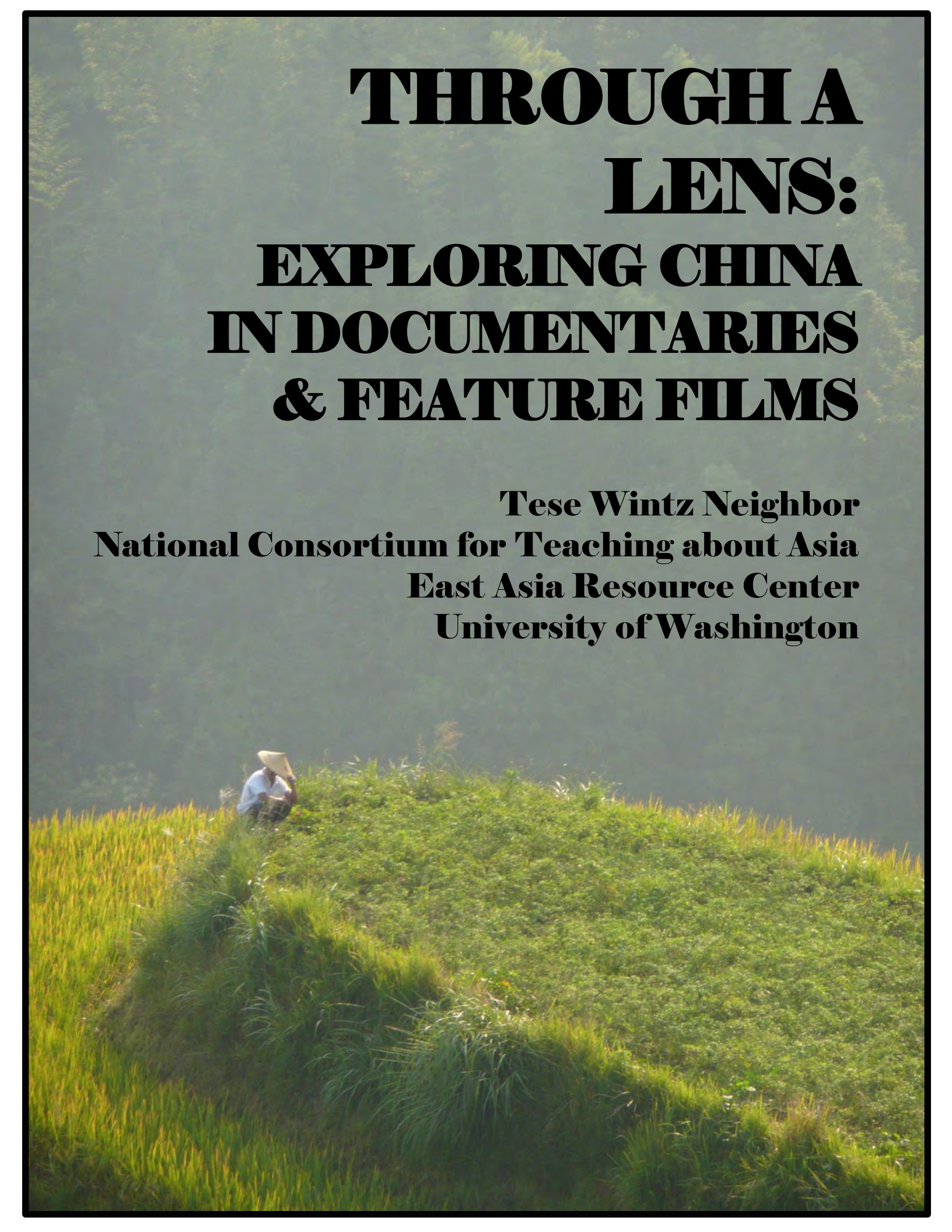


The background of the entire page is a photograph of a person wearing a traditional conical hat, working in a lush green rice field on a hillside. The person is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the image. The rice plants are tall and vibrant green, with some golden-brown tips. In the background, there are misty, forested mountains under a soft, hazy sky. The overall scene is peaceful and rural.

THROUGH A LENS: EXPLORING CHINA IN DOCUMENTARIES & FEATURE FILMS

**Tese Wintz Neighbor
National Consortium for Teaching about Asia
East Asia Resource Center
University of Washington**

THROUGH A LENS: EXPLORING CHINA IN DOCUMENTARIES & FEATURE FILMS

Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms, which began in 1978 following the Mao Zedong's death in 1976, resulted in rapid economic growth that catapulted the People's Republic of China through a period of intense modernization and development. This guide has been organized for teachers who are interested in studying contemporary China through film.

This is not a comprehensive list. The annotated lists include mostly films directed and produced in China. In general, I have not included many films produced in Taiwan or Hong Kong or other countries in Asia. I have included some films that were made with US-China cooperation. I have also included a smattering of Chinese TV documentaries and Western TV documentaries. I have taken the liberty to throw in films such as *The Farewell* and *Finding Ying Ying*. And throw out some violent thrillers and sappy romcoms.

Filmmakers' names are copied from the source cited. Yes. It is confusing. Some sites use the Chinese name as expected with the surname first (Zhang Yimou), others put the surname last (Yimou Zhang) in western style. All Chinese language films noted here include English subtitles.

I hope this list illuminates the growing accessibility of diverse films portraying a changing China. I have confidence that you will find a movie or two that can be used in your classroom. Some films are as short as 7 minutes, others are as long as 554 minutes. This is a work of labor and love *and is still in progress*.

Tese (tneighbor@aol.com) May 2021

CONTENTS
Documentaries 2 - 88
Feature Films 89 - 146
Film Resources 147 - 153



This resource is dedicated to my old friend and comrade-in-much-of-my-life, Zhang Yan (1922-2018) and to the youth of China.

USING THESE RESOURCES

The information regarding each film has been excerpted directly from the websites. Some were taken from film festival websites, some from film reviews, others from Wikipedia. I have included short trailers, reviews, teacher guides, and articles of interest.

There are different ways to access these documentaries and films. They can be downloaded directly from the web or local libraries, on Netflix, Kanopy, Amazon Prime, HULU, etc. They can also be purchased directly from the producer or from online stores. At the time of this "printing" (5/21), I have indicated films that can be downloaded for free online. This is a changing list and I encourage you to go to **JustWatch** where you can easily find out where to watch your movie choice: justwatch.com/us. Kanopy <https://spl.kanopy.com/> adds new movies every week and is free with your library card.



Kanopy downloads



Teacher Guide



Tese's favorites

DOCUMENTARIES

(Listed in chronological order of film release)



THE SIX – 2021 (100 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8517640/>

The Six is a documentary that tells the unknown story of the Chinese passengers on board Titanic. Through the work of the team of researchers - led by historian Steven Schwankert - the central mysteries of their story are tackled: how did they survive the accident at such a high rate and, afterwards, why did they disappear from the history books so completely within 24 hours of arriving in the US? While most of the 700 or so survivors of Titanic were celebrated in their home countries, and to this day are regularly covered in the press on Titanic anniversaries, the Chinese men on

Titanic were never interviewed, and never claimed by relatives, making their experience unique.

Podcast interview with Arthur Jones and writer Steven Schwankert:

<https://supchina.com/podcast/searching-for-the-six-chinese-survivors-of-the-titanic/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LxpTnSZvX4c>

BEETHOVEN IN BEIJING – 2021 (83 MINUTES)

https://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/beethoven-in-beijing-about/12364/?utm_source=youtube&utm_medium=pbsofficial&utm_campaign=greatperformances_2021#GreatPerformancesPBS

Great Performances: Beethoven in Beijing spotlights the resurgence of classical music in China through the legacy of the Philadelphia Orchestra, the first American orchestra to perform in China in 1973. Following the end of China's Cultural Revolution, when Western classical music was banned in favor of politically themed works, the onset of "Beethoven fever" began. Narrated by American and Chinese musicians and historians, the film explores the impact of the Philadelphia Orchestra's historic tour on China both then and now. Renowned musicians, including Academy Award-winning composer Tan Dun, Philadelphia-trained famed classical pianist Lang Lang, Philadelphia Orchestra and Metropolitan Opera music director Yannick Nézet-Séguin and more share their stories of how Beethoven's music shaped their careers as China's classical music scene boomed. Featuring archival footage and first-person recollections from American and Chinese musicians, the documentary brings the 1973 visit to life alongside a behind-the-scenes look at present-day tours capturing the dynamism of China, from its new concert halls to its tens of thousands of young musicians.

Stream entire film at website listed above.

IN THE SAME BREATH – 2021 (95 MINUTES)

<https://deadline.com/video/coronavirus-china-sundance-in-the-same-breath-nanfu-wang-interview-hbo/>

Nanfu Wang's deeply personal *In the Same Breath* recounts the origin and spread of the novel coronavirus from the earliest days of the outbreak in Wuhan to its rampage across the United States.

Shot very up-close and personal with dozens of cameras and freelancers in the emergency wards, ambulances and dark heart of the crisis in Wuhan and all over the People's Republic, *In the Same Breath* brings a damning critical perspective on misinformation and incompetence not only in China, but here in America too.

"I think the people in the two countries tend to believe that we are very different," Wang said of competing superpowers the PRC and the USA. "What I witnessed and I hope that the film can convey is how the authority has shaped the narrative of China's response to the pandemic," she notes of the propaganda machine at work literally from New Year's Day 2020 when the first rumors of a new virus started to spread – as you can see in a harrowing clip from *In the Same Breath* below:

"People in China had now formed this memory of this is how it happened and this is how China handled it. And this memory ...is more so shaped by the information they consumed, TV, newspaper and social media, the information that was allowed to be presented to them, So, what really struck me is I felt I had seen seeing the history being written in real time, and this is the very of the history that the Chinese people will remember," Wang notes.

Yet, with almost 430,000 deaths from Covid-19 so far, and nearly 26 million confirmed cases here in America, an attempt at an official narrative was not unique to China, Wang states in the film.

Review: <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2021/jan/29/in-the-same-breath-review-nanfu-wangs-shattering-covid-19-documentary>

Interview (11 minutes) with director: <https://deadline.com/video/coronavirus-china-sundance-in-the-same-breath-nanfu-wang-interview-hbo/>

Clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_G1DcbbkQ0&feature=emb_logo



76 DAYS – 2020 (93 MINUTES)

<https://www.indiewire.com/2020/09/76-days-review-1234586513/>

...While Wuhan's story would soon be retold in places like Northern



Italy and New York City, the remarkable documentary *76 Days* offers a bracingly immediate view from the frontlines of history — at the trauma and disequilibrium of being ambushed by a crisis

dire enough to define its century. Discretely shot across four Wuhan hospitals without government approval... this fly-in-the-trenches look inside the outbreak is scattered and structureless in a way that makes it seem as if it's

simply taking notes for the history books of the

future. But if Hao Wu, Weixi Chen, and their

anonymous co-director's film is more valuable as a time capsule than it is as a piece of cinéma vérité, it still puts a human face on an epochal horror that some people have refused to acknowledge even as it rages around them...

...*76 Days* is an urgent act of witnessing for a world that only tends to see itself clearly in hindsight; the film's value to future generations is self-evident, but it has just as much to show us in the here and now about the history we're making alone and together.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwEhn9hgHy4>

USC
Interview with
Director Hao
Wu 12/11/20

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHHS4hC6JY&feature=youtu.be>

Window into
Wuhan's Wards: A
Nurse's Video
Diary

<http://www.sixthtone.com/news/1006648/Window%20Into%20Wuhan%E2%80%99s%20Wards%20A%20Nurse%E2%80%99s%20Diary>

CORONATION_— 2020 (113 MINUTES)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/21/movies/ai-weiwei-coronation-coronavirus.html>

Ai Weiwei, the artist-activist has secretly assembled a powerful and artful look at how the pandemic was handled in China ... The film reflects this broader story through vignettes that follow the events chronologically: It begins on Jan. 23 with a couple driving through a snowy night to return home to a suburb of Wuhan, and ends on April 8 with people burning paper money — a traditional offering to the dead — on a street corner.

In between are scenes and stories remarkable for their rare access into the machinery of the Chinese state. These include up-close images of a hospital being built in a matter of days and an inside look at an intensive-care unit, scenes of medical staff being rewarded with membership in the Communist Party and of workers at a crematory kneading bags of human ashes so they will fit into urns...

Review: <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2020/aug/21/coronation-review-ai-weiwei-harrowing-coronavirus-documentary>

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8_9fQSxsU

LEFTOVER WOMEN — 2020 (84 MINUTES)

<https://ff.hrw.org/film/leftover-women>

In China, unmarried women over the age of 27 are deemed “*sheng nu*” or “leftover”. As an effect of the now-defunct one-child policy there are 30 million more men than women, leaving single women under immense social pressures to marry, and fast, or be rejected from society. Public dating contests, “marriage markets” where city sidewalks are lined with parents advertising their children’s attributes, and government-sponsored matchmaking festivals are just some of the humiliating ordeals that single women face. This eye-opening documentary follows three women in their grueling quest to find a husband, weighing the cost of family and society’s approval against their own chances of happiness.

Review: <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2020/03/leftover-women-china-israel-children-marriage/607768/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9ZucgOlcSE>

LIKE THE DYER’S HAND — 2020 (120 MINUTES)

<http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202010/16/WS5f890206a31024ad0ba7f0c1.html>

...As the first biographical film authorized by traditional Chinese literature scholar Florence Chia-ying Yeh, who turned 96 in July, the movie looks back at her legendary life through interweaving interviews of her and scholars and literature enthusiasts. Producers said the crew traveled to 10 areas in China, the United States and Canada, and interviewed 43 people close to Yeh, mostly her students – such as writers Pai Hsien-yung, Hsi Muren and sinologist Stephen Owen.

As one of a few Chinese scholars who toured the United States to teach traditional Chinese poetry in English in 1960s, Yeh worked at Harvard University and Michigan State University before settling down in Canada as a lifetime professor at the University of British Columbia. Director Chen Chuan-xing likened Yeh to Odysseus, the ancient Greek poet Homer's famous literature figure who wanders for 10 years to try to get back home, explaining that the documentary tries to display Yeh's lifelong pursuit of freedom and her quest to find her physical and spiritual hometown.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8eGENj-YdU>

FAREWELL TO POVERTY — 2020 (100 MINUTES)

http://www.china.org.cn/arts/2020-07/06/content_76241919.htm

...The film records the real stories during China's poverty-alleviation campaign in Kelan County, Shanxi province, where there are 91 poor villages, 4,580 poor households and 10,181 poor people. In accordance with the overall deployment of the poverty-stricken areas in Kelan County, the local government plans to relocate 115 natural villages.

...During the two years of filming, the crew lived in cave dwellings, struggled with household mice and fleas, and encountered severe scenarios, such as heavy snow sealing off mountain passes and mobile phones having no signal. Almost isolated from the world, the crew eventually finished this impossible movie.

The tagline on the movie poster reads: "Poverty itself is not terrible. What is terrible is the thought that you are destined to be poor or must die due to poverty." released online on 7/3/20 on Youku, a major video streaming platform owned by Alibaba Group.



SWIMMING OUT TILL THE SEA TURNS BLUE — 2020 (112 MINUTES)

<http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/swimming-out-till-the-sea-turns-blue-jia-zhang-ke>

Faces are the recurring interest of Jia Zhangke's *Swimming Out Till The Sea Turns Blue*, the director's third film in a "trilogy" of arts based documentaries that began with *Dong* (2006) and *Useless* (2007). The reminiscing, reciting, emoting,

boring, or thinking face becomes a site of great interest, as if in an attempt to imbue the camera with the writerly perceptiveness embodied by the subjects of this film. Here, the principal subjects are a trinity of renowned contemporary Chinese writers who focus on rural life: Jia Pingwa, Yu Hua, and Liang Hong.

...The interviews themselves are often long-winded, and seem minimally edited. Each subject is allowed to wander through their memory and experience, which allows them to naturally reach poignant insights about their artistic relationships to rurality, politics, and culture in China post-1949. They reveal vivid details from their personal lives, sometimes reaching an emotional vulnerability so potent that audience members experience a privileged intimacy with suddenly accessible and deeply present figures of cultural prominence.

Of *Swimming's* many contributions to literary discourse, its most powerful insight might be in upholding the importance of literature while refusing to romanticize the life of an artist or merely chart their accolades. These writers are not treated as diviners of truth but humans subject to the flows and impositions of country and history. As with the best poetry, they are grounded in life itself.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzU8yV1RCxg>

Director Jia Zhangke discusses *Swimming Out Till the Sea Turns Blue* with NYFF programmer K. Austin Collins and interpretation by Vincent Cheng.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynHOHJ1A1KIM>

LOST COURSE — 2020 (179 MINUTES)

<https://www.dgeneratefilms.com/catalog/LOST-COURSE>

Embedding herself in the village of Wukan, southern China for several years starting in 2011, first time documentarian Jill Li witnessed an unprecedented experiment in local democracy. Corrupt officials had illegally sold villagers' land, but the villagers decided to fight back.

The documentary is divided into two halves: the first, "Protests", depicts the grassroots activities of Wukan residents as they work to reverse the land sales and gain a substantial measure of control over their local territory. We see how the villagers themselves learn to organize elections, form alliances, and win support. Part two, "After Protests", confronts the collapse of idealism as the newly elected village government finds itself mired in the same kind of corrupt dealings they had originally condemned.

Li reveals the complexities of their triumphs and setbacks from the inside. Her astonishingly intimate, sympathetic and fair-minded access to the events' major players reveals Chinese local politics with three-dimensional passion and energy.

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/502243654>

FINDING YINGYING – 2020 (99 MINUTES)

<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/finding-yingying-movie-review-2020>

Yingying Zhang was a promising young graduate student who left her home, family and boyfriend in China to pursue her studies in the United States. She's one of thousands of students who make the same journey, whose parents sacrifice both financially and emotionally to let their children go to an unknown country all in the hopes of a brighter future.

Unfortunately, that future never came to pass for Yingying. One day when she was running late to see an apartment, she accepted a ride from a stranger and was never seen again.

...Jaiyan "Jenny" Shi's *Finding Yingying* is simultaneously a tribute to the young woman — who she was and what she aspired to, the isolation and culture shock she faced in the U.S., the love she had for her family that drove her to keep going — and a true crime documentary that follows the Zhang family as they try to piece together what happened to their beloved daughter. But the documentary is quite sympathetic to the family, centering their frustrating experiences with the U.S. justice system.

...The MTV documentary doesn't play up the emotions for dramatic effect. The flashbacks to Yingying's photos and words are in service of the story, and by the end, her diary's sudden stop brings a second heartache. We won't hear from her anymore. The answers the documentary finds are not easy, but the loss *Finding Yingying* depicts is one that will reverberate for years to come.

Review:

<https://supchina.com/2020/12/18/finding-yingying-chinese-pain-and-the-empathy-deficit/>

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6dlsAibt1hc&feature=emb_logo

HOW DUSHAN BURNT 40 BILLION – 2020 (22 MINUTES)

<https://sg.news.yahoo.com/china-debt-fuelled-county-admits-112055680.html>

A county-level government in China has vowed to make changes after a viral online video raised questions over its debt-fueled 40 billion yuan (US\$5.7 billion) construction spree that began in 2016.

Within days of its release, the *How Dushan Burnt 40 billion* video was viewed over 27 million times on Weibo, China's Twitter-like social media platform.

The 22-minute video, produced by Shanghai-based Guan Video, features some of the construction projects that have taken place in Dushan County in the landlocked southwest province of Guizhou, one of the poorest regions in China.

Review: <https://www.sixthtone.com/news/1005931/unfinished-vanity-projects-a-debt-trap-for-guizhou-county>

1001 NIGHTS — 2020 (not released at time of printing)

<https://www.sixthtone.com/news/1005816/father-tells-his-coming-out-story-in-daughters-documentary>

Chen Yujun's upcoming documentary is her journey of staking out her father's business and stumbling upon his sexuality is the topic of her upcoming documentary *1001 Nights*. What started as an amateur project born of curiosity and some speculation about her father's private life has turned into a film that's now scheduled to premiere on June 25, with an eventual online release. "Literature and film play vital roles in shifting people's attitudes toward sexual minorities," Yang Yi, (a program officer at LGBT Rights Advocacy China)

said. "Considering the lack of social activism in China, LGBT stories in the media contribute to the transformation of queer culture, from being a taboo to an embraced identity." Chen hopes her documentary will also join the ranks of films that help others explore LGBT identities and family dynamics. "My film is about more than just sexuality," Chen said. "It also explores topics like love, aging, and kinship. I hope viewers will find it encouraging and remain hopeful for a future where homophobia is less prevalent."

COCKROACH_ — 2020 (93 MINUTES)

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2020/dec/18/cockroach-review-ai-weiwei-hong-kong-protests-pro-democracy-activists>

... *Cockroach* (the film by the artist-activist Ai Weiwei), is about the passionate pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong, which was triggered by the introduction of the Fugitive Offenders amendment bill by the pro-Chinese Hong Kong government in 2019, exposing protesters to extradition to the Chinese mainland and effectively destroying that minimum of 50 years' judicial independence and autonomy that the Hong Kong people were promised at the 1997 handover. "Cockroaches" is how the protesters feel they are seen by the Chinese authorities: their proud sense of democratic independence is seen as laughably irrelevant by an increasingly belligerent national government – and the same goes for any human rights. A banner proclaims that they are going the same way as Tibet and the Uighurs, and the whole of Hong Kong is going to be a scorched-earth monument to Beijing's new obsession with alpha-dog nationalism...

Review: <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-55354531>

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJuYB6HIfrk&feature=emb_logo

JOURNEY OF CHINESE PLANTS — 2020 (10-PART SERIES, 50 MINUTE SEGMENTS)

<https://chinadialogue.net/en/nature/11883-china-s-first-plant-based-documentary-series/>

The series, which had official backing, took three years to make and examines 28 different species over ten 50-minute episodes, including the tea tree, the mulberry tree, rice, soybean and bamboo. It covers their lifecycle from sprouting to harvest, their significance to China, and the impact they have had globally. ...The documentary goes to great lengths to explain how plants have contributed to Chinese civilization. The soybeans carefully selected by our ancestors fed their families, and also allowed them to raise livestock. When the Tang dynasty monk Jianzhen travelled to Japan he took soybeans as a gift alongside his Buddhist texts. Bamboo slips were used for early forms of writing: "Of China's five millennia of history, two or three millennia were recorded on bamboo, and it was bamboo that allowed the writing

system to stabilize.” And in China, tea is not just a drink – it is also widely used in traditional medicine...

Short previews here:

https://www.iqiyi.com/a_19rrhzhmd9.html

SEEK OUT NATURAL MYSTERIES – 2020 (5-PART SERIES, 30-50 MINUTE SEGMENTS)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pxdSCng-hc&list=PLrpsOAujCCNzhyTbRhBiogqxSwizjgbPp>

What it's about: The science-and-nature-focused documentary series *Seek Out Natural Mysteries* depicts the four unsolved mysteries in nature The Origin of Life, Species Extinction, Light Curves, Ball Lightning. We not only want to present you with four fascinating natural riddles in a refreshing way, but also would like to introduce you those outstanding Chinese scientists and China's little-known past related to science. Science has no nationality... Jie also acts as the executive secretary of Voice of Science, a science media league to popularize scientific knowledge and disseminate scientific spirit. Voice of Science takes its mission to improve people's scientific literacy, advocate logic and empirical evidence, oppose pseudoscience, and eliminate ignorance and superstition.

Trailer:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSNk_FflCQ8&list=PLrpsOAujCCNzhyTbRhBiogqxSwizjgbPp&index=5

SKATEBOARDING

SHANGHAI 5 – 2010 (23 MINUTES)

Stream entire film here: <https://vimeo.com/17700447>

SHANGHAI 6 – 2020 (22 MINUTES)

Stream entire film here: <https://vimeo.com/416297647>

Skateboarding in Shanghai has radically changed over the years, going from a free for all skate spots to a heavily regulated practice. Shanghai 6 is the sequel to Shanghai 5 a 2010 documentary about the burgeoning skate scene. The new opus focuses on the radical changes the scene has undergone in the past decade and what it means for the local skate community. Directed, filmed, produced and edited by Charles Lanceplaine.



DO NOT SPLIT – 2020 (35 MINUTES)

<https://fieldofvision.org/do-not-split>

Told from within the heart of the Hong Kong protests, *Do Not Split* begins in 2019 as a proposed bill allowing the Chinese government to extradite criminal suspects to mainland China escalated protests throughout Hong Kong. Unfolding across a year, *Do Not Split* captures the determination and sacrifices of the protesters, the government's backlash, and the passage of the new Beijing-backed national security law. is a 2020 American-Norwegian documentary film directed by Anders Hammer The film was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Documentary Short Subject at the 93rd Academy Awards.

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/393764663>

Stream entire film here: <https://fieldofvision.org/do-not-split>

THE REVOLUTION THEY REMEMBER — 2020 (106 MINUTES)

<https://culturalrevolution.pitt.edu/#documentary>

The Revolution They Remember — a documentary produced by the University of Pittsburgh's Library System — explores how ordinary people experienced the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966–76) and how they remember it today. The featured interviews with Chinese citizens were among many collected as part of two oral history projects by the Library System's East Asian Library and Dartmouth College Library.

This site contains maps, timelines, background information.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i78TXr3_uPU

Stream entire movie here: <https://culturalrevolution.pitt.edu/#documentary>

OUTCRY AND WHISPER — 2020 (100 MINUTES)

<https://www.dgeneratefilms.com/catalog/OUTCRY-AND-WHISPER>

A performance artist approaches a dais with a quiet formality, and then proceeds to slowly and deliberately slice a series of cuts into her face with a razor. A doctoral student/filmmaker, under house arrest and constant surveillance, walks up to a vehicle following her and holds up a sign saying, "Shame to insult a woman." Female factory workers describe being arrested and harassed when they stand up for their rights. Shot over eight years, *Outcry and Whisper* is a highly personal and sometimes uncomfortably intimate documentary chronicling women's oppression and resistance in mainland China and Hong Kong. One remarkable and tumultuous sequence is shot in the midst of Hong Kong pro-democracy demonstrations...

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/429306868>

Rent here: <http://icarusfilms.com/df-outcry>

SPARK — 2019 (114 MINUTES)

<https://www.dgeneratefilms.com/catalog/SPARK>

Spark opens by the side of a road in Lanzhou City, northwestern China, as trucks rumble through a blasted hillside. An elderly man walks along the dusty road and pauses to point to a nearby spot — the former execution grounds. "They executed many," the man says. "Then fewer and fewer."

Two of those executed were contributors to *Spark*, a short-lived magazine from Gansu Province whose young, intellectual contributors bravely shone a light on the horrific realities of life during the Great Leap Forward. More than 35 million people died of famine between 1959 and 1961, in large part because of Communist Party policies. To this day, the Party has never fully acknowledged the scope of the disaster.

In *Spark*, filmmaker Hu Jie — who has been described as "China's most important unofficial historian-filmmaker" — tracks down the surviving men and women of *Spark*, including founder Gu Yan, allowing them to tell their stories.

Weaving together their interviews, the film is in an oral history of the magazine and the tumultuous period that from which it arose. The interviews are striking in their clarity and their emotional immediacy 60 years later...

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/sparkdoc/430370855>

THE OBSERVER — 2019 (78 MINUTES)

<http://icarusfilms.com/df-obser>

After repeated threats from authorities, the Beijing Independent Film Festival was shut down. The government wouldn't tolerate their showing *Spark*, an incendiary historical documentary that revealed human rights violations during The Great Leap Forward. News of the festival's cancellation reverberated around the world. Who was the artist whose work had pushed the government past the edge of tolerance?

Away from the limelight, dissident artist Hu Jie has managed to make more than 30 documentaries. Films like *Though I Am Gone* and *Searching for Lin Zhao's Soul* are vital to understanding Chinese history and society and preserving memory of its past. Widely recognized as the first artist to dare talk about the Great Famine, the labor camps and the Cultural Revolution in an unfiltered way, Hu Jie is considered China's first historical documentary filmmaker—even though he's blacklisted.

Featuring lush photography and revealing interviews, filmmaker and critic Rita Andreetti's sensitive portrait, *The Observer*, explores Hu Jie's commitment, tenacity and courage, as well as the toll those have taken in his personal life. Through the creation not only of films but also of woodcuts and paintings, he continues to fight for the truth... but will museums, galleries and movie theaters have the courage to show the work that he makes?

Trailer:

<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/theobserver/430728768>

TELL THE WORLD – 2019 (43 MINUTES)

<https://www.journeyman.tv/film/7639>

Detained under a high-tech dystopian surveillance state in Xinjiang province, exiled Uighurs speak out in this powerful investigation. Their religion is all but banned as they undergo 're-education'.

Trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryk6qZ4YLi0>

CHINA'S CRAZY RICH – 2019 (10 MINUTES)

<https://www.journeyman.tv/film/7722>

For most of the last century Communist China's planned economy prevented its citizens from getting wealthy. But now China is producing more billionaires than any other country in the world.



A WOMAN WHO PAINTS THANKAS – 2019 (25 MINUTES)

<https://vimeo.com/334373370>

Rebgong (Qinghai, China) is well-known for its Tibetan Buddhist thangka art for centuries.

However, Tibetan women were not allowed to learn or to paint thangkas, until recent years. Lutso

See **Journeyman Pictures** for current documentaries and shorts on rap music to women's issues to censorship to environmental concerns (search China)

<https://www.journeyman.tv/features>

<https://www.journeyman.tv/shorts>

NOWHERE TO CALL HOME – 2019 (26 MINUTES)

<https://www.journeyman.tv/film/7576>

CHINA DREAM – 2018 (29 MINUTES)

<https://www.journeyman.tv/film/7504>

THE LOVE BOAT – 2018 (28 MINUTES)

<https://www.journeyman.tv/film/7251>

GOBI DESERT SAND WARRIORS – 2018 (12 MINUTES)

<https://www.journeyman.tv/film/7308>

A DISAPPEARING WAY OF LIFE 2018 (7 MINUTES)

<https://www.journeyman.tv/film/7314>

RENT A BOYFRIEND – 2017 (26 MINUTES)

<https://www.journeyman.tv/film/7248>

CHINA'S MILLIONAIRE MIGRANT – 2016 (22 MINUTES)

<https://www.journeyman.tv/film/6799>

BULKLAND – 2016 (59 MINUTES)

<https://www.journeyman.tv/film/6685>

REMEMBERING TIANANMEN – 2014 (11 MINUTES)

<https://www.journeyman.tv/film/6206>

EMPTY CITIES – 2013 (14 MINUTES)

<https://www.journeyman.tv/film/5939>

MY DEAR ART – 2018 (106 MINUTES)

<https://www.journeyman.tv/film/7263>

CHINA'S WEB CELEBS – 2017 25 MINUTES

<https://www.journeyman.tv/film/7197>

is one of the few Tibetan female thangka painters in Rebgong. She is also a mother, a wife, and the oldest daughter in the family. The film captures Lutso's unique life as a thangka painter, who has a career to develop and a family to support. The film is made by Dr. Ming Xue, an anthropologist who has been doing field research about Tibetan thangka painters in Rebgong since 2009.

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/334373370>

BROKEN HARMONY: CHINA'S DISSIDENTS – 2019 (51 MINUTES)

<https://www.brokenharmonyfilm.com/>

Broken Harmony: China's Dissidents tells the story of Hua Ze, an ordinary Chinese citizen for whom a discovery of corruption led her into a hidden world of dissidents, citizen journalism, police harassment and kidnappings.

Trailer: <https://www.brokenharmonyfilm.com/trailer>

Broken Harmony is a great teaching resource to put students in touch with the gritty reality of China today.

Andrew Nathan, Professor,
Columbia University;
Chair, Center for The
Study of Human Rights



Download Teacher's Guides (including history, humanities, IB Global Politics & Economics, etc.) here: <https://www.brokenharmonyfilm.com/for-educators>

Stream entire film here: https://tubitv.com/movies/549691/broken-harmony-chinas-dissidents?utm_source=google-feed&tracking=google-feed

WE WERE SMART – 2019 (125 MINUTES)

<https://radiichina.com/shamate-documentary/>

Li Yifan's film gives a rare look into the life and struggles of this group of marginalized, often poor rural youths through their own accounts. It has helped reopen old wounds and spark conversations around class and conformity, over a decade on from the vicious takedown that marked the end of the shamate movement.

Focused largely around rural migrant workers who'd travelled to China's cities to get in on, and help power, the country's economic boom, shamate was largely identified by its outlandish fashion sense, makeup and hairstyles. Spreading through dedicated online forums, the subculture's name came from the Chinese transliteration for the word "smart" – "sha-ma-te."

Li spent two years collecting 915 first-hand video recordings from former shamate members, as well as conducting full-length interviews with 78 of them. According to the director, almost all shamate participants were second-generation migrant kids who were born in the '90s and hailed from underserved villages and towns....

In the documentary, one trend that emerges is that many of these young people were "left-behind children," kids whose parents had taken jobs in major urban areas, leaving their offspring with grandparents at home in the village. Many talk of only seeing their parents on occasion, such as during the national Spring Festival holiday. Many of the interviewees also relay how they dropped out of school at a very early age and went to look for work themselves, often heading to manufacturing hubs on the basis of a vague lead or tip from a fellow villager.

Once there, the young migrant workers found themselves in unfamiliar surroundings and often in intense, exploitative working arrangements. In search of an outlet for pent-up tensions and a sense of belonging, they formed their own identity: shamate.

...Ultimately, *We Were Smart* is a poignant, important look at an oft-overlooked section of the incredibly diverse mosaic that is Chinese society.

Review: <https://supchina.com/2021/02/05/we-were-smart-chinas-controversial-subculture-tells-its-story/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyP5zI1svzU>

MY PEOPLE, MY HOMELAND – 2020 (153 MINUTES)

<https://thereelbits.com/2020/10/26/review-my-people-my-homeland/>

It would be very easy to drop the word ‘propaganda’ in here and be done with it. Yet to do so would ignore the role of the National Day films in Chinese popular culture. Like Chinese New Year, they are aimed at being a feel-good piece and to get bums on seats in cinemas. In late 2020, this is even more important than ever.

As a companion piece to the 2019 anthology film *My People, My Country*, this follow-up unapologetically bathes rural Chinese life in a golden glow. Filled with glorious drone shots of fields and vividly saturated landscapes, it borders on being a tourism video were it not for some fun vignettes at its core. Like the previous film, this is made up of multiple unrelated stories, but thematically linked by their appreciation of hometown life.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ev2sCnsYv9A>

My People, My Homeland is the 2020 sequel to *My People, My Country*

MY PEOPLE, MY COUNTRY – 2019 (154 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My_People,_My_Country

“My People, My Country” is a 2019 Chinese seven-part anthology drama film, consisting of seven segments directed by seven directors, Chen Kaige, Zhang Yibai, Guan Hu, Xue Xiaolu, Xu Zheng, Ning Hao, and Wen Muye. It is based on 7 moments since the founding of the PRC. It stars many of China's top actors, many in supporting roles and cameos. The film was released in China on September 30, 2019, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

1. The opening segment by director Guan Hu, *The Eve* is about an engineer, Lin Zhiyuan (played by Huang Bo), racing against time to perfect an automatic flag-raising mechanism before the founding ceremony of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949.
2. The second story *Passing by* directed by Zhang Yibai, sees a scientist, Gao Yuan, played by Zhang Yi, work on China's first atom bomb who had to bid farewell forever to his lover in the 1960s.
3. The third story *The Champion* , directed by Xu Zheng, is about how a little Shanghai lad named Dong Dong (played by Han Haolin) helped his neighbors watch TV for the China women's national volleyball team's Olympic gold medal win in 1984.
4. The fourth story *Going Home* directed by Xue Xiaolu, is about a Chinese executive delegation and local policemen preparing for the return of Hong Kong from British rule to China in 1997. The 12-second silence between the British and Chinese anthems during the Hong Kong handover ceremony is also reflected in this part.
5. The fifth story *Hello Beijing* directed by Ning Hao, is about a taxi driver who gives a ticket to the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics to a boy from the Sichuan earthquake zone though it was intended to be a birthday gift to his aloof son.

6. The sixth story *The Guiding Star* directed by Chen Kaige, is about a pair of homeless brothers who witness the landing of the capsule of the Shenzhou 11 manned spacecraft on November 18, 2016, a moment of national pride that touched them.

7. *One for All* directed by Wen Muye, follows the story of a top female fighter jet pilot Lü Xiaoran who helps her fellow pilots accomplish a smooth aerial performance at the Military Parade of the 70th Anniversary of the Victory in the Second Sino-Japanese War in 2015.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bvrJS1LL_HY



OUR TIME MACHINE – 2019 (86 MINUTES)

<http://timemachinefilm.com/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2020/sep/11/our-time-machine-documentary-maleonn>

...The fragility of memory, the tension between fantasy and reality, and the family bonds forged in hardship and joy are tenderly interwoven in *Our Time Machine*, which won the award for best cinematography at last year's Tribeca film festival. Co-directed by Yang Sun and S Leo Chiang, the documentary charts the evolution of Maleonn's ambitious production while reflecting on the artist's past and present relationship to his ageing father, who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. In the play, the main character achieves what exists only in Maleonn's wildest dreams: he builds a time machine so that his father, whose memory is also fading, can relive his happiest moments.

Trailer: <http://timemachinefilm.com/#trailer>

Review: *Our Time Machine*

A short, stylistic documentary that examines the love between a father and son, the difficulty of creating art, the challenges of dementia, and the importance of perseverance through anguish.

<https://supchina.com/2020/10/16/our-time-machine-a-bittersweet-documentary-on-love-art-and-dementia/>



ALL IN MY FAMILY – 2019 (40 MINUTES)

<https://thebottomline.as.ucsb.edu/2020/04/all-in-my-family-highlights-the-lgbt-asian-american-experience>

...*All in My Family* documents the experiences of Hao Wu, a gay Chinese American film director, as he and his partner start a non-traditional family and learn how to raise children via surrogate mothers amid backlash from Wu's conservative family. But this 40-minute documentary is also about the cultural and generational barriers gay people all over the world have to overcome.

The opening scene shows the family of one of Wu's surrogate mothers. This image of a typical nuclear American family that consists of a wife, husband, and children is juxtaposed next to Wu's large, loud, and emphatically Chinese family. At age 20, Wu ran away from his home of Chengdu to escape his family's Confucian values and live freely as a gay man in America. But as Hao puts it, "The son of a Chinese family can never run away from his past. At least not from his parents."...

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXiSr8I39fM>



AMERICAN FACTORY – 2019 (115 MINUTES)

<https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2019/09/10/759152615/why-we-should-all-watch-american-factory>

...And so *American Factory* is only nominally a film about America. The part that is astonishing about *American Factory* is seeing everything about the United States through the eyes of Chinese factory workers and managers arriving to reopen and restaff a plant in the rust belt. *American Factory* is the view we never get. Americans know how they feel about competing with China. But we don't know how China feels about working with America.



Just minutes in, two workers from China, a couple, stand on a ledge overlooking Dayton. They marvel at the houses, which seem like antique wonders to them. They think it's beautiful. And on second watching, I took a moment to look at the view, too, and, yeah, Dayton may be an opportunity zone, but it's underrated. 2020 Academy Award for Best Documentary.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m36QeKOJ2Fc>

Reviews:

NYT:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/20/movies/american-factory-review.html>

The Atlantic:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2019/08/american-factory-review-julia-reichert-steven-bognar/597067/>

The Guardian:

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/aug/15/american-factory-review-a-sobering-documentary-by-the-obamas>

ONE CHILD NATION – 2019 (89 MINUTES)

<https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/films/one-child-nation/>

China's one-child policy, the extreme population control measure that made it illegal for couples to have more than one child, may have ended in 2015, but the process of dealing with the trauma of its brutal enforcement is only just beginning. From award-winning documentarian Nanfu Wang and Jialing Zhang, *One China Nation* explores the ripple effects of this devastating social experiment, uncovering one shocking human rights violation after another – from abandoned newborns (almost always girls), to forced sterilization and abortion to government abductions.

As the story unfolds, Wang, a native of China, digs fearlessly into her own personal life, weaving her experience as a new mother and the firsthand accounts of her relatives with archival propaganda material and testimony from victims and perpetrators alike, yielding a revelatory and essential record of this chilling moment in human civilization....

Interview: <https://www.npr.org/2019/08/13/750875479/one-child-nation-documentary-tells-explores-the-dark-side-of-chinese-policy>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMcJVOLwyD0>



AI WEIWEI: YOURS TRULY – 2019 (76 MINUTES)

<https://www.yourstrulyfilm.com/>

The story of the film begins with the remarkable exhibiting 2@Large: Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz, organized in 2014 by director Cheryl Haines. Following Ai Weiwei's detention at the hands of the Chinese authorities, the outspoken artist and activist transformed the former island penitentiary of Alcatraz into an artistic platform. The resulting exhibition engages nearly 900,000 visitors in a conversation about the plight of prisoners of conscience around the world.

...The film *Ai Weiwei: Yours Truly* follows these postcards around the globe—from Alcatraz Island to Beijing, Washington, DC and Cairo—as Director Cheryl Haines meets with former prisoners of conscience and their families to discuss their impossible choices and the comfort

they found in messages sent by people they would never meet...ultimately the film is a call to action, extending the incredible reach of Ai Weiwei's postcards by asking viewers to take the issue of global human rights personally.

Review: <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/sep/27/ai-weiwei-yours-truly-review-alcatraz-artwork-mixes-the-political-and-personal>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOGQBZP5OpU>

CITY DREAM – 2019 (100 MINUTES)

<https://tiff.net/events/city-dream>

Weijun Chen's lively new film documents the struggles of Wang Tiancheng, an elderly and cantankerous street vendor in Wuhan, China, whose business is threatened by the development of a new retail district.

Documentary comedies are a rarity, even more so from China. But Weijun Chen has proven himself a master with such mirthful films as *Please Vote for Me* and *The Biggest Chinese Restaurant in the World*. The Chinese economy may have lifted over 850 million people out of poverty since the early 1980s, but it's necessary to look beyond such statistics and into individual lives for a true understanding of what this means. That's the accomplishment of *City Dream*, which documents an effort to introduce a new retail district by clearing out street vendors.

Chen embeds himself with the Urban Management Bureau of Wuhan, the biggest city in Central China. The bureau officers are firm in their duty to clean up the streets, but still show sympathy towards vendors being displaced. They meet their match in Wang Tiancheng, an elderly and cantankerous seller of fruits and clothing, who receives help from his grown son who lost a hand in a factory accident. The old man is brazenly defiant, like a swordless warrior against an army. He rips up the officers' paper citations, screams insults to their faces, and even throws punches. They take his abuse with surprising patience and humour. But their bosses are adamant to see the job get done. Suspense builds over a year in this standoff between government force and individual willpower.

In the tradition of his previous films, Chen brings out the humanity of everyone on screen, even when they're pushed to their limits.

Q&A with Director at Toronto International Film Festival:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJNDTAM8iXw>

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhqa3AYxJ9o&feature=emb_logo



CONFUCIAN DREAM – 2019 (87 MINUTES)

<http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/review-confucian-dream>

After witnessing the cohesion of a family practicing Confucianism, young wife and mother Chaoyan converts to the religion with hopes of bringing order and happiness to her family life. While diving into her studies, Chaoyan becomes obsessive. Chaoyan's four-year old son seems oblivious to his mother's fervour, while she clashes with her husband and alienates her in-laws. Consumed with the thought that an ardent practice of Confucianism is necessary to her family's well-being, Chaoyan's newfound beliefs end up having the opposite effect.

Mijie Li's *Confucian Dream* follows Chaoyan's narrative, which flows with almost fictional precision. Her beliefs begin earnestly before developing into mania. The philosophy starts with respect and morality, but slowly results into screaming matches with family. The drama

reaches fever pitch as Chaoyan's zealotry increases, but *Confucian Dream* offers a dénouement: Chaoyan separates from her husband and gains self-awareness of her actions. Without abandoning her beliefs, she acknowledges her desperation and anger and we witness her growth. Chaoyan is never one-dimensional in her strict Confucianism; instead, she shows a great deal of depth and development....

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LfAaMEUnBEg>

CHINA'S NEW SILK ROAD — 2019 (52 MINUTES)

<https://javafilms.fr/film/chinas-new-silk-road/>

Chinese president XI Jinping has named it the 'project of the century.' Since 2013 China has invested billions into bringing the 'Middle Kingdom' to the forefront of global economics and international politics.

What China has baptized 'The New Silk Road' allows a pair of trainees to be transported by train from China to France in less than two weeks. But they also act as a vehicle for a wave of Chinese expansionism across the world.

In Gwadar, Pakistan, China is excavating a giant port, as well as a spectacular highway that crosses the Himalayas, in order to open the doors to the warm seas. At the limits of their Russian borders in central Asia, along a new railway line that serves Europe, Chinese entrepreneurs have installed special economic zones and casinos in the middle of the desert. Further afield than Beijing, in Djibouti, on the Horn of Africa, the Chinese state has recently established a military port, a stone's throw from the American and French bases, as well as building an ultra modern railway serving Ethiopia. In the wake of these movements, Chinese businesses are swooping down on east African markets, hoping to make the region one of the new workshops of the world.

Trailer: <https://javafilms.fr/film/chinas-new-silk-road/>



PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF DESIRE — 2018 (95 MINUTES)

<https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/films/peoples-republic-of-desire/>

This is not Black Mirror; this is real life.

In an age where the power of technology helps us connect, are we as isolated as ever?

People's Republic of Desire exposed the baffling reality of how virtual relationships are replacing real-life human connections through China's video-based social network YY- a hugely popular gathering place for over 300 million people in China. From the super-rich, who lavish virtual gifts on their favorite live-streamers to the very poor, many of them migrant workers in urban area searching for cheap entertainment and a way to feel connected.



Disturbing and provocative, *People's Republic of Desire* explores the strange world of these live-streaming "showrooms," where the most popular stars can earn hundreds of thousands of dollars a month for adoring fans who "tip" them with digital gifts paid for with actual cash. It is a virtual dystopia, or a

chance for a second life? What are the consequences for all of us when human connections are put up for sale to the highest bidder?

Q & A with Director Hao Wu

<https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/blog/director-explores-live-streaming-revolution-and-how-technology-affects-human-happiness/>

Is This Real Life: The Live Streaming Craze Explained (includes several clips)

<https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/blog/is-this-real-life-the-live-streaming-craze-explained/>
Clip: <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/videos/peoples-republic-of-desire-vote-for-livestreamers-clip/>
Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HvhJWcdsI30>

PBS NEWSHOUR PRESENTS CHINA POWER AND PROSPERITY — 2019 (58 MINUTES)

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/series/china-power-and-prosperity>

The United States' relationship with China has dominated conversations about U.S. foreign policy, trade and more recently, the global effort to combat coronavirus. Before COVID-19 cases were first reported out of China and before the pandemic swept across the globe, PBS NewsHour's foreign affairs and defense correspondent, Nick Schiffrin, traveled to China for a series of inside looks into the country. PBS NewsHour Presents China: Power and Prosperity explores the future of the communist country's relationship with the U.S., which will help determine the new international order, the dominant technology supporting the world's communications infrastructure, and the global economy.

Stream entire 58 minutes here:

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/series/china-power-and-prosperity>

See box to the right for related 11-part series (5-10 minute segments)

CHINESE PORTRAIT — 2018 (79 MINUTES)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/12/movies/chinese-portrait-review.html>

In its title and its panoramic scope, *Chinese Portrait* promises a snapshot of modern China, with scenes that show life in settings urban and rural, industrial and agrarian, scenic and seedy. This documentary's human subjects are young and old. But in intriguing, sometimes unsatisfying ways, it leaves the synthesis to the viewer. It is an experimental film more than it is a state-of-the-nation address, inviting consideration of how each of its successive tableaux — just about the entirety of the movie — came to be created.

