



## Yonfan 楊凡 (b. 1947)

### Director, Screenwriter, Producer, Art Director, Costume and Make Up Designer

Born Yang Man-shih in Hankou, Hubei (now a part of Wuhan), a native of Hengshan, Hunan, Yonfan moved to Taiwan when young and to Hong Kong at the age of 16, where he completed secondary school. Subsequently, he went to the US and Europe to study film and photography, after which he became a photographer. He returned to Hong Kong in 1973 and became well-known, especially in portrait-taking. He published *Yonfan Photographs China* in 1980, *Ten Years of Yonfan* in 1983; and a portrait photography collection, *By Yonfan-A Chinese Portrait* (1991), etc. In the same year, he established Far Sun Film Co. Ltd to distribute European films. During that time, he was engaged in the entertainment industry, shooting magazine covers and record sleeves; also cameoed in the TV anthology series, *Tea for Two* (1975). In 1975, he worked as a producer for Commercial Television, on shows including *Agnes Melling Chan's Show* (1975) and *Commercial TV All-Star Variety Show* (1975), etc.

Yonfan made his directorial debut in 1984 with *A Certain Romance*, a fresh portrayal of a young woman's in love. He continued directing more films that cast the spotlight on different types of women and which won him praise for having an aesthetic style, including *Lost Romance* (1986) and *Last Romance* (1988), adapted from Isabel Ni's novels, and the thriller-love stories such as *Immortal Story* (1986) and *Double Fixation* (1987), as well as *Promising Miss Bowie* (1990), a story about a mother-daughter relationship. It wasn't until *Bugis Street* (1995) that saw a change in style as he probed the boundaries beyond a heteronormative narrative in a foreign land; the following *Bishonen* (1998) touched on gay themes, while *Colour Blossoms* (2004) slipped into an exploration of eroticism.

He also drew inspiration from *Kunqu* opera in directing *Peony Pavilion* (2001); shot a *Kunqu* opera documentary, *Breaking the Willow* (2003), and related short films *Yun* ('Rhyme', 2013) and *Lü* ('Rhythm', 2013). In addition, he directed the feature drama film *Prince of Tears* (2009) in Taiwan. A decade later, he directed the animated feature film, *No.7 Cherry Lane* (2019), recreating a sense of Hong Kong nostalgia. Both films were shortlisted for the Venice Film Festival competition section, with the latter awarded the honour of Best Screenplay.

The multi-talented Yonfan has penned all his directorial works over the years. He was the photographer for *Lost Romance*, the art director (along with Andrew Wong Man-hin) and costume designer (alongside Fung Man-chun) for *Prince of Tears*, and won Best Costume & Make Up Design at the 21st Hong Kong Film Awards for *Peony Pavilion*. He wrote, directed and co-produced with Hsu Li-kong a section of *In Between* (1994). In recent years, he has published works such as *Incantation* (2013), *Fu Hwa* (2015) and *As Time Goes By* (2020).

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