman ability. The story was adopted into a Cantonese opera movie in 1959 by director Ng Hui. The story is a classic tale of the good banding together to fight against the evil, obviously the movie taught the age-old morals that unity is strength. To bring these superhuman powers to life on the silver screen, Ng employed low-tech special effects and giddy movie soundtrack. The result is a cartoonish family movie that is loved by kids across the city. The movie has become the childhood memory of many Cantonese growing up in the 60s. The nicknames of the brothers were so catchy they were incorporated into Cantonese slangs.

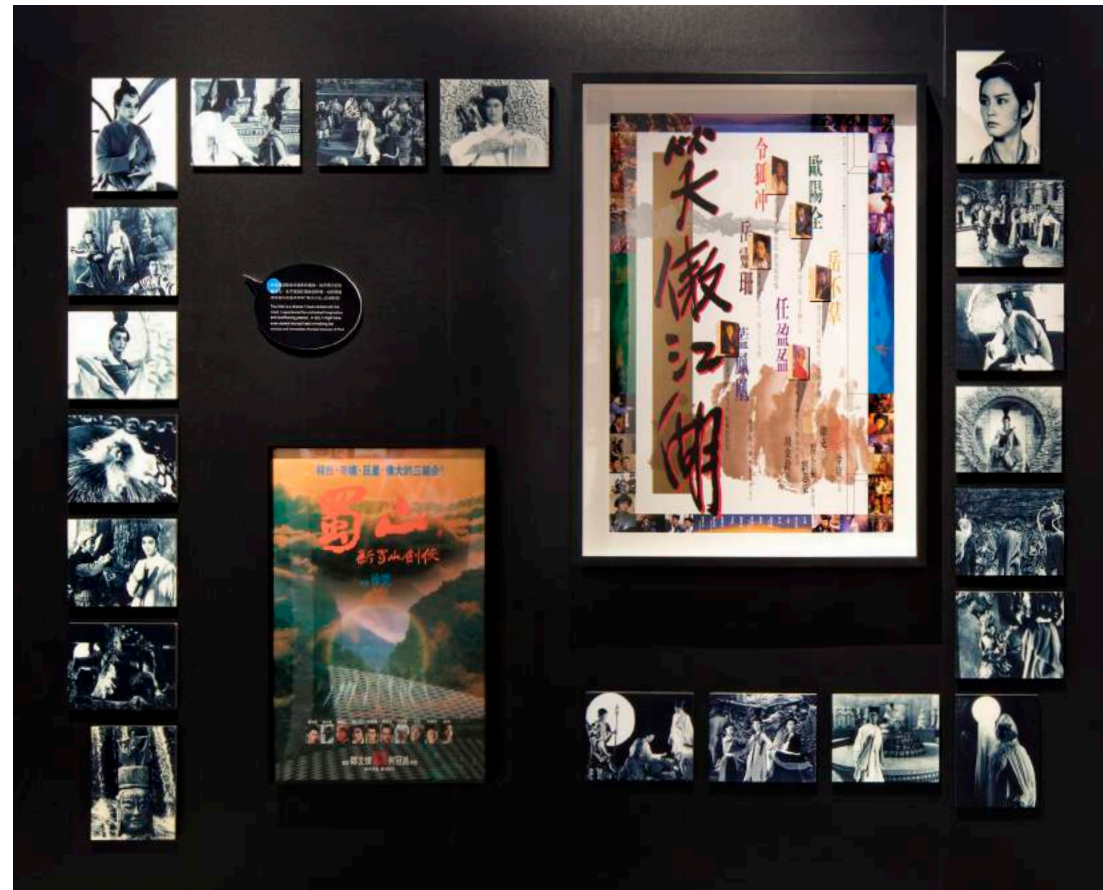
*“The visual effect in Ten Brothers, although crude, opened my imagination as a kid. To me, it was the Star Wars of Hong Kong. I still fantasize that I would one day meet the brother with superhuman hearing.” — Alan Chan*



