

BFI presents
A CENTURY OF CHINESE CINEMA
 in partnership with TIFF
 June to October
 at BFI Southbank and across the UK

June and July Programme Highlights



- Introduction by Noah Cowan, season curator for TIFF
- New digital restoration of *Spring in a Small Town*
- *Wuxia (Swordplay)*, martial arts epics and Hong Kong gangster films



London, May 2014

From 1 June till 7 October 2014, the **BFI** will present the largest and most comprehensive exploration of Chinese cinema from Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan ever to be undertaken in the UK. **A Century of Chinese Cinema**, programmed in partnership with **TIFF**, with the generous support of our season sponsors **Lycamobile** and **Shangri-La** and with special thanks to **Cathay Pacific Airways**, forms part of **Electric Shadows**, the Chinese term for film and the name of the BFI's extensive year-long programme of business, trade, creative and cultural collaborations with China. The season will showcase more than 80 films across five distinct programme strands for audiences to discover the rich variety of films from this immensely significant cinematic region.

The season begins in June with **The Golden Age** showcasing stunning classics from the 1930s and 40s that shattered age-old taboos, experimented with visual techniques and created stars to rival Hollywood. **A New China** presents powerful melodramas, gritty war films and daring satires made during the years of post-war revolutionary China and the Cultural Revolution. In July, the third part of the programme **Swordsmen, Gangsters and Ghosts** highlights the popular *wuxia* (swordplay), martial arts and Hong Kong gangster films which first brought Chinese cinema to international attention. This landmark season continues with **New Waves** in August and **New Directions** in September and early October. Further announcements on these programme strands and very special guests will follow soon.

Programme highlights of the first two months at BFI Southbank include:

The Golden Age – June 2014

The Golden Age of Chinese Cinema was defined by the classics of Shanghai cinema from the 1930s and 1940s. Some of the best known films of this era include **New Women** (China 1935, Cai Chusheng) starring the iconic 'Greta Garbo of China' **Ruan Lingyu** whose tragic early death at the age of 24 led her to become an icon of Chinese cinema. The musical **Street Angel** (China 1937, Yuan Muzhi) which portrays the daily struggles of Shanghai's underclasses, and **Crossroads** (China 1937, Shen Xiling), a heart-breaking portrait of four impoverished, artistically-minded young friends in Depression-era Shanghai. The epic melodrama **The Spring River Flows East (Part I: Eight War-Torn Years + Part II: The Dawn)** (China 1947, Cai Chusheng, & Zheng Junli) about the trials and tribulations of a family around the Sino-Japanese War is considered as one of the greatest films of this period and China's answer to *Gone With the Wind*.

On 17 June, BFI Southbank welcomes **Noah Cowan**, season curator for TIFF for **An Introduction to A Century of Chinese Cinema**. He will give an overview of China's incredibly rich cinematic history, and provide a taster of the months to come. On 18 June, Cowan will chair a panel discussion on early Chinese cinema following rare screenings of the silent films, **Love's Labours** (China 1922, Zhang Shichuan) and **Romance of the Western Chamber** (China 1927, Hou Yao). He will also introduce a screening of **Red Heroine** (China 1929, Wen Yimim), a prime example of the martial arts explosion of the late 1920s.

Regarded as the finest work from the first great era of Chinese filmmaking, Fei Mu's poignant study of adulterous desire, **Spring in a Small Town** (China 1948) was produced prior to the Communist takeover in China in 1949 and subsequently long suppressed by the new regime. It is now seen as a masterpiece and in 2005 declared the greatest Chinese film ever made by the Hong Kong Film Critics Association. The BFI will release the film in a new digital restoration in cinemas **UK-wide from 20 June**.

A New China – June 2014

The victory of the Chinese Communist Party in 1949 marked the birth of a radically different nation. **A New China** introduces us to the cinema made during the first years of Communist rule and the volatile years leading up to the Cultural Revolution in 1966. Highlights of this programme include one of the major discoveries of this season **Shangrao Concentration Camp** (China 1951, Sha Meng, Zhang Ke) set in the hellish confines of a Nationalist prison; and the patriotic war epic **Red Detachment of Women** (China 1961, Xie Jin) about a young peasant girl's recruitment to an all-female brigade in a brutal campaign against the Nationalists.

A brief relaxation of socialist realism guidelines in the 1960s saw the emergence of several wonderful and now rarely-seen comedies, the most popular of which was the enormously charming **Li Shuangshuang** (China 1962, Lu Ren). Dubbed the 'Romeo and Juliet of the East', the Shaw Brothers' legendary musical **The Love Eterne** (Hong Kong 1963, Li Han-hsiang) sparked fanaticism amongst audiences and broke box-office records throughout Asia on its release. While a host of memorable tunes accompany the bitter rivalry between two opera singers over their different financial and political fortunes in 1940s Shanghai in **Two Stage Sisters** (Mainland 1964, Xie Jin).

One of the few female filmmakers working in Hong Kong in the 1960s and 1970s was **Cecile Tang** who was highly influenced by the French New Wave. Two of her best-known films will be shown in the programme - her debut **The Arch** (Hong Kong 1968) a daring character study of a wealthy widow and her relationship with a handsome young cavalry officer, and her second feature **China Behind** (Hong Kong, 1974) - banned for over a decade by the Hong Kong government - about a group of Mainlanders who flee the Cultural Revolution to the British 'haven' of Hong Kong only to discover it is a far cry from their dreams of liberty.

Swordsmen, Gangsters and Ghosts – The Evolution of Chinese Genre Cinema – July 2014

Part three of the BFI's season looks at the evolution of Chinese genre cinema that first brought Chinese cinema to international attention including the *wuxia* (swordplay) films that date back to China's earliest filmmaking days. In the late 1940s, with anti-*wuxia* policies in place, talent from the worlds of filmmaking and martial arts migrated to Hong Kong, and the genre came alive again with **Wong Fei-hung: The Whip That Smacks the Candle** (Hong Kong 1949, Wu Pang). It was an offshoot of *wuxia* that brought the martial arts films to the world, and reached its global popularity with the kung-fu genre in the mid-1960s to 70s with films like **A Touch of Zen** (Taiwan 1971, King Hu), and **Fist of Fury (The Chinese Connection)** (Hong Kong 1972, Lo Wei) starring the legendary **Bruce Lee**.

