



JANUS FILMS PRESENTS

World of
W O N G K A R W A I

Booking Inquiries: Janus Films
booking@janusfilms.com • 212-756-8761

Press Contact: Courtney Ott
courtney@cineticmedia.com • 646-230-6847



THE WORLD OF WONG KAR WAI

With his lush and sensual visuals, pitch-perfect soundtracks, and soulful romanticism, Wong Kar Wai has established himself as one of the defining auteurs of contemporary cinema. Joined by key collaborators such as cinematographer Christopher Doyle, editor and production and costume designer William Chang, and actors Tony Leung and Maggie Cheung, Wong (or WKW, as he is often known) has enraptured audiences and critics worldwide and inspired countless other filmmakers with his movies' poetic moods, narrative and stylistic daring, and potent themes of alienation and memory. Whether tragically romantic, soaked in blood, or quirkily comedic, the films in this retrospective are an invitation into the unique and wistful world of a deeply influential artist.

Janus Films is proud to present the following Wong Kar Wai classics in brand-new 4K restorations, in addition to a new director's cut of *The Hand: As Tears Go By*, *Days of Being Wild*, *Chungking Express*, *Fallen Angels*, *Happy Together*, and *In the Mood for Love*.

The biographies below include excerpts of interviews from WKW: The Cinema of Wong Kar Wai, by Wong and John Powers. Reprinted with permission. © 2016 Wong Kar Wai. © 2016 Rizzoli International.

WONG KAR WAI

Filled with passion, heartbreak, obsession, dreams, and the memories left in their wake, the films of Wong Kar Wai have been celebrated all over the world for their unique style. The youngest of three children, Wong was born in Shanghai in 1958 and left for Hong Kong five years later, when his father, an ex-sailor, found a job managing a nightclub located in the basement of Chungking Mansions (the future setting of 1994's *Chungking Express*).

With his father working long hours, and struggling himself with learning Cantonese and English, Wong, along with his mother, found solace in the many cinemas that dotted their new neighborhood of Tsim Sha Tsui. "She was the one who introduced me to cinema. She was my film school," he would later say. Pieces of her personality are evident in Rebecca Pan's mahjong doyen in *In the Mood for Love* (2000) and Gong Li's gambler in *2046* (2004). "She got extra money from playing mahjong—she was very good at it," he has recalled. "In our apartment, it was twenty-four-hour mahjong."

High school and college brought a better grasp of the local languages as well as a keen interest in photography and graphic

design. After graduating from Hong Kong Polytechnic, Wong was accepted into a training program at Hong Kong's TVB television network, leading to work as a writer on soap operas. He soon progressed to feature-film screenplays in a variety of genres. It was during this time that he met a collaborator who would go on to work on all of his features, William Chang. "In those days, we spent almost every night together drinking and talking about films," Wong has reminisced. "I'm afraid we used up all our quota of conversations during that period. Since then, we haven't had to talk."

After several years of working on scripts—including cowriting *Final Victory* (1987) with the legendary Patrick Tam—Wong helmed his first feature, *As Tears Go By* (1988), a mob drama in the vein of *Mean Streets* that proved a critical and commercial success in Hong Kong and was invited to Critics' Week at the 1989 Cannes Film Festival. It marked his first collaboration not only with Chang but also with an actor who would go on to star in several of his films, Maggie Cheung. "Maggie was pretty new then," Wong has said. "People liked her but few thought of her as a serious actress."

Wong's second feature, *Days of Being Wild* (1990), saw him add to his trusted stable of collaborators, working for the first time with actors Leslie Cheung and Tony Leung, and cinematographer Christopher Doyle. Production on *Days* was troubled, and plans for a second part of the film were eventually scrapped. Following the film's (commercially disappointing) release, Wong founded his own production company, Jet Tone, and accepted a big-budget studio project that would allow him to reunite all of his key *Days* collaborators, *Ashes of Time* (1994; a reedited version of the film was released in 2008).