# Tsui Hark

## Cinematic Creative Style

Tsui Hark is the key figure of the second wave of film directors, taking on the roles of film director, screenwriter, producer and actor with abstract ideas that took action movie to another level. First signs of this came to light in his debut film *The Butterfly Murders*. Rather than choreographing increasingly dangerous stunts, Tsui revolutionised and innovated on special effect and editing. In *A Chinese Ghost Story*, the incredibly creative director incorporated CGI effects and stunts to create a fantastical world of mythical creatures and sword-riding heroes. He is also particularly conscientious of costume and character design. In *Once Upon A Time In China* (1991) or *Seven Swords* (2005) his movies, the protagonists are the exemplar of Chinese heroes from classic literature. Independent, righteous, modest and unswayed by temptation, his characters represent the ideals of Chinese morality. Using stunt, special effect and editing as a device for action design, Tsui further accentuates the superior physique of his multi-layered characters. His work has earned him multiple honours including Best Director at The Golden Horse Awards.



*“Tsui Hark is a director I have worked with the most. I experienced his unchecked imagination and overflowing passion, in fact, I might have even started the bad habit of making last minute and immediate changes because of this!” — Alan Chan*

# Wong Kar-wai

## Style of Storytelling



In the 90s, when cops movies and comedy dominated Hong Kong cinema, Wong Kar-wai led the wave of art-house films. The director behind *Days of Being Wild* (1990), *Chungking Express* (1994), *In The Mood For Love* (2000) and many other cinematic classics wooed the audience with lavish visual effects and intricate camera work. At once delicately mannered and visually extravagant, Wong's *In The Mood For Love* masterfully evoked romantic longing and fleeting moments. The daunting pizzicato prelude introduces the stairway scenes as the two protagonists exchange gazes have etched into the memory of countless audience. The director's desolate urban aesthetic encapsulates the rudderless love in the big city. Equally impressive as his stylistic storytelling is the exquisite and dynamic cinematography of Christopher Doyle and Mark Lee Ping-bin. Wong was able to add a sophistication that is unusual in Hong Kong cinema. In 2017, Wong Kar-wai received the Lumière Award at the Lumière Festival 2017 in Lyon, France, the first Hong Kong filmmaker to be bestowed this honour.

*“In his film, Wong Kar-wai tells the story of Hong Kong — stories with no storyline. You have to read between the lines to decipher the real message. We construct our emotions in his cinematic world. This distanced yet intimate connection makes his movie that much more engrossing.” — Alan Chan*



# Fruit Chan

## Hong Kong-Themed Films

The Hong Kong director and independent producer never shies away from sensitive topics, his movies often approach social, political and historical controversies head on. Among his impressive list of work, *Made in Hong Kong*, *The Longest Summer*, and *Little Cheung*, collectively referred to as ‘the 97 trilogy’, remains undeniable classics in Hong Kong cinema. Chan started in the film industry in 1981 working at the bottom. He has since taken on many different roles. In 1996, he shot ‘*Made in Hong Kong*’ with a limited budget of \$500,000. Often called the first of his trilogy, the movie tells the story of a young gang member, a society’s reject growing up in a public housing estate who went through a series of unfortunate events: dropped out of school, disowned by parents and the death of his best friends. His inner struggle engendered the post-handover anxiety shared among Hong Kongers. Shot in expired film and a laughably low budget, and working only with fresh faces and a production team of five, the movie went on to earn international recognition from East and West, winning Chan multiple awards. A small film that made it big globally.

*“I believe no one in the film industry has more grit and perseverance on the topic of Hong Kong than director Fruit Chan. He has never once swayed from his life views and values. For that, I truly respect him. Among the very few Hong Kong films highlighting humanities, his films show Hong Kong in its truest form and are the manifestation of every Hongkonger which is ‘Very Hong Kong’.”*

— Stanley Wong

# Lawrence Cheng/ Gordon Chan

## Yuppie Fantasia Series



*“The Yuppie Fantasia speaks to the hearts of Hong Kong men. The life choices of the protagonist and the melancholy of Hong Kong men resonate with me.”*

— Stanley Wong


Yuppie Fantasia was originally a radio drama created by Lawrence Cheng and written in the peak of Hong Kong economic prosperity. The story chronicles how a ‘beta male’ finds footing in society, in the life of a man working in a metropolitan city. The protagonists, voiced by Cheng, recounted the happenings, big and small, in his love life, family life and work life. The drama was an instant favourite and was later adopted into novels, movie and stage play. ‘Beta male’ in the Cantonese title poked fun at the male insecurity during the economic transition in the 80s and 90s as women entered the working force and gained economic independence. Besides the humorous monologue, the mixed use of Chinese and English and the many brand names mentioned in the dialogue depicted the lives of the uprising middle class. This series of bourgeois screwball comedy gave audience a window to understanding the changes in gender, relationship and social identity during the era. The Yuppie Fantasia 3 was released in early 2017 voiced by Carol Cheng. The film marks the 30th anniversary work of the original Yuppie Fantasia series.