In the 1980s and 90s, **Jackie Chan** found international superstardom as a kung-fu comedy clown by blending martial arts with slapstick and stunts. **Police Story** (Hong Kong 1985, Jackie Chan) showcased Chan at his physical, comedic and creative peak, while **Drunken Master** (Hong Kong 1978 Yuen Woo-ping) and **Drunken Master 3 (aka The Legend of Drunken Master)** - (Hong Kong 1994 Lau Kar-leung) both starred Chan as the celebrated Chinese martial artist Wong Fei Hung.

Martial arts cinema returned to the Mainland following the success of **Ang Lee's** exhilarating epic **Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon** (Taiwan/Hong Kong/USA/Mainland 2000) which brought global acclaim for Chinese cinema in the new millennium. It became the most successful Chinese-language film of all time, making £127m on its release in 2000, and won the best foreign-language Oscar the following year. Recent *wuxia* films also include **Zhang Yimou's Hero** (Mainland/Hong Kong 2002) and **Feng Xiaogang's The Banquet** (Mainland 2006).

Concurrent with the rise of the *wuxia* and kung-fu genres were Hong Kong's guns and gangsters movies which became a trademark of H.K action cinema. One of the earliest films of this genre is the long-neglected, tough-as-nails crime thriller, **The Story of a Discharged Prisoner** (Hong Kong 1967, Patrick Lung Kong) which had an enormous and lasting influence on directors such as John Woo. More recently, a new generation of filmmakers has reinvigorated the genre with films like **Infernal Affairs** (Hong Kong 2002 Andrew Lau & Alan Mak), a modern masterpiece of the crime thriller genre later remade by Martin Scorsese in 2006 as *The Departed*; and Johnnie To's Triad crime film series **Election** (Hong Kong 2005) and **Election 2** (Hong Kong 2006).

– Ends –

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FILM AND EVENT LISTINGS

JUNE 2014

UK-wide release (including BFI Southbank)

Spring in a Small Town (China, 1948 Dir Fei Mu) from **Friday 20 June Digital Restoration**
Regarded as the finest work from the first great era of Chinese filmmaking, Fei Mu's quiet, piercingly poignant study of adulterous desire and guilt-ridden despair – now restored – is a

remarkable rediscovery. After eight years of marriage to Liyan – once rich but now sickly and almost suicidally apathetic following a long, ruinous war – Yuwen does little except deliver his daily medication. A surprise visit from Liyan’s friend Zhang re-energises the household, the invalid included. Liyan’s young sister is not alone in her excitement over the much-travelled guest; Yuwen knew him before her marriage... Eliciting a great performance from Wei Wei as Yuwen, whose wistful voiceover offers insights into her conflicted feelings, Fei creates a tense, sensual chamberwork steeped in suspicion and suppressed longing, deep resentments and half-spoken truths. The deft use of locations, dissolves and camera movements makes for a fraught, febrile mood of hesitant passion, entrapment and ennui; sophisticated cinematically and psychologically, the film eschews sentimentality for something far more beguiling.

China 1948. Dir Fei Mu. With Wei Wei, Li Wei, Shi Yu. 93min. Digital. Mandarin with EST. A BFI release

June Events

Sex, Politics and Aesthetics in the Shanghai Golden Age

This illustrated talk by Dr Victor Fan (King’s College London) introduces the riches of ‘The Golden Age’ of Chinese cinema by sketching the intellectual and artistic contexts from which these landmark films emerged. Fan argues that in 1930s Shanghai a vibrant discourse on ‘cinematic realism’ appeared, in conjunction with the Chinese filmmakers and critics’ fascination with sexuality, politics and aesthetics. Drawing references from European and Chinese frameworks, a distinct and hybrid cinematic style – one that ‘approaches reality’ – was born. This talk is an essential primer as we begin our journey into A Century of Chinese Cinema. Tickets £6

Tue 3 June 18:10 NFT3

Love’s Labours (*Lao Gong de Aiqing*) China 1922. Dir Zhang Shichuan. c.30min. EST

+ **Romance of the Western Chamber** (*Xi Xiang Ji*) China 1927. Dir Hou Yao. c.45min. EST

With live piano accompaniment

These exceedingly rare films provide a charming comedy about a fruitpeddler trying to impress his future father-in-law, plus a sumptuous, costume epic. Followed by a panel discussion, chaired by Noah Cowan, that will investigate the contexts in which Chinese cinema first emerged.

Joint ticket available with *Red Heroine* £16, concs £12 (Members pay £1.50 less)

Wed 18 June 18:10 NFT3

Red Heroine (*Hong Xia*) China 1929. Dir Wen Yimin. With Fan Xuepeng, Xu Guohui, Wen Yimin. c.95min. EST. With live piano accompaniment

Red Heroine was a smash hit on release and a prime example of the martial arts explosion of the late 20s (setting the template for later revivals), but with a crucial twist: in place of the typical, manly hero we have a swashbuckling woman. At first she’s a helpless abductee, then an unstoppable killing machine, fighting to stop a tyrannical warlord ravaging the countryside and enslaving numerous (very) scantily-clad young women.

Introduced by Noah Cowan

Wed 18 June 20:50 NFT3

A New Nation, a New Cinema: Chinese Cinema Under Mao

In this illustrated talk Julian Ward (University of Edinburgh, co-editor of ‘The Chinese Cinema Book’) introduces us to the cinema made during the first years of Communist rule – when art became a tool of the Party, and filmmakers were expected to become servants of the Revolution. While noting the devastating toll of oppression in the period, we’ll also see how the resilience of filmmakers, and their resourceful manoeuvres within the constantly shifting restrictions on artistic freedom, led to the production of many examples of original and arresting cinema. An essential introduction to our A New China programme.

