BAMcinématek and the Taipei Cultural Center of TECO in New York present *All Hail the King: The Films of King Hu*, a 15-film tribute to the Chinese cinematic titan, Jun 6—17

“An extravagantly talented visual stylist with a gift for illuminating the borderland where myth, history, magic, faith, heroism, and regret intertwine.”—Bruce Bennett, *The New York Sun*

Features a sidebar of films revealing Hu’s own influences and those influenced by his legacy

14 films in 35mm!

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**Brooklyn, NY/May 5, 2014**—From Friday, June 6 through Tuesday, June 17, BAMcinématek presents *All Hail the King: The Films of King Hu*, a 15-film tribute to the Chinese cinematic titan. Master of the martial art movie, King Hu revolutionized the *wuxia*/swordplay film, introducing a refined sense of aesthetics, attention to mise-en-scène, and an aura of mysticism to the genre that was borne out of his lifelong love for Chinese opera. With his unique blend of stoic, iconic heroes, realistic violence, and dance-styled fight choreography, Hu’s style influenced decades of subsequent Asian cinema, modernizing the *wuxia* in the same way that Sam Peckinpah and Sergio Leone changed the Western. The series includes nine features by Hu alongside a globe-spanning sidebar of films that both influenced and paid homage to him, with many screening in rare and imported 35mm prints from around the world. *All Hail the King* is programmed by Andrew Chan and Nellie Killian and presented in conjunction with the Taipei Cultural Center of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in New York.

Born in Beijing, Hu emigrated to Hong Kong as a teenager and drifted into jobs in the film industry, where he came to specialize as an actor and a set designer. For the famous Shaw Brothers studio, Hu worked as an assistant to director Li Han-hsiang on two films, including *The Love Eterne* (1963—Jun 7), a musical romance so popular in Asia that lines of its dialogue became catchphrases. Hu’s breakthrough film as a director, *Come Drink With Me* (1966—Jun 8), introduced the first of his many badass heroines: Cheng Pei-pei as the unforgettable Golden Swallow, first glimpsed decimating a tavern full of gangsters with her faster-than-lightning hands.

Already notorious for his meticulous, intractable attention to detail, Hu clashed with producer Run Run Shaw over *Come Drink With Me* and left for Taiwan to make *Dragon Inn* (1967—Jun 14), a Ming Dynasty revenge yarn that cemented Hu’s commanding mature style of dynamic widescreen compositions, tracking shots, and rapidly edited combat scenes. Two years in the making, *A Touch of Zen* (1971—Jun 6) is Hu’s magnum opus, depicting the larger-than-life battles between a female fugitive (Hsu Feng) and her pursuers from the point-of-view of a humble scholar (Shih Jun) who becomes her protector and lover. With its famously transcendental ending, *A Touch of Zen* literally took *wuxia* to another level and remains highly influential—contemporary Chinese master Jia Zhangke paid it tribute with last year’s acclaimed *A Touch of Sin*. 
Working independently and on a smaller scale after the box office failure of *A Touch of Zen*, Hu made the spy vs. spy melodrama *The Fate of Lee Khan* (1973—Jun 15), a claustrophobic “inn film.” Hu loved this setting, a place where people of all classes and professions would interact that explodes into violence in the last reel. By contrast, *The Valiant Ones* (1975—Jun 13) is non-stop action from start to finish, as the titular heroes rout a gang of Japanese pirates along the Chinese coast.

Next Hu made two back-to-back films in sumptuous South Korean locations: the languorous supernatural epic *Legend of the Mountain* (1979—Jun 16) and the twisty *Raining in the Mountain* (1979—Jun 17), a story of temple intrigue in which wit supplants weaponry. Legendary Taiwanese New Wave screenwriter Wu Nien-jen (*The Puppetmaster*) co-wrote Hu’s rarely-screened, 10th-century dark comedy *All the King’s Men* (1983—Jun 11), and a new generation of martial arts stars (including Sammo Hung and Joey Wong) headlined his final film, *Painted Skin* (1992—Jun 10), a ghost story based on the same collection of Pu Songling stories as *A Touch of Zen*.

