

Film Archive presents "Coming to a Theatre Near You – Gems of Hong Kong Film Trailers" exhibition (with photos)

The Hong Kong Film Archive (HKFA) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will stage the "Coming to a Theatre Near You – Gems of Hong Kong Film Trailers" exhibition at the Exhibition Hall of the HKFA from May 31 until November 3. The exhibition will display over 100 trailers of films from the 1940s to the present day from the HKFA's collection to introduce to visitors how film production crews produced trailers of duration from tens of seconds to a few minutes by adopting deft and smooth editing skills and meticulously designed promotional taglines with a view to enticing audiences into purchasing film tickets. Visitors can also learn about the development of Hong Kong films through these trailers. This exhibition is one of the programmes of the Hong Kong Pop Culture Festival 2024.

Trailers are film advertisements which aim to catch the attention of audiences through revealing a certain amount of the film story and highlights. Their production requires superb editing skills. This exhibition will showcase some of the most precious items of the HKFA's collection. Based on the traces of the development of Hong Kong films, the exhibition will outline the methods, styles and characteristics of trailers in different periods as well as their changes across time. It will display trailers in six different categories, namely the earliest trailers of the HKFA's collection, drama and realist films, musical films, comedy films, martial arts and action films, overseas versions of trailers.

The earliest trailers of the HKFA's collection to be displayed at the exhibition include 10 trailers of films in the 1940s from the HKFA's collection. The taglines of post-war trailers in the 1940s generally closely tap the pulse of society to cater to the tastes of most audiences. In order to attract people of all ages, the trailers, about four minutes long on average, often weave laughter and tears together alongside attention-grabbing slogans. An example is the trailer for the film "Intimate Lovers" (1947), which is about the story of a married woman entering the workplace. Film trailers became shorter and more brisk later as the economy of Hong Kong took off with the quickening pace of city life.

Trailers for drama and realist films often made use of the films' songs. Some of them even covered whole songs, such as "Love in a Fallen City" (1984) and "An Autumn's Tale" (1987). Others featured the lead actors themselves introducing the films, including the trailer of "The House of 72 Tenants" (1973) directed by Chor Yuen, where the cast of the film, Lydia Shum, Hu Chin, Elliot Yueh, Ching Li and Ivan Ho introduce the film as themselves, in order to attract audiences.

In the category of trailers for musical films, the trailers for musicals, Huangmeidian films and Cantonese opera films in the 1950s and 1960s will be displayed. Trailers for Cantonese opera films in this period sometimes included the performance by an actor of an entire Cantonese opera excerpt. The exhibition will display various precious trailers for Cantonese opera films starring Yam Kim-fai and Pak Suet-sin including "The Fairy in the Picture" (1957) and "Butterfly and Red Pear Blossom" (1959). In the trailer for "Trouble on the Wedding Night" (1964), the focus is unconventionally placed on the film's music, featuring precious footage of the choir and band's live recording of the film's music with the well-known composer Zhou Lan-ping.

Voice-overs in trailers for comedy films often adopted a light-hearted tone. In the trailer for director Chun Kim's "How to Get a Wife" (1961), the film title and main cast are introduced in a comic style. It opens and ends with lead actor Patrick Tse speaking directly to the camera about the highs and lows of being both a husband and father. Coupled with the witty banter between the actors, the trailer is filled with playfulness and hilarity. Meanwhile, the promotional taglines of trailers for Stephen Chow's comedies, which were unparalleled in the 1990s, are testimonials of his zany humour.

The exhibition also presents trailers for martial arts and action films. In the trailer for "Spy with My Face" (1966), actresses Connie Chan and Nam Hung captivate film audiences with action and comedy alongside catchy title cards. In the trailers for Bruce Lee's "The Big Boss" (1971) and "Fist of Fury" (1972), some of the most thrilling action scenes were showcased. Films produced with greater budgets often feature stunt scenes, explosion scenes, etc to entice audiences into purchasing film tickets.

Trailers are the most important promotional tools of films. When films are shown overseas, there are different edits of trailers to cater for overseas markets. For example, Bruce Lee's kung fu films "The Big Boss" and "Game of Death" (1978) have English trailers. The exhibition will also display different trailer editions of the film "Zu: Warriors from the Magic Mountain" (1983), which is a film combining Chinese myths, the wuxia genre and history for Hong Kong, the Japanese, the English and overseas markets. Trailers reflect how film companies target different audiences by adjusting their promotional focus.

To deepen visitors' understanding of film trailers, excerpts of interview videos with renowned actress Fung Bo-bo and experienced dubbing artist Ding Yue will be shown in the exhibition. In addition, interviews with filmmakers on different roles including directors Siu Wing, Bee Chan, Ho Cheuk-tin, Wilson Yip, Nick Cheuk, Jonathan Li, producers Terence Chang, Shu Kei, Amy Chin, editors Tony Chow, Chiang Kwok-kuen, Ng Wang-hung, and Wong Hoi will be rolled out at the exhibition in phases. Three screenings of selected trailers will also be held at the HKFA Cinema with free admission. Each screening will last for about an hour. Moreover, various filmmakers will share their experiences in film editing and film promotion in seminars.

A tunnel of stars will also be set up at the exhibition, with screens on both sides of the tunnel showing star-studded clips of film trailers to provide an immersive experience to visitors. They can also take photos with a promotional cardboard of the cast of "The Quarrelsome Couple" (1959), including Patrick Tse, Patsy Kar Ling, Woo Fung and Nam Hung.

Admission to the exhibition is free. For details, please visit www.filmarchive.gov.hk/en/web/hkfa/2024/trailer/pe-event-2024-trailer.html or call 2739 2139.

The LCSD presented the first Hong Kong Pop Culture Festival last year to great acclaim. This year, the second edition features "Arts & Action" as its theme, taking audiences on a journey through time to explore the charm of Hong Kong's pop culture. It encompasses both "Arts" (creative works) and "Action" (martial arts), an attempt to show the dynamic inheritance, diffusion, integration and breakthroughs within Hong Kong's pop culture. The event lineup offers a diverse range of formats including thematic exhibitions, film screenings, stage performances and outreach activities and its rich content spans across literature, various art forms and martial arts, clearly showcasing how Hong Kong's vibrant and diverse pop culture stands out from the rest. For more information, please visit www.pcf.gov.hk/en.



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