Like *Days*, *Ashes* was long in the making. During a hiatus from its postproduction, Wong directed and released *Chungking Express*. "The idea was to film a collection of short stories that I had developed over the years," Wong has said. "I called it *The Days and Nights of Hong Kong*. With limited time and budget, we had to make it like a student film, and the camera was on [Christopher Doyle's] shoulder." It was distributed in North America under megafan Quentin Tarantino's Rolling Thunder Pictures. Shot in a similar manner to *Chungking*, the darker *Fallen Angels*

(1995) also garnered praise and accolades from critics worldwide.

For his next film, *Happy Together* (1997)—which reunited him with Leslie Cheung—Wong won best director at the Cannes Film Festival. In 2000, *In the Mood for Love*—starring Leung and Maggie Cheung, perhaps at their most iconic—also competed at Cannes, winning two awards: best actor for Leung as well as the technical prize. A little over a decade later, the film was voted one of the twenty-five greatest of all time in *Sight & Sound*'s international poll of critics, programmers, and filmmakers.

It's no secret that Wong's singular vision has yielded unorthodox production techniques. With the exception of *Chungking Express*, his films—from *Days of Being Wild* through his most recent movie, *The Grandmaster* (2013)—have tended to go over budget and over schedule. Wong has recalled that, when he arrived in Buenos Aires to begin principal photography on *Happy Together*, "I had only an idea. I told everyone, 'We are going to shoot a road

movie in Argentina, from where to where I don't know yet.'" The first cut of the film ran three hours long and featured a romantic subplot involving Shirley Kwan that was eventually dropped.

In recent years, new collaborators have emerged, and longtime ones have moved on. Though Doyle shot much of *In the Mood for Love* and 2046, his contributions were supplemented by those of other cinematographers. Neither Doyle nor Wong discounts the possibility of working together in the future, but Wong's two most recent features have been shot by others: Darius Khondji lensed Wong's English-language debut, *My Blueberry Nights* (2007), and Philippe Le Sourd earned an Academy Award nomination for his work on *The Grandmaster*.

Shortly after starring in 2046, Maggie Cheung announced her retirement from acting to focus on her family and music career. Tony Leung, on the other hand, has continued to work with Wong since his mysterious one-shot

appearance in *Days*, last appearing as the lead of *The Grandmaster*. Wong has recently collaborated multiple times with superstar Gong Li, who appeared in *The Hand* (2004) and 2046, and Zhang Ziyi, who had significant roles in 2046 and *The Grandmaster*.

Wong, who owns most of his own films through Jet Tone, says the restorations done for this retrospective, overseen by him, allowed him to see his films anew: "At the end of my film *In the Mood for Love*, there was a caption:

He remembers those vanished years . . .
as though looking through a dusty windowpane.
The past is something he could see, but not touch.
And everything he sees is blurred and indistinct.

"It was my exact feeling when I watched the film again in 2015. In collaboration with Criterion and with the meticulous work of L'Imagine Ritrovata, we spent five years on the restoration of not only *In the Mood for Love* but also the rest of this collection. Now, the window is no longer dusty." •

FILMOGRAPHY

As Tears Go By (1988)

Days of Being Wild (1990)

Ashes of Time (1994)

Chungking Express (1994)

Fallen Angels (1995)

Happy Together (1997)

In the Mood for Love (2000)

The Hand (2004)

2046 (2004)

My Blueberry Nights (2007)

Ashes of Time Redux (2008)

The Grandmaster (2013)





MAGGIE CHEUNG

Of international star Maggie Cheung Man Yuk, Wong Kar Wai has gushed, “To me, she is the face of Hong Kong cinema in the nineties. Girls looked up to her. She is both East and West, modern and independent.” Cheung was born in Hong Kong in 1964 and raised in the United Kingdom. When on a vacation back in Hong Kong at the age of seventeen, she landed a modeling assignment, paving the way to the 1983 Miss Hong Kong pageant, where she placed second. It wasn’t long before she caught the eye of Jackie Chan, who cast her as his long-suffering girlfriend May in his soon-to-be blockbuster *Police Story* (1985). The success of that film would lead to roles in a slew of Hong Kong action, comedy, and fantasy pictures.

After Wong cast her as Andy Lau’s stricken love interest in *As Tears Go By*, critics took note of her performance, and she became more in-demand than ever. She appeared in the Hong Kong megahits *Center Stage* (1991) and *New Dragon Gate Inn* (1992), as well as *Days of Being Wild* and *Ashes of Time* for Wong. In the midnineties, feeling fatigued, Cheung began to severely limit the roles she would take on and eventually moved to France, living and working with director Olivier Assayas (the two were married from 1998 to 2001), and returning to Hong Kong to film *In the Mood for Love*, *Hero* (2002), and 2046.