# Allen Fong

## Just Like Weather

Great editing can bring depth and meaning to the simplest story. That is the case in Alan Fong's *Just Like Weather*, which retold the private love life of a married couple. This movie was truly experimental in terms of its narrative. Fong subverted the continuity of plot line by presenting their story in fragmented narratives. The scenes which seemed randomly cut together, portrays facets of their love life. The casual conversation in the dining scene formed the backdrop of the story while the pregnancy test and abortion story revealed the dark side of their relationship. Fong also mixed in documentary footage with written scenes, blurring the lines between reality and drama. Casting first time actors for his movies further heightened the realism, keeping the audience engaged in the dilemma as the couple decided whether to divorce or emigrate. The daring narrative choices in *Just Like Weather* are one of its kind in Hong Kong cinema.



*“Set against the time of emigration, Alan Fong discussed the phenomenon of leaving Hong Kong in his movie with elements of documentary and drama. To me, this film was a pioneering experiment.”*

— Stanley Wong

# Ann Hui

## Summer Snow / A Simple Life

*“Ann Hui depicted the female sensibility through different characters and times in two movies, showing the archetypes of Hong Kong women and their lives and values profoundly. The director and two actresses have incredibly strong interaction and remarkable synergy. Ann’s achievement has exemplified her talent and creative genius as a female director in Hong Kong.”*

— Stanley Wong

Celebrated Hong Kong director Ann Hui was a leading key figure in the Hong Kong new wave cinema recognised for her human drama steeped into social conscience and changing times. Her early work *Summer Snow*, centred around a housewife who juggles a family life and her work at the factory, vividly depicts the patience and mental strength that Hong Kong working mums possess as they master the intricate balance of work and family. The interaction between her and the three most important men in her family, her father-in-law, husband and son, shows audience warmth and angst of a family.

*A Simple Life* shares Hui’s delicate depiction of female characters. The movie, based on a true story, revolved around the love and respect between a long-serving servant Ah Tao and her young master Roger. After the maid suffers a stroke, the dynamic of their relationship changed one-eighty as Roger took on the role to take care of Ah Tao. Through Roger’s kindness and the close bond between the two, Hui invites the audience to re-examine the traditional Chinese values of interpersonal relationship in the increasingly individualistic society. Deanie Ip’s captivating performance as the loyal servant, complemented by her on-screen chemistry with Andy Lau, made the movie all the more engrossing.

# Michael Hui

## The Private Eyes

The Hui's comedies were wildly successful in Hong Kong in the 70s. Among them all, *The Private Eyes* undoubtedly represented the pinnacle of their comedic greatness. Directed, written and starring Michael Hui, the whole movie is punctuated with effortlessly funny dialogue executed with ineffable comedic timing. Hui's masterful use of visual comedy is demonstrated in the city-chasing scene at the beginning of the movie. Throughout the entire montage, Hui cut between a pair of hairy legs in broken shoes and a pair of smooth legs in stylish platform shoes. Even before the audience was introduced to the characters, Hui was able to create a comedic atmosphere with just a title sequence. The three main characters — the stingy boss, the sharp-minded malapert and the dimwitted plagued by bad luck — are all caricatures of real-life people one encountered in the workplace, which Hong Kong audience can easily relate to.



