

“Directed by Wayne Wang” series presented by the UCLA Film & Television Archive and American Cinematheque

At the Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum and at the Aero Theatre

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOS ANGELES (Aug. 1, 2022) – The UCLA Film & Television Archive and American Cinematheque are proud to present [*Directed by Wayne Wang*](#) from September 16 to 25. This six-night screening series showcases 12 feature films by maverick filmmaker Wayne Wang, who will appear in-person on multiple evenings over the course of the program, including opening weekend.

Wayne Wang has had one of the most eclectic careers in Hollywood, with a resume ranging from independent international co-productions to big-budget dramedies, including films the *New York Times* noted “daringly chronicled Chinese life in a time when it was unthinkable in American cinema.”

“The Archive is thrilled to partner with the American Cinematheque in celebrating Wayne Wang, a groundbreaking director and national treasure,” said May Hong HaDuong, director of the Archive, a division of UCLA Library. “From his brilliant perspectives on immigrant life to memorable characters, Wang skillfully tells the stories often untold.”

- [Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m.](#)

In person: Wayne Wang, CSU Long Beach professor Oliver Wang.

Chan is Missing (1982)

New 4K restoration!

Wayne Wang’s debut feature also represents a much larger cultural milestone as the first Chinese American feature-length narrative film to achieve broad critical acclaim outside of the Asian American community. Made in the golden age of American indies for \$22,000, *Chan is Missing*, celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2022, is the essential entry point into Wang’s incredibly eclectic career.

Original release print!

Slamdance (U.K./U.S., 1987)

Wayne Wang’s third feature film is as hedonistically unhinged as its title suggests. Los Angeles-based cartoonist Charles “C.C.” Dood (Tom Hulce) leads a chaotic life “anchored” by late nights at dance clubs. When Dood returns home one day to find his studio apartment has been burgled, he’s knocked unconscious by the culprit, instigating a whirlwind mystery wherein the audience knows about as much as our hapless victim.

- [Sept. 17, 7:30 p.m.](#)

In person: Wayne Wang, pop culture writer John Powers.

Life is Cheap... But Toilet Paper is Expensive (1989)

Restored director's cut!

A man is hired to deliver a briefcase from America to Hong Kong in this loose, Hong Kong-set version of *Chan is Missing*. With late-1980s street photography of open air markets and an impressionistic sense of narrative, *Life is Cheap...* is Wang's most experimental work to date, blending the formalist sensibilities of the *nouvelle vague* with documentary-like moments and direct-camera addresses. The film received an X-rating from the MPAA, prompting the film's distributor to release it without an official rating.

Chinese Box (1997)

Chinese Box chronicles an ailing British journalist's pursuit of truth and love in Hong Kong in the months leading up to the end of British rule. John (Jeremy Irons) spends his time navigating between cocktail parties and the city streets, where, armed with his video camera, he attempts to record an "authentic" Hong Kong. There he encounters Jean (Maggie Cheung), a scrappy street hustler with a story.

- [Sept. 18, 7:30 p.m.](#)

At the American Cinematheque at the Aero Theatre

Smoke (Germany/Japan/U.S., 1995)

Wayne Wang's captivating independent film centers on a Brooklyn tobacco shop, the hub where a diverse cast of characters hang out, tell stories, and share secrets. At the center is Harvey Keitel as the earnest shop owner who invests his life in these patrons and curiously photographs the store from across the street every morning. As each character's story collides, Wang seamlessly weaves together the subplots, creating a fascinating portrait of a lively New York neighborhood.

Blue in the Face (1995)

After coming in under budget at the completion of *Smoke*, Wayne Wang and screenwriter Paul Auster managed to convince their producers to make an immediate sequel, this time shot almost entirely on the fly with no script in just five days. Despite the constraints, Wang and Auster, serving as co-directors, deliver a satisfying follow up, returning once again to Auggie Wren's Brooklyn tobacco shop, and assembling another impressive cast. What emerges is yet another funny, moving, and authentic portrait of a Brooklyn neighborhood.

