

# Jaded Lense



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Edited by Michael Jarvis

## The Official CUEAFS Newsletter

**Once again thanks for a great turn out to the last screening. The whole CUEAFS team is amazed by your fantastic response to the first two events and were positive that this support will continue over the following weeks.**



(A packed lecture theatre)

After an amazing array of reviews last week the anticipation for the same standard was high amongst the editorial team, and I am pleased to say that you didn't disappoint. We were inundated with well crafted, top class articles but unfortunately we can only pick two. So here is Niya Diamo's winning review of 'Shinjuku Incident':

'The one word that could describe this movie is "conflicting". It was moving and impressive, cinematographically and in the sense of content. However, the really delicate issue, that this film is based on - the Japan/China/Taiwan history, is a very hard matter to grasp for anyone unfamiliar with it. For most Chinese and Japanese people, I'm sure this film had a deep historical meaning and influence, other than just being a drama and meaningful in a specific way, but for any ordinary westerner, the movie definitely has another way of making an impression.

### 'Brutal Incident'

The plot tells us about a Chinese immigrant, Steelhead, who goes to Japan in search of his long-lost childhood sweetheart, Xiu Xiu. Steelhead ends up in between rival gangs and has to choose one side in order to survive. Accidentally, after a brutal incident with his friend, Jie, Steelhead goes looking for revenge and saves the life of gang leader Eguchi, finding himself on that side of the battle. Steelhead goes through an inner struggle, but ends up deciding to help Eguchi kill two other gang leaders, in order to receive legal status in Japan for himself and all of his friends, as well as all Taiwan controlled territories, thus providing for their future.

Looking beyond the Chinese/Japanese conflict story, beyond the Yakuza and culturally based messages, one could easily find a deeper meaning invested in the film. It is a story of metamorphosis and inner conflict, where the main character is unsure whether his actions are right, leaving him overwhelmed by guilt and regret. It is a human story and probably could be portrayed through any other nationality as well...

We might not be used to seeing Jackie Chan in such a dramatic role, but he pulled it off pretty well. His performances in his movie career have been mainly based on Kung Fu skills and humour for so long (just think of Rush Hour, the Tuxedo, the Shanghai movies with Owen Wilson, the Legend of Drunken Master, etc) that it is unnatural for us to see him in another light. And it certainly affects his performance, given that his facial expressions and body language don't really portray deep inner conflict and suffering, as we've seen by so many good drama actors. However, he played the part convincingly, whereby it was believable that that was a man bouncing between peace and vengeance, internally confused about the bloody actions he is supposed to take in search of peace.

The most powerful and dramatic scene, the turning point of the whole plot, was the best and most exquisitely done movie scene I've seen in a while - Jie losing his hand. That was the one moment, after which the metamorphosis of everything began and everyone's life turned dramatically. It changed Jie - the quiet and timid immigrant, too afraid to go outlaw, into a rebellious and hateful gang leader, opposing to Steelhead's peaceful idea of life. It changed Steelhead from the peaceful and calm character, into a revengeful person, which led him to saving Eguchi's life and turned him into the blood-shedding secret weapon of his childhood sweetheart's husband. It changed the lives of everyone involved, transforming them from peaceful workers, just looking for jobs to support their families, into a violent drug-selling Chinese gang. Which then led them to being slaughtered by the vengeful Yakuza in defence of their power.

Very impressive performance by rising star Daniel Wu, good portrayal of the metamorphosis from good to bad with death ending the cycle and shedding light on his deepest pain and regret. We see BingBing Fan again, in a really different light than in Sophie's Revenge (like Ziyi's Sophie and Sayuri portrayals perhaps), showing her actual talent and ability to adjust to different roles bringing life to characters.

I can't help but comment on the cinematographic perfection of the movie. From the first scene, I was overwhelmed by the beauty of the landscapes, of the obvious contrast of colours, enforcing the scenes themselves. The really blue sea and sky, with the promise of hope and happiness, absolute excellence in the scenes with Eguchi and his wife or the first meeting between Steelhead and Yuko, and the dark and grey-oriented colours towards the end, when hope disappears and death takes over. Absolute brilliance in Peter Kam's soundtrack, bringing the story to a whole different level of influence, and leaving us utterly touched and conflicted when the credits roll.'



Thanks for such a great review. We will also be giving a prize DVD to Cameron who wrote a very interesting review as well and was narrowly pipped to the post by Niya. Keep your reviews coming in as they are great to read and it's great to know how you feel about the films we show. All reviews will be kept on the blog and soon there will be pictures of all winners, so keep your eyes peeled.

# Growing Numbers

We are proud to say that CUEAFS is growing fast. The Facebook page has already welcomed more than a 100 members and each Wednesday the screenings room (ETG34) is filling to the maximum. This is why we want to turn your attention to several things. Firstly, we encourage everybody to officially join the society through the Students' Union page ([www.cusu.org](http://www.cusu.org)) as this will bring you benefits in relation to future screenings. Secondly, we would like to ask you to enjoy your free popcorn and drinks during the screenings without making a mess. The university staff have been kind enough to provide us with a lecture theatre, it would be really mean on our behalf if we leave the room a mess after each movie. So please, guys, help us with that. And last but not least, since this society is for everybody to enjoy – we would like to hear what YOU want to watch. Log on to our Facebook page, click on “Discussions” and leave us your opinion on the movies you’ve seen, the genres you want to see in the future and, in fact, everything else you’d like to share and discuss.

Written by Elena Rapondzhieva

## Halloween Special



## Double Bill



**Are you fed up with the same old horror? Recently been told that the latest film out is the most horrifying thing ever? Well this time CUEAFS isn't lying!**

This Wednesday we are screening the latest Grudge films and they are not to be missed! To wet your appetite here are the posters for the films. Don't get too scared ...



**Wednesday 4th  
November 2:00 pm**

# Star Sponsors

We've managed to get two very significant and influential companies to be our sponsors! So now we can't resist bragging about them!



Terracotta Entertainment Group and their sub-branch Terracotta Distribution are a film promotion and distribution company. Founded by Joey Leung, it's gradually settling in as one of UK's top purveyors of Far Eastern Cinema. Earlier this year the company held the annual Terracotta Far East Film Festival in London, hosting eight UK and one Europe premieres of Asian films, among which K.T. Kwak's "An Eye for an Eye" and Johnnie To's "Sparrow". In January 2010 Terracotta is releasing in the UK the multi-award winning "Breathless", a provocative film exploring the topic of domestic violence.

The company's latest titles include:

**God Man Dog – The Fox Family – Hansel and Gretel**



**third window films**

Third Window Films is a British independent DVD label, dedicated to distribution of all kinds of genres of Far Eastern Cinema. It was created in 2005 by Adam Torel and since then has strived to bring to UK public what Torel himself describes as "quality Asian movies". Due to the fact that they've been on the market for a while, their catalog is quite full. Their latest movies include:

**Instant swamp – Love Exposure – Fine totally fine**

Written by Elena Rapondzhieva

## Activity Week

Unfortunately as it is activity week there will be no screening next Wednesday. However we have great news! Shortly after the activity week break we will be having a guest speaker from Third Window to come and introduce the screening and also talk about the progress and development of the company, along with East Asian Cinema. Look out for further details of this fantastic event as information will be posted around the Ellen Terry building and also on all other media platforms CUEAFS operates on.

### YOUR THOUGHTS

As you are well aware this is a new society and it is our goal to give you as its supporters and members what you want. So please feel free to send any articles you want posted in this newsletter to: [jarvism3@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:jarvism3@coventry.ac.uk)