The director, the veteran Chinese filmmaker Wang Xiaoshuai (*Beijing Bicycle*) shot *Chinese Portrait* over a decade on a combination of film and video. Many scenes consist of a single shot, and the vignettes are generally separated by brief bits of visible film leader. The pieces of dialogue that can be heard go unsubtitled. And while the film depicts a diverse cross-section of Chinese life — from horses grazing in the countryside to a man in a respiratory mask in a smoggy cityscape; from Muslims in prayer to a dimly lit celebration — its primary interest lies in the tension between candid moments and shots that appear artfully composed.

PBS 11-Part Series

1. Taking Stock of China's Growing Power & Prosperity

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/taking-stock-of-chinas-growing-power-and-prosperity>

2. How President Xi Jinping is Transforming China at Home and Abroad

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/how-president-xi-jinping-is-transforming-china-at-home-and-abroad>

3. China's Massive Belt & Road Initiative

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/how-historic-belt-and-road-infrastructure-project-is-building-chinas-global-influence>

4. Impact of US-China Trade

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/impact-of-u-s-china-trade-war-felt-in-both-countries>

5. Chinese Tech Makes Cities "Smart"

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/is-this-chinese-technology-a-trojan-horse-for-spreading-authoritarianism>

6. How China's High-Tech Monitors Behavior & Dissent

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/how-chinas-high-tech-eyes-monitor-behavior-and-dissent>

7. China is Producing Billionaires Faster than any other Nation

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/china-is-producing-billionaires-faster-than-any-other-nation>

8. How China is Driving the Future of Electric Cars

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/how-china-is-driving-the-future-of-electric-cars>

9. How China's Art Market is Evolving from Knockoffs to New Works

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/why-chinas-art-market-is-evolving-from-knockoffs-to-new-works>

10. China Calls it Re-education, but Uighur Muslims say it's Unbearable Brutality

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/china-calls-it-re-education-but-uighur-muslims-say-its-unbearable-brutality>

11. Pro-democracy Demonstrators and Beijing Fight for the Future of Hong Kong

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/pro-democracy-demonstrators-and-beijing-fight-for-the-future-of-hong-kong>

The documentary begins with miners standing by a track at what looks like the opening of a mine shaft. (There are no title cards or other identifiers.) Are the miners' stoic stances natural or acted? What conversations, with the filmmakers or otherwise, took place before and after the cameras rolled? In several shots — in an office, in a classroom — one person will stare directly at Wang's camera while others appear oblivious to it. Other images are straightforward person-on-the-street portraits, practically still photographs. The camera is notable for its stillness. Kineticism generally derives from action within a shot: A man stands by a gate at the back of a speeding train while another train rushes by in the opposite direction. A building undergoing demolition partly collapses, stirring up a giant cloud of dust...

...The rush of progress generated by China's transition to a capitalist economy has been explored by several widely screened Chinese filmmakers, such as Jia Zhangke (*Ash is Purest White*) and Wang Bing (*Bitter Money*). A bit of that theme — in scenes that involve construction or pollution — is here as well. But the overall mood is less hectic than peaceful; Wang's snapshot shows a China that happily encompasses multitudes. The concatenation of difference is captured in the busy final image, in which a singer with a guitar begins to perform in a crowded restaurant, never quite commanding the attention of its diners.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muWRbcEz00k&feature=emb_logo



MINERS, THE HORSEKEEPER, AND PNEUMOCONIOSIS — 2018 (81 MINUTES)

<https://u.osu.edu/mclc/2020/05/07/documentary-on-the-plight-of-chinese-miners/>

From the age of 15, Zhao Pinfeng worked for two decades as an iron ore miner in a remote, mountainous area of Hunan province in central China.

Several years ago Zhao, who by then had two children and whose wife is mentally challenged, was diagnosed

with pneumoconiosis, a fatal lung disease. He lost the ability to work and had to breathe through a ventilator. On one fateful night in 2018, an electricity outage at his village stopped his ventilator. He died the next day.

Zhao's final days were recorded for a documentary feature, *Miners, the Horsekeeper and Pneumoconiosis*. Directed by Jiang Nengjie, the 81-minute film revolves around Hunan villagers who relied on the illegal mines for a living before they were closed down by the government. They include porters who transport the mine explosives and iron shards, and miners like Zhao.

The film shows how the use of illegal explosives and mining without protective gear damaged the health of villagers, with many of them contracting pneumoconiosis....

Interview: <http://www.sixthtone.com/news/1005595/premiering-in-your-inbox-chinas-new-indie-doc-sensation>

Review: <https://www.shine.cn/feature/art-culture/2005087714/>

Trailer: <https://www.orientindiefilms.com/content/documentary/miners-the-horsekeeper-and-pneumoconiosis/>

Stream entire movie here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2KEQHB8lrs> or <https://vimeo.com/403946897>

It's not your typical viral hit. Self-directed, self-funded, and shot mostly on a simple camcorder, the film follows the lives of coal workers in rural Hunan, a central Chinese province. The horsekeeper in the film is Jiang's own father Jiang Meilin, and the dying miner Zhao Pinfeng who is a central character in the film is a fellow villager.

CHINESE GRANDMOTHERS – 2018 (7 MINUTES)

<http://www.sixthtone.com/news/1002021/dancing-grannies-share-stories-from-their-past>

There's more to China's elderly square dancers than fast footwork and synchronized moves: Some have fascinating stories to share. In her recent documentary *Chinese Grandmothers*, filmmaker Tan Jiaying brings these vibrant stories to a wider audience.

From the tumultuous years of the Cultural Revolution to the decades following China's economic reforms, the film is a kaleidoscope of a changing China, as seen through the lens of four grandmothers, according to the 36-year-old filmmaker. It's also a recollection of a past the women still treasure, despite the myriad hardships they faced....

Stream entire 7-minute film here: <http://www.sixthtone.com/news/1002021/dancing-grannies-share-stories-from-their-past>

THE LAND OF PEACH BLOSSOMS – 2018 (99 MINUTES)

<https://www.idfa.nl/en/film/7ce9edb2-f54c-4820-8ed3-b2b4f4df3bbb/the-land-of-peach-blossoms>

One of the skyscrapers in the Chinese city of Chongqing houses a unique restaurant. The diners at the big round table become part of a spectacular show featuring dance and martial arts, inspired by old traditions and contemporary patriotism. Behind the scenes, the company's founder and authoritarian leader, a bored-looking chain smoker, imposes a strict collectivism. Personal opinions are forbidden, while thinking and behaving like the Leader is the ideal. Self-criticism is a frequently performed ritual.

The Land of Peach Blossoms follows life in the company over several months and shows the extent to which the staff submits to this brainwashing experience. The title is borrowed from an old fable by Tao Yuanming about a utopian community. Is this restaurant a similar experiment? As the Leader's angry tirades intensify, cracks begin to appear in his team's faith. The exhausting work and the paltry wages don't help in what seems to become a metaphor for modern China.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoPsxKV8sb4>



YELLOW IS FORBIDDEN – 2018 (95 MINUTES)

<https://fashionista.com/2018/04/yellow-is-forbidden-guo-pei-documentary>

In the new film, *Yellow Is Forbidden*, veteran documentarian Pietra Brettkelly captures Beijing-born designer Guo Pei's fierce artistic vision and drive, from the designer's prosaic childhood to her remarkable Spring 2017 Couture show in Paris. Along the way, Brettkelly highlights the many opposing forces that conflict with Pei's dream of being selected into the exclusive world of haute couture: Chinese tradition versus Western modernity, acceptance versus prejudice, and maintaining a healthy, lucrative business versus pursuing more expensive and rare techniques. Nevertheless, we watch Pei persevere to become an extraordinary champion for her art and become the first Chinese designer invited into the official Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture, the French governing body for couture.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkobOm1Yx0o&feature=emb_logo

**THE OUTSIDER TRILOGY (DOCUMENTARIES BY YANG ZHENGFAN)
DOWN THERE 2018 (11 MINUTES)**

A blissful night is unexpectedly interrupted by a sound from downstairs. Different reactions are triggered as well as the relentless indifference.

Director Zhengfan Yang statement: Seeing is believing, hearing is deceiving. Is it?

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/281101082>

WHERE ARE YOU GOING? 2016 (130 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5449374/>

Where Are You Going is the second part of "The Outsider Trilogy", following my (Zhengfan Yang) previous film *Distant* (2013). The one and only character in the film is Hong Kong, a city where I spent five years living there as an outsider. During my stay in Hong Kong, I, together with the city, experienced its intensive economic/political/social changes from 2009 to 2014. Conveyed by thirteen journeys on a taxi wandering around the city, with off-screen conversations between the driver and different passengers, this film explores the moving landscape of Hong Kong, examining the city's past, present and future, as well as unveiling the alienation and confusion of its people after the reform.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiH9S35GDMI>

DISTANT 2013 (88 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3103370/?ref=nm_knf_t3

Distant is a film that is made up of 13 sections, each comprised of a single long take. Each section tells a story about distance between different time and space, focusing on the subtle moments when people are suddenly confronted with modernity and gradually become lost in the transition between this and their present lives. Without any dialogue, simply working with image, sound and actions of the characters, these 13 dramatic, realistic and mysterious scenes are painted. It tries to describe today's human condition in an abstract way - its alienation, abandonment and eternal loneliness.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rihVfNO21Cs>

A LONG WAY HOME — 2018 (73 MINUTES)

<https://store.der.org/a-long-way-home-p1031.aspx>

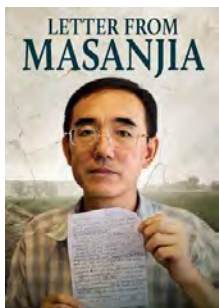
A Long Way Home takes us on a fascinating journey into both the grim days of recent Chinese history and the dazzling cultural scene in present-day China. The film centers around five of the most significant representatives of contemporary Chinese counterculture: the visual artists the Gao Brothers, the choreographer and dancer Wen Hui, the animation artist Pi San and the poet Ye Fu. With bravery and subversive wit, they each shed light on the social problems in their country from their unique perspective. Their vision is of a democratic and humane civil society, and, increasingly, their struggle seems as relevant for the world today as it is for China.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEOX6_joiUo&t=119s



LETTER FROM MASANJIA — 2018 (76 MINUTES)

<https://www.letterfrommasanjia.com/>



Letter from Masanjia begins when mom of two, Julie Keith, finds an SOS note in a box of "Made in China" Halloween decorations from an Oregon Kmart. The desperate note was written by a political prisoner named Sun Yi, from inside China's notorious Masanjia labor camp. On the crumpled page that travelled over 5000 miles, he details being jailed for his spiritual beliefs and how he is being subjected to torture and brainwashing tactics. His message goes viral and miraculously leads to the closure of China's entire labor camp system. But their story is far from over.

Peabody-winning Canadian filmmaker Leon Lee is not welcome in his native country because of his prior films about China's human rights abuses. So, in *Letter from Masanjia*, he teaches Sun Yi to use camera equipment via Skype. For over a year, Sun Yi secretly captures harrowing footage of his daily life as a human rights defender, leading up to his tense run from the Chinese authorities. Meanwhile, just outside Portland, Julie Keith is struggling with her own dilemmas as a mother newly embroiled in this cause. Together, these unlikely heroes expose China's ongoing persecution against millions whose ideology differs from the Chinese government.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6JogjRLM5j8>

MAINELAND – 2017 (90 MINUTES)

<http://www.mainelandfilm.com/>

Filmed over three years in China and the U.S., MAINELAND is a multi-layered coming-of-age tale that follows two affluent and cosmopolitan teenagers as they settle into a boarding school in blue-collar rural Maine. Part of the enormous wave of "parachute students" from China enrolling in U.S. private schools, bubbly, fun-loving Stella and introspective Harry come seeking a Western-style education, escape from the dreaded Chinese college entrance exam, and the promise of a Hollywood-style U.S. high school experience. As Stella and Harry's fuzzy visions of the American dream slowly gain more clarity, they ruminate on their experiences of alienation, culture clash, and personal identity, sharing new understandings and poignant discourses on home and country.



Review for Teachers: <https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/ea/archives/maineland-directed-by-miao-wang/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpuR-lHaPyA>

PRESENT. PERFECT – 2017 (124 MINUTES)

<https://mubi.com/notebook/posts/livestreaming-china-shengze-zhu-discusses-present-perfect>

...Documentary filmmaker Shengze Zhu first started watching livestreaming shows from China when she heard about the 2017 story of a young man who was recording a stunt on top of a skyscraper and tragically fell to his death. She soon became fascinated by the form of livestreaming itself and recorded more than 800 hours worth of footage, molding it into the film that would become *Present.Perfect*.

The individuals who host these shows are known as anchors and Zhu found herself drawn to the more quotidian shows, which is reflected in the film. We follow characters that are often seen as peripheral in society. A young mother working in a garment factory, and a man whose face was disfigured by a fire feature prominently, as does a construction worker and a man with dwarfism who creates art on the street. These real-life characters express an authentic sense of intimacy through their recordings, which Zhu organises into a four part structure.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VmVgbiEDs_0

JIABIANGOU ELEGY: LIFE AND DEATH OF THE RIGHTISTS – 2017 (82 MINUTES)

This documentary series recounts the persecution of inmates at the Jiabiangou labor camp in Jiuquan, Gansu province and examines the way the victims' final affairs were handled. During the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957-59, more than three thousand people were sent to

Jiabiangou for re-education through labor. These people were labeled rightists, counterrevolutionaries, and anti-party dissidents.

Jiabiangou Elegy includes interviews with the few remaining survivors and their children, and presents the conflict between the preservation and destruction of memory.

Stream entire documentary series here: <https://spl.kanopy.com/video/jiabiangou-elegy-life-and-death-rightists-0>

WE THE WORKERS — 2017 (174 MINUTES)

<https://www.dgeneratefilms.com/catalog/WE-THE-WORKERS>

China's economic miracle has been built on cheap labor. And now, that labor is starting to fight back.

Filmed in the southeastern part of the country, *We the Workers* is a vérité documentary that closely follows people organizing workers and fighting for collective bargaining rights. They find themselves up against factory employees who don't understand their rights and fear the consequences of organizing, police and government officials who see them as dangerous troublemakers, and foreign owners who ignore what lax regulations do exist...

Q&A with director: <https://www.chinoiresie.info/we-the-workers-huang-wenhai/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndY1294mVDk>

JIAYI — 2017 (75 MINUTES)

<https://u.osu.edu/mclc/2017/05/09/interview-with-documentarian-jiang-nengjie/>

When he was a child, Jiang Nengjie's parents left him behind in their Hunan village when they went to find work in Guangdong province. Now he's a filmmaker who's made four documentaries about left-behind children.

Unaccustomed to the fast pace of city life, Jiang, 32, lives in his hometown and splits his time between making films and taking care of three village libraries he established in the county for left-behind children.

Jiang Nengjie "I feel empathy for Jiayi [a left-behind girl who is the main character in the film]. Her family reminds me of my childhood. The film is a tribute to my childhood. I can see myself in her. She also has a younger brother. She has to take care of her brother and do lots of household chores. She is like a parent. Because the child is a positive figure, the local government also likes the film. I respect Jiayi's parents. Although they left her behind in the village, they've kept good communication, unlike other parents who are estranged from their children. It's a matter of awareness. Jiayi and her parents talk on the phone every two or three days. During summer holidays, they take Jiayi and her brother to their workplaces and live together for a month."

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/jiayi/413929197?autoplay=1>

AWAKEN — 2017 (62 MINUTES)

<http://www.sixthtone.com/news/1001392/the-chinese-fisherman-and-the-sea>

Awaken — Ning Jiawei's 2016 thesis project at southwestern China's Sichuan Fine Arts Institute — is an experimental film with no character introduction, dialogue, narration, or major conflicts. Instead, it centers on one person and his mundane daily routine. Much of the story is told from the fisherman's point of view, and many of the shots were taken by the fisherman himself with a GoPro. The sea also becomes a character in the story, and the ambient sound under and above the water are the lines it speaks. The hourlong film was

short-listed in the Mid-Length Documentary category at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA), the world's largest documentary film festival, which took place in November 2017. (see interview with filmmaker Ning Jiawei at the above link.)

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YY0qR4OVgtY&feature=emb_logo

Stream 62-minute film here: <https://filmfreeway.com/1321769>

FOUR SPRINGS — 2017 (105 MINUTES)

https://www.cmu.edu/faces/Previous_Festivals/2019women/foursprings.html



After the popularity of his online diary, *My Father*, filmmaker Lu Qingyi decided to turn a camera on his parents' everyday life in a remote town in Guizhou. Over four springs, we see the flow of life: chores, singing, hikes, celebrations, funerals, reunions, and separation. After a family tragedy forces Qingyi from the role of participant to observer, he becomes more deeply moved by the open-minded, pristine life philosophy his parents reveal through their

everyday interactions with people and nature. Using cinema as a tool, Lu crafts a profound visual diary of family in southwest China that will have the viewer calling their family to say "I love you" as soon as the screen goes dark.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hxfqn3-07s>

AFRICANS IN YIWU — 2017 (6 EPISODES)

<https://www.chinafile.com/library/china-africa-project/new-documentary-portrays-nuanced-view-of-africans-experience-living>

Africans in Yiwu is a 6-episode on-line documentary film produced by the Center for African Film and TV Research of the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University. This film focuses on the lives of the African Community in the City of Yiwu, and surrounding areas of Zhejiang Province.

When filmmakers Zhang Yong, Hodan Abdi, and Fu Dong set out to make a new documentary on the African migrant experience in China, they were determined to ensure that their own voices and experiences came through in the story. Until now, most if not all of the documentary films on Africans in China have been produced by Westerners, so it was very important to this filmmaking trio that an authentic, blended Chinese African voice frame the narrative of their film.

Africans in Yiwu is a long-form documentary that portrays the lives of a group of young, ambitious African migrants in the Chinese coastal city of Yiwu. Little known outside of China, Yiwu has been one of China's leading trading hubs for over 2,000 years and is now home to People's Republic of China's second-largest population of African migrants.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0BGLPIyZDE&feature=emb_logo

Africansinchina.net is the world's most comprehensive repository about African presence in China.

<https://africansinchina.net/about-2/>

The China Africa Project (CAP) is a multimedia resource dedicated to exploring every aspect of China's growing engagement with Africa.

<https://chinaafricaproject.com/>

COMPLICIT — 2017 (89 MINUTES)

<http://www.complicitfilm.org/>

Filmed below the radar in China by Sun Shaoguang (and produced by Heather White and Lynn Chang) and sparking a global campaign with the release of its first trailer, *Complicit* tells the story of Chinese migrant worker Yi Yeting, and his effort to eliminate life-threatening benzene from workplaces producing smartphones.

While struggling with occupational leukemia, he discovers many others have also been poisoned at tech factories in the Pearl River Delta.

Seeking justice Yi travels from his hospital room where he helps other workers, to Silicon Valley and the international stage. Against huge odds, he directly confronts corporate and government interests, while empowering and inspiring the people around him.

With unparalleled access and intimate portraits of the workers behind our devices, *Complicit* is about family, the challenges faced by everyday Chinese citizens, and the young workers sacrificing everything to make the devices we cannot live without.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mL68rayV9_I



HOOLIGAN SPARROW — 2016 (91 MINUTES)

<http://archive.pov.org/hooligansparrow/film-description/>

Speaking truth to power is dangerous in some places, including modern-day China, where corrupt government officials deal very harshly with critics.



Chinese officials prove especially displeased when their critics include an activist lawyer, outraged parents, a fearless filmmaker, and a sex workers' rights activist with a wicked sense of humor. *Hooligan Sparrow*, Nanfu Wang's feature debut, centers on a horrible crime that took place in 2013:

A school principal and a member of the education bureaucracy abducted six female students 11 to 14 years of age, took them to a hotel and sexually assaulted them over a 24-hour period.

When parents and their supporters demanded justice, the perpetrators insisted the girls were prostitutes. Then the powers-that-be and their hired thugs really started playing hardball...see this POV website for complete text, interviews, and resources.

NPR Review: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2016/10/17/497697103/when-6-girls-are-sexually-assaulted-hooligan-sparrow-seeks-justice>



Lesson plan/discussion guides Dissent and Freedom of speech: Using Biography to Compare China and the U.S. <http://archive.pov.org/hooligansparrow/film-description/>

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJ1ajITz8_0

TED: Controlling time through story | Nanfu Wang

Documentary filmmaker Nanfu Wang discusses the impact of major moments in life and how film distorts and manipulates them. In this perspective-shifting talk, she tells us some of her story, from following feminist protesters as she filmed her documentary "Hooligan Sparrow" across China while under the close watch of the government to the heartbreak of her father's untimely death. As they forever changed her, these happenings woke her up to the possibility of how a story can impact the perception time.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2NAI77gAlfc>

STILL TOMORROW — 2016 (88 MINUTES)



<https://www.pbs.org/pov/watch/stilltomorrow/>

A village woman with no high school diploma becomes China's most famous poet, and her book of poetry the best-selling such volume in China in the past 20 years. *Still Tomorrow* follows Yu Xiuhua, a 39-year-old woman living with cerebral palsy, as she faces sudden fame.

The film poignantly weaves her personal narrative with that of an ascendant, urbanizing China. (see site for short 2-minute interviews with director Jian Fan).

...This character piece by Jian Fan (*Wu Tu: My Land*) is an appropriately poetic rendering of Yu's life and struggle. The film watches Yu as she gains her voice through her poetry and Jian Fan offers methodical observational shots of the land and countryside that inspire Yu while voiceover and title cards immerse the viewers in her poetry. The peaceful serenity of the countryside and idyllic



moments of artistic creation are far more pleasing than the grating presence of her husband. One understands why Yu seeks an escape. *Still Tomorrow* is a touching character portrait that dives right into the heart of a poet and illustrates how the arts empower and sustain us.

Review: <http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/review-still-tomorrow>

Q & A with Fan Jian:

<http://www.sixthtone.com/news/1696/q%26a-with-fan-jian-on-documentaries-of-desire>

Trailer: <http://www.pbs.org/pov/watch/stilltomorrow/video-trailer-still-tomorrow/>



GUANGZHOU DREAM FACTORY – 2016 (66 MINUTES)

<https://www.gzdreamfactory.com/about-the-film/>

Guangzhou, a.k.a. Canton, is southern China's centuries-old trading port. Today the booming metropolis of 14 million is a mecca of mass consumption, its vast international trading centers, crammed with every "Made in China" good imaginable. Every year more than half a million Africans travel to Guangzhou where they buy goods to sell back in in Africa. Over time, some have chosen to stay, and for these Africans China looks like the new land of opportunity, a place where anything is possible. But is it?

Featuring a dynamic cast of men and women from Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda. *Guangzhou Dream Factory* weaves the stories of Africans chasing alluring, yet elusive, "Made in China" dreams into a compelling critique of 21st century global capitalism. Following a filmmakers' journey from Ghana to China and back to Africa, *Guangzhou Dream Factory* provides a rare glimpse of African aspirations in an and of endless outsourcing.

Review: <http://www.cihablog.com/film-review-guangzhou-dream-factory/>

Trailer: <https://www.gzdreamfactory.com/trailer/>

PAPA RAINBOW – 2016 (77 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5472146/plotsummary?ref=tt_ov_pl

In China, most families have difficulties facing their lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender (LGBT) children. They have to contend with common social beliefs that homosexuality is shameful, abnormal, a perverted condition caused by deviant family relationships. Many parents see their kids as their property, and fathers often assert their authority to ensure that no harm comes to the family reputation. The documentary *Papa Rainbow* features six Chinese fathers who talk openly and freely about their experiences with their LGBT children. Speaking out against discrimination and stigma, they redefine what it means to protect a household. They fully embrace their kids for who they are, and become pioneer activists fighting for an equal and diverse society.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSfC-RzpLK0>

BORN IN CHINA – 2016 (79 MINUTES)

<https://variety.com/2017/film/reviews/born-in-china-review-1202027208/>

...*Born in China* makes a number of pointed references to the ravishing glory of the Chinese wilderness, but what's striking about it, really, is that the sections of Western and Central China in which the film was shot look so much like areas of the Rocky Mountains. It's a bit of a revelation, because when we think of China, we tend to imagine either sprawling cities or a certain kind of decorous flat rural farming terrain. To the extent that "Born in China" is, by its very existence, a minor act of cross-cultural diplomacy, its most progressive effect is to unveil the majestic diversity of Chinese landscapes.

And, of course, to show us how pandas really live! China is the only place on earth where these roly-poly creatures exist in the wild, and the story that "Born in China" tells, of a panda named Ya Ya raising her child, Mei Mei, in the bamboo woods, is one of unadorned love and a kind of becalmed indolence. The tender comedy of pandas is that they really look like what they are: the soulful couch potatoes of nature. They basically sit around stuffing their faces, consuming up to 40 pounds of bamboo a day, but that doesn't mean they aren't good at moving; one of Mei Mei's crucial rituals is to learn how to scurry up a tree. In the most quietly touching story "Born in China" tells, these two must finally separate, not because anything harsh happens but simply because life happens, a lesson the movie presents with a simplicity that should resonate with adults and children alike.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGJh7Zhq6SE>

THIS IS LIFE – 2016 (106 MINUTES)

<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/movies/la-et-mn-capsule-this-is-life-review-20161119-story.html>

This Is Life, directed by Chen Weijun, opens with an instrumental "Ave Maria" playing over the sound of crying newborn babies while a camera floats angelically above the fray of a hospital floor. It's the single moment of respite in the film until the end, where the film closes with a tender song about motherhood over soaring aerial cityscapes.

What comes in between isn't so gentle. It's a harrowing journey into the bowels of a large urban hospital where high-risk pregnancies and births are tackled with a jarring forthrightness by the doctors.

Weijun and his filmmaking team were granted intimate access to the hospital, and the footage they capture obscures none of the hard, messy truths about childbirth. For Western audiences, there may be something a bit shocking about the brutally honest bedside manner of the doctors, as well as their demands for payment up front. One rural farmer enlists his brother to collect funds so that the hospital will schedule a surgery to save his wife and their premature twins.

With a fly-on-the-wall observational approach, the film's unobtrusive style and loose structure following four different women's experiences can feel overwhelming. But what emerges is a portrait of doctors and staff who work hard to do the right thing for their patients and the

Chen Weijun Selected Documentary Filmography

- 2016 This is Life (Director)
- 2012 Education, Education (Director)
- 2012 Chinese Dream (Director)
- 2008 The Biggest Chinese Restaurant in the World (Director, Cinematographer)
- 2007 Please Vote for Me (Director, Cinematographer)
- 2003 To Live Is Better Than To Die (Director, Cinematographer)

babies, who have no voice. It is life, fought for and forged in the most difficult of circumstances.



UNDER THE SAME SKY – 2016 (20 MINUTES)

<https://www.newday.com/film/under-same-sky>

In 2014, the Chinese government started a new national campaign on equal elementary education, but at the same time strengthened the residential registration system to segregate the rural and urban areas. Through this observational documentary we watch as class and regional lines collide to debunk the Chinese propaganda about equality.

The truth is revealed that the elementary education in China puts young children under unbearable and shocking pressure, which is what I've personally suffered from while growing up. Now as an adult, in reviewing the education I received in China

I discovered the influence it had on me and what it is still doing to children today that come from different backgrounds.

Trailer:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiW_UBiv2lU&list=PLh5xsVxKnSngBd3ihWJw4PaMWnx3bro5s&index=116

THE IVORY GAME – 2016 (112 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Ivory_Game

The documentary concerns the poaching of elephants in Africa, related to the ivory trade in China and Hong Kong, and the repercussions of elephant poaching if it is allowed to continue. Directors Keif Davidson and Richard Ladkani spent 16 months undercover along with their crew and several subjects investigating the killing of elephants for their tusks and the smuggling of ivory to China, where it is seen as a status symbol. While illegal, there is a rampant black market where corrupt business practices and dealings occur. The film takes its viewers from Tanzania, Kenya, and Zambia to China, Hong Kong, and Vietnam, briefly stopping in London...

In China, Andrea Crosta, who is head of investigation for Wildleaks, a whistle-blowing site for "wildlife crime", and Hongxiang Huang, an investigative journalist, go undercover to gather evidence of illegal importing and selling of ivory. China has become the world's biggest market for ivory. The Chinese government releases 5 tons of ivory per year to licensed dealers, making it difficult to discern between legal and illegal ivory. Crosta and Huang, along with their hidden cameras, expose many dealers bragging about having much more ivory than their licenses allow and reveals the many loopholes in ivory regulations which have helped create an intense demand.

Review: <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-ivory-game-2016>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3GPEKKaSmZY>

PLASTIC CHINA – 2016 (86 MINUTES)

<https://filmsfortheearth.org/en/films/plastic-china>

...*Plastic China's* main character Yi-Jie is an unschooled 11-year-old girl whose family works and lives in a typical plastic waste household-recycling workshop. As much as her life is poor and distorted, she's a truly global child who learns the outside world from the waste workshop that her family lives in and works in - also known as the "United Nations of Plastic Wastes." She lives her happiness and sorrows amongst the waste, as well. Small packs of discarded instant black powder tells her the bitter taste of "coffee"; the English children's learning cards teach her words like "summer" and "father's day"; and broken Barbie dolls are her best friends to talk to. This is her world. Her father has promised to send her to school five years ago but not yet delivered on it. Instead, he spends his hard-earned money from the plastic workshop on alcohol. However, Yi-Jie keeps her wish alive of going to school one day, and we see her holding her playful campaign towards learning and schooling. Will she succeed to sit in a classroom and learn? Or will she succeed her parents as an illiterate laborer in the recycling workshop? What is her future?

Kun, the owner of this household-recycling workshop, represents money, power and the educated class for Yi-Jie. He looks down on Yi-Jie's family, but also depends on them to do the dirty labor that nobody else wants to do. Often, he teaches Yi-Jie to read and write, when he is in a good mood.

Kun works day and night and ignores the physical and mental health problems of his own family and himself, just to save for a sedan car like any other factory boss in the region. He's afraid of being looked down upon and owning a car is the status symbol of being successful in the world.

Following these families' daily lives, *Plastic China* explores how this work of recycling plastic waste with their bare hands takes a toll not only on their health, but also their own dilemma of poverty, disease, pollution and death. All of this to eek out a daily living..

Use in class: <https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/ea/archives/plastic-china/>

Teacher Guide: http://misc.docuseek2.com/gej/guides/gj-022a_guide.pdf

Trailer: <https://www.cnex.tw/plasticchina>

Where Will Your Plastic Trash Go Now That China Doesn't Want It?

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2019/03/13/702501726/where-will-your-plastic-trash-go-now-that-china-doesnt-want-it#:~:text=A%20lot%20of%20the%20plastic,thus%20not%20profitable%20to%20import.>



BITTER MONEY – 2016 (153 MINUTES)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/11/movies/bitter-money-review.html>

...Wang Bing's subject is the mass migration to Huzhou, where a boom in clothing manufacturing seems roughly comparable to the North Dakota oil rush in the United States. Residents from rural areas have gone to Huzhou for jobs. Mr. Wang documents the bustle on a crowded train to the city, though typically, he doesn't provide statistical details until the closing title cards.

Only some of the workers, filmed between 2014 and 2016, stand out. The most tense interaction occurs early, when a woman who has left her abusive husband returns to him seeking money. Mr. Wang films the resulting altercation in a 10-minute take, with his camera crouching

outside a shop door like a voyeur. The director's methods are open to ethical debate, but the power of his filmmaking, at its best, is not.

Review: <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/bitter-money-ku-qian-film-928706>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSXj5d7f41w>

TA'ANG — 2016 (148 MINUTES)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/04/movies/taang-review-wang-bing.html>

The documentary filmmaker Wang Bing is a dogged chronicler of China's downtrodden. His *Ta'ang* also documents a kind of limbo. During armed clashes in Myanmar in February 2015, refugees from the Ta'ang and other ethnic minority groups in the country's northeastern Kokang region fled across the border into China.

Mr. Wang spends time on the Chinese side, observing daily life in refugee camps and at other sites along the mountainous border. The refugees cut sugar cane to sell and scrounge for money for personal transport. We learn of separated families. It's a mild shock whenever someone uses a cellphone — a rare reminder of modernity.

Incorporating his typically arduous, slow-paced style, Mr. Wang doesn't make things easy for viewers. His subjects aren't identified directly; the person speaking is frequently off camera. This vagueness may be a universalizing strategy, reflecting a place where people are, in one man's words, "here one minute, gone the next." But it's also a double-edged sword that prevents most participants from standing out.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4lcgo7YDk64>

NANGCHEN SHORTS — 2016 — WATER (8 MINUTES), RITUAL OBJECTS (15 MINUTES), AND TSAMPA (7 MINUTES)

<http://www.btgproductions.com/nangchen>

Nangchen Shorts, a triptych of short films, were filmed in and around Kala Rongo, a Buddhist Monastery exclusively for women in Kham, Tibet.

In *Water*, a Tibetan woman collects water near her family's yak farm, in a ritual that takes her an hour to complete. In the developing world, water-gathering is primarily a woman's job - rural Tibet is no exception. Several times a day, she carries a bucket to a potable source of water and brings it back home 80-pounds full. This task is physically debilitating, and keeps her from seeking education, wage-earning jobs, and rest from her other exhausting tasks.

Ritual Objects explores three traditional Buddhist rituals via the implements that are used in them. A young nun shares the meaning and mechanics of the iconic Tibetan Prayer Wheel. The visit of a High Lama to their remote monastery prompts a group of nuns to prepare a customary welcoming procession. And an old monk gently instructs one of the nuns on how to prepare the tormas for an intricate Tibetan Buddhist ceremony.

Trailer: <http://www.btgproductions.com/nangchen>

In *Tsampa*, a young nun quietly preparing tsampa in a traditional yak tent and are treated to a brief lesson in how to make eating a mindful act. Tsampa - sometimes called the Tibetan national food - is a mixture of roasted barley flour, yak butter and tea, and is often the only food available to the subsistence farmers and yak herders of rural Tibet.

Trailer: <http://www.btgproductions.com/nangchen>



In 2019, *Water* was selected for the Italian educational program "BETWEEN CINEMA AND NATURE: Training for Sustainable Development." This initiative pairs films with a country-wide school curriculum raising awareness of the 17 goals of the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030. *Water* has been chosen to enrich the discussion of Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation.

SKY LADDER – 2016 (76 MINUTES)

This documentary is directed by Scotland-born Kevin McDonald. The Sky Ladder is a 1,650-foot ladder of fire climbing into the skies above artist Cai Guo-Qiang's hometown. Creating ambitious signature pieces on the largest imaginable scales, Cai's electrifying work often transcends physical permanence while burning its philosophies into the audience members' minds. Told through the artist's own words and those of family, friends and observers, the film tracks Cai's meteoric rise and examines why he engineers artworks that loom as far as the eye can see.

Review: <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/sky-ladder-the-art-of-cai-guo-qiang-2016>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LT8ogRf50>

ANOTHER YEAR – 2016 (181 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5886728/>

Thirteen dinners of a Chinese migrant worker's family over the course of fourteen months. The film portrays a series of random occurrences. Joys, frustrations and the struggle for survival. The meals unfold in real-time through thirteen static, long takes. Each take captures with vivid detail the reality of the relationships between the different family members. As the seasons unfold, so does time and the echoes for better working conditions penetrate the frame. Issues such as the one-child policy and the possibilities for better wages weigh heavily on the minds of the three-generation family. Thus, the room where the family gathers night after night becomes an observational microcosm of the transformations that the Chinese working class faces on a daily basis. By examining the lives of migrant workers, who left their rural hometowns to look for a better life in cities, the film creates a powerful and moving meditation on China's economic boom and massive urbanization...

Reviews: <https://theartsofslowcinema.com/2016/04/12/another-year-shengze-zhu-2016/>

<https://mubi.com/notebook/posts/shengze-zhu-introduces-her-film-another-year>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nROUeZlqtY>

FACTORY YOUTH – 2016 (196 MINUTES)

<https://www.chinaindiefilm.org/films/factory-youth/>

Shenzhen, yet another economic miracle of contemporary global China. What do the towering skyscrapers, the glossy malls and the endless apartments mean, however, to those scraping to survive in this new Industrial Revolution? Starting from visions of the factory floor as their bleak life space, Guo Xizhi follows youths through the city, where they seek tawdry escape, and the damaged countryside they are now alienated from, probing the depths of change and loss that mark a generation.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEPR3xN5MNo>

WHERE ARE YOU GOING? – 2016 (130 MINUTES)

<https://theartsofslowcinema.com/2016/02/08/where-are-you-going-zhengfan-yang-2016/>

Where Are You Going? is an apt title for a film, which puts you in the seat of a taxi, or a bus, or anything on four wheels that takes you from A to B. The standard first question a taxi driver asks you becomes a metaphor in Zhengfan's film, though. The film is not only divided into several car journeys across Hong Kong. I found that, more than anything, the question was metaphorical for where the characters (want to) go in their lives. Who are they? Zhengfan doesn't show them. Sometimes we're not even sure whether there is someone with us in the

car which is travelling through the night or through the busy streets of Hong Kong under the sizzling sun. Their voices are the protagonists. The characters become a face only through their voices, and those voices create not only a personality but an entire life of that personality in front of your eyes. You cannot see the character, but you get to know him/her in an astonishingly detailed way.

Every character has a story to tell but only reveals pain, frustration, anger and sorrow slowly and gradually over the course of a long take. The viewer gets a glimpse of Hong Kong society through the eyes of people from very different backgrounds and social status.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiH9S35GDMI>



UNDER THE DOME – 2015 (104 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Under_the_Dome_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Under_the_Dome_(film))

Under the Dome is a 2015 self-financed Chinese documentary by Chai Jing, a former China Central Television journalist, concerning air pollution in China. It was viewed over 150 million times on Tencent within three days of its release, and had been viewed a further 150 million times by the time it was taken offline four days later.

Chai Jing started making the documentary when her as yet unborn daughter developed a



tumor in the womb, which had to be removed very soon after her birth. Chai blames China's air pollution for the tumor. The film, which combines footage of a lecture with interviews and factory visits, has been compared with Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* in both its style and potential impact. The film openly criticizes state-owned energy companies, steel producers and coal factories, as well as showing the inability of the Ministry

of Environmental Protection to act against the big polluters.

Despite demonstrating the failure of China's regulations on pollution, the Chinese government at first did not censor the film. Instead, the *People's Daily* reposted the film alongside an interview with Chai, while Chen Jining, the recently appointed minister for environmental protection, praised the film, expressing in a text message his gratitude.^[2] However, within a week, the Communist Party's publicity department confidentially ordered the film to be removed. An employee of China Business News was suspended for leaking the order.

Review: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/07/world/asia/china-blocks-web-access-to-documentary-on-nations-air-pollution.html>

Stream entire film here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6X2uwlQGQM&feature=emb_logo



BEHEMOTH – 2015 (95 MINUTES)

<https://variety.com/2015/film/festivals/behemoth-review-1201625962/>

Maverick indie helmer Zhao Liang continues his muckraking tour of China's social and environmental woes with the stunningly lensed, cumulatively moving *Behemoth*. Acting as a modern-day Dante on a tour through Inner Mongolia's coal mine and iron works, Zhao (*Together, Petition*) eschews narrative for an impressively self-shot poetic exercise in controlled righteous outrage, emphasizing the contrasts between rapidly dwindling green pastures and dead landscapes disemboweled by toxic mining. The human toll is also here in the final sections, making starkly clear the price impoverished workers pay for back-breaking labor.

Zhao's quiet yet powerful indignation will play to the arthouse crowd, and his striking visuals ensure that *Behemoth* receives berths beyond environmental fests...

Interview with Zhao Liang: <https://www.slantmagazine.com/film/interview-zhao-liang-talks-behemoth-and-censorship/>

Review: <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2016/aug/21/behemoth-zhao-liang-review>

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfO_0B6_YYY

WU TU: MY LAND – 2015 (83 MINUTES)

https://www.berlinale.de/en/archive/jahresarchive/2016/02_programm_2016/02_filmDatenblatt_2016_201606522.html#tab=video25

Vegetable farmer Chen Jun runs a telephone hotline for Beijing's migrant workers. He helps them fight for their rights. The municipality whose land he has farmed for many years now wants to earn money by building tower blocks for China's burgeoning new middle class. But Chen Jun and his wife refuse to be fobbed off without compensation; instead they take up the fight against all kinds of intimidation, even if that means years of living in the midst of a building site without electricity or water.

They are idealists, full of civic spirit and a

deep sense of solidarity with fellow migrant workers in a country in which the laws do not appear to apply to everyone in the same way.

Since 2010, director Fan Jian has accompanied these two activists who, alongside their commitment to fighting for their rights, are raising two children, instilling in them a healthy respect for the land and a critical perspective on the powerful. A universal and touching story of two people engaged in a struggle against great adverse powers; a couple who refuse to be browbeaten and who, in spite of everything, manage to retain their humanity and decency...

Review: <https://medium.com/@filmvore/wu-tu-my-land-b454987acc43>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFnrpf40ssk>

Fan Jian: *In the last few years, my creative direction has shifted somewhat. I'm less interested in big social issues now and more interested in people's psychology. That's a transformation or a development in how I understand the art of documentary. Even in my past films, I was always interested in people's personal lives, in delving into their individuality. In "My Land," a big part was looking at the relationships and emotions in [migrant farmer couple] Chen Jun and Xiao Feng's family. There was little that directly addressed social problems. I left that for audiences to reflect on themselves, merely creating a space in which they could consider those issues.*

I want to eliminate the topic-ness, eliminate the Chinese-ness, because when a Chinese documentary appears on the international stage, people see it as an analysis of contemporary China and its issues. That's not really what I want to do as a creator.



THE VERSE OF US / IRON MOON – 2015 (96 MINUTES)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/11/movies/iron-moon-review.html>

The Qin Xiaoyu and Wu Feiyue documentary *Iron Moon* has a slowly mounting, but lingering, impact. The film concerns poets in Southern China who, while enduring arduous, sometimes hazardous conditions in working-class occupations, preserve their spirits with verse. Its inspiration is Xu Lizhi, the 24-year-old poet and laborer at a Foxconn electronics factory in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, who leapt to his death in 2014. Mr. Xu was one of the countless workers from the countryside who travel to China's growing cities seeking employment, only to be eaten alive by the tedious, pitiless demands of industry.

Iron Moon (the title comes from Mr. Xu's "I Swallowed an Iron Moon" examines four living poets, some writing pseudonymously. The young Blackbird (whose real name is Wu Niaoniao) attends a job fair and performs at a reading with other worker-poets. Lucky Chen (Chen Nianxi), a demolitions expert, risks his life daily underground while tending a paralyzed father and aging mother living in rural squalor. Old Coalmine (Lao Jing), a coal miner for 25 years, writes of "ghosts between coal seams and rock crevices." In her poem "Sundress," Dawn (Wu Xia), 33, a seamstress since she was 14, considers the affluent woman who will enjoy the fruits of her labor amid wealth Ms. Wu will never know.

With arresting images, *Iron Moon* powerfully addresses China's moral crisis in the wake of economic prosperity. Today, "if you don't have money or power, it's really hard," says Xu Lizhi's father. Especially if you're working the line.

Q & A with director Qin Xiaoyu:

<https://uschinatoday.org/qa/2017/06/22/qa-with-xiaoyu-qin-on-iron-moon/>

Reviews: Is there room for poetry in contemporary society? *Iron Moon* an award-winning documentary that splices together the working-class life of its subjects with their work, suggests poetry is more important now than ever.

<https://supchina.com/2019/05/10/iron-moon-a-beautiful-portrait-of-chinas-working-class-poets/>

<http://www.sixthtone.com/news/929/poet-worker-documentary-hits-cinemas-through-crowdfunding-0>

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/186456414>

*I swallowed a moon made of iron
They refer to it as a nail
I swallowed this industrial sewage,
these unemployment documents
Youth stooped at machines die before
their time
I swallowed the bustle and the
destitution
Swallowed pedestrian bridges, life
covered in rust
I can't swallow any more
All that I've swallowed is now
gushing out of my throat
Unfurling on the land of my
ancestors*

Into disgraceful poem

For information on the poets and their poetry see:
<http://www.ironmoonmovie.com/>

CATCHING THE SUN – 2015 (75 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catching_the_Sun_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catching_the_Sun_(film))

Directed by Shalini Kantayya, the film features portraits of diverse personalities and their roles in the transition to solar power. Unemployed workers in Richmond, California, businessmen in China, Tea Party activists, and would be White House adviser are all featured in the film. The film debunks a false dilemma that clean energy requires sacrificing economic prosperity.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjTi1j4enl4>



THE ROAD – 2015 (95 MINUTES)

<https://www.idfa.nl/en/film/a20a8ca0-5bb3-414c-acfd-1491d2d1bd3c/the-road>

In four chapters, director Zhanbo Zhang documents the abuses surrounding the construction of a giant highway through Hunan province from the perspective of the local population, the construction company and the laborers. In 2008, the Chinese government decided to invest \$586 billion on infrastructure in an effort to stimulate the economy. The new highway is part of President Hu's three-stage strategy, a process of modernization that has been underway for some 30 years now. In reality, the project is being

run by corrupt Party members, bad employers and local gangsters. Many homes belonging to

local people have been damaged by explosives, and the private construction company is endlessly dragging its feet when it comes to paying its employees. Behind the scenes at the construction company, we hear their plans to deal with dissent: “If people obstruct the construction with no reason, we must strike back without mercy and arrest them if needed.” Meanwhile, a building inspector has discovered that the construction of the highway is both unsound and completely illegal. It also turns out that many of the laborers haven’t been paid, and on a neighboring highway construction site 19 get killed in an explosion in a tunnel. Everyone is at odds – it would seem that building a highway is a little like fighting a war. Nevertheless, the Xu-Huai Highway was opened with great fanfare in 2013.
Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/169221433>



THE MUSIC OF STRANGERS – 2015 (95 MINUTES)

<https://www.silkroad.org/tmos>

The Grammy-nominated documentary *The Music of Strangers*, follows members of the Ensemble as they gather in locations across the world, exploring the ways art can both preserve traditions and shape cultural evolution.

Blending performance footage, personal interviews, and archival film, Oscar-winning director Morgan Neville and producer Caitrin Rogers focus on the personal journeys of a small group of Silkroad Ensemble mainstays — Kinan Azmeh (Syria), Kayhan Kalhor (Iran), Yo-Yo Ma (France/United States), Wu Man (China), and Cristina Pato (Spain) — to chronicle passion, talent, and sacrifice. Through these moving individual stories, the filmmakers paint a vivid portrait of a bold musical experiment and a global search for the ties that bind.



Curriculum Guide: <https://www.silkroad.org/resources-tmos>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pim7mvgXerg>



THE CHINESE MAYOR – 2015 (89 MINUTES)

<https://variety.com/2015/film/reviews/sundance-film-review-the-chinese-mayor-1201419888/>

Granted remarkable access to the daily business of a high-ranking mainland Chinese official, Zhou Hao’s *The Chinese Mayor* offers a fascinating verite portrait of the collision between



progress, politics, corruption and citizens’ rights in a rapidly changing People’s Republic. This rare peek behind the usual scrim of government image management is a natural for niche

broadcasters and anyone else interested in quality current-events documentary features. Fifty-four-year-old Geng Yanbo is the mayor of Datong, a metropolis of 3.4 million in

Shanxi province that was long a coal-industry capital. But now that business is in decline, leaving as its major legacy the status of China’s most polluted city. Geng has made it his mission to transform Datong into a tourist-magnetizing cultural center, highlighting its important

role throughout central dynasties of Imperial Chinese history.