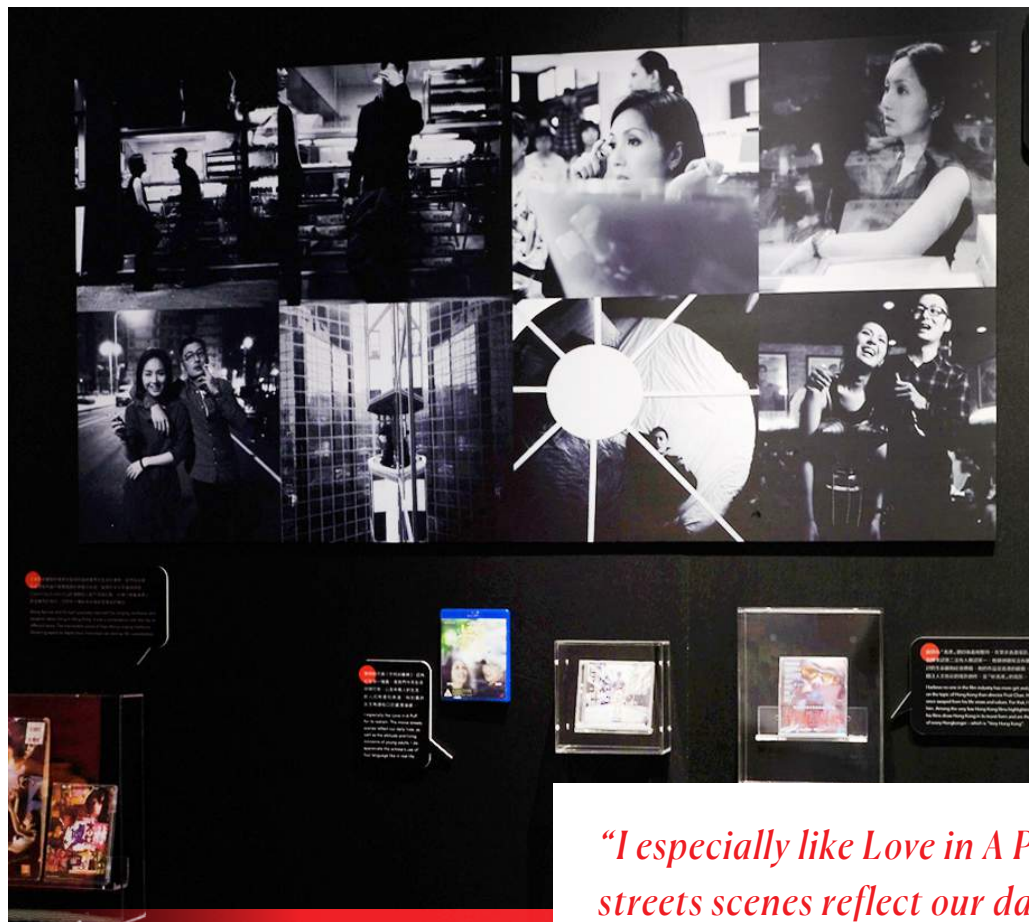
*“The comedic scenes in The Private Eyes were snippets of our everyday lives. It was a down-to-earth classic that resonated with the 70s. I believe the scene where Sam Hui held on to a flour sieve and the man with flour dots all over his face were among the unforgettable moments on screen.” — Stanley Wong*





# Pang Ho-cheung

## Love In A Puff Series



Set against the citywide indoor smoking ban, Love in A Puff depicts the falling-in-love story of a metrosexual couple who met at the back alley during a smoking break.

The story touches the hearts of many as they can relate to the pair. The dialogue 'It's not the cigarette, but the loneliness one endures' resonated among the city's men and women. The whole plot is sprinkled with facets of Hong Kong life with scenes set in convenience stores, karaoke, back alleys and other popular places frequented by young adults. One biggest highlight in this romantic comedy is the well-written dialogues punctuated with local slangs and sly innuendos. They made the story exponentially more believable as the audience can always find a character they identify with in the movie, whether it is the adman Jimmy or the cosmetics salesgirl Cherie. The down-to-earth screenplay written by Pang Ho Cheung and Heiward Mak transcended what could be bland rom-com into a captivating piece on modern relationships.

*"I especially like Love in A Puff for its realism. The movie streets scenes reflect our daily lives, as well as the attitude and living concerns of young adults. I do appreciate the actress's use of foul language like in real life."*

— Stanley Wong

# Johnnie To

## PTU


In mid-90s, Johnnie To partnered with several talented playwrights and founded Milkyway Image, a movie production company well known for its low-budget, yet immensely innovative and well-written crime dramas. A continuation to Milkyway Image's signature style, PTU, which premiered in 2003, stood out as a cinematic masterpiece in the 2000s. The movie starts with a police sergeant who lost his gun after being attacked by triad members, and followed by his colleague's search for the lost gun overnight. The plot thickens as the lines between who's a "good guy" and who's a "bad guy" blurs, prompting the audience to question their intentions. Instead of following the age-old formula and pleasing the audience with gun fights and massive explosions, PTU focuses on the bond shared among the characters. Packed with To's signature black humour and stylised depiction of human psyche, PTU is undoubtedly a triumphant return of To's more polished work. Johnnie To won Best Director at the 23rd Hong Kong Film Awards for his work in PTU.

