

Cinematic Landscapes: Observations on the Visual Arts and Cinema of China and Japan. Edited by LINDA C. EHRLICH and DAVID DESSER. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994. xii, 345 pp. \$19.95 (paper).

Although China and Japan are linked by a common aesthetic tradition, surprisingly little work exists on how that common artistic heritage can be seen concretely in the cinema. This work represents a very important contribution not only to a growing body of English language scholarship on the cinema cultures of China and Japan, but to the virtually barren field of Asian cross-media research. Given the importance of the common visual arts history of China and Japan to the development of film art in each country, it is surprising that so little material exists on this topic. This book takes an important step in redressing this gap in Asian film scholarship. Moreover, it helps to bridge the gulf among various disciplines (e.g., Asian art history, aesthetic theory, cultural studies, and film criticism) that really need to address common issues.

This anthology has many features that make it a particularly valuable addition to the growing body of books on Asian cinema. The filmography and standardization of romanization of Chinese (particularly the choice to use pinyin with tone symbols) and Japanese titles help to make the book more accessible to a reader generally unfamiliar with different systems of romanization. The chronology of major historical periods is a welcome addition for students for the same reason. Also, this volume is beautifully illustrated with ten full color plates and ample black-and-white plates, so that the clear visual links among the various media come into focus for the reader.

The anthology offers a balanced selection of essays by art historians, aestheticians, and literature, theater and film scholars. The introductory materials by the editors, Linda Ehrlich and David Desser, an essay outlining mutual aesthetic traditions by noted Asian art authority Sherman Lee, section overviews by Douglas Wilkerson on

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Chinese aesthetics, and Tom Rimer on Japanese aesthetics and the cinema help to guide the reader through the volume by surveying the common ground occupied by the various essayists. Part 1 of the volume is devoted to film and the visual arts in China, and part 2 deals with Japan.

Part 1, however, really does not attempt to cover the entirety of Chinese cinema. Although the entry by Hao Dazheng looks at early Chinese cinema, cinema from the 1940s and 1950s produced in the mainland, as well as contemporary films, the other essays in this section deal exclusively with the so-called Fifth Generation of film makers in the People's Republic (i.e., directors who attended film school and made their first features in the early to mid-1980s). Taiwanese films are occasionally referred to for the sake of comparison, but Hong Kong cinema is completely absent from the volume. However, limiting the focus of this section makes the book stronger. Issues raised by Chris Berry and Mary Ann Farquhar in their essay on "post-socialist strategies" in *Yellow Earth* and *Black Cannon Incident*, for example, resonate with observations made by An Jingfu on *King of Children* and Jenny Kwok Wah Lau on *Ju Dou*. Choosing to focus on the work of Chen Kaige, Zhang Yimou, and Huang Jianxin exclusively allows for an in-depth aesthetic exploration of a specific film movement and its roots in a common artistic heritage.

Part 2 on Japanese cinema is broader in scope. This section begins with Donald Richie's essay on the roots of Japanese cinema in the theatrical traditions of Japan and Sato Tadao's essay on the indebtedness of Japanese cinema to landscape painting, print making, and architecture. The essays that follow keep both theatrical and plastic arts in the forefront as they explore the work of the major *auteurs* of Japanese cinema: D. William Davis and Dudley Andrew on Mizoguchi, Cynthia Contreras on Kobayashi, Linda Ehrlich on Ichikawa, Kathe Geist on Ozu, and David Desser on Suzuki, among others.

If anything can be felt to be lacking in this book, it is a concluding essay that would bring the sections on Japanese and Chinese film and art together to remap common terrain. However, this is a minor flaw in an otherwise outstanding volume. Not only will specialists in Asian film benefit from this book, but many scholars working in Asian regional studies, Asian art and literature, as well as film history and criticism undoubtedly will find this anthology of interest. It is valuable as a textbook in courses on art and the cinema, Asian cinema, or film form and aesthetics. The work makes an important contribution to Asian film and art scholarship.

GINA MARCHETTI
University of Maryland, College Park