

# Hong Kong Film Panorama



Antwerp  
11 May - 29 May 2004



**FILM** museum  
Antwerpen





Hong Kong has long been a major film production centre. Its film industry is an important part of the city's economy, a vehicle for many talented people and a source of enjoyment for millions.

The Federation of Hong Kong Film Workers estimates that up to 130 films will be made in Hong Kong this year, an increase by 30 to 40% over 2003 when Hong Kong was hit by the SARS outbreak. The positive forecast was attributed to the Mainland of China and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA), which entered into force on 1 January 2004. Under the CEPA, Chinese language motion pictures produced by Hong Kong companies can be imported for distribution in the Mainland without being subject to China's quota of 20 foreign films per year. Films co-produced with the Mainland will be treated as Mainland movies for distribution in the Mainland. These are huge breakthroughs for the Hong Kong film industry.

In recent years Hollywood has been keen to co-produce with Hong Kong film talents and the results are more than encouraging. We hope to see a stronger partnership develop between Hong Kong and European filmmakers.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (HKSAR Government) has reaffirmed its commitment to help create favourable conditions to promote the development of our film industry. Two funds totalling 100 million Hong Kong dollars (about € 10 million) have been set up to enhance the professional and technical capabilities of the local film industry, to assist filmmakers to obtain loans for film production and to sponsor local films to participate in film festivals abroad.

We are dedicated to promoting Hong Kong movies to overseas viewers. In the past two years, we co-hosted successful Film Festivals in Antwerp, Paris and Amsterdam with the assistance of the HKSAR Government's Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority.

We are happy to be back in Antwerp to present some of the most recent productions, dating from 2002 to 2003.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Antwerp Film Museum and the Hong Kong International Film Festival for their support. Enjoy the films!

*Mr Andrew H Y Wong*

*Special Representative for Hong Kong*

*Economic and Trade Affairs to the European Communities*

## HONG KONG FILM PANORAMA – an introduction

A core group of filmmakers including Johnnie To, Wai Ka-fai, Peter Chan and Andrew Lau produced films of outstanding quality in 2002-2003. *Infernal Affairs*, co-directed by Andrew Lau and Alan Mak, was the top grossing Hong Kong film of 2002, acting as a stimulant for the industry to produce a rash of prequels and imitations. In 2003, *Infernal Affairs II* and *Infernal Affairs III* were released almost back-to-back. The strategy of Peter Chan's production company Applause Pictures is pan-Asian cooperation, with Chan himself contributing a haunting episode to *Three*, together with episodes by Thai and Korean directors. Chan produced *The Eye*, directed by the Bangkok-based Pang Brothers, which was the most successful horror genre picture of 2002. Chan was also the producer of *Golden Chicken* and its sequel *Golden Chicken 2*, both films looking back at the recent history of Hong Kong's ups and downs as an economic power. As for Johnnie To, he came up with *PTU*, regarded as his best work since *The Mission*. Working with Wai Ka-fai as co-director, To also put out a quirky series of films: *Love for All Seasons*, *Turn Left*, *Turn Right* and *Running on Karma*, the last with a Buddhist theme of preordained fate.

The independent scene was also active, with directors Fruit Chan, Carol Lai, Julian Lee, Yau Ching, Kwok Wai-lun, Bryan Chang contributing new works. Carol Lai's *The Floating Landscape* attempts to break through into the mainstream, Julian Lee's *Night Corridor* is a weird fantasy, Fruit Chan's *Public Toilet* is a multi-national production. DV film was the medium of choice for filmmakers such as Yau Ching and Kwok Wai-lun. In this particular medium, Wong Ching-po and Lee Kung-lok's *Fubo* stood out of the crowd.

The other significant development of 2003 was the increasing linkage with the Mainland China film industry, with Hong Kong filmmakers recognising that the future lies in collaborating more with the Mainland. Ann Hui's *Jade Goddess of Mercy*, based on a Mainland best-selling novel, is an example of this trend. The movie is a China production, with most of its actors, crew and funding coming from the Mainland. 2004 will be a year that will test how close the Hong Kong-Mainland linkage is.

