



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Please refer to membership renewal information in this newsletter. We are grateful to the team at Highland Creative and to Helen Jones (our Membership secretary) who made the instructions so clear and easy.

A valued member sent me this link abc.net.au/listen/programs/lifematters/cinemas-in-decline/105002298. Our Empire cinema is praised at the end!

We have a great need for social contact (hence FISH screenings), and also for a big screen.

Thank you- Empire Cinema.

I am told by a cinema expert that the word "semiotics" has a fuller definition than I thought, that our perception of a film is greatly influenced by our emotional state when we enter the cinema. So, although we try hard, we can't please all of the people all of the time!

Best Wishes to all, **Roz Garwen**



FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

President: Roz Garwen 4886 4142 & 0414 820 890

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TEXT ONLY minimum 24hours notice

Website: www.fish.org.au

Email: fishfilmsadmin@gmail.com

Membership: Fishfilmsadmin@gmail.com

Membership is closed

Enquiries: fishfilmsadmin@gmail.com

We are grateful to our sponsors : **EMPIRE CINEMA**

ACE INTERNET SERVICES HIGHLAND CREATIVE

FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

10.00 am Sunday 27th April 2025

8.15 pm Tuesday 29th April 2025

Films In Southern Highlands Membership Renewal Procedure for 2025/2026

Renewals for current members of Films In Southern Highlands will become due from the beginning of May 2025, and as reported in the Annual General Meeting of September 2024, we find it necessary to increase this annual fee to **\$80** per membership to cover our rapidly increasing costs.

*Please note that your membership is now registered as falling due every year **on the date** that you initially entered your details into our newly automated system, so if you renewed your membership last year on 2 May 2024, your membership falls due on 2 May 2025.*

General Membership Renewals

General membership renewals should commence from 1 May 2025, with all members who have opted for recurring memberships due to receive a reminder email **one week prior** to their renewal date and notification when payment has been received.

This email also advises **members not wishing to renew their memberships** to login to the FISH website and their membership details and click on *'Cancel Membership'*.

Their membership will remain valid until the end of the current season (until after our June screening) and their login access to their membership information on the website will be **blocked** immediately their renewal date has passed.

Members who wish to **change their Joint Membership**, please email a request to me with your phone number and I will contact you asap on: fishfilmsadmin@gmail.com

The few members **who did not opt for recurring membership** will receive email notification that their membership renewals are due **two weeks prior** to their due date, and if they do not respond their membership will cease at the end of the current season. Ditto their login access to their membership information on the website will be blocked immediately their renewal date has passed.

*(Please note that we advise you to renew your non-recurring membership well **before the due date**, as **late renewals will not be accepted** by the system).*

So...In SimpleTerms:

If you have subscribed as a recurring member you have to do nothing unless you have changed your banking details!

If you have subscribed as a recurring member and wish to unsubscribe, follow the prompts from the renewal email that you will have received.

If you wish to change your joint membership, please email me requesting assistance at fishfilmsadmin@gmail.com

If you haven't subscribed as a recurring member and wish to renew your membership, enter your payment details, and If you haven't subscribed as a recurring member and don't wish to rejoin, do nothing!

New Member Applications

Once existing membership renewals are complete, we will place a form on the Films in Southern Highlands website fish.org.au inviting new membership applications, and this will be taken down once our maximum membership number has been reached.

Please Note that email or SMS applications will not be considered or accepted.

Thank You

Helen Jones

Membership Secretary

Black Dog

[China 2024]

Spoiler alert : You may prefer to read this review after the screening

DIRECTOR : Guan Hu

RUNNING TIME : 110mins

RATING : MA

Synopsis:

In the lead-up to the 2008 Olympics, an ex-con tasked with rounding up stray dogs strikes an unlikely friendship with a black whippet

Review: Jamie Tran

Black Dog begins, somewhat unusually, with an avalanche in the Gobi Desert. As the opening shot pans around the arid slopes, affixed to a speeding bus, a torrent of wild dogs tear across the frame and tumble down towards the road.

Among its remarkable qualities, the film's coordination of live animals provides its most spectacular images. The four-legged wayfarers descend upon Chixia, an industrial town in north-western China, where they traipse along sidewalks, skulk inside condemned buildings, and occasionally bite residents.

While the film took home the 2024 Un Certain Regard award at Cannes, in a just world, the canine cast would have been the recipients of an ensemble prize for its Palm Dog Award.

The film's human perspective takes the form of Lang (Eddie Peng; Wu Kong), a former local celebrity returning to Chixia following a protracted manslaughter sentence. Once renowned as a motorcycle stunt driver and a musician, he's since withdrawn into a stoic isolation. His fraught homecoming is endured while barely uttering a word. Swathes of the town now lie in ruins, waiting to be converted into office blocks and apartment complexes.

