



John WOO 吳宇森 (b. 1946)

Director, Executive Producer

Born in Guangzhou, Woo grew up in Hong Kong and started making experimental films at the age of 19. In 1969, he joined Cathay Organisation (HK) (1965) Ltd as a continuity. He became an assistant director to Chang Cheh at Shaw Brothers (Hong Kong) Ltd in 1971, where he assisted in the making of *Boxer from Shantung* (1972), *The Blood Brothers* (1973), etc. In 1973, Woo made his directorial debut *Farewell Buddy* (later renamed as *The Young Dragons* and was released in 1975), which was picked up by Golden Harvest (HK) Limited for distribution. Earning the recognition of Raymond Chow, he had become a staple director at Golden Harvest.

Woo assisted Michael Hui in the filming of *Games Gamblers Play* (1974), before moving on to direct kung fu titles such as *The Dragon Tamers* (1975) and *Hand of Death* (1976); as well as the Cantonese opera film *Princess Chang Ping* (1976). He later returned to help Michael Hui in the planning of *The Private Eyes* (1976) as planning producer. Woo's directorial success came with the comedy *The Pilferers' Progress* (1977), starring Ricky Hui and Richard Ng Yiu-hon. It was the biggest-grossing film in Hong Kong that year. He later directed a number of comedies including *Follow the Star* (1978), *From Riches to Rags* (1980), *To Hell with the Devil* (1982), *Plain Jane to the Rescue* (1982), most of which were collaborations with Ricky Hui. He also directed the *wuxia* film *Last Hurrah for Chivalry* (1979). Meanwhile, Woo wrote and directed *Laughing Time* (1980), the inaugural production of Cinema City Company Limited and a sizeable box-office hit, under the pseudonym of Ng Sheung-fei.

In 1983, on completion of *Sunset Fighters* (which was renamed *Heroes Shed No Tears* and released in 1986), he left Golden Harvest for Cinema City. In 1986, he directed *A Better Tomorrow*, which broke box-office records with over HK\$30 million and earned him the Best Director at the 23rd Golden Horse Film Awards in Taiwan. Following its success, Woo directed *A Better Tomorrow II* (co-directed with Tsui Hark, 1987) and *The Killer* (1989) respectively. The latter won him the Best Director at the 9th Hong Kong Film Awards.

In 1990, Woo formed his own company, directing a number of hits, including *Bullet in the Head* (1990), *Once a Thief* (1991) and *Hard-boiled* (1992). Woo made a career move to the Hollywood in 1992 and directed *Hard Target* (1993), *Broken Arrow* (1996), *Face/Off* (1997), *Mission: Impossible II* (2000), *Windtalker* (2002), etc. Woo returned to Chinese cinema with *Red Cliff* (2008) and *Red Cliff: Part II* (2009). In 2010, he was awarded a Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the 67th Venice Film Festival. After a few years' break, Woo began to work on *The Crossing* (2004), *The Crossing II* (2015) and *Manhunt* (2017), among others.