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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



The Hong Kong action epic "Hero," at the New York Asian Film Festival.

BATTLE ROYALE

Martial arts in the movies are raised to new balletic heights in Zhang Yimou's "Hero," the opening film of the New York Asian Film Festival, for which the director teamed up with the choreographer Ching Siu-tung and the cinematographer Christopher Doyle. Two of the aerial scenes in the film—a fight over a mountain lake and a duel in an autumn orchard between two women—are already legendary. And the actors Jet Li and Zhang Ziyi, who have both appeared in more conventional action epics, have an athletic poise not generally seen in American actors. "Hero" is an ambiguous tale about the limits of rebellion—which character is the hero is anyone's guess. (Anthology Film Archives, June 18; see Movies.)