By LAM Kam Po  
*Project Co-ordinator, Hong Kong International Film Festival*

## *Hong Kong Film Panorama*

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Brussels, together with the Antwerp Film Museum and the support of the Hong Kong International Film Festival and the Belgium – Hong Kong Society, is organising a “Hong Kong Film Panorama” in Antwerp from Tuesday 11 May to Saturday 29 May 2004.

This film festival presents eight of Hong Kong's most recent productions, dating from 2002 to 2003. They demonstrate the growing sophistication of Hong Kong's creativity.

The festival was launched in Germany in March 2004 and presented in six major cities. After Antwerp, Stockholm, Amsterdam and Vienna will be the next in the row.

Additional information about the films can be found on the following website: [www.hongkong-eu.org](http://www.hongkong-eu.org)

## *Film List*

1. Infernal Affairs (Wujian Dao)
2. Golden Chicken (Jin Ji)
3. Three – Going Home (San Geng zhi Huijia)
4. Public Toilet
5. Running on Karma (Da Zhi Lao)
6. The Eye (Jian Gui)
7. Fubo
8. Lost in Time (Wang Buliao)

## *Screening venue and date*

**MuHKACinema**

**at the Foto Museum**

Walsekaai 47 - 2000 Antwerpen

Tel.: + 32 3 260 99 99

E-mail: [info-film@muhka.be](mailto:info-film@muhka.be)

Website: <http://www.antwerpen.be/filmmuseum>

## *Screening Schedule*

Tuesday 11 May 20:30 hrs

INFERNAL AFFAIRS (Wujian Dao)

*Dir: Andrew Lau, Alan Mak - Scr: Alan Mak, Felix Chong*

Thursday 13 May 20:30 hrs

GOLDEN CHICKEN (Jin Ji)

*Dir: Samson Chiu - Scr: Matt Chow, Samson Chiu*

Sunday 16 May 20:30 hrs

THREE – GOING HOME (San Geng zhi Huijia)

*Dir: Peter Chan - Scr: Jojo Hui*

Monday 17 May 20:30 hrs

PUBLIC TOILET

*Dir: Fruit Chan*

Friday 21 May 20:30 hrs

RUNNING ON KARMA (Da Zhi Lao)

*Dir: Johnnie To, Wai Ka-fai*

*Scr: Wai Ka-fai, Yau Nai-hoi, Au Kin-ye, Yip Tin-shing*

Saturday 22 May 20:30 hrs

THE EYE (Jian Gui)

*Dir: Danny and Oxide Pang - Scr: Pang Bros., Jojo Hui*

Friday 28 May 20:30 hrs

FUBO

*Dir: Wong Ching-po, Lee Kung-lok - Scr: Simon Lai*

Saturday 29 May 20:30 hrs

LOST IN TIME (Wang Buliao)

*Dir: Derek Yee - Scr: Derek Yee, Yuen Sai-sang*

## *About Belgium - Hong Kong Society*

The Belgium-Hong Kong Society was founded in 1986 and registered as a non-profit making organisation. Its objective is to promote closer links between Belgium and Hong Kong. The Society organises various activities including luncheons, seminars, visits, business missions to Hong Kong and the well-known annual Chinese New Year dinner – a real must on the social agenda in Brussels.

Mr Piet Steel has been the Society's Chairperson since March 2002. Mr Steel is also the Vice-Chairman of the Federation of Hong Kong Business Associations Worldwide. The Society has 94 members, the highest number in recent years.

On this occasion, the Chairperson appeals to your financial support to a scholarship the Society presents each year to a deserving Hong Kong student to study at the College of Europe in Brugge. This complements a programme run by the King Baudouin Foundation, Prince Albert Fund which sends Belgian post-graduates to Hong Kong. By such means we are fostering long-term links between Belgium and Hong Kong.

