

# Celebrating 85 Years Of Bruce Lee [B1]

Se Bruce Lee fosse ancora vivo, compirebbe 85 anni questo novembre. Maestro di arti marziali, attore, regista e filosofo, continua ad essere una figura di spicco della cultura pop internazionale.

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Bruce Lee is considered one of the most influential martial artists in the history of film. Sadly, Lee, who was also an actor and filmmaker died of a brain oedema at the age of thirty-two. This November, the world is celebrating him and his lasting influence on martial arts, filmmaking, and popular culture on what would have been his 85th birthday.

## FORMATIVE YEARS

Born in San Francisco, California, Lee was raised in Hong Kong, which was then under British rule. He appeared in his first film, *The Beginning of a Boy* (1946), at the age of six and had been in twenty films by the time he was eighteen. He also began studying martial arts at a young age; he was thirteen when he started taking kung fu lessons from the martial arts grandmaster Ip Man.

## RETURN TO THE US

In 1959, Lee returned to the US and, two years later, began studying philosophy and drama at the University of Washington. Although his ambition was to become a film star, he began teaching martial arts to make money. He later developed his own martial artist philosophy called Jeet Kune Do, which emphasises adaptability, practicality and self-discovery. He taught famous US figures, including actors Chuck Norris and Sharon Tate, and NBA star Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

## FIVE FILMS

Lee's first big role in the US was in the TV series *The Green Hornet*. This helped him establish himself in Hollywood. After returning to Hong Kong in 1971, he starred in five martial arts films. They included *The Way of the Dragon* (1972), which he also wrote and directed, and the US-Hong Kong co-production *Enter the Dragon* (1973). All these films were commercially successful and they made Lee an international star. By demonstrating his incredible martial arts abilities, they popularized both martial arts and martial arts films. And through their realistic fight scenes, they changed forever how martial arts were represented in film.

## MYSTERIOUS DEATH

Lee died in Hong Kong on 20 July 1973 six days before the release of his film *Enter the Dragon*. Lee's sudden death was caused by a swelling of the brain. However, many conspiracy theories have sprung up since. He had complained of a headache and taken a painkiller called Equagesic, which contained aspirin and a tranquiliser. Some theories suggest an allergic reaction to the medication, while others propose heat stroke or excessive water intake as contributing factors. Despite these theories, no definitive cause has ever been universally accepted, and Lee's death remains a subject of debate.

## HOW DO YOU SAY...?

Ridurre in poltiglia, pestare a sangue. To beat someone to a pulp.

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# Glossary

- **painkiller** = antidolorifico
- **heat stroke** = colpo di calore
- **Despite** = nonostante
- **lasting** = duratura
- **raised** = crescere
- **swelling** = gonfiore, edema
- **sudden** = improvvisa
- **sprung up** = sorgere
- **complained** = lamentarsi
- **water intake** = assunzione, consumo
- **rule** = dominio
- **drama** = arte drammatica
- **Hornet** = calabrone