...The film’s breathlessly on-the-run progress suggests Zhou had almost unlimited access — an intimacy underlined near the close when Geng asks just what the director has been filming, as he’d become so accustomed to the one-man crew he’d long since forgotten he

In Datong, a Crumbling Legacy of China’s Most Extreme Urban Makeover
<http://www.sixthtone.com/news/1006277/in-datong%2C-a-crumbling-legacy-of-chinas-most-extreme-urban-makeover>

was there. Compelling as both nonfiction narrative and character capture, the pic has a laserlike focus strengthened by the lack of soundtracked music or other packaging filigree. Review: <https://medium.com/east-asia-on-screen/datong-%E5%A4%A7%E5%90%8C-movie-review-a-two-faced-chinese-mayor-fe228a7fb861>

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHJlVDTl6IQ&has_verified=1



ALL EYES AND EARS: COMPLEX LINKS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA – 2015 (75 MINUTES)

<https://china.usc.edu/calendar/lrccs-chinese-film-series-all-eyes-and-ears>

A timely exploration into the complex links between the U.S. and China, Vanessa Hope's documentary feature debut evokes the personal and the international with its accent on diplomacy, activism and individual experience. Interspersed with remarks from journalists and experts, *All Eyes and Ears* interweaves the stories of U.S. Ambassador to China Jon Huntsman, his adopted Chinese daughter, Gracie Mei, and blind legal advocate Chen Guangcheng as they find purpose, identity and resolve amid the two nations' evolving relationship.

Trailer: <https://www.amazon.com/All-Eyes-Ears-Jon-Huntsman/dp/B01MQSEBM2>



PATHS OF THE SOUL – 2015 (118 MINUTES)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/13/movies/review-paths-of-the-soul-a-road-trip-unlike-any-other.html>

Paths of the Soul is rare in several respects, not least that it is a depiction of Buddhism in Tibet that has passed muster with Chinese censors. Directed by Zhang Yang, it dramatizes a 1,200-mile pilgrimage by the actual residents of the Tibetan village of Nyima. The movie so upends the traditions of documentary and narrative filmmaking that “dramatizes” may be inaccurate — the filmmakers followed the real pilgrims for a full year, after all. But the movie is so well made and engaging that such distinctions will make little difference to the viewer.

Walking for hundreds of miles is difficult, especially when the 11 pilgrims who set out for Lhasa and its Jokhang Temple, the most revered site in Tibetan Buddhism, are purposefully falling to the ground every few steps. With cut wooden blocks protecting their palms, they dive downward and stretch out, making sure to touch their foreheads to the earth. It's tricky devotional work, and dangerous, too, given the terrain and the traffic on winding roads up and around mountains. The group contains a couple of “types” — the village drunk, a wise elder — but they and others don't bring Western-style narrative intrigue to the journey. Instead, we see a united and good-humored community pulling together under increasingly extraordinary circumstances, including childbirth.

The views of Tibet are spectacular; you get the impression of traveling through an ancient world. The group doesn't traverse a modern city until over an hour into the film, and Mr. Yang plays down the pilgrims' attachment to technology: It's only a little after they leave the city that we learn that at least one is carrying a cellphone. That comes as something of a relief, as by this time, I was fervently concerned for their safety.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07FFZK8uHII>

TWENTY TWO – 2015 (112 MINUTES)

<https://raifilm.org.uk/films/twenty-two/>

The film, *Twenty Two*, focuses on Chinese ‘comfort women’ during World War II. At the time of filming, only 22 of the 200,000 Chinese victims forced into sexual slavery remained alive. Quietly humanistic, this challenging film follows these elderly women as they go about their lives, listening to them talk about their experiences and their own perspectives, including both suffering and happiness. Avoiding intrusiveness, the film assembles and preserves fragments of histories both factual and highly personal, ensuring their voices are heard.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQcQAGS7w3Y>

The film, *Twenty Two*, got its name from the number of surviving Chinese “comfort women” in 2014, when director Guo Ke prepared to make the film. In 2012, Guo’s first short documentary was named *Thirty Two*. His documentary presents the true story of Wei Shaolan and follows her traumatic and courageous journey from forced prostitution to life today with her Japanese son.

Watch this 44-minute film here:

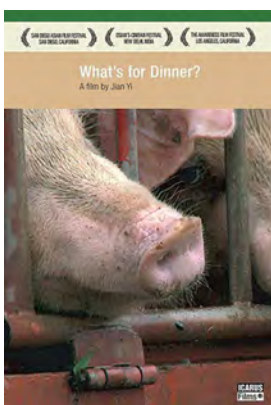
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRxO_MitId0

A BITE OF CHINA: CELEBRATING THE CHINESE NEW YEAR – 2015 (89 MINUTES)

https://www.timeoutshanghai.com/features/Film-Film_features/49611/12-unmissable-Chinese-Documentaries.html

A full-length feature coming from one of China's top TV series, *A Bite of China: Celebrating The Chinese New Year* not only introduces local food culture, but also illustrates how families across the country celebrate the most important holiday of the year. This film will fill you with joy, appreciation and (perhaps above all) hunger.

Stream entire feature here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8C2rizBCHtI>



WHAT'S FOR DINNER? – 2009 (29 MINUTES)

SIX YEARS ON – 2015 SEQUEL (29 MINUTES)

<http://wfdinner.com/home/>

What's For Dinner? examines the rapidly increasing consumption of animal-based foods in China that has mirrored the country's swift economic growth in recent years. Average pork consumption has doubled over the past ten years, with both western and home-grown fast food chains becoming commonplace in urban centers and creating a \$28 billion-a-year market in the country. None of this would be possible without the adoption of U.S.-style systems of intensive production.

But strains are showing: manure run-off from so-called “factory farms” housing thousands of pigs, chickens, and ducks is fouling groundwater and rivers; only two generations after a national famine killed millions, nearly a quarter of Chinese adults and a fifth of Chinese children are overweight or obese; and diet-related chronic diseases now kill more people in China than any other cause.

In the film (Mandarin and various Chinese dialects with English subtitles), award-winning independent director Jian Yi captures the shift in how China eats and produces food through interviews with people across Chinese



Download Classroom Resources which includes pre- and post-viewing questions, background information, and resources for further research:
<http://wfdinner.com/guides/> OR
http://wfdinner.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/wfdinner_viewing_guide_letter.pdf

society – such as Zhou Shuzhen, a retired pig farmer from Jiangxi province; Wang Ronghua, a young livestock entrepreneur who's expanding his pig and poultry farms; and Wen Bo, one of China's leading environmentalists.

The film offers a unique look into China's rapidly changing food and agricultural landscape and sheds light on some of its consequences for public health, sustainability, the environment, climate change, and animal welfare. Much of the footage documents places, people, and events that have never been filmed before in China.

Director interview:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=UUtXrQsgpxagcmGHv571A0CQ&v=rPQZSFW7iis&feature=emb_logo

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwtMphRuhAg&feature=emb_logo

Six Years On revisits some of the places and people (including the film crew) featured in the 2009 film *What's For Dinner?* and poses questions about the future of the country's food production and consumption. What has and hasn't changed in their lives and their awareness and understanding of animal agriculture?

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DszcdNsUWVc&feature=emb_logo



NOWHERE TO CALL HOME: A TIBETAN IN BEIJING – 2014 (83 MINUTES)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/24/movies/nowhere-to-call-home-examines-prejudices.html>

When the Tibetan farmer Zanta's husband died, she was forced by local custom to move in with her in-laws, who forbade her son to attend school. Instead, she packed up and moved to Beijing, where she was helped by a relative from another lifetime.

That is the beginning of *Nowhere to Call Home*, a documentary by a foreign correspondent in Beijing, Jocelyn Ford, showing at the Museum of Modern Art this month. The film follows Zanta (who, like many Tibetans, goes by one name) here and in her hometown, where she confronts her father-in-law. Along the way, it becomes clear that the relative from another lifetime is Ms. Ford, who breaks the traditional wall between journalist and subject by becoming a friend.

The film breaks down the sometimes romantic Shangri-La view that Westerners have of Tibet, showing it to be a place with many hidebound traditions, especially discrimination against women. It also offers a shocking portrait of the outright racism that Zanta and other Tibetans face in Chinese parts of the country. And it shows how many members of minorities lack even basic education: Zanta's sisters are illiterate, unable to count their change in the market or recognize the numbers on a cellphone. But maybe most surprising is that Ms. Ford has been quietly showing the film in China itself, eliciting admiration and unease that such a penetrating film was made by a foreigner...

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/46664189>

2018 discussion
with filmmaker
Jocelyn Ford:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jy3-fW5MGOU>



JIA ZHANGKE, A GUY FROM FENYANG – 2014 (105 MINUTES)

<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/jia-zhangke-a-guy-from-fenyang-2016>

...From the first, Jia has established himself as a realist who looks intently at specific places, people and situations with clear-eyed sympathy but without sentimentality or rhetorical intent. In doing so, he has provided a remarkable chronicle of China as it has been transformed by capitalism, globalization and technology. He has also been an intrepid stylistic innovator, especially in his use of digital cinema. While Salles' portrait gives a very incomplete

account of the man and his art, it pays tribute to a filmmaker who remains among the medium's foremost and most fascinating creators.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2Jcmq4tJuo>



CHINESE HIP-HOP UNDERGROUND — 2014 (45 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2061607/plotsummary?ref=tt_ov_pl

Chinese Hip-Hop Underground is an insider documentary following the story of Weber - one of Mainland China's first rappers. Weber's uncanny musical talents allow him to spearhead the creation of Chinese rap music - a free form of creative self-expression that spreads like wildfire amongst those struggling the most; young working class students and grassroots migrants left out of the country's meteoric rise. Even while Weber's music electrifies China's youth and gains a huge following, he is challenged by enemies posing a threat to his musical existence: state censors, on the one hand, and armies of state-backed pop stars seeking to steal the name of hip-hop for their own gain, on the other. Can Weber and underground musicians like him survive this assault? Will Underground Chinese hip-hop survive?

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xL4xN6oM00>

Four Documentaries
on Hip Hop to
Check out:
<https://radiichina.com/chinese-hip-hop-documentaries/>

OUT OF FOCUS — 2014 (88 MINUTES)

<https://www.torchfilms.com/products/out-of-focus>

On a steamy summer day, director Shengze Zhu (*Another Year*) began to teach photography at Lingzhi Elementary School in Wuhan, Central China, to a group of 23 “migrant children” aged 8-12. Lingzhi is known as the “rooftop” school, because its classes are held in a worn-down, four-floor apartment building with a rooftop playground, accommodating about 200 students.

All of the students are originally from rural areas but have moved to Wuhan, as their parents chase urban work and the possibility of a better life. When the children migrated from the tranquil countryside to the most populous city in Central China, most fell in love with the bustling city at first. They were intrigued by city life and ambitious about the future and their various dreams.

As it tells the stories of this group, the film focuses in detail on one pupil, Qin, and her family. An ambitious adolescent impatient to learn new technologies, Qin is furious that her parents have had three children. Forced to endure miserable low-income living conditions, and a discriminatory household registration policy known as hukou, Qin and her classmates share a common reality. The distance between the innocence of their hopes and the brutality of their lives could hardly be starker.

Trailer: <https://www.torchfilms.com/products/out-of-focus>

FALLEN CITY — 2014 (60 MINUTES)

<http://archive.pov.org/fallencity/>

In today's go-go China, an old city completely destroyed by a devastating earthquake can be rebuilt — boasting new and improved civic amenities — in an astoundingly quick two years. But, as *Fallen City* reveals, the journey from the ruined old city of Beichuan to the new Beichuan nearby is long and heartbreaking for the survivors. Three families struggle with loss — most strikingly the loss of children and grandchildren — and feelings of loneliness, fear

and dislocation that no amount of propaganda can disguise. First-time director Qi Zhao offers an intimate look at a country torn between tradition and modernity.



Lesson Plan: Memorializing Tragedy: <http://archive.pov.org/fallencity/lesson-plan/>

Download 13-page Discussion Guide: <http://archive.pov.org/fallencity/discussion-guide/>

Trailer: <http://archive.pov.org/fallencity/>

CHINA DREAMERS – 2014 (21 MINUTES)

<http://www.chinafile.com/multimedia/video/chinese-dreamers>

In a country that has long defined its interests in collective terms, people are no longer waiting for their goals and sacrifices to be decreed from above. In Sharron Lovell's insightful short film, she shows us the Chinese Dream not as a slogan but as the possession of the ordinary young men and women who will determine China's future.

Stream film here: <https://www.chinafile.com/multimedia/video/chinese-dreamers>

CHINA DREAMS: THE DEBATE – 2014 (11 MINUTES)

<http://vimeo.com/80820310>

Since Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the 'China Dream' as his official slogan in November 2012, many people inside and outside the PRC have been asking 'What is the China Dream?' Is it for national greatness or for a comfortable life? This 11 minute video explores how academics and artists in China and Singapore answer this key question about Chinese identity, politics and international relations.

Stream 11-minute discussion here: <http://vimeo.com/80820310>

COTTON – 2014 (93 MINUTES)

<https://watson.brown.edu/events/2017/cotton-screening-and-discussion-film-maker-zhou-hao>

For over a decade, Zhou has been making independent documentaries probing many of China's most urgent social issues, including migrant labour, drug abuse, law enforcement and political corruption, and *Cotton* continues this by exploring the lives and experiences of the unseen work force behind China's cotton trade.

The character driven documentary follows four principal characters, including a farmer, a cotton picker and workers in cotton factories, and takes the viewer on an odyssey into the heart of an incredibly labour-intensive industry, from planting and growing cotton in the North-Western province of Xinjiang through to fashion events in Southern Guangdong. Through their experiences Zhou examines the 'social contract' offered by the Chinese leaders to the citizens of the country, supposedly aimed at bringing about a new and harmonious society, but which is instead recreating the old class systems previously destroyed by the communist ideals and revolution of Mao. With ruthless commercial competition and a win at all costs attitude driving the industry, the incredibly humanistic film depicts its protagonists being subjected to harsh conditions as they try desperately to climb the social ladder of modern China, though at the same time maintaining extraordinary courage and dignity.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUmLBm5uoIU>

EMERGENCY ROOM CHINA — 2013 (89 MINUTES)

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/emergency-room-china-ji-chen-634290>

A gritty, low-budget documentary offering yet another nuanced look at how civil servants -- well-meaning medical staff this time -- operate amidst red tape and rough and tumble members of the Chinese public.



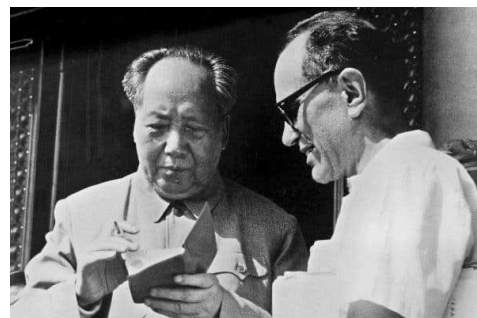
THE REVOLUTIONARY — 2013 (92 MINUTES)



<https://revolutionarymovie.com/>

Sidney Rittenberg (whose Chinese name is Li Dunbai) arrived in China as a GI Chinese language expert at the end of World War II. Discharged there, he joined the Chinese Communist Party, and was an active participant in the Chinese communist revolution and its aftermath. An intimate of the Party's leadership, including Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, he gained prominence at the Broadcast Administration, one of the most important agencies of government. But in the convulsions of a giant country constantly reinventing itself, he twice ran afoul of the leadership, and served a total of 16 years in solitary confinement. He returned to the United States in 1980.

Rittenberg captivates the audience with his exceptional intellect, uncompromising honesty, and engaging personality. Over a five-year period, award-winning former-CBS journalist and China specialist, Irv Drasin, interviewed Rittenberg to produce a compelling, complex and unique understanding of the 20th century's biggest revolution. From Sid first meeting Mao in the caves of Yan'an, to his becoming famous and powerful during the Cultural Revolution, to his battling insanity in solitary, his journey and his profound insight illuminate a much greater history — a history few Chinese are aware of, let alone many Americans, told by an American who was there.



Review: <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/12/movies/the-revolutionary.html>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vH9w34onSC8>

VILLAGE DIARY — 2013 (100 MINUTES)

<http://www.cccbbrussels.be/coming-soon/cs-events/cmn-village-diary.html>

During a year, documentary director Bo Jiao and his crew settled in a small rural village in the province of Shandong, China. *Village Diary* is the outcome of their experience and records the daily life of several farmer families. From their folk customs to their day to day struggle and hopes in a fast-changing China, the farmers open up to the crew that is soon considered as the 168th family of the village of Shaoyu.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJwYkK9dFI&feature=emb_logo



VALLEY OF THE HEROES: TIBET'S SHIFTING CULTURAL LANDSCAPE — 2013 (54 MINUTES)

<https://www.machikkhabda.org/valley-of-the-heroes.html>

Valley of the Heroes offers a rare glimpse at a pivotal moment of cultural and linguistic transition among Tibetans and Muslims in Hualong County, a remote community in Amdo, Tibet, part of what is now eastern Qinghai Province, PRC. Over the past several decades, Tibetans

living in Hualong have experienced rapid cultural shifts accelerated by language loss – today more than 30% are unable to speak their own native language. The film spends time with village residents and elders who reflect on the changes taking place in their community, and also documents a unique Tibetan language program that is attempting to address the situation.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYPfI7Ls38A&feature=emb_logo

‘TIL MADNESS DO US PART – 2013 (227 MINUTES)

<https://variety.com/2013/film/global/venice-film-review-til-madness-do-us-part-1200610004/>

There are endurance tests, and then there is Wang Bing's nearly four-hour plunge into the daily tedium and long-term despair of life in a mainland Chinese mental hospital. An unsparing chronicler of the abused and neglected in his country's darkest corners, Chinese documentarian Wang Bing pushes his starkly immersive strategies to a grueling yet empathetic extreme in *Til Madness Do Us Part*. There are endurance tests, and then there is this nearly four-hour plunge into the daily tedium and long-term despair of life in a mainland mental hospital, patrolling the same tightly enclosed quarters in a manner that seeks to reproduce, without compromise, an inhabitant's sense of physical, mental and spiritual entrapment.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQ1sy7A1kn0>

THE ROAD TO FAME – 2013 (80 MINUTES)

<http://www.famethedoc.com/>

Wu Hao's *The Road to Fame* tells a unique story of coming-of-age with Chinese characteristics. The film chronicles the staging of the American musical Fame—China's first official collaboration with Broadway—by the senior class at China's top drama academy as their graduation showcase. During the eight-month process, five students compete for roles, struggle with pressure from family and authority, and prepare to graduate into a cutthroat and corrupt show business. Part of China's Single-Child generation, they were spoiled growing up but are now obliged to carry on the failed dreams of their parents. They must confront complex social realities and their own anxieties, and, in the process of staging Fame, negotiate their own definitions of path to success in today's China.

Review: <https://www.theatlantic.com/china/archive/2013/11/china-s-brash-young-actors-swap-ideology-for-a-chance-at-fame/281327/>

Trailer: <http://www.famethedoc.com/trailer.html>



CHINA IN THREE WORDS – 2013 (15 MINUTES)

https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.4cabda6d-bcc1-7f85-0221-5b2e299a80f6?autoplay=1&ref=atv_cf_strg_wb

Author Yu Hua is one of the only “honest writers to survive in China,” as Ian Johnson recently wrote. This makes him not only a rarity, but also an inspiration. This short documentary takes its cue from an interview with Yu Hua about his latest book, “China in Ten Words,” focusing on words common in the Chinese vernacular, “Leader,” “Revolution,” and “Disparity,” with a fourth bonus word, “Bamboozle,” thrown in with a wink to its

meaning. Each word is illustrated with a personal story and insightful, witty analysis of the breakneck social and economic change happening in China today.

Trailer: https://www.fandor.com/films/china_in_three_words



WEB JUNKIE: TREATMENT FOR INTERNET ADDICTION IN CHINA – 2013 (76 MINUTES)

<http://archive.pov.org/webjunkie/>

Internet addiction has been declared a national health crisis in China, the first country in the world to classify this evolving diagnosis. Web Junkie follows the treatment of three Chinese teenagers, obsessive gamers whose preference for the virtual world over the real one is summed up in one jarring statement: "Reality is too fake." Israeli filmmakers Shosh Shlam and Hilla Medalia gained extraordinary access to a three-month military-style rehab program in Beijing, illuminating a process that, while stern, may help set a standard as the wider world comes to grips with the devastating consequences of excessive Internet use.

MBUR's On Point 48-minute podcast with filmmaker:

<https://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2015/07/13/internet-addiction-web-junkie>

Trailer: <http://archive.pov.org/webjunkie/video/video-webjunkie-trailer/>



Lesson plans, discussion guides, clips for the classroom found here:

<http://archive.pov.org/webjunkie/>

THE LAST MOOSE OF AOLUGUYA – 2013 (100 MINUTES)

<http://cinemaontheedge.com/the-last-moose-of-aoluguya/>

Award-winning filmmaker Gu Tao's weirder-than fiction documentary is a portrait of Weijia, a hunter-poet with a tumultuous life. Weijian is a member of the Ewenki minority, whose homeland is near Siberia in far northeastern China. Forbidden to continue hunting, the Ewenki have been forced to move from their forests into dreary Chinese government-designed permanent villages. Deprived of means of livelihood like many of his people, Weijia spends his time drinking and being a poet... when all of a sudden, as in a fairytale, a young teacher from Hainan, the tropical paradise island in China's far south, comes to marry him and sweep him away. Weijia, clad in tropical print shirts, doesn't quite fit into paradise, and his story turns dark, with intimations of madness and violence.

Review: <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/last-moose-aoluguya-han-da-694709>

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/thelastmooseofaoluguya>

The final installment in a trilogy of documentaries charting the struggling Ewenki ethnic minority in northern China, *The Last Moose of Aoluguya* is perhaps also the broadest in its scope. Employing footage shot across five years -- a period during which he finished the series' first two entries, *Aoluguya*, *Aoluguya* (2007) and *Yuguo and His Mother* (2011) -- Gu Tao has pieced together the trying existence of a creative and contemplative man whose artistic gift and generosity of spirit is whittled away by the natural or artificial realities in the margins of society.

THE MOSUO SISTERS – 2013 (80 MINUTES)

<http://www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c850.shtml>

A tale of two sisters living in the shadow of two Chinas, this documentary by award-winning filmmaker Marlo Poras (*Mai's America; Run Granny Run*) follows Juma and Latso, young women from one of the world's last remaining matriarchal societies. Thrust into the worldwide economic downturn after losing jobs in Beijing and left with few options, they return to their remote Himalayan village. But growing exposure to modernity has irreparably

altered traditions of the Mosuo, their tiny ethnic minority, and home is not the same. Determined to keep their family out of poverty, one sister sacrifices her educational dreams and stays home to farm, while the other leaves, trying her luck in the city. The changes test them in unexpected ways. This visually stunning film highlights today's realities of women's lives and China's vast cultural and economic divides while offering rare views of a surviving matriarchy.

Clip: <https://www.pbs.org/video/global-voices-mosuo-sisters-jumas-conflict/>

Trailer: <http://www.wmm.com/advscripts/wmmvideo.aspx?pid=220>

THE AFRICA-CHINA CONNECTION: A THRIVING BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP — 2013 (50 MINUTES)

<http://www.films.com/ecTitleDetail.aspx?TitleID=30656&r=SR>

While Europe and the U.S. were once the destinations of choice for workers migrating from low-wage countries, Africans looking to raise their standard of living have now proclaimed China “the new promised land.” This program goes to Nigeria Town in Guangzhou to investigate the strong economic relationship between Africa and China and what it may mean for the West. Political scientist Achille Mbembe (*On the Postcolony*) provides background on this partnership, in which roughly \$30 million in cash and goods moves from China to Nigeria every day and China opens its borders to even more African workers. In addition, World Bank vice president Ian Goldin explains how migrants can be a source of economic dynamism, something that Europe sorely needs but may miss out on due to its immigration policies.

CROCODILE IN THE YANGTZE: INSIDE A CHINESE INTERNET JUGGERNAUT — 2012 (77 MINUTES)

<http://www.films.com/ecTitleDetail.aspx?TitleID=25764>

Starting out as an English teacher and small-scale Web site builder, Jack Ma became China's first Internet entrepreneur, gradually assembling the Alibaba Group — a digital empire that faced off against eBay and won. This award-winning independent film was created by an American who worked in Ma's company for several years. It draws on a vast archive of footage shot between 1995 and 2009, presenting a candid portrait of the visionary businessman and documenting Alibaba's journey from scrappy start-up to stratospheric success. The result is an astonishingly relevant chronicle, told from the standpoint of an American fly on a Chinese wall, so to speak — an eyewitness account of the strategies Alibaba put in place during the period in which China's economy began to rival that of the U.S.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHlT3QxMqCs>

Stream entire film here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkVJNOQ7B74>



HIGH TECH, LOW LIFE – 2012 (88 MINUTES)

<http://archive.pov.org/hightechlowlife/>

High Tech, Low Life follows the journey of two of China's first citizen reporters as they travel the country – chronicling underreported news and social issues stories. Armed with laptops, cell phones, and digital cameras they develop skills as independent one-man news stations while learning to navigate China's evolving censorship regulations and avoiding the risk of political persecution. The film follows 57-year-old "Tiger Temple," who earns the title of China's first citizen reporter after he impulsively documents an unfolding murder and 27-year-old "Zola" who recognizes the opportunity

to increase his fame and future prospects by reporting on sensitive news throughout China. From the perspective of vastly different generations, Zola and Tiger Temple must both reconcile an evolving sense of individualism, social responsibility and personal sacrifice. The juxtaposition of Zola's coming-of-age journey from produce vendor to internet celebrity, and Tiger Temple's commitment to understanding China's tumultuous past provides an alternate portrait of China and of newsgathering in the 21st century.

This site includes book lists, discussion guides, interviews, bios, slideshows, etc.

Discussion Guide: <http://archive.pov.org/hightechlowlife/>

Lesson Plan: <http://archive.pov.org/hightechlowlife/lesson-plan/>

Trailer and classroom clips: <http://www.pbs.org/pov/hightechlowlife/additional-video.php>



MY REINCARNATION – 2012 (80 MINUTES)

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/myreincarnation/>

Filmed over 20 years by acclaimed documentarian Jennifer Fox, *My Reincarnation* chronicles the epic story of exiled Tibetan Buddhist master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and his Western-born son, Yeshe. As Namkhai Norbu rises as a teacher in the West, Yeshe, recognized from birth as the reincarnation of a famed Buddhist master, breaks away to embrace the modern world. Can the father convince his son to keep the family's spiritual legacy alive? With intimate access to both the family and H.H. The Dalai Lama, Fox distills a decades-long drama into a universal story about love, transformation and destiny.

Lesson Plan: <http://archive.pov.org/myreincarnation/lesson-plan/>

Discussion Guide: <http://archive.pov.org/myreincarnation/discussion-guide/>

Trailer and classroom clips: <http://archive.pov.org/myreincarnation/>



AI WEIWEI: NEVER SORRY – 2012 (91 MINUTES)

<http://aiweiweineversorry.com/>

Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry is the inside story of a dissident for the digital age who inspires global audiences and blurs the boundaries of art and politics. First-time director Alison Klayman gained unprecedented access to Ai while working as a journalist in China. Her detailed portrait provides a nuanced exploration of contemporary China and one of its most compelling public figures.

Trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MYFOzP6Xns>

Ai Wei Wei

<http://aiweiwei.com/>

Ai Weiwei is China's most famous international artist, and its most outspoken domestic critic. Against a backdrop of strict censorship and an unresponsive legal system, Ai expresses himself and organizes people through art and social media. In response, Chinese authorities have shut down his blog, beat him up, bulldozed his newly built studio, and held him in secret detention.

CHINA: FROM CARTIER TO CONFUCIUS – 2012 (45 MINUTES)

<http://www.films.com/ecTitleDetail.aspx?TitleID=29219>

Surging economic strength, expanding military capabilities, and an undeniable impact on the existing global order—these make up the dramatic narrative of 21st-century China.

Meanwhile, a small group of philosophy students at Shanghai's prestigious Fudan University convenes each Friday night to study texts by Confucius and other classical philosophers.

These young scholars have embraced—or at least do not disavow—China's consumerist-driven ascendancy, but they are insecure about the lack of principles to guide it. In the process of rediscovering values that were buried during the Cultural Revolution, a core question emerges: Will Confucianism regain more than a tentative foothold amid the fervor of state capitalism? Will the ruling class eventually welcome the ancient ideas and their implications for neo-conservatism and nationalism?

Post-Film Screening Q & A with co-producer Ying Zhu (37 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGz4CeJ71uc>

Stream entire film here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2j_2GBWqu_Y

RICH CHINA: AN EMERGING CLASS OF WEALTHY ELITES – 2012 (28 MINUTES)

<http://www.films.com/ecTitleDetail.aspx?TitleID=24717&r=SR>

In China, optimism is unyielding. Soon-to-be billionaire Zhang Yue has developed a stunning prefabricated building model that slashes construction time, and he predicts his company will soon be “the biggest in the world.” Beijing restaurateur Zhang Lan is similarly ambitious. She has built her Szechuan eatery chain, South Beauty, into a culinary empire employing 10,000 people, and she estimates that by 2020 she'll have 500 restaurants around the globe. And what of 34-year-old Yan Zhihui, co-owner of Jincheng electronics? With a net worth of a few million yuan, he considers himself to have entered “the lower end of China's middle class.”

This program puts a spotlight on the country's new paradigms of wealth and status, going inside the world of Chinese tycoons to examine the scope of their business plans and their dazzling luxury lifestyles. Yet the economic climate is changing and the good times may not last forever for China's high rollers. Can their momentum continue?

A HOME FAR AWAY – 2012 (100 MINUTES)

<http://ahomefaraway.com/en>

The extraordinary destiny of two people. After the Second World War, Lois is an actress in Broadway theatre, television and Hollywood films. Her husband, Edgar Snow, is world famous. A pioneer fascinated by China, he is the first journalist to film and interview Mao Tse-tung. Suspected by the American authorities of Communist sympathies, Ed and Lois are blacklisted. Together with their two small children, they go to Switzerland, mid-way between China and America, where they find a new home. A story of revolution, utopia, disillusionment, and hope

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNZnzf3RaHk>

CHINA HEAVYWEIGHT – 2012 (94 MINUTES)

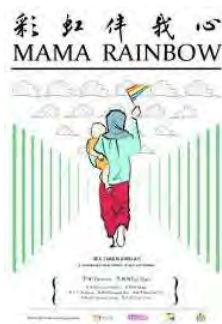
<https://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/06/movies/china-heavyweight-a-documentary-by-yung-chang.html>

There are no heavyweights in *China Heavyweight* Yung Chang's dispassionate look at the aspirational lure of Chinese amateur boxing programs. None, that is, unless you count the cinematographer, Sun Shaoguang. Illustrating the film's rags-to-ring narrative with panoramic mountain views and compact shots of young bodies punching their way up the food chain, Mr. Sun straddles ancient and modern, tranquility and turmoil, with equal sureness.

Appropriately for a documentary whose Chinese title translates as "To Be Tried and Tested a Thousand Times Over," the story concentrates on the mental and physical hurdles of two talented friends from Sichuan Province. Recruited as 12-year-olds in 2004 (five years before we meet them) and installed in boxing training camp, the boys respond very differently to the punishing schedule and barracks like accommodations...

Clip: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/chinaheavyweight/73175733?autoplay=1>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8utBPHp88PY>



MAMA RAINBOW — 2012 (80 MINUTES)

<https://asianmoviepulse.com/2020/05/documentary-review-mama-rainbow-2012-by-popo-fan/>

In this uplifting and touching documentary, filmmaker and gay rights activist Popo Fan follows six "mamas" and their gay sons and daughters and allow them to tell us about their personal experience of acceptance and empathy. Homosexuality is a sensitive issue in China; it is not illegal but often frowned upon and its cinematic representation almost nonexistent. The strongly family-centered Chinese society is one of the main pressures that gay people have to face in a culture where a heterosexual marriage blessed by children is considered a life's final destination. Despite discussions on the issue of same-sex marriage emerging in China (at the moment there is only a "guardianship agreement") and the public opinion towards LGBT+ people is becoming more tolerant; homosexuality is still a stigma for many people who must resort to lies or silence in order to avoid troubles. As the documentary immediately remarks, their families also suffer and find it difficult to talk to others about it...

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFTVOnaixKM>

THREE SISTERS — 2012 (153 MINUTES)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/10/movies/three-sisters-a-documentary-by-wang-bing.html>

Not for the faint of heart or weak of bladder, Wang Bing's two-and-a-half-hour *Three Sisters* documents extreme poverty in rural China with the compassionate eye and inexhaustible patience of a director whose curiosity about his country's unfortunates never seems to wane.

Filming for six months in a remote hillside village in 2010, Mr. Wang follows the spirit-crushing lives of a short-tempered peasant and his three little daughters. Their mother ran off long ago, and now Yingying, 10; 6-year-old Zhenzhen; and Fenfen, 4 — all so malnourished that they look years younger — spend their days doing chores and herding sheep. But when their father leaves for a job in the city, taking the two youngest girls with him, Yingying is left alone. A grandfather and an aunt live close by, but the girl's isolation and sadness suggest a poignant hopelessness, as though she has reached the age at which she has begun to notice a future. And it's not pretty.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlmjJoVDLVo>

EDUCATION, EDUCATION – 2012 (59 MINUTES)

<https://www.thewhy.dk/films/education-education>

"In China, the most lucrative industry is Education." Wang Zhenxiang, Tutor, Hongbo Education. There is a worldwide economic crisis, but everywhere parents are told that their children may escape the worst if they are educated, and everywhere children are pressured to climb the rungs of the ladder and acquire the totem of middle-class life – a university education. But does education secure what it is supposed to? Can a degree really get your out of poverty? Weijun Chen's film, set in Wuhan in central China, looks at the realities of Chinese education through the lives of Wang Zhenxiang, a tutor at the private Hongbo Education college, Wang Pan, high school graduate and would be student, and Wan Chao, graduate job seeker who goes from one unpromising interview to another.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoAo6Evc2Pc>

Watch entire 59-minute film here: <https://www.thewhy.dk/films/education-education>

A BITE OF CHINA/SERIES – 2012 (50-MINUTE SEGMENTS)

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/wordofmouth/2012/sep/12/bite-of-china-finest-food-tv-ever>



... *A Bite of China* began airing in May 2012 ... Thirty of the country's most respected filmmakers worked for more than a year filming the seven 50-minute episodes. They shot throughout the country, from the frozen lakes of the north-east and the bamboo forests of Liuzhou to the frenetic chaos of Beijing and Hong Kong... Each episode adopts a theme: preserving by salt, pickling or wind, staple foods, the "gifts of nature" or "our rural heritage". The filmmakers explore

the central idea using examples from across the country. Perspective shifts from the macro – helicopter shots of neon cities or canopied mountains rearing out of lakes – to the micro – a single bamboo shoot pushing through the earth.

Stream entire *The Secret of Kitchen* (50 minutes) episode here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QxvbeZ-9m4>

THOUGH I AM GONE – 2012 (68 MINUTES)

<http://icarusfilms.com/df-gone>

Pioneering artist Hu Jie uncovers the shocking story of girls' school headmistress who was beaten to death by her students during the Cultural Revolution.

In 1966, the Cultural Revolution exploded throughout China, as Mao's Red Guards persecuted suspected Rightists. Bian Zhongyun, the vice principal of a prestigious school in Beijing, was beaten to death by her own students, becoming one of the first victims of the revolutionary violence that would engulf the entire nation.

In *Though I am Gone*, Hu draws upon photographs taken by Bian's husband, Wang Jingyao, whose impulse to document his wife's death makes him a spiritual forebear to Hu's fearless work. Hu also incorporates vivid accounts from surviving witnesses and archival footage to depict the deadly madness of the era.

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/44405926>

SHATTERED – 2011 (100 MINUTES)

<https://iffr.com/en/2012/films/shattered>

Tang Xixin is a retired railway official who has lost little of his outspoken character at the age of 80. He does not like to receive his adult children in his ramshackle home, but he makes an exception for this daughter Caifeng. She runs a brothel and is involved in equally illegal mining practices. In other words, a woman of the world who tries energetically to keep out of the hands of the law.

Xu Tong films the family the way it is. The old Tang, with his flood of words, is an ideal witness to the 20th century; his daughter is a colorful symbol of the new China. Even though in the views of the state she is undoubtedly far from being a role model. Xu Tong's intimate, occasionally raw style of filming fits in well with that. He does not make any moral judgment and that makes him controversial in China. The result is nevertheless sincere and authentic.

Trailer: <https://iffr.com/en/2012/films/shattered>

FLOATING – 2011 (93 MINUTES)

<http://icarusfilms.com/df-flo>

Yang is a vagrant singer from China's rural Henan region: he earns his living by singing in the subways of urban business centers. Everyday he brings with him his temporary residency card and identification to avoid being detained by local police. In order to keep his work, he bribes the security guards in charge of the subways, deals circuitously with city workers, and squeezes out other street artists. From time to time, many of his busking friends are detained by local police and repatriated back home, only to return to the city and continue their drifting life. Yang, in the thirtieth year of his life, considers going back to his hometown to marry his first girlfriend, while old and new lovers make his life even more chaotic. Eventually he is caught by local police while singing, detained, and finally sent back home. *Floating* is directed by Huang Weikai.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HC-1TUp0Hjo>

THE TRANSITION PERIOD – 2011 (114 MINUTES)

<http://icarusfilms.com/df-trans>

Filmed with unprecedented access to a Communist Party leader, investigative filmmaker Zhou Hao offers a startlingly candid look inside Chinese politics at the local level.

As Chinese Communist Party secretary, Guo Yongchang was the most powerful man in his county, located in the rural inland province of Henan. Guo invited acclaimed documentary filmmaker Zhou Hao to record his final months in office. Through Zhou's lens, we see Guo work tirelessly to achieve his greatest desire: for Henan to match the affluence of booming coastal areas. Zhou also captures the sordid details of local-level politics in pursuit of growth: lavish parties with foreign investors, threats to local workers protesting unpaid wages, and offers of bribes and kickbacks.

Hailed by international press as an exceptional work of investigative filmmaking, *The Transition Period* captures the daily life of a Chinese official with incredible ground-level detail. With boastfully candid interviews from Guo and fly-on-the-wall coverage of closed-door dealings, Zhou lays bare the unsavory dynamics within China's top-down power structures. Penetrating in scope yet objective in its approach, *The Transition Period* reveals the conflicting forces shaping China's path to prosperity.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeXjGAPsgiQ>

THE INTERCEPTOR FROM MY HOMETOWN – 2011 (90 MINUTES)

<https://www.ji-hlava.com/filmy/narusitel-z-meho-mesta>

The Chinese government allows its citizens to file official complaints against their local governments, but at the same time unofficially prevents them from doing so. This documentary is the result of Zhanbo Zhang, the director's random encounter with an old classmate whose job is to convince people not to file their complaints. In long monologues by the director's acquaintance, which take up most of this critical portrait of modern China, we hear a sense of shame at his job, but also helpless resignation.

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN – 2011 (94 MINUTES)

<https://somewherebetweenmovie.com/about-film>

In profiling Chinese adoptees in contemporary America, Linda Goldstein Knowlton has created a deeply moving documentary illustrating that even the most specific of experiences can be universally relatable. Of the roughly 80,000 girls who have been adopted from China since 1989—a decade after China implemented its One Child Policy—the film intimately follows four teenagers: Haley, Jenna, Ann, and Fang. These four wise-beyond-their-years, yet typical American teens, reveal a heartbreaking sense of self-awareness as they attempt to answer the uniquely human question, “Who am I?” They meet and bond with other adoptees, some journey back to China to reconnect with the culture, and some reach out to the orphaned girls left behind. In their own ways, all attempt to make sense of their complex identities. Issues of belonging, race, and gender are brought to life through these articulate subjects, who approach life with honesty and open hearts.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tym49uGmm0>

YUGUO AND HIS MOTHER – 2011 (45 MINUTES)

<https://www.tidf.org.tw/en/films/42057Liuxia>,

Yuguo's mother, lost her husband when her child was young. Suffered from excessive drinking, she was not able to support Yuguo. Thanks to the financial aid from the society, Yuguo was sent to Wuxi to accept free education. In a winter vacation, Yuguo came back to his hometown--- While he has no longer the child when he left his home but a teenager. Yuguo then had to face his drunk mother, the frustrated uncle, the innocent tribes people, and the familiar but strange forest. He was going through a period of confusion...

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/yuguoandhismother/390989284?autoplay=1>



TO THE LIGHT – 2011 (69 MINUTES)

<http://shearwaterfilms.com/to-the-light/>

The bright lights of China's booming economy are powered by the hard labor of its minors, who work deep in perilous coal shafts around the country. When a miner dies, his family receives a death pension greater than the amount of money he would have made in his lifetime had he stayed alive. In rural China, where farming alone cannot sustain families, miners have no alternative but to risk their lives daily, descending hundreds of meters underground to dig out the black ore fueling China's massive electrical grid.

To the Light delves into the hopes and struggles of the mining families in Sichuan. The father of two, Luo originally became a coal miner to pay off the fine for violating

China's One Child Policy. Hui, son of another miner, prefers to be a coal-train driver than take work far from home. For many families, coal mining has become a principal source of income and the only alternative to factory jobs in distant cities. But the mines are notorious dangers and thousands are killed every year. Going deep underground, the film exposes the perils faced by these miners, the slim rewards, and dire consequences when things go wrong. In spite of the risks, the working poor continue to flock to the mines, unable to heed the warning that earning a living wage may also mean dying for it.

Trailer: <http://shearwaterfilms.com/to-the-light/>

Stream movie here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFcN30pj3mQ>



RESTORING THE LIGHT – 2011 (57 MINUTES)

https://www.restoringthelight.com/?page_id=2

Restoring the Light is a feature documentary that travels deep into the heart of Ningxia, one of China's poorest regions, to uncover the hopes and adversities of the rural population that has been left behind in the wake of China's dizzying economic boom.

China's new mantra, "You go through school, then you get a good job and you leave the rural areas" has created an unending flow of migrant workers streaming to prospering cities. But what happens to the faceless millions who stay behind and who must struggle for basic survival and limited access to healthcare and education?

Unlike those who have migrated, ophthalmologist Zhang Xubin has chosen to return to his roots. Dr. Zhang grew up in a crude cave dwelling in Ningxia as a child. In spite of his humble beginnings, he attained a successful medical career, then decided to forego the comfortable city life in order to start his own medical practice in Ningxia, operating a non-profit mobile eye clinic for underprivileged rural patients. However, financial difficulties cause mounting pressure for him and his family as they face eviction. *Restoring the Light* explores the personal and professional sacrifices of this unique doctor-entrepreneur in China and journeys into the lives of two benefiting disabled families in rural Ningxia:

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xakBrbQH2Zk&feature=emb_logo

THE NEXT LIFE – 2011 (81 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1972796/plotsummary?ref=tt_ov_pl

In the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake, 5,335 students were killed. As China has one-child policy, the earthquake took away the only child of many families. This film is about a mother -Ye Hongmei and her friends' different fate of having a new baby. Ye Hongmei, 40-year-old, started her second IVF treatment to get pregnant. Her 8-year-old daughter was killed in the 2008 Sichuan earthquake. Refusing to come to terms with the reality, Ye believes that giving birth to another girl would mean the return of her gone daughter. So pregnancy becomes an ordeal for her. Then she has to bear extraordinary pains: she travels 50 miles every day just to receive injections and blood tests. Can she make it?



THE WARRIORS OF QIUGANG: A CHINESE VILLAGE FIGHTS BACK – 2011 (39 MINUTES)

https://e360.yale.edu/features/the_warriors_of_qiugang_a_chinese_village_fights_back



This exclusive e360 video report, *The Warriors of Qiugang* — co-produced by Yale Environment 360 — tells the story of how the villagers fought to transform their environment, and, in the process, found themselves transformed as well. The 39-minute video focuses on an unlikely hero — farmer Zhang Gongli, now almost 60, who leads the village's fight to shut down the chemical plant. Soft-spoken and easy-going, but with a backbone of steel, Zhang — who has only a middle-school education — quickly learns how to use China's more stringent federal environmental laws to put pressure on the factory owners and their cronies in local and regional government.

Nominated for Best Documentary Short, Academy Awards 2011

Stream entire film here:

http://e360.yale.edu/feature/the_warriors_of_qiugang_a_chinese_village_fights_back/2358/

TRUE BELIEVERS: RELIGION IN TODAY'S CHINA – 2011 (24 MINUTES)

<http://www.films.com/ecTitleDetail.aspx?TitleID=23280&r=SR>

China is on the rise economically, but the post-Mao era has also seen an increasing hunger for something beyond material prosperity. From the novice Taoist monk honing tai chi skills atop a sacred mountain to the uncountable worshippers of the underground house church movement, this program reports on modern China's emboldened—yet still cautious—religious population. In the city of Wenzhou, evangelical pastor Zheng Datong agrees to be interviewed, despite secret police looking on. Pastor Samuel Lamb, another lightning rod for security surveillance, insists that “oppression simply leads to more believers,” while Pastor Joseph Gu, leader of a mainstream Three-Self Patriotic Movement church, describes the rapid growth of his congregation. For a much different yet equally spiritual perspective, the film turns to Daoist kung fu master Zhong Yunlong at a monastery in the Wudang Mountains, where a sacred shrine still attracts pupils and travelers.

PBS: CHINA'S TERRACOTTA WARRIORS — 2011 (54 MINUTES)

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/secrets/chinas-terracotta-warriors-watch-the-full-episode/844/>

The life-sized terracotta warriors of China are known throughout the world. This clay army of 8,000 including infantry, archers, generals and cavalry was discovered by archaeologists in 1974 after farmers digging a well near the Chinese city of Xian unearthed pieces of clay sculpted in human form. An amazing archaeological find, the terracotta warriors date back more than two thousand years. But what was the purpose of this army of clay soldiers? Who ordered its construction? How were they created? *Secrets of the Dead* investigates the story behind China's Terracotta Warriors and documents their return to former glory for the first time.

WAKING THE GREEN TIGER — 2011 (78 MINUTES)

<https://www.chinadialogue.net/books/6557-Waking-the-green-tiger-the-rise-of-China-s-green-movement/en>

The documentary film describes how the media, NGOs and locals joined forces to block construction of a dam at Tiger Leaping Gorge on the Jinsha River in Yunnan - a campaign seen as a turning point for China's environmental movement.

<https://www.videoproject.com/Waking-the-Green-Tiger.html>

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFQsvTnEVUg&feature=emb_logo

BEIJING BESIEGED BY WASTE — 2011 (72 MINUTES)

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/searchresults_detail.html?biblioId=8258

Award-winning photographer Wang Jiu-liang travels to more than 500 landfills, fearlessly documenting Beijing's unholy cycle of consumption through poignant observational visits with the scavengers who live and work in the dumps. While China's economic ascent commands global attention, less light has been shed upon the monumental problem of waste spawned by a burgeoning population, booming industry, and insatiable urban growth. Wang focuses his lens upon the grim spectacle of waste, excrement, detritus, and rubble unceremoniously piled upon the land surrounding the China's Olympic city, capital, and megalopolis, Beijing.

Eking out a dangerous living within are the scavengers, mostly migrant workers from the countryside, who struggle to uphold familial and cultural systems amid their occupation's Dickensian bleakness. Wang renders the decimation of once-essential rivers and farmlands in the backdrop of gleaming high-speed trains, stadiums, and skyscrapers; the sinister cyclical pattern of construction's consumption and garbage and moving images of the daily lives of scavengers who labor at their own risk.