- [Sept. 23, 7:30 p.m.](#)

At the American Cinematheque at the Aero Theatre

Dim Sum: A Little Bit of Heart (1985)

Mrs. Tam (Kim Chew) doesn't have much to celebrate on New Year's Day—a fortune teller had told her this would be the year she died. Whether or not the prophecy is true, the widow resolves to tie up loose ends and cross some items off her bucket list—first and foremost seeing daughter Geraldine (Laureen Chew) finally get married. Director Wayne Wang discovered this real-life mother-daughter duo while making *Chan is Missing*, and the affection they share anchors this warm and wise comedy.

The Joy Luck Club (China/U.S., 1993)

Adapted from the popular novel by author Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club* weaves a rich tapestry of family ties across generations as four women meet regularly in San Francisco to share stories and play mahjong. Having emigrated from China to make new lives in America, these four women each now have daughters who are by turns burdened by their mother's

expectations and guided by their advice. Told primarily through flashbacks, Wayne explores layers of the Chinese American experience.

- [Sept. 24, 7:30 p.m.](#)

Anywhere But Here (1999)

In this adaptation of the Mona Simpson novel, single mother Adele August (Susan Sarandon) is bad with money, and even worse when it comes to making decisions. Her straight-laced daughter, Ann (Natalie Portman), is a successful high school student with Ivy League aspirations. When Adele decides to pack up and move the two of them from the Midwest to Beverly Hills, California, to pursue her dreams of Hollywood success, Ann grows frustrated with her mother's irresponsible and impulsive ways.

A Thousand Years of Good Prayers (2007)

“A gentle, pleasantly unrushed piece of moviemaking. There’s a tonic simplicity to how it gets the job done, *A Thousand Years* studies the subtle day-to-day tensions between Mr. Shi and Yilan before building, in its circumspect way, to a big emotional resolution. A more ambitious film might have forgone this predictable denouement; a less accomplished one would have fumbled its touching sincerity.”—Nathan Lee, *New York Times*

- [Sept. 25, 7 p.m.](#)

Maid in Manhattan (2002)

Marisa Ventura (Jennifer Lopez) is a struggling single mom who works at a posh Manhattan hotel and dreams of a better life for her and her young son. One fateful day, hotel guest and senatorial candidate Christopher Marshall (Ralph Fiennes) meets Marisa and mistakes her for a wealthy socialite. After an enchanting evening together, the two fall madly in love. But when Marisa's true identity is revealed, issues of class and social status threaten to separate them.

Last Holiday (2006)

Georgia Byrd's (Latifah) terminal illness diagnosis leads her to sell all her possessions to live out her remaining days at a posh hotel. Teaming again with Giancarlo Esposito to show off their honed comedic chops, Wang's *Last Holiday* makes for the perfect hotel-set double bill with *Maid in Manhattan*, doubling down by working with rapper-turned-actress Queen Latifah in a role that suits her comedic timing and grounded confidence.

Admission is free for all screenings at the Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum at UCLA through June 2023, thanks to a gift from an anonymous donor. **For details, updates, registration information and important health guidelines, please visit cinema.ucla.edu.** *Schedules and guest speakers subject to change.*

About the UCLA Film & Television Archive

A division of UCLA Library, the Archive is internationally renowned for rescuing, preserving and showcasing moving image media and is dedicated to ensuring that the visual achievements of our time are available for information, education and enjoyment. The Archive has over 450,000 film and television holdings conserved in a state-of-the-art facility at the Packard Humanities Institute Stoa in Santa Clarita, CA, that is designed to hold materials ranging from nitrate film to digital video at all

preservation standards. Many of the Archive's projects are screened at prestigious film events around the globe.

The Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum is the home of the UCLA Film & Television Archive's public programs. The theater is among a handful of venues nationwide able to exhibit an entire century's worth of moving images in their original formats. From the earliest silent films requiring variable speed projection all the way up to cutting-edge digital cinema, the Wilder can accommodate an array of screen technologies.

About the American Cinematheque

Established in 1984, the American Cinematheque is a member-supported 501(c)(3) non-profit cultural arts organization dedicated to building an engaged film community through immersive film curation, conversation, and presentation. The American Cinematheque celebrates the film-going experience at the core of its mission. Since it first began showing films in theatres in 1985, the American Cinematheque has provided a wide range of film programming, with both new and repertory cinema, hosting screenings, panels and special events with thousands of filmmakers. The AC showcases hundreds of films a year; it connects the filmmaker to the audience and film history to its future. Presenting in 35mm, 70mm, rare nitrate, and state-of-the-art-digital.

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