

LCSD to showcase film classics of six Hollywood auteur directors

The Film Programmes Office of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will hold the "INSPIRE Series: Hollywood Auteurs: Ideas of Cinema" from September 11 to October 16 to screen 14 classics of six auteur directors from Hollywood's "golden age" at the Cinema of the Hong Kong Film Archive and K11 Art House. Six of the screenings come with free post-screening talks while another two screenings will be accompanied by free seminars, enabling audiences to explore with veteran film critics the artistic quality of classic Hollywood films and how the ideas of master filmmakers translate into their great works.

The era from the 1940s to 1950s is regarded as the "golden age" of Hollywood film during which many talented directors were nurtured. These talented directors had a strong sense of *mise-en-scène* and conceived a meaningful world beyond story and entertainment. They are thus regarded as "auteurs". The six auteur directors featured in the programme are John Ford, Otto Preminger, Jacques Tourneur, Ida Lupino, Howard Hawks and Vincente Minnelli. The films selected were rarely shown in Hong Kong in recent years.

As a towering figure in classic American cinema, John Ford is renowned for exploring humanism through his westerns. His compositions were neatly arranged, carrying multi-layered meaning in a concise manner, with big skies and stunning landscapes to create a sense of greatness. The series includes three classics by Ford filmed at Monument Valley, namely "Fort Apache" (1948), "The Searchers" (1956) and "Cheyenne Autumn" (1964), all of which showcased Ford's scrutiny of the relationship between Native Americans and White Americans and the racial policy in America.

Otto Preminger favours dramas of human passion subjected to a rational and objective examination. He often used long takes and deep focus to show a network of relationships or connections formed by the characters. The three works selected are characterised by his attitude of subverting conformity. In "River of No Return" (1954), Marilyn Monroe took on a refreshingly human role, defying the "dumb blonde" cliché with which she had been typecast for so long. In "Laura" (1944), Preminger successfully chiselled the obsessiveness and abnormality behind high society with fluid *mise-en-scène*. In "Daisy Kenyon" (1947), the female character desires self-expression against the obsession of the male characters to control her fate.

Jacques Tourneur's films often reflect his character of modesty and subtlety. Tourneur's films emphasise the light source, the use of space, and the relationship between lighting and the actors. His films are also fascinated with the unknown, the unexplained and the ambiguous. Tourneur's "Night of the Demon" (1957) was regarded as the most refined of his horror classics while the "Out of the Past" (1947) was widely recognised as one of the most accomplished film noir.

Ida Lupino was one of the very few female directors in Hollywood's "golden age". The actress-turned-director focused on marginal characters generally overlooked in mainstream cinema, and her work captured the spirit of reality of a documentary. Her classics include "The Hitch-Hiker" (1953) and "The Bigamist" (1953); both examine the human condition and the dark shadow of modern existence from a sophisticated perspective.

Howard Hawks was an all-round director who was capable of filming a wide variety of genres. His films are fascinating for their fluidity in storytelling with an orderly succession of shots. Hawks was gifted in catalysing interactions between actors and had a genius eye for creating legendary shots for them. "His Girl Friday" (1940) and "The Big Sleep" (1946) featured in this series were Hawks's signature classics.

Vincente Minnelli had an aesthetic flair for creating a splendid filmic world with his profound experience in costume, set design and directing musicals in Broadway theatre. The visual grandeur of his works often reflects the characters' social status and psychological state. His classics include "The Bad and the Beautiful" (1952) and "The Band Wagon" (1953), with the latter representing the pinnacle of his work as a director of musicals.

All films selected either have Chinese and English subtitles or have English subtitles only. American film critic Chris Fujiwara has been specially invited to contribute an essay film titled "Inner and Outer Spaces in American Film" and an article about this subject. He will speak at two of the post-screening talks and one of the seminars. Details of the essay film are available at www.lcsd.gov.hk/fp/en/listing.html?id=39.

Tickets for screenings scheduled at the Cinema of the Hong Kong Film Archive are priced at \$60 and available at URBTIX (www.urbtix.hk) starting today; for credit card telephone bookings, please call 2111 5999. For screenings scheduled at K11 Art House, tickets are priced at \$110 and available at the website of MCL Cinemas (www.mclcinema.com) starting today. For programme enquiries and concessionary scheme, please call 2734 2900 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/fp/en/listing.html?id=38.

The Film Programmes Office is also launching the lecture series "Genius of the System: When Art and Commerce Converge on Film". The lectures in September will talk about the big-name auteurs of Hollywood's "golden age", including all the auteurs mentioned above. Please visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/fp/en/listing.html?id=31 for more details.

To comply with the anti-epidemic regulations, audience members should take note of pandemic prevention measures and the admission arrangements implemented at relevant cinemas. In order to comply with the requirements stipulated in the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) and relevant requirements of administrative instructions, all persons are required to scan the "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code with their mobile phones/devices before being allowed to enter the venues managed by the LCSd for necessary contact tracing if a confirmed case is found. In accordance with the Prevention and Control of Disease (Vaccine Pass) Regulation (Cap. 599L) and relevant

requirements of administrative instructions, all persons entering indoor venues under the management of the LCSD must comply with the relevant requirements of the Vaccine Pass. According to the latest requirements on the Vaccine Pass announced by the Government, all persons whose Vaccine Pass QR code is displayed in red or amber are not allowed into the Hong Kong Film Archive.