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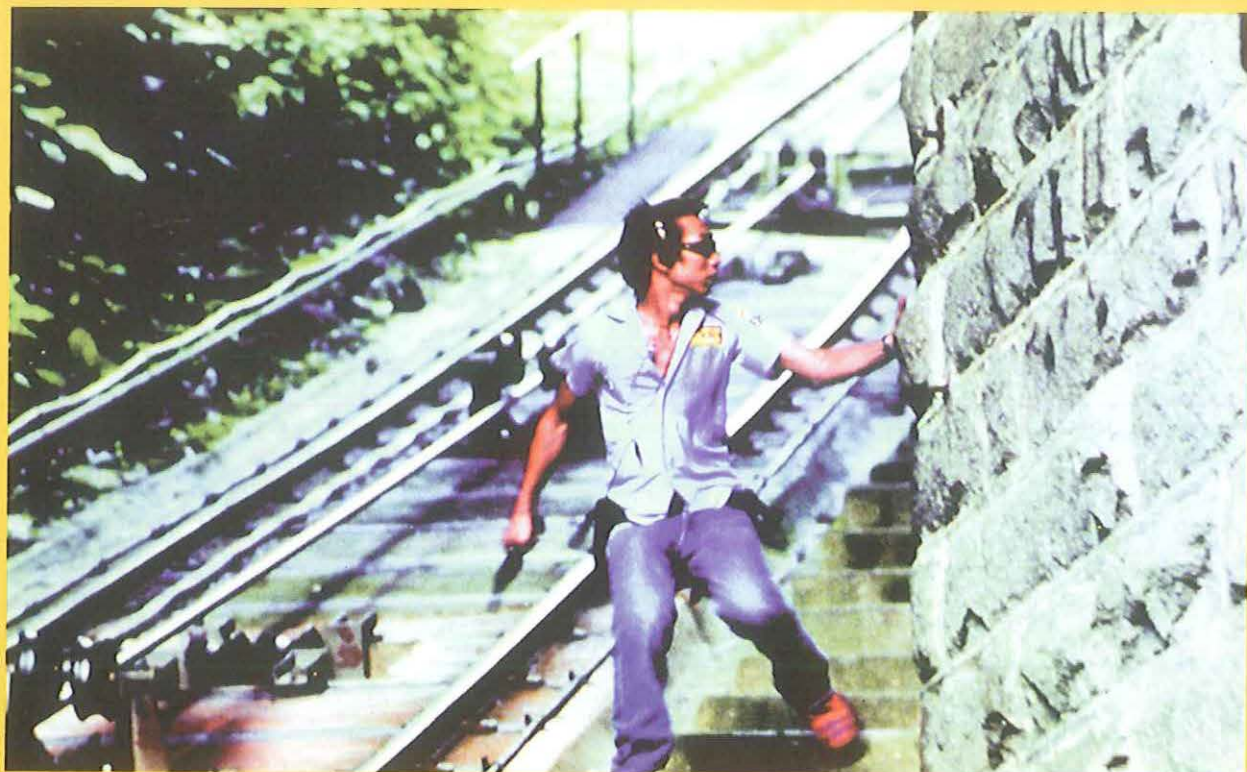
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Hecho en Hong Kong

# Abstracts

## CHINESE CINEMA SINCE 1989

*Bérénice Reynaud*

Tanks bursting into Tiananmen Square on 4th June 1989 put an abrupt end to the democratic "Spring of Beijing" movement, thus marking the beginning of a new stage in the political, social and cultural life of the three Chinas, while obviously showing their filmmakers the road they had to follow. In Hong Kong, which for years had been preparing its incorporation to Popular China, the decade began with the separation of its two cinema strongmen, Tsui Hark and John Woo, culminating in the latter's departure for Hollywood. Chinese filmmakers forming part of the "Fifth Generation" headed by Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige were hit hard after the events in Tiananmen by the imposed exile of Wu Tianming, mentor and principal promoter of new Chinese cinema. Meanwhile, in Taiwan, the end of martial law in 1987 saw filmmakers from the so-called "New Wave", with Hou Hsiao-hsien and Edward Yang in the lead, start delving into the country's conflictive history and portraying subjects until then forbidden on its screens.

