

Curator's Notes
Historical Overview of Martial Arts Film "Wu Xia Pian"

In Cinema with Passion Series 14, AMA is pleased to show a retrospective of the evolution of Hong Kong martial arts films, featuring stars such as David Chiang, Ti Lung, Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan.

The martial arts films or Wu Xia Pian constitute a distinctive genre within the Chinese cinema. Unlike other genres, martial arts films is the only one that wins international attention. Although fashions and styles may have changed, the genre has proven uniquely durable over the last 30 years.

In the late 1960s the Kung Fu film was dominated by one studio: Shaw Brothers, all the films are male-led, with simple revenge plots, brutal and moody violence, and elegant fight choreography (*The Duel of the Iron Fists*). When Bruce Lee returned in 1971 to star in *The Big Boss*, it ignited international popularity for Kung Fu cinema (*Enter the Dragon*). In late 1970s, Directors like Chang Cheh and Liu Chia Liang, subsequently began to explore the tradition of authentic martial arts associated with the Shaolin Monastery (*36th Chamber of Shaolin*). In early 1980s Jackie (*Young Master*) and Sammo's (*The Victim*) Kung Fu comedies dominated the market. But in the mid 1980s, with the arising of D & B, the modern Kung Fu, mixed with gangster and gun shot became popular (*Legacy of Rage*, *Tiger Cage II*). In the 1990s, Jet Li brought in another climax with his portrayal of Wong Fei Hong (*Last Hero in China*). But perhaps the most important aspect of the nineties is the return of Shaw Brothers into the filmmaking arena. The Hero is a remake of SB's *The Boxer from Shantung* (1972) with Takeshi Kaneshiro represents a step which we hope will eventually lead SB to open its vault of important classics in Chinese cinema. Don't miss this rare opportunity to unfold the whole history of the martial arts films.

New Stars, New Series

Fri. midnite, Jan. 9 — Sat. midnite, 17
 Sat. 11am, Jan. 10

Killing Me Tenderly
 Directed by Lee Lik-Chi, 1997 (101 min.)
 Starring: Leon Lai Ming, Sammi Cheng, Sau-Man, Sandra Ng

A rural policeman (Leon Lai Ming) is sent to guard a pop star (Sammi Cheng), but must pretend to be gay to fit in with her entourage. Threatened by a rival singer, crazed fans, and a multitude of other Cantopop perils, Leon's work is cut out for him in this popular 1997 romantic comedy.

Fri. midnite, Jan. 16 — Sat. midnite, 24
 Sat. 11am, Jan. 17

We're No Bad Guys
 Directed by Wong Jing, 1997 (101 min.)
 Starring Dior Cheng, Yee-Kin, Jordan Chan, Siu Chun, Gigi Leung, Wang-Kay, Yvian Hui (Tsui Yeuk-Suen)

Airplane originally was an eager police officer at the organized crime bureau, but because his girlfriend was murdered by drug dealer Goldtooth Kwai his attitude changed. After encountering his new partner Turner and meeting a new girlfriend Siu Man, he finally decided to live his live anew and face the world again. At the same time, Goldtooth Kwai and killer Angel plan to kill them all.

History of Martial Arts

Shaw Brothers Era: Fist Fight Classics

Fri. midnite, Jan. 23 — Sat. midnite, Jan. 31
 Sat. 11am, Jan. 24

Duel of the Iron Fists a.k.a. The Duel
 Directed by Chang Cheh, 1971
 Starring David Chiang (Keung Dai-Wai), Ti Lung

The Dream Team: Chang Cheh, Ti Lung & David Chiang
 One of the earliest kung fu movies to get an English dubbed release, this rarest of rare action packed thriller is a masterpiece and classic, a must for Hong Kong movie fans! Ti Lung plays the son of a mobster killed by supposed followers who is on a quest for revenge. He later finds out that his co-hero, David Chiang, was paid to kill Ti Lung's father by a treacherous accountant. A furious duel ensues.
 ENGLISH DUBBED

Fri. midnite, Jan. 30 — Sat. midnite, Feb. 7
 Sat. 11am, Jan. 31

36th Chamber of Shaolin a.k.a. Master Killer
 Directed by Liu Chia Liang, 1976 (115 min.)
 Starring Gordon Liu (Lau Ka-Fai), Wong Yun, Lo Lieh

Liu Chia Hui plays a patriotic youth whose father and friends are killed by Manchu soldiers. Intent on revenge, he enters the Shaolin Monastery to learn martial arts. Each of Shaolin's 35 chambers contain a different type of martial arts technique or exercise which the youth must master before progressing to the next. After mastering all 35 chambers, Lau's character asks for permission to establish a 36th Chamber of Shaolin and become its teacher. In the movie, Liu tackles the learning process not only of style/philosophy, but of a martial arts totality.

