

模擬空間中，陳國產只是 Nicole 出價把玩的商品，公寓裡，陳國產拒絕和妓女「免費」造愛，覺得唯有付錢才算擁有。人與人之間的親密關係，似乎只能呈現於空間收窄的環境下：Zero 在地鐵座位上滑向陳國產，陳國產從碌架床上格爬到下格與母親共眠。人對空間的慾望，與人對彼此的愛念，在電影裡結上了複雜矛盾的關係。那些長頸鹿片段，乍看似是穿插於慾望遊戲中的過場戲。這個跳皮又帶點浪漫的寄寓，開的卻是一個嚴肅的玩笑。野生動物紀錄片的旁述解釋：「你們知道長頸鹿為什麼伸到那麼高的地方去覓食？因為沒有低等動物跟它們搶食嘛！」後九七的香港人也彷彿淪為不能或不肯往高處覓食的低等動物。Zero 最喜歡陳國產修長的頸項，但片尾的陳國產卻捲起津領毛衣蓋著頸，始終不肯拉近自己與 Zero 的空間。也許陳國產背負著太沉重的符號包袱：代表一國的產品，如何有尋覓自主的自由？也許我們能更輕鬆的寄望 Zero，一個解構了名字的名字，消解了自我的自我，零星自在，逍遙向前。

女同志的自我書寫

《好郁》洋溢著時下香港社會的後過渡情懷，是一齣不少香港人都能認同的電影。與此同時，《好郁》亦是一齣不折不扣的女同志電影。《好郁》開拓的同志空間，與呈現於主流電影中的有所不同。堅定的獨立精神和女子主導的製作班底，令片中人物的造形、語調以至幽默感，都和香港女同志圈有不言而喻的默契。女同志的情慾戲，如 Nicole 躺在電腦前自慰、陳國產和妓女在公寓偷歡，拍得清新坦蕩，完全脫離了主流電影一貫獵奇或拘泥的處理。陳國產和 Zero 更是香港 TB 的典型：被陌生人評頭品足或索性當男孩相待、在卡拉 OK 深情地唱男歌手的情歌……漫不經心的小節，卻能令女同志觀眾感到親切、溫馨。Zero 在劇終清唱蘇永康的《我女人》，改寫主流異性戀文化以抒發女同志情懷。同樣，《好郁》從女同志的角度書寫香港，把這些從來就屬於大家卻一直受制於別人的大故事，還給我們。

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LOVING IN THE STILLNESS OF EARTHQUAKES:

HO YUK — LET'S LOVE HONG KONG

HELEN HOK-SZE LEUNG

Word Play

Ho Yuk — Let's Love Hong Kong inhabits and negotiates the many ironies and contradictions of post-1997 Hong Kong. The film's central characters survive in the interstitial spaces between technology, desire, commodity, and memory, wherever they can find them. It is uncertain if they are moving across the hyperdensity of Hong Kong's urban jungle, or simply being carried along by the infamous speed of the city's rhythm of change. This ambivalence is already resonant in the film's title. *Yuk* — a verb in Cantonese meaning "to move" — is here colloquially used as an adjective to describe a perception of movement. The active will to move across space is displaced by the passive perception of movement around one's stagnant, non-moving self. Chan Kwok Chan anxiously complains to her mother after feeling an earthquake that is imperceptible except to those who stay perfectly still: "Why is it that I feel movement around me and yet I stay still, unmoving?" However, such anxiety is itself displaced by another, less explicit, shade of meaning in the title. The adverb *ho*, meaning "very", can also be understood as an adjective meaning "fond of". *Ho yuk*, the anxious perception of movement can be playfully transformed into *ho yuk*, the fondness for movement. Thus, in contrast to Chan Kwok Chan, Zero actively pursues her desire and livelihood, with humour and playful enthusiasm. She does not feel the anxiety of movement around her but becomes herself



a subject on the move. Finally, the title echoes one other important element in the film. One of the opening shots draws our attention to the character *yuk* which is made up of two parts, each of which forms a character on its own: *nui* and *dzi*. *Nui dzi*. Woman. *Ho Yuk* is about women's space: a site where women desire each other across the extremely difficult emotional and physical terrain of Hong Kong's urban life.

Desire and Space

Living space is one of the most valuable and hyper-inflated commodities in Hong Kong. Owning a flat of one's own is the quintessential Hong Kong dream. While intense real estate speculation over the years has made millionaires of many middle-class home-owners, the collapse of the housing market after the Asian financial crisis in 1997 has left just as many in dire straits. For other more disenfranchised groups, home ownership remains a distant and elusive goal. *Ho Yuk* takes a poignant, satirical look at this predicament. Zero is a squatter in an abandoned movie theatre, where she tries to maintain the illusion of a home, complete with house decorations and two cats, all in the space of a single theatre seat! Chan Kwok Chan lives with her parents in a one-room flat in a housing estate, where the family shares the same space for everything from cooking, eating, watching television to sleeping. Chan's dream is to earn enough money in the next decade to move into a bigger house with her mother. Her regular forays into the rental market highlight the squalid conditions of the city's living space. In the sugar-coated speech of the slick rental agent, any window that looks outside has a "view" and crumbling old buildings offer the most "feel"! Yet, there is also a massive gap between the privileged and the disenfranchised. The foreign-educated young professional Nicole lives in a beautiful and spacious home, exactly the kind that Zero and Chan Kwok Chan desire. Yet,



Nicole abuses her living environment (at least in the eyes of the sleazy *feng shui* master) by enclosing a corner of her house in artificial obscurity, where she loses herself in cyberporn every night. She escapes into the same extended living space where many of Zero's fellow squatters seek pleasure. Thus, even though Nicole already occupies the commodified living space that Chan Kwok Chan and Zero long for, she needs habitat of a different kind. Cyberspace becomes another sort of real estate where exchange relations determine how and which bodies occupy what space.