After a critically acclaimed performance in Assayas’s *Clean* (2004), Cheung decided she had taken her acting career as far as it would go. “Acting was phase one for her,” Wong has said of her retirement. “After a point, I think she had a bigger picture of her life and wanted to have more control over it.” Over the course of her acting career, she won the Hong Kong Film Award for best actress five times and was noted for her multilingual performances, in Cantonese, Mandarin, Shanghaiese, English, and French. She currently focuses on charity work and making music.

TONY LEUNG

Born in 1962 in Hong Kong, where he was also raised, Tony Leung Chiu Wai quit school at the age of fifteen, taking several odd jobs before meeting Stephen Chow (*Kung Fu Hustle*, 2004), who piqued his interest in acting. Like Wong Kar Wai, Leung enrolled in the TVB television network’s training program, and after finishing he was cast, along with Chow, in the popular children’s program *430 Space Shuttle*. By 1984, he was starring with Maggie Cheung in the highly successful *Police Cadet* serial, which would mark the first of their many collaborations together.

After a notable role in Hou Hsiao-hsien’s *A City of Sadness* (1989), Leung caught the eye of Wong Kar Wai, who cast him in *Days of Being Wild*—though he only ultimately appeared in a single shot, the last of the film. Initially, *Days* was conceived as a two-part project. As Wong has said, “Because of the contracts with all the distribution territories, Tony had to be in it, even though his character would only do something in part two.” That second part of the problem-plagued project was never made.

Furthering their collaboration, Leung and Wong worked together on *Ashes of Time*, *Chungking Express*, and *Happy Together*. They also resurrected Leung’s character from the end of *Days*, Chow Mo-wan, for the spiritual sequels *In the Mood for Love* (for which Leung won best actor at the Cannes Film Festival) and 2046. Chow was based on a writer Wong knew from his youth. “I knew all the martial-arts stories from him,” Wong has said. “He was the model for Tony’s character—but not as handsome.”

With *The Grandmaster*, Wong again cast Leung in a leading role, this time as the martial-arts master Ip Man. One of the most in-demand actors of his generation, Leung has worked as well with John Woo, Zhang Yimou, and Ang Lee. Recently announced was his casting in his first Hollywood film, Marvel’s *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*.

LESLIE CHEUNG

Skyrocketing to Cantopop fame in the early eighties, Leslie Cheung Kwok Wing was a true titan in both the music and film industries. The son of a famous tailor whose clients included Alfred Hitchcock, Marlon Brando, and Cary Grant, Cheung was born in 1956 and spent the early part of his childhood in Hong Kong before moving to England for schooling. Following in his father's footsteps, he began studying textile management, at the University of Leeds, though he returned to Hong Kong before finishing.

Passionate about singing since childhood, Cheung began participating in talent competitions and releasing music. By 1982, he had signed with Capital Artists and put out his breakthrough album, *Wind Blows On*. In 1984, he released "Monica," which would become the best-selling single in Hong Kong history.

Cheung received his big acting break in the John Woo blockbuster *A Better Tomorrow* (1986). A few years later, Wong cast him as the troubled Yuddy in *Days of Being Wild*, followed by his appearance as Ouyang Feng in *Ashes of Time*. Cheung, who was open about his bisexuality, also tackled several pioneering queer-cinema roles, including in the Palme d'Or-winning *Farewell My Concubine* (1993) and, collaborating again with Wong, the much-lauded *Happy Together*.

Though the professional accolades continued to mount, Cheung, who struggled with depression, took his life in 2003. "He was a romantic," Wong has remembered. "But he was very thoughtful and always caring about other people. That's why we were all so upset the night he committed suicide. At the lowest point in my career, after *Days of Being Wild*, he was there to support me. Working with him was one of the highlights of my career."