Tickets £6.50

Tue 10 June 18:10 NFT3

The Golden Age: film screenings

Spring Silkworms (*Chuncan*)

China 1933. Dir Cheng Bugao. With Xiao Ying, Gong Jianong, Zheng Xiaoqiu. c.100min. Mandarin with EST. With live piano accompaniment

Adapted from a short story by progressive writer Mao Dun, *Spring Silkworms* echoes Visconti's *La Terra Trema* in its story of a humble silk-farming family struggling to free themselves from the grip of exploitative middlemen. Hailed as one of the first successful attempts to weave progressive politics into Chinese popular cinema, the film is also notable for director Cheng Bugao's luminous landscape shots and lyrical depictions of rural life.

Sun 1 June 16:00 NFT2

Wed 4 June 20:30 NFT2

New Women (*Xin Nüxing*)

China 1935. Dir Cai Chusheng. With Ruan Lingyu, Zheng Junli, Wang Naidong. 106min

New Women was iconic actress Ruan Lingyu's swan song, released mere months before her suicide, and its story eerily parallels Ruan's own tragically short life. Ruan plays an independent-minded music teacher who dreams of becoming a celebrated writer, and must struggle not only against the sexist dictates of society but a host of lecherous and vengeful men out to manipulate and exploit her.

Fri 6 June 18:10 NFT3

Mon 9 June 18:15 NFT1

The Highway (aka **The Big Road**) (*Da Lu*)

China 1935. Dir Sun Yu. With Jin Yan, Li Lili, Zhang Yi, Zheng Junli. 104min

A big-hearted classic of the 1930s progressive film movement, *The Big Road* chronicles the efforts of six young, unemployed city men who volunteer to help build a highway to aid the anti-Japanese war effort. Second Generation master Sun Yu manages to weave in several intriguing formal experiments – particularly in the area of sound design – into this otherwise straightforward and unabashedly patriotic film.

Sun 1 June 20:30 NFT2

Thu 5 June 20:40 NFT2

Crossroads (*Shizi Jietou*)

China 1937. Dir Shen Xiling. With Zhao Dan, Bai Yang, Lü Ban. 110min. Digital. Mandarin with EST

A free (and music-free) adaptation of *La Bohème*, *Crossroads* is a charming, engrossing and heart breaking portrait of four impoverished, artistically minded young friends in Depression era Shanghai, whose creative angst and romantic crises must take a backseat when the Japanese invade the country. Director Shen Xiling infuses the Shanghai leftist-cinema template with a frothy, dynamic, Hollywood-style energy, helped considerably by the Jimmy Stewartesque Zhao Dan in the lead role.

Mon 2 June 20:30 NFT3

Fri 6 June 20:30 NFT3

Song at Midnight (*Yeban Gesheng*)

China 1937. Dir Ma-Xu Weibang. With Jin Shan, Hu Ping, Wang Weiyi. 119min. Mandarin with EST

In a crumbling old theatre, a visiting opera troupe discover a catatonic woman who is entranced by the haunting voice of an unseen singer, a once-famous opera star who was tortured and hideously disfigured over his love for the woman who now thinks him dead. Beautifully rendered in gothic black and white, this loose adaptation of *The Phantom of the Opera* fuses left-wing politics with the tropes of Hollywood horror films to brilliant effect.

Sat 7 June 18:00 NFT2

Fri 13 June 20:40 NFT2

Street Angel (*Malu Tianshi*)

China 1937. Dir Yuan Muzhi. With Zhao Dan, Zhou Xuan, Wei Heling. 91min. Mandarin with EST

Loosely based on Frank Borzage's 1927 silent classic *7th Heaven*, this scintillating mixture of melodrama, social realism, exuberant musical numbers and slapstick comedy stars Zhao Dan (the lanky hero of Shen Xiling's *Crossroads*) as a misfit street musician who sets out to rescue two hard-luck sisters from dire straits – one already sold into prostitution, the other on the verge of the same, barely surviving as a teahouse singer.

Sun 1 June 18:10 NFT3

Tue 3 June 20:45 NFT1

The Spring River Flows East (*Yijiang Chunshui Xiang Dong Liu*)

(Part I: Eight War-Torn Years + Part II: The Dawn)

China 1947. Dirs Cai Chusheng, Zheng Junli. With Tao Jin, Bai Yang, Shangguan Yunzhu. Pt I 96min. Pt II 92min. Digital. Mandarin with EST

A young couple marry during the Sino-Japanese War, but are separated by the conflict. When they're reunited after the war – the husband now a successful entrepreneur and lover of a wealthy debutante, the wife a lowly labourer – loyalties of heart and class are painfully and tragically tested. This milestone classic is now regarded as China's answer to *Gone With the Wind*.

Part I: Sun 8 June 18:30 NFT1

Thu 12 June 18:30 NFT1

Part II: Sun 8 June 20:50 NFT1

Thu 12 June 20:45 NFT1

A New China: Film screenings

This Whole Life of Mine (*Wo zhe Yibeizi*)

China 1950. Dir Shi Hui. With Shi Hui, Wei Heling, Li Wei. 120min. Digital. Mandarin with EST
This Whole Life of Mine, the first film produced in Shanghai after the end of the civil war, traces the history of 20th-century China from the fall of the Qing dynasty through to the 1949 Revolution through the eyes of a simple Beijing policeman. Actor-director Shi Hui takes the lead role, and brilliantly conveys the changing face of the Chinese people through four tumultuous decades. Tragically, Shi was driven to suicide during the 'Anti-Rightist Purge' of the late 1950s.

