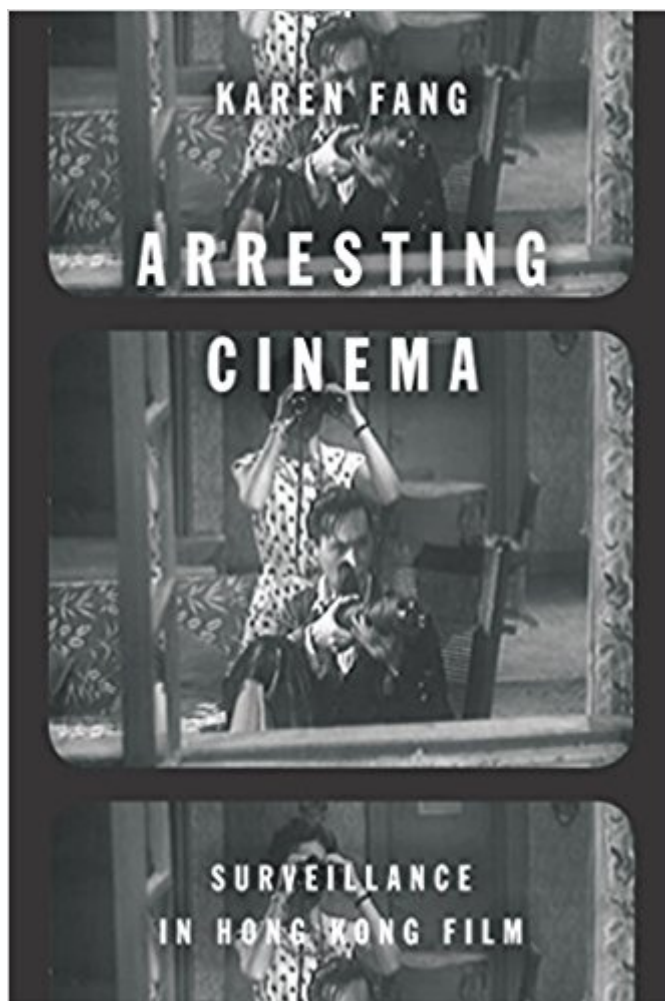


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Arresting Cinema: Surveillance In Hong Kong Film



Synopsis

When Ridley Scott envisioned *Blade Runner*'s set as "Hong Kong on a bad day," he nodded to the city's overcrowding as well as its widespread use of surveillance. But while Scott brought Hong Kong and surveillance into the global film repertoire, the city's own cinema has remained outside of the global surveillance discussion. In *Arresting Cinema*, Karen Fang delivers a unifying account of Hong Kong cinema that draws upon its renowned crime films and other unique genres to demonstrate Hong Kong's view of surveillance. She argues that Hong Kong's films display a tolerance of—and even opportunism towards—the soft cage of constant observation, unlike the fearful view prevalent in the West. However, many surveillance cinema studies focus solely on European and Hollywood films, discounting other artistic traditions and industrial circumstances. Hong Kong's films show a more crowded, increasingly economically stratified, and postnational world that nevertheless offers an aura of hopeful futurity. Only by exploring Hong Kong surveillance film can we begin to shape a truly global understanding of Hitchcock's "rear window ethics."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Hong Kong films love to look: through windows, across courtyards, over ledges, down gun barrels, into mirrors, and around corners. I always knew that, but never gave it much thought until I read Karen Fang's innovative, refreshing, and yes, *Arresting Cinema*. Fang's analysis offers an essential complement to Western scholarship on cinema and surveillance." (Michael Curtin, University of

California Santa Barbara)"An incisive, insightful consideration of a regional cinema that inspires thinking on a much larger scale. Karen Fang's study of surveillance culture in Hong Kong films offers not only a refreshing perspective on world cinema but also, in tracking how Hong Kong is coming to terms with dramatic changes, a challenge to view the globalized world through a new lens." (Sam Ho, Former Programmer Hong Kong Film Archive)"Karen Fang's Arresting Cinema breaks new ground in the contemporary surveillance era and makes available to a wider audience a film genre that is relevant well beyond its area focus. As a result, it will be an edifying resource both for area specialists and practitioners and students in diverse disciplines. Conceptually sophisticated yet accessibly written, the book is both timely and of enduring value." (Michael J. Shapiro University of Hawai'i at Manoa)

Karen Fang is Associate Professor of English at the University of Houston and a member of the Film Committee for the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston.

Karen Fang's "Arresting Cinema" brings a fresh perspective to the study of Hong Kong cinema, with insights from the scholarship of surveillance in (Hollywood) cinema illuminating hitherto neglected areas of Hong Kong film history. Conversely, the book also uses Hong Kong cinema to complicate the commonly Eurocentric understanding of surveillance film. I particularly enjoyed Chapter 1 (on the understudied Hong Kong comedian Michael Hui) and Chapter 3 (which deals with the links between the Hong Kong police force and the local film industry). Elegantly written and drawing on an impressively wide range of sources, this book remains accessible to a broader audience, but should also receive priority on the reading lists of professional film scholars.

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