## IN THE MOOD FOR WONG

*Antonio Weinrichter*

Thanks to the success of his last film, **In the Mood for Love**, and a decade of travelling and presenting his work at some of the world's most prestigious festivals, Hong Kong-raised Wong Kar-wai has now succeeded in making a name for himself as a director. After cult films like **Chungking Express** (1994) or **Fallen Angels** (1995), it is with his last film - a romantic and somewhat exotic love story starring two of his regular collaborators, Maggie Cheung and Tony Leung- formal, though not thematically, radically different from his six previous works, that this Shanghai-born, Hong Kong-raised director has hit the soft spot of the big audiences who were largely ignorant of his earlier works.

## THE DIASPORA CINEMA OF STANLEY KWAN

*Bérénice Reynaud*

Ever since his 1984 debut with **Women**, one of the most important filmmakers to come out of Hong Kong in the last two decades, Stanley Kwan has spent his time researching the cinematographic expression of feminine subjectivity. With the collaboration of today's top Chinese actresses, including Maggie Cheung or Anita Mui, Kwan, considered since his earliest works as a director of "women's films" (Cukor-style), has created some of the most complicated, interesting and credible female characters of contemporary Asian cinema, always within the field in which he feels most at home, that of Chinese melodrama or *wenyi pian*.

## THE STEADYCAM AND THE TRIPOD. THE FILMS OF CHEN KAIGE AND ZHANG YIMOU

*Roberto Cueto*

"New Chinese cinema" made its first Western appearance only two decades ago. Constantly condemned to unfolding within a hostile and conditioning political atmosphere, it has recently become something of a regular on commercial European screens and at international festivals. The names of Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou, plus that of the actress Gong Li, a familiar face in films by both directors, have been a driving force behind this appearance. The long list of awards garnered by their films at different festivals attracted attention to a cinematography faced with authentic aesthetic renovation as it struggles to find its own voice. The work of both Chen and Zhang perfectly exemplifies the glories and downfalls of Chinese cinema thanks to a series of films offering a lucid fresco of Chinese history from 1912 until today.

## THE CINEMA OF HOU HSIAO-HSIEN. HISTORY, DOCUMENT AND STYLIZATION

*Carlos F. Heredero*

Fascinating to the majority of contemporary critics, a common face at top-line European festivals, virtually unknown by spectators - only one of his films, **The Puppetmaster** (1993), has been commercially released in Spain- and difficult for them to understand, the cinema of Hou Hsiao-hsien can be summed-up in three main factors that explain the fascination and the incomprehension experienced by western spectators on contemplating his work: on the one hand is the controversial and poorly known background of Taiwan, the patient victim of continuous historical-political crossbreeding and the basic axis of Hou's cinema, in the West; on the other, the use of a language based on codes indebted to methods of Eastern representation (Chinese poetry and painting) that are complicated for the Western spectator; and, lastly, the strong influence on his later works of models and resources inherited from the expressive and linguistic arsenal of modern screens.

## JAPANESE CINEMA OF THE 90s

*Kuoshi Ueno*

Film-lovers from all over the world discovered their first Japanese films in the fifties with the works of Kurosawa and Mizoguchi. Later came Ozu and Naruse, together with the appearance of authors like Imamura or Oshima. This said, the enormous void in western knowledge of Japanese cinema continued until the nineties, when it eventually started to change. The world outside of Japan now knows the works of Kitano, Aoyama, Tsukamoto or Harada. The view from inside the country has also made it possible for us to observe the presence in recent years of several highly talented young directors who have brought a breath of fresh air to the industry. The purpose of this article is to describe the atmosphere into which they were born, the problems with which they deal and the view of these authors from the nineties when shooting their films.

## TAKESHI KITANO. THE ORIGAMI SKULL

*Jordi Costa*

Kitano is a master of origami who has changed his base material. Just like the simple blank sheet of paper with which the origami master is capable of reinventing reality, Kitano bases his work on pure, limpid material: the eloquence of silent cinema. Like Kaurimäki, he is one of the contemporary filmmakers most capable of injecting tension to the grammar of cinema by taking recourse to its essences, turning his hand to a primitive and uncontaminated writing and employing the most basic of expressive resources in order to create a new, fundamentally modern, form of cinematographic language. A new perspective on the basis of which to consider reality in his peculiar perception of time, in turn converted into form and background, impregnates all of his images, in which he depicts a sad poetry of life, from which the epic so closely related to the history of his country of origin has disappeared.