Sat 14 June 18:10 NFT2

Thu 19 June 20:40 NFT2

Shangrao Concentration Camp (*Shangrao Jizhongying*)

China 1951. Dirs Sha Meng, Zhang Ke. With Tang Huada, Jiang Jun, Lin Nong. 96min. Mandarin with EST

One of the major discoveries of this season, *Shangrao Concentration Camp* is set in the hellish confines of a Nationalist prison, where the brutal officials try to force two female Communist prisoners to reveal their leader's identity. Cinematographer Zhu Jinming echoes Alexander Dovzhenko's stunning landscape shots in his depiction of China's rugged northern climes, and the extraordinary use of long takes and tracking shots accentuate the passionate, earthy performances of the two leads.

Tue 10 June 20:40 NFT2

Sat 14 June 20:30 NFT3

In the Face of Demolition (*Wei Lou Chun Xiao*)

Hong Kong 1953. Dir Li Tie. With Cheung Ying, Ng Chor-Fan, Bruce Lee. 125min. Cantonese with EST

This early leftist social drama from Hong Kong offers a panoramic portrait of a crumbling apartment complex and its down-and-out denizens, including a taxi driver, an unemployed teacher, a professional reduced to selling his blood and, of course, a venal landlord. In addition to establishing an omnipresent theme in Hong Kong cinema – the plight of the urban poor – the film is also a prime example of the popular melodramas of the time, which featured displaced Mainland film stars.

Sun 15 June 17:45 NFT3

Tue 17 June 20:20 NFT3

Parents' Hearts (*Fu-Mu Xin*)

Hong Kong 1955. Dir Chun Kim. With Ma Si-Tsang, Wong Man-Le, Lam Kar-Sing. 111min. Video. Cantonese with EST

This heart-breaking drama, included on *Time Out Hong Kong's* list of the 100 greatest Hong Kong films ever made, chronicles the decline of the once prominent Cantonese opera scene. *Parents' Hearts* tells the story of a bit-part Cantonese opera actor (played by real-life opera star Ma Si-Tsang) who's reduced to playing a clown in a low-rent company in order to support his family.

Sun 15 June 15:20 NFT1

Mon 16 June 20:30 NFT1

New Year's Sacrifice (*Zhufu*)

China 1956. Dir Sang Hu. With Bai Yang, Wei Heling, Li Jingbo. 110min. Mandarin with EST

Despite Mao Zedong's denunciation of the May Fourth Movement for its lack of ideological rigour, many post-1949 Mainland films continued to be derived from these recognised classics of Chinese left-wing culture. Based on a short story by influential left-wing writer Lu Xun, *New Year's Sacrifice* – which chronicles the travails of a poor servant who is twice sold into marriage, twice widowed and forced back into lowly servitude – is one of the most successful fusions of progressive modernism with socialist realism.

Sat 14 June 15:50 NFT2

Sun 15 June 20:30 NFT3

An Unfinished Comedy (*Meiyou Wancheng de Xiju*)

China 1957. Dir Lü Ban. With Han Lan'gen, Yin Xiucen, Fang Hua. 80min. Mandarin with EST
Performing for a group of party cadres, two famous comedians from pre-Revolution days put on a series of sketches that blend over into absurdist fantasy episodes which parody Party propaganda and ideological orthodoxy. Director Lü Ban was a master of comedies that gently tweaked the Party bureaucracy, but this stunning, formally audacious farce landed in hot water for its radical critique of Party censorship; Lü himself was heavily persecuted, and never made another film.

Fri 13 June 18:10 NFT3

Fri 20 June 20:40 NFT3

Red Detachment of Women (*Hongse Niangzijun*)

China 1961. Dir Xie Jin. With Zhu Xijuan, Wang Xin'gang, Xiang Mei. 110min. Mandarin with EST

A young peasant girl on the island of Hainan is recruited to the red flag by a dashing communist spy, and joins an all-female brigade for a brutal campaign against the dastardly Nationalist foe. One of the most important Mainland films up to the fall of the 'Gang of Four,' director Xie Jin's war epic crosses the eye-popping style of Communist propaganda posters with the gritty realism of Soviet war films.

Fri 20 June 18:15 NFT3

Fri 27 June 18:10 NFT3

Li Shuangshuang

China 1962. Dir Lu Ren. With Zhang Ruifang, Zhong Xinghuo, Zhang Wenyong. 104min. Mandarin with EST

A brief relaxation of socialist realism guidelines in the 1960s saw the emergence of several wonderful comedies, the most popular of which was the deft and enormously charming *Li Shuangshuang*. The title character (*Seventeen Years* superstar Zhang Ruifang) is a model member of a village commune who cheerily denounces the laziness and corruption of the village men – including that of her kind but not overly bright husband. This elicits a substantial amount of domestic strife, before the inevitable happy ending.

Sat 21 June 18:15 NFT3

Tue 24 June 18:10 NFT3

The Love Eterne (Liang Shanbo yü Zhu Yingtai)

Hong Kong 1963. Dirs Li Han-Hsiang, King Hu. With Betty Loh Ti, Ivy Ling Po. 126min. Mandarin with EST

A true 'event' movie, this musical adaptation of the legend of the Butterfly Lovers – a whirlwind, cross-dressing romance sometimes referred to as the 'Romeo and Juliet of the East' – broke box office records throughout Asia. Huangmei opera diva Ivy Ling Po stars as a young (male) scholar who befriends Zhu Ying Tai (Betty Loh Ti), an aristocratic young girl masquerading as a boy; perhaps needless to say, complications ensue, leading to one of the greatest tear-jerking endings in Hong Kong film history.