Teacher Guide: https://misc.docuseek2.com/gej/guides/gj-006a_guide.pdf

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juJLxiVD9nU>



GOOGLE CHINA STANDOFF — 2011 (47 MINUTES)

<http://www.films.com/ecTitleDetail.aspx?TitleID=26460&r=SR>

Whether Google Inc. expanded into China because of the country's vast consumer market or out of a sincere desire to make information available may be up for debate. The company is known for its idealistic corporate culture, but the controversy regarding Google China's censorship policy became so fierce that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton felt compelled to make a worldwide call for Internet freedom. This program examines Google Inc.'s operation in China and its battle between political and economic sensitivity and unlimited access to information. Differing points of view are presented by Beijing professor Hu Yong; Kaiser Kuo, director of communications at the Chinese Web services company Baidu; CUNY professor Ying Zhu; Ken Auletta, author of *Googled*; and others.

Related Lecture: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Faz16ZSrstc>

Trailer: <http://www.films.com/ecTitleDetail.aspx?TitleID=26460&r=SR>



TOGETHER — 2010 (83 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Together_\(2010_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Together_(2010_film))

Together is a 2010 Chinese documentary directed by Zhao Liang. It was filmed beside the Chinese film *Love for Life* and chronicles the everyday lives of a variety of different people living in China with HIV/AIDS. The documentary depicts the living conditions of those living with HIV in China, as well as their own personal thoughts on their disease. *Together*, like the film *Love for Life*, was commissioned by the Ministry of Health and backed by the Chinese government. Zhao Liang has been seen as a rebel director, producing

documentaries that expose the Chinese government of wrongdoing....

The documentary *Together* begins on the set of the film, with Zhao Liang asking cast members and crew about their opinions on HIV/AIDS. Liang also reveals to cast members and those working on the film that there are cast members who have HIV/AIDS. This revelation

receives mixed reactions from the crew, demonstrating a lasting stigma around the disease despite working on a film to promote awareness on HIV/AIDS. Liang also follows actors from the film and extras who have the diagnosis and uses the documentary to let these individuals both share their stories and offer insight to the disease and the effect on their lives and relationships with others. For instance, it is revealed in the documentary that Hu Zetao, who plays the narrator in the film *Love for Life*, has HIV/AIDS. The documentary looks closely at Zetao's life and relationships with family members; *The Lancet* noted in 2011 that of the participants in the film, Zetao, who contracted the virus from his mother, was the least isolated by his diagnosis. In fact, most of the participants asked that their identities remain secret..

...*Together* was filmed beside *Love for Life*, marking the first time the blood selling scandal of the 1990s had been featured in mainstream Chinese media. More still, the Chinese government backed the film, and used it as a way to advocate public health information on HIV/AIDS, and the living condition and social impact it has on those who contract it.

Clips and teacher resources: <https://www.yimovi.com/en/movies/together-1>



YAK DUNG – 2010 (50 MINUTES)

<https://asiasociety.org/new-york/events/screening-farmers-struggle-and-yak-dung>

For nomadic families on the Tibetan Plateau, yak dung is a renewable and readily available energy source for staying warm, making sacrifices and providing light. Yak dung is also used to build homes and fences, fertilize grass, and as a medicinal ingredient, detergent, and material for sculptures. It is an indispensable part of the Tibetan culture and livelihood. Living with yak dung is part of a lifestyle that has coexisted with nature for centuries. But more and more people on the plateau are drifting away from this way of life.

Having never before made a film, director Lanzhe attended film training workshops organized by the Shanshui Conservation Center, a Beijing-based environmental NGO that works in Qinghai, Sichuan, Yunnan, and Shaanxi provinces in western China. Its program “Eyes of the Village Nature and Culture” trains and empowers amateurs to make films to document lives in their own habitats. Many of these trainees, such as Lanzhe, were picking up a camera for the first time in their life.

Stream entire film here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZfpTHOhExGI>

FORTUNE TELLER – 2010 (183 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1847591/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl

Li Baicheng is a charismatic fortune teller who services a clientele of prostitutes and marginalized figures whose jobs, like his, are commonplace but technically illegal in China. He practices his ancient craft in a village near Beijing while taking care of his deaf and dumb wife Pearl, who he rescued from her family's mistreatment. Winter brings a police crackdown on both fortune tellers and prostitutes, forcing Li and Pearl into temporary exile in his hometown, where he revisits old family demons. His humble story is told with chapter headings similar to Qing Dynasty popular fiction.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNAjKrJkfY&feature=emb_logo

SUMMER PASTURE – 2010 (84 MINUTES)

<http://www.khamfilmproject.org/summerpasture/>

Filmed in the high grasslands of eastern Tibet, *Summer Pasture* is an intimate glimpse into the life of a young nomad couple and their infant daughter.

Locho and his wife Yama live in Dzachukha, nicknamed *Wu-Zui* (*5-Most*) for being the highest, coldest, poorest, largest, and most remote county in China's Sichuan Province. They depend on their herd of yaks for survival, much as their ancestors have for generations. But in recent years, Dzachukha has undergone rapid development, and Locho and Yama are finding their traditional way of life increasingly difficult to maintain.

Summer Pasture is an exploration of Locho and Yama's personalities, relationship, and the changes taking place around them. Over the course of the film we witness their experiences with illness, infidelity, and the dissolution of their community. In the face of mounting challenges, Locho and Yama ultimately reveal the personal sacrifice they will make to ensure their daughter's future. Directors: Lynn True and Nelson Walker.

Summer Pasture aired on PBS's Independent Lens series in 2012 and earned a Peabody Award.

Film clips: <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/films/summer-pasture/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79-8uatcry4>

BEIJING TAXI — 2010 (78 MINUTES)

<http://www.beijingtaxithefilm.com/>

This feature-length documentary captures the rapid transformation of Beijing during the 2008 Olympics. The main characters of the film are three taxi drivers, who continue on their journey with no particular destination, taking turns at various crossroads of modern-day Beijing. The Olympics gave the city its first moment in the spotlight for decades, pushing the speed of infrastructure development to the extreme. Each of the three cab drivers, who each have their own intimate story, sees the transformation in a different light.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHSbaauClSI&feature=emb_title

I WISH I KNEW — 2010 (138 MINUTES)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/23/movies/i-wish-i-knew-review.html>

...The focus of *I Wish I Knew* is Shanghai, one of the largest cities in China. (The movie had its premiere at the 2010 Cannes Film Festival.) In genre terms, it resembles a city symphony, one of those urban portraits that emerged in the 1920s and that reveal degrees of excitement and dread about the rapidly changing world. But like other more recent examples of the city symphony (and like Jia Zhangke's other work), *I Wish I Knew* has a tone that is more elegiac than excited, more meditative than bustling. At times, it feels like a eulogy for a city that — with mounds of detritus below and construction cranes soaring above — looks like it is being razed and rebuilt while you watch....

Certain historical and political nuances will likely remain elusive for some viewers (they did for me). This isn't a barrier to the movie. Every city is different for every traveler; my New York is not your New York, even if they seem to look much the same. Perhaps this explains why Jia adds so many voices here, including that of the great Taiwanese director Hou Hsiao-Hsien, whose family fled the mainland during China's civil war. In effect, with "I Wish I Knew," Jia is building not just a portrait of a city, but of a fragmented people — one story and memory at a time. He is finding meaning in collective remembrance and revealing a world, to borrow a phrase from Walter Benjamin, "under the gaze of the melancholy man."

Review: <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/i-wish-i-knew-movie-review-2020>

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6Vees2VL5E&feature=emb_logo

PBS POINT OF VIEW: WO AI NI (I LOVE YOU) MOMMY — 2010 (90 MINUTES)

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/woainimommy/>

What is it like to be torn from your Chinese foster family, put on a plane with strangers and wake up in a new country, family and culture? Stephanie Wang-Breal's *Wo Ai Ni (I Love You) Mommy* is the story of Fang Sui Yong, an 8-year-old orphan, and the Sadowskys, the Long Island Jewish family that travels to China to adopt her. Sui Yong is one of 70,000 Chinese children now being raised in the United States. Through her eyes, we witness her struggle with a new identity as she transforms from a timid child into someone that no one — neither her new family nor she — could have imagined.



Teacher Guide: <http://archive.pov.org/woainimommy/>

Trailer: <https://www.pbs.org/video/pov-wo-ai-ni-i-love-you-mommy-trailer/>



KARAMAY — 2010 (356 MINUTES)

<http://dgeneratefilms.com/catalog/karamay>

In 1994, the oil-rich city of Karamay in Northwest China was the site of a horrible fire that killed nearly 300 schoolchildren. The students were performing for state officials and were told to stand by while the officials exited first. After the fire, the story was heavily censored in the Chinese state media. To this day, the families of Karamay have not been allowed to publicly mourn their children. In *Karamay*, filmmaker Xu Xin helps a community break the silence nearly two decades after their tragedy. The film is structured around a series of first-person accounts from families, teachers and survivors, interspersed with rare archival footage. Each narrative represents a complete and self-contained story in which the subjects recount their reaction to the carnage and how it colored their view of nation, society, education, law, party institutions and human nature.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bG1cazL6prs>

CHINA: THE REBIRTH OF AN EMPIRE — 2010 (86 MINUTES)

<http://www.films.com/ecTitleDetail.aspx?TitleID=23686&r=SR>

Can China replace the U.S. as the world's preeminent power? And if it did, what type of power would it wield? In Pakistan and Afghanistan, China's investment in infrastructure along with a flow of low-cost goods has beat out U.S. foreign policy in winning the hearts of the people. Yet China's relations with India become strained over the issue of Tibet, and in Hong Kong brutal crackdowns on Falun Gong make a mockery of the slogan "one country, two systems." This program travels throughout Asia to study the relationships China has with its closest neighbors, and to examine the U.S.-China balance of power. Chalmers Johnson (*The Blowback Trilogy*) discusses American hegemony, Rebiya Kadeer addresses concerns of the Uyghur minority, and exiled dissident Wei Jingshen provides commentary throughout.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9LiKmWGzho>

COP SHOP — 2010 (56 MINUTES)

COP SHOP II — 2011 (70 MINUTES)

<http://screeningchina.blogspot.com/2012/01/frontline-policing-in-guangzhou-zhou.html>

Zhou Hao's documentaries explore the daily operations of police officers at a police station near the Guangzhou Train Station.

NEW CASTLE – 2010 (112 MINUTES)

<https://www.anu.edu.au/events/new-castle-%E6%96%B0%E5%A0%A1>

Guo Hengqi's *New Castle* is an unflinching documentary of the changes wrought by urbanisation in a remote mountain village in Shanxi Province sustained by local mining operations. The first part of *New Castle* focuses on the miners who have come from different parts of the country looking for work. In the run up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics approaches, as part of the campaign to clean up the pollution, mines are closed and the miners sent back home. The documentary then shifts its attention to the lives of villagers. Faced with bleak economic prospects, the local government's solution is – not surprisingly – urbanization: the destruction of the old village and creation of new apartments. The film poignantly captures the various ways in which villagers cope with upheaval to their lives, from protesting, to praying in Church, to giving in to the imperative of urbanization by administrative decree. In the words of the director:

'When you see the destitute but honest lives of these peasants and miners on the verge of being moved into two-story apartment buildings, you can't help but wonder, can the construction of these new buildings bring them happiness? Why is there such a discrepancy between the state's macro-narrative and the micro-level of individual people's lives?'

A LOVE SONG, MAYBE – 2010 (114 MINUTES)

<https://www.chinaindiefilm.org/films/a-song-of-love-maybe/>

Zhang Zhanbo's film is a troubled love story from a woman's perspective. A KTV waitress is involved in a relationship with a customer who had come for pleasure and relaxation. However, this relationship has been plagued from the very beginning by lies, desire, impetuosity, confusion, and pain. The brightness and darkness of human nature, the warmth and coldness of the city, stage themselves alternately and continuously, just like those vulgar pop songs the girl had grown so familiar with while working in the KTV's private rooms.

WHEN MY CHILD IS BORN – 2010 (75 MINUTES)

Take a rare glimpse into the life of a young academic couple in Beijing. Jun is finishing her Ph.D. in Australia and is a Virginia Woolf specialist. Long, who has just returned from a research study in Germany, is struggling to finish his dissertation on Marx and Kant. An unexpected pregnancy propels the couple to marry quickly and navigate the world of parenthood. An overbearing mother-in-law enters their private world and expects to be in every part of child rearing. The film offers a candid and intimate portrait of two people caught between freedom and responsibility, career and family, and the new and old.

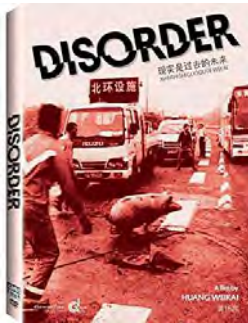
Stream entire film here: <https://cultureunplugged.com/documentary/watch-online/play/5813/When-My-Child-Is-Born>

NEW BEIJING: REINVENTING A CITY – 2009 (52 MINUTES)

As China emerges as the new economic powerhouse of the 21-century, no one can disrupt the biggest construction boom in the world's history. We marvel at the Beijing's bright new face as international architects create new icons - the Watercube, Birds Nest, Stadium, and National Theatre. The architects of the iconic buildings and their visions for the future contrast with those of heritage activist Zhang Jinqi. His photography exhibition 'Memories of China' documents the last heritage districts of the old city which are soon to be demolished.

With 400 cities of the size of Beijing to build by 2020 the China has little time to reflect on the past. Directed by Georgia Wallace-Crabbe

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAdARUnJRnY>



DISORDER — 2009 (58 MINUTES)

<http://icarusfilms.com/df-diso>

Huang Weikai's one-of-a-kind news documentary captures, with remarkable freedom, the anarchy, violence, and seething anxiety animating China's major cities today. As urbanization in China advances at a breakneck pace, Chinese cities teeter on the brink of mayhem. One man dances in the middle of traffic while another attempts to jump from a bridge before dozens of onlookers. Pigs run wild on a highway while dignitaries swim in a polluted river.

Unshowable on China's heavily controlled television networks, Disorder

reveals an emerging underground media, one that has the potential to truly capture the ground-level upheaval of Chinese society.

Huang Weikai collects footage from a dozen amateur videographers and weaves them into a unique symphony of urban social dysfunction. Huang shatters and reconstructs a world that's barely comprehensible, though with palpable energy - vibrant, dangerous, and terrifying.

Trailer <https://vimeo.com/44399931>

EAST WIND STATE FARM — 2009 (101 MINUTES)

<http://icarusfilms.com/df-ew>

Condemned "Rightists," sentenced to 21 years of thought reform in the countryside, share harrowing first-person accounts of life in a Chinese labor camp.

In 1957, 200 teachers, students, and cadres were labeled as "Rightists" for voicing criticism of the Communist Party and sent to the East Wind State Farm in southwest China. As part of China's disastrous Great Leap Forward, these inmates were forced to take part in ill-conceived deforestation, agricultural and industrial projects that led to wide-scale famine. Later they endured the Cultural Revolution when their camp was visited by large groups of "sent-down" youth from the cities. After 21 years of "remolding," the "Rightists" were finally "rehabilitated" in 1978 and allowed to leave in 1978.

The East Wind State Farm re-examines the tragic events of Chinese modern history during the height of Maoist rule. Director Hu Jie collects dozens of extensive interviews with both inmates and staff who served through three decades of the camp's existence.

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/27742062>

MOUTHPIECE — 2009 (108 MINUTES)

<https://www.chinaindiefilm.org/films/mouthpiece/>

In a democratic polity the media is supposed to be the mouthpiece of the public. However, in a Shenzhen TV station protecting the interests of the Chinese Communist Party is paramount and reporters are simply mouthpieces of the government. 'First Spot' is an investigative TV programme focusing on social inequality, but most of its coverage ends up being buried. This Guo Xizhi film documents the day-to-day operation of the TV station, following reporters as they attempt to capture a city and its people in all its myriad forms.

DISTURBING THE PEACE – 2009 (80 MINUTES)

<https://hirshhorn.si.edu/explore/film-screening-ai-weiweis-disturbing-the-peace/>

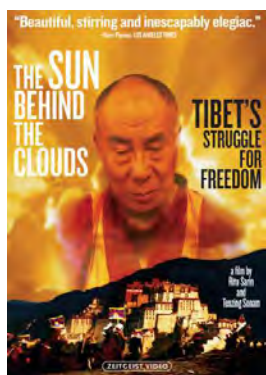
Tan Zuoren is a civil rights advocate who investigated the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, including the deaths of 512 Wenchuan students, and the corruption which resulted in poor building construction. For his efforts, he was charged with “inciting subversion of state power.” During his trial, police violently detained witnesses, which is an obstruction of justice. He was sentenced to five years in prison. *Disturbing the Peace* is a confrontational film, with Ai Weiwei directly taking on the police and other authorities and paying a heavy price for doing so.

Review: <https://www.newyorker.com/news/evan-osnos/ai-weiwei-disturbing-the-peace>



THE SUN BEHIND THE CLOUDS – 2009 (79 MINUTES)

<https://zeitgeistfilms.com/film/sunbehindthecLOUDS>



A provocative and potent look at the Dalai Lama’s ceaseless struggle for justice and recognition for the Tibetan people, *The Sun Behind the Clouds* focuses on the pivotal and particularly tumultuous events of 2008. From the four-month march of exiled Tibetans to the Indo-Tibet border and Buddhist monks’ protests in Lhasa, to the Beijing Olympics and the contentious talks between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama’s emissaries, the film uncovers the growing rifts between younger Tibetans and their most respected spiritual leader.

While His Holiness advocates for political autonomy within China rather than secession from it, a younger generation within Tibet has grown impatient and begun to chart a more confrontational course. Following the

Dalai Lama’s political life with unprecedented personal access, Tibetan filmmaker Tenzing Sonam and co-director Ritu Sarin bring an impassioned focus to the myriad complexities in finding a peaceful solution based on compromise and dialogue.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34cLHNfFiZg>

THE TRANSITION PERIOD – 2009 (114 MINUTES)

<https://emro.libraries.psu.edu/record/index.php?id=4909>

The Transition Period documents a Communist party leader — Shu Ji in Chinese — and his economically disadvantaged county in mainland China. The film takes a closer look at the last month of Guo Yongchang in Gushi County before a job transition. With simple yet realistic cinematography, the audience will be wowed by Guo’s impressive political legacy as well as the corrupt life behind the scenes.

Guo aimed to urbanize the county in his term. To accomplish this goal, he was steadfast when he fought for reducing government deficits; he put on a poker face when he socialized with investors across the country and beyond; he was even in tears when he said farewell to local residents. However, due to greed and the pursuit of power and materialism, Guo was eventually sentenced to seven years in prison for corruption and accepting bribes.

In China, political legacy matters so much that many government officials strive to do anything to impress their peers and take credit. Although the global media takes a critical view of China’s economic boom, local governments never slow down the leap of development and modernization. The transition period for Mr. Guo is smooth, but economic reform in China is going through an uneven and painful path. The visual and audio quality may not be

satisfying, but the film stands out for its realistic and rare first hand records. The film comes with Henan dialect and English subtitles.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeXjGAPsgjQ>

A FARMER'S STRUGGLE — 2009 (30 MINUTES)

<https://asiasociety.org/new-york/events/screening-farmers-struggle-and-yak-dung>

Desertification has been threatening livelihoods in many parts of China. In Minqin, Gansu province, an aging farmer and his wife are the only inhabitants left in this small village that is increasingly swallowed by the advancing desert. Growing up fishing in a local lake that has since dried up, the farmer now has to drive to another village for water. While the government encourages families to move to Xinjiang with the offer of a subsidy, the old couple stays put — at least for now — to defend their home.

CHINA'S UNNATURAL DISASTER: THE TEARS OF SICHUAN PROVINCE — 2009 (39 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China%27s_Unnatural_Disaster:_The_Tears_of_Sichuan_Province

China's Unnatural Disaster: The Tears of Sichuan Province is a 2009 documentary film co-directed by Jon Alpert and Matthew O'Neill of the Downtown Community Television Center, and produced by MZ Pictures for HBO Films.

Nominated
2009 Academy
Award for Best
Documentary,
Short Subject

The documentary covers the aftermath of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake on May 12, which killed around 70,000 people—of which 10,000 were children, many of whom were killed when their schools collapsed. The film focuses on the grieving families and communities of the children as they mourn their loss and question the government over the construction standard of the schools.

Alpert and O'Neill sent the raw footage of the film by courier to the United States, before they were detained and questioned by local police for eight hours as they tried to leave the country themselves. In September 2009, the filmmakers were scheduled to present the film at the Shanghai International Film Festival, but were denied visas by the Chinese government
Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpdN8_ac0iE



FALLING FROM THE SKY — 2009 (145 MINUTES)

<https://www.brown.edu/campus-life/arts/bell-gallery/events/2012/10/03/film-screening-falling-sky>



Little-known Suining county lies directly in the path of falling debris from the Xichang Satellite Launching Base, one of three satellite launching bases in China. Ten times in the last 20 years, the county has been visited by dangerous “aliens from the skies”: falling satellite debris that smashes into the tranquil lives of the 160,000 impoverished local inhabitants. In China, 2008 was both “the year of the Olympics” and “the year of space exploration.” While the people of Suining, like their fellow countrymen and women, eagerly awaited the Olympic

2016 NYT Q & A
Zhang Zhanbo: A
Chinese Documentary
Filmmaker Returns to
His Roots
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/09/arts/international/zhang-zanbo-a-chinese-documentary-filmmaker-returns-to-his-roots.html>

Games, their pride about Chinese development, particularly in terms of space exploration, was tempered by the fact that they had to endure falling wreckage from constant satellite launches.

Director's Statement

The film *Falling from the Sky* aims to represent the life under the strong will of nation in a magical and realistic area of Suining and wishes to raise awareness to our homeland and subsistence with the concern of individual life under the will of the nation. The title *Falling from the Sky* not only refers to the debris; it is an allusion to fate, something befalling of these people. Moreover, its meaning can be extended to point to a kind of heavenly destiny looming over their heads, hinting not only to the physical sky, but also the ancient Chinese concept of the “mandate of heaven”, the will of the nation. Thus, the expression of the film about remote Suining is somehow much closer to a real China rather than the splendid Olympics and Shenzhou 7 spaceship in 2008.



PETITION – 2009 (124 MINUTES)

<http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/petition/>

The last decade has brought an extraordinary wave of remarkable documentaries from China,



many of them revealing the social and political transformations that have occurred as the country has become an economic giant, and that have often taken a grave toll on the lives of its citizens. *Petition*, filmed over the course of more than 10 years, is among the very finest of these often heroic attempts to bear witness. Since 1996, Zhao has documented the 'petitioners' who come from all over China to make complaints in Beijing about abuses committed by their local authorities. Gathered near the complaint offices, living in most cases in makeshift shelters, the complainants wait for months or years to obtain justice. Peasants thrown off their land, workers from factories which have gone into liquidation, small homeowners who have seen their

houses demolished but received no compensation, they pursue justice with unceasing stubbornness, facing the most brutal intimidation and most often finding that their hopes are in vain. Unfolding like a novel by Zola or Dickens, but with the existential absurdity of Beckett, *Petition* reveals the persistent contradictions of China in the midst of powerful economic expansion.

Background: The Petitioning System in China <https://www.diritticomparati.it/the-petitioning-system-in-china/>

Stream entire movie here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1TeQQJRytag>



LAST TRAIN HOME – 2009 (87 MINUTES)

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/lasttrainhome/>

Every spring, China's cities are plunged into chaos as 130 million migrant workers journey to their home villages for the New Year in the world's largest human migration. *Last Train Home* takes viewers on a heart-stopping journey with the Zhangs, a couple who left infant children behind for factory jobs 16 years ago, hoping their wages would lift their children to a better life. They return to a family growing distant and a daughter longing to leave school for unskilled work. As the Zhangs navigate their new world, *Last Train Home* paints a rich, human portrait of China's rush to economic development.



This site includes book lists, discussion guides, interviews, bios, slideshows, etc.
 Trailer and additional clips: <http://www.pbs.org/pov/lasttrainhome/additional-video.php>
 Lesson Plans: Confucianism in a Changing World:
<http://www.pbs.org/pov/lasttrainhome/lesson-confucianism.php>
 The Ethics of Outsourcing to China:
<http://www.pbs.org/pov/lasttrainhome/lesson-ethics-outsourcing.php>

PBS POINT OF VIEW: UTOPIA PART 3: THE WORLD'S LARGEST SHOPPING MALL — 2009 (13 MINUTES)

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/utopia/>

Is nothing American sacred anymore? The largest mall in the world turns out not to be the famous Mall of America in Bloomington, Minn. It's the South China Mall outside of Guangzhou, China. Outdoing the techniques of American consumerism, South China Mall is Disneyland, Las Vegas and Mall of America rolled into one. There are carnival rides, mini-parks, canals, and lakes amid classic Western-style buildings with space for hundreds of shops. But along with the glitz and glory of middle-class shopping, the mall's Chinese developers seem to have imported something else — a cautionary tale of capitalist hubris. Alex Hu, a local Guangdong boy who made it big in international business, wanted South China Mall to be a hometown monument to his success — even though his home town has no major airports or highways nearby. Four years after its construction, the mall sits virtually empty of both shops and shoppers. But the Chinese have imported yet another concept familiar to Americans — South China Mall is considered too big to fail. Employees line up for flag-raising ceremonies and pep talks about “brand building” before going off to maintain the deserted concourses meticulously. If China is the future of the world economy, *Utopia, Part 3: The World's Largest Shopping Mall* just may be a startling peek at what's to come.



Teacher Guide: <http://archive.pov.org/utopia/lesson-plan/>

1428 — 2009 (117 MINUTES)

<https://www.dgeneratefilms.com/catalog/1428>

Du Haibin's award-winning documentary of the earthquake that devastated China's Sichuan province in 2008 explores how victims, citizens and government respond to a national tragedy. The Great Sichuan Earthquake took place at 14:28 on May 12, 2008, causing 70,000 deaths and 375,000 casualties. Days later, Du Haibin visited Sichuan to capture the devastation as well as the recovery effort. Survivors were reduced to salvaging destroyed pig farms in the mountains, selling scrap metal for pennies, and pillaging homes. Seven months later, as the nation celebrated Chinese New Year, Du returned to see how life had changed in the stricken villages. Sidestepping the highly controlled media tours, Du found scenes not seen on official TV, exposing the gap between the Party's promises and the disaster victims' reality.

Review: <https://asianmoviepulse.com/2019/11/film-review-1428-2009-by-haibin-du/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUv5caIzjIM>

PORTRAITS OF LOSS AND THE QUEST FOR JUSTICE — 2009 (22 MINUTES)

<http://www.hrichina.org/en/content/6719>

Consisting of footage shot by the Tiananmen Mothers, a group of family members of those killed during the violent crackdown on the 1989 Democracy Movement, *Portraits of Loss and*



the Quest for Justice presents the stories of six victims told by their family members, and of two survivors told by themselves. In the absence of official accounting of the casualties of June Fourth, these stories humanize a tragic episode in contemporary China that the government has continued to suppress for nearly a quarter century.

Background Information/Stream entire film here: <https://www.hrichina.org/en/content/6719>

ONCE UPON A TIME PROLETARIAN: 12 TALES OF A COUNTRY – 2009 (76 MINUTES)

<http://asiasociety.org/new-york/events/once-upon-time-proletarian>

Thirteen chapters provide poignant snapshots of individuals navigating the modern China. An old peasant calls his country “shit” and yearns for the old days when greed and corruption were less rampant; a young car washer from the countryside calls Beijing huge and unfriendly; a young woman at a hair salon wants to find a rich husband; businessmen sit around and chat about the prices of Russian prostitutes... This meditative film offers an existentialist take on the common experience of disillusionment and disorientation in an evolving social and economic landscape that is far removed from the bygone days of Mao.

HOLLYWOOD CHINESE – 2009 (90 MINUTES)

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/episodes/hollywood-chinese/introduction/1146/>

The 90-minute film illuminates a century of Chinese American cinematic history, from rare silent classics such as Marion Wong's *The Curse of Quon Gwon* (1916) to the contemporary critical and commercial success of Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain* (2005). The film features a treasure trove of clips, punctuated with personal accounts from the movie industry's most accomplished Chinese and Chinese American talent.



24 CITY – 2008 (112 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1103963/>



In Chengdu, factory 420 is being pulled down to make way for multi-story buildings with luxury flats. Scenes of factory operations, of the workforce, and of buildings stripped bare and then razed, are inter-cut with workers who were born in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s telling their stories - about the factory, which manufactured military aircraft, and about their work and their lives. A middle-aged man visits his mentor, now elderly; a woman talks of being a 19-year-old beauty there and ending up alone. The film concludes with two young people talking, each the child of workers, each relaying a story of one visit to a

An experimental fiction-nonfiction hybrid, it takes place in the southwest city of Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province. (It was shot before last year's catastrophic earthquake.) The focus is a state-owned factory building, a ruined monument to precapitalist China, or rather to its workers, who helped turn the country into a global power.

factory. Times change.

Review: <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/05/movies/05twen.html>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzs3ew526Gc>

THE BIGGEST CHINESE RESTAURANT IN THE WORLD – 2008 (80 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1286510/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl

West Lake Restaurant in South China's Changsha can safely call itself the biggest Chinese restaurant in the world, with its staff of 1,000 working 5,000 tables and serving no fewer than

150 ducks per day and 200 snakes per week. The words of the restaurant's staff and guests are used in the film to paint a picture of modern China: the proprietress, one of the city's 20 self-made millionaires, speaks candidly about her failed marriage; a bridegroom-to-be who is celebrating at the restaurant explains the modern Chinese customs associated with the wedding party; and a waitress visits her poor parents in the countryside. Through these scenes, we gain insight into the unique combination of the ancient religious values and the new capitalist values with which China is stepping into the 21st century. What becomes very clear is that not everyone is set to benefit from the economic boom. In an approach comparable to Jia Zhang-ke's in his portrait of a theme park called "The World," by focusing on the microcosm of the West Lake Restaurant, this film manages to gain a perspective on the huge changes China is going through.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0VXQOrvEAY>

Watch film here (edited to a 44-minute Why Story Documentary)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NlmFLEhR0uY>

UMBRELLA — 2008 (93 MINUTES)

<https://www.dgeneratefilms.com/catalog/UMBRELLA...>

...Filmed in a purely observational style, with no narration or commentary, *Umbrella* shows the workaday life of young employees in a factory in Zhongshan, Guangdong Province, where they engage in monotonous, endlessly and rapidly repeated routines to manufacture umbrellas, for which they are paid a meager piece rate. At a massive shopping mall, the "World's Largest Small Commodity Market," in Yiwu, Zhejiang Province, those multicolored, multi-patterned umbrellas are sold at much higher prices by wholesale merchants, who are among China's nouveaux riche. The film also shows throngs of young people filling out applications at a job fair in Shanghai or undergoing physical drills and ideological regimentation at a provincial garrison of the People's Liberation Army. Finally, on a farm in Luoyang, Henan Province, we watch a group of elderly farmers struggle to salvage a premature harvest of drought-impacted wheat...

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qw-d6hXBcg>

GHOST TOWN — 2008 (180 MINUTES)

<http://movies.nytimes.com/2010/03/15/movies/15ghost.html>

Zhiziluo is a ghost town full of life. Lisu and Nu minority villagers squat in the abandoned halls of this remote former communist county seat, where Cultural Revolution slogans fade into the shadows of the old city hall, and a blank white figure of Chairman Mao gazes out silently to the wild mountain wilderness of the Salween River Valley in China's southwest Yunnan province. The film is arranged into three sections: voices, recollections and innocence. Each deals with various aspects of the lives of the Nu and Lisu occupants of this ghost town. Director's Statement: *When China took the brutal path of the Cultural Revolution, it lost sight of the most fundamental understanding of the value of human life. In the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, as Chinese busied themselves with becoming materially prosperous to the point of sacrificing even their own well-being, they once again lost sight of the cultural and spiritual meaning of life — and what little was left of our culture again faced extinction. As our past has been erased, our history has become mere legend. In this film I wanted to explore the idea of these lost histories and ravaged cultures, and by extension my own cultural identity, by delving into the lives and spirit of the abandoned city.* From New York

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0D6cVpVpDk>

MAN ZOU: BEIJING TO SHANGHAI – 2008 (86 MINUTES)

<http://manzoumovie.com/index.html>

Man Zou: Beijing to Shanghai is an independently produced feature-length documentary shot in China in the fall of 2008. Arriving in Beijing three weeks after the Olympics, four American (Seattle!) friends and their Chinese guide set out on a month-long trip to bicycle 1,000 miles of China's countryside, filming their adventures along the way. Without support vehicles, they were able to capture an intimate and unfiltered look at parts of China that are typically bypassed or flown over. In more ways than one, the bicycle trip is the vehicle to explore the environmental, economic and sociological issues facing China today, as the film intersperses the experiences of the team with the opinions of residents, expats, and academics.

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/manzou/17099375>

慢走

"Man Zou" is a common phrase in Mandarin that translates literally to "Walk Slow." Used as a farewell, it is a way of reminding one another to be careful and mindful on our journey and take the time to see things along the way.

YOUNG AND RESTLESS IN CHINA – 2008 (106 MINUTES)

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/youngchina/>

Chinese society is changing at breathtaking speed. As China's economy has grown, its young people have become Westernized, savvy about today's interconnected world, ambitious—and often torn between their culture and their aspirations. This module focuses on a sampling of young, urban Chinese who struggle with business ethics and striking the right balance between work and family. Their choices could have economic, social, and political consequences that affect us all.

Teacher Guide: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/teach/youngchina/>



LEAVING FEAR BEHIND – 2008 (24 MINUTES)

<http://www.leavingfearbehind.com/projects/leaving-fear-behind>

Leaving Fear Behind (in Tibetan, *Jigdre*) is a heroic film shot by Tibetans from inside Tibet, who longed to bring Tibetan voices to the Beijing Olympic Games. With the global spotlight on China as it rises to host the XXIX Olympics, Tibetans wish to tell the world of their plight and their heartfelt grievances against Chinese rule. The footage was smuggled out of Tibet under extraordinary circumstances. The filmmakers were detained soon after sending their tapes out, and remain in detention today.

Stream entire film here: <https://vimeo.com/50220285>

DEMOLITION – 2008 (62 MINUTES)

<https://vimeo.com/64235823>

Demolition is a portrait of urban space, migrant labor, and ephemeral relationships in the center of Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province in western China. Attending first to the formal dimensions of the transforming worksite—including the demands of physical labor and the relationship between human and machine—the film shifts focus to the social dynamics of a group of thirty men and women who have come from the countryside to work in this ever-changing urban landscape. In exploring the various banal yet striking interactions between these members of China's "floating population," the city's residents, and the

filmmaker, *Demolition* simultaneously expresses and resists the fleeting nature of urban experience.

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/64235823>

A DISAPPEARANCE FORETOLD — 2008 (86 MINUTES)

<https://iihs.co.in/urbanlens/films/a-disappearance-foretold/>

A film about a popular neighbourhood in Beijing, and what happened there in relation to the 2008 Olympic Games. Qianmen is a popular neighbourhood in the very heart of Beijing, just south of the Tiananmen Square. In the perspective of the 2008 Olympic Games, the city decided that the six hundred years old neighbourhood has to be “rehabilitated”. It is now in the line of fire of the promoters, and the 80000 people living there are facing drastic (and dramatic) changes. The film follows the rapidly changing life in the neighbourhood for more than a year and a half, from one reality to another, completely different one. Little by little, fragment per fragment, the film is drawing a portrait of a neighbourhood, recording memory of a soon disappearing reality. A story of China today.

PBS FRONTLINE/WORLD - CHINA: GREEN DREAMS A NOT SO MODEL VILLAGE — 2008

http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/fellows/green_dreams/

The village of Huangbaiyu in rural northeast China was supposed to be a model for energy-conscious design. The initial project was to build four hundred sustainable homes, collaboration between U.S. architect William McDonough and the Chinese. But something went awry. *Frontline/World* reporter Timothy Lesle traveled to the region to investigate.

Teacher resources:

http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/fellows/green_dreams/resources/links.html



PBS WIDE ANGLE: CHINA PREP — 2008

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/episodes/china-prep/introduction/810/>

China Prep follows five Chinese students through their final high-pressure year at an elite high school in Sichuan Province. Eighteen hundred students vie for spots in Beijing’s top two universities. Last year only 59 made it. Studying seven days a week, the students’ lives are regimented almost every minute of the day as they prepare for the end-of-year exam that can determine their fate. For many students from poor or rural backgrounds, a strong performance on the test is the only way to climb the social ladder and excel without connections. Competition is fierce and the majority of high school seniors will be relegated to vocational schools....How do the ambitions of these teenagers reflect the realities of today and tomorrow’s China? Who among them will be most likely to succeed – the daughter of the Party official or the farmer’s son? Who will be the boss?



TWO MILLION MINUTES — 2005 (55 MINUTES)

This documentary explores how students in the U.S., India, and China spend their 2 million minutes of high school years.

Teacher resources: <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/uncategorized/china-prep-resources/2417/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2S522C-41g>

Stream Part 1 of 4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MnuH6Bu-8FE>

Stream Part 2 of 4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NoVSWFTP4AE>



Stream Part 3 of 4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TLmJ1bFd0Y>

Stream Part 4 of 4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0u7sNKkg-4>

PBS POINT OF VIEW (POV) — UP THE YANGTZE — 2008 (93 MINUTES)

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/watch/uptheyangtze/>

Nearing completion, China's massive Three Gorges Dam is altering the landscape and the lives of people living along the fabled Yangtze River. Countless ancient villages and historic locales will be submerged, and 2 million people will lose their homes and livelihoods. The Yu family desperately seeks a reprieve by sending their 16-year-old daughter to work in the cruise ship industry that has sprung up to give tourists a last glimpse of the legendary river valley. With cinematic sweep, *Up the Yangtze* explores lives transformed by the biggest hydroelectric dam in history, a hotly contested symbol of the Chinese economic miracle.

[I wanted to make] a movie about tourists on this Yangtze cruise boat — a kind of 'Gosford Park' idea that shows the social hierarchy, the lives above and below the decks. I realized that the people working on the boat were all from the Yangtze area and that many of their families were affected by the dam. — Yung Chang, Filmmaker



Teacher Guide: <http://archive.pov.org/uptheyangtze/discussion-guide/>

This grades 6-12 lesson plan is designed to be used with the film *Up the Yangtze*, which shows how China's Three Gorges Dam project is changing the Yangtze River and the lives of those who live along its path. Classrooms can use this lesson to explore the social, economic and political changes caused by technological advances. Also, students will increase their skills for analyzing visual imagery.

BBC EARTH: WILD CHINA — 2008 (SHORT CLIPS)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00bv6lk/clips>

TIBET IN SONG — 2008 (82 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibet_in_Song

Tibet in Song tells the story of Ngawang Choephel, a Tibetan exile and former Fulbright scholar at Middlebury College, who returns to Tibet in 1995 to videotape traditional music and dance. The film follows his travels throughout the country recording music and understanding the impact of Chinese communist rule on Tibetan culture and everyday life. The movie contends that the Chinese authorities re-purposed traditional Tibetan music to forward their own agenda and propaganda. Two months into the trip, after he'd sent a batch of material back to friends in India, Chinese intelligence agents arrested Choephel and confiscated his camera, notes, and videotape. He was convicted of spying, without a trial, and sentenced to 18 years in prison. While in prison he continued his research, transcribing songs from prisoners and eventually memorizing songs after his notes were confiscated. His mother launched a tireless campaign for his freedom, and in January 2002, he was released.

Review: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/films/reviews/view/20192>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdAqU2PdVU4>

TONGZHI IN LOVE — 2008 (30 MINUTES)

<http://store.cinemaguild.com/nontheatrical/product/2338.html>

Directed by Ruby Yang and produced by Thomas Lennon - the filmmakers behind the 2007 Academy Award-winning documentary *The Blood of Yingzhou District* - *Tongzhi in Love* explores what it's like to be gay in modern China. "Frog" Cui and his gay friends are torn between the

lures of city life and the stern demands of Chinese tradition. They live in cosmopolitan Beijing, reveling in the freedom that it affords them. But traditionally, a Chinese son's solemn duty is to produce a child and carry forward the family line. That China's laws limit most families to a single child only compounds the pressures on gay men. Many resort to sham marriages...

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XHXqwwjRng&t=2s>

USING — 2008 (105 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1677711/plotsummary?ref=tt_ov_pl

An unusual relationship develops between an urban Chinese couple struggling with heroin and a filmmaker chronicling their addiction, in this provocative documentary on drug abuse, filmmaking and friendship. For three years, filmmaker Zhou Hao chronicled the lives of Long and Jun, a couple struggling with heroin addiction in Guangzhou. Zhou captures Chinese junkie subculture, its members languishing in a slum flophouse, the equivalent of a modern day opium den. When Long is hospitalized after a failed robbery, Zhou speaks out from behind the camera to intervene. Still, Long and Jun persist, soon dealing drugs full-time to make ends meet. As the couple increasingly offers lies for answers, Zhou must confront his ethical responsibilities to them, as a friend and a documentarian. *Using* probes a dark, cruel reality of contemporary Chinese society that has rarely been seen by any audience. Addicts disclose techniques for dealing with police, confronting sham suppliers and staying high throughout the day. Zhou's unflinching depiction of his friends' repeated attempts to quit blurs the line between filmmaker and subject, and raises provocative questions about the ways in which each uses the other.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hgwrasm97wE>



WHEAT HARVEST — 2008 (98 MINUTES)

<https://www.chinaindiefilm.org/films/wheat-harvest/>

The film shows the life of Niu Hongmiao, a 20-year-old country girl who works as a prostitute in Beijing. Around harvest time, she goes back home to Dingxing County, Hebei Province, to help her parents and to care for her severely ill father. She also leaves all her savings behind. Xu Tong sketches a picture of the sex industry in Beijing, showing the loyalty and dignity of the men and women who work in it. A hidden world emerges before the camera with its own language, rituals and rules, centred on strong, self-assured women, who are, just like the subject, rare in Chinese films and documentaries.

SPIRAL STAIRCASES OF HARBIN — 2008 (109 MINUTES)

<https://www.chinaindiefilm.org/films/spiral-staircase-of-harbin/>

In a high-rise apartment at the top of a hill, a mother lives with a daughter who is preparing for college. In a run-down tenement at the foot of the hill, a couple lives with their troubled son. The frustrated teenagers feel that nobody understands them. The parents spin in anxious circles, alternately scolding and spoiling their children. Entering their late forties, the adults are stranded in the face of their midlife crisis and the imminent independence of their children. Is it possible to find happiness, living for one's self and not for the family? As the pace of contemporary society accelerates, the Harbin-born director captures the sighs that drift through the skies above the city with a warm-hearted and insightful eye.

WIND, FLOWERS, SNOW, MOON – 2008 (88 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1859648/>

In a small village in the northwest of Sichuan, ninety-year-old Yang is the ninth male successor in a family of fengshui geomancers. The local geomancers main function is to preside over village funerals. The film follows the Yang family as they must deal with several deaths: the tragedy of a father who must bury his son, the disputes between siblings over funeral expenses, a pair of lovers who died one after another. Meanwhile, Mr. Yang celebrates the birth of his two great-grandchildren while he is forced to bury his own son who succumbed to cancer.

FAIRYTALE – 2008 (153 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ai_Weiwei#Fairytale

Fairytale covers Ai Weiwei's project Fairytale, part of Europe's most innovative five-year art event Documenta 12 in Kassel, Germany in 2007. Ai invited 1001 Chinese citizens of different ages and from various backgrounds to travel to Kassel, Germany to experience a fairytale of their own. The 152-minute-long film documents the ideation and process of staging Fairytale and covering project preparations, participants' challenges, and travel to Germany.

Along with this documentary, Fairytale was documented through written materials and photographs of participants and artifacts from the event.

Fairytale was an act of social subversion, improving relationships between China and the West through interactions among participants and the citizens of Kassel. Ai Weiwei felt that he was able to make a positive influence on both participants of Fairytale and Kassel citizens.

Interview: <https://vimeo.com/68202707>

Info clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJndGgpzfxQ>

Stream entire movie: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3dliVfgt-I>



CRIME AND PUNISHMENT – 2007 (122 MINUTES)

<https://windowsonworlds.com/2019/09/06/crime-and-punishment-%E7%BD%AA%E4%B8%8E%E7%BD%9A-zhao-liang-2007/>

The life of a small-town policeman is an often thankless one. When they're not dealing with petty neighbourhood disputes, people who are essentially just lonely, and acts of elaborate busywork, there's not much else to do but wear the uniform with pride. Unfortunately, the uniform can eventually consume the person inside it, turning them into fastidious prigs obsessed with the letter of the law. Locating itself in a small town near the North Korean border, Zhao Liang's *Crime and Punishment* paints an ambivalent portrait of local law enforcement, in this case operated by the Military Police who are themselves perhaps victims of the austerity of the system.

Book chapter: https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvfrxqcz.52?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents
Article:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290329181_Filming_power_and_the_powerless_Zhao_Liang's_crime_and_punishment_2007_and_petition_2009

BING AI – 2007 (116 MINUTES)

<https://letterboxd.com/film/bing-ai/>

Feng Yan spent seven years in the Three Gorges region following a peasant woman Bingai, who refused to give up her land (for new development). Feng is greatly moved by Bingai's uncompromising personality. Feng says that most Chinese people give up their land too easily, like losers. Meanwhile the extraordinary effort Feng puts into making this documentary is comparable to Bingai's perseverance. In this sense, the filmmaker and her subject are mirror image of each other.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSRTqfOfJ9g>

BRAVE FATHER – 2007 (93 MINUTES)

<https://www.chinaindiefilm.org/films/brave-father/>

In 2002, Han Peiyin's son Shengli was accepted into university and arrived in the city of Xi'an from his rural home. To pay for Shengli's living expenses and tuition, Han sold off all the valuable things in his home and came to work in Xi'an to make money. Though a lifelong farmer, Han firmly believed knowledge had the power to change destinies and expected his son to be successful. Jobs for migrant workers were getting harder to find as more and more farmers came to the city. Han could barely make RMB 400 a month, yet Shengli needed RMB 9,000 a year for college. The place Han stayed cost one RMB a night. At night, he used a brick as his pillow. Shengli would think about what to eat after class. He saw the bottled water his classmates were holding and could only think of selling the empty for money. Graduation was near. A shy youth, Shengli's job prospects were dim. He felt the city was becoming further away from him. Despite his education, he might end up earning less than his father. For years the elder Han carried with him a notebook, in which he entered records of his borrowings. Most of them were small sums of 10 or 20 RMB. He also noted his expectations for his son: "Around the year 2013 or so, that is, roughly in my sixties, Shengli will take our family to Beijing for a sightseeing visit. We will have plenty of money by then..."

Clip: <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-pacific-14090058>



PLEASE VOTE FOR ME – 2007 (58 MINUTES)

<https://itvs.org/films/please-vote-for-me>



An experiment in democracy is taking place in Wuhan, the most populous city in central China. For the first time ever, the students in grade three at Evergreen Primary School in Wuhan, China have been asked to elect a class monitor. Traditionally appointed by the teacher, the class monitor holds a powerful position, helping to control the students, keeping them on task and doling out punishment to those who disobey. The teacher has chosen three candidates: Luo Lei (a boy), the current class monitor; Cheng Cheng (a boy); and Xu Xiaofei (a girl). Each candidate is asked to choose two assistants to help with his or her campaign... For all three children, the campaign takes its toll, especially for the losing candidates and their assistants. Viewers are left to decide if the experiment in democracy has been "successful" and what it might mean for democracy education in China. *Please Vote for Me* challenges those committed to China's democratization to consider the feasibility of, and processes involved in, its implementation.