## GHIBLI. ANIMATION AS AN INTEGRATOR OF GENRES

*Ángel Sala*

To talk about the Ghibli Animation Studio is, partly, to talk about the meteoric growth experienced by Japanese animation in recent decades. It also explains the vindication of this animation from the artistic and even author points of view, particularly via the works of Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata, co-founders of the studio and authors of an unmistakable aesthetic proximity with a nevertheless totally opposed conceptual message, a dialectic lending wings to the extraordinary function of Ghibli both as a definition of the new Japanese cinematographic epic and of the functional minimalism so deeply rooted in the country's celluloid.

## VIETNAMESE FILMS IN THE NINETIES

*Keiko Kawaguchi*

The governmental policy of market liberalization, or *Doi Moi*, brought serious problems to the Vietnamese film industry traditionally run by public entities. Obligated to compete with foreign productions, the industry entered a serious crisis lasting until 1994, when the State regained the financial reigns of national cinema. Since then, despite the economic difficulties suffered by the country and the iron hand of a censorship falling hard on any screenplay making even the slightest criticism of the government or attempting to critically examine social relations, each year some four or five films make a now familiar appearance at European festivals and cinemas.

## MEMORIES OF VIETNAM. THE COLOUR AND EMOTIONS OF TRAN ANH HUNG

*Ricardo Aldarondo*

Ever since his first feature was screened at Cannes 1993, Tran Anh Hung has unquestionably become the world's major representative of Vietnamese cinema. A resident since the age of twelve in Paris, where he received his cinematographic education, the incredible plastic beauty of this director's work has left its mark on the biggest international festivals, having received a number of prizes undoubtedly contributing to the commercial screening of his films in a number of European countries. An exceptionally well-defined style, and clear-cut ideas when creating an own world, together with the constant repetition of aesthetics and subject-matter characterize a cinema which, with the same team film after film and a great deal of emphasis on music, creates a whole new world of sensations for the spectator with each new work.

## THE SOUTH-KOREAN CINEMA IN THE NINETIES

*Giuseppe Giarizzo*

South-Korean cinema is doubtless one of the most exciting and fertile as far as talent and ideas in today's cinema are concerned. Branching out in several directions, from the classicism with experimental touches of Im Kwon-taek and the political-sexual subversion of Jang Sun-woo to the abstract melodrama of Kim Ki-duk -author of *The Isle* (2000), one of the most important titles of this emerging cinema- and the horrific choreographies of the different filmmakers who are fascinated by decomposing and recomposing the rules of the game, Korean filmmakers, who film in all kinds of genres, also use their works to discuss the current political and social situation in South Korea.

## PERSPECTIVES OF THAI CINEMA

*Alberto Elena*

The big studios and powerful star system of the fifties and sixties, when the annual production of mainly traditional or musical melodramas aimed at the largely rural public was somewhere around two hundred films, were helpless against the crisis suffered by Thai cinema in the seventies, principally caused by the country's political situation, which brought harder censorship and a curfew responsible for a reduction in the number of showings per day, and, therefore, in the number of spectators. But parallel to this crisis came the appearance of a group of filmmakers who started making movies about social and political subjects unseen until then on the screens of the country. The production crisis of the nineties, with a brutal reduction in the number of films, seemed to paint a black picture for the future of Thai cinema. However, the new generation of young directors who appeared in 1997 changed this fate with their new, modern and lively films aimed at a young, urban public, and which are now enormously popular with Thai audiences.

## SHIPWRECK IN THE PACIFIC. THE REDISCOVERY OF FILIPINO CINEMA

*Gino Dormiendo*

Filipino cinema has a long and glorious past marked by the great films and directors who led the way. Over the years it has become the most popular form of mass entertainment, despite the fact that constant political transition has hindered its complete development, a factor in itself not particularly successful given the commercial motivations of the producers and the divisions existing in both the governmental and the industrial sectors. As a result, today's Filipino cinema is having great difficulty in finding a profitable path to follow in the flourishing 21st century film market. Surprisingly enough, Filipino cinema is still alive and kicking despite its constant ups and downs. But it still has to answer the million-dollar question: will it be able to recover the ground it has lost and reinstate itself at the forefront in the near future?