If you would like to make a donation, you could transfer the money to the Society's following bank account: 310-0714657-47

Please contact the Society's secretariat for any additional information:

**Belgium Hong Kong Society**  
Aarlenstraat/Rue d'Arlon 118  
1040 Brussels  
Tel.: 02 775 00 88  
Fax: 02 230 31 78  
Website: [www.bhks.be](http://www.bhks.be)

## **Infernal Affairs** (*Wujian Dao*)

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A superb contemporary noir thriller with striking cinematography and suspenseful action, easily capturing the tone of gloom that has enveloped Hong Kong in recent years. Tony Leung and Andy Lau star as the two moles (the former planted by the police into a triad gang, and the latter by the triad into the police department) caught in a deadly cat-and-mouse struggle to obliterate each other before their identities are blown. Anthony Wong and Eric Tsang brilliantly support the two stars as their superiors trying to checkmate each other before each side becomes aware that their safety is compromised by the presence of each other's moles. The back-stories of all these protagonists form the narratives of the two prequels released almost back-to-back in 2003, re-energising the Hong Kong film industry with huge box-office returns. This first edition is an imperative initiation into the high-concept style and mood of the whole series.



*Dir: Andrew Lau, Alan Mak*

*Scr: Alan Mak, Felix Chong*

*Cast: Andy Lau, Tony Leung, Anthony Wong, Eric Tsang, Sammi Cheng, Kelly Chen, Edison Chen, Shawn Yu*

*2002 - Cantonese*

*Colour - 100 min*

## **Golden Chicken** (*Jin Ji*)

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Sandra Ng, whose performance as 'Golden Chicken' ('chicken' being local slang for prostitute) Ah Kam won her the 2003 Golden Horse Award for Best Actress, oozes unrestrained charm in this tale of a prostitute's life story, which becomes a veritable economic history of Hong Kong in the past twenty years. The film progresses as a flashback when Ah Kam tells her story to a desperate robber. Beginning from the 1970s, and her initiation into the world's oldest profession through her employment as a 'fish-ball' girl, the story segues into various periods of her life as she graduates from low-class fish-ball stalls to more classy joints where she works as an escort girl. She meets assorted characters (affording memorable cameos to some of Hong Kong's most popular stars), who altogether present a gallery of some of the weirdest and kinkiest personalities ever seen in the Hong Kong cinema of recent years.



*Dir: Samson Chiu*

*Scr: Matt Chow, Samson Chiu*

*Cast: Sandra Ng, Eric Tsang, Andy Lau, Tony Leung, Felix Wong, Hu Jun, Alfred Cheung*

*2002 - Cantonese*

*Colour - 106 min*

### Three – Going Home (*San Geng zhi Huijia*)

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Peter Chan's episode from *Three*, an anthology of three movies about ghosts with pan-Asian settings. Chan's episode, set in Hong Kong, stars Eric Tsang as a CID detective and single father who moves with his young son into a deserted police dormitory where the only other residents are Yu Fai (Leon Lai), a doctor specialising in Chinese medicine, and his four-year old daughter. The doctor keeps to himself, rebuffing Chan's attempts to be neighbourly; but when Chan's son disappears, he breaks into Yu Fai's apartment and discovers the well-preserved corpse of a woman, kept in a bath of herbal medicines. Not so much a shock piece as a sublime thriller with a melancholic edge, Chan shows that he has not lost his human touch. All the actors give affecting performances, but perhaps none more so than Eugenia Yuen as the preserved corpse - her countenance conveying the hope of resurrection.



*Dir: Peter Chan*

*Scr: Jojo Hui*

*Cast: Leon Lai, Eric Tsang, Eugenia Yuen*

*2002 - Cantonese/Putonghua*

*Colour - 61 min*

### Public Toilet

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Financed by Korean sources and featuring a cast of Korean, Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese actors (both professionals and non-professionals), this was shot on DV by director Fruit Chan, making exemplary use of the medium to emphasise multiculturalism and global mateship (or rather, pan-Asian cooperation) in a freewheeling, totally idiosyncratic style. Chan builds the movie around the conceit of young characters searching for a miracle cure, seemingly to be found in human waste products. His actors travel to various locations around the world (Beijing, Pusan, Calcutta, New York), with separate stories all revolving around public toilets where the theme is essentially one of a common humanity based on the purging of waste. The stories are loose and intersecting, but though the premise may be flimsy, Chan manages to bring it off with verve and his usual non-conformity that is strangely appealing.

