

Fondazione Prada

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中国电影资料馆  
Zhongguo Dianying Ziliao Guan  
China Film Archive



*Storia Segreta del Cinema Asiatico*  
*Secret History of Asian Cinema*

Fondazione Prada - Milan  
28 November - 1 December 2005

Fondazione Prada presents in Milan, 28 November to 1 December in the space at Via Fogazzaro 36, a selection from the survey *Storia Segreta del Cinema Asiatico* (*Secret History of Asian Cinema*), a well-received event at the *62nd International Film Festival* (Venice, 31 August - 10 September 2005).

Fondazione La Biennale di Venezia together with Fondazione Prada organized the initiative, personally curated by Marco Müller, the Venice festival Director, with the aim of systematically recovering, restoring, and rediscovering forgotten and “unseen” Asian films. Realized with the support of the Ministry of Cultural Assets and Activities, the project benefited from the contribution of its main partners, Cineteca Nazionale (Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia - Scuola Nazionale di Cinema) and the China Film Archive.

The initiative is just one of the activities of Fondazione Prada, whose President Miuccia Prada and Artistic Director Germano Celant have been engaged over the past ten years in a vast cultural enterprise embracing projects in the fields of art, architecture, philosophy, science, design, and film, and that now sees them embarked on an exploration of new horizons of vision.

*Secret History of Asian Cinema* marks a continuation of the collaboration between Fondazione La Biennale di Venezia and Fondazione Prada, which in 2004 gave rise to the project *Secret History of Italian Cinema 1949-1976*, presented at the *61st Venice International Film Festival*, later screened at Fondazione Prada in Milan, in Tokyo, and now due to be presented at the London Tate Modern in January 2006.

This is a further development in the dialogue that Fondazione Prada has established with the film medium, offering another look at it, from the avant-garde to mass entertainment, both influential approaches in the history of film-making, and an added enhancement to the panorama of Fondazione Prada's pursuits.

The vitality of Asian cinema no longer needs demonstrating. More and more frequently the most vibrant stimuli for a stylistic and thematic renewal of cinema come from this cinematographic continent, which remains in large part unexplored. In the past twenty-five years, in Italy and Europe, many retrospectives and festivals have sounded out that terrain, starting with the pioneering “Ombre elettriche” (Electric Shadows: the first big retrospective survey of Chinese cinema, organized in 1981 in Turin by Marco Müller). It is to the “classic” Chinese cinema and Japanese “genre” films, which have faded back into “invisibility” after successive “rediscoveries” in the Eighties and Nineties, that *Secret History of Asian Cinema* is dedicated.

*Secret History of Asian Cinema* is made up of two special monographic sections.

The first section, *Secret History of Chinese Cinema*, features eleven films produced between the mid-Thirties—corresponding to the end of the silent film period, and the golden age for the studios—and the transition to the Peoples' Republic of China with the 1949 revolution, and continuing through to 1990, the year of production of *Mama*, a genuine “incunabulum” of the modern period, one of the first films of the two

Chinese *nouvelles vagues* of the Eighties and Nineties (recovered with the collaboration of Cineteca del Friuli, which conserves the copies rescued by Müller).

Along with the more recent *Mama*, presented in Milan with the participation of the director himself, Zhang Yuan, the programme includes some of the most important titles of Shanghai cinema of the Thirties and Forties, directed by “unorthodox” filmmakers, such as the great Sun Yu, who managed to create an heretic blend of Hollywood and Soviet cinema, or lovers of the European avant-gardes (though Hollywood, too, was never far from their minds), such as the innovative Yuan Muzhi. These are joined by such great masters as Fei Mu, Shen Ziling, Zheng Junli, and Shi Hui, the Chinese equivalents of Renoir and Rossellini, Ozu and Mizoguchi. Among the rarest titles is *Tie shan gong zhu* (*Princess Iron Fan*, 1941), by the brothers Wan Laiming and Wan Guchan, China’s first feature-length animated film. All of them are works that among scholars and enthusiasts have always been much talked about, but rarely shown to the public after the early Nineties, and never, since their original release, in copies that matched their original splendour.

Celluloid Dreams has acquired the international distribution rights for the Chinese films, and BIM Distribuzioni the rights for Italy.

Over the past ten years, Japanese cinema has presented filmmakers and genres showing a new aesthetic of violence and a poetic style that soon became important points of reference internationally. The survey *Secret History of Japanese Cinema* explores the long evolution of popular film in the archipelago, revealing the development and incubation of genres through the work of some of the most important pioneers, in large part unknown to the Western world.

November 30<sup>th</sup> is the day dedicated to a selection of three of the most important titles of this section, produced between 1969 and 1975, and directed by Kato Tai and Fukasaku Kinji.

Mikado has acquired the distribution rights for the Japanese films in Italy, and will distribute them through Dolmen Home Video.

The delicate job of restoration, which makes it possible for all the forgotten works to return in circulation, was done in high definition (HD) under the supervision of Nicola Mazzanti, known worldwide for his restoration of the masterpieces of Charlie Chaplin and German expressionism.

To complete this vital cooperation between culture and industry, the best Italian home-video distributors plan to release the restored films in a series of Dvds. Over time, these materials will be part of an extraordinary “digital film archive of Asian cinema” that will be the platform for non-commercial distribution initiatives organized at the main centres of film and visual arts culture in Italy and internationally, in the Asian capitals and at the most prestigious western venues.

Thanks go to Agis Lombarda for their role in the promotion of the project in Milan.

#### *Event information*

<i>Title:</i>	<i>Storia Segreta del Cinema Asiatico / Secret History of Asian Cinema</i>
<i>Calendar:</i>	28 November – 1 December 2005
<i>Location:</i>	Fondazione Prada
<i>Address:</i>	via Fogazzaro 36, Milan
<i>Admission:</i>	free
<i>Press conference:</i>	18 November, 12 noon, Fondazione Prada, via Fogazzaro 36, Milan
<i>Inauguration:</i>	28 November, 6:30 pm, Fondazione Prada, via Fogazzaro 36, Milan
<i>Symposia:</i>	29 November, 7:30 pm, <i>The cinema of Shanghai 1934-1944</i> 30 November, 6:00 pm, <i>Introduction to Japanese “B” Films</i> The Symposia will be held at Fondazione Prada, via Fogazzaro 36, Milan
<i>Information:</i>	Fondazione Prada - tel 02 54670515, fax 02 54670258 www.fondazioneprada.org
<i>Press office:</i>	Fondazione Prada - tel 02 54670981, fax 02 54670258 press@fondazioneprada.org Fondazione la Biennale di Venezia - tel 041 5218849 - 859 www.labiennale.org - ufficiostampa@labiennale.org