Documentary Discussion Guide (7 pages):

https://cdn.itvs.org/please_vote_for_me_discussion.pdf

Democracy Educator Guide (44 pages) https://cdn.itvs.org/vote_democracy-educator-guide.pdf

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oCEB-uH49AQ>

Stream 44-minute film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KD1Q5X2hOnk>

CHILDREN OF THE CHINESE CIRCUS – 2007 (58 MINUTES)

<https://asiasociety.org/new-york/events/double-bill-children-chinese-circus-brave-father>

Take a behind-the-scenes look at the training of some of the world's best acrobats and circus performers. In this Shanghai circus school, a highly disciplined environment, small children endure excruciating and dangerous training regimes. Mostly from poor families, these children are sent to the school by their parents in the hope that the specialty training will secure them a future. While small children endure agonizing daily practice, the teachers are also under tremendous pressure to produce award-winning stunts. A faculty meeting turns into a Cultural Revolution-styled criticizing session. This film is set to change your perception of acrobatic performances forever.

CHINA'S POLLUTION BUSTERS – 2007 (26 MINUTES)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OR8WInWv5eQ&feature=channel_page

In the past six years, infant birth defects in China have increased by an unprecedented 40%. This rise is being blamed on pollution from factories. Now green campaigners are taking on the multinationals. "The untreated waste is pumped out secretly at night", states activist Wu Deng Ming, pointing at a water outlet leading from a factory into a river. "People living along the river have enlarged livers", claims one local. They suffer from: "loss of appetite or cancer and all sorts of terminal diseases". Although strong laws governing pollution exist, these are regularly flouted. "Some local officials give protection to polluters", claims Ma Jun. In an attempt to put pressure on polluters, campaigners are naming and shaming guilty companies online. "We let people know that this company, with such a popular brand, is violated waste water discharge standards". There are also signs that central government is taking the problem more seriously...

Stream entire film here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OR8WInWv5eQ&feature=channel_page

ELECTRONIC TRASH VILLAGE – 2007 (10 MINUTES)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch/ZHTWRYXy2gE>

Every year, 35 million tonnes of electronic waste is exported to China to be scrapped. There the rubbish is broken down by hand, poisoning workers and polluting the environment. Free download of film.

SUPER, GIRLS! – 2007 (73 MINUTES)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTqjXXhfqb0>

Super, Girls! follows ten female teenagers on their quest to become instant superstars on China's biggest television show. The Chinese equivalent of "American Idol," the "Super Girls Singing Contest" spawned an unprecedented pop culture phenomenon. Drawing over 400 million viewers, the show's runaway popularity spurred the Chinese government to ban it

after only two seasons. The film provides unparalleled, intimate access into the contestants' lives over several months. Through candid interviews and footage of nail-biting auditions and competitions, *Super, Girls!* offers a fascinating look inside what the Chinese media have dubbed "the Lost Generation" and their startling takes on sexuality and success in the new China.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTqjXXhfqb0>

AOLOGUYA, AOLUGUYA – 2007 (80 MINUTES)

<https://www.chinaindiefilm.org/films/aoluguya-aoluguya/>

In the Greater Xing'an mountains of northern China, there is a group of people who share their life with the reindeer. These Ewenki people came from Siberia over 300 years ago. They have been living in the dense primeval forest and surviving on hunting and raising reindeers in their own traditional way

In 2003, the Reindeer Ewenkis came out of the forest and moved down to the new settlement built by the government. Now with hunting also banned, the Reindeer Ewenkis find themselves in a dilemma.

The reindeer could not survive the "city life" either. So, a small number of the tribe moved back into the mountains again, back into their forest.

Liushia, a woman whose husband has passed away, numbs herself with alcohol. Besides the reindeer and her son, who is far away, there is nothing left for her in this world. Her younger brother, Weijia, is an alcoholic artist who is increasingly disorientated by life. He Xie expresses the sadness in his heart through his harmonica.

Time is passing... the sounds of deer bells are fading away... Maria Suo, the last chief of the tribe, watches time pass helplessly.

But does the forest the Ewenkis used to know still belong to them?

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/aoluguyaaoluguya/390989512?autoplay=1>



MADE IN CHINA: MIGRANTS IN RURAL CHINA – 2007 (57 MINUTES)

<https://spl.kanopy.com/video/made-china>

This documentary by Jean Yves Cauchard tells one of the millions of stories of migrants from rural China who comprise the backbone of the Chinese economic miracle. It provides a human face behind the ubiquitous label "Made in China." This massive dislocation of people may well represent the largest, most rapid migration in human history. The film demonstrates how one generation of Chinese is experiencing the culture shock of an Industrial Revolution which took centuries in the West. It is inevitably both an elegy for a lost way of life and a grassroots view of what could become the most powerful economic power on earth.

Made in China follows the lives of a typical migrant couple, Heqing and Heping Fan, including their first trip home after two years in the city. They both work in the Cixi Industrial Zone, a manufacturing center with over 1,000,000 workers, mostly former peasants, south of Shanghai, in a plant making bathroom products for export. They work seven days a week, twelve hours a day for approximately \$.45 an hour or about \$250 a month. Each month they save about \$150 dollars to send back to their village. The factory owner feels he is doing his workers a service; rural China is overpopulated, and industrialization is the only answer for surplus peasants.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvBI05OR264&feature=emb_logo

USELESS – 2006 (81 MINUTES)

<https://www.newyorker.com/goings-on-about-town/movies/useless-4>

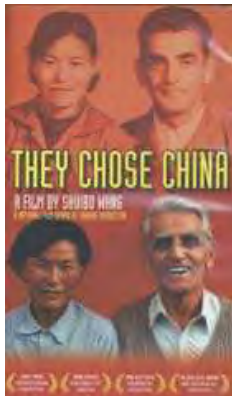
In this promotional film from 2007 commissioned by the fashion designer Ma Ke, the Chinese director Jia Zhangke eludes the genre's constraints to provide a revelatory documentary view of inner and outer life in contemporary China. Showcasing Ma's handmade haute-couture line is the pretext for a triptych that begins in the vast and oppressive clothing factories of Guangdong. After viewing laborers in their numbing routines, Jia follows Ma at work in her serene studio and records her meditations on the moral aspect of handicrafts. The film concludes with Jia's visit to a coal-mining town in his native Shanxi province, where he speaks with a traditional tailor who has abandoned his needle and thread to work as a miner. Jia's plaintive images suggest the dehumanization that has come with China's industrial revolution and the soul-killing authority on which it depends: a long, poignant shot of laborers squeezing through or climbing over a pointlessly locked gate is a stunning visual metaphor for a society of excessive restrictions in which living normally means breaking the rules.

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/9580063>



THEY CHOSE CHINA – 2006 (53 MINUTES)

<https://emro.libraries.psu.edu/record/index.php?id=2625>



This well-made documentary film is the epitome of professionalism. It has excellent camera work, acceptable audio, carefully edited live action and archival footage woven into a unified piece of AV fabric, and it tells a compelling story, all of which combine to make it a good view. The bottom line, however, is that it is also disturbing, because its subject is easily used manipulatively for propaganda purposes. This reviewer could not help but sense an underlying agenda, well camouflaged, that seems to lurk beneath the surface. Ostensibly, it claims to serve the goals of historical documentation and world peace; but, perhaps, these worthy goals are being interpreted from a particular perspective.

...Viewers learn that the three central figures are ordinary Americans.

Unlike their comrades-in-arms, however, they came to believe what they were told about Communism and its desire for world peace and equality for all. The men held strong anti-war views they felt would bring McCarthy's wrath on their heads and were painfully aware of the inequalities of American life, especially the African Americans. That what they heard was all part of a POW indoctrination program is explicitly stated, but that these men might have been selected for special treatment for reasons only the Communists knew for sure, is not.

Why did they go home? One says that when he first came to China, he was called "Comrade" and made to feel part of China's "family." After several years, he was called "Peace Fighter," which was still good, but no longer family. After several more years, he started to be called "Mister," indicating rejection from family status and China's force for world peace.

They Chose China can support courses teaching about prisoner of war experiences in general and the Korean War in particular. Viewers should not neglect, however, thinking about who is telling this particular story and what their motives in telling it might be.

Stream entire film here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDTPhT8mZ9o>

THE BLOOD OF YINGZHOU DISTRICT – 2006 (40 MINUTES)

<http://yangruby.com/the-blood-of-yingzhou-district/>

No-one knows how old Gao Jun is. Four? Older? Younger? Whatever his biological age, he has none of the verbal babble, or ready tears, of a child his age. The film tracks this orphan for a year as his closest surviving kin -- his uncles -- weigh what to do with him. The older uncle's dilemma: if he allows his children to play with Gao Jun, who is HIV-positive, they will be ostracized by terrified neighbors. The younger uncle's dilemma: so long as Gao Jun remains in the house, the young man may not be able to find a wife.

2006
Academy
Award-
winning
documentary
short

Gao Jun is one of just a handful of children we come to know in this film: Nan Nan, who after her parents' death, was shunned by relatives and left to live without adult care with "Little Flower," her teenage sister; and the Huang siblings, who vividly describe their ostracism at school. The suffering of these orphans is all the more devastating for being largely unnecessary, the function of misinformation about the nature of the disease.

Yet the film is more than a mere catalogue of woes. Nan Nan reveals her impish humor and joy; the Huang children resolve to become educated and outstrip those who shun them; and Gao Jun, in the closing scenes, demonstrates his ferocious determination to live.

Filmmaker interview: <https://www.documentary.org/online-feature/meet-academy-award-nominees-ruby-yang-blood-yingzhou-district>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FwaWZMd75hg>

THE BLOOD OF YINGZHOU DISTRICT REVISITED – 2013 (9 MINUTES)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FwaWZMd75hg>

After 10 years, much has changed for the children featured in *The Blood of Yingzhou District*.

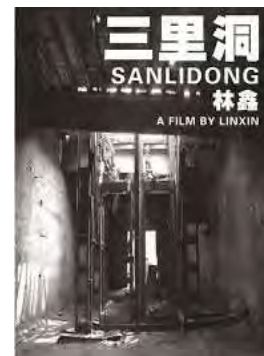


SANLIDONG: A PORTRAIT OF COAL MINERS – 2006 (172 MINUTES)

<https://www.chinaindiefilm.org/films/sanlidong/>

This is a documentary film made by the son of a miner about his father's generation. In the year 1955, more than 300 ardent youths from Shanghai City came to the Sanlidong Coal Mine with the hope of realizing their dream of contributing to the development of the Great Northwest. 50 years on, few of them are still alive. The sound of miners breathing is omnipresent in that land of buried black coal. This film is divided into 15 sections, and records the lives of miners still living there, those who have already died, as well as an era that has almost ended. The images of the lives of these miners are testimony to their incredible tenacity and dignity.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kfzBn8Esmtc>



MANUFACTURED LANDSCAPES – 2006 (90 MINUTES)

<https://www.edwardburtynsky.com/projects/films/manufactured-landscapes>

Manufactured Landscapes is a feature length documentary on the world and work of renowned artist Edward Burtynsky. Burtynsky makes large-scale photographs of 'manufactured landscapes' – quarries, recycling yards, factories, mines, dams. He photographs civilization's materials and debris, but in a way people describe as "stunning"



or "beautiful," and so raises all kinds of questions about ethics and aesthetics without trying to easily answer them.

The film follows Burtynsky to China as he travels the country photographing the evidence and effects of that country's massive industrial revolution. Sites such as the Three Gorges Dam, which is bigger by 50% than any other dam in the world and displaced over a million people, factory floors over a kilometre long, and the breathtaking scale of Shanghai's urban renewal are subjects for his lens and our motion picture camera.

Shot in Super-16mm film, *Manufactured Landscapes* extends the narrative streams of Burtynsky's photographs, allowing us to

meditate on our profound impact on the planet and witness both the epicentres of industrial endeavour and the dumping grounds of its waste. What makes the photographs so powerful is his refusal in them to be didactic. We are all implicated here, they tell us: there are no easy answers. The film continues this approach of presenting complexity, without trying to reach simplistic judgements or reductive resolutions. In the process, it tries to shift our consciousness about the world and the way we live in it.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8nxsENV7BA>

NFB.ca is a website where you can watch films produced by the National Film Board of Canada.
<http://www.onf-nfb.gc.ca/>

*** THE CHINESE VIOLIN – 2002 (8 MINUTES)**

http://www.nfb.ca/film/chinese_violin

In this animated short from the Talespinners Collection, a young girl and her father move from China to Canada, bringing only their Chinese violin along for the journey. As they face the challenge of starting fresh in a new place, the music of the violin connects them to the life they left behind and guides the girl towards a musical future.

Stream 8-minute animation at this site.

*** IN THE SHADOW OF GOLD MOUNTAIN – 2004 (43 MINUTES)**

http://www.nfb.ca/film/in_the_shadow_of_gold_mountain/

Filmmaker Karen Cho travels from Montreal to Vancouver to uncover stories from the last survivors of the Chinese Head Tax and Exclusion Act, a set of laws imposed to single out the Chinese as unwanted immigrants to Canada from 1885 to 1947. Through a combination of history, poetry and raw emotion, this documentary sheds light on an era that shaped the identity of generations.

Stream 43-minute animation at this site.

Other titles related to China and the Chinese immigrants' experiences include:

* **EARTH TO MOUTH – 2002 (41 MINUTES)**

* **SUNRISE OVER TIANANMEN SQUARE – 1998 (29 MINUTES)**

* **NORTH CHINA FACTORY – 1980 (53 MINUTES)**

* **GATEWAY TO ASIA – 1945 (10 MINUTES)**

MEISHI STREET – 2006 (85 MINUTES)

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLB8D08EC589900224>

Meishi Street shows ordinary citizens taking a stand against the planned destruction of their homes for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. In order to widen traffic routes for the Olympic Games, the Beijing Municipal Government orders the demolition of entire neighborhoods. Several

evictees of *Meishi Street*, located next to Tiananmen Square, fight through endless red tape and the indifference of fellow citizens for the right to keep their homes. Given video cameras by the filmmakers, they shoot exclusive footage of the eviction process, adding vivid intimacy to their story. Acclaimed at over two dozen museums and galleries around the world, *Meishi Street*, by renowned visual artist Ou Ning, works as both art and activism, calling worldwide attention to lives being demolished in the name of progress. (includes 3 film clips.)

DONG – 2006 (70 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0855784/plotsummary?ref=tt_ov_pl

China's greatest living filmmaker Jia Zhangke (*Platform*, *The World*) travels with acclaimed painter Liu Xiaodong from China to Thailand as they meet everyday workers in the throes of social turmoil. Liu Xiaodong is well-known for his monumental canvases, particularly those inspired by China's Three Gorges Dam project. In *Dong*, Jia Zhangke visits Liu on the banks of Fengjie, a city about to be swallowed up by the Yangtze River. The area is in the process of being "de-constructed" by armies of shirtless male workers who form the subject of Liu's paintings. Liu and Jia next travel to Bangkok, where Liu paints Thai sex workers languishing in brothels. The two sets of paintings are united in their subjects' shared sense of malaise in the face of the dehumanizing labor afforded them.

Dong as a hybrid genre documentary emphasizes Jia's conception of fusion cinema. People would look at his characters subjectively through each different view of the world rather than only accepting truth from it. The appearance of fictional scenes within *Dong* shows how Jia departs from audiences' expectation of traditional documentaries, questioning film genres as a form of label.

NOTE: The fictional film *Still Life* also directed by Jia Zhangke has two parallel storylines of a coal worker and a nurse who came to Fengjie from Shanxi (where Jia was born) to find their spouses who left them years ago. It creates Jia's connection as an outsider with Fengjie, since he relates himself into the place and local people through this film.

Filmed at the same time as Jia's fiction film, *Still Life*, *Dong* also shares the same setting (the Three Gorges area of central China) and in certain instances, the same shots. This causes them to make a closely linked relationship with each other. Jia mentions once in his interview that he has always been trying to "knock down the barrier between documentary and fiction". He portrays the documentary with a more subjective view and reflects the realistic perspective in the fictional film *Still Life*, overstepping the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction films.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvNhEhwKhgY>

Stream entire documentary here: <https://vimeo.com/433545872>

TO TELL THE TRUTH: THE LIU BANYAN STORY – 2006 (59 MINUTES)

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/publications/filmreviews/Liu_Binyan.html

To Tell the Truth: The Liu Binyan Story traces the life and career of the foremost practitioner and perhaps even the founder of the so-called "reportage" school of modern Chinese literature. As far back as the Hundred Flowers Movement of 1956, Liu challenged the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) from within for not living up to its stated ideals. For his troubles, along with hundreds of thousands of other students and intellectuals, he was imprisoned for many years at the start of the CCP's Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957. Released from jail and rehabilitated at the start of the reform era in China in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Liu wasted no time getting back to his self-assigned task of investigating the abuses of power and grievances of

urban and rural dwellers throughout China as a reporter for the CCP newspaper, *People's Daily*. Liu published collections of his articles and essays in the West and signed petitions and wrote articles in support of student demonstrations in the 1980s which culminated in the Tiananmen protests of 1989. As a result, China sent Liu into exile in the United States, where he finished his days editing a dissident newsletter at Princeton University, trying in effect to lead a loyal social democratic opposition from abroad, until he died of colon cancer on December 5, 2005.

THE TRASH TRADE: SELLING TRASH TO CHINA – 2006 (49 MINUTES)

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/publications/filmreviews/trash_trade.html

Trash Trade chronicles the emergence of the trash trade by following Japanese city officials, Japanese and Chinese businessmen, and Chinese workers as trash is transformed into new products. These interweaving narratives enable the filmmakers to address a number of interconnected processes. First and foremost, *Trash Trade* illuminates the way in which economic globalization is transforming business practices around the world. Once considered an unfortunate byproduct of ever-growing consumption and a burden for municipalities, trash has become a valuable source of raw materials for new products. The global demand for raw materials has become even more acute as the Chinese landscape does not possess the natural resources necessary to fuel its booming factories. Chinese businessmen thus began buying Japanese waste and shipping it back to China. Chinese workers receive far less money than their Japanese counterparts, thus making it economically viable to buy trash and ship it thousands of miles. For a Chinese couple shown in the film, however, the daily wage they can earn sorting through trash is much more than they could make as rice farmers, thus enabling them to send their children to school...

PBS: THE TANK MAN – 2006 (84 MINUTES)

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tankman/>

On June 5, 1989, one day after the Chinese army's deadly crushing of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests in Beijing, a single, unarmed young man stood his ground before a column of tanks on the Avenue of Eternal Peace. Captured on film and video by Western journalists, this extraordinary confrontation became an icon of the struggle for freedom around the world. Seventeen years later, veteran filmmaker Antony Thomas goes to China in search of "The Tank Man." Who was he? What was his fate? And what does he mean for a China that today has become a global economic powerhouse? Timeline, interviews, podcasts, teacher's guide.

Teacher Guide: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/teach/tankman/>

Stream entire film here: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/tankman/>



CHINA RISES – 2006 (EACH EPISODE 43 MINUTES)

http://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/specials/chinarises/gettingrich/CREDITS_FEATURE/alt_00.html

<https://curio.ca/en/collection/china-rises-1087/>

A four-part Discovery Channel series that covers politics, economy, environment and society.

Teacher Review: <https://www.asianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/china-rises.pdf>

PBS CHINA FROM THE INSIDE – 2006 (EACH EPISODE IS 60 MINUTES)

<http://www.pbs.org/kqed/chinainside/about.html>

China is rapidly becoming a world power, but much of the country and its people remain hidden to those outside its borders. *China from the Inside* provides a rare insider's view of China, her institutions, and people. This is a four-part series; PDF transcripts available for each program.

Episode 1: Power and the People

How does the Communist Party exert control over a population of 1.3 billion? Are village elections a chance for people to take a share in power? Can the Party end the rampant corruption and keep the people's trust? Chinese people, from farmer to Minister, speak frankly about the problems the country faces and the ways forward.

Episode 2: Women of the Country

China's women are argued over at their weddings and have one of the highest suicide rates in the world. Now many are beginning to fight for their rights and their futures. This hour shows discrimination against Xinjiang's Muslim women, various hardships faced by Tibetan women, and the status of some of those who have left the countryside for factory work in the cities.

Episode 3: Shifting Nature

China's environment is in trouble, but solutions often seem as harsh as the problems. A third of the world uses water from China's rivers, but rapid industrialization and climate change have led to bad air, polluted rivers and dire water shortages. One "solution" that has received considerable media attention in the West is the channelling of water in the biggest hydraulic project in world history. While it has benefited nearly half a million people, relocation from dam areas is causing mammoth social upheaval.

Episode 4: Freedom and Justice

Religious worship in China is problematic for Tibetan Buddhists, Catholics separated from Vatican influence, the 40 million adherents of China's unofficial churches, and the Falun Gong. Civic problems include forced evictions, government cover-up of AIDS, corruption and land grabbing. Filmed in Tibetan temples, newspaper offices and a labor camp, this final episode asks: what are the limits of freedom -- and the threats to stability?

Teacher Guide: <http://www.pbs.org/kqed/chinainside/educators.html>



TIMBER GANG (LAST LUMBERJACKS) — 2006 (94 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1510811/plotsummary?ref=tt_ov_pl

Yu Guangyi's stunning debut explores a grueling winter amongst loggers in Northeast China as they employ traditional practices through one last, fateful expedition. For generations, the lumberjacks of Heilongjiang, China have made their living harvesting timber amidst a barren, wintry landscape. These woodcutters confront the elements, living in makeshift cabins surrounded by snow and ice. Hand tools, sleds and horses are the only technology they employ to drag massive trees down the perilous slopes of Black Bear Valley. At constant risk of injury and death, they attempt to appease the mountain gods with ancient rituals and sacrifices. Despite their heroic efforts to subsist, the deforestation caused by their decades-long customs may lead to their ultimate demise.

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/mubang>

Yu Guangyi's *Timber Gang* is part of his White Mountain Trilogy (Changbaishan Sanbuqu), which includes *Bachelor Mountains* and *Survival Song*.

THOUGH I AM GONE — 2006 (68 MINUTES)

<http://icarusfilms.com/df-gone>

Pioneering filmmaker Hu Jie uncovers the tragic story of a teacher beaten to death by her students during the Cultural Revolution.

In 1966, the Cultural Revolution exploded throughout China, as Mao's Red Guards persecuted suspected Rightists. Bian Zhongyun, the vice principal of a prestigious school in Beijing, was beaten to death by her own students, becoming one of the first victims of the revolutionary violence that would engulf the entire nation.

In *Though I Am Gone*, Hu draws upon photographs taken by Bian's husband, Wang Jingyao, whose impulse to document his wife's death makes him a spiritual forebear to Hu's fearless work. Hu also incorporates vivid accounts from surviving witnesses and archival footage to depict the deadly madness of the era.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xto0n4YQh4c>



GARDEN IN HEAVEN — 2005 (179 MINUTES)

<https://spl.kanopy.com/video/garden-heaven>

"Garden in Heaven" is the name of a memorial website for the date-rape and murder victim Huang Jing. When Huang was found dead, she was naked and had wounds on her body, but the coroner declared illness as the cause of her death. Huang's mother had her body undergo five autopsies and six inquests. The results of each were different. This film documents a mother's mourning, as well as her anger toward and resistance against sexual violence in a society that denies legal recourse for such crimes.

BEFORE THE FLOOD — 2005 (147 MINUTES)

<http://icarusfilms.com/df-befor>

A landmark documentary following the residents of the historic city of Fengjie as they clash with the officials forcing them to evacuate their homes to make way for the world's largest dam.

China's Three Gorges Dam, the largest dam built on earth, has displaced millions of local residents whose towns and villages have been flooded. Fengjie, a city that has thrived along the Yangtze River for a thousand years, has only a few months left before it is completely submerged in water. Its citizens contend with administrators and each other over the residences in "New Fengjie," which are allocated via lottery and are far smaller than the homes they've worked a lifetime to build. Communist collectivism gives way to individual ruthlessness while the community battles furiously against bureaucratic mismanagement. Shot over the course of two years, *Before the Flood* is a breathtaking achievement in verité-style documentary filmmaking. Directors Yan Yu and Li Yifan observe the death of a city, from streets teeming with life to a ghost town echoing with the sound of sledgehammers. A disaster movie rooted in reality, *Before the Flood* has won awards around the world and inspired Jia Zhangke's *Still Life*, also shot in Fengjie. This profound film shows the human effects of one of history's grandest social engineering projects that reflecting the loss of both home and heritage.

Review: <https://emro.libraries.psu.edu/record/index.php?id=5182>

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/44473976>

FUCK CINEMA – 2005 (173 MINUTES)

<https://www.filmaffinity.com/us/film649507.html>

This documentary shows how different young people try to realize their dreams or become famous through the film industry. One of the main characters of this documentary is named Wang, a young man from the countryside, aged 28. He comes to Beijing out of a love for cinema; however, all he can do every day is line up outside the gate of a film studio in hope of landing a job as an extra, getting 30RMB for one day! During his stay in Beijing, he writes a film script based on his own experience in Beijing as an extra. He thinks his play presents the darkness and desperation of survival in China. Then he wants to find an investor or a director who can produce his play as an "underground film", because in his opinion many Chinese directors are successful on the international stage through this way. In the process of searching, he meets some directors and producers (including some underground film people), some famous some not, and also some businessmen, people from the film censorship authority as well as some students from the cinema institute. In fact, in Beijing his life is very hard - with no money, or a stable place to sleep. In the summer he has to sleep on the roof of a school dormitory. Finally, Wang fails to realize his dream, and he will never see his film made... "Throughout this process not only am I the maker of this documentary, but also a person who is puzzled about why we make films. Of course, I also appear in this documentary, and never hide my bewilderment, or the conflicts between my characters and me. For example, Wang assails me that I use his miserable story for my own reputation."



MARDI GRAS: MADE IN CHINA – 2005 (72 MINUTES)

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/searchresults_detail.html?biblioId=6847



The film confronts both cultural and economic globalism by humanizing the commodity chain from China to the United States. Redmon follows the stories of four teenage women workers in the largest Mardi Gras bead factory in the world, providing insights into their economic realities, self-sacrifice, and dreams of a better life, and the severe discipline imposed by living and working in a factory compound. Interweaving factory life with Mardi Gras festivities, the film opens the blind eye of consumerism by visually introducing workers and festival-goers to each other. A dialogue results when bead-wearing partiers are shown images of the teenage Chinese workers and asked if they know the origin of their beads, while the factory girls view pictures of Americans exchanging beads, soliciting more beads, and decadently celebrating. The conversation reveals the glaring truth about the real benefactors of the Chinese workers' hard labor and exposes the extreme contrast between women's lives and liberty in both cultures. - Meredith Lavitt, Sundance Film Festival Please note: A 48-minute PG version of this title is available, which omits the nudity and curse words.

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/85613954>

THE WOMEN'S KINGDOM – 2005 (20 OR 10 MINUTES)

http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/rough/2005/07/introduction_to.html

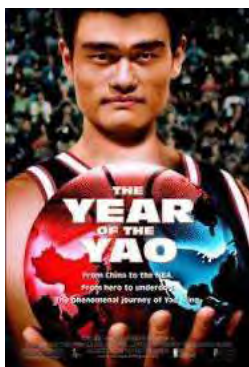
Xiaoli Zhou's *The Women's Kingdom* is a short production of the FRONTLINE/World Fellows program, our ongoing effort to identify and mentor the next generation of video and print journalists to report international news. This documentary from China introduces La Mu and several extraordinary Mosuo women as we travel to "The Women's Kingdom" in southwest

China, not far from the Tibetan Buddhist city the Chinese have renamed Shangri-La. "I enjoy being a girl," beams 16-year-old La Mu. "Girls can do anything. Isn't that great?" It's an unusual sentiment to hear in China, a country whose traditional preference for boys combined with its stringent population control policy limiting urban couples to one child has resulted in an inconvenient shortage of women and wives. Male babies in China now outnumber girls by a ratio of 112 to 100; some researchers say it's 117 to 100. But La Mu lives beyond the strictures of mainstream Chinese society. She is part of the Mosuo, an ethnic minority that has a matriarchal society, one of the last in the world.



THE YEAR OF THE YAO – 2005 (84 MINUTES)

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/searchresults_detail.html?biblioId=6738



A documentary about the NBA basketball star Yao Ming. Directed by James D. Stern and Adam Del Deo, *The Year of the Yao* shows you how this new Chinese NBA star Yao Ming tries to adjust to American life. The directors give a multi-faceted portrait of this charismatic basketball player, who is now rising to unprecedented popularity! Yao Ming's friendship with his translator Colin Pine forms one of the most interesting parts of this documentary. Pine has accompanied Yao Ming going through countless difficult moments in his career. Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/71032672>

SENIOR YEAR – 2005 (90 MINUTES)

<https://chinadigitaltimes.net/2008/04/documentary-senior-year/>

Study Hard! Move Ahead! Be Patriotic! These slogans are drilled into the minds of Chinese boarding school students as they prepare for their college entrance exams. Since most of these teens come from impoverished rural areas, their tuition is paid for by the blood, sweat and tears of their peasant parents, most of whom never made it past junior high, so the pressure to succeed is stifling. To keep up their marks the students must study from dawn until dusk, waking up before the sun to memorize everything from math formulas to propagandist passages. Their desks are piled high with books from every subject and teachers roam between rows to keep these exhausted and diligent kids on task. We glimpse this hectic world through the eyes of a select group of senior students who try to assert their personalities and live out a few teenaged whims like shopping and dating in a strictly controlled environment that doesn't bolster personal space and freedom. As the battle for success rages on, this intense film provides a harrowing portrait of the new direction of Chinese education, one that aims to mass produce focused, result-oriented over-achievers.

Clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7KbDvHg1-ns>



DREAM WALKING – 2005 (86 MINUTES)

<https://www.sfmoma.org/event/dream-walking/>

This film follows four artists living on the margins of society whose passionate discussions belie their stark and impoverished living conditions. The subjects are performance artist Li Wake, painters Wang Yongping and Ding Defu, and poet Motou Beibei, who is hailed online as a genius but in reality works as a security guard. Overcome by ennui, lost in the uncertainties of their everyday lives and their artistic identities, the artists express certain hopelessness.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaGByCxB74&feature=youtu.be>

RETURN TO THE BORDER – 2005 (80 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Return_to_the_Border

Return to the Border is a 2005 documentary film directed by Zhao Liang about his return to his hometown in China that borders the Yalu river and North Korea. The short film presents deep insight into both the Chinese and North Korean societies and changes that have taken place over the last several decades.

Clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IRWeoFTDIQ>



CHINA BLUE – 2005 (86 MINUTES)

<https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/documentaries/chinablue/>

They live crowded together in cement factory dormitories where water has to be carried upstairs in buckets. Their meals and rent are deducted from their wages, which amount to less than a dollar a day. Most of the jeans they make in the factory are purchased by retailers in the U.S. and other countries. *China Blue* takes viewers inside a blue jeans factory in southern China, where teenage workers struggle to survive harsh working conditions. Providing perspectives from both the top and bottom levels of the factory's hierarchy, the film looks at complex issues of globalization from the human level.



Teacher Guide: <http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/guides/chinaguide.pdf>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0yfNOkBCII>



PBS: WORLD IN BALANCE CHINA REVS UP – 2004 (57 MINUTES)

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/worldbalance/about.html>

The second hour of this Nova documentary (*China Revs Up*) takes the pulse of China's hyperactive economy, which is the fastest growing in the history of the world...As the sprawling country develops from a poor nation and aspires to a more middle-class lifestyle, China's air, land, and water are beginning to suffer. Already, a massive dust cloud of eroded soil from Mongolia has darkened the skies over North America, and air pollution from Beijing and Shanghai regularly wafts as far as California. The prospect that all Chinese will strive to live like middle-class Americans is daunting, since it has been calculated that if all of the world's people had an American standard of living, two more planets the size of Earth would be needed to support them.



Teacher Guide: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/teachers/programs/3108_worldbal.html

SEARCHING FOR LIN ZHAO'S SOUL – 2004 (115 MINUTES)

<http://icarusfilms.com/df-linzha>

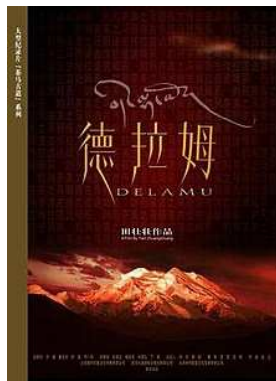
This landmark documentary reveals the tragic life of a gifted young woman who was executed for speaking out during the height of Chairman Mao's rule. Lin Zhao, a top student from Peking University, was imprisoned for defending students and leaders persecuted during Mao Zedong's Anti-Rightist Movement in the late 1950s. A gifted writer, Lin composed endless articles and poems from her cell. Forbidden to use pens, she wrote with a hairpin dipped in her own blood. In 1968 she was executed, her tragic life lost to the margins of history. Four decades later, filmmaker Hu Jie brings Lin's story to light and

"Though none of his works have been publicly shown in China, Hu Jie is one of his country's most noteworthy filmmakers." Ian Johnson, The New York Review of Books

uncovers the details of this forgotten woman's fight for civil rights. . Searching for Lin Zhao's Soul stands as a landmark in the Chinese independent documentary movement, an unprecedented work of investigation and recovery of modern China's suppressed memories. Director Hu Jie digs through artifacts and interviews first-hand witnesses to Lin's persecution, illuminating an era of political terror that sent millions to their deaths. The result is a lasting testament to a young woman's legacy of courage and conviction. In the words of Chinese writer Ran Yunfei,: "Lin Zhao is the spiritual resource for all Chinese people and the legacy for the whole world.

Clip: <http://icarusfilms.com/df-linzha>

Director's Statement: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQIGjzj1-vc>



DELAMU – 2004 (114 MINUTES)

<https://tribecafilm.com/films/512d00621c7d76e0460023f6-delamu>

With this ravishing new film, Tian Zhuangzhuang returns to the pastoral cinematic territory of the documentary-based ethnographic explorations of his earlier masterpieces, *On the Hunting Ground* and *The Horse Thief*. Shot along an ancient trading route that is etched on the mountainside from the high plateau in Western Yunnan to the trading outposts of Tibet, above the roar of the Nujiang Rive, *Delamu* is animated by a series of portraits of people along the way. An old Protestant pastor has returned to his church and his fellow Lisu tribesmen in his parish after years of exile and imprisonment during the

Cultural Revolution; a young Tibetan describes his life with his older brother and the wife they share; an old woman from the Nu minority recalls the days when soldiers of the Kuomintang sought out her hand in marriage; and a young wrangler speaks tenderly of the sure-footed mules and ponies who help him make his living. The range and utterly compelling humanity of these and other intimate sketches are as awe-inspiring as the plunging gorges and the soaring mountains that form the backdrop of this work of measured beauty.

SAN YUAN LI – 2003 (45 MINUTES)

<http://icarusfilms.com/df-sanyu>

Armed with video cameras, twelve artists present a highly stylized portrait of *San Yuan Li*, a traditional village besieged by China's urban sprawl.

China's rapid modernization literally traps the village of San Yuan Li within the surrounding skyscrapers of Guangzhou, a city of 12 million people. The villagers move to a different rhythm, thriving on subsistence farming and traditional crafts. They resourcefully reinvent their traditional lifestyle by tending rice paddies on empty city lots and raising chickens on makeshift rooftop coops.

Clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pzHXDQ7ddeA>

MY CAMERA DOESN'T LIE – 2003 (92 MINUTES)

<https://variety.com/2003/film/reviews/my-camera-doesn-t-lie-1200540907/>

A film about Chinese underground filmmakers who were the first to express their truthful and realistic views on China from 1989 until today. It is also the first film speaking about the Chinese homosexual film-scene. The documentary features Chinese intellectuals and directors

such as: Cui Zi'en, Jia Zhangke, Ju An Qi, Li Yu, Liu Bingjian, Liu Hao, Wang Xiaoshuai, Zhang Yuan.

RAILROAD OF HOPE – 2003 (56 MINUTES)

<https://letterboxd.com/film/railroad-of-hope/details/>

Railroad of Hope consists of interviews and footage collected over three days with Ning Ying of migrant agricultural workers traveling from Sichuan in China's interior, to the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, China's northwest frontier. Through informal interviews aboard the cramped rail cars, Ning Ying explores the hopes and dreams of the workers, many of whom have never left their homes before.

TO LIVE IS BETTER THAN TO DIE – 2003 (88 MINUTES)

<https://emro.libraries.psu.edu/record/index.php?id=1755>

According to Ma Shengyi, a farmer from Wenlou village in central China, there are too many of the following in his village:

Too many people still selling blood

Too many people who have contracted HIV/AIDS from selling blood

Too many widows and widowers who can't afford to send their children to school

Too many people whose children are dead

Too many lonely old people whose children are dead

In the 1990s HIV/AIDS came to Wenlou through a blood purchasing program. To supplement their income many poor villagers sold their blood and 60% of those who sold blood contracted HIV/AIDS from unsanitary equipment. Many have died from the disease. In his documentary film, *To Live is Better than to Die*, Weijun Chen tells of the impact AIDS has had in parts of rural China by showing how it has affected the Ma family. It is spring when the film takes up the family's story. Ma Shengyi's wife, Leimei, is suffering from full-blown AIDS. Ma Shengyi and the younger two of their three children are HIV positive. Through periodic interviews Chen is able to document the family's ability to maintain a loving and supportive home environment while struggling with their distressing situation. By the following spring, Ma Shengyi's wife had died, his son had learned to walk, and his eldest daughter had come to know AIDS, death, and separation.

Film Clip and Peabody Award to Director Chen Weijun:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-OoIPs9cDg>

PBS: CHINA IN THE RED – 2003 (120 MINUTES)

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/red/>

China in the Red chronicles three pivotal years of evolution from Communist society to market economy. For half a century, millions of Chinese labored in state factories with cradle-to-grave job security. But reforms bringing prosperity and world-power status now threaten the livelihood of many Chinese. *Frontline* follows ten Chinese citizens caught up in social and economic transformation, struggling to survive in a world they never imagined.

Teacher Guide: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/teach/red/>

This site has a wide assortment of lesson plans and viewing guide for grades 9-12. "Teaching activities have been designed for social studies and language arts teachers of students in grades 9 to 12. Social studies activities use the documentary to examine the impact of economic growth, globalization, and changing family structures in China. Literature-based activities help students explore Chinese culture. Since the documentary follows many people



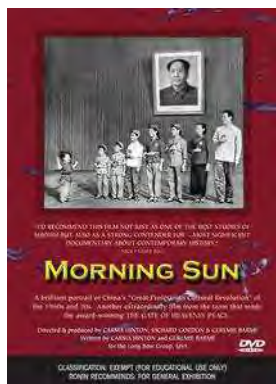
over a four-year period, there is also an activity that provides a way for each student to learn about and track each person. Choose the activities that work best for you and your students.” Stream entire film here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggc0W5EfUkc>



MORNING SUN – 2003 (117 MINUTES)

<http://morningsun.org/film/index.html>

The film *Morning Sun* attempts in the space of a two-hour documentary film to create an inner history of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (c.1964-1976). It provides a multi-



perspective view of a tumultuous period as seen through the eyes—and reflected in the hearts and minds—of members of the high-school generation that was born around the time of the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, and that came of age in the 1960s. Others join them in creating in the film’s conversation about the period and the psycho-emotional topography of high-Maoist China, as well as the enduring legacy of that period. *Morning Sun* is not a comprehensive or chronological history of the Cultural Revolution as such; nor is it a study of elite politics or of student factionalism. The film essays rather a psychological history. It attempts a cinematic account of experiences and emotions as reflected on by historical actors who themselves were enacting a history that they had learned and wished to recreate in their own lives. It is also a film about the

cultures and convictions, as well as the historical events, that created the impetus, language, style and content of the period—the films and plays, the music and ideas, the rhetoric and ideologies, the education and the aspirations, the frustrations and fantasies, as well as the realities and ardor, that a new revolution that attempted to remake revolution itself entailed.

Review: <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/22/movies/film-review-the-loss-of-relationships-under-mao-s-rough-revolutionary-hand.html>

Teacher Guide: <http://morningsun.org/about/index.html>

Beginning clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyYWOyRngL8>



TIE XI QU: WEST OF TRACKS – 2002 (554 MINUTES)

<https://store.der.org/west-of-the-tracks-p250.aspx>

Tie Xi is a massive industrial complex in northeastern China's Shenyang province. Built during the Japanese occupation of China and restructured with Soviet support after World War II, it is the country's oldest and largest manufacturing center. From the postwar period to the 1980s, the thriving factories employed more than a million workers, but like other state-run industries they began their collapse in the early 1990s.

In *West of the Tracks*, filmmaker Wang Bing documents the slow, inevitable death of an obsolete manufacturing system. Between 1999 and 2001 he meticulously filmed the lives of the last factory workers, a class of people once promised glory during the Chinese revolution. Now trapped by economic change, the workers become deeply moving film heroes in this modern epic. The film is an engrossing portrait of Chinese society in transition. *Cahiers du Cinema* compares Wang Bing to the great Russian writers and calls his film "a masterful production, an open file on realism." *West of the Tracks* "opens up a new and radical era in cinematography."

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_z4BTaTRko

PBS WIDE ANGLE: TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT – 2002

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/episodes/to-have-and-have-not/introduction/886/>

Every year this nation's economy struggles to absorb 20 million *new* unemployed, while the newly rich move to gated communities with private schools and tennis courts. If this sounds like Daddy Warbuck's America, it isn't. It's the new China. Once the home of the "iron rice bowl" and social equality for all, today China has joined the ranks of the World Trade Organization. The country's new commitment to private enterprise and free markets may change China more in a single year than most countries change in a decade. This extraordinarily candid film introduces viewers to the unemployed, the working poor and the *nouveaux* riches alike.

Introduction clip: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/episodes/to-have-and-have-not/introduction/886/>



HERDSMEN – 2001 (89 MINUTES)

<https://store.der.org/herdsmen-p782.aspx>

A small film crew tracks a Kazak family in Xinjiang, China's western-most province, from spring to winter. Unlike the people of Kazakhstan, who grew into a nation of farmers and workers, the Kazaks retained their nomadic life and a close bond with nature.

The Kazaks are a small minority among many more tenacious peoples of Xinjiang. To exist they went their way among the mountains and plateaus of the most remote region in the most desolate part of China. The crew follows a typical nomadic family with eleven children as the family travel wherever there is grass for their animals. They endure incredible hardships, sometimes going several days without food. In spite of this they have moments of joy and beauty, believing that nature will support them and that they will survive.

The filmmakers' four-year-long effort shooting the film is part of a recent rise in Chinese filmmakers' documenting their country's ethnic diversity. Although it takes a classic ethnographic, observational approach, the film is stunning in its cinematic, epic style. Richly informative for teaching anthropology, Asian Studies, nomadic cultures and kinship.

22-minute clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BG0A6k8sRw4&feature=emb_logo

THE TURANDOT PROJECT – 2000 (87 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0262076/plotsummary?ref=tt_ov_pl

In May of 1997, Zubin Mehta conducts and Zhang Yimou directs Puccini's "Turandot" in Florence. A year later, they stage nine performances in Beijing*. This documentary focuses on the China production: a huge and elaborate set, hundreds of extras, three sets of principles, props and costumes matching the Ming Dynasty. Mehta, with his Indian roots and European training, revels in bringing disparate cultures together. Zhang wants the music to come through and anticipates the demands (and habits) of the Chinese audience. Rehearsals; production work; rain; talks with singers, crew, and local officials -- can it all come together? When the chorus is in full volume, no one sleeps.

NYT film review: <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/08/10/movies/film-review-an-italian-china-meets-a-chinese-china.html>

*Stream original Turandot 2-hour performance in the Forbidden City here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dyZHi-yVESQ>

NIXON'S CHINA GAME — 1999 (59 MINUTES)

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/china/filmmore/index.html>

In February 1972, after a quarter-century of mutual antagonism between the United States and China, President Richard Nixon traveled to Beijing for an historic encounter with Chairman Mao Tse-tung. The climax of a secret White House initiative headed by Henry Kissinger, the diplomatic breakthrough shocked both America's allies and its enemies. Drawing on recently declassified records and key eyewitnesses, the program recreates, step by step by dangerous step, the events leading up to what Nixon called "the week that changed the world."

Teacher Guide: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/china/tguide/index.html>

NIXON IN CHINA (46 MINUTES)

A compilation of audiovisual materials from the collections of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library.

Stream:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cfsI4ZjTbU>



CHINA: A CENTURY OF REVOLUTION — 1997 (120 MINUTES EACH)



<http://www.aems.illinois.edu/publications/k12resources/china/docs.html>

This series includes:



1. *China in Revolution 1911-1949* (1989) This 2-hour video describes the rivalry between the Chinese Communist Party and the Nationalist Party and highlights the two figures who came to shape events, Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong.

2. *The Mao Years 1949-1976* (1994) tells the story of how Mao Zedong and his colleagues tried to build a "new China." Includes images of the Great Leap Forward and ensuing famine, the Cultural Revolution, and the historic visit of President Nixon.

3. *Born Under the Red Flag 1976-1996* (1997) examines China's transformation to a world economic and military power and its pursuit of two seemingly contradictory goals economic strength and prosperity and absolute Communist Party control as it approaches the 21st century.

CONFUCIUS: WORDS OF WISDOM — 1996 (44 MINUTES)

<https://www.studenthandouts.com/world-history/ancient-east-asia/books-films/1996-confucius-words-of-wisdom.htm>

Produced by A&E Biography, Confucius: Words of Wisdom discusses the childhood, development, philosophy, and influence of this great man, featuring reenactments of scenes from his life and historical artwork of his image.

Stream entire film here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgDq1WqPhwM>



GATE OF HEAVENLY PEACE — 1995 (180 MINUTES)

<http://www.tsquare.tv/>

The Gate of Heavenly Peace is a feature-length documentary about the 1989 protest movement, reflecting the drama, tension, humor, absurdity, heroism, and many tragedies of the six weeks from April to June in 1989. The film reveals how the hard-liners within the government marginalized moderates among the protesters (including students, workers and intellectuals), while the actions of radical protesters undermined moderates in the government. Moderate



obo.php

voices were gradually cowed and then silenced by extremism and emotionalism on both sides. It is a sobering tale, for faced with the binary opposition between Communists and anti-Communists, there has been little middle ground left for the rational and thoughtful proponents of positive reform in China. By giving these ignored voices their proper place in history, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* reveals an ongoing debate in China concerning the importance of personal responsibility and moral integrity, the need, as Vaclav Havel has put it, to "live in the truth."



Teacher Guide: <http://www.tsquare.tv/>

This website explores the origins and history of the protests, the intense international media coverage and underlying themes such as democracy, human rights, reform and revolution, and nationalism. The site contains transcripts, articles, essays, and book excerpts, a tour of Tiananmen Square, and a Media Library with posters, photographs, music, and videos. Stream Part 1 (112 minutes) here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Gtt2JxmQtg>
Stream entire film here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSh1cG-rCnI>

BUMMING IN BEIJING – 1990 (70 MINUTES)

<https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/bumming-in-beijing-the-last-dreamers/Film?oid=1052540>

Shot before and shortly after the Tiananmen Square massacre, Wu Wenguang's 1990 video ushered in a new documentary style in China, focusing on urban issues and operating outside the cultural bureaucracy. The five young artists he profiles—a writer, a photographer, two painters, and a director of avant-garde theater—reject a life tethered to the government yet still hope to modernize the urban cultural scene; their frank ruminations about life, art, and the future are punctuated by groundbreaking verité shots of people doing their chores in squalid back alleys and studio apartments. Wu funded the film himself, using a camcorder to capture his subjects at work and at play, and unlike government propagandists he eschews music and voice-over narration for an intimate naturalism akin to Frederick Wiseman's. Most revealing is Wu's portrayal of Zhang Xia Ping, a feisty feminist painter who suffers a mental breakdown; her delirious outburst is the first such episode to be documented in mainland China for a Western audience (Wu especially angered the censors by subtitling his documentary in English). The last third of the video takes place after Tiananmen, when two of the artists have gone abroad and two more are about to leave. The massacre is never mentioned, but Wu documents the artists' disillusionment and cynicism as unflinchingly as he did their earlier idealism.

