

NEWS

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WALKER ART CENTER PRESENTS ANG LEE WITH JAMES SCHAMUS: EAST MEETS WESTERN

REGIS DIALOGUE AND RETROSPECTIVE HIGHLIGHTS AWARD-WINNING FILMS FROM THE PAIR'S LONGTIME COLLABORATION

"Let's jump from genre to genre and be filmmakers and see what we can make of these gifts; whether from Hong Kong or Hollywood, these genres are now so often ossified relics. [We need to] go back in there and shake 'em up." —James Schamus, on Ang Lee in *indieWIRE*



Still from *Brokeback Mountain*, directed by Ang Lee, 2005
Photo: Kimberley French, ©2005 Focus Features

Minneapolis, October 21, 2005—From November 11–December 13, the Walker Art Center presents the Regis Dialogue and Retrospective **Ang Lee with James Schamus: East Meets Western**. All of the films that have resulted from this collaboration between writer-director Lee and producer, co-writer Schamus will be screened during this series, including their latest film, *Brokeback Mountain*, on Sunday, December 11, 7:30 pm. Winner of the 2005 Venice Film Festival's Golden Lion award for best film, Lee and Schamus' most recent collaboration is a tale of the complex, passionate relationship between two cowboys. Other highlights of the series include *The Wedding Banquet* (Friday, November 11, 9:30 pm); *Sense and Sensibility* (Sunday, November 20, 2 pm); *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (Saturday, November 26, 7:30 pm); and *The Hulk* (Saturday, November 26, 9:45 pm). The series will conclude with a Regis Dialogue between Ang Lee and James Schamus on Tuesday, December 13, at 7 pm, on their collaborative process and their body of work.

In the early 1990s, Taiwan-born aspiring director Ang Lee connected with James Schamus, founder of upstart company Good Machine in New York, and a long creative collaboration was sparked. Lee directed, Schamus produced, and both wrote. Their first three films—*Pushing Hands*, *The Wedding Banquet*, and *Eat Drink Man Woman*—all featured Sihung Lung as a Taiwanese patriarch confronting a changing world, and formed what Lee has jokingly referred to as the "Father Knows Best" trilogy. They became international hits that revealed universal moments of intergenerational misunderstanding mixed with equal measures of pathos



Ang Lee and James Schamus on the set of *Brokeback Mountain*
Photo: Kimberley French, ©2005 Focus Features

and comedy. In a move that rocked Hollywood, Lee's next picture was the 18th-century English period piece *Sense and Sensibility*. The rapturous yet elegant Jane Austen adaptation gained the filmmaker wide recognition for his radical shift in style and perspective. Lee and Schamus continued to defy expectations. Their next foray, *The Ice Storm*, was situated in the decidedly different setting of Watergate-era suburban America. Then, just as Lee was becoming known as a director of gently satiric comedy-of-manners family dramas, he again shifted gears with the sprawling Civil War epic *Ride with the Devil*. Lee returned to his roots in grand style with a high-action historical epic that debuted at Cannes to thundering ovation. *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* swept the 2000 Oscar nominations and became the highest grossing foreign language film ever released in the United States. In another departure, the 2003 comic-book reinvention *The Hulk* featured Freudian undertones offset by eye-popping effects. True to form, *Brokeback Mountain* again plumbs new territory of a thwarted love in the American West.

Although the settings of Lee and Schamus' works vary greatly, this retrospective reveals the connections: an emphasis on social customs; cross-generational conflict; the significance of the unspoken. Unquestionably, their films share an artistry, an attentiveness to personal and minute period details, a light comedic touch, and an infusion of warmth, wisdom, and humanism. But for all of these similarities, diversity is what makes Lee's oeuvre particularly remarkable, and underscores a truly amazing filmic range that is nothing short of extraordinary.

Unless otherwise noted, tickets are \$8 (\$6 Walker members). Tickets are available at walkerart.org/tickets or by calling 612.375.7600. Screenings are presented in the Cinema. All films in the retrospective are directed by Ang Lee and coproduced by James Schamus.

ANG LEE WITH JAMES SCHAMUS: EAST MEETS WESTERN

A Regis Dialogue and Retrospective

November 11–December 13

Friday, November 11

Double Feature

***Pushing Hands (Tui shou)*, 7:30 pm**

Venerable tai chi master Mr. Chu moves from Beijing to New York, but clashes with his American daughter-in-law. The screenplay was based on Lee's reflections on the isolation he felt after moving to the United States. 1992, Taiwan/U.S., color, 35mm, in English and Mandarin with English subtitles, 107 minutes.