CHRISTOPHER DOYLE

Christopher Doyle is legendary for the visual pyrotechnics of his cinematography, as well as for his mercurial demeanor. Born in Australia in 1952, he left the country at the age of eighteen, traveling all over the world before settling in Taiwan, where he picked up photography. The newfound interest soon led him to cinematography, and to the doorstep of Edward Yang, who convinced his production company to let the novice nonnative shoot his first feature, *That Day, on the Beach*. Doyle won a prize for his work on the film at the 1983 Asia-Pacific Film Festival.

After briefly moving to France to hone his skills, Doyle then went to Hong Kong to shoot two features for Patrick Tam, who introduced him to Wong Kar Wai, eventually leading to Doyle and Wong's teaming up for *Days of Being Wild*. "Chris can surprise you," Wong has mused. "He has the best qualities of a great cinematographer: the eyes, the rhythm, and, most of all, the heart. He is the Charles Bukowski of cinematography."

Doyle would go on to work on all of Wong's features through 2006, deploying a range of styles, from the epic vistas of *Ashes of Time* to the handheld bustle of *Chungking Express* and the elegant dollies of *In the Mood for Love*. After *Days*, Doyle was also sought out by other directors all over the world, including Gus Van Sant, Zhang Yimou, Jim Jarmusch, Neil Jordan, and Alejandro Jodorowsky.

Though both have publicly stated that they would work together again, Doyle's working methods aren't especially compatible with Wong's now typically protracted productions. "He can't spend three weeks waiting," Wong has said. "He has so much energy that he has to be going nonstop. So in *Fallen Angels*, we started using second units because sometimes he had to go away. The same with *In the Mood for Love*. Because he had so many offers and preferred to keep himself busy, he couldn't be a regular anymore."

WILLIAM CHANG

One of Wong Kar Wai's oldest friends and closest confidants, William Chang Suk Ping has had a hand in every one of Wong's productions to date, including as an editor, production designer, art director, and costume designer. Over the years, the two have perfected a working relationship that blends Wong's organic shooting process with Chang's exacting production demands. "I've worked with other set designers or production designers who can't answer the question 'What is the point of this space?' William knows what I mean," Wong has noted. "He'll ask me, 'How are you going to see it?' And I say, 'I'm going to see it from here.' He instantly gets it."

In addition to his various creative roles, Chang has occasionally given Wong blunt advice. He famously complained to Wong that the first cut of *Fallen Angels* was "icy" and "bleak"—prompting the director to go back and shoot the sequence of He Zhiwu (Takeshi Kaneshiro) watching videos he made of his since-deceased father cooking, lying in bed, and washing up in the bathroom, giving the ending of the film its warmer tone.

Along with Christopher Doyle and Mark Lee, Chang shared the Cannes Film Festival's technical prize for *In the Mood for Love*, for which he designed nearly fifty neck-high cheongsams, fewer than thirty of which were donned by Maggie Cheung in the final cut. Getting the star's hair just right also proved painstaking. "He had to make sure she had this particular kind of Monica Vitti curl to her hair," Wong has said. "In Hong Kong, the old barbershops could do it, but we couldn't take those hairdressers with us. So in Bangkok, we ended up having to rework it. Over and over. It was ironed and blow-dried in a certain way that took hours."

Aside from Wong, Chang has worked with a number of other Hong Kong auteurs, including Stanley Kwan, Tsui Hark, and Patrick Tam. In 2014, he received his first Academy Award nomination, for his costume designs for *The Grandmaster*.

FILM SYNOPSES

As Tears Go By

Hong Kong • 1988 • 102 minutes • Color • In Cantonese with English subtitles • 1.85:1 aspect ratio

Wong Kar Wai's scintillating debut feature is a kinetic, hypercool crime thriller graced with flashes of the impressionistic, daydream visual style for which he would become renowned. Set amid Hong Kong's ruthless, neon-lit gangland underworld, this operatic saga of ambition, honor, and revenge stars Andy Lau as a small-time mob enforcer who finds himself torn between a burgeoning romance with his ailing cousin (Maggie Cheung, in the first of her iconic collaborations with the director) and loyalty to his loose-cannon partner in crime (Jacky Cheung), whose reckless attempts to make a name for himself unleash a spiral of violence. Marrying the pulp pleasures of the gritty Hong Kong action drama with hints of the head-rush romanticism Wong would push to intoxicating heights throughout the 1990s, *As Tears Go By* was a box-office smash that heralded the arrival of one of contemporary cinema's most electrifying talents.