Also screening are Kurosawa’s samurai classic *Seven Samurai* (1954—Jun 15), a major influence that Hu called “a real martial arts picture,” and Nicholas Ray’s own “inn film” *Johnny Guitar* (1954—Jun 7), whose gunslinger leading ladies (Joan Crawford and Mercedes McCambridge) parallel Hu’s female combatants. Hu disciple Tsui Hark pays homage to the ending of *The Valiant Ones* in his sweat-and-blood-soaked *The Blade* (1995—Jun 13), just as the acrobatic action scenes in Ang Lee’s crossover hit *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000—Jun 9) invoke *A Touch of Zen*’s balletic bamboo forest fight. *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* (2003—Jun 14), Tsai Ming-liang’s tribute to Hu and to the twilight of cinema itself, features cameos by two of Hu’s stock company, Shih Jun and Miao Tien, in the audience for the final show of a closing Taipei movie theater—a screening of *Dragon Inn*.

**Press screenings to be announced.**

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**All Hail the King: The Films of King Hu Schedule**

**Fri, Jun 6**
7:30pm: *A Touch of Zen*

**Sat, Jun 7**
2, 7pm: *The Love Eterne*
4:40, 9:40pm: *Johnny Guitar*

**Sun, Jun 8**
4:30pm: *Come Drink with Me*

**Mon, Jun 9**
4:30, 7, 9:30pm: *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*

**Tue, Jun 10**
8pm: *Painted Skin*

**Wed, Jun 11**
8pm: *All the King’s Men*

**Fri, Jun 13**
2, 4:30, 9:30pm: *The Blade*
7pm: *The Valiant Ones*

**Sat, Jun 14**
4:30, 9:30pm: Goodbye, Dragon Inn
7pm: Dragon Inn

Sun, Jun 15
2, 8:15pm: Seven Samurai
6pm: The Fate of Lee Khan

Mon, Jun 16
8pm: Legend of the Mountain

Tue, Jun 17
8pm: Raining in the Mountain

Film Descriptions
All films in 35mm unless otherwise noted.

All the King’s Men (1983)
Directed by King Hu. With Cheng Pei-pei, Tang Paoyun, Tian Feng.
Hu introduced a wry sense of humor into the historical epic form with this lavish, gorgeous tale of court intrigue, power plays, and elaborate political machinations during the tail end of the Tang Dynasty. Set in the 10th century BC, this dizzyingly complex story revolves around a sickly emperor who sends his prime minister to infiltrate the neighboring kingdom and bring back the only doctor capable of saving his life.

The Blade (1995) 105min
Directed by Tsui Hark. With Vincent Zhao, Moses Chan, Hung Yan-yan.
A longtime favorite of Quentin Tarantino, and widely considered one of Tsui Hark’s greatest and most audacious films, this brutal homage to the macho Hong Kong action films of the 1960s follows the tale of an orphan raised by the owner of a sword factory and his quest to avenge the death of his father. Reimagining the Chang Cheh martial arts classic The One-Armed Swordsman, The Blade also incorporates visual homages to the films of King Hu, who served as Tsui’s most important mentor and whom he eventually replaced as director on the legendary wuxia film Swordsman. Praising its show-stopping montage sequences, scholar Stephen Teo compares Tsui’s work to “the incredible technical effect King Hu achieved in The Valiant Ones.”

Come Drink with Me (1966) 95min
Directed by King Hu. With Cheng Pei-pei, Yueh Hua, Chan Hung-lit.
Hu’s first wuxia film is a landmark marriage of swordplay with the stylized grandeur of Chinese opera, in which a woman (Cheng) goes undercover as a warrior in order to rescue her brother from the clutches of the Five Tiger Gang. A seminal work of Hong Kong cinema, this Shaw Brothers production established a number of Hu’s recurring motifs: a strong female action hero, lavish art direction, and elaborately choreographed, balletic fight sequences.

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000) 119min
Directed by Ang Lee. With Chow Yun-Fat, Michelle Yeoh, Zhang Ziyi.
Ang Lee revitalized the wuxia genre with this exhilarating, fairy tale-like epic of warriors and thieves battling for possession of Green Destiny, a mythic 400-year-old sword. Justly celebrated for its transcendent, airborne action sequences, this Academy Award-winning international mega-hit is rife with references to Hu’s work—particularly the famous bamboo grove fight in A Touch of Zen.