Ironically, despite everyone's fervent longing for space, intimacy between people seems possible only when space is closed up. Nicole enjoys Chan Kwok Chan's body every night across the distance of cyberspace. Chan Kwok Chan would not allow herself to sleep with her favourite prostitute "for free" because she needs to be able to "own" her and ownership is not possible without an exchange relation and an emotional distance. Time and again, Zero and Chan Kwok Chan find themselves looking at each other across a distance, never connecting. Intimacy seems to demand a closing of physical space, such as the time when Zero slides across the seat on the MTR to get close to Chan Kwok Chan, or when Chan Kwok Chan climbs down the bunk bed and crowds into the tiny lower bed to sleep closely next to her mother. The film thus projects a complicated and at times contradictory relationship between the desire for commodified space and the desire for sexual and emotional intimacy. The footage of the giraffes, which always cross-cuts with scenes of suspended desire circulating between the three women, marks a mock-utopian place that transcends such contradictions. When the first giraffe sequence appears, the voice-over jokingly explains: "Do you know why giraffes reach up so high for food? It's because the less evolved low-lives cannot reach up there to



compete with them!" There is an interesting combination of self-mocking pathos and utopian longing in this simultaneously silly and romantic use of the images of the giraffes. In post-1997 Hong Kong, we seem to have remained less evolved low-lives who are unable or unwilling to reach high for a different kind of space and a different kind of human relation. In an attempt to make a connection with Chan Kwok Chan, Zero flirtatiously compliments her on her exquisite long neck that reminds Zero of a giraffe. Yet, at the end of the film, Chan Kwok Chan rolls up the collar of her turtleneck sweater to cover her neck in front of Zero, still refusing to close up the distance between them. Perhaps Chan Kwok Chan, whose name is burdened with allegorical significance — the national product of Hong Kong, China — cannot yet pursue or even imagine such freedom. And perhaps our hope lies more easily with Zero, whose minimalist name signifies a freer, more visionary path into the future?

Queer Self-Writing

While *Ho Yuk* is evocative of a mood that pervades contemporary Hong Kong society, it is also unmistakably a queer film. Hong Kong cinema is not devoid of queer spaces, which have existed throughout its entire history. Many of them are unconsciously, at times even accidentally produced. However, *Ho Yuk* opens up a different kind of queer space. Its independent spirit and community-driven production fosters an aesthetic that derives directly from the experiences, humour, and language of the local queer community. While the film problematizes the commodified relation between people, it also foregrounds and animates the desire of and between women. Even as it critiques certain aspects of the porn industry, *Ho Yuk* does not neglect to give us exuberant erotic scenes of queer sexuality, from Nicole's masturbation to Chan Kwok Chan's sexual encounters with the sex worker. At the same time,



the portrayal of Chan Kwok Chan and Zero is drawn very closely from the culture and style of TB — the queer gender category specific to Hong Kong lesbians that approximates the notion of "butch" but is not entirely reducible to it. The two women's androgynous appearance sometimes draws mild hostility from strangers (as Zero experiences in the elevator) and at other times invites others to simply address and communicate with them as men (Chan Kwok Chan is called Mr. Chan by the motel attendant while Zero is treated as a boy by her various clients). These subtle and lovingly reconstructed details of local queer lives give *Ho Yuk* a rare feel of familiarity for queer audience. Much like Zero's karaoke rendition of William So's "*My Woman*" in the closing credits, which is a brilliant TB appropriation of mainstream heterosexual culture, *Ho Yuk* appropriates the impersonally "big" stories of contemporary Hong Kong and tells them from the perspectives of queer women whose lives have, until now, been left out of the grand narratives of their troubled, beloved city.

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青文評論叢書之十

書名：《好郁》劇本及評論集

作者：游靜、畢雷尼斯·利盧、克利斯·貝利、馬嘉蘭、梁學思

攝影：謝明莊、張景熊、黃知敏

設計、排版：盧燕珊

出版人：羅志華

出版／發行：青文書屋

香港灣仔莊士敦道214-216號3樓B座

電話：(852) 2891-6932

傳真：(852) 2838-5818

出版日期：二〇〇二年十月

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Title : *HO YUK - LET'S LOVE HONG KONG* : SCRIPT AND CRITICAL ESSAYS

Authors : Chris Berry, Helen Hok-Sze Leung, Fran Martin, Bérénice Reynaud, Yau Ching

Photos : Tse Ming Chong, Cheung King Hung, Gill Wong

Design : Lo Yin Shan

Printed in Hong Kong

Published by Youth Literary Book Store

Flat B, 2/F, 214-216 Johnston Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong.

Tel:852-2891-6932

Fax:852-2838-5818

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ISBN: 962-8158-64-3

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