This 4K digital restoration was undertaken from the 35 mm original camera negative by the Criterion Collection in collaboration with L'Imagine Ritrovata and One Cool.

Days of Being Wild

Hong Kong • 1990 • 94 minutes • Color • In Cantonese with English subtitles • 1.85:1 aspect ratio

Wong Kar Wai's breakthrough feature represents the first full flowering of his swooning signature style. The first film in a loosely connected, ongoing cycle that includes *In the Mood for Love* and *2046*, this ravishing existential reverie is a dreamlike drift through the Hong Kong of the 1960s in which a band of wayward twentysomethings—including a disaffected playboy (Leslie Cheung) searching for his birth mother, a lovelorn woman (Maggie Cheung) hopelessly enamored with him, and a policeman (Andy Lau) caught in the middle of their turbulent relationship—pull together and push apart in a cycle of frustrated desire. The director's inaugural collaboration with both

cinematographer Christopher Doyle, who lends the film its gorgeously gauzy, hallucinatory texture, and actor Tony Leung, who appears briefly in a tantalizing teaser for a never-realized sequel, *Days of Being Wild* is an exhilarating first expression of Wong's trademark themes of time, longing, dislocation, and the restless search for human connection.

This 4K digital restoration was undertaken from the 35 mm original camera negative by the Criterion Collection in collaboration with L'Imagine Ritrovata and One Cool.

Chungking Express

Hong Kong • 1994 • 102 minutes • Color • In Cantonese with English subtitles • 1.66:1 aspect ratio

WINNER, BEST PICTURE, HONG KONG FILM AWARDS, 1995

The whiplash, double-pronged *Chungking Express* is one of the defining works of 1990s cinema and the film that made Wong Kar Wai an instant icon. Two heartsick Hong Kong cops (Takeshi Kaneshiro and Tony Leung), both jilted by ex-lovers, cross paths at the Midnight Express take-out restaurant stand, where the ethereal pixie waitress Faye (Faye Wong) works. Anything goes in Wong's gloriously shot and utterly unexpected charmer, which cemented the sex appeal of its gorgeous stars and forever turned canned pineapple and the Mamas and the Papas' "California Dreamin'" into tokens of romantic longing.

This 4K digital restoration was undertaken from the 35 mm original camera negative by the Criterion Collection in collaboration with L'Imagine Ritrovata and Jet Tone. It was supervised and approved by Wong Kar Wai.

Fallen Angels

Hong Kong • 1995 • 99 minutes • Color/Black & White • In Cantonese with English subtitles • 2.39:1 aspect ratio

Lost souls reach out for human connection amid a glimmering Hong Kong in Wong Kar Wai's hallucinatory, neon-soaked nocturne. Originally conceived as a segment of *Chungking Express* only to spin



off on its own axis, *Fallen Angels* plays like the dark, moody flip side of its iconic predecessor as it charts the subtly interlacing fates of a handful of urban loners, including a coolly detached hit man (Leon Lai) looking to go straight; his business partner (Michelle Reis), who secretly yearns for him; and a mute delinquent (Takeshi Kaneshiro) who wreaks mischief by night. Swinging between hard-boiled noir and slapstick lunacy with giddy abandon, the film is both a dizzying, dazzling city symphony and a poignant meditation on love, loss, and longing in a metropolis that never sleeps.

This 4K digital restoration was undertaken from the 35 mm original camera negative by the Criterion Collection in collaboration with L'Imagine Ritrovata and Jet Tone. It was supervised and approved by Wong Kar Wai.

Fallen Angels is newly presented in the 2.39:1 aspect ratio, a format that Wong had originally envisioned for the film. "The restoration provides the opportunity to realize our artistic intention that we couldn't have achieved technically twenty-five years ago," says the director.

