

“Hong Kong Pop 60+” Exhibition

Audio Tour Script

Film poster for *The Story of Woo Viet* 1981

Director Ann Hui made three films and TV dramas about Vietnam: an episode in the *Below the Lion Rock* TV series called *The Boy From Vietnam*, and the films *The Story of Woo Viet* and *Boat People*. These three are known as the “Vietnam Trilogy”, and all centre on Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s and 1980s.

Following the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, there were mass departures of Vietnamese refugees. In May 1975, 3 743 Vietnamese arrived in Hong Kong; this was the start of a succession of Vietnamese boat people seeking sanctuary in Hong Kong.

In 1979, Hong Kong became the “Port of First Asylum”, and a large number of Vietnamese refugees arrived by boat. The government implemented a screening policy in 1988, classifying the Vietnamese who entered Hong Kong as either “political refugees” or “boat people”, and those who arrived because of economic factors were repatriated. Despite all this, in the 25 years between 1975 and 2000, Hong Kong still took in more than 200 000 Vietnamese. Therefore, the government had to set up several centres for Vietnamese refugees and boat people in different areas of Hong Kong. During this period, about 143 000 Vietnamese refugees emigrated to overseas countries from Hong Kong; more than 72 000 non-refugees were voluntarily repatriated to Vietnam; and finally, about 1 400 Vietnamese refugees and boat people were allowed to stay in Hong Kong through the “Widened Local Resettlement Scheme”, which gave them the opportunity to become Hong Kong residents.

In 2000, with the closure of the Pillar Point Vietnamese Refugee Centre, the world’s last Vietnamese refugee centre, the 25-year problem of Vietnamese boat people coming to Hong Kong finally came to an end. Although Hong Kong is restricted by the objective factors of limited land and a large population, the Hong Kong government, local charities and organisations, and people from all walks of life did their best to help these Vietnamese who left their homes to settle into life for humanitarian reasons.

Vietnamese refugees were hot news in Hong Kong at that time, inspiring many people working in film and television to create works about Vietnam. Besides the “Vietnam Trilogy”, film and television works also include *Bullet in the Head*, *A Better Tomorrow III*, *The Final Verdict* and *The Breaking Point*.