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***The Wedding Banquet (Xi yan)*, 9:30 pm**

New York yuppie real-estate magnate Wai Tung hasn't the heart to tell his parents that he's gay. When he lies about his upcoming marriage, they surprise him by arriving from Taiwan for the wedding. Plot twists abound,



Still from *Pushing Hands*, directed by Ang Lee, 1992
Photo: Sean McCloud, ©Focus Features

culminating in a magnificent wedding feast. 1993, Taiwan/U.S., color, 35mm, in English and Mandarin with English subtitles, 111 minutes.

Sunday, November 13

***Eat Drink Man Woman (Yin shi nan nu)*, 2 pm**

Tao Chu is a master chef who has lost his sense of taste, and he maintains a tenuous relationship with his three daughters only through their sumptuous weekly dinners. "It's the culinary arts rendered as thrillingly as the martial arts" (*Time*). 1994, Taiwan/U.S., color, 35mm, in Mandarin with English subtitles, 123 minutes.

Sunday, November 20

***Sense and Sensibility*, 2 pm**

In this tale of two sisters, Elinor (Emma Thompson), with her measured approach to life, has too much sense; Marianne (Kate Winslet), with her unbridled enthusiasm, has too much romantic sensibility. This finely crafted film, balancing irony and warmth, was nominated for seven Academy Awards and won for Thompson's adapted screenplay. 1995, U.S./U.K., color, 35mm, 135 minutes.



Still from *Sense and Sensibility*, directed by Ang Lee, 1995
Photo ©1995 Sony Pictures

Saturday, November 26

***Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (Wu hu cang long)*, 7:30 pm**

This achingly beautiful kung-fu masterpiece has been described as "an epic that defies the laws of gravity" (*New York Times*). The sheer poetry of Yuen Wo-ping's choreography (with a surprising lack of computer effects) makes for an exhilarating viewing experience. 2000, Taiwan/U.S./Hong Kong/China, color, 35mm, in Mandarin with English subtitles, 120 minutes.

***The Hulk*, 9:45 pm**

Inventively bringing life to Stan Lee's comic book, complete with the filmmaker's characteristic theme of father/child turmoil, "*The Hulk* is . . . a throwback to those science fiction classics of the 1950s, where B moviemakers actually had things to say about the human condition" (*Hollywood Reporter*). 2003, U.S., color, 35mm, 138 minutes.

Sunday, November 27

***The Ice Storm*, 2 pm**

This devastating family disintegration is set in chilly 1970s Connecticut, complete with shag carpeting and key parties. Featuring first-rate acting by Kevin Kline, Sigourney Weaver, and Joan Allen as well as a breakout performance by youngster Christina Ricci, *The Ice Storm* earned Schamus the best screenplay award at Cannes. 1997, U.S., color, 35mm, 113 minutes.



Still from *The Ice Storm*, directed by Ang Lee, 1997
Photo ©1997 Fox Searchlight Pictures

Thursday, December 1

***Ride with the Devil*, 7:30 pm FREE**

Missouri, the only slave-holding state that fought with the Union during the Civil War, was the site for skirmishes between Kansas Jayhawkers and Missouri Bushwackers who wanted to preserve their way of life. A rare

tackling of the war from a Southern perspective, the film is marked by its sharp attention to detail. Its “real métier is a texture of fine-grained observation that brings history to life on the molecular level” (*Sight and Sound*). 1999, U.S., color, 35mm, 138 minutes.



Still from *Brokeback Mountain*, directed by Ang Lee, 2005
Photo: Kimberley French, ©2005 Focus Features

Sunday, December 11

***Brokeback Mountain*, 7:30 pm**

Winner of the Golden Lion for Best Film at the 2005 Venice Film Festival, this epic story of two cowboys who fall in love is based on the novella by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Annie Proulx (*The Shipping News*). Ennis del Mar (Heath Ledger) and Jack Twist (Jake Gyllenhaal) maintain their relationship over a 20-year period, keeping it secret from their wives. *Brokeback Mountain* is a bittersweet tale of two men’s overwhelming feelings for each other clouded by the fear of reprisals from a disapproving society, all set against the stunning backdrop of the American West. 2005, U.S., color, 35mm, 134 minutes.

Tuesday, December 13

Regis Dialogue with Ang Lee and James Schamus, 7 pm

\$22 (\$15 Walker members)

Lee and Schamus discuss their collaborative process as director, producer, and cowriters of a wide-ranging body of work and reflect on their creative history, illustrated with clips from their films.

This Regis Dialogue and Retrospective is made possible by generous support from the Regis Foundation.

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The Walker Art Center is located at 1750 Hennepin Avenue—where Hennepin meets Lyndale—one block off Highways I-94 and I-394, Minneapolis.

For public information, call 612.375.7600, or visit walkerart.org.