*“Johnnie To’s movies are mostly down-to-earth. The story of finding a lost gun in Kwun Tong, presented with black humour and many thrilling scenes, makes PTU my personal favourite. You can also find familiar places and faces that are easily recognised and resonated with everyday life.”*

— Stanley Wong

# Chun Wong/ Chan Chor-hang

## Mad World



*“We all know what depression or autism is, but very few of us have experienced mental illnesses first-hand. Mad World presented a family plagued by mental illness and created a much-needed discourse on the issue, stirring up a dialogue and arousing more attention for the mental illness community.”*

— Stanley Wong

Based on a true story, Mad World follows the tragedy of a bipolar son's accidental murder of his mother and its aftermath. Bringing audience through the emotional rollercoaster of a family struggling with bipolar disorder, the movie exposed the ignorance and indifference about mental illness perpetuated in Hong Kong. The cramped living condition at the subdivided flats and the frustration of a man suffering from bipolar disorder who failed to find acceptance in the society created a suffocating social reality that resonates with the local crowd. Not to be overlooked is the impeccable acting of Shawn Yu and Eric Tsang. Yu vividly portrayed a mentally-ill man torn by his sickness while Tsang brought to life a failing father who desperately tried everything to help. Shot with a modest HKD2 million budget just over 16 days, this poignant and arresting movie inspired empathy towards the marginalised community.



# Wong Kar-wai

## Chungking Express

Often regarded as one of the defining works of Hong Kong new wave cinema, Chungking Express told the story of two seemingly connected but disparate relationships took place in the concrete jungle of Hong Kong. Just as with his other movies, Chungking Express does not follow a clear plot line, nor does it give audience a definite ending, Wong experimented with shooting style and narratives in Chungking Express. The shaky hand-held camera shots in the chasing scenes brought audience through the glitzy yet confounding cityscape. The two subplots interweaved through the entire plot, yet the two relationships shared nothing in common except for the fact that they took place in the same city at the same time. This poetic arrangement further accentuated the loneliness unique to urban life. Despite living in a city of millions, people crave a deeper connection with someone to take away the aching loneliness buried deep inside their hearts. The whole movie stands as a poignant visual poem to the longing and romance of the city, perhaps best summed up in this line from the monologue scene: "Everyday you pass through many people, they may be just a stranger to you, but they may one day become you friends or your loved ones."


*“Wong Kar-wai and his team precisely captured the longing, confusion and escapism about living in Hong Kong. It was a conversation with the city on different levels. The memorable scene of Faye Wong singing California Dreaming seems to depict how intoxicated we were by life’s possibilities.”*

— Stanley Wong



# Derek Yee

## The Lunatics



*“The spectacular performances of Chow Yun-fat and Tony Leung in The Lunatics strengthen or subvert our understanding about mental illness. The director, playwright and actors delivered exceptionally though only Wong Yan-kwai won the Hong Kong Film Awards for Best Art Direction. It was a great encouragement to art directors who chose to portray the realistic working-class rather than polished extravagance.”*

— Stanley Wong

First shown in the cinema in 1986, *The Lunatics* is Derek Yee's directorial debut. The story revolves around the work of a social worker played by Stanley Fung as he donated his time to help three patients suffering from mental illness. The groundbreaking movie was one of the few that touched on the taboo subject, depicting the plight of people with mental illness. Hong Kong was a hostile society towards the mentally-ill, in addition to a lack of aid from the government, public ignorance fuelled by sensational news had further marginalised the group, delaying the treatment they desperately needed and turning curable illnesses into bone-chilling tragedies. The movie sheds light on the hardship of the social worker as well as the down-spiralling fate of the three 'lunatics'. *The Lunatics* remains a poignant social critique on the way the society, the government and the media mistreated the mentally-ill and is part of our collective memory.