Sat 21 June 15:30 NFT1

Mon 23 June 18:15 NFT1

Two Stage Sisters (Wutai Jiemei)

China 1964. Dir Xie Jin. With Xie Fang, Cao Yindi, Shangguan Yunzhu. 112min. Digital. Mandarin with EST

Two opera singers in 1940s Shanghai engage in a bitter rivalry over nothing less than the future of the New China itself, in this stunning and sumptuous melodrama straight out of the Bette Davis/Joan Crawford playbook. A scenery-eviscerating performance by Xie Fang, a host of memorable tunes and an over-the-top (and truly fabulous) final courtroom scene make this film a major revelation.

Sun 22 June 18:15 NFT1

Tue 24 June 20:45 NFT1

The East Is Red (Dongfang Hong)

China 1965. Dir Wang Ping et al. 117min. Mandarin with EST

The East Is Red is one of the most lavish and important examples of the 'ideologically correct' model operas, which would soon become the only films allowed to be made during the virtual shutdown of film production during the Cultural Revolution. The film retells the history of the Chinese Communist Party, from its founding in 1921 to its victory over the Nationalists in 1949 as a grand musical pageant that's both breathtaking and discomfiting in its monumental, abstract design. Its title song practically became the national anthem for a time.

Sat 21 June 20:30 NFT3

Wed 25 June 18:20 NFT1

Red Crag: Life in Eternal Flame (Lie Huo zhong Yongsheng)

China 1965. Dir Shui Hua. With Zhao Dan, Yu Lan, Li Jian. 137min. Digital. Mandarin with EST

Arrested while escorting a weapons shipment, a female Communist guerrilla resists torture at the hands of her Nationalist captors and becomes a leader in the rough-and-tumble prison. As the Communist army approaches and the prisoners are threatened with execution, a desperate escape is planned. Featuring plentiful patriotic chest beating and many Mao-inspired smiles, this taut wartime thriller anticipates the paranoia and violence of the imminent Cultural Revolution.

Mon 23 June 20:20 NFT3

Sat 28 June 20:20 NFT2

The Arch (Dong Furen)

Hong Kong 1968. Dir Cecile Tang. With Lisa Lu, Roy Chiao. 95min. EST

One of the few female filmmakers working in Hong Kong in the 60s and 70s, Cecile Tang made a classic of the era with this profound and stylistically daring character study. In the early Qing dynasty, a wealthy and respected widow agrees to billet a handsome young cavalry officer in her palatial home; but when he begins to court both her and her immature teenage daughter, she is forced to choose between her own happiness and her daughter's well-being.

Thu 26 June 20:40 NFT2

Sun 29 June 16:00 NFT2

The Winter (*Dong Nuan*)

Taiwan 1969. Dir Li Han-Hsiang. With Gui Yalei, Tian Ye, Sun Yue. 95min. Video. Mandarin with EST

A young woman returns to her hometown and reconnects with an old family friend, who cannot bring himself to confess his love for her. When he finally reveals his feelings she abruptly leaves town, only to return years later with a child. A change of pace for veteran historical epic specialist Li Han-Hsiang, this small scale, yet profoundly moving, romantic drama was a major influence on both Hou Hsiao-hsien and Ang Lee (who subsequently cast its lead actress Ling Fang in several films).

Fri 27 June 18:20 NFT2

Sun 29 June 20:40 NFT2

Execution in Autumn (*Qiu Jue*)

Taiwan 1972. Dir Lee Hsing. With Ou Wei, Tang Pao-Yun, Ko Hsiang-Ting. 99min. Digital. Mandarin with EST

In Han-era China, a bullish young man is sentenced to death for three murders he committed during a brawl. As he languishes in prison waiting for his date with the executioner, his manipulative mother attempts to free him – or at least ensure that he produces an heir. Intensely dramatic and dazzlingly stylised, *Execution in Autumn* also uses its historical framework to subtly critique the traditional Confucian values of family loyalty and filial sacrifice.

Wed 25 June 20:50 NFT1

Sat 28 June 18:30 NFT1

China Behind (*Zaijian Zhongguo*)

Hong Kong 1974. Dir Cecile Tang. With Tsang Kei-Luk, Poon Yu-Man, Siu Siu-Ling. 89min. Mandarin with EST

A group of Mainlanders fleeing the Cultural Revolution risk all to reach the adjacent British 'haven' of Hong Kong; yet what they find there is a far cry from their dreams of liberty. *China Behind*, one of the most politically daring films of 70s Hong Kong cinema, is the second feature by Cecile Tang, who was highly influenced by the French New Wave. The film was banned for over a decade by the Hong Kong government, and is a damning indictment of both the socialist and free-market 'utopias.'

Sun 29 June 18:20 NFT2

Mon 30 June 20:40 NFT2

JULY 2014

July Events**Once Upon a Time from China: Chinese Martial Arts Cinema and its Transnational Evolution**

In this illustrated lecture, Leon Hunt (author of 'Kung Fu Cult Masters: From Bruce Lee to Crouching Tiger') introduces the diverse riches of Chinese martial arts cinema, charting its multiple evolutions within the context of globalised cinema culture. We'll hear about the origins of this indigenous genre within Chinese literature and silent film, the explosion in its global popularity in the 60s, and its continuing development to produce both acclaimed arthouse meditations and formidable blockbuster hits.

Tickets £6.50

Mon 7 July 18:20 NFT3

Swordsmen, Gangsters and Ghosts: Film screenings**Wong Fei-hung: The Whip that Smacks the Candle**

Huang Feihong Zhuan: *Bianfeng Mie Zhu*

Hong Kong 1949. Dir Wu Pang. With Kwan Tak-Hing, Yuen Siu-Tin, Tso Tat-Wah. 72min.

Cantonese with EST

The martial artist Wong Fei-hung (1847-1924) is a popular screen character; a symbol of Chinese tradition and patriotism, he was portrayed most famously by Jackie Chan and Jet Li. But this film started it all: Chinese opera star Kwan Tak-hing would go on to play the role in over 70 features, serials and TV episodes, while it set the template for modern kung fu by eschewing fantasy for realistic action choreography and a focus on martial arts discipline and technique.