Dragon Inn (1966) 111min
Directed by King Hu. With Polly Shangguang Lingfeng, Bai Ying, Miao Tien.
In this martial arts classic, a trio of swordsmen and women battle the forces of a powerful, conniving eunuch plotting to wipe out the children of his political rival. Following a falling out with Shaw Brothers over his desire for more artistic control, Hu unleashed his awe-inspiringly ambitious vision in this action-packed Taiwanese production that laid the foundations for decades of wuxia films to come.
The Fate of Lee Khan (1973) 105min
Directed by King Hu. With Angela Mao, Li Hua Li, Hsu Feng.
The third film in Hu's "inn trilogy" (along with Come Drink with Me and Dragon Inn) is a rollicking comic adventure that follows a band of largely female fighters out to stop a Mongol warlord from getting his hands on a valuable map. With fight choreography by none other than Sammo Hung, The Fate of Lee Khan is a rousing showcase for Hu's formidable women warriors, including martial arts icon Angela "Lady Whirlwind" Mao.

Goodbye, Dragon Inn (2003) 82min
Directed by Tsai Ming-liang. With Lee Kang-sheng, Chen Shiang-chyi.
Contemporary art-house darling Tsai Ming-liang pays poignant tribute to King Hu with this entrancing elegy for the golden age of Taiwanese cinema. Set in a crumbling Taipei movie palace during its last screening ever—Hu's iconic Dragon Inn—it captures the theater's workers and patrons (including two actors from the Hu classic) in alternately mundane and deadpan moments, as Tsai's hypnotic long takes gradually acquire a quietly moving minimalist majesty. "A movie about the dreamy pleasures of moviegoing that is itself both haunting and haunted" (A.O. Scott, The New York Times).

Johnny Guitar (1954) 110min
Directed by Nicholas Ray. With Joan Crawford, Sterling Hayden, Mercedes McCambridge.
Nicholas Ray's subversive oat opera is at once a tale of Freudian passion, a camp vehicle for star Joan Crawford, and a florid satire of the Hollywood blacklist, released even as Senator Joe McCarthy staged his last investigation. With its powerful female protagonists, insular saloon setting, and feverishly stylized aesthetic, it makes for a fascinating Hollywood companion piece to King Hu's Come Drink with Me.

Legend of the Mountain (1979) 184min
Directed by King Hu. With Shih Jun, Hsu Feng, Sylvia Chang.
Made in South Korea, this atmospheric supernatural fable follows a scholar (Shih) who retreats to the mountains to finish transcribing a sutra and finds himself suspended in an alternate reality, seduced by two women who may or may not be ghosts. One of Hu's most visually ravishing works, Legend of the Mountain is a mesmerizing, mood-drenched feast for the senses. DigiBeta.

The Love Eterne (1963) 126min
Directed by Li Han-hsiang. With Betty Loh Ti, Ivy Ling Po.
Hu cut his teeth at the legendary Shaw Brothers studio, where he assistant directed this sweeping musical based on a famed Chinese legend about a young woman (Loh) who disguises herself as a male in order to attend college and falls in love with a man who doesn’t know her true identity. Rooted in the highly stylized tradition of Chinese opera, this sumptuously mounted romance proved nothing short of a box office phenomenon throughout Asia, helping jumpstart Hu's own directorial career.

Painted Skin (1993) 94min
Directed by King Hu. With Adam Cheng, Joey Wong, Sammo Hung.
Drifting away from wuxia films later in life, Hu focused instead on tales of the supernatural. His final work, based on a classic Chinese legend, is a beguiling story of a young scholar (Cheng) entangled with a beautiful ghost (the ethereal Wong) who paints her skin in order to appear human. Hu masterfully evokes an otherworldly atmosphere with his typically opulent visuals in this horror-tinged metaphysical fable, which features the great Sammo Hung as a Taoist priest.

Raining in the Mountain (1979) 120min
Directed by King Hu. With Hsu Feng, Sun Yueh, Shih Jun.
Hu immediately followed up Legend of the Mountain with this more action-oriented but no less pictorially lush tale of intrigue in a Ming Dynasty-era Buddhist monastery, in which a nobleman and a general each conspire to steal a valuable scroll from the temple's library. With the action deftly confined to the monastery's maze-like interiors, Raining in the Mountain becomes a virtuoso showcase for Hu's typically luxurious mise-en-scène and elegant choreographing of action.