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/336168896>

Stream entire movie here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ES1LnLCRtQ>

CHUNG KUO, CINA – 1972 (220 MINUTES)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/28/movies/chung-kuo-cina-antonioni-moma-forgotten-masterpiece-a-china-travelogue.html>

...Invited by Mao Tse-tung's government to make a film, Antonioni arrived in China in the spring of 1972 (shortly after Richard Nixon's historic visit) and filmed there for approximately five weeks. His movie, which has three parts — the first set in Beijing, the second in various towns and cities along the Yangtze River and the third in Shanghai — is leisurely and largely observational as it follows an itinerary established by official minders. Antonioni conducts no interviews, and ambient

Chinese is untranslated. Long passages in which his camera simply watches groups of people engaged in various activities provide something like a tranquil flood of information. ...Although *Chung Kuo* seems to have been initially praised by the Chinese diplomats who previewed it in Italy, Antonioni was soon after accused of perpetrating a malicious slander. Perhaps caught in a political struggle between the relatively liberal Zhou Enlai, the first premier of the People's Republic of China, and that country's hard-line Gang of Four, the director became the target of an orchestrated campaign. Wall posters in Beijing showed his face covered with swastikas; he was denounced as a lackey of both Benito Mussolini and

the Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. The film, of course, went unseen — it was not publicly shown in China until 2004 when it was screened to 800 people at the Beijing Film Academy. *How did an Italian film director wind up rubbing shoulders with Marx, Lenin and the Chinese Communist Party in the lyrics of a children's ditty? Even more peculiarly, why were Chinese children being mobilised en masse to — frankly speaking — piss him off? How did Antonioni become such a high-priority target of national criticism?* See:

<https://www.sensesofcinema.com/2013/feature-articles/when-ordinary-seeing-fails-reclaiming-the-art-of-documentary-in-michelangelo-antonionis-1972-china-film-chung-kuo/>

Stream Part One (69 minutes) here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IuxseEtIRXI>

CHANGING MASK: A LETTER TO ANTONIONI — 2004 (58 MINUTES)

<https://homemcr.org/event/chinese-film-forum-presents-china-close-up/>

This film re-visits the original places and people featured in Michelangelo Antonioni's acclaimed documentary, *Chung Kuo* (1972). First commissioned and subsequently banned by the Chinese government, Antonioni's film was one of the few western documentaries about China's Cultural Revolution. Echoing the themes portrayed in Antonioni's original film, *Changing Mask: A Letter to Antonioni* portrays the opinions of Chinese people as they discuss changes, they have experienced during the last 40 years.

FEATURE FILMS

(Listed in chronological order of film release)



THE WINGS OF SONGS — 2021 (98 MINUTES)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/05/world/asia/china-uyghurs-propaganda-musical.html>

Welcome to *The Wings of Songs*, a state-backed musical that is the latest addition to China's propaganda campaign to defend its policies in Xinjiang. The campaign has intensified in recent weeks as Western politicians and rights groups have accused Beijing of subjecting Uyghurs and other Muslim

minorities in Xinjiang to forced labor and genocide.

The film offers a glimpse of the alternate vision of Xinjiang that China's ruling Communist Party is pushing to audiences at home and abroad. Far from being oppressed, the musical seems to say, the Uyghurs and other minorities are singing and dancing happily in colorful dress, a flashy take on a tired Chinese stereotype about the region's minorities that Uyghur rights activists quickly denounced.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I934hfjEEwg>

Stream entire movie here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4lXAZRdW5PI>

SISTER — 2021 (127 MINUTES)

<http://www.sixthtone.com/news/1007190/Hit%20Film%20Tackles%20Male%20Gender%20Preference%20in%20Chinese%20Families/>

A new Chinese movie is casting a spotlight on a long-debated question: Should personal values be prioritized over traditional family values?

The family drama *Sister*, which topped the domestic box office during the recent Qingming Festival holiday, tells the story of An Ran, a young woman who is suddenly faced with having to take care of her 6-year-old brother after their parents die in an accident. The movie follows An's trajectory as she struggles to balance her own life choices while becoming her brother's caretaker.

Review: <https://supchina.com/2021/04/05/homegrown-movie-sister-dominates-box-office-by-shining-rare-light-on-male-preference-in-chinese-families/>

Trailer: https://www.imdb.com/video/vi1669513241?playlistId=tt12788426&ref_=tt_ov_vi



LEAP — 2020 (134 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leap_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leap_(film))

Leap is a 2020 Chinese biographical sports film directed by Peter Chan and starring Gong Li and Huang Bo. The film is based on the China women's national volleyball team's stories spread over more than 40 years. It had been slated for release in China on January 25, 2020, the first day of the Chinese New Year, but was withdrawn due to COVID-19 pandemic. It was selected as the Chinese entry for the Best International Feature Film at the 93rd Academy Awards. The film was released in Mainland China and the United States on September 25, 2020. The cast consists of ten out of the 12 Olympic Gold medalists from the

2016 Rio Olympics squad appearing as themselves. Many other professional volleyball players acted in the movie. (2021 Oscar feature film Submission from China)

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ejQWvtjbQ8>

THE EIGHT HUNDRED – 2020 (150 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Eight_Hundred
Chinese historical war drama film directed by and co-written by Guan Hu. During the early days of the Second Sino-Japanese War, and on a greater scale World War II, the Imperial Japanese Army invaded Shanghai, which became known as The Battle of Shanghai. After holding back the Japanese for over 3 months, and suffering heavy losses, the Chinese army was forced to retreat due to the danger of being encircled. Lieutenant Colonel Xie Jinyuan of the 524th Regiment of the under-equipped 88th Division of the National Revolutionary Army, leads 452 young officers and soldiers to defend Sihang Warehouse against the 3rd Imperial Japanese Division consisting of around 20,000 troops on a heroic suicidal last stand against the Japanese under an order by Generalissimo of Nationalist China, Chiang Kai-shek. The decision was made to provide a morale boost to the Chinese people after the losses of Beijing and Shanghai, and help spur support from the Allies, who were in full view of the battle from the International Settlement in Shanghai just across from the Suzhou Creek.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbikn8Q148c>

The Guardian: The Eight Hundred: How China's Blockbusters Became a New Political Battleground

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2020/sep/18/the-eight-hundred-how-chinas-blockbusters-became-a-new-political-battleground>

It was pulled from a film festival, censored by the state and now it's the year's second biggest film. Is The Eight Hundred an exhilarating war movie – or slick propaganda?

"The biggest thing is not the censorship itself; it's the unpredictability of it," says Mudge. "The things to avoid are pretty much the same" – chiefly politically sensitive issues such as Mao, Tibet, the Tiananmen Square massacre, and Hong Kong democracy – "but if you're a film-maker or an investor or a producer, and you know that your film could get yanked the day before it's supposed to be released, even after you've spent all your marketing money, it's a problem."

THE SACRIFICE – 2020 (122 MINUTES)

<http://en.people.cn/n3/2020/1025/c90000-9772706.html>

Set during the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-53), the movie joins a host of films and TV shows recently released to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Chinese People's Volunteers entering the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fight in the war.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpUzjkqNKjM>

OVER THE MOON – 2020 (100 MINUTES)

<https://variety.com/2020/film/reviews/over-the-moon-review-1234798509/>

Produced in partnership with Shanghai-based Pearl Studio (the DreamWorks venture responsible for *Abominable*), *Over the Moon* celebrates Chinese culture as no mainstream American toon – not even *Mulan* – has before. But it does so in a way that's so formulaically Western that it feels like the creative team took "Coco" and dressed it up in another country's colors, customs and costumes.

The plot plays off the myth of Chang'e goddess of the moon, who sacrificed earthly romance with handsome Houyi for immortality among the stars – a legend that Keane himself hand-renders in an impressive early sequence, when the sketch decorating a silk scarf comes to life. Chinese kids know the story of moon goddess Chang'e, which sparks

2021 Oscar nomination for Best Animated Feature Film

the movie's main character, 13-year-old Fei Fei to prove it's true ... by building a rocket to the moon...

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P_zuK_pergw

ONE SECOND – 2020 (104 MINUTES)

<https://variety.com/2020/film/news/zhang-yimou-one-second-china-release-date-1234805038/>

The film tells the story of a strong bond that forms between three characters played by Zhang Yi, Liu Haocun, and Fan Wei because of a movie. A new trailer depicts a gritty rural town during the Cultural Revolution period where residents have gathered to watch a projected film, only to find that the print has been unwound, dragged through the dirt and nearly destroyed. They work together to repair it even as a young street urchin fights to steal it. The tone is feel-good and upbeat, comedic but not satirical, despite dark elements like a knife fight in which a man knocks said young urchin unconscious.

New promotional posters for the film consist merely of a handwritten note from Zhang Yimou, who writes, "I'll never be able to forget the feeling I had when watching a film when I was young. That indescribable excitement and joy was like a dream. Film accompanies us as we grow older. Dreams follow us are whole lives. There will always be a film that you remember your whole life. What you remember perhaps isn't the film itself, but the kind of longing and expectation you get from looking up at the stars."

He has previously called *One Second* his "love letter to cinema."

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gYkRPDt5R4&feature=emb_logo

MULAN – 2020 (115 MINUTES)

<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/mulan-movie-review-2020>

SupChina: Why Chinese Viewers Hate Disney's 'Mulan' (9/11/20)

<https://supchina.com/2020/09/11/why-chinese-viewers-hate-disneys-mulan/>

As Hong Kong activists solicit worldwide solidarity for the #BoycottMulan movement and Disney faces growing criticism for shooting much of the movie in Xinjiang, Chinese moviegoers have found different reasons to tear the movie apart.

Its origins date back centuries, and its animated predecessor is beloved within the '90s Disney canon, but the latest version of *Mulan* couldn't be more relevant, vital, and alive.

Director Niki Caro's live-action take on the classic story of a young Chinese woman who disguises herself as a man to become a warrior is thrilling from start to finish. It's steeped in traditional cultural locales and details yet feels bracingly modern with the help of dazzling special effects and innovative action sequences. You want gravity-defying, wuxia-inspired aerial work, *and* elaborately choreographed martial arts battles and horse stunts? You got 'em all. And a truly impressive array of veteran actors helps keep the emotions grounded, including Tzi Ma, Donnie Yen, Jet Li and the goddess Gong Li.

Review: <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/the-new-mulanandnbspuncomfortable-relationship-with-chinas-past-and-present>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KK8FHdFluOQ>

STRIDING INTO THE WIND – 2020 (156 MINUTES)

<https://www.chicagofilmfestival.com/digifilm/striding-into-the-wind/>

Fed up with his final year at film school, skilled sound recordist Kun is searching for something more. He coasts through class, works dead-end jobs, and is constantly at odds with his girlfriend. With a newly minted drivers' license, an old second-hand Jeep, and his best

friend in tow, Kun takes up with a student production and embarks on a journey of self-discovery across China's lush, varied landscape. Featuring winning performances and directed with a wry emotional clarity, *Striding into the Wind* is a keenly observed meditation on movies, modern China, and the meandering restlessness of youth.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2NFplc5JfU>

BEING MORTAL – 2020 (96 MINUTES)

<https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202010/14/WS5f86af4aa31024ad0ba7ea84.html>



Liu Ze's film is based on a Chinese novel *Deng Dai*. Xia Tian transfers her job back to her hometown in order to take care of her dad who gets Alzheimer's for over ten years. She thought it will be a comfort for her parents, but as the disease gets worse, the stress of life she gets to learn, and the only thing she can do is just wait... "With China's aging population expanding fast, the country has seen growth in patients diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease," Liu said during the premiere. "Despite *Being Mortal* telling a story about how to best take care of such a patient, the film also wants to explore the conflict and contradiction between China's traditional value to respect filial piety and a family's struggle over high medical fees," Liu added.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXnwBLoieZM&feature=emb_logo

JIANG ZIYA: LEGEND OF DEIFICATION – 2020 (110 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jiang_Ziya_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jiang_Ziya_(film))

The film tells the story of the mythological and fictional literary version of Jiang Ziya from the *Investiture of the Gods*, a gargantuan Ming-dynasty (1368–1644) *shenmo* novel that is traditionally attributed to Xu Zhonglin, and incorporates various existing myths into a wider narrative. Jiang Ziya is traditionally depicted in Chinese fiction as a Taoist adept in Chinese folk religion and Taoism. In the original novel, Jiang is a 72-year-old man. In this film, Jiang Ziya is portrayed as a middle-aged man who insists on following his heart despite having a complex past.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMTH6sNCsrs>

SUMMER BLUR – 2020 (88 MINUTES)

<https://www.berlinale.de/en/programme/202106075.html>

"Mum really misses you. I bought you lots of presents. When you're next here, I'll take you to Disneyland..."

Like a seismograph, 13-year-old Guo moves through Han Shuai's feature debut: locked in a series of close-ups, more of an observer than a participant, quietly registering all of the tremors causing the fabric of her working-class social environment to crumble. Guo becomes witness to her friend accidentally drowning in the river, which results in her inability to deal with her feelings of grief, guilt and longing. The summer heat is as oppressive as the overbearing advances of one of her classmates, the shrill chirping of cicadas permeating the desolation of her loveless home on the outskirts of Wuhan – far away from a mother whose presence in her life is limited only to voice messages. A tender portrait of a young girl defying the confines of her circumstances and coming of age in the process.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eyy34PmJpHE>



SO LONG MY SON — 2019 (185 MINUTES)

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/dec/08/so-long-my-son-review-wang-xiaoshuai-masterpiece>

So measured is the pacing, so sinuous the timeline, so understated the subtle ache of the performances that you don't immediately realize that Wang Xiaoshuai's exquisite three-hour drama has been performing the emotional equivalent of open-heart surgery on the audience since pretty much the first scene.

A member of China's so-called "sixth generation" of directors, a group that has its roots in a naturalistic, neorealist tradition, Wang sprang to

international prominence with *Beijing Bicycle* (2001), which paid homage to De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves*. For *So Long, My Son*, which the director co-wrote with Ah Mei, and which unfolds over the course of three decades, the inspiration is drawn from closer to home. China's recent history – the unforgiving one-child policy; the stinging tail end of the cultural revolution; the seismic shifts in worker status and security as the country lurched from communism to a market economy – is explored through an intimate focus on two couples, linked first by friendship and later by tragedy.

It's the tragedy that is revealed first. Two boys watch as older children cavort at the edge of a reservoir. One longs to join in; the other, fearful, remains behind. A short time later, the camera lingers at a respectful distance as we see parents Yaojun (Wang Jingchun) and Liyun (Yong Mei) rush to the water's edge to haul the lifeless body of their son on to the bank. Likewise, their desperation and desolation in the hospital is captured with a wide shot, placing the grieving couple at the end of an oppressive corridor.

Threading back and forward, weaving together buoyant celebration and needle pricks of sadness, both before and after the tragedy, the film elegantly pieces together a portrait of a couple, their adopted child and the family whose fate is tied to theirs. The repeated motif of an instrumental version of Auld Lang Syne should be hokey but somehow steepens the picture in a kind of luxuriant sadness and resignation. It's a gorgeous, melancholy masterpiece.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GbJi3YstBzE&feature=emb_logo

NEZHA — 2019 (110 MINUTES)

<https://variety.com/2019/film/reviews/nezha-review-1203384829/>

...Based on a popular character out of Chinese mythology, Ne Zha was born to Lord Li (Chen Hao) and Lady Yin (Lü Qi), who lied by telling him that he was the reincarnation of the Spirit Pearl. In truth, his Demon Pearl foundation means that he's fated to be killed by a lightning bolt when he reaches the age of three. His parents, without success, have tried to keep him locked away inside their sprawling domestic compound, so he's really a victim — of destiny, and of the higher powers, who spend more than their share of screen time in *Nezha* pulling metaphysical puppet strings. The poignance of the movie is that Ne Zha has a Pinocchio side. Part of him would like to be an ordinary boy, even though he can scarcely play a round of Chinese Hackey Sack without smashing the footbag through a wall.

Can he wriggle out of his fate? That's the question on which the rather busy plot is hung, as Ne Zha gets tugged in different directions by an ambiguous host of spirit mentors, from the stammering Shen Gongbao (Yang Wei), who could be an early-'90s virtual-reality Dracula, to Ao Bing (Han Mo), who looks like a blue-haired version of Legolas from *The Lord of the Rings*,

even though he's actually the reincarnated son of the Dragon King, who is out to liberate his clan from their underwater prison lair...

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=aJolTuhDr9E>

WISDOM TOOTH — 2019 (104 MINUTES)

<https://variety.com/2019/film/reviews/wisdom-tooth-review-1203429400/>

Slippery and surprising, full of odd details and insights, and leaching significant visual and thematic texture from its unusual setting, Liang Ming's *Wisdom Tooth* must be one of the year's most remarkable debuts. Set in a depressed Chinese fishing town close to the Korean border during the first snow flurries of winter, the film is partly a crime thriller, partly a distinctly European-flavored relationship drama, but wholly a knotty, complex character portrait of a young woman taking her tentative first steps toward independence. The result feels like a potent hybrid of the Chinese social realist tradition as exemplified by Jia Zhangke and the Korean independent scene of which the films of Lee Chang-dong are at the forefront.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7rxTSdE0D1w&feature=emb_logo

MOSAIC PORTRAIT — 2019 (108 MINUTES)

<https://variety.com/2019/film/reviews/mosaic-portrait-review-1203259501/>

At first glance, Zhai Yixiang's *Mosaic Portrait* looks like it pursues the same semi-journalistic agenda as so much social-issue cinema: Xu Ying, a 14-year-old girl from a rural Chinese village, is discovered to be pregnant, and names one of her schoolteachers as the father. Ying's father, Xu Guangjun — a frequently absent migrant worker — along with school authorities and visiting reporter Jia, who takes an interest in the case, attempt to piece together the truth of the situation. They are all excessively concerned with Ying's predicament, yet somehow unable to conceive of Ying's place within it, and so the men tussle over the sullen teen like dogs over a bone, vying with each other without ever really looking at her.

...The impressions of Ying from others can never hope to describe the totality of her, making this a psychologically inclined project that in itself sets *Mosaic Portrait* apart from the social realist tradition with which it initially flirts. If realism in cinema means mirroring the world as it is, then Zhai's film, as the title suggests, is that mirror shattered and the pieces reassembled into a picture far more elusive and abstract. And also in its way, more honest, because it refers, in the gaps between those glinting shards, to the mystery of all we can never know about each other, and perhaps can only rarely know about ourselves.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snLpHPdbmd8>



LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT — 2019 (139 MINUTES)

<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/long-days-journey-into-night-2019>

Time moves differently in *Long Day's Journey into Night*, a sensuous, dream-like Chinese drama set in and around the Southeast mainland city of Kaili. The first half of the movie — which only shares a title with Eugene O'Neill's play of the same name — is a disorienting mix of flashbacks and flash-forwards. We follow emotionally withdrawn drifter Hongwu Luo (Jue Huang) as he chases after a woman that he can only vaguely recall. He remembers her in stages: each new place that he revisits — physically and in his memories — brings him closer to her, a woman who may or may not be the enigmatic Kaizhen (*Lust/Caution* star Wei Tang). Or maybe her name is Qiwen Wan, like the movie star. It's hard to tell since time slips through Luo's fingers as easily as the rainwater that darkens Kaili's skies and then seeps into the

foundation of almost every building. This is a city—and a mind—that's perpetually on the brink of collapse. How do the locals survive? Why is Luo looking for Kaizhen? What's the point of this story?

The answer to these and many other questions are a matter of faith. Because *Long Day's Journey into Night*, is a slow, fragmented drama that has become somewhat renowned for its inclusion of an hour-long 3-D tracking shot that only occurs about halfway through the movie. And because Luo's quest is, for the most part, about blind devotion...

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=0yPt3kQzxa8>

THE WANDERING EARTH — 2019 (125 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7605074/>

As the sun is dying out, people around the world build giant planet thrusters to move Earth out of its orbit and sail Earth to a new star system. Yet the 2500-year journey comes with unexpected dangers, and in order to save humanity, a group of young people in this age of a wandering Earth fight hard for the survival of humankind.

Review: <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-wandering-earth-2019>

Discussion/publication of eight scholars on the film: <https://u.osu.edu/mclc/online-series/the-wandering-earth/>

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_lsOwtKNsA



THE FAREWELL — 2019 (100 MINUTES)

<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-farewell-2019>



The Farewell announces at the beginning that it's "based on an actual lie," but the meaningful truths it reveals couldn't be more poignant or powerful. And while writer/director Lulu Wang's film is obviously personal and culturally specific, it achieves a universality and a resonance through its vivid depiction of a family in the midst of crisis.

That crisis was actually Wang's crisis: Her beloved grandmother was dying in China, and the family decided not to tell their matriarch to protect her and prevent her from living in fear throughout her remaining days. Instead, they planned a lavish wedding as an excuse to bring everyone together one last time...

...In sharing her story with us, Wang achieves a masterful tonal balance throughout *The Farewell*. She's made a film about death that's light on its

feet and never mawkish. She's told a story about cultural clashes without ever leaning on wacky stereotypes or lazy clichés. She finds a variety of moments for her actors to shine within a large ensemble cast. And she's pulled off one of the most perfect endings you'll ever see. The entire film is pretty perfect, actually, and it's one of the year's best.

Fresh Air Interview with director/writer Lulu Wang:

<https://www.npr.org/2019/07/24/744805282/filmmaker-lulu-wang-based-the-farewell-on-her-family-s-real-life-lie>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RofpAjqwMa8>

SISTER – 2019 (8 MINUTES)

<https://www.thedigitalfix.com/film/news/watch-oscar-nominated-animation-short-film-sister/>

A less acknowledged category of the Oscars indeed, but it is hard not to notice that one of the nominations went to the Chinese writer and director Siqu Song and her stop-motion animation *Sister*. The story follows a man's recount of growing up with his imaginary little sister who could have been born in the 1990s due to the nation's one-child policy. Drawing inspirations from her training in ink painting as a child, Song's black-and-white setting is livened by the puppets made of wool, a unique texture to work with. The result is a poignant film that captures a woeful time in the country's history.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dacN7rBHLSw>

2020 Academy Award Nominee for Best Animated Short Film

See: <http://songsiqu.com/>



BALLOON – 2019 (102 MINUTES)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2RSAO1btzs>

At once playful and allusive, *Balloon's* first moments are viewed through the misty curvature of an inflated condom. Shepherd Dargye's two boys have found their parents' stash, delighting in what for them are simply oblong balloons. The Chinese government has instituted quotas on family size, and Dargye's wife Drolkar, now a mother to three and content to end her childbearing days, has embraced the policy, requesting condoms from a nearby clinic. Meanwhile, Drolkar's sister,

Meet the director Pema Tsenden (5 MINUTES)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUFggZ37G6A>

Balloon Director Q & A (24 MINUTES)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2RSAO1btzs>

Shangchu Drolma, has renounced motherhood altogether by becoming a Buddhist nun. One day, she runs into an old boyfriend, Dakbum Gyal, whose neglect pushed her towards her vocation — and who has recently published an acclaimed novel that fictionalizes their relationship. The sisters, each in their own way, are making steps towards autonomy. But when a member of the family passes away, urgent new questions arise regarding a woman's duty in this traditional, highly religious community. With its cool colour palette, attentive handheld camerawork, and painterly passages that seem to transpire somewhere between this world and the next, *Balloon* approaches weighty themes with beguiling brio. Its closing sequence, in which each character gazes upward to glimpse some fleeting spectacle, will leave you with a sense of wonder you won't soon shake off.

Review: <https://variety.com/2019/film/reviews/balloon-review-1203319030/>

Interview: <http://www.sixthtone.com/news/1006551/The%20Tibetan%20Filmmaker%20Fighting%20to%20Put%20Minority%20Stories%20on%20Screen/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZ73CSUer6Q>

CRAZY ALIEN – 2019 (116 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crazy_Alien

An alien diplomat is sent to Earth to establish intergalactic diplomatic relations.

The superpower nation "Armenika" selfishly hide this contact with alien life, believing they are "the most advanced civilization on earth" and therefore have the sole right to do so. The alien diplomat however resents its assignment due to the requirement to interact with lower life forms. The treaty must be signed by exchanging DNA which is performed by putting a ball into the mouth and coating it with saliva. Armenika's Captain Zach Andrews through his own sense of self-importance, fumbles the signing of the treaty when he takes a selfie, and the alien

interprets the flash as a sign of aggression. A satellite hits the alien spaceship, causing it to tumble out of orbit, landing in an amusement park.

Two Chinese men working at the park, monkey trainer Geng Hao and his business-savvy wine merchant friend Shen Tengfei find the crashed alien spaceship, mistaking the alien diplomat for an exotic South American monkey, and remove the alien's headband. Having been in the circus monkey business their entire life, they do not know anything else, so they begin to train the alien as a performing monkey, much to the diplomat's disgust. Meanwhile, Armenika sends Agent John Stockton their top operative, to search for the alien. The alien manages to take photographs of its surroundings by gaining access to its headband for brief periods of time, one of its gadgets apparently being a camera. Due to the setting being an amusement park, it has many replicas of famous architectural monuments around the world. The Armenikan agents intercept the transmission of the photographs, believing it to be in those locations, they go to the Kremlin and the pyramids of Giza, shooting everyone along the way. They eventually catch up with the alien.

Meanwhile, Geng and Shen differ in opinion on what to do with the "monkey". Geng wishes to sell the "rare monkey" but Shen instead wishes to train the "monkey" in order to become a successful performer. The alien regains access to its headband which gives it telekinetic powers and confronts the two men, turning the tables and forcing them to perform for its amusement. It demands Geng sign the treaty by putting a new ball in his mouth, but he misunderstands and swallows the ball. They outsmart the alien, getting the alien very drunk, believing they have killed it, immerse its body in alcohol, planning to sell it. When the Armenikans arrive they hide the alien by dressing up their performing monkey in the alien's suit. They are taken with the disguised monkey to the Armenikan embassy, and the Armenikans interrogate them about the alien. They agree to help. Extracting the ball from his feces, Geng presents it to Agent Stockton, who proceeds to sign the treaty. The two men successfully pass off the monkey as the alien, performing their usual performing monkey show but with commentary explaining the fine points of intergalactic diplomatic etiquette and are let go. Stockton is told by a forensic scientist that the DNA they extracted from the ball was from a monkey, himself and an Asian man's feces. Discovering that he had been tricked, Stockton pursues the two men.

Upon returning home, Geng and Shen discover the alien has resurrected. Stockton follows and arrives shortly after. A final battle ensues and ends with the two Chinese men getting drunk with the alien, signing the treaty with a third and final ball and the alien telekinetically taking all the alcohol home with it.

Review: <https://www.cinemaescapist.com/2019/02/crazy-alien-chinese-movie-review/>

Trailer: https://www.imdb.com/video/vi1055179033?playlistId=tt6660238&ref=tt_ov_vi

A DOG BARKING AT THE MOON – 2019 (107 MINUTES)

<https://www2.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/sight-sound-magazine/reviews-recommendations/dog-barking-at-moon-xiang-zi-family-portrait>

...Barely fictionalized, *A Dog Barking at the Moon* directly addresses Xiang's real, thorny family life, seamlessly moving back and forth between decades to understand where she comes from. The maturity and grace of the self-reflection on display and Xiang's empathy for her imperfect parents is staggering.

Huang Xiaoyu returns home to Beijing from New York with her Western husband in tow, her outsider's perspective shedding new light on deeply-entrenched family foibles. The film's

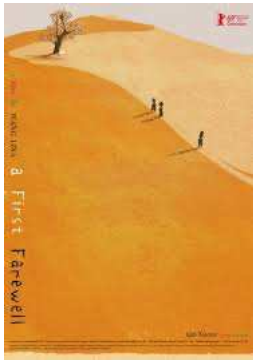
interpersonal conflict was triggered in Xiaoyu's childhood, when her mother walked in on her father compromised with a male lover. The event resonates into the present, with Xiaoyu's parents choosing to remain in a resentful, toxic marriage...

To her daughter's horror, Jiumei finds solace in an exploitative Buddhist cult, and the pair butt heads in standoffs that veer from detached and mundane to fervently antagonistic. With Nan positioned in a passive, observant role, it is left to Naren to cover the emotional spectrum – hers is a spellbindingly funny performance aching with tragedy.

Impressive enough for the story of its inception, *A Dog Barking at the Moon* is an impressive early showcase of Xiang's cinematic craft: from the lived-in, delicately detailed design of its domestic settings to the lush sound design and tempered, patient camerawork, she and Val Ban work in tandem to create a piece as visually rewarding as it is emotionally adept.

Moments of painful silence are held with evocative restraint. Creative flourishes abound – memories played out as stripped-back stage plays, or the understated overlapping of scenes past and present within a single shot – but every neat trick serves Xiang's ultimate vision...

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PRsCOaXn4_o



A FIRST FAREWELL – 2018 (86 MINUTES)

<https://supchina.com/2021/02/26/a-first-farewell-bids-goodbye-to-a-uyghur-childhood/>

Dedicated to her hometown of Shaya, Xinjiang, director Wang Lina's debut uses non-professional actors to tell a poetic story about three young Uyghur children and their experiences with poverty, Sinicization, and a way of life vanishing before their eyes.

...Movies about Uyghurs tend not to leave China (if even Xinjiang), so it's definitely exciting when something like *A First Farewell* is brought to wider audiences. The film is short but strong, using non-professional actors to tell

a poetic story about three young Uyghur children and their experiences with poverty, Sinicization, and a way of life vanishing before their eyes.

...Given the horrors in Xinjiang right now, some viewers might be disappointed by its indirectness, but it's only natural that a movie aiming to be approved by Chinese censors has to put what it's saying softly. Talking about a form of oppression as explicit as internment camps is out of the question in China. Although the film is careful, there's a strong theme about the Sinicization of Uyghur culture. Several adults push the kids to speak Mandarin, promoting the notion that it's better and more sophisticated. Nowhere is this attitude stressed more than at the kids' school, where they study classical Chinese poets but learn nothing about their own culture or history. The teachers reigning over these classes are authoritarian and indifferent. Step out of line, or don't meet expectations, and you're berated like poor Kalbinur and her mother.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTp_JMWh0Q

WANGDRAK'S RAIN BOOTS – 2018 (90 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7961082/plotsummary?ref=tt_ov_pl

After heavy rains, puddles and mud cover the streets of the Tibetan mountain village. It's good for the crops, but bad for young Wangdrak, the only boy in the village without rubber boots. While his father is busy with other worries, Wangdrak's mother fulfills her son's wish. But new shoes bring new problems. For Wangdrak, a battle against the blue sky and for the

rain begins, fought alongside his loyal friend Lhamo. Nestled in the inimitable mountain landscape, director Lhapal Gyal uses vivid imagery to show us a culture steeped in ancient traditions, paying special attention to the young protagonist's dreams.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tzL6gKH3jQ>

THE WIDOWED WITCH – 2018 (118 MINUTES)

<https://www.siff.net/festival-2018/the-widowed-witch>

A third-time widow who falls on especially hard times is declared cursed but turns superstition to her advantage by travelling the wintry landscape of rural China and offering supernatural advice, in this modern tale of mysticism told with mordant humor and starkly beautiful cinematography.

Living in a rural town in China, Erhao finds herself widowed for the third time after a fireworks accident kills her husband and injures her. After her brother-in-law attacks her, she realizes she can no longer stay at the home of her in-laws, and leaves in search of starting a life of her own. Erhao is widely deemed inauspicious and even cursed in the eyes of the villagers, who during these cold winter months, are unwilling to share their home or help her find proper food and shelter. Having no one to depend on but herself, she soon discovers she has magical powers that she can use to her advantage, gaining social power and importance by helping the villagers with their own life problems. Erhao instantly becomes the town's famous shaman, and uses her special skills to make a living. Yet as she helps the village people with their issues day after day, she finds it increasingly impossible to satisfy the need and greed of the community. The debut feature of director Chengjie Cai, *The Widowed Witch* explores the painful social issue of the "left-behind child," the injustices centered around women, and superstition in rural China with biting humor.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19ckeCdeVhE>

THE ISLAND – 2018 (134 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Island_\(2018_Chinese_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Island_(2018_Chinese_film))

The Island is a Chinese fantasy comedy film written, directed, and stars Huang Bo. Passengers of a sea bus, including brothers Ma Jin and Xiao Xing and their colleagues, get stuck in an island and are forced to survive with each other. Meanwhile, Ma Jin and Xiao Xing discover a way to unite the passengers for survival by selling them fishes with playing cards as money, in which Xiao Xing immediately abused his power in and causing brotherly-relationship problems with Ma Jin.

Review: <https://variety.com/2018/film/reviews/the-island-review-chu-haoxi-1202901618/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lLtNiDDb5yk>

JINPA – 2018 (87 MINUTES)

<https://www.dgeneratefilms.com/catalog/JINPA>

Jinpa is a 2018 Chinese Tibetan-language film written and directed by Pema Tseden. The screenplay is based on the novels *The Slayer* by Tsering Norbu and *I Ran Over a Sheep* by Pema. On an isolated road passing through the vast barren plains of Tibet, a truck driver, who has accidentally run over a sheep, chances upon a young man, who is hitching a ride. As they drive and chat, the truck driver notices that his new friend has a silver dagger strapped to his leg. He comes to understand that his man is out to kill someone, who wronged him earlier in life. As he drops the hitchhiker off at a fork in the road, little does the truck driver realize that

their short time together has changed everything, and that their destinies are inexorably intertwined.

On the path of life, sometimes we meet someone whose dreams overtake our own to the point that they converge.

Trailer: https://www.imdb.com/video/vi2101526297?playlistId=tt8836292&ref=vp_rv_0

ASH IS PUREST WHITE — 2018 (141 MINUTES)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/13/movies/ash-is-purest-white-review.html>

...Viewed from one angle — from the ground level of its plot — the scale of *Ash Is Purest White* can seem modest. It's the story of two people whose love collapses under the weight of bad luck and betrayal but who can't manage to quit each other. When Bin is attacked by members of a rival gang, Qiao saves his life. Rather than rat him out, she accepts a five-year prison sentence, after which she goes looking for Bin, who has left their home province, Shanxi. Earlier, he had told her about traditional criminal code of "righteousness and loyalty," but she seems to be the only one committed to upholding it.

On her way to find him — it's now 2006 — she takes a ferry down the Yangtze River, through the area soon to be inundated by the construction of the Three Gorges Dam. Later, she will find herself on a train heading west, striking up a friendship with a man bound for the province of Xinjiang. Even without a detailed knowledge of China's geography or its recent history, a viewer feels the dislocation and momentum of accelerating change — and something of the country's sheer vastness and density.

There is always something new. By the time *Ash Is Purest White* returns to Datong, in the present day, the city is almost unrecognizable. But Jia Zhangke's perspective is neither nostalgic nor optimistic. His movies don't imagine a stable past to be mourned or longed for. (Since 2000, his non- or semi-documentary features, all essential, are *Platform*, *Unknown Pleasures*, *Still Life*, *The World*, *A Touch of Sin*, *24 City* and *Mountains May Depart*.) Nor do they project a happy future on the horizon. His world is in constant motion, and his refusal to hurry through it — the grace of his camera movements, the sometimes agonizing slowness of his scenes — can be understood as a kind of protest, a reminder of the ethical necessity of paying attention.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=l0fKX6VhovQ>:

OPERATION RED SEA — 2018 (143 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Red_Sea

Operation Red Sea is a 2018 Chinese-Hong Kong action war film directed by Dante Lam and starring Zhang Yi, Huang Jingyu, Hai Qing, Du Jiang and Prince Mak. The film is loosely based on the evacuation of the 225 foreign nationals and almost 600 Chinese citizens from Yemen's southern port of Aden during late March in 2015 Yemeni Civil War.

It serves as the highlight film presented to audiences as a gift for the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, as well as the party's 19th National Congress. This film is said to be "China's first modern naval film."

Review: <https://thediplomat.com/2018/11/operation-red-sea-the-chinese-publics-introduction-to-beijings-new-navy/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7sOD1Qc0O4M>

DYING TO SURVIVE — 2018 (117 MINUTES)

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/dying-survive-1214786>

Wen Muye's record-breaking social drama, based on a real-life story, lauds a Chinese businessman for circumventing big pharma and illegally importing cheap generic medicine. Crowning Cannes' China Day events was a screening of *Dying to Survive*, the 2018 dramedy that became a blockbuster both in terms of its \$450 million box office (making it the third-highest-grosser in China last year) and its apparent influence on government policies regarding cheap generic drugs for leukemia patients. Produced by hitmaker Ning Hao and directed by 34-year-old Wen Muye (*Drug Dealer*), who won the Golden Horse award for best new director with this film, it humorously and humanely describes the terrible reality of impoverished CML cancer patients unable to afford \$70,000 a year worth of a life-saving meds.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1_b4kFOFy8

AN ELEPHANT SITTING STILL — 2018 (234 MINUTES)

<https://www.indiewire.com/2019/03/an-elephant-sitting-still-review-1202049702/>

...Loosely adapted from one of the two controversial novels Hu wrote before his death, *An Elephant Sitting Still* unfolds like a frozen cross between Paul Thomas Anderson's *Magnolia* and Jia Zhangke's *A Touch of Sin* (complete with the light flourish of magical-realism that marriage would lead you to expect). The cold and colorless film takes place over the course of a single day in the industrial desolation of China's Hebei province — just south of Beijing, though it looks just north of Hell — and collects four wayward souls into such a decrepit mosaic that they can't even tell they're part of the same story.

Wei Bu (Peng Yuchang) is the closest thing to a main character. Bullied at home almost as badly as he's bullied at school, Wei Bu is a blank and glowering stand-in for an entire generation of teenagers who are being denied a future; in a movie that's almost entirely composed of painful moments, there's something extra brutal about the scene in which a spiteful administrator at Wei Bu's second-rate high school tells him the whole place is being demolished: "You will go to the worst high school in the city. When you graduate, most of [your class] will become street vendors." Wei Bu has no reason not to believe him; he knows that he was born into a dead-end. "I think it makes sense," he calmly says to a friend, as though double-checking the answer to a math problem.

The girl he likes, Huang Ling (a flinty, no-nonsense Wang Yuwen), is having her own troubles at school...

Review: <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/the-front-row/an-elephant-sitting-still-reviewed-a-young-chinese-filmmakers-masterly-portrait-of-political-and-intimate-despair>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=om6xGJ4S3LY>

SHADOW — 2018 (116 MINUTES)

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/shadow-ying-review-1140369>

The latest gorgeously mounted period film from Zhang Yimou (*Hero*, *House of Flying Daggers*) was inspired by the yin-and-yang symbol and Chinese ink-brush painting...

...The script, based on a previous screenplay by Zhu Sujin and credited to Li Wei and the director, reimagines a small part of the Three Kingdoms epic as the story of the cunning military commander Yu of the Pei Kingdom. After having been so badly hurt in battle that he has to retreat into the shadows so as not to show his physical failings, Commander Yu

entrusts his job to Jing a lookalike in perfect health who is indebted to him and who is named after a city lost to a foreign army. By employing a body double, the Pei Kingdom won't show any outward signs of weakness, though apart from Jing and from Yu's own wife, referred to only as Madam, no one knows about the switch, not even Pei's young king. In a tense early scene that only makes sense a little later on, the ruler risks finding out when he commands "Yu" to play the zither, which is impossible because Jing might look like Yu, but unlike the latter, he can't play the ancient instrument.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=Zw3LjaZlSLM>

SUBURBAN BIRDS — 2018 (118 MINUTES)

<http://www.cinemaguild.com/theatrical/suburbanbirds.html>

A striking debut from China's Qiu Sheng, *Suburban Birds* is a tantalizing mystery and a bittersweet coming-of-age comedy rolled into one. Hao (Mason Lee) is part of a team of young engineers called in to investigate a series of craters that have opened up on the edge of the city. As he and his team survey the subsiding area, another story is taking place in the same suburban landscape. A younger boy, also named Hao, spends long afternoons playing with friends and making mischief until one-by-one, his playmates start to disappear. As these parallel stories unfold, the connections between them proliferate and grow stranger.

With virtuosic assurance, Qiu employs distinct styles for each of the two narrative strands and unites them with a wry and wistful sense of humor. *Suburban Birds* is both a reflection on the slippery nature of memory as well as a comment on China's rapid urbanization that heralds the arrival of an exciting new voice.

8-minute interview with film maker: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Px-F8KE2KxA>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFnWW-ezmXg>

DOWN THERE — 2018 (11 MINUTES)

A blissful night is unexpectedly interrupted by the sound from downstairs. Different reactions are triggered as well as the relentless indifference.

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/281101082>

ANGELS WEAR WHITE — 2017 (108 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angels_Wear_White

Mia, a teenager, works as a cleaner in a motel in a small seaside town. One night, while manning the reception for her co-worker Lili, she witnesses the sexual assault of two 12-year-old schoolgirls by a middle-aged man. Through the surveillance TV, she sees the man forcing himself into the girls' room and records the whole incident with her mobile phone. Mia keeps quiet for fear of losing her job. However, for one of the victims, Xiaowen realizes that her troubles have only just begun. As Mia and Xiaowen find themselves in ever harrowing circumstances and nowhere to run, they have to work together to find their own way out.

Review: <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/angels-wear-white-2018>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYtK7Dxhong&list=PLOG1eYZDB8-Y3th413tYHhvh4qOJR1chn&index=10&t=0s>

HAVE A NICE DAY — 2017 (75 MINUTES)

<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/have-a-nice-day-2018>

The stylistic quirks that define the bitterly funny Chinese animated neo-noir *Have a Nice Day* are thrillingly original. This is the kind of film that evokes stylistic predecessors like Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*—another criss-crossing narrative about several tangentially related small-time crooks—and the fiction films of Chinese filmmaker Zhangke Jia, whose melodramas all concern hard-luck laborers who turn to crime in order to escape dirt road poverty. Still, "Have a Nice Day" stands apart because of its bitterly funny black humor, and idiosyncratic animation and sound design. Writer/director Liu Jian has taken familiar stylistic elements, and made them feel fresh, and exciting. ...A good part of the brilliance of Liu's pulpy narrative stems from his consummately light touch, and sparing use of familiar hard-boiled tropes. Events start without a belabored set-up: young Xiao Zhang (Zhu Changlong) steals money from mob boss Uncle Liu (Yang Siming), and everybody wants it back. In this case, "everybody" includes calculating hitman Skinny (Ma Xiaofeng), easily distracted wannabe inventor Li Er (Jian himself), and greedy cousin Ann Ann (Zhu Hong), a relative of Zhang's girlfriend Yan Zi (who never speaks)...

Review: <https://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/media/chinas-animated-underbelly>

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qt3rs_MFgI



YOUTH – 2017 (146 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth_\(2017_film\)#Synopsis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth_(2017_film)#Synopsis)

Feng Xiaogong's film chronicles the lives of a group of idealistic adolescents in a military art troupe in the People's Liberation Army during the Cultural Revolution. They experience love, lust, betrayal, and sufferings in the background of Mao-era songs and dances. Through the narration of Xiao Suizi, the film follows the story of two key characters, Feng Liu and Xiaoping He. Xiaoping He, a naive, and innocent new recruit from Beijing, and Feng Liu a morally impeccable character, whose comrades praise for being a real life Lei Feng. The pair also participate in the Sino-Vietnamese War in 1979 and become heroes for their act of courage.

Feng Xiaogong (*The Banquet, Assembly*), a filmmaker whose popular melodramas have earned him a reputation as "China's Spielberg," <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/youth-2017>

Xiaoping He eventually becomes the target of her roommates bullying for her provincial naive mannerisms. A majority of the acts spearheaded by Hao Shuwen, the daughter of the regional commander.

After the war, they are honorably discharged from the Army but struggle to make ends meet in the Reform-era China while they learn lessons from soul-crashing experiences of love, lust, betrayal, and heartbreak.

Review: <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/youth-2017>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQ8fCA8vXZc>

OUR TIME WILL COME – 2017 (133 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our_Time_Will_Come_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our_Time_Will_Come_(film))

Set in the 1940s, the film tells the story of a legendary woman "Fang Gu" (Zhou Xun), who is one of the key figures during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong. It also portrays the fight and struggle for freedom and independence by youths of the resistance groups. Directed by Ann Hui, a Hong Kong film director, producer, screenwriter and actress who is one of the most critically acclaimed Hong Kong New Wave filmmakers.

Review: <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/our-time-will-come-2017>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFT9tE3SjsU>

A GENTLE NIGHT – 2017 (15 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Gentle_Night

A Gentle Night is a 2017 Chinese short film written and directed by Qiu Yang. It won the Short Film Palme d'Or at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival. In a nameless small Chinese city, a distressed mother desperately tries to find her missing teenaged daughter throughout the night. The film is set in Changzhou, Jiangsu, China.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XlaXJBfwLE>

JOURNEY TO THE WEST: THE DEMONS STRIKE BACK – 2017 (109 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5273624/>

Tang Monk brings three disciples on a journey to the West. On the outside, everything seems harmonious. However, tension is present

JOURNEY TO THE WEST: CONQUERING DEMONS – 2013 (110 MINUTES)

A Buddhist disciple (Zhang Wen) battles demons by using a book of nursery rhymes to appeal to their inherent goodness.

Trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmKrgPr7PA8>

beneath the surface, and their hearts and minds are not in agreement. After a series of demon-capturing events, the monk and his disciples gain mutual understanding of each others' hardships and unease. Finally, they resolve their inner

conflict and work together to become an all-conquering, demon-exorcising team.

This is a sequel to the 2013 film (see box)

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljCtLNu-gHU>

THE MONKEY KING: HAVOC IN HEAVEN'S PLACE – 2014 (120 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1717715/>

THE MONKEY KING 2 – 2016 (120 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4591310/>

THE MONKEY KING 3 – 2018 (116 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6466464/>

THE WRATH OF SILENCE – 2017 (120 MINUTES)

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/wrath-silence-bao-lie-wu-sheng-film-review-1046406>

...Having dabbled with noir-ish ruses in his Venice-bowing 2014 debut *Coffin in the Mountain*, Chinese filmmaker Xin Yukun embraces genre cinema wholesale in *Wrath of Silence*, which sets a mute, vengeful miner against a world of corruption. Appropriating visual and narrative tropes from Westerns and film noir with invention and poise, the 32-year-old helmer's latest is a powerful and fatalistic illustration of the Chinese rural underclass and its futile fight against oppressive social forces...

Beyond all this, Xin's masterstroke lies in his clever way of accommodating the Chinese censors' well-documented demand that bad guys must pay onscreen. Justice might be served and the authorities might swoop in to seize the baddies and save the day, but it doesn't necessarily lead to a happy ending for all. Deadly misdeeds can't be undone. Ending with the sound of a crying woman and the thundering collapse of a coal mine, *Wrath of Silence* is as loud and devastating a *j'accuse* against social injustice in China as, say, Jia Zhangke's *A Touch of Sin*.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QtbhIeIebCY>

Stream entire movie here: https://tubitv.com/movies/551197/wrath-of-silence?start=true&utm_source=google-feed&tracking=google-feed



BIG FISH AND BEGONIA — 2016 (100 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1920885/>

It is a world within our world, yet unseen by any human, and the beings here control time and tide and the changing of the seasons. On the day Chun turns sixteen, she is transformed into a dolphin to explore the human world. She is rescued from a vortex by a human boy at the cost of his own life. Chun is so moved by the boy's kindness and courage that she decides to give him life again. But to do this, she must protect the boy's soul, a tiny fish, and nurture it to grow. Through adventure and sacrifice, love grows, yet now she must release him back to the sea, back to life in the human world.