Wed 2 July 18:20 NFT2

Mon 7 July 20:30 NFT3

One-Armed Swordsman

Dubei Dao

Hong Kong 1967. Dir Chang Cheh [Zhang Che]. With Jimmy Wang Yu, Chiao Chiao, Pan Ying-Tse. 117min. Mandarin with EST

Chang Cheh achieved great success with a series of martial arts epics heavy on mutilation and male bonding (an aesthetic passed on to his future assistant director, John Woo). In Chang's first big hit, the enormously talented Jimmy Wang Yu stars as a martial arts prodigy who loses an arm in a street battle. After teaching himself a new style of swordplay, he defends his school and master from the gang that killed his father. *One-Armed Swordsman* is a high point in the careers of its director, star and studio.

Fri 4 July 18:10 NFT3

Sat 5 July 20:30 NFT1

The Story of a Discharged Prisoner

Yingxiong Bense

Hong Kong 1967. Dir Patrick Lung Kong. With Tse Yin, Sek Kin, Patrick Lung Kong. 119min. Cantonese with EST

This influential, tough-as-nails crime thriller served as the basis for John Woo's *A Better Tomorrow*. Patrick Tse Yin stars as Lee Cheuk-hung, who is released from prison to discover his fiancée is the mistress of triad boss One-Eyed Jack (Shek Kin). One-Eyed Jack tries to recruit Lee into his gang, but determined to stay on the straight and narrow, Lee refuses... This is both a groundbreaking action drama and a forceful, socially-conscious portrait of the plight of the marginalised in a rapidly modernising Hong Kong.

Fri 4 July 20:30 NFT3

Thu 10 July 18:10 NFT3

A Touch of Zen

Xia Nü

Taiwan 1971. Dir King Hu. With Shih Jun, Hsu Feng, Roy Chiao. 200min. Mandarin with EST

King Hu began at the Shaw Brothers' studio in the late 50s, but relocated to Taiwan to pursue his own artistic vision. His masterpiece is this epic fantasy about a timid artist and scholar (a stand-in for the director) protecting a beautiful young woman from the corrupt nobles intent on wiping out her family. Exquisite, painterly compositions, rapid-fire editing and spectacular choreography, intertwined with traditional Chinese philosophy, make *A Touch of Zen* a true classic.

Fri 11 July 19:00 NFT3

Sun 13 July 18:30 NFT1

Fist of Fury

Jingwu Men

Hong Kong 1972. Dir Lo Wei [Luo Wei]. With Bruce Lee, Nora Miao, Tian Feng. 107min. Cantonese and Mandarin with EST

Possessed of charisma, power and grace, Bruce Lee was the living symbol of the worldwide kung fu craze in the 70s and a martial arts innovator. *Fist of Fury* is a patriotic revenge fantasy which echoes the ideology of Wong Fei-hung's films. Lee's second starring role sees him as kung fu prodigy Chen Zhen, who returns to early 20th century Shanghai to discover that his former master was murdered. Enraged, he declares a one-man war

against the Japanese *dojo* responsible.

Sat 5 July 15:50 NFT3

Tue 8 July 20:45 NFT1

Drunken Master

Zui Quan

Hong Kong 1978. Dir Yuen Woo-Ping. With Jackie Chan, Yuen Siu-Tin, Wong Cheng-Lee. 111min.

International version

Jackie Chan blows a raspberry at tradition by playing folk hero Wong Fei-hung as a wild, clumsy kung fu student sent to train with his cruel uncle. After being painfully schooled in the technique of the Eight Drunken Gods, he returns to protect his father when an assassin agrees to kill him for cash. *Drunken Master* mixes furiously fast fist and footwork with Three Stooges-style slapstick; the climactic battle is one of the most amazing fight scenes in film history.

Sun 6 July 18:30 NFT1

Mon 14 July 20:45 NFT1

The 36th Chamber of Shaolin

Shaolin Sanshiliu Fang

Hong Kong 1978. Dir Lau Kar-Leung. With Gordon Liu, Lo Lieh, Wong Yue. 119min.

Mandarin with EST

The 36th Chamber of Shaolin is the masterpiece of the great director and fight choreographer Lau Kar-leung, and arguably the greatest martial arts film of all time. Lau's godbrother Gordon Liu stars as San Te, who is drawn into rebellion against the oppressive Manchu government. Wounded, he flees to the Shaolin Temple and spends years mastering his martial arts skills... Lau emphasises his discipline and dedication, but this doesn't stop the film from being spectacular and riotously entertaining.

Sun 6 July 15:45 NFT3

Thu 10 July 20:40 NFT1

Long Arm of the Law

Sheng Gang Qibing

Hong Kong 1984. Dir Johnny Mak. With Lam Wai, Huang Jian, Jiang Lung.

100min. Cantonese with EST

Johnny Mak's wildly successful film *Long Arm of the Law* introduced amoral brutality into the moralistic gangster genre, and laid the groundwork for the 'heroic bloodshed' films of Ringo Lam and John Woo. A Mainland gang of former Red Guards arrive in Hong Kong for a jewellery heist, but tensions with Hong Kong allies and within the gang soon lead to violence... There's more here than gangster gunplay; the desperation and nihilism have been interpreted as symptomatic of the 'handover syndrome' preceding Hong Kong's return to the Mainland in 1997.

Sun 6 July 20:45 NFT1

Sun 13 July 15:50 NFT3

Police Story

Jingcha Gushi

Hong Kong 1985. Dir Jackie Chan. With Jackie Chan, Maggie Cheung, Brigitte Lin, Chor Yuen. 94min.

Cantonese with EST

Police Story showcases Jackie Chan at his physical, comedic and creative peak, in front of and behind the camera. Departing from period martial arts, he mixes elements from Hollywood cop and car-crash films with comedy, acrobatics and stunts, to stunning (and hilarious) effect. The story is simple – a zealous cop (Chan) in pursuit of a drug lord, finds himself framed for murder – but the execution is everything. Jaw-dropping.