Seven Samurai (1954) 207min
Directed by Akira Kurosawa. With Toshirô Mifune, Takashi Shimura, Keiko Tsushima.
This sweeping chronicle of courage and heroism tells the story of 16th-century farmers who enlist a band of samurai to protect their village from invading bandits. Frequently listed as one of the greatest movies of all time, Kurosawa’s masterpiece showcases stunning cinematography, star turns from the great Toshirô Mifune and Takashi Shimura, and the director’s masterful approach to storytelling. In addition to providing source material for the classic western The Magnificent Seven, its virtuoso displays of swordplay also exerted enormous influence on the Shaw Brothers studio films and King Hu in particular, who called it a “real martial arts picture.”

A Touch of Zen (1971) 200min
Directed by King Hu. With Hsu Feng, Roy Chiao, Bai Ying.
Hu’s masterpiece is a mind-meltingly mystical tale of a female warrior (Hsu) who must fight for her life when the corrupt Ming dynasty targets her and her entire family for extermination. The first Chinese film to win a prize at Cannes, A Touch of Zen is part martial-arts epic, part ghost story, and part metaphysical reflection on Buddhist philosophy that bursts off the screen with Hu’s knockout visual flourishes, including the unforgettable image of a monk who bleeds gold.

The Valiant Ones (1975) 102min
Directed by King Hu. With Hsu Feng, Bai Ying, Roy Chiao.
Hu bid farewell to the wuxia genre with this elegiac, stylistically inventive period tale about a band of warriors battling Japanese pirates on the coast of China. The director transforms breathless fight sequences into an abstracted rush of rhythm and movement in this “daringly innovative action adventure story… The glittering images include a chess game that suddenly becomes a battle plan, a silent woman with heightened sight and hearing, and a rumbustious zen archer” (Time Out London).

About BAMcinématek
The four-screen BAM Rose Cinemas (BRC) opened in 1998 to offer Brooklyn audiences alternative and independent films that might not play in the borough otherwise, making BAM the only performing arts center in the country with two mainstage theaters and a multiplex cinema. In July 1999, beginning with a series celebrating the work of Spike Lee, BAMcinématek was born as Brooklyn’s only daily, year-round repertory film program. BAMcinématek presents new and rarely seen contemporary films, classics, work by local artists, and festivals of films from around the world, often with special appearances by directors, actors, and other guests. BAMcinématek has not only presented major retrospectives by major filmmakers such as Michelangelo Antonioni, Manoel de Oliveira, Shohei Imamura, Vincente Minnelli (winning a National Film Critics’ Circle Award prize for the retrospective), Kaneto Shindo, Luchino Visconti, and William Friedkin, but it has also introduced New York audiences to contemporary artists such as Pedro Costa and Apichatpong Weerasethakul. In addition, BAMcinématek programmed the first US retrospectives of directors Arnaud Desplechin, Nicolas Winding Refn, Hong Sang-soo, and, most recently, Andrzej Zulawski. From 2006 to 2008, BAMcinématek partnered with the Sundance Institute and in June 2009 launched BAMcinemaFest, a 16-day festival of new independent films and repertory favorites with 15 NY feature film premieres; the sixth annual BAMcinemaFest runs from June 18—29, 2014.

Credits
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General Information

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, BAM Rose Cinemas, and BAMcafé are located in the Peter Jay Sharp building at 30 Lafayette Avenue (between St Felix Street and Ashland Place) in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn. BAM Harvey Theater is located two blocks from the main building at 651 Fulton Street (between Ashland and Rockwell Places). Both locations house Greenlight Bookstore at BAM kiosks. BAM Fisher, located at 321 Ashland Place, is the newest addition to the BAM campus and houses the Judith and Alan Fishman Space and Rita K. Hillman Studio. BAM Rose Cinemas is Brooklyn’s only movie house dedicated to first-run independent and foreign film and repertory programming. BAMcafé, operated by Great Performances, offers a bar menu and dinner entrées prior to BAM Howard Gilman Opera House evening performances. BAMcafé also features an eclectic mix of spoken word and live music for BAMcafé Live on Friday and Saturday nights with a bar menu available starting at 6pm.

Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, Q, B to Atlantic Avenue – Barclays Center (2, 3, 4, 5 to Nevins St for Harvey Theater)
             D, N, R to Pacific Street; G to Fulton Street; C to Lafayette Avenue
Train: Long Island Railroad to Atlantic Terminal – Barclays Center
Bus: B25, B26, B41, B45, B52, B63, B67 all stop within three blocks of BAM
Car: Commercial parking lots are located adjacent to BAM

For ticket information, call BAM Ticket Services at 718.636.4100, or visit BAM.org.