

ONCE A HERO



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Perry Lam was among the first to critically examine Hong Kong movies in English on a regular basis, with reviews in the early 1980s for South China Morning Post. Widely quoted by the international press including Reuters, The Associated Press, Asiaweek and Cahiers du cinéma, he has long been recognized as an authority on Hong Kong cinema. From 2006-10, he was editorial director of Muse magazine, and taught Asian cinema as adjunct professor of Syracuse University Hong Kong Center. He is now assistant editorial director of Oxford University Press and writes columns in Chinese for Hong Kong Economic Journal and Yazhou Zhoukan. Once A Hero: The Vanishing Hong Kong Cinema is his first English book.

In *Once A Hero*, his latest collection of essays, Lam describes the decline of Hong Kong cinema since 1997 and gives an eyewitness account of its attempt to reinvent itself in the past five years. He examines successes and failures of its famous auteurs; spotlights talented newcomers seeking to inject new life into cinema; and, with the future of Hong Kong cinema now bound up with the mainland, discusses the works of major Chinese filmmakers.

书摘：

“The real story about Hong Kong films isn’t the dramatic decline in their creativity, or power to draw people to theaters. It is the surgical removal of their distinctiveness as movies of Hong Kong. In their eagerness to please the mainland audience, Hong Kong filmmakers now churn out movies with ready-made plots, powered by simple demographics. I smell more desperation than inspiration in the race to make the Hong Kong cinema mainland-friendly.”

“Hong Kong filmmakers still know better than anyone how to get under the skin of an undercover agent – a lasting legacy of the original sin of Hong Kongers, who prospered under colonialism by, as the Chinese saying goes, ‘treating the thief as father.’ The distinctly Hong Kong species of movie hero is a tragic hero who goes deep into the enemy’s operation, risking his identity, sanity and life, yet he remains misunderstood to the end. A film like *Avatar*, by contrast, is interested only in the idea, not the complicated experience, of going undercover.”

作者介绍:

目录:

[ONCE A HERO_ 下载链接1](#)

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