Wed 16 July 20:30 NFT3

Sun 20 July 18:30 NFT1

Once Upon a Time in China

Huang Feihong

Hong Kong 1991. Dir Tsui Hark. With Jet Li, Rosamund Kwan, Yuen Biao, Jackie Cheung. 134min. Cantonese with EST

Forty-two years after Wong Fei-hung was first immortalised on screen in *The Whip That Smacks the Candle*, Tsui Hark teamed with Jet Li to create arguably the most famous and popular big-screen iteration of the legendary martial artist. It casts Li as defender of Chinese culture, standing tall against the plundering of the country by Europeans and Americans, while symbolising the strength and persistence of local traditions. The climactic ladder battle is especially exhilarating.

Mon 21 July 18:00 NFT1

Fri 25 July 18:00 NFT3

Once Upon a Time in China 2

Huang Feihong zhi Nan'er Dang Ziqiang

Hong Kong 1992. Dir Tsui Hark. With Jet Li, Rosamund Kwan, Max Mok, Donnie Yen. 113min. Cantonese with EST

In the second of five sequels, Tsui Hark revitalises the period martial arts film with his typical brio and mix-and match approach to genre – fuses pro-China patriotism with a template that clearly evokes the classic American western. *Once Upon a Time in China 2* includes some of the most spectacular fight sequences ever put to film, notably a rare onscreen clash between Jet Li and fellow martial arts icon Donnie Yen.

Mon 21 July 20:45 NFT1

Fri 25 July 20:45 NFT3

Drunken Master 3 (aka The Legend of Drunken Master)

Zui Quan II

Hong Kong 1994. Dir Lau Kar-Leung. With Andy Lau, Jackie Chan, Michelle Li, Gordon Liu. 99min. International version

Jackie Chan again plays Wong Fei-hung, this time embroiled in a plot by British officials to steal a valuable Chinese artefact. Forced to fight, he must take to the bottle to give his drunken boxing its full power and defeat legions of thugs. The combination of Lau Kar-leung's intricate choreography and Chan's acrobatics and gleeful mugging results in one of the all-time peaks of martial arts cinema, with examples of Hong Kong kung fu craftsmanship at its finest.

Thu 24 July 20:50 NFT3

Sat 26 July 18:30 NFT1

A Chinese Odyssey

Xi You Ji

Hong Kong 1995. Dir Jeff Lau. With Stephen Chow, Athena Chu, Karen Mok. PtI: 87min. PtII: 95min. Cantonese with EST

Part I: Pandora's Box Di Yibai-ling-yi Hui zhi Yueguang Baohe
+ Part II: Cinderella Dajie Ju zhi Xian Lu Qi Yuan

This comedy-fantasy-wuxia is widely considered the best of the numerous screen adaptations of the classic Ming Dynasty novel 'Journey to the West,' due mainly to lead actor Stephen Chow. *A Chinese Odyssey* casts the comedian in one of his best roles, as a 16th-century outlaw who discovers that he's the reincarnation of a prankster demi-god known as the Monkey King, who betrayed his master while the two were travelling to the West to bring the teachings of Buddha back to China. Much supernatural slapstick, time travelling and star-crossed romance ensues.

Pt I: Fri 18 July 20:50 NFT3; Sat 19 July 16:20 NFT2

Pt II: Sat 19 July 18:30 NFT2; Tue 22 July 20:45 NFT2

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

Wo Hu Zang Long

Taiwan-Hong Kong-USA-Mainland 2000. Dir Ang Lee. With Chow Yun-Fat, Michelle Yeoh, Zhang Ziyi, Cheng Peipei. 120min. Mandarin with EST

Ang Lee brought *wuxia* to the West with this multiple Oscar®-winning, period swordplay epic. When a rebellious teenager (Zhang Ziyi) steals Li Mu Bai's (Chow Yun Fat) legendary jade sword from his warrior friend (Michelle Yeoh), she triggers a sweeping pursuit that incorporates magnificent chases over rooftops, lakes and trees. Paying homage to *wuxia* master King Hu, Lee created a fusion of martial arts and arthouse that would prove immensely influential.

Thu 24 July 18:10 NFT3

Sun 27 July 20:30 NFT1

Hero

Yingxiong

Mainland-Hong Kong 2002. Dir Zhang Yimou. With Jet Li, Tony Leung, Maggie Cheung. 99min. Mandarin with EST

Jet Li leads a dream cast as a nameless assassin who arrives at the court of a warlord, claiming to have killed three killers who had previously made attempts on the lord's life, but he has an agenda of his own. An inversion of the 'noble hero fights official corruption' template of Hong Kong *wuxia*, the Mainland produced *Hero* argues for the peace and stability offered by centralised state control. Zhang's excellent action sequences, are complemented by cinematographer Christopher Doyle's bold, colour-coordinated design.

Sat 26 July 20:30 NFT3

Tue 29 July 18:10 NFT3

Infernal Affairs

Wujian Dao

Hong Kong 2002. Dirs Andrew Lau, Alan Mak. With Andy Lau, Tony Leung, Anthony Wong. 101min. Cantonese with EST

Infernal Affairs is a modern masterpiece of the crime thriller genre. Tony Leung Chiu-wai and Andy Lau (not to be confused with the film's director) play undercover moles who, unbeknown to each other, have burrowed their way deep into the other's organisation: cop Leung into a triad society, triad member Lau into the police department... *Infernal Affairs* was followed by two sequels and remade by Martin Scorsese as *The Departed*.