36th Chamber of Shaolin was a huge success and established Lau Kar Fai as a leading Chinese action star of the late seventies. Considered a classic, this film is rarely seen and shown because of print unavailability.
 ENGLISH DUBBED

Bruce Lee Era: 25th Anniversary Release

Fri. midnite, Feb. 6 — Sat. midnite, Feb. 14
 Sat. 11am, Feb. 7

Enter the Dragon
 (tentative)
 Directed by Robert Clouse, 1973, 1997 (90 min.)
 Starring Bruce Lee, Jim Kelly, John Saxon, Sammo Hung, Shih Kien, Angela Mao Ying

Bruce Lee's Last Movie
 Released just after his death, the film put Bruce Lee on the Hollywood map. In order to break into the Hollywood market, Bruce plays a "James Bondish" type character. Unfortunately *Enter the Dragon* is also his last complete movie. Lee must compete in a secret martial arts tournament used as a cover for recruiting new henchmen for drug dealing. While on an island, Lee meets up with an old family nemesis and must deal with him and the island's deadly traps. The mirror scene near the end of the film is one of the most spectacular fight scenes between Bruce Lee and Shih Kien. This new print contains scenes not seen in the original U.S. release. (English version).

Golden Harvest Era: Kung Fu Comedy

Fri. midnite, Feb. 13 — Sat. midnite, Feb. 21
 Sat. 11am, Feb. 14

The Victim
 Directed by Sammo Hung, 1980
 Starring Leung Ka-Yan, Sammo Hung

The Victim has one of the better stories in the age of exploitive kung fu flicks and it creates the theme of Sammo's period kung fu drama: the master/student relationship. Sammo Hung plays a rough and tough traveler who sets out to find the best martial artist. When he meets his match with a brilliant Leung Ka-Yan, Sammo pleads to have him become his master. Sammo soon discovers a skeleton in Leung's closet, however, when he learns of an intense family feud involving Leung's evil brother (Chang Yi). Reluctantly, the two become friends as they join forces against the evil Chang Yi. Hung is incredibly funny and Leung stands out as a worthy valiant hero.

Fri. midnite, Feb. 20 — Sat. midnite, Feb. 28
 Sat. 11am, Feb. 21

Young Master
 Directed by Jackie Chan
 Starring Jackie Chan (Sing Lung), Yuen Biao, Wei Fei, Lily Li Li

As a young pupil in a kung fu school, Jackie Chan is sent to replace his sick master in a Lion Dance Competition where he discovers that his master has shown up on the opponent's side! After the opponent wins the competition, Jackie unwillingly helps his master cover up his betrayal, but both are discovered and kicked out of the school. Later, they discover that it was all set up by their competitor in order to divide and conquer the rival school. Will Jackie save the day? This is Jackie's first film with Golden Harvest.

D & B Era: Modern Action

Fri. midnite, Feb. 27 — Sat. midnite, Mar. 7
 Sat. 11am, Feb. 28

Legacy of Rage
 Directed by Ronny Yu, 1986 (84 min.)
 Starring Brandon Lee, Michael Wong, Man-Tak, Michael Chan, Wan-Man, Regina Keri (Kan Wai-Ling)

Brandon Lee vs. Michael Wong
 Brandon Lee, son of the late Bruce Lee, delivers a powerful performance in his movie debut, and won the nomination for the "Best Newcomer in Acting" of 1987 Hong Kong Film Award. Lee plays a naive young man set up by his "best friend" Michael Wong in a crime that leaves Lee serving 8 years in jail. Wong, in the meantime, takes advantage of this by hitting on Lee's girlfriend. Learning of his friend's betrayal, Lee sets out on a quest for revenge upon his release from prison.
 Directed by Ronny Yu (*The Bride with White Hair*).