This animated cartoon could equally fall into the category for best fantasy movies as the otherworldly underwater realm portrayed in the film is depicted in such a beautifully creative and imaginative way.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5eUasNF4AU>

Stream entire movie here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHO0ddkHAVU>

SUMMER IS GONE — 2016 (106 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6118258/plotsummary?ref=tt_ov_pl

In Inner Mongolia in the early 1990s, 12-year-old Xiaolei enjoys summer with his father, who works at a film studio, and his education-minded mother. But life is rapidly changing, as stable jobs at state-owned companies disappear. Hohhot-born director Zhang Dalei, who was inspired by "the magic of a daydream" he experienced while visiting his grandmother, has created a portrait of his country's past, in beautiful monochrome. Distancing itself from the nostalgic tone of popular teen dramas, the film presents a boy's detached view of the world. Pema Tseden, of *Old Dog* and *Tharlo*, is the executive producer. In a small town in western China in the early 1990s, after finishing primary school, Xiaolei looks forward to his long-awaited summer vacation, free of homework. However, this hot summer is not the usual leisurely summer he imagines, as it coincides with the transformation of state-owned companies and the loss of job security. While Xiaolei and his friends idle away the days, the shock of the reformation of state-owned enterprises sees his parents, seemingly calm in the blazing sunshine, seething with inner anxiety. As time passes, Xiaolei has a feeling that a revolution has quietly taken place. His father has to become a migrant worker to make a living, with the mother and son relying on each other. Xiaolei feels that life has changed completely. One night at the beginning of autumn, the epiphyllum in Xiaolei's yard blooms, as if it were an apocalypse.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9u7uO5JZWN4>

I AM NOT MADAME BOVERY — 2016 (140 MINUTES)

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/may/26/i-am-not-madame-bovary-review-fan-bingbing>

There is a lot to admire about this pointed modern-day political satire, but you'll have to get over a few hurdles. One of them is the unnecessary length, another is the distracting use of a circular frame – a device that references Chinese art and hints at its heroine's constrained

plight, but often makes the viewer feel as if they're peering through a keyhole. The heroine is a comically stubborn villager (a spirited, uglified Fan Bingbing) who embarks on a perverse mission to get her sham divorce overturned so that she can re-divorce her cheating husband *properly*. He's added insult to injury by likening her to Pan Jinlian, a literary character associated with promiscuity (misleadingly translated to Madame Bovary in the English title). These grievances are clumsily handled by a succession of self-serving, buck-passing officials, in a similar fashion to Zhang Yimou's *The Story of Qiu Ju*. The satirical bite dissipates a little as the story drags on, though a powerful, emotional coda makes it worth the wait.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0IkThj___4

FREE AND EASY – 2016 (99 MINUTES)

<https://asianmoviepulse.com/2019/07/film-review-free-and-easy-2016-by-geng-jun/>

The story takes place in a desolate factory town, in a setting that could be easily described as dystopian, although the concept is not futuristic at all. In this strange town, the roads of a number of unlikely individuals meet. A soap salesman pitches his products, although his agenda is not so innocent. A Buddhist monk tries to spread the faith, for a price. A failed martial arts instructor becomes the victim a number of times, including when he is trying to file a report to the two bored and not very smart policemen that comprise the local police department. A young man preaches Christianity while he posts flyers for his mother who is missing. A ranger who is in charge with the area's reforestation is enraged because someone is stealing the trees. Furthermore, one of the policemen seems to have some ideas regarding a woman in the area, an old lady accompanied by two thugs appear, a murder occurs and unlikely friendships and relationships are built.

Geng Jun has an approach that manages to present social critique through a unique combination of intelligent, subtle and slapstick humor, mainly deriving from the characters and the way their relationships are formed. Each of the characters seems to represent an archetype of the current Chinese society, particularly regarding the faults of each one.

Review: <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/free-easy-969342>

Trailer:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_PpgPv7qr8&list=PL_nuMIvzFAilbXI0CvT7CU342Xv5FasIC&index=49

Stream entire movie here: https://tubitv.com/movies/475497/free-and-easy?utm_source=google-feed&tracking=google-feed

THE GREAT WALL – 2016 (120 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Wall_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Wall_(film))

The Great Wall is a 2016 fantasy action monster film directed by Zhang Yimou...An American and Chinese co-production starring Matt Damon, Jing Tian, Pedro Pascal, Willem Dafoe, and Andy Lau, the plot centers a mercenary warrior (Matt Damon) imprisoned within the Great Wall when he discovers the mystery behind one of the greatest wonders of the world. As wave after wave of marauding beasts besiege the massive structure, his quest for fortune turns into a journey toward heroism as he joins a huge army of elite warriors to confront the unimaginable and seemingly unstoppable force. *The Great Wall* is Zhang's first English-language film... The film received mixed reviews from critics, who said it "sacrifices great story for great action." Although it grossed \$335 million worldwide, the film was still

considered a box office bomb due to its high production and marketing costs, with losses as high as \$75 million.

Review: <https://www.indiewire.com/2017/02/the-great-wall-review-matt-damon-whitewashing-zhang-yimou-1201783848/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=avF6GHyyk5c>



WOLF WARRIER – 2015 (90 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3540136/>

A Chinese special force soldier with extraordinary marksmanship is confronted by a group of deadly foreign mercenaries who are hired to assassinate him by a vicious drug lord.

Review:

<https://variety.com/2015/film/asia/wolf-warriors-review-1201480183/>

[warriors-review-1201480183/](https://variety.com/2015/film/asia/wolf-warriors-review-1201480183/)

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ec7LY8dLYSc>

Stream entire movie here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0S84Z9W-OE>

WOLF WARRIER 2

The sequel tells a story of a loose cannon Chinese soldier named Leng Feng who takes on special missions around the world. In this sequel, he finds himself in an African country protecting medical aid workers from local rebels and vicious arms dealers. It was the highest-grossing Chinese film ever released.

Trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGNAlvAZjIY>

Review:

<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/wolf-warrior-2-2017>

MOUNTAINS MAY DEPART – 2015 (127 MINUTES)

<https://www.filmcomment.com/blog/interview-jia-zhang-ke-mountains-may-depart/>

With *Mountains May Depart*, Jia Zhangke turns his powers of social observation inward, shifting subjects from the physical migrations in contemporary China to the inner emotional complexities arising from the decades following the nation's great Cultural Reform. With rare intimacy, the filmmaker's first foray into melodrama reveals the yearnings, melancholy, and indignations of China's new secret heart.

Comprised of three vignettes set in 1999, 2015, and 2025, *Mountains May Depart* tracks the lives of childhood friends from Jia's native Shaanxi—singer-dancer Shen Tao (in one of Zhao Tao's most tremendous performances), brash young capitalist Zhang (Zhang Yi), and poor mineworker Liangzi (Liang Jin Dong). Each grapples with unfamiliar feelings of loneliness and isolation brought on by the pressure to survive in the nation's ever forward-thrusting milieu of industrial, technological, and economic progress. In her pursuit of a better life, Tao has to choose between her two loves. But her decision to marry Zhang ruptures the trio's friendship, and eventually leads to a divorce that forces her to part with her only son Dollar (Dong Zijian) when he moves, first to Shanghai and then to Melbourne with his father...

See more at this site listed above including an interview with Jia Zhangke

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=qc1ZKYhMG6o>

RIVER – 2015 (98 MINUTES)

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/river-gtsngbo-shanghai-review-804473>

The complexity of human relations is the subject of Tibetan writer director Sonthar Gyal's marvelously understated second film, *River (Gtsngbo)*. A small girl of 3 or 4 struggles with her fear of losing her parents' love when her mother gets pregnant and weans her. At the same time, her stubborn klutz of a dad wages a silent war against his own

father for what he considers an unforgivable lapse. Tibet's high, lonely mountains lend the story an aching authenticity, while the comically expressive face of little Yangchen Lhamo (played by Yangchan Lhamu) keeps the mood light and tender.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epq6PsbKFss>

MONSTER HUNT – 2015 (118 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monster_Hunt

Monster Hunt is a 2015 mainland Chinese-Hong Kong 3-D fantasy action comedy adventure film directed by Raman Hui... The film takes place in ancient China, where the Humans existed alongside the Monsters. They once shared the world in peace and harmony until the Humans drove the Monsters out from their home, for they sought total dominion over their lands. Recently, a civil war took place in the Monster Realm which resulted in the usurpation of the Monster King's throne from a treacherous minister, who later sought the Monster Queen and her unborn baby, and the Monster Queen fled to the Human Realm. The story begins with Song Tianyin, an unnerved young village mayor who becomes pregnant with the Monster Queen's baby, and he encounters an aspiring Monster-hunter named Huo Xiaolan, and they both embark on an adventure to protect the baby from villains of the Human and Monster worlds alike.

Review: <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/monster-hunt-2016>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRXTOW1InAE>

THARLO – 2015 (138 MINUTES)

<https://www.watchthefullmovie.com/full-movie/tharlo-2015/>

Tharlo is an orphan. Now grown up, he makes a living as a sheep herder in the village. He has grown a ponytail, so people simply call him "Ponytail", since nobody remembers his real name anyway. Tharlo has a remarkable memory. He remembers so many things, except his own name. He is now in his forties, and he has yet to have his first woman. Now Tharlo goes to town to take a photo for his identity card. He meets a girl in the barber's shop who changes the course of his life. He embarks on the journey to find his true self. He sells all his sheep and those entrusted by other villagers to him for care, and decides to use the money to go out into the world with the girl, only to find himself being deceived and cheated by her. Ironically, in his journey of self-discovery, Tharlo has lost his sense of self. As he witnesses in the mirror his ponytail being cut off and leaving him bald, he can no longer see himself as a man with a history that he recognizes.

Review: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/28/movies/review-tharlo.html>

Trailer: <https://letterboxd.com/film/tharlo/trailer/>

KAILI BLUES – 2015 (110 MINUTES)

<https://www.kviff.com/en/programme/film/4619213-kaili-blues/>

Even a fine sketch of a small episode in an ordinary man's life can embrace the past, present and future of the largest of nations. In 26-year-old poet Gan Bi's debut a provincial doctor sets off on a pilgrimage to find his brother's abandoned son and to reunite bygone lovers through the keepsakes entrusted to him. In one mesmeric, forty-minute take, his journey to his native region is transformed into a mystical experience. The hand-held camera starts to live its own life as it scans a stretch several kilometers long, its unpredictable course resembling the meanders of a river. As the doctor reaches a small Chinese town, the twilight is

transformed into a magical temporal plane which slowly takes possession of his drifting memory. *Kaili Blues* is a visionary cinematic poem about the agonizing desire to displace the past but also to come to terms with it. The main character's emotions are intrinsically linked with the lives of the rural inhabitants, who are caught between a troubling history and an auspicious future, between their nostalgia and the turbulent changes affecting their country. Review: <https://movieretrospect.blogspot.com/2016/10/kaili-blues-2015-jumbled-journey-with.html>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ZVFtE10aK4>

LOOKING FOR ROHMER (SEEK MCCARTNEY) — 2015 (88 MINUTES)

<https://www.sixthtone.com/news/1002095/first-gay-ish-film-widely-released-in-china>

...A French-Chinese coproduction, the film tells the story of Zhao Jie, a Chinese dancer, coming to terms with his French friend Rohmer having died in an avalanche in Tibet. Han Geng, an actor known for his boyish good looks, plays the lead role of Zhao, while Rohmer is played by French actor Jérémie Elkaim. The movie's trailer — released over two years ago, in March 2016 — paints a picture of an ambiguous, complex bromance between the two men. Notably, little if any compelling evidence of a sexual relationship can be found in the Chinese novella upon which the film is based.

While the film is not devoid of gay themes, many are subtly incorporated. After witnessing a fatal car accident, for example, Rohmer numbs the pain at a bar populated by men in pairs that viewers identified as "Destination," a popular LGBT bar in Beijing. The film's ending, meanwhile, is a flashback to Zhao and Rohmer performing a traditional Tibetan dance that tells the story of a royal couple parted in death...

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFCXFrkrmA>



TEN YEARS — 2015 (105 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ten_Years_\(2015_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ten_Years_(2015_film))

Ten Years is a 2015 Hong Kong dystopian speculative fiction anthology film. It offers a vision of the semi-autonomous territory in the year 2025, with human rights and freedoms gradually diminishing as the Chinese government exerts increasing influence there. Produced on a shoestring budget, the film was a surprise hit...

Due to the film's sensitive political themes, mainland Chinese authorities censored reports mentioning *Ten Years* except in terms of condemnation. State television channels and major internet sites were prohibited from broadcasting the 35th Hong Kong Film Awards live as the film was nominated for Best Film which it eventually won. The film comprises five short stories set in or before the year 2025.

Review: <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/07/07/484778210/in-ten-years-a-dystopian-vision-of-hong-kongs-future-under-china>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5miCtwKeAE>

THE NIGHT — 2014 (95 MINUTES)

https://www.berlinale.de/en/archive/jahresarchive/2019/02_programm_2019/02_filmdatenblatt_2019_201911388.html#tab=filmStills

A young man stands before his mirror. The night belongs to him. Self-love and longing. Every evening he admires himself in a different outfit before leaving his apartment and waiting for

clients in a dimly lit alley. This is where he meets a female prostitute of the same age who is new to his district. They flirt, drift together through the streets, toy with the idea of paying each other for sex, and give each other the names of flowers: he is Tuberose and she is Narcissus. The strangers whom they sleep with all remain faceless to them - until one night a young man who calls himself Rose falls in love with Tuberose. With the help of Narcissus, Rose begins to court the young sex worker. Tuberose responds at first with cool reserve, but the yearning love songs of Taiwanese singer Teresa Tung make it difficult for him to remain aloof for long.

In 2014, the then 21-year-old director surprised audiences with this brilliant debut, in which he also plays the leading role. Seducing the viewer with mysteriously atmospheric images, he succeeds in drawing us completely into the search by these three social misfits for warmth across social and gender divides.

Review: <https://asianmoviepulse.com/2019/03/film-review-the-night-2014-by-zhou-hao/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbNqLiBTvo4&t=59s>

RED AMNESIA — 2014 (116 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3890278/plotsummary?ref=tt_stryp_l

Deng is a stubborn retired widow who spends her days caring about her two grown up sons and her elderly mother, despite her family efforts to stop her. But her daily routine starts derailing when she keeps receiving anonymous calls. Deng began to be suspicious. The policemen and her two sons all think she was hallucinating. With the incident escalated, the emergence of the broken windows, mysterious boy, frequent burglary in the community.....until the murder occurred, the unfolded past began to emerge..... What's happening to her? Who could have anything against her? Even her husband's ghost doesn't seem to know...

Director Wang Xiaoshuai views *Red Amnesia* as the last of his Cultural Evevolution trilogy, begun with *Shanghai Dreams* and *11 Flowers*.

Review: <https://variety.com/2014/film/festivals/venice-film-review-red-amnesia-1201297599/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDKj4pASa8c>

BLACK COAL THIN ICE — 2014 (110 MINUTES)

<https://variety.com/2014/film/reviews/berlin-film-review-black-coal-thin-ice-1201099676/>

A dissolute former detective, a trail of dismembered human remains, and a widow with a dark secret set the stage for a bleak but powerful Chinese film noir.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbQ7LXXEUBM>



COMING HOME — 2014 (111 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coming_Home_\(2014_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coming_Home_(2014_film))

Coming Home is a 2014 Chinese historical drama film directed by Zhang Yimou.

Lu Y anshi was a professor before being sent to the labor camp during the Cultural Revolution. He escapes from the labor camp in Xining to meet his long-missed wife Feng Wanyu and daughter Dandan. However, the police were already waiting outside the house to arrest him.

Dandan, a teenage ballerina, could not play the leading role in *Red Detachment of Women* due to her father's outlaw status. Under the temptation of regaining the leading role, Dandan reveals her parents'

secret meeting plan to the police. The meeting ends with the capture of Lu, but Dandan still does not get the leading role.

After the end of the Cultural Revolution, Lu comes home only to find his family broken- his wife suffering from amnesia and his daughter working as a textile worker. Under the shock of a former official's sexual harassment, his wife sometimes mistakes Lu as Officer Fang instead of her husband. To reawaken his wife's memory, Lu disguises himself as a stranger so he can be near his wife. She recognizes him only as a letter reader or a piano tuner, and he never could live close enough with his chaste wife because of her trauma. During these years, Lu continued to write to his wife as a way of communicating with her and to convince her to forgive their daughter.

Several years later Feng is waiting to receive her husband outside the railway station on a snowy day, and Lu is standing with her, pretending to be a pedicab driver.

Reviews: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/09/movies/review-in-coming-home-a-family-rocked-by-the-cultural-revolution.html>

<https://variety.com/2014/film/asia/cannes-film-review-zhang-yimou-coming-home-1201188459/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPY52ucN0aM>

THE COFFIN IN THE MOUNTAIN – 2014 (119 MINUTES)

https://www.cmu.edu/faces/Previous_Festivals/2016conflict/coffin.html

After a charred body is discovered in the woods of a Chinese village, a black comedy of death, deception, cupidity, sex, and guilt ensues. A young man tries to rebel from his father, but after the boy's wrongdoings, their fates will be intricately linked. A woman, who for years has been victim of domestic violence, finds comfort in the arms of her ex-lover. The news of the death of her husband arrives as she was planning his murder. An honest village chief plans to retire but an exceptional event related to his son will pull him into the abyss. *The Coffin in the Mountain* is a striking first feature from Xin Yukun, whose photography background is evidenced by the way cold tones and composition quietly shape the story. Playing with time and sequencing, the drama unfolds as if the viewer is piecing together vague memories from a dream, but as the details crystalize, almost everyone in the small mountain community is shown to be guilty.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Qvg-ak-Few>

THE NIGHTINGALE – 2013 (108 MINUTES)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/06/movies/review-in-the-nightingale-the-beauties-of-rural-china.html>

The virtues of understatement and restraint are vividly apparent in Philippe Muyl's *The Nightingale*, a gentle tale that could easily lapse into mawkish sentiment but largely steers clear of doing so. In glittering Beijing, two affluent, fast-track parents, Chongyi (Qin Hao) and Qianying (Xiaoran Li), have scheduled the days of their daughter, Renxing (Xinyi Yang), down to the minute. When mother and father have concurrent business trips, Renxing is entrusted to Chongyi's father, Zhu Zhigen (Baotian Li), a widower intent on a long-overdue visit to his hometown in southern China. Chongyi is concerned; his father has lost track of Renxing in a public place before.

Off Zhigen and Renxing go, with Zhigen's caged nightingale in hand, on a road-and-rail trip fraught with a bus breakdown, a wrong forest path taken and other modest obstacles.

Renxing, a petulant urban child addicted to her iPad, discovers the rural beauty of Guangxi Province, as do we. And Mr. Li (an alumnus of the Zhang Yimou films “Ju Dou” and “Shanghai Triad”) proves an appealing guide.

Though the film is a French-Chinese coproduction from Mr. Muyl, a French director, it was China’s Academy Award entry in 2014 for best foreign film. A reworking of Mr. Muyl’s 2002 film *The Butterfly, The Nightingale* demonstrates the ways urbanization has sapped our appreciation of country values and landscape. Mr. Muyl’s unforced direction, coupled with the cinematographer Sun Ming’s lovely images and Armand Amar’s unintrusive musical score, reminds us of what we are missing.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PANAJ9f31E>

AMERICAN DREAMS IN CHINA – 2013 (100 MINUTES)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pg97bpWsl-U>

Based on the real-life story of a mainland Chinese teacher who rose to become one of China’s wealthiest men through his English-language tutorial centers, *American Dreams in China*, sees a trio of idealistic young men charting China’s social changes from the 1980s to the 21st century, as they first join forces and then fall out over how to realize their ambitions.

Film Reviews:

<http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2013/05/28/american-dreams-in-china-tops-box-office/>

http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/foreigners/2013/06/american_dreams_in_china_storms_the_box_office_the_chinese_version_of_the.html

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pg97bpWsl-U>



A TOUCH OF SIN – 2013 (143 MINUTES)

<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/a-touch-of-sin-2013>

"May you live in interesting times" is the familiar Chinese saying, usually spat out as a curse. You can see why in *A Touch of Sin*, a film by renowned director Jia Zhang-ke. That kind of time is now, in the history of his country. With four vignettes inspired by real-life "ripped from the headline" events, he shows what the great economic expansion of China is doing to the majority of its people. It's not a pretty picture, but it's a compelling one.

The four stories track a furious miner who goes on a rampage against a company head, a migrant worker who returns home for his mom's 70th birthday, a young kid from the provinces who can only find work in an exploitative factory or a brothel, and a massage parlor receptionist (played by Zhao Tao, the director's real-life wife). Jia's view is of a country with corrupt managers and government officials. It also points up the undeniable income disparity topping even that of the U.S. Still, the displaced and marginalized traverse the country, trying to get some piece of the pie. Or some job...

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=377D2mDpv5U>

TRAP STREET – 2013 (93 MINUTES)

https://asianwiki.com/Trap_Street

A city in southern China. In the heat of summer.

While out surveying for the digital mapping company he works for, Li Qiuming offers a pretty young woman a lift home. Not long afterwards, he notices a small box with a memory

stick under the car seat and realizes that the woman, Guan Lifen, must have left it. He arranges to give the box back to her at a Starbucks but is disappointed to be met instead by a man who introduces himself as the director of the lab where Lifen works. He asks for Qiuming's address and phone number – to thank him, he claims – and Qiuming is left with an uneasy feeling.

So much for romance, he thinks. But when Qiuming tries to enter the mapping data for the street where he met Lifen into his company's system, the system rejects it as invalid.

Revisiting the street for a second survey late at night, he encounters Lifen again, and the two happily resume their conversation in her car.

After this promising start, however, Qiuming suddenly finds his life turned upside-down: his discovery of the memory stick and attempts to get close to Lifen have placed him under suspicion; he is accused of stealing sensitive data.

What can he do to prove his innocence? Can he return to normal life?

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIT60Ej5s4o>

DISTANT – 2013 (88 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3103370/plotsummary?ref=tt_ov_pl

Zhengfan Yan's debut feature is set in Zhuhai, his home town, the coastal city of Zhuhai.

Distant is a film that is made up of 13 sections, each comprised of a single long take. Each section tells a story about distance between different time and space, focusing on the subtle moments when people are suddenly confronted with modernity and gradually become lost in the transition between this and their present lives. Without any dialogue, simply working with image, sound, and actions of the characters, these 13 dramatic, realistic and mysterious scenes are painted. It tries to describe today's human condition in an abstract way - its alienation, abandonment, and eternal loneliness.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lycoKQr0Gic>

I KILLED MY FATHER – 2012 (20 MINUTES)

<https://mubi.com/films/i-killed-my-father-2012>

This is a story about a fight between a father and a son. The father attempted to strictly set up everything for his son based on his own expectation, whereas the son tried to get away from his father by making films. The film is based on the true story of the director Zhengfen Yang, who has been fighting with his father for almost ten years. The director decided to use a film to examine his ten years' struggle.

THE GRANDMASTER – 2012 (130 MINUTES)

http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the_grandmaster/

Directed by acclaimed filmmaker Wong Kar Wai, *The Grandmaster* is an epic action feature inspired by the life and times of the legendary kung fu master, Ip Man. The story spans the tumultuous Republican era that followed the fall of China's last dynasty, a time of chaos, division and war that was also the golden age of Chinese martial arts. Filmed in a range of stunning locations that include the snow-swept landscapes of Northeast China and the subtropical South, *The Grandmaster* features virtuoso performances by some of the greatest stars of contemporary Asian cinema, including Tony Leung and Ziyi Zhang.

Film Clips: <http://videos.huffingtonpost.com/entertainment/the-grandmaster-movie-review-517906193>

LOST IN THAILAND – 2012 (105 MINUTES)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/29/lost-in-thailand-xu-zheng_n_2978185.html

The historical epic, fantasy, action, and thriller genres have long filled China's domestic movie screens. But *Lost in Thailand* was a low-budget and light-hearted road-trip tale about an ambitious executive who goes to Thailand to get his boss's approval for a business deal. Along the way he's pursued by a rival co-worker and encounters a wacky tourist who helps him rethink his priorities.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqZb1bUKJQ0>

THE LAST SUPPER – 2012 (110 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Last_Supper_\(2012_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Last_Supper_(2012_film))

The story is told in flashbacks from the point of view of a 61-year-old Liu Bang, the founding emperor of the Han Dynasty. Liu Bang has been experiencing nightmares and living in fear and apprehension as he constantly suspects that someone is trying to kill him. In his whole life, he has been afraid of only two persons: Xiang Yu, who fought with him for supremacy over China after the fall of the Qin Dynasty; Han Xin, a man who previously served Xiang Yu, but later became a general under him, and helped him defeat Xiang Yu... It is said that he finally found peace in death because he has been living in suspense and uncertainty.

Trailer: https://www.imdb.com/video/vi1931458585?ref=tt_pv_vi_aiv_1

CAUGHT IN THE WEB – 2012 (121 MINUTES)

http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/caught_in_the_web/

This contemporary ensemble drama directed by Chen Kaige centers around the story of a young woman, who after learning of a terminal illness, is caught on video mistreating an elderly bus passenger. She quickly becomes the victim of a massive viral internet campaign, with her life, and the lives of everyone around her, slipping into chaos and media scrutiny. A social commentary about the 'sound bite' society we are becoming, it is a moving tale of the effects media and technology have on the truth, and the damage quick judgments can cause.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyouKr5OndQ>

THE FLOWERS OF WAR – 2011 (146 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Flowers_of_War

The Flowers of War is a 2011 historical drama war film directed by Zhang Yimou, starring Christian Bale, Ni Ni, Zhang Xinyi, Tong Dawei, Atsuro Watabe, Shigeo Kobayashi and Cao Kefan. The film is based on a novella by Geling Yan, *15 Flowers of Nanjing*, inspired by the diary of Minnie Vautrin. The story is set in Nanking, China, during the 1937 Nanking Massacre in the Second Sino-Japanese War. A group of escapees, finding sanctuary in a church compound, try to survive the Japanese atrocities.

Review: <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/flowers-of-war-2012>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jS8o4ZVo-Gc>

11 FLOWERS – 2011 (116 MINUTES)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/22/movies/11-flowers-directed-by-wang-xiaoshuai.html>

Poised on the brink of sexual awareness and the waning of the Cultural Revolution, an 11-year-old boy struggles to interpret the signals from his changing body and an increasingly confusing world.

Yet Wang Xiaoshuai's *11 Flowers* never allows politics to overwhelm its fondly intimate portrait of life in a Chinese village in 1975. Seen through the curious eyes of the young Wang Han (Liu Wenqing) and his friends, the film's more mysterious events — including a corpse on the riverbank and the strange sadness of a neighbor's beautiful daughter — are little more than incomprehensible distractions from the daily rituals of rural life.

Delicate and autobiographical (Wang Han was the director's name when he was a child, and the story is constructed from his boyhood memories), *11 Flowers* clings steadfastly to its youthful point of view. And while there is a plot involving a lost shirt and a fateful encounter with a murderer, information leaks through from the adult world mostly in the form of glimpsed interactions and overheard conversations.

This oblique approach allows small moments of direct connection between Wang Han and his parents — in particular lovely scene where his father teaches him about the brush strokes in a Monet — to resonate with luminous simplicity. And when someone remarks that “a change is coming,” he's as likely to be suggesting a shift in the weather as the dawning of a brand-new era.

Review: <https://www.npr.org/2013/02/21/172395278/11-flowers-a-revolutionary-childhood>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WzUt4p8olHI>

THE SURROUNDINGS — 2011 (28 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2402215/plotsummary?ref=tt_ov_pl

In a society obsessed with economic development, a young man from a rural area is hired to take care of an old man living on a farm. The old man stands firmly on keeping his home, while the young man works hard to make a life for him and his girlfriend. However, the two are met with the harshness of a society that's leaving them behind. In the end, they become victims to a fate they did not choose.

NO. 89 SHIMEN ROAD — 2010 (85 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1802807/>

In the late 1980's Shanghai, a 16-year-old boy, Xiaoli, comes of age surrounded by his neighbors and grandfather. His best friend is a girl named Lanmi, a couple years older than him. But Lanmi slowly drifts away from him, lured by the new opportunities which come as China opens up to foreign goods and businessmen. At the same time, the 1989 events force Xiaoli to grow up and to let go of his teenage dreams.

Review: <https://16mm.pl/2014/11/01/shanghai-onoff-screen-no-89-shimen-road-2010-dir-shu-haolun/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xc-y-JGwFEs>

BUDDHA MOUNTAIN — 2010 (104 MINUTES)

This drama directed by Yi Yu chronicles the lives of three youths who have no intention of sitting exams and getting into universities and a retired Chinese opera singer who is mourning the death of her son. The film explores themes of teenage confusion, angst, and rebellion and the impermanence of life.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqL-p_niM5I

PIERCING I — 2010 (103 MINUTES)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueKJULZewok&lc=z12uvva4urfcjfj3h22gynhzhkieflm3x>



With his head pressed hard against the ground and a cursing, violent security guard standing above him, the young Zhang has hit rock-bottom. He would like to leave Beijing, and return to the life in the countryside, which he abandoned in search of job opportunities, which no longer exist. But when he helps an accident victim, on his way to the train station, a chain-reaction of fateful events is set in motion, which finally results in both extortion and murder; it is not so easy to leave Beijing. Liu Jian's animation feature debut is a slice of Chinese megacity

realism, which takes as its starting point the global financial crisis and slowly develops into a classic entanglement crime thriller, which would make the Coen brothers proud. Moments of hope are few and far between in the director's take on modern China. Beijing is a place inhabited by a cynical, despondent youth and a frustrated working class, and provides the setting for this melancholy story, brought to life in simple, grey images, simple animation, and a dry sense of humour. *Piercing I* provides sharp insights into modern China, and is a rare example of an animated auteur film, from a director with something to say.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueKJULZewok>

Liu Jian, a Nanjing-based animator and director with a background in painting, has single-handedly launched the genre of black humor adult animation in China, and further catapulted it into the international limelight with two feature-length works, *Piercing I* (2010) and *Have a Nice Day* (2018) See:

<http://acas.ust.hk/2018/12/14/the-animation-that-deconstructs-itself-liu-jian-piercing-i-and-have-a-nice-day/>

MY MONGOLIAN MOTHER — 2010 (100 MINUTES)

https://asianwiki.com/My_Mongolian_Mother

The film is a touching epic drama based on a true story. In the 1960s, about 3,000 Chinese orphans were sent to Inner Mongolia. In the Xilingol grassland, Qiqigema Erji adopted Chen Chen and Yu Sheng even though her husband disapproved. The children grew up as Mongolian nomads. But 20 years later, upon hearing the news that biological parents were looking for their children, Chen Chen left for Shanghai in the hope of meeting his parents. Yu Sheng finally did meet his parents and faced a choice as to where he wanted to live.

Stream entire movie here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYvAyEy9hNI>

THE PIANO IN A FACTORY — 2010 (107 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Piano_in_a_Factory

Set in the 1990s, laid-off worker Chen Guilin was betrayed by his wife, who remarried a rich businessman who has much more money than him. The condition for the custody of their daughter is to give their daughter a piano. Chen tries all means to borrow money from his friends, even attempting to steal a piano, but all his attempts fail. Despite these challenges, Chen always maintains an optimistic outlook. Finally, he decides to build a piano with his friends.

The group eventually build a piano which is made of steel. He also organizes a band to make a living and uses his wisdom to create a life which is full of sound and color.

Review: <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/piano-factory-film-review-32286>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPqX0JGjvbg>



APART TOGETHER – 2010 (97 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1587878/plotsummary?ref=tt_ov_pl

Liu returns to his native city Shanghai after 50 years spent in Taiwan. He has come to find the first love of his life, Qiao, who he left behind pregnant. In the meantime, Qiao has married and formed a family. But Liu is determined to get the family's approval to take her away with him.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zs3MLm7w7Ak>

LOST ON JOURNEY – 2010 (95 MINUTES)

[https://www.timeoutshanghai.com/features/Film-Film_features/5299/7-](https://www.timeoutshanghai.com/features/Film-Film_features/5299/7-classic-Chinese-New-Year-films-to-watch-this-holiday.html)

[classic-Chinese-New-Year-films-to-watch-this-holiday.html](https://www.timeoutshanghai.com/features/Film-Film_features/5299/7-classic-Chinese-New-Year-films-to-watch-this-holiday.html)

Another *chunyun* film, but a rarity on this list because, for once, it is not a bleak drama tugging on the social conscience of 'new money' China, but a comedy. Heading back home for Chinese New Year (and to divorce his wife), a wealthy businessman has his journey ruined when he accidentally joins forces with a stranger (think of it as a Chinese version of *Planes, Trains and Automobiles*). Everything that could possibly go wrong does go wrong, and they have to race home on any transportation they can get.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ijVmya3hBU>

SACRIFICE – 2010 (132 MINUTES)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJEWZ33guH4>

Sacrifice is a richly designed and wrenchingly emotional historical drama from veteran director Chen Kaige (Palme d'Or winner and Academy Award nominee for *Farewell My Concubine*). Based on the medieval play *Orphan of Zhao*, the first Chinese play known in Europe, the film recounts an epic power struggle between feudal princes, counterpoised with the melancholy tale of one ordinary man caught up in it all, and the steep price paid by his family. Chen -- renowned both East and West for lavish sagas like *Temptress Moon* (1996) and *The Emperor and the Assassin* (1998) -- imaginatively realizes an ancient Chinese kingdom and expertly constructs an intricate plot filled with clan rivalries, court intrigue and betrayal. A Machiavellian general (Wang Xueqi) plots the overthrow of the reigning Zhao clan. In the violent coup d'état that ensues, a loyal and humble doctor (popular Chinese star Ge You of *Let the Bullets Fly*) fulfills a promise to protect an infant Zhao heir from the bloodshed. When a case of mistaken identity has devastating consequences, he ends up raising the Zhao boy in secret -- and meditating a long, slow revenge. Despite the grandeur of the narrative, the heart of *Sacrifice* is the very human relationship between the doctor and the boy, who is caught between familiar adolescent growing pains and the gnawing intuition of a mysterious and powerful destiny. A stellar cast helps Chen shape an exquisite melodrama with a surprisingly intimate tone. *Sacrifice* is a fable of honor and retribution told with the feeling and insight of a Shakespearean tragedy.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJEWZ33guH4>

THE KARATE KID – 2010 (135 MINUTES)

http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/karate_kid_2010/#

When his mother's career results in a move to China, 12-year-old Dre Parker (Jaden Smith) finds that he is a stranger in a strange land. Though he knows a little karate, his fighting skills are no match for Cheng, the school bully. Dre finds a friend in Mr. Han (Jackie Chan), a

maintenance man who is also a martial-arts master. Mr. Han teaches Dre all about kung fu in the hope that Dre will be able to face down Cheng and perhaps win the heart of a pretty classmate named Mei Ying.

Clips: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/karate_kid_2010



LET THE BULLETS FLY – 2010 (132 MINUTES)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=641U0JfDMjY>

When legendary bandit Pocky Zhang (Jiang Wen) violently crosses paths with a con man Tang (Ge You), he is offered an intriguing proposition: become the governor of Goose Town and make more money in a month than a year of train robberies. But neither realizes that Goose Town is already under the iron rule of Master Huang (Chow Yun-Fat), a ruthless and wealthy crime lord. Zhang and Huang begin a hyper-violent and hilarious series of escalating mind games in this masterfully vicious, pitch-black action comedy that will have you laughing and cringing at the same time.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=641U0JfDMjY>

CONFUCIUS – 2010 (125 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confucius_\(2010_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confucius_(2010_film))

The film begins with Confucius as an old man, thinking back. Then we see him in his early 50s, being promoted from Mayor to Minister for Law in his home state of Lu. He is confronted with ethical issues after saving a slave-boy who was due to be buried alive with his former master who has just died. There are a lot of complex politics and war, ending with Confucius being rejected and becoming a wandering scholar. After many hardships and losses, he is invited back as an old man. We see him finally preparing the Spring and Autumn Annals, expecting that this book will determine his future influence. The film was scheduled to screen later in 2009 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, as well as the 2,560th birthday of Confucius himself. However, the release date was later moved to January 2010.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDqDC2VFAS8>

Stream entire movie here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=el3i3TfNg-I>

CITY OF LIFE AND DEATH (NANJING! NANJING) – 2010 (137 MINUTES)

http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/city_of_life_and_death/

City of Life and Death takes place in 1937, during the height of the Second Sino-Japanese War. The Imperial Japanese Army has just captured the then-capital of the Republic of China, Nanjing. What followed was known as the Nanking Massacre, or the Rape of Nanking, a period of several weeks wherein tens of thousands of Chinese soldiers and civilians were killed. The film tells the story of several figures, both historical and fictional, including a Chinese soldier, a schoolteacher, a Japanese soldier, a foreign missionary, and John Rabe, a Nazi businessman who would ultimately save thousands of Chinese civilians.

Trailer: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1TIamXyc_I

DOOMAN RIVER – 2010 (90 MINUTES)

<https://variety.com/2010/film/reviews/dooman-river-1117943259/>

...In *Dooman River* (usually written as Tumen River in English), the focus is on the forlorn lives of a family of three — playful pre-adolescent Chang-ho his mute older sister, Soon-hee, and their equally untalkative grandfather — who reside in an impoverished village near the titular border. When Chang-ho meets a Korean escapee his own age, they form an erstwhile bond based on a mutual love of soccer, while the other villagers grow fearful of crimes committed by famine-stricken refugees seeking food and shelter...

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VhUPzBhulI>

Stream entire movie here: https://tubitv.com/movies/445519/dooman-river?start=true&utm_source=google-feed&tracking=google-feed

HOT SUMMER DAYS — 2010 (99 MINUTES)

<http://movies.nytimes.com/2010/10/01/movies/01hot.html?adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1293285649-KrMUHeodmx2ZpAQiXsFIgw>

Do they have date movies in China? Probably, and *Hot Summer Days*, an enjoyable concoction of loosely intertwined stories of love and obsession, is just right for that purpose. The film, by Tony Chan and Wing Shya, is intricate without being taxing and does just what you want a date movie to do: generate high hopes about the exhilarating, sometimes painful adventure that is love. (Hong Kong production)

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Equylb6VmLY>

CRAZY RACER — 2009 (99 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crazy_Racer

Crazy Racer, also known in some countries as *Silver Medalist*, is a 2009 Chinese black comedy movie directed and written by Ning Hao, filmed mostly in the southern coastal city of Xiamen, China.

The plot follows four seemingly separate stories that intersect and converge at points throughout the movie. It begins with the protagonist, Geng Hao losing first place in a cycling race and subsequently being tricked into sponsoring an energy drink containing illegal performance-enhancing substances by corrupt businessman Li Fala which causes him to forfeit the winnings from his silver medal. Disgraced and outlawed from ever participating again in the sport, Geng Hao's coach suffers from a heart attack, prompting Geng Hao to seek retribution from Li Fala, who he believes is the cause. In the process of obtaining the money for his coach's funeral, Geng Hao crosses the paths of local criminals, perpetually confused policemen and Taiwanese gangsters.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HbXPqGC65Cw>



THE SEARCH — 2009 (117 MINUTES)

<http://www.icarusfilms.com/df-sear>

A director, his assistant, and a businessman drive through the Amdo region of Tibet, scouring small villages to find actors for their adaptation of the *namthar* of Drime Kunden, an opera traditionally performed for the Tibetan New Year, that tells the story of a prince—an early incarnation of Buddha—who gives away all his possessions, his wife and children, and even his own eyes.

Driving through the country's stunning landscapes, the crew meets frustration in their search for actors who can live up to the legendary roles. They find that while many of the traditions they would like to film have persisted, others are disappearing.

Directed by Pema Tseden, whose *The Silent Holy Stones* was China's first Tibetan-language film, *The Search* reveals a contemporary Tibet where the ancient and the modern co-exist. The film is framed by two love stories. In the first village they visit, the team discovers the perfect actress to play Made Zangmo, Drime Kunden's wife, but she will not perform unless her ex-boyfriend, who has left the village for a job in the city, plays the lead. The crew consents, and brings her along to find him. Along the way, the businessman tells the story of his first love. This moving account entertains the crew between stops in the villages, and captivates the otherwise quiet actress.

A human story that unfolds in the context of religious parable and historical change, *The Search* offers a sensitive, nuanced look at contemporary Tibet.

Review: <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=106089201>

A WOMAN, A GUN, AND A NOODLE SHOP – 2009 (95 MINUTES)

<http://www.sonyclassics.com/awomanagunandanoodleshop/synopsis.html>

Wang is a miserable yet cunning noodle shop owner in a desert town in China. Feeling neglected, Wang's wife secretly goes out with Li, one of his employees. A timid man, Li reluctantly keeps the gun the landlady bought for 'killing her husband later'. However, not a single move they make escapes the boss's notice, and he decides to bribe patrol officer Zhang to kill the illicit couple. It looks like a perfect plan: the affair will come to a cruel but satisfying end... or so he thinks, but the equally wicked Zhang has an agenda of his own that will lead to even more violence.

Review: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/03/movies/03woman.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLJiLp_mMCU



MAO'S LAST DANCER – 2009 (127 MINUTES)

http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/maos_last_dancer/

From Academy Award nominee Bruce Beresford comes *Mao's Last Dancer*, the inspiring true story of Li Cunxin and his extraordinary journey from a poor upbringing in rural China to international stardom as a world-class ballet dancer. Based on the bestselling autobiography, *Mao's Last Dancer* weaves a moving tale about the quest for freedom and the courage it takes to live your own life. The film compellingly captures the struggles, sacrifices, and triumphs, as well as the intoxicating effects of first love and celebrity amid the pain of exile.

Mao's Last Dancer and wife Mary Li on raising their deaf daughter, Sophie (2021)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUvpTn_aFtc

Teacher Guide: <https://teachwithmovies.org/maos-last-dancer/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPM-tmT9sV8>



A NORTH CHINESE GIRL – 2009 (81 MINUTES)

<https://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/title/774983/a-north-chinese-girl/#synopsis>

Xiao Xue is nineteen and lives in a town in northern China. During the day she works in a fashion store, and at night, she accompanies her boss on his various social engagements and

activities. When he goes out with his friends, she makes herself useful as a hostess, joining him in karaoke bars and nightclubs. Xiao Xue sees her after hours involvement in her boss' life as a launching pad to improve her standard of living. But then she discovers she is pregnant and this changes her life in an unexpected way.

QUICK, QUICK, SLOW – 2009 (83 MINUTES)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1516572/>

A comedy about ordinary people taking part in a dance competition. China hosts the Olympics for the first time. The whole country is excited. The forgotten generation, the same age as Red China - once passionate in their youth, then sent to the countryside in every corner of China for re-education - wants to be a part of it. A group of people: a security guard in his middle age crisis, a desperate housewife, a fame-seeker and her admirer, an odd couple at their fifties, started their own dance team. They practiced; they dreamed; they struggled. Is this for real or it is just a dream?

IF YOU ARE THE ONE – 2008 (127 MINUTES)

http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/if_you_are_the_one/

Inventor Qin Fen (You Ge) is well-off, but lonely and insecure. He wants to meet girls and decides to pursue Internet dating. After a series of unsuccessful blind dates, Qin Fe meets Smiley (Shu Qi), a beautiful flight attendant. Qin Fen is immediately taken with Smiley, but believes she is out of his league and doesn't pursue her romantically. Nevertheless, the two become friends and form a tight bond after Qin Fen takes Smiley on a trip to Japan.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5c7PyRNgvJQ>

RED CLIFF – 2008 (146 MINUTES)

https://asianwiki.com/Red_Cliff

It's A.D. 208 China. Rival states Shu and Wu join hands against their common enemy, the evil and ambitious General Cao Cao of the Wei kingdom, but are seriously outnumbered by his million-strong army. But with the charismatic leadership of Gen. Zhou Yu ([Tony Leung](#)), the perfect strategy of scholar Zhuge Liang ([Takeshi Kaneshiro](#)), and the support of emperor Sun Quan ([Chang Chen](#)), they manage to declare a small victory. While Cao Cao scoffs at this as no big deal, it adds fuel to his fury.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVrTlXkXJhI>

Stream entire movie here: https://tubitv.com/movies/437181/red-cliff?utm_source=google-feed&tracking=google-feed

LUST, CAUTION – 2007 (158 MINUTES)

<http://www.amazon.com/Lust-Caution-Widescreen-Tony-Leung/dp/B0010SAGHI>

Lust, Caution, Ang Lee's follow up to *Brokeback Mountain*, for which he won the Academy Award for Best Director, continues his exploration of people with a passion for each other trapped in a world where their passion could be life-threatening, but in a very different context this time. Set in China during the Japanese occupation of early World War II, the underlying plot concerns the story of young Wong Chia Chi (Tang Wei), an actress and member of a small group of student resisters planning to infiltrate the home of Mr. Yee (Tony Leung), a high-ranking collaborationist government official, in order to kill him for his role in the torture and executions of Chinese resistance fighters. Chi ingratiates herself with Yee's

wife, the sophisticated and cultured Mrs. Yee (Joan Chen) under the guise of being the wife of a wealthy but unseen tycoon.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CizN-DvGhrc>

BLIND MOUNTAIN – 2007 (97 MINUTES)

<http://movies.nytimes.com/2008/03/12/movies/12blin.html>

Every so often in his slow-to-boil, hard-to-shake drama *Blind Mountain*, the Chinese director Li Yang slips in a moment of beauty — a blooming valley wreathed in mist, a shepherd tending his flock — of the sort you find in glossy travel magazines. These pastoral visions initially feel like a reprieve, a respite from the story's increasing heaviness, but there's something about these bucolic images that begins to gnaw at you too. This native, touristic fantasy about the unspoiled China, you realize, comes with a brutal price tag. This true-crime shocker about a woman who suddenly found herself in captivity led to a flurry of reports that recounted the usual rituals of official outrage and condemnation, and then it was back to politics and business as usual. *Blind Mountain* is a coda to that story, as well as a reminder that art sometimes keeps the truth alive far better than the news.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=biJOrUhBTOI>



IN LOVE WE TRUST – 2007 (116 MINUTES)

<https://www.filmmovement.com/educational/film/in-love-we-trust>

A divorced couple learns that the only way to save their little daughter Hehe, who suffers from Leukemia, is to have another child. Now both remarried, Mei Zhu and Xiao Lu are forced to test their love and their commitment to one another by putting their current relationships in danger. Will this passionate affair re-spark their love for one another and destroy their new marriages? Wang Xiaoshuai's *In Love We Trust* is a story of parenthood, love, marriage, betrayal, trust and giving, which touches upon changes in contemporary society and family life, as well as the moral and ethical dilemmas brought on by modernity.

Stream movie here (tubi): https://tubitv.com/movies/30845/in-love-we-trust?utm_source=google-feed&tracking=google-feed

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HgKtzWFRwOg&feature=emb_logo

THE SUN ALSO RISES – 2007 (116 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0769507/>

Jiang Wen stars in his third directorial work that boasts a stellar cast including Joan Chen, Anthony Wong and Jaycee Chan. A polyptych of interconnected stories in different time-zones, shifting between a Yunnan village, a campus, and the Gobi Desert.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RaeZ1D5o9CI>

PRINCE OF THE HIMALAYAS – 2006 (108 MINUTES)

<https://globalshakespeares.mit.edu/prince-of-himalayas-hu-sherwood-2006/#video=trailer>

Prince Lhamoklodan learns of his father's mysterious death and returns home to find his uncle has taken the throne—and the widowed queen. The dead emperor's son wants revenge, but how can he exact it without devastating his mother? In the struggle to face his destiny and fight his demons, a new king is born.