*Dir: Fruit Chan*

*Cast: Cho Insung, Ma Zhi, Jang Hyuk, Tsuyoshi Abe, Sam Lee*

*2002 - Cantonese/Putonghua/Korean/ English*

*Colour - 102 min*



## Running on Karma (*Da Zhi Lao*)

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Andy Lau plays "Biggie", a male stripper and muscle man, actually an ex-monk from the Mainland who possesses the gift of seeing visions of victims who are about to be murdered. Biggie uses this power to help a female cop, Yee (Cecilia Cheung). Their relationship deepens; she learns that Biggie had left the monkhood because of the death of a female friend, killed by another monk. Biggie must wrestle with the same dilemma towards Yee when he becomes aware that she will die from discharging her responsibilities in arresting the murderer of Biggie's friend. Biggie, realising that he has fallen in love with Yee, attempts to save her by trying to reverse her karma, but can it be changed? This new work by Johnnie To and Wai Ka-fai bounces along on a lively pace and the gimmick of Andy Lau running around naked, wearing a body suit that inflates his vital parts.

*Dir: Johnnie To, Wai Ka-fai*

*Scr: Wai Ka-fai, Yau Nai-hoi, Au Kin-ye, Yip Tin-shing*

*Cast: Andy Lau, Cecilia Cheung, Cheung Siu-fai, Karen Tong, Chun Wong*

*2003 - Cantonese*

*Colour - 92 min*



## The Eye (*Jian Gui*)

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The Pang Brothers, of *Bangkok Dangerous* fame, return to the city of their birth for this horror thriller featuring Angelica Lee as a young blind woman who starts to see ghosts after a cornea transplant restores her sight. When she learns that her eyes had belong to a dead woman from Thailand, she travels there to resolve her predicament, but there is more horror in store. Influenced by *The Sixth Sense* and *The Ring*, *The Eye* also evokes the ghost traditions of Thailand, a country portrayed as a dark forbidding nether world, with Bangkok as the setting of the movie's apocalyptic climax (and also a marker of the movie's pan-Asian co-production concept). The theme of a fiery meltdown ties in with that of extrasensory vision and the sensation of old-time religion hell-and-brimstone prophesying, Asian style. The Pang Brothers expertly balance special effects with psychological shades and nuances in Angelica Lee's central performance.

*Dir: Danny and Oxide Pang*

*Scr: Pang Bros., Jojo Hui*

*Cast: Angelica Lee, Lawrence Chou, Hurcha Rujinanon*

*2002 - Cantonese*

*Colour - 98 min*



## Fubo

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One of the most impressive Hong Kong independent productions of 2003, *Fubo* is a drama that handles the subject of crime and punishment in atypical manner. Because its chief set is a mortuary, the film reverberates with moral-existentialist questions. The story takes place in Macao and turns around three or four chief characters: a mortuary assistant and his helper, a world-weary triad assassin whose conscience is bothering him, and a prison cook who prepares last meals for death row inmates. Though their lives are separate, their fate is inextricably linked together by the common chain of death. The film is rich in atmosphere underscoring the motif of existentialism and death, but though it plays on a downbeat tone, the narrative pulsates with psycho-dramatic beats. The characterisations are expertly moulded by a cast made up of some of the best character actors in the Hong Kong cinema.



*Dir: Wong Ching-po, Lee Kung-lok*

*Scr: Simon Lai*

*2003 - Cantonese/Portuguese*

*Colour - Betacam - 84 min*

## Lost in Time (Wang Buliao)

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Director Derek Yee follows up on the romantic tradition that he himself established with *C'est la vie, mon chéri* (1993) and *The Truth About Jane and Sam* (1999). *Lost in Time* tells the story of a widow (Cecilia Cheung) who is left to bring up her stepson when her husband, a mini-bus driver, is killed in an accident. Lau Ching-wan plays the man who falls in love with her, a man haunted by his past failure in marriage because of an addiction to gambling. The theme of the preservation of a family against tough odds (despite the burden of bringing up a child, the widow is unable to give up her step-son to an orphanage) evokes old Cantonese melodramas about the institution and ethics of the family. Derek Yee directs with a sensitive feel for the kind of sentimentality that has seemingly gone out of fashion in our postmodern world.



*Dir: Derek Yee*

*Scr: Derek Yee, Yuen Sai-sang*

*Cast: Lau Ching-wan, Cecilia Cheung, Louis Koo*

*2003 - Cantonese*

*Colour - 109 min*



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Hong Kong International Film Festival

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