

WVXU Views and Reviews

Movie Reviews

In the Mood for Love

October Films

Rated PG

Now Showing at: Cincinnati World Cinema November 11 & 12 at 7pm

Review by: Larry Thomas

As the 21st century progresses, China is playing a larger, more important role in world affairs. The Cincinnati Art Museum is currently exhibiting "China Design Now," which highlights the arts, commerce, architecture, graphic design, and so much more.

In conjunction with this current display, Cincinnati World Cinema is showing one of the best Chinese films so far from this new century. *In the Mood for Love* from director Wong Kar-Wai, one of that country's most prolific, highly regarded contemporary filmmakers, is a love story set in 1962 Hong Kong. A man and a woman move in to an apartment complex on the same day, with their respective spouses. As they become friends, they notice their spouses are noticeably absent for periods of time, and they suspect an affair is going on. Their bond of friendship and the emotional ties created by their mutual sadness is the setup for one of the most romantic films in years. The slight, but heartfelt, tale is told through their feelings about the situation and how they will cope with it within the framework of the time and location, not to mention cultural traditions.

The touching performances by Maggie Cheung and Tony Leung are exemplary, and bring the character to life so that the viewer is fully engaged in their story. Both are famous in their country, and have also gained a following worldwide due primarily to their extensive work with Wong Kar-Wai. They work together like a well-oiled machine, much like Scorsese and DeNiro, or Hitchcock and Jimmy Stewart.

Resisting the temptation to make *In the Mood for Love* a torrid, erotic film, the trio goes for a platonic relationship, smoldering with desire, which must be repressed. How these two cope with their dilemma makes for a most intriguing film. When reviewed in the New York Times, Elvis Mitchell said that it's "dizzy with a romantic spirit that's been missing from the cinema forever." And that's very true. In many ways, *In the Mood for Love* is like a contemporary version of a 1940s Hollywood film about an awkward, unanticipated romance.

If you have yet to be exposed to the talent of Wong Kar-Wai, who also directed the frenetic *Chung King Express* and the martial arts classic *Ashes of Time*, *In the Mood for Love* is a good place to start. Then later this month, his reworked version of *Ashes of Time*, titled *Ashes of Time Redux*, will come to the Mariemont Theatre. After two big screen experiences, then you should be ready to venture through his resume of film making on DVD. Wong Kar-Wai is an artist worthy of more exposure in this country.

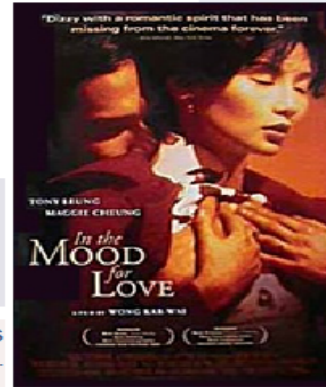
In the Mood for Love is a presentation of Cincinnati World Cinema. Showings are Tuesday and Wednesday at 7 pm in the Cincinnati Art Museum theatre. You should go early in order to take in the China exhibit before attending the film. Following the film, you're welcome to stay for the post-film discussion.

This is the final 2008 presentation for Cincinnati World Cinema. After a short break, the series will resume in January.

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