

Film Archive to present exhibition tracing interaction between Hong Kong films and literature (with photos)

The Hong Kong Film Archive (HKFA) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department will stage the "City Portraits: Hong Kong Film and Literature" exhibition at the Exhibition Hall of the HKFA from November 29, 2024 to May 4, 2025. The exhibition combines film excerpts, oral history segments, photographs and videos on the transformation of written words into moving images in films to explore the interaction between film and literature in Hong Kong from the mid-20th century to the new millennium in a multifaceted manner.

The creation of a film often starts with a script, which is usually inspired by literature. While local directors and screenwriters constantly seek inspiration from novels or stage plays and turn them into touching films full of Hong Kong characteristics, many novelists and playwrights are also active in the film industry, adapting works of themselves or others for the screen or collaborating with directors to write new stories and scripts. This cross-disciplinary collaboration between filmmakers and writers, bringing inspiration to each other through interactions, is a distinctive feature of Hong Kong's film culture.

This exhibition is comprised of four zones, recounting films related to Hong Kong urban literature from the 1930s to the new millennium. It demonstrates the long-lasting and close relationship between Hong Kong's films and literature, as well as the changes in the daily lives of local people over the decades.

The first zone, "Footprints", features photos of early writers and filmmakers, along with relevant film stills through which visitors can learn about the interaction, fusion and mutual inspiration between Hong Kong films and literature.

Two programmes of videos will be shown in the second zone "Screening Room: Time Flows Like a Song". "Programme One: Writers and Movies" showcases excerpts from films of masterpieces from various writers and screenwriters such as "The Rich House" (1942), adapted from Lui Lun's novel "Clara" by himself; and "The Greatest Wedding on Earth" (1962), adapted from Qin Yifu's original work and scripted by Eileen Chang. "Programme Two: Lyricists and Songs" features an array of memorable songs from films to highlight how lyricists put the stories of films into words and add more charm to the film. The songs include "Selling Wonton" from the film "It's Always Spring" (1962) with lyrics by Evan Yang, composed by Yao Min and sung by Li Mei, as well as "The Last Rose" from "Lost Romance" (1986) with lyrics by Cheng Kok-kong, composed by Lam Man-yee and sung by Jenny Tseng.

In the third zone, "From Words to Images", films including "The Seaman and the Dancing Girl" (1961) and "Diary of Monita" (1968) are taken as examples to illustrate how filmmakers extract the essence of literary works, and turn stories into scripts to create unique films with images.

The fourth zone, "Oral History Excerpts: Stories Behind Screenwriters", concludes the entire exhibition with invaluable interview excerpts of screenwriters from different eras including clips from interviews with several legendary figures in the past, such as Chen Dieyi, who was also a lyricist, and wildly talented broadcaster Li Ngaw on their creative insights. There are also more recent interview excerpts, including novelist, lyricist, screenwriter and director Erica Li and Kong Ho-yan, who became a screenwriter after creating an online novel under the pseudonym "Mr. Pizza"; and more.

To tie in with the exhibition, the HKFA will present the screening programme "Dancing Between Words and Images – Hong Kong Film and Literature" from December 1, 2024, to February 23, 2025, screening 17 Hong Kong films adapted from or inspired by literary works at the Cinema of the HKFA to show the intricate ties between film arts and literature.

This exhibition is one of the programmes of the Muse Fest HK 2024. Admission is free. For details of the exhibition, please visit www.filmarchive.gov.hk/en/web/hkfa/2024/literature-exhibition/pe-event-2024-literature-exhibition.html or call 2739 2139.