Happy Together

Hong Kong • 1997 • 96 minutes • Color/Black & White • In Cantonese, Mandarin, and Spanish with English subtitles • 1.85:1 aspect ratio
WINNER, BEST DIRECTOR, CANNES FILM FESTIVAL, 1997

One of the most searing romances of the 1990s, Wong Kar Wai's emotionally raw, lushly stylized portrait of a relationship in breakdown casts Hong Kong superstars Tony Leung and Leslie Cheung as a couple traveling through Argentina and locked in a turbulent cycle of infatuation and destructive jealousy as they break up, make up, and fall apart again and again. Setting out to depict the dynamics of a queer relationship with empathy and complexity on the cusp of the 1997 handover of Hong Kong—when the country's LGBT community suddenly faced an uncertain future—Wong crafts a feverish look at the life cycle of a love affair that is by turns devastating and deliriously romantic. Shot by ace cinematographer Christopher Doyle in both luminous monochrome and luscious saturated color, *Happy Together* is an intoxicating exploration of displacement and desire that swoons with the ache and exhilaration of love at its heart-tearing extremes.

This 4K digital restoration was undertaken from the 35 mm original camera negative by the Criterion Collection in collaboration with L'Imagine Ritrovata and Jet Tone. It was supervised and approved by Wong Kar Wai.

In the Mood For Love

Hong Kong • 2000 • 99 minutes • Color • In Cantonese and Shanghaiese with English subtitles • 1.66:1 aspect ratio
WINNER, BEST ACTOR (TONY LEUNG), TECHNICAL GRAND PRIZE (CHRISTOPHER DOYLE, MARK LEE, WILLIAM CHANG), CANNES FILM FESTIVAL, 2000

Hong Kong, 1962: Chow Mo-wan (Tony Leung) and Su Li-zhen (Maggie Cheung) move into neighboring apartments on the same day. Their encounters are formal and polite—until a discovery about their spouses creates an intimate bond between them. At once delicately mannered and visually extravagant, Wong Kar Wai's *In the Mood for Love* is a masterful evocation of romantic longing and fleeting moments. With its aching soundtrack and exquisitely abstract cinematography by Christopher Doyle and Mark Lee, this film has been

a major stylistic influence on the past two decades of cinema, and is a milestone in Wong's redoubtable career.

This 4K digital restoration was undertaken from the 35 mm original camera negative by the Criterion Collection in collaboration with L'Imagine Ritrovata and Jet Tone. It was supervised and approved by Wong Kar Wai.

The Hand (director's cut)

Hong Kong • 2004 • 56 minutes • Color • In Mandarin with English subtitles • 1.78:1 aspect ratio

Like *In the Mood for Love*, *The Hand* is set in the hazy Hong Kong of the 1960s, but its characters couldn't be more different from the earlier film's restrained, haunted lovers. Originally conceived for the omnibus film *Eros*, the film—presented in this retrospective for the first time in its extended cut—tells the tale of Zhang (Chang Chen), a shy tailor's assistant enraptured by a mysterious client, Miss Hua (Gong Li). A hypnotic tale of obsession, repression, and class divisions, *The Hand* finds Wong Kar Wai continuing to transition from the frenetic, energized style of his earlier films into a register that is lush with romantic grandeur.

FUN FACTS

Wong Kar Wai's feature debut, *As Tears Go By*, remained his highest-grossing film in Hong Kong until the release of *The Grandmaster* in 2013.

Leslie Cheung was so proud of his work in *Days of Being Wild* that, despite plans to retire from acting, he decided to star in Wong's next film, *Ashes of Time*.

In *Chungking Express*, the apartment belonging to Cop 663 (Tony Leung) is in fact the one where cinematographer Christopher Doyle lived at the time.

The original ending of *Chungking Express* found all four principal characters in the transit lounge of the Taipei airport. However, when Wong couldn't get permission to shoot in the location he wanted to use, he scrapped that ending in favor of a more ambiguous one.

The original title of *Happy Together*, *Chun gwong cha sit*, is an idiom that means "a glimpse of something intimate" (literally, "spring light at first glance").

Wong landed on the English title *In the Mood for Love* while listening to Bryan Ferry's "I'm in the Mood for Love," a cover of a song written in the 1930s. Though not in the film, the song was used in the Hong Kong and U.S. trailers.

Despite being integral to the story of *In the Mood for Love*, the characters of Mr. Chan and Mrs. Chow are never fully seen on-screen. Roy Cheung and Paulyn Sun actually filmed scenes as these characters that were not included in the final cut.