

country of production HONG KONG, CHINA

year of production 1999
format 35mm, 1:1.85 Color Stereo
length 109 mins, 6 reels
language Chinese

a film by
YU LIK WAI

starring
TONY LEUNG WONG NING
LU LI PING ROLF CHOW

producer STANLEY KWAN TONY LEUNG
executive producer YEE YIN LEUNG FREDDIE WONG
associate producer JAMES TSIM CHOW KEUNG LI KIT MING
line producer MAY NG
production manager MAK YUEN YAN

director/scriptwriter YU LIK WAI
assistant director CONNIE NG
director of photography LAI YIU FAI
lighting design WONG CHI MING
art director ELBUT POON
editor CHOW KEUNG
sound designer GARY SZE
location sound recordist WILLIAM KWOK SO KA FAI

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Tony Leung (LEUNG Ka-Fai) as Ah Jian
 'Discovered' by the late director Li Hanxiang, Tony Leung entered the Hong Kong film industry in the early 1980s. His early roles were in dramas about the Qing Dynasty imperial court, such as Li Hanxiang's *Reign Behind a Curtain* (1984, Best Actor in the Hong Kong Film Awards). He has since shown great range and versatility in such films as Clara Law's *New York-set Farewell, China*, (1990, Best Actor Golden Horse Award) *Wong Kar-Wai's Ashes of Time*, *Jeff Lau's 92 The Legendary La Rose Noire* (1992, Best Actor in the Hong Kong Film Award) and - in the international market - Jean-Jacques Annaud's *L'Amant (The Lover)*. He is both the star and the co-producer of *Love Will Tear Us Apart*.

Lulu Ling as Ah Yan
 Mainland star Lu Liping graduated from Beijing's Central Drama Academy in 1984. She began acting in films immediately, and was seen in such modern classics as Wu Tianming's *Old Well* (Tokyo Film Festival). She established herself in film and on television, quickly becoming known as one of the foremost actresses of her generation. Her work attracted international attention in Zhou Xiaowen's *No Regrets for Youth* and Tian Zhuangzhuang's *The Blue Kite*. (She won the Tokyo Film Festival's Best Actress prize in 1992 for the latter). She remains very active in China films and television series, but *Love Will Tear Us Apart* is her first film outside China proper.

WONG Ning as Ah Ying
 She graduated in 1998 from the Central Drama Academy in Beijing. *Love Will Tear Us Apart* marks her debut as a screen actress. He worked as a barman in Hong Kong and was 'Discovered' by Yu Lik Wai and offered this part. It is his first ever acting experience.

Director's biography

Born in 1966 in Hong Kong, Yu Lik Wai graduated from INSAS (Institut National Supérieur des Arts de Spectacle, Belgium) in 1994, majoring in cinematography. He made his directional debut in 1996. He is now actively involved in productions both in Hong Kong and mainland China.

filmography

1999 *Love Will Tear Us Apart*, col. 35mm
 Official Selection - Competition, The 52nd Cannes International Film Festival
 Fipresci Award - Special Mention, The 23rd Hong Kong International Film Festival (4/99)
 Neon Goddesses, col. 16mm (Documentary)

Prizes

We Love Cinema Award,
 Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival Japan (10/97)
 Mention Grand Prix par le Jury International,
 Vue sur les docs, Marseille, France (6/97)

Filmography

1998 *Ordinary Heroes*
 Directed by Ann Hui
 49th Berlin International Film Festival, Competition
 Xiao Wu
 Directed by Jia Zhang Ke
 Wotfgang Staudte Award, NETPAC Prize,
 International Forum of New Cinema, Berlin (2/98)



Love Will Tear Us Apart

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In Shenzhen, the new city on China's border with Hong Kong, a young woman named Ah Ying is working her last night as a hostess in a karaoke bar. Tomorrow she will move to Hong Kong to try her luck in the jungle of migrants from China to the new Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong. Most of them are ill-equipped for the realities which await them over the border, and many end up as part of a new under-class on the fringes of respectable Hong Kong society.

Ah Jian is another Mainlander who has been in Hong Kong for some time. Success has eluded him. He runs a hole-in-the-wall shop selling porno videotapes. He has just been dumped by his latest Hong Kong girlfriend - which forces him back into his rather exhausted relationship with fellow-immigrant Ah Yan, who has a dead-end job as a restaurant receptionist. Ah Yan was once a professional dancer and dance teacher, but an injury to one foot forced her to retire from the dance-floor.

