

Film Archive to present screening programme "Of Fists and Swords – Kaleidoscope of Hong Kong Martial Arts Films"

The Hong Kong Film Archive (HKFA) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department will present a screening programme entitled "Of Fists and Swords – Kaleidoscope of Hong Kong Martial Arts Films" from March 27 to June 22, screening 23 martial arts films at the Grand Theatre of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre and the Cinema of the HKFA to showcase how Hong Kong martial arts films with unique aesthetics are created from the rich foundations of Chinese culture and martial arts, with elements of pop culture blended in. This screening programme is one of the programmes of the Hong Kong Pop Culture Festival 2024.

The opening film "Zu: Warriors from the Magic Mountain" (1983) (4K Digitally Restored Version) is an adaptation of the martial arts novel "Legend of the Swordsmen of the Mountains of Shu". Director Tsui Hark hired Hollywood special effects experts who had worked on "Star Wars" (1977), and used numerous practical and special optical effects to build an oriental fantasy world combining Chinese myths, wuxia and history.€€

In addition to the opening and closing films, the screening programme is divided into six sections. The first section, "Tales of Chivalry", consists of five imaginative period wuxia films including "The Valiant Ones" (1975) (4K Digitally Restored Version) which was directed by King Hu with its production and costume designs based on serious and meticulous historical research; "The Enigmatic Case" (1980), the film debut of director Johnnie To; a film blending together elements of swordplay, suspense, detective work and science fiction directed by Tsui, "The Butterfly Murders" (1979) (Restored Version); and "The Sword" (1980) with Tony Ching as the film's martial arts choreographer, employing a lot of "wire" techniques; and "Seven Swords" (2005) (4K Restored Version), directed by Tsui with Lau Kar-leung as the action director.

There are four kung fu films in the second section "Fists of Fury". "The Way of the Dragon" (1972) (4K Restored Version) is the only film scripted, directed and acted by Bruce Lee, and both "Shaolin Martial Arts" (1974) and "Martial Club" (1981) give mesmerising displays of kung fu of the southern schools and the northern and southern fist-fight martial arts respectively. The last one is "The Shaolin Temple" (1982) (4K Restored Version), in which internationally acclaimed martial arts star Jet Li made his screen debut.

In the third section "Yin Over Yang", there will be two classics acted by two iconic kung fu film actresses that feature the glamour of the action heroines. The films are "My Young Auntie" (1981), which earned actress Kara

Wai the Best Actress Award at the 1st Hong Kong Film Awards, and "Yes, Madam!" (1985) (Restored Version), which established Michelle Yeoh's image as an action star.

The four genre-crossing action films featured in the fourth section "Entertaining Remixes" are action hero Jackie Chan's comedy kung fu classic "Drunken Master" (1978); "The Prodigal Son" (1981), for which Sammo Hung was the director, a scriptwriter, a martial arts instructor and an actor; "Police Story" (1985) (4K Restored Version), a police drama and action film in which Jackie Chan was the director, writer, lead actor as well as the team leader for martial arts choreography; and "Black Mask" (1996) (Restored Version), a fantasy action film in comic style.

The fifth section "Legends Reimagined" will present four films revolving around real-life martial arts grandmasters, including "Once Upon a Time in China" (1991), which clinched four wins at the 11th Hong Kong Film Awards, and "Ip Man" (2008), which was based on the life of Wing Chun grandmaster. In "Tai Chi Zero" (2012) and "Tai Chi Hero" (2012), the story of the founder of Yang-style Tai Chi Yang Lu-chan is portrayed in a visual style inspired by video games. To facilitate the audience's understanding of the complete plots of the films, "Tai Chi Zero" and "Tai Chi Hero" will be screened consecutively.

Directed by Alex Law and Ann Hui respectively and featured under the sixth section "Behind-the-Scenes Stories", "Painted Faces" (1988) (Restored Version) and "Ah Kam" (1996) focus on the careers of martial arts actors, stunt performers and martial arts choreographers that are rarely portrayed in films. They offer audiences glimpses of the stories behind the limelight, paying tribute to the contribution of lesser-known people in martial arts filmmaking.

Directed by Wong Kar-wai, the closing film "The Grandmaster" (2013) is about the stories between Ip Man and his fellow martial artists in the competitive world of martial arts. An epitome of wenyi films wrapped in martial arts, the film won 12 awards including the Best Film Award and Best Director Award at the 33rd Hong Kong Film Awards.

Various screenings will be accompanied by post-screening talks, where directors Daniel Lee, Wilson Yip, Joe Cheung and Lawrence Lau; martial arts choreographers Lau Kar-wing and Ku Huen-chiu; actors Frankie Chan, Lau Kong and Robert Mak; film editors Gogo Wong and Chu Kar-ning; screenwriters Sze Yeung-ping and Bryan Chang; kung fu culture researcher Pang Chi-ming; and film researchers Shu Kei, Sam Ho, Thomas Shin, Eric Tsang, Matthew Cheng, Joyce Yang and Cheng Chuen-wai will discuss with audiences about the extraordinary creativity and talent both in front of the camera and behind the scenes. For programme details, please call 2739 2139 or visit the website of the HKFA:

www.filmarchive.gov.hk/en/web/hkfa/2024/martial/pe-event-2024-martial.html.

Tickets priced at \$45 are now available at URBTIX (www.urbtix.hk). For telephone bookings, please call 3166 1288.