Sun 27 July 18:20 NFT2

Tue 29 July 20:45 NFT2

Election

Heishehui

Hong Kong 2005. Dir Johnnie To. With Simon Yam, Tony Leung Kar-Fai, Louis Koo. 100min. Cantonese and Mandarin with EST

Mon 28 July 18:20 NFT3

Wed 30 July 20:45 NFT3

Election 2

Heishehui Yi He Wei Gui

Hong Kong 2006. Dir Johnnie To. With Simon Yam, Louis Koo, Nick Cheung. 92min. Cantonese and Mandarin with EST

The *Election* diptych is a perfect display of To's mastery of genre cinema. He dispenses with the sentimental notion of honour among thieves that marks many gangster films, and captures the amoral lust for power at the heart of organised crime. Featuring a stellar cast of To veterans, the two films constitute a sprawling crime epic that traces the power-plays, betrayals and retributions of high-level gangsters battling to fill the power vacuum left after the triad leadership comes up for grabs.

Mon 28 July 20:40 NFT3

Thu 31 July 18:10 NFT3

The Banquet

Ye Yan

Mainland 2006. Dir Feng Xiaogang. With Zhang Ziyi, Ge You, Daniel Wu. 131min. Mandarin with EST

The Banquet is a loose adaptation of 'Hamlet' set in 10th-century China, which finds surprising intersections between Shakespeare's play and Chinese family values; it becomes a cautionary tale about the chaos that strikes a family when traditional roles break down or are denied. Featuring a fine cast and enormous sets, *The Banquet* is a more cerebral entry in the *wuxia* genre, but sterling work by choreographer Yuen Woo-ping keeps the energy high.

Wed 30 July 18:00 NFT3

Thu 31 July 20:20 NFT3

NOTES TO EDITORS:

About A Century of Chinese Cinema

Curated by Noah Cowan for TIFF (TIFF Bell Lightbox), in collaboration with China Film Archive (Beijing), Hong Kong Film Archive and Chinese Taipei Film Archive.

About Lycamobile

Lycamobile is a prepaid mobile SIM card provider that provides low-cost, high-quality international and national calls and has acquired over 30 million customers across 17 countries (UK, Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Spain, Australia, France, Germany, Poland, Ireland, Portugal, Italy and the USA). Lycamobile is available through an extensive network of more than one million retail outlets. The brand was initially introduced in 2006 and is already Europe's largest pre-pay MVNO. Lycamobile continues to grow rapidly with further market launches planned throughout 2014.



About Shangri-La

Hong Kong-based Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, one of the world's premier hotel companies, currently owns and/or manages more than 80 hotels under the Shangri-La brand with a room inventory of over 34,000. Over four decades the group has established its brand hallmark of 'hospitality from the heart.' The group has a substantial development pipeline with upcoming projects in mainland China, India, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Qatar, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom. For more information and reservations, please contact a travel professional or access the website at www.shangri-la.com.



About Cathay Pacific Airways

Carmen Tse, Marketing Communications & E-commerce Manager at Cathay Pacific Airways, commented: "Flying five times a day from London to Hong Kong, and onwards to 21 destinations within mainland China, we are committed to bringing China and the Far East closer to the UK to share cultural experiences. We are delighted to be supporting *Electric Shadows*, the BFI's film season in 2014 which will showcase some of China's most iconic films ever created. Serving business and leisure travellers, Cathay Pacific has connecting flights from Hong Kong International Airport to more than 170 destinations worldwide."

About BFI Film Audience Network

The BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) is a ground-breaking initiative that goes to the heart of the BFI's vision and new audience development strategy to help put film at the centre of UK cultural life, as set out in the BFI's *Film Forever* five-year plan.

Film-watching is one of the UK's most loved and important cultural activities, but many audiences across the UK do not get the opportunity to see a diverse range of films in a cinema setting. For filmmakers, getting films onto cinema screens is a highly competitive business, particularly for specialised films which includes archive, documentary, independent and foreign language films. The BFI FAN aims to change this.

- In a first for the UK, the BFI is investing up to £8.7 million of Lottery funding over four years (2013-2017) through partnerships with nine lead organisations (Film Hubs) to work full-time with cinema exhibitors, film festivals, educators, film societies, community venues, film archives and other organisations in their regions or nations to boost audiences for film across the UK.
- The Film Hubs, which drive audience engagement locally, will work together with the BFI at a UK-wide level to grow audiences for British independent and specialised film. They currently comprise: Broadway, Nottingham and Cambridge Film Trust; Chapter, Cardiff; Cornerhouse, Manchester; Film London; Queen's Film Theatre, Belfast; Regional Screen Scotland; the University of Brighton; Showroom Sheffield and National Media Museum, Bradford; and Watershed, Bristol. These organisations and their partners form the BFI FAN.
- The BFI FAN is also investing in targeted training and programming activity, in support for the non theatrical sector as well as improving access to cinema for people with hearing or sight loss, through strategic partners including the Independent Cinema Office, the British Federation of Film Societies and Your Local Cinema.com

More partners will join the network in the coming months as it grows and expands across the UK.

In ten years' time, we want to look back on the setting up of the BFI FAN as a turning point for film culture in the UK, embracing film not just as a form of entertainment, but also as a way of engaging audiences in ideas, dialogue and debate about culture and society.



About the BFI

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI Southbank is open to all. BFI members are entitled to a discount on all tickets. BFI Southbank Box Office tel: 020 7928 3232. Unless otherwise stated tickets are £11.00, concs £8.50 Members pay £1.50 less on any ticket. Website www.bfi.org.uk/southbank

Tickets for FREE screenings and events must be booked in advance by calling the Box Office to avoid disappointment

BFI Shop

The BFI Shop is stocked and staffed by BFI experts with over 1,200 book titles and 1,000 DVDs to choose from, including hundreds of acclaimed books and DVDs produced by the BFI.

The benugo bar & kitchen

Eat, drink and be merry in panoramic daylight. benugo's décor is contemporary, brightly lit and playful with a lounge space, bar and dining area. The place to network, hang out, unpack a film, savour the best of Modern British or sip on a cocktail.

There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archival collections, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you.

***** PICTURE DESK *****

A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting BFI Southbank screenings can be found at www.image.net under

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