Ah Jian first notices Ah Ying when he sees her shoplifting in a convenience store. After that, he sees her coming and going at a Mongkok Au cours de ce voyage initiatique. Elle rencontre trois immigrés de Chine Populaire. Ah Yan, la quarantaine toute fraîche, travaille comme Libraire pour un grand restaurant chinois. Dans ses beaux jours, elle enseignait la danse dans les soirées de nuit. Elle est sa jambe dans un accident de bus. Ah Jian, who has been in Hong Kong for some time, is an immigrant from Hainan Island. He has an unrewarding job maintaining and repairing elevators. His chief pleasure in life is to make prank calls to radio phone-in shows, especially the ones in which callers are paired off for blind dates. One night, he decides to revenge himself on Ah Yan, who has been dumped by her latest Hong Kong boyfriend.

At the end of the film, Ah Jian and Ah Yan are seen walking away together. The film is a love story, but it is also a story about the lives of immigrants in Hong Kong. The film is a love story, but it is also a story about the lives of immigrants in Hong Kong. The film is a love story, but it is also a story about the lives of immigrants in Hong Kong.



Eventually, she will give up the attempt to "make it" in Hong Kong and return to China. But Ah Jian, Ah Yan and Ah Chun will remain trapped in their more or less thankless lives.

This is a film about 'Post-Chinese' Hong Kong.
 'Post-Chinese' in the sense that in this 'Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China' the Chinese esse has become brittle and emptied of its substance. Migrants by nature, the people here are perpetual victims of a nostalgia for 'somewhere else'. The film sets out to construct a kind of pathology of what it means to 'be Chinese' in my native city.

It's not really a film about marginality.
 Rather, I want to examine the duality that underpins the experience of finding oneself on the margins: on the one hand, a submission to the everyday darkness; on the other, a vague desire for rupture. We may find unexpectedly that our self-prisons carry their own fascination. Or, conversely...

It is a film about happiness.
 To be more precise, about the inability to bear 'Happiness'. From generation to generation, the notion of 'Little Happiness and Prosperity' has been providing the Chinese people with a form of escapism. As social rifts become more and more obvious, we find ourselves bereft of such consolations. The parameters of happiness are now elusive. People become petrified, forgetful. Parody and provocation becomes substitutes for dignity. Subservience becomes a strategy of life.

Not a real film about Post-Chinese.
 Ceci est un film sur le Hong Kong Post-Chinois.
 Post-Chinois en ce sens que "l'être" Chinois se fracture, se vidant de son sens. Emigrés par nature, les gens ici sont les victimes perpétuelles d'une nostalgie pour un "ailleurs" improbable. D'un point de vue pathologique, ce film pose la question suivante: Que veut dire "être Chinois" dans ma ville natale?

Reveal the skin of a very magnalised group: recent immigrants to Hong Kong from Mainland China. Belying the expectation that they will belong in a territory now returned to China's sovereignty, they find themselves friendless, frustrated, poor and employable only in the most menial jobs, from elevator maintenance to prostitution. Like its smart, acutely observed image refuse to beauty these social and its smart, acutely observed image refuse to beauty these social and by shafts of unexpected humour.

Which love, finally, tear "us" apart?
 Perhaps not the feelings between the main four characters, who have the resilience of all victims in a Darwinian social order, but rather the feelings of China for Hong Kong and vice versa. Better than most high-powered commercial productions, this film captures aspects of present-day Hong Kong which some would prefer to keep out of sight and out of mind.

Crises
 The premier film of Yu Lik-wai se glisse sous la peau d'un groupe très marginalisé: les nouveaux immigrants à Hong Kong. Trahisant l'espoir d'un hypothétique attachement à ce territoire rattaché à la Chine, ils se retrouvent sans amis, frustrés, pauvres et employés à des tâches les plus ingrates, de la maintenance d'ascenseur à la prostitution. Comme ses personnages, le film concentre son regard sur les détails plutôt que sur le tableau sociologique général, et son image, fruit d'une observation minutieuse et intelligente, se refuse d'embellir ces vies sordides. Mais elle est éclairée par la chaleur de son regard sur ces âmes brisées et par des traits d'humour inattendus.

quel "amour", finalement, "nous" déchire?
 Sans doute pas les sentiments unissant les quatre personnages principaux, qui possèdent la tenacité commune à toute victime de l'ordre social Darwinien, mais plutôt les sentiments liant la Chine Populaire à Hong Kong et vice versa. Mieux que la plupart des supers productions commerciales locales, ce film a su capturer des aspects contemporains de Hong Kong que beaucoup préféreraient éloigner du regard et de l'esprit.

— Tony Rayns

— Yu Lik Wai

— Derek Malcolm, President of Jury

Hong Kong International Film Festival 1997 FIPRESCI JURY

...for its stark yet compassionate view of human relationships in the context of the changing social fabric of Hong Kong

— Tony Rayns

— Yu Lik Wai

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