

Mabel Cheung and Alex Law to discuss filmmaking experience in Film Archive's "Movie Talk" series (with photo)

The Hong Kong Film Archive (HKFA) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department will launch its latest "Movie Talk" series in May, focusing on scriptwriters, directors and producers Mabel Cheung and Alex Law. Four films that they have collaborated on and two films that profoundly influenced them will be screened at the HKFA Cinema. They will also attend the post-screening talks on May 15, 22 and 23 with film veterans and critics John Sham, Sam Ho, Ng Chun-hung and Shu Kei to discuss their filmmaking journeys and their passion for films.

Mabel Cheung and Alex Law were among the few highly successful partners in the ranks of numerous film directors of the 1980s. They met at New York University, and progressed from film school classmates to steady partners. Taking up various roles, they have together created many Hong Kong film classics.

"An Autumn's Tale" (1987), which will be screened in a restored version, tells of a complex relationship between a university student who goes to New York to be with her boyfriend and a waiter working at a Chinatown restaurant. The three main actors portray characters different from their typical images, bringing a breath of fresh air to the film. A sense of tenderness and melancholy is also added to the romance through the signature touch of the director-writer combination.

Written in a realistic style, "Painted Faces" (1988), which will also be presented in a restored version, depicts the story of a group of boys from all over China learning Peking opera from the famous "wusheng" (male lead in a martial role) Yu Zhanyuan. The boys undergo stern traditional Chinese opera training, unaware that the skills and techniques they learnt have died off. Their complex emotions are handled wonderfully by Law and Cheung's expertise in exploring the deep connections between characters.

Adapted from Law's childhood, "Echoes of the Rainbow" (2010) describes the story of the Law family and the harsh circumstances in the 1960s as seen through the eyes of their young son. Shot on location at tenement buildings at Wing Lee Street in Sheung Wan, the movie brings out the warmth and memories of Hong Kong people at that time.

Cheung created "City of Glass" (1998) with inspiration found in the demolition and reconstruction of Lady Ho Tung Hall of the University of Hong Kong. Recounting a story extending back from the 1990s to the 1970s, the movie explores the romance and regrets from a love story that spans 20 years,

bringing out the sadness of historical changes.

In "Taxi Driver" (1976), Robert De Niro plays the role of a veteran who earns a living by driving a night-shift taxi. He moves around New York City and witnesses all kinds of crimes committed in the dark. As Cheung studied in New York, she can completely relate to the movie. Cheung also believes that the movie symbolises the realism that New York film directors favour and affects her profoundly.

"The Graduate" (1967), screening in a 4K restored version, was awarded five major Golden Globe awards including Best Film and Best Director. Adapted from a novel of the same name, the movie focuses on the confusion and uncertainty the male protagonist faces after graduating from a renowned university. Law describes the movie as one of the films he has watched the most times as it accompanies him through different stages of development and emotional states, joy and sadness.

"Taxi Driver" and "The Graduate" are in English and with Chinese subtitles, while the other films are in Cantonese with Chinese and English subtitles.

Tickets priced at \$45 are now available at URBTIX (www.urbtix.hk). For credit card telephone bookings, please call 2111 5999. For programme enquiries, please call 2739 2139 or visit www.filmarchive.gov.hk/en_US/web/hkfa/programmesandexhibitions/highlights.html.

The HKFA has been holding the "Movie Talk" series since 2013. Each instalment of the series focuses on a filmmaker who selects films for screenings and discussions with audiences keen to learn about the inspiration and process behind the featured guest's work.

In view of the latest situation of COVID-19, audiences should take note of the special arrangements for screening venues, admission and seating to be implemented. For details, please call 2734 2139 or visit www.filmarchive.gov.hk/en_US/web/hkfa/aboutus/openhl.html.