Black Dog's early 2008 setting makes overt reference to the Beijing Olympics, an event emblematic of China's sweeping modernisation and its corresponding tumult, whose shock waves contour the film. When the strays stymie efforts to reinvigorate Chixia's local economy, a full-scale eviction is ordered by authorities.

The effort is spearheaded by a team of reformed ex-cons and their leader, Uncle Yao, a kindly restaurant owner portrayed by Jia Zhangke — a friend and peer of director Guan Hu, both among China's 'Sixth-Generation' of filmmakers to emerge in the 1990s.

Household pets soon fall victim to a broadening crackdown, accompanied by accusations of black-market dealings. Lang is reluctantly conscripted into dog-catching work, where he ends up sabotaging orders. When tasked with transporting a particularly infamous target — a battered, malnourished whippet by the name of Xin (the runner-up to this year's Palm Dog) who's potentially afflicted by rabies — he's caught in a vicious dust storm that leaves both recovering under the same roof.

Black Dog's interweaving of social realism, whimsy and sentimentality proves largely cohesive, with Guan reining in the saccharine tendencies that define more conventional man-meets-dog narratives. Moreover, the film is consistently, disarmingly funny. Lang's problems are compounded by the local 'Butcher' Hu (Hu Xiaoguang), who's hell-bent on punishing our protagonist for his son's death. There's a faintly Looney Tunes quality to the attempted assassinations carried out by the Butcher's cronies; even when cornered at the end of a bungee jump cord, Lang manages to wriggle out of their clutches. Off-screen, he's able to dispatch of enemies with action-star efficiency.

Wes Anderson, of all filmmakers, appears to be one of the film's most apparent visual influences. Even putting aside narrative similarities to *Isle of Dogs*, Guan and cinematographer Gao Weizhe predominantly communicate the story through the kind of lateral tracking shots, camera pans and anamorphic photography that have become synonymous with the Asteroid City filmmaker, albeit reformatted into its own distinct style.

Ultimately, dog movies are only ever as good as their lead pup. Xin may lack the eminent adorability of Messi, *Anatomy of a Fall's* breakout star, but commands a genuine screen presence defined by a ferocity of spirit and fragility. One of the year's most emotional scenes is carried entirely by the film's animal lead, in which he searches for and comforts Lang's ailing dad in hospital. Such perfect moments eclipse the familiarity of the film's narrative, and the bluntness of its commentary.

The subtext is legible to a fault, with direct comparisons drawn between its cast of furry marauders and those falling through the gaps of China's economic upheaval. But even those with ambivalent feelings towards dogs will likely find something to connect to in this soulful, deftly understated film.

Black Dog deserves its day.

Source: www.abc.net.au Jamie Tram 16/12/2024 Edited extracts accessed 10/3/25



COMING UP

May	<i>Hammar skjold</i> [Sweden]	Sunday 18 th & Tuesday 20 th
June	<i>My Favourite Cake</i> [Iran]	Sunday 15 th & Tuesday 17 th
July	<i>All We Imagine as Light</i> [India]	Sunday 20 th & Tuesday 22 nd



Some Thoughts on: Citizen Kane

I came to this film with great expectation. I have been aware of it, and its reputation for most of my life. I knew many critics regarded it as the very peak of cinema production.

I was also aware of a mixed bag of details concerning plot, casting, themes and even the prominence of the word 'Rosebud', but, I had never seen it.

I was not disappointed, this is an extraordinary piece of work.

I thought this film was brilliant in its ground-breaking scope and innovative technical style. Having said that, I can understand why many people have difficulty with that style.

Made in 1941, *Citizen Kane* is well over eighty years old and deserves that context to be considered when judging it. Yes, it was loud, the dialogue was often clipped and rushed and the editing could be fast and furious, but these minor issues fade in the powerful drive and vision on screen.

I loved the innovative use of lighting, camera angles, (some shot from the floor), dissolving edits and scene changes, and then the energy and drive of Kane himself. His lust for power, control and general megalomania were exhausting to witness. Modern day comparisons were inevitable as his power, wealth and ambition, (including political), grew.

In our current world of life being influenced so much by Murdoch, Trump and Musk, Kane would fit in perfectly with HIS ambition, bullying, greed and information manipulation.

The gross excess and tasteless decor of Xanadu could be seen in a particular New York tower or in a large villa in Miami. His newspaper published stories to suit or match sensational headlines. That practice still thrives today.

This tale of the use and abuse of power, has a real heart too. The theme of, 'money can't buy happiness', is displayed powerfully in the closing scene. Having whispered 'Rosebud' with his final breath, the search for its relevance is the basis of the plot. It is revealed by the burning of his snow sled with its brand name, Rosebud, shown blistering in the fire. The snow sled takes us back to the winter when an eight-year old boy is given away by his parents at perhaps the happiest time in his life, feeling loved and secure.

Thank you for screening this classic film FISH. An amazing work.

Ross Armfield.

Thank you Ross & welcome back! [Ed.]