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Hong Kong Cinema: The Extra Dimensions



Synopsis

Covering a period from 1909 to the "end of Hong Kong cinema" in the present day, this book features information about the films, the studios and the personalities that have shaped this kind of cinema. It includes studies of the films of King Hu, Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan, as well as those of John Woo and the directors of the various "New Waves". The book applies a bicultural (Chinese and Western) perspective and encompasses genres ranging from melodrama to martial arts, "kung fu", fantasy and horror movies, as well as the international art-house successes.

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Customer Reviews

"This book offers a history of Hong Kong cinema in the postwar period. It is an extraordinary history of survival and success against the odds, a history which is inseparably bound up with Hong Kong's economic miracle." Here is the first book to treat the Hong Kong film industry with real seriousness, demonstrating how it reflected the changes in the city's administration and growth. Author Stephen Teo convincingly debunks the commonplace notion that Hong Kong consistently produced movies of "dubious aesthetic quality"; he uncovers the remarkable range and versatility of the city's cinema. Teo focuses on international action stars such as Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan and directors like John Woo, Ringo Lam, and Tsui Hark, while also covering the industry's forays into melodrama, horror, comedy, social realism, the crime film, and other genres. His descriptions of the industry's ethics are very powerful, even when he covers action movies: "More than any other cinema, the Hong Kong cinema takes to heart the adage that old warriors never die: they fade away and reappear, some taking the call to arms literally by using their fists as kung fu warriors. Others fence

their way to a last moment of glory as expert swordsmen and women before the sword is sheathed and the scabbard hung up." --Raphael Shargel

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There is no denying the author knows his subject and is able to expound voluminously upon it. The book, however is dry, tedious and devoid of illustrations.

If you're looking for true insight into the development of Hong Kong cinema, be sure to check out this informative yet entertaining work. While some other books on HK cinema are all flash and recommend the same few titles over and over, this book looks far beyond the surface. I found myself reaching to re-read sections over and over after viewing different films, wanting to refresh my memory on the stories behind their directors, stars, and genres as a whole. Definitely recommended for those seriously interested in improving their appreciation of Hong Kong cinema.

While there have been tons of books on HK cinema, they mostly touch on the popular movies, directors and stars. You hear of John Woo, Jackie Chan, Tsui Hark, Ringo Lam etc etc. But there are next to none, if any, on the history of HK cinema in English. This book is an essential read if one wants to know more about the political and cultural events that shaped HK cinema. Thankfully it isn't only just essential and informative, it also manages to be enjoyable.

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