Fri. midnite, Mar. 6 — Sat. midnite, Mar. 14
 Sat. 11am, Mar. 7

Tiger Cage II
 Directed by Yuen Woo-Ping, 1990 (92 min.)
 Starring Donnie Yen, Ji-Dan, Rosamund Kwan Chi Lam, David Ng Dai-Wai

Donnie Yen
 After the enormous success of the first *Tiger Cage*, Yuen Woo-Ping was needed to make a sequel. Having nothing to do with the first film (besides a brief appearance by Carol "DoDo" Cheng), it still manages to surpass the original. Donnie Yen, a tough cop, and Rosamund Kwan are framed for murder. In desperation, they enlist the aid of an overseas triad who is working to find the truth of the murder and recover a missing briefcase full of cash. The fight choreography is amazing and plentiful. Includes Martial Kombat star Robin Shou.

Jet Li Era

Fri. midnite, Mar. 13 — Sat. midnite, Mar. 21
 Sat. 11am, Mar. 14

Last Hero in China
 Director: Wong Jing
 Starring Jet Li, Cheung Man, Dicky Cheung, Gordon Liu, Anita Yuen

Jet Li
 Wong Jing presents a lighter view of kung fu folk hero Wong Fei Hong from *Once Upon a Time in China*. Wong must stop a gang of kidnappers, but first he must fight Boxer Rebels, and deal with the inevitable repercussions of Po Chi Lam's new neighbor a brothel.



The Duel

90s: Return of the Shaw Brothers

Fri. midnite, Mar. 20 — Sat. midnite, Mar. 28
 Sat. 11am, Mar. 21

The Hero (tentative)
 Directed by Corey Yuen Kwai, 1997 (97 min.)
 Starring Yuen Biao, Takeshi Kaneshiro (Gum Sing Mo), Valerie Chow Kar-Ling, Yuen Wah, Corey Yuen Kwai

Yuen Biao vs. Takeshi Kaneshiro
 After a severe drought, Ma Wing Jing (Takeshi Kaneshiro) and Tai Cheung (Yuen Wah) leave Shanghai for Shanghai. Forced to work as coolies, Ma, a fierce fighter, soon takes control and becomes a famous underworld figure. In the meantime, he falls in love with a beautiful singer (Hsuan Jessica Hester). However, by saving the life of crime boss Tam See (Yuen Biao), he earns the hatred of Tam's rival, Yang Shuang. Ma's swift rise to power leaves him ill-prepared to deal with Yang's guile, and in the end, he must pay a bloody price for his success. This powerful martial arts thriller combines state-of-the-art combat sequences with rich characters and plot. A major addition to the Hong Kong action cinema from the Chinese director Corey Yuen. A visually stunning film, *The Hero* is the most complete martial arts film since Tsui Hark's *Once Upon A Time In China*.

Chow Yun-Fat Series

Fri. midnite, Mar. 27 — Sat. midnite, Apr. 4
 Sat. 11am, Mar. 28

Romancing Star
 Directed by Wong Jing, 1987
 Starring Chow Yun-Fat, Maggie Cheung Man-Yuk

Romance/Comedy
 Chow Yun-Fat and Maggie Cheung team up in this girl-chasing comedy. The successful box office of the film turned the first time director Wong Jing to be the hottest director/long time box office winner in Hong Kong. The success also assisted the Win's Entertainment to establish itself as the 90s Movie Giant.

Fri. midnite, Apr. 3 — Sat. midnite, Apr. 11
 Sat. 11am, Apr. 4

The Lunatics
 Directed by Derek Yee Tung-Sing, 1986
 Starring Chow Yun-Fat, John Sham, Kim-Fun, Tony Leung Chiu-Wai, Stanley Fung Shui-Fan, Deannie Yip Tak-Han

Drama
 Stanley Fung plays a social worker who works with mentally ill patients after they are released from the hospital. All the big stars—Chow Yun-Fat, John Sham, Paul Chun Pui and Tony Leung—play the various mental patients and each one has a compelling story. A wonderful, intense social drama with excellent acting.

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