Prince of the Himalayas is an adaptation of William Shakespeare's tragedy Hamlet. Set in ancient Tibet under the shadow of the Himalayas, the film is a visually ravishing historical epic with stunning scenery, richly saturated color, and lush costuming. Setting Shakespeare's Prince of Denmark in a completely new context is richly suggestive of the play's enduring relevance for the modern world. As the proto-typical tale of oedipal anxiety, or of the terrifying possibilities of taking action in the social world, this film re-invents and refreshes a story we thought we knew.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPKwudubbf&feature=emb_logo

TUYA'S MARRIAGE – 2006 (93 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0949564/>

Tuya is the persevering wife of Bater, a herdsman who lost his legs exploring water in the Neimenggu (Inner Mongolia) grassland that is fast vanishing as a result of desertification. She takes up the sole responsibility to make a living for the family but develops a dislocated lumbar from her hard labor and risks paralysis herself. Faced with harsh reality, the couple decide to divorce so that Tuya can seek a better life. Imposing her own conditions of a remarriage - her new husband must take care of Bater, their children and their poor herding land, the strong-minded, stubborn, but also gentle, susceptible Tuya embarks on an arduous search for a new husband, and meets suiters who are rich but disingenuous, likable but shy, and saves a suicidal Bater who still longs for Tuya and their children along the way. Tuya's Marriage won the top prize at the 2007 Berlin International Film Festival.

Trailer and numerous clips:

https://www.imdb.com/video/vi3844061209?playlistId=tt0949564&ref=tt_ov_vi

THE ROAD – 2006 (116 MINUTES)

[https://asianwiki.com/The_Road_\(2006-China\)](https://asianwiki.com/The_Road_(2006-China))

Aboard a bus in the rural mountains of China, a naïve young girl name Li Chunfen attends to passengers' needs, all the while speaking of the virtues of the Communist Party. The always loyal Li is happy to serve the driver, Old Cui, a kind of father figure to her who also acts as the consoling voice of the party. When she develops an acute case of puppy love for a frequent passenger -- an emotion that leads to a chased kiss and a rape report, she learns all too well that her party and driver might not always have her best interests in mind. But how big of hand will the Cultural Revolution play in Li's life? How much control will she have over her own fate? Spanning five decades of Li's life, The Road is a coming-of-age tale of epic proportions. Heartbreakingly beautiful -- the countryside cinematography is jaw-dropping -- and tragically timely, the film stands out as a masterful work from a powerful new Chinese voice, director Zhang Jiarui, reminding us of a painful history and warning us never to repeat it.

CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER – 2006 (114 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0473444/>

During China's Tang dynasty the emperor has taken the princess of a neighboring province as wife. She has borne him two sons and raised his eldest. Now his control over his dominion is complete, including the royal family itself.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBFi6LqYswI>

STILL LIFE — 2006 (108 MINUTES)

<http://movies.nytimes.com/2008/01/18/movies/18stil.html>

A modern master of postmodern discontent, Jia Zhangke is among the most strikingly gifted filmmakers working today whom you have probably never heard of. During the past decade he has made some half-dozen documentary-inflected fictions and several documentaries that weigh the human cost of China's often brutal, dehumanizing shift from state-controlled communism to state-sanctioned capitalism, a price paid in the blood and sweat of people who have, paradoxically, inspired him to create works of sublime, soulful art. In *Still Life*, which won the grand prize at the 2006 Venice Film Festival, the blood and the sweat run directly into the Yangtze River, where they mingle with more than a few tears. The movie takes place amid the clatter and misery of the Three Gorges Dam, which cuts across the Yangtze in central China. The largest dam in the world, Three Gorges is a site of great cultural and political strife because of both environmental and humanitarian concerns. This may sound like a prescription for social cinema, but Mr. Jia's interest lies in visual ideas and human behavior, not agendas...

Review:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/18/movies/18stil.html>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FKcuplP8c>

Still Life is a unique hybrid of documentary and fiction.

Filmed at the same time as Jia's fiction film, *Still Life*, Jia's 70-minute documentary, *Dong* also shares the same setting (the Three Gorges area of central China) and in certain instances, the same shots. This causes them to make a closely linked relationship with each other. Jia mentions once in his interview that he has always been trying to "knock down the barrier between documentary and fiction". He portrays the documentary with a more subjective view and reflects the realistic perspective in the fictional film *Still Life*, overstepping the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction films. DONG Trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvNhEhwKhgY>

Stream entire documentary here: <https://vimeo.com/433545872>

TAKING FATHER HOME — 2006 (100 MINUTES)

<http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/346120/Taking-Father-Home/overview>

Taking Father Home, the debut feature of the Chinese director Ying Liang, is a poetic study of resolve and revenge. It is also a stunning introduction to a rare new talent. When 17-year-old Xu Yun learns that his village in Sichuan Province is being replaced by a government industrial zone, he sets out to fetch the wayward father who abandoned him six years earlier. Armed with only a vague address and a pair of placid geese in lieu of cash, Yun heads for the big city of Zigong and a closure he may not even know he needs. Shot with a borrowed video camera and starring Mr. Ying's friends and family, *Taking Father Home* immerses us in the sights and sounds of a city in flux, the constant intrusion of background noise paralleling Yun's volatile emotions with the political and environmental upheavals of his country.

CRAZY STONE — 2006 (96 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crazy_Stone_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crazy_Stone_(film))

Crazy Stone is a 2006 Chinese black comedy film directed by Ning Hao and produced by Andy Lau.

When a precious jade stone is discovered in an old outhouse, the owner of said outhouse and the surrounding buildings suddenly finds himself with the financial clout to withstand the buy-out pressure of an unethical developer who wishes to build a large building on his plot. The owner, intending to display the stone to the public, puts his dedicated chief of security in charge of keeping it safe. But with the stakes running high, this is easier said than done. The

developer hires a high-tech cat burglar from Hong Kong to steal the stone, the owner's wayward son sees the jewel as the perfect symbol of wealth and hatches a plan to use it to increase his chances at getting laid, and a gang of three con men who hear about the jewel see it as their ticket to the big time. These three groups find themselves in direct competition and, finding their attempts foiled as often by the security guard as by each other, become more and more desperate as the film progresses.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSkoLUx03tg>

THE BANQUET – 2006 (131 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0465676/plotsummary?ref_=tt_stryp_l

The Banquet is a 2006 Chinese film, also known as *Legend of the Black Scorpion*. It is a loose adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and is set in 10th century China.

In 907 AD, the Tang Dynasty is in tatters; infighting snarls the imperial family. Crown Prince Wu Luan loves Little Wan, but his father takes her as his Empress. Wu Luan goes into exile, studying dance and music. His uncle murders his father, taking throne and Empress; uncle sends assassins to kill Wu Luan. The Crown Prince eludes death and comes to court. The Emperor arranges for Little Wan's coronation and dispatches Wu Luan to a distant land; he then calls for a midnight banquet on the 100th day of his rule. Poison, treachery, Wu Luan's return, and the love of the innocent Qing for Wu Luan set up the final entanglements. No Fortinbras or Horatio lay the dead to rest

The Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlhgwWYO2IY>



THE SILENT HOLY STONES – 2005 (102 MINUTES)

<https://asiasociety.org/new-york/events/silent-holy-stones>

A 10-year-old Buddhist novice nicknamed “Little Lama” returns

home from the remote Guwa monastery for the New Year celebration. After a long journey on horseback over icy steppes, he finds himself glued to his family's new TV, watching the popular Chinese television series *Journey to the West*. Meanwhile, the villagers are rehearsing their annual staging of a traditional Tibetan opera for the New Year. The juxtaposition shows a young monk who finds himself magnetically drawn to the secular world, which calls to him through the TV. *The Silent Holy Stones* has the immediacy of a documentary, delivering a compelling and intimate insider's look of everyday life in Tseden's hometown, where traditional life rubs up against modernity and globalization. The character Little Lama in *The Silent Holy Stones* was played by a real monk, Luosang Danpai, who later de-robed, got married, and is now living a layperson's life.

Written and directed by Pema Tseden, the film is entirely in the Tibetan language and with nonprofessional Tibetan actors. The film won the Best Directorial Debut at the 25th Golden Rooster Awards in China and is an official selection of the Pusan International Film Festival, the International Buddhist Film Festival, the International Film Festival Rotterdam, and the San Francisco International Film Festival.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0t_rVTEAXrE

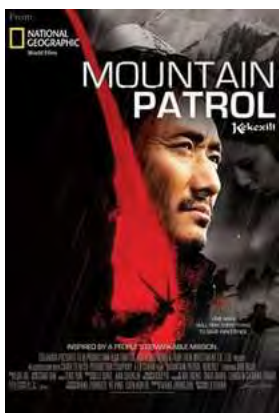
“The place where the story took place is none other than my home village, where the mountains and waters have always haunted my dreams. I long to tell the true stories — in my own way — that have come up in my home village, to disclose the real looks of her, and to reveal the genuine conditions of life of the people there ... a reciprocal infiltration between tradition and modernism.” — Pema Tseden

ELECTRIC SHADOWS – 2004 (96 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0424273/>

Electric Shadows is the debut film of director Xiao Jiang, one of the few active female directors in China. For no apparent reason, a mute young woman assaults a youth who delivers water on his bicycle, injuring him and ruining his bike. Surprisingly, she asks him to feed her fish while she is in custody. Her tiny apartment, he discovers, is a shrine to his favorite escape, the movies. He finds her diary - a screenplay of her life built around scenes from favorite films - and it sets off his imagination. Maybe they have more in common than a love of the movies.

7 Clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KID_-UkzAnI



MOUNTAIN PATROL: KEKEXILI – 2004 (89 MINUTES)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PjCbzM7SJNY>

Kekexili, the largest wildlife reserve in China, is home to many rare species. When photojournalist Ga Yu (Zhang Lei) arrives at the Kekexili Mountain Patrol camp, they are mourning the death of one of their members. Determined to uncover the real story behind the disappearance of patrol volunteers, the slaughtering of Tibetan antelopes and the rumor that the patrol cooperates with the poachers, Ga Yu joins the squad into the wilderness. Led by Ri Tai (Duo Bujie), the patrol risk their lives in the fight against the brutal hunters. At first distanced by the lens of his camera, Ga Yu slowly becomes personally involved in the deadly struggle. Ga Yu returns to Beijing a different man and writes the story

that shocks the nation.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rosOtYVJM4I>

Stream entire film here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PjCbzM7SJNY>



HERO (YING XIONG) – 2004 (159 MINUTES)

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/searchresults_detail.html?biblioId=6578

Long ago, China was divided into seven kingdoms all fighting for supremacy. The King of Qin is determined to unite the kingdoms and become the first emperor of them all. Of the King's many would-be assassins, only three inspire true fear: Sky, Broken Sword, and Flying Snow. Ten years after the king's edict for their elimination, a man called Nameless brings the weapons of the three assassins to the Qin King's palace, and claims he has defeated them. With Jet Li, Tony Leung, Maggie Cheung, Donnie Yen, and Zhang Ziyi.

Curriculum unit (19 pages):

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/publications/lessonplans/chinesefilm_summerinstitute/Hero_document.pdf

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srFhXDZhUZI>

HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS – 2004 (119 MINUTES)

http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/house_of_flying_daggers/

Set in the year is 859 AD, as China's once flourishing Tang Dynasty is in decline; unrest is raging throughout the land. The corrupt government is locked in battle with rebel armies that are forming in protest. The largest and most prestigious of these rebel groups is the House of Flying Daggers, which is growing ever more powerful under a mysterious new leader. Two local captains, Leo and Jin are ordered to capture the new leader and the two hatch an

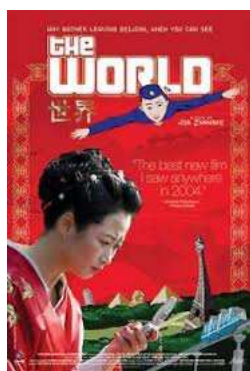
elaborate plan. Captain Jin will pretend to be a lone warrior called Wind and rescue the beautiful, blind revolutionary Mei from prison, earning her trust and escorting her to the secret headquarters of the House of Flying Daggers. The plan works, but to their surprise, Jin and Mei fall deeply in love on their long journey to the House. Danger lurks in the forest surrounding them, and the wind is still, as if sensing the tension in the air. What lies ahead for Jin and Mei, these star-crossed lovers? If this is true love, then why are there plots in their heads, and secrets in their hearts?

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLkedDMb8vI>



THE WORLD – 2004 (139 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_World_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_World_(film))



The World a film written and directed by Jia Zhangke which tells the story about the work and the life of several young people moving from the countryside to a world park. Starring Jia's muse, Zhao Tao as well as Cheng Taishen *The World* was filmed on and around an actual theme park located in Beijing, which recreates world landmarks at reduced scales for Chinese tourists. *The World* introduces new technologies like binoculars, coin-operated telescopes, digital cameras, mobile phones and digital services in the theme park as touristic tools to virtually travel around the world, emphasizing the globalization and convenience. It is a metaphor for Chinese society to experience the sense of mobility, but the knowledge is still limited domestically, and the environment of simulation

is seen as a sense of escaping from the real world. *The World* was Jia's first film to gain official approval from the Chinese government.

Clip and New Yorker Overview: <https://www.newyorker.com/video/watch/the-world>

CELL PHONE – 2003 (107 MINUTES)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cell_Phone_%28film%29

Yan Shouyi is a TV host who has an affair with Wu Yue (Fan Bingbing), a young and attractive woman working in publishing. Yan diligently erases all text messages and call records between him and Wu on his cellphone before he gets home every day, in order to avoid detection by his wife Yu Wenjuan (Lu Zhang). One night, after telling Yu that he has a work meeting with Fei Mo (Zhang Guoli), a TV producer and Yan's superior, Yan rendezvous with Wu and switches off his cellphone. Not being able to reach Yan a while later, Yu calls Fei, who has been in the know of Yan's affair.

Review: http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2004-04-18/news/0404180510_1_china-lurches-cell-phone-chinese-audience

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=we5m44sUmew>



BALZAC AND THE LITTLE CHINESE SEAMSTRESS – 2002 (111 MINUTES)

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/searchresults_detail.html?biblioId=6212

This 2003 Golden Globe nominee for Best Foreign Film is based on the experience of director and novelist Dai Si Jie, who spent four years in a re-education program instigated during Mao Zedong's "Cultural Revolution." Two teenage boys, Ma (Ye Liu) and Luo (Kun Chen), are sent to live on the remote mountain known as Phoenix in the Sky. The boys steal the

Your students may enjoy comparing the movie with the novel by the same name.

"subversive" novels of Honore de Balzac, Flaubert, Dostoevsky, and Gogol, and read them to the granddaughter of the local tailor (Xun Zhou). While reading, both boys fall in love with the girl, and, through Balzac, discover awakening desire, passion, impulsive action, love—all the subjects that had, until then, been hidden.



Study Guide for the book: <https://www.litcharts.com/lit/balzac-and-the-little-chinese-seamstress>

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuDb03Q_AQg



LIFE SHOW — 2002 (105 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_Show

Directed by Huo Jianqi *Life Show* follows a woman, Lai Shuangyang who operates a duck neck stall in night market in an unnamed city in central China (the film was shot in Chongqing). Though Shuangyang keeps her cool, her life is filled with complications. Her brother drug-addicted Jiujiu has been committed to a sanitarium. Her assistant, Mei, who has fallen in love with Jiujiu, attempts suicide. Her sister-in-law, Xiaojin, always leaves Shuangyang's nephew for Shuangyang to take care of. At the same time, Shuangyang is trying to regain her family's home, which was given to a neighbor during the Cultural Revolution. Perhaps worst of all, Shuangyang is at risk of losing her restaurant.

Into this morass, Shuangyang starts to notice one of her customers, Zhou Xiongzhou, a middle-aged businessman who has been frequenting her restaurant for a year. Despite concerns, she decides to take the risk with Xiongzhou and the two begin an unassuming romance.

Trailer: <https://www.tvguide.com/videos/life-show/2030123982/life-show/3570684/>

Stream entire film here: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x219006>



TOGETHER — 2002 (119 MINUTES)

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/searchresults_detail.html?biblioId=6153

Together is a coming-of-age tale woven together with the harmony and intensity of a complex musical orchestration. Xiaochun is a talented 13-year-old violinist who lives with his father in a small, provincial Chinese city. Shy and sensitive, music is his way of expressing his feelings. Xiaochun's sweet-natured father wants the best for him, so they move to immense, metropolitan Beijing so that Xiaochun can audition for a prestigious music school and take lessons that befit his talent. But Xiaochun's new world is unlike any he's known. He meets new and demanding teachers, discovers true friendship, falls in love for the first time, learns how painful love can be, and comes to understand the true meaning of music.

WHEN RUO MA WAS SEVENTEEN — 2002 (86 MINUTES)

http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/when_ruoma_was_seventeen/

When Ruo Ma Was Seventeen illustrates the perspectives and fantasies of youngsters towards love. Ruoma, a girl from Hani tribe, lives with her grandma since childhood. Fantasizing about the world outside, Ruoma wants to visit the city but has no money. In the meantime, she meets Ming, an amateurish photographer, who helps her to earn money by asking Ruoma to take photos with the tourists with her tribe dresses on. At last, their dream come true but Ming has to leave his hometown, however Ruoma's love to him make him so confused...

Without any acting experience, Li Min is nonetheless stunning and natural in her portrayal of Ruoma. Made independently from China's studio system, this film takes a subtle, yet compelling look at Xjani culture. An official Selection of 2004's Philadelphia Film Festival, *When Ruoma Was Seventeen* is a fresh coming-of-age story from director Zhang Jiarue that features an interesting subject, and nuanced performances.

Stream entire film here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2GgBmMFuEiI>

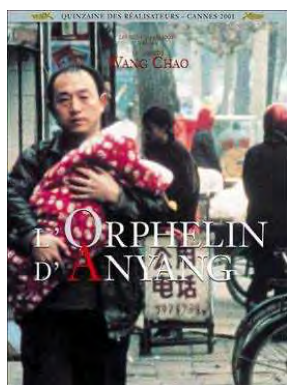
UNKNOWN PLEASURES – 2002 (113 MINUTES)

<https://letterboxd.com/film/unknown-pleasures/>

Directed by Jia Zhangke, three disaffected youths live in Datong in 2001, part of the new “Birth Control” generation. Fed on a steady diet of popular culture, both Western and Chinese, the characters of Unknown Pleasures represent a new breed in the People's Republic of China, one detached from reality through the screen of media and the internet.

Review: <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2003/jul/11/artsfeatures1>

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKj8liAHny4&feature=emb_logo



ORPHAN OF ANYANG – 2001 (84 MINUTES)

<https://www.filmaffinity.com/en/film389059.html>

A prostitute from the Northeast, desperate and unable to make ends meet, abandons her baby. An unemployed factory worker decides to take the child for the 200 yuan (about \$37 Canadian) a month in child support promised by its mother. His early attempts at child-rearing are somewhat painful to watch, but also charming and amusing.

Eventually, he and the mother become friendly and it seems that the child will be raised in a sweetly unorthodox family. However, when the woman's pimp, a local gangster, not only finds out that he may have fathered the child, but also that he is dying of cancer, he decides that he

must adopt the baby - and is willing to resort to violence if necessary.

It is Wang's first feature film as director (he had previously served as an assistant director to Chen Kaige), and is based on a novel written by the director.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3S3W2pOcvI>

SHADOW MAGIC – 2001 (116 MINUTES)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2001/04/06/movies/film-review-when-movies-fomented-a-cultural-revolution.html>

Shadow Magic is a 2000 historical fiction film about the introduction of motion pictures to China during the early 20th century. The film was directed and co-written by Ann Hu. It was a US-China co-production... Ann Hu's *Shadow Magic* imagines an intriguing, culturally fraught moment in the early history of cinema: the arrival in China in 1902 of the latest movie technology (that is, hand-cranked, black and white, soundless cameras and projectors.)

Raymond Wallace (Jared Harris), the Englishman who brings movies to Beijing, is hardly a Promethean figure, but rather a down-at-the-heels roustabout seeking to reverse his bad luck in a dusty corner of the city.

But the gizmos he carries with him and the images they produce are harbingers of profound change. The residents of Beijing intuit this; even before they understand what the machines can do, many of them perceive them as a threat not only to their traditional culture but also to

the structure of Chinese society. Before long one character remarks, "Men will cut their pigtails and omen will unbind their feet."

Not everyone, however, is alarmed at the prospect of change...

Review: <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/shadow-magic-2001>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EUsiNJ60zuw>



FISH AND ELEPHANT — 2001 (106 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fish_and_Elephant

Fish and Elephant (or *This Summer*) is documentary filmmaker and former TV hostess Li Yu's feature film directorial debut. The film is also often referred to as the first Chinese mainland film to broach the topic of lesbian relationships in China.

The story follows the elephant keeper in the Beijing Zoo who maintains an aquarium of fish in her home (hence the two-animal title), and her lesbian lover, a fabric saleswoman in an outdoor market. Her relationship is tested, however, when her recently divorced mother returns to town in the hope of setting her daughter up in marriage. Further complicating

matters is one of Xiaoqun's ex-lovers also returning to her life with the law in pursuit.

The film was produced by Cheng Yong Productions and was an "underground" production (in that it was not made with official support). Moreover, the film was cast entirely with non-professional actors and actresses

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wM9bxWpy82o&t=3s>

HAPPY TIMES — 2000 (102 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0303243/plotsummary?ref=tt_ov_pl

Zhao is an aging bachelor who hasn't been lucky in love. Thinking he has finally met the woman of his dreams, Zhao leads her to believe he is wealthy and agrees to a wedding far beyond his means. Zhao's best friend Li hatches the idea to raise the money by refurbishing an abandoned bus, which they will rent out by the hour--the Happy Times Hotel--to young couples starved for privacy. Unfortunately, this plan goes awry because Zhao is too old fashioned to allow the couples to leave the bus door closed. Meanwhile, Zhao's fiancée introduces him to her spoiled son and beautiful blind stepdaughter Wu Ying, whom she sees as a burden. To be rid of the girl, she insists that Zhao take her to the Happy Times Hotel and give her a job. Zhao reluctantly agrees, then creates a series of deceptions to keep the girl occupied, including setting her up as a masseuse and enlisting his friends to pretend to be her customers. Everything that is happening between Zhao and Wu is superficially about trickery, but gradually a very real empathy grows between the young woman and the old man.



Teacher Guide: <https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/ea/archives/using-zhang-yimous-happy-times-as-a-path-toward-cross-cultural-understanding/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbn08yxNb0Y>

I LOVE BEIJING – 2000 (100 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Love_Beijing

With each entry into Ning Ying's *Beijing Trilogy*, the focus has been on a different generation: the elderly in *For Fun*, the middle-aged in *On the Beat* and now the youth in *I Love Beijing*. The film follows the twenty-something taxi driver Desi and opens on his divorce proceedings. Finding himself alone, Desi becomes something of a Casanova, and is soon dating a waitress, then a librarian, then a radio talk show host. Each woman, however, lacks something he desires. It becomes clear that despite his serial monogamy, Desi is really a romantic, and wonders

when he will find the love of his life in the rapidly changing city he lives in.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpozpiKRfi8>

CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON – 2000 (120 MINUTES)

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/searchresults_detail.html?biblioId=4579

Based on *Wo Hu Zang Long* by Wang Dulu. Set in 19th-century China, two master warriors are faced with their greatest challenge when the treasured Green Destiny sword is stolen. A young aristocratic woman prepares for an arranged marriage, but soon reveals her superior fighting talents and her romantic past.

As each warrior battles for justice, they come face-to-face with their worst enemy, and the enduring power of love.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xPC1lEJ6Mg>

BEIJING BICYCLE – 2000 (113 MINUTES)

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/searchresults_detail.html?biblioId=6981

Beijing: young men in packs, machismo, class divisions, violence, and indifference. Guei arrives from the country: toothbrushes, hotel foyers, and Qin, a rich neighbor in high heels, dazzle him. He gets a job as a messenger. The company issues him a bike, which he must pay for out of his wages. When it is stolen, Guei hunts for it. A student, Jian, has it; for him, it's the key to teen society - with his pals and with Xiao, a girl he fancies. Guei finds the bike and stubbornly tries to reclaim it in the face of great odds. But for Jian to lose the bike would mean humiliation. The two young men - and the people around them - are swept up in the youths' desperation.

Curriculum unit (14 pages):

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/publications/lessonplans/chinesefilm_summerinstitute/Beijing%20Bicycle%20team%20version.pdf

Ning Ying's "Beijing Trilogy" include: *For Fun* (1992), *On the Beat* (1995), and *I Love Beijing*, (2000).

"I first set out to explore Beijing in 1992 with *For Fun*, a comedy about disappearing traditional ways of life. In 1995, with the black-humored *On the Beat* I focused on the emerging new reality and the difficulty of coping with it. In *I Love Beijing*, the magnitude of changes shaping our lives and the anxieties of the new generation are represented in a rhapsody form, through the eyes of a young, restless taxi driver."

<https://niemanreports.org/articles/woman-with-a-movie-camera/>

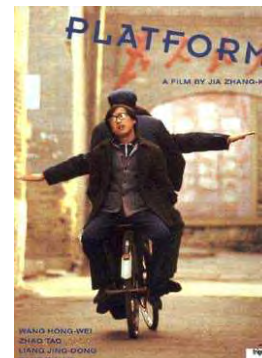


PLATFORM — 2000 (154 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platform_\(2000_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platform_(2000_film))

Platform is a 2000 Chinese film written and directed by Jia Zhangke. The film starts in 1979 in the wake of the Cultural Revolution. A theatre troupe of young adults in Fenyang performs state-approved material. The troupe includes Cui Minliang and his friends, Yin Ruijuan, Zhang Jun, and Zhong Ping. Zhang and Zhong are together. Cui asks Yin if she is his girlfriend, but she replies that she is not. The troupe leaves their hometown and travels throughout the country for several years during the 1980s. Yin stays behind in Fenyang and becomes a tax collector. The authorities find out about the illegal sexual relationship between Zhang and Zhong, and Zhong then leaves the group, never to return. As China undergoes massive social changes, the troupe alters their performances and starts to play rock music. They eventually return to Fenyang. Cui, jaded by his years on the road, reunites with Yin.

5-minute clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bnr56DZF-Yg>



NOT ONE LESS — 1999 (106 MINUTES)

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/searchresults_reviewavailable.html?biblioId=4156

Not One Less is a touching film that calls for some reflection in order to appreciate the nature and plight of a fair number of school children in China's countryside today. For Y50 (\$6 U.S.) thirteen-year-old Wei Minzhi is hired to keep thirty-odd kids in school for a month while the old village teacher takes leave to visit his ailing mother. Wei herself has just finished grade school and has no idea how to teach. All her thoughts are on getting paid, and when she suspects that she might not be, she chases after the village head and old teacher demanding payment. The two promise to pay her after thirty days, and if no more school kids drop out of school, Wei will get an extra ten-yuan bonus. It is this added 'bonus' sum that gives Wei focus. She will make sure that there will be "not one less." ... The cast comes from the towns and villages in Hebei, where the film was shot. Wei, the village head, the old school master, the head of the TV station, the obtuse gate guard in the city, and the village kids all more or less play the roles they have in real life. Zhang Yimou's ability to guide this assemblage in acting out this simple tale gives *Not One Less* an authenticity that is rare in cinema today.

This film will probably work best with a middle school audience. Younger school children may not be able to follow the story via the subtitles, while high school students might be looking for something with more action and romance. Middle school students would likely be fascinated by the differences they see, yet feel a link to Wei.



Curriculum ideas: <http://www.eagle.pitt.edu/node/282>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNsF9YWeoII>

THE ROAD HOME — 1999 (89 MINUTES)

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/searchresults_detail.html?biblioId=6217

Based on the novel *Remembrance* by Bao Shi. As a son helps his mother arrange for the burial of his father in the traditional Chinese custom of his mother's village, the beautiful and touching story of his parent's courtship unfolds. His father was from the city and came to his mother's village to become the schoolmaster. In the days of arranged marriages, the son discovers that his parents' marriage was the first marriage based on love.



SHOWER— 1999 (92 MINUTES)

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/searchresults_detail.html?biblioId=4540

Shenzhen businessman, Da Ming, goes home to Beijing when he thinks his father has died.



He finds his father hard at work at the family's bathhouse (the false message was a ruse of Da's mentally-handicapped, exuberant brother, Er Ming, to get Da home). Da stays a couple days, observing his father being social director, marriage counselor, and dispute mediator for his customers and a boon companion to Er. Da is caught between worlds: the decaying district of his childhood and the booming south where he now lives with a wife who's not met his family. When Da realizes his father's health is failing and the district is slated for razing, he must take stock of family and future.

See page 8 for full review:

<http://www.aems.uiuc.edu/downloads/Fall2002.pdf>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcwZfUMDB0w>

EAST PALACE, WEST PALACE — 1999 (90 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Palace,_West_Palace

East Palace, West Palace is a film directed by Zhang Yuan based on a short story by the cult writer Wand Xiaobo. The film was shot in the spring of 1996 when it was smuggled out of China for post-production in France.

In China, homosexuality isn't illegal, but homosexuals are routinely persecuted by police and arrested for "hooliganism". The film focuses on a young gay writer called A-Lan who, being attracted to a young policeman named Xiao Shi, manages to have himself arrested and interrogated for a whole night. His life-story which he tells during the interrogation reflects the general repression of the Chinese society. Xiao Shi's attitude shifts from the initial revulsion to fascination and, finally, to attraction.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXY3pb8sXnw>



LUNAR ECLIPSE — 1999 (95 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lunar_Eclipse_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lunar_Eclipse_(film))

Lunar Eclipse is the directorial debut from Sixth Generation director Wang Quan'an. It is also the feature film debut of Wang's most frequent collaborator/muse Yu Nan. Unlike his next two films, which focus on rural communities, *Lunar Eclipse* is an urban drama following the wife of a newlywed couple who becomes mesmerized by an amateur photographer who claims to have once been in love with a woman who looked just like her.

SEVENTEEN YEARS — 1999 (90 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seventeen_Years_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seventeen_Years_(film))

This 1999 film directed by Zhang Yuan takes place in and around the city of Tianjin, in northeastern China. Two divorced singles marry, each bringing a daughter into their new home. Xiaolan short haired is fiercely independent and wishes to work in a factory after she graduates from high school. Her stepsister, Xiaoqin is more intellectual, and wishes to enter a university. After a dispute over a mere 5 yuan that Xiaoqin accuses Xiaolan of stealing, Xiaolan hits her stepsister over the head. To the surprise of everyone, Xiaoqin succumbs to the injury and dies and Xiaolan is led to jail.

The film then cuts seventeen years into the future. Xiaolan has been selected as one of the lucky inmates allowed a furlough during the New Year holiday. At the same time, a young prison guard, Chen Jie is calling her mother to say that she will soon be returning home for the holiday. While waiting for the inmates to be picked up by their families, Chen Jie notices that soon only Xiaolan remains. In an act of charity, Chen Jie offers to help Xiaolan return home. Upon arriving at her old apartment, however, both women discover that the home has long since been torn down, and Xiaolan's parents moved to another part of the city. Chen Jie, however, is now determined that Xiaolan will spend the holiday with her family and the two set out in search of parents who may not want to see their only daughter...

Review: <http://www.vcinemashow.com/seventeen-years-china-1999/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1jIEGaULY4>

A BEAUTIFUL NEW WORLD – 1999 (97 MINUTES)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0191002/plotsummary?ref=tt_ov_pl

A satirical comedy about a country bumpkin who goes to the big city, and ends up teaching the cynical city folk a few lessons about basic human decency. The hero leaves home for the first time to go to Shanghai, to collect his lottery prize - a brand new apartment. However, when he arrives, he is told by the developers that his apartment block will take a year and a half to complete. He decides to find a job in Shanghai and wait for his apartment to materialise...



XIU XIU: THE SENT DOWN GIRL – 1998 (100 MINUTES)

https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/xiu_xiu_the_sent_down_girl

Xiu Xiu: The Sent Down Girl is a 1998 Chinese drama film directed by Joan Chen in her directorial debut, who co-wrote the screenplay with Geling Yan. Based on Yan's 1981 short story *Celestial Bath*, the film is set in the 1970s. During the Cultural Revolution in China, Mao Zedong's regime sends countless adolescents, including a bright young girl named Xiu Xiu (Lu Lu), to rural lands in order to participate in various kinds of physical labor. Xiu Xiu is torn away from her caring relatives and close friends to live and work with Lao Jin (Lopsang), a rancher. Though he treats Xiu

Xiu kindly, she yearns for her old life and eventually turns to a degrading life of prostitution in hopes of earning the means to return home.

Review: <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/film/050799xiu-film-review.html>

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/440812944>

Stream entire film here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=raFuAMhMKHo>

POSTMEN IN THE MOUNTAINS – 1998 (90 MINUTES)

<http://alibi.com/film/7522/Postmen-in-the-Mountains.html>

The story, at its heart, is one of understanding and reconciliation between father and son. The two characters, never mentioned by name, are played with extraordinary subtlety by Teng Rugan (*Red Sorghum*) and Liu Ye (*Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*). Dad, it seems, has spent most of his adult life away from his family, trudging through steep mountain passes and handing out mail to strangers. Sonny boy, although mindful of his father's sacrifice, can't help but feel a little resentment for the father he never got to know.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-5jtrc3vvo>

MULAN – 1998 (88 MINUTES)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120762/>

This retelling of the old Chinese folktale is about the story of a young Chinese maiden who learns that her weakened and lame father is to be called up into the army in order to fight the invading Huns. Knowing that he would never survive the rigours of war in his state, she decides to disguise herself and join in his place. Unknown to her, her ancestors are aware of this and to prevent it, they order a tiny, disgraced dragon, Mushu to join her in order to force her to abandon her plan. He agrees, but when he meets Mulan, he learns that she cannot be dissuaded and so decides to help her in the perilous times ahead.

Mulan is a girl, the only child of her honored family. When the Huns invade China, one man from every family is called to arms. Mulan's father, who has an old wound and cannot walk properly, decides to fight for his country and the honor of his family though it is clear that he will not survive an enemy encounter. Mulan, who just got rejected by the matchmaker because she had set her on fire, decides to prove that she is worth something and steals away to fit her father's place in the Chinese army. She prays to her family's ancestors for protection and luck before leaving as a man in her father's armor with her family's horse. The ancestors awake and decide to send Mushu, a little dishonored dragon to aid Mulan in her quest. Weeks later, Mulan and the other troopers have survived the training camp and are on the way north to stop the huns. After being spotted and pursued by the enemies, an impass situation in the mountains forces Mulan to come up with an idea. But then, her real gender will no longer be a secret. She decides to risk everything in order to save China. The Fa family's only child, tomboy Mulan, fails to fulfill a Chinese girl's traditional duty as desirable bride. When the empire mobilizes a man from every family to fight the invading Huns, Mulan fears her father, an honorable veteran, is no longer up to fighting and joins in his place, masquerading as fictitious son Fa Ping. The ancestors designate the mighty stone dragon as her magical protector, but only eager baby-dragon Mushu actually goes. When they reach the front, the Huns have already wiped out the regular army. Now the novice company must save China or perish honorably.

Teacher Guide: <https://teachwithmovies.org/mulan/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MsAniqGowKE>



KUNDUN – 1997 (134 MINUTES)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0119485/>

The Tibetans refer to the Dalai Lama as 'Kundun', which means 'The Presence'. He was forced to escape from his native home, Tibet, when communist China invaded and enforced an oppressive regime upon the peaceful nation of Tibet. The Dalai Lama escaped to India in 1959 and has been living in exile in Dharamsala ever since. In 1937, in a remote area of Tibet close to the Chinese border, a two-year-old child is identified as the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, the compassionate Buddha. Two years later, the child is brought to Lhasa where he is schooled as a monk and as head of state amidst the color and pageantry of Tibetan culture. The film follows him into adulthood: when he is 14, the Chinese invade Tibet and he is forced into a shaky coalition government; he travels to China to meet with a cynical Mao; and, finally, in 1959, ill and under siege, he flees to India.

Teacher Guide: <https://teachwithmovies.org/kundun/>



GOING TO SCHOOL WITH DAD ON MY BACK – 1997 (90 MINUTES)

<http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/going-to-school-with-dad-on-my-back/>

When insufficient funds force a widowed Chinese father to choose between sending either his son or his daughter to school, he sends his son, Shiwa, and keeps his daughter at home to work the fields. But after Shiwa places first in a national chemistry competition, he faces an equally tough choice between his studies and his family. The supporting cast includes Yan Danchen, Jiang Hualin and Qiang Zhao, with English narration by Eddie Eagle.

PICKPOCKET (XIAO WU) – 1997 (108 MINUTES)

<https://www.newyorker.com/goings-on-about-town/movies/pickpocket-xiao-wu>

From the modest yet precise opening sequence of this drama, from 1997, the Chinese director Jia Zhangke—in his first feature film—displays an incisive mastery of political symbolism. As the title character, Xiao Wu (Wang Hongwei), boards a bus and slips his fingers around a stranger's wallet, he observes a portrait of Mao dangling from the rearview mirror; minutes later, he hears a loudspeaker blare an official call for "self-denunciation." Crime, in Jia's view, starts at the top and spreads through Chinese society with a blankly ordinary enormity, at the price of nothing less than its citizens' souls. Xiao Wu's quietly arrogant marginality contrasts with the government-ratified success of his nouveau-riche brother, Xiao Yong, whose wedding makes the local news. In desperate solitude, the pickpocket pursues a relationship with a call girl (Hao Hongjian), who is practicing her own defiant deceptions. Jia's restrained yet fierce X-ray of the ills of modern China also evokes a calm, intimate compassion for its struggling survivors.



THE KING OF MASKS – 1996 (101 MINUTES)

For PDF full review see p. 6: <http://www.aems.uiuc.edu/downloads/Fall2002.pdf>

...The central narrative of the film is built around the resolution of the King of the Masks' need to find a male heir and his inability to find one. The problem arises because of the old man's strict adherence to tradition. The art of the *King of Masks* has been handed down for generations following two rules: First, that the art be taught to no one outside of the family, and second, that it be passed on to a male. Indeed, it is his strong desire to follow this tradition that leads him to purchase an heir from a slave-trader in the first place. It was his misfortune, we are at first led to believe, that he ended up purchasing a "worthless" girl. Yet, in the end, the girl proves to be not so worthless after all, saving the "King of the Masks" life through a desperate act of filiality. The beauty and devotion of this act allows the old man to see that tradition must yield to filiality...

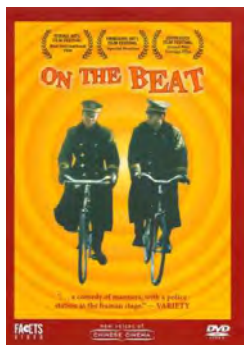
Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDwo1XKW0Fs>

BLUSH – 1996 (115 MINUTES)

<https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1996/06/07/000051.html?pageNumber=62>

Watching Li Shaohong's film *Blush*, it is easy to imagine how Hollywood might have schmaltzed up this story of a friendship between two women that survives in spite of overwhelming obstacles. A ready-made tear-jerker, with plot elements from *Gone With the Wind* and *Old Acquaintance*, *Blush* has almost everything you could ask for in a sudsy historical epic: a sweeping revolution, an anguished romantic triangle, prostitution, illegitimacy, a stay in a convent and a baby one woman doesn't want and the other adores.

But "Blush," ... wasn't made in Hollywood. This two-hour Chinese film, based on a novel by Su Tong (who wrote "Raise the Red Lantern") is a sober and surprisingly unsentimental exploration of the way two different women adapt to traumatic social upheaval...



ON THE BEAT – 1995 (105 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_the_Beat_\(1995_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_the_Beat_(1995_film))

On the Beat consists mainly of a series of vignettes involving members of a local precinct in the Beijing Public Security Bureau. Filmed in the slow months of December, January, and February^[1] the members of the PSB find they have little in the way of substantive police work. Instead, they spend time (and manpower) on small incidents like the chasing of a possibly rabid dog, the arrest of a small-time con artist, and the reprimanding of a man who sells posters of a woman in a bathing suit.

Though the incidents seem small, the PSB treats each with deadly seriousness, often to comedic effect. The film culminates in the arrest and intense interrogation of a man who may have insulted a police officer. Realizing that they have no evidence, the officers bluster as they attempt to avoid losing face.

Review: <http://mondo70.blogspot.com/2009/06/on-beat-1995.html>

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBKw-Ps2_d8

Stream entire film here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhkiDVqE76E>

A MONGOLIAN TALE – 1995 (103 MINUTES)

<https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1997/04/03/416258.html?pageNumber=58>

...With dreamy tranquility, *A Mongolian Tale* tells of two children raised in an idyllic paradise. It progresses from the time when a boy named Beiyinpalica and girl named Someyer are taken in by the kindly, grandmotherly Nai Nai (Miss Dalarsurong) to when these childhood sweethearts are separated by their adult destinies.

The film cares about these characters, but it cares even more about the beauty of their surroundings. As in comparably elemental African films, *A Mongolian Tale* uses refreshingly plain storytelling and an immensely dignified elderly character to convey respect for tradition and wariness of a changing world. The nurturing figure of Nai Nai conjures an evocative past, but the film's open, beautiful setting plays as significant a role as its people do. This haunting and exotic landscape is lovingly presented as a contrast to the modern ways that threaten future generations...

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMLSYVFlHo>



IN THE HEAT OF THE SUN – 1994 (140 MINUTES)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_the_Heat_of_the_Sun

In the Heat of the Sun is a 1994 Chinese film directed and written by Jian Wen. This was Jiang Wen's first foray into directing after years as a leading man. The film is based loosely on author Wang Shuo's novel *Wild Beast*.

The film is set in Beijing during the Cultural Revolution. It is told from the perspective of Ma Xiaojun, nicknamed Monkey (played by Xia Yu; some of Monkey's experiences mimic director Jiang's during the Revolution),^[1] who is a teenage boy at the time. Monkey and his friends

are free to roam the streets of Beijing day and night because the Cultural Revolution has caused their parents and most adults to be either busy or away and the school system is extremely nonfunctional.

Most of the story happens during one summer, so the main characters are even more free because there is no school. The events of that summer revolve around Monkey's dalliances with his roguish male friends, and his subsequent angst-filled crush on one of the older female characters, Mi Lan (Ning Jing). Mi Lan falls instead for Monkey's friend, Liu Yiku.

The film reflects Monkey, reminiscing as an older man, and his struggle with remembering his youth. Framed by his adult life in 1990s Beijing, portrayed in black and white, and presented in snippets of memory in color, the viewer is asked to question the accuracy of Monkey's memory and wrestle with the truth of the time.

Review: <https://supchina.com/2018/05/25/film-friday-in-the-heat-of-the-sun/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SeWN-SWLLbE>



ERMO – 1994 (107 MINUTES)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0109738/>

Women's roles and consumerism in a Chinese village. The independent Ermo supports her son and disabled husband, rising early to make noodles she sells as a street vendor. A snooty neighbor has a TV, so Ermo wants a huge one. The neighbor's husband, Blindman, offers her transport to sell baskets she's made. After he gets her a city job making restaurant noodles and more money, their relationship becomes an affair. She's also selling her blood. When she discovers Blindman is subsidizing her pay, she throws the money at him and quits the job; he covers their affair and her reputation by getting beaten up over a woman in the city. When she has enough for the TV, she's exhausted.



TO LIVE – 1994 (132 MINUTES)

<https://www.asian-studies.org/EAA/EAA-Archives/8/3/501.pdf>

Based on the novel by Yu Hua. In the 40's, in China, Fugui is a gambler. His wife Jiazhen cannot stand it any longer and leaves. He loses everything, and creates puppet shows to survive. Jiazhen comes back... Historical

chronicle of the China from the 40's to the 80's, through the story of the family of Fugui and Jiazhen. Also a study of how the History can randomly affects every day's life. *To Live*, a film directed by Zhang Yimou, provides an overview of key events in twentieth-century China, moving from the 1940s to the 1970s. American high school students will enjoy contemplating the effect of historical events on the intimate life of a single family. *To Live* opens the study of twentieth-century Chinese history in a creative and personal way. The film and this guide relate to the National Standards for World History in ways that include: rivalry between the Nationalist Party and the Chinese Communist Party in the context of political fragmentation, economic transformation, and Japanese and European imperialism; Chinese Communist Party, 1936-1949 and civil war, Maoism after 1949 and how it changed China, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution; population growth in China Analyzing the internal causes of Civil Strive in China; analyzing the goals and policies

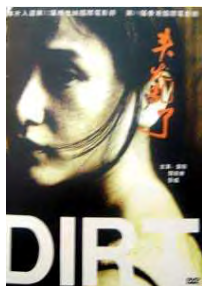
Encourage students to compare novel with film. Study guide: <https://www.supersummary.com/to-live/summary/>
Interview with Yu Hua, Author of *To Live* <https://www.asianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/ea-interview-with-yu-hua-author-of-to-live-huo-zhe.pdf>

of the Nationalist and Communists in China; evaluating the effect of the Communist takeover in China in 1949.

Teacher Guides:

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/downloads/To_Live.pdf

<https://teachwithmovies.org/to-live/>



DIRT – 1994 (124 MINUTES)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dirt_\(1994_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dirt_(1994_film))

The film follows a nurse, Ye Tong who also serves as the film's narrator. One day, Ye Tong reunites with some childhood friends, including Peng Wei, a disillusioned and long-haired young man who leads a local rock band. Ye finds herself attracted to Peng Wei's lifestyle, despite the admonitions of her police officer friend, Zheng Weidong. When Zheng is injured by a mutual friend, Ye finds herself increasingly attracted to the strait-laced Zheng, while also finding herself attracted to Peng.



THE BLUE KITE – 1993 (138 MINUTES)

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/searchresults_detail.html?biblioId=1636

Rated as one of the ten best films of 1994, this powerful film made 'without permission' from the government traces the fate of a Beijing family and their neighbors during the 1950's and 60's. The political and social upheavals of the era is told from the perspective of Tietou, a young boy, and shows the adverse effects of party policy on various members of his family. Tietou's kite represents the only image of hope and freedom. It is directed by Tian Zhuangzhuang.

Curriculum unit (19 pages):

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/publications/lessonplans/chinesefilm_summerinstitute/BlueKiteGroup1.pdf



FAREWELL MY CONCUBINE – 1993 (157 MINUTES)

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/searchresults_detail.html?biblioId=2603

This complex story of passion and political intrigue won the Best Film Award at Cannes and is an ambitious historical epic of China in the 20th century. It follows the enduring friendship between two opera stars in old Beijing. As they prosper, the political upheavals of war and revolution take their toll. When a young prostitute threatens their professional and personal union, it becomes just one of many trials which test the enduring strength of art and love that bind these two men.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cC-SLiRnJE>



BEIJING BASTARDS – 1993 (95 MINUTES)

<https://www.timeout.com/movies/beijing-bastards>

This is a film without precedent in Chinese cinema: a seemingly free-form portrait of rock-generation kids in the city, its own quest for a structure mirroring their search 'for something to help them live'. One broken relationship provides the overall frame (a young guy named Karzi searches for the pregnant girlfriend who has left him), but half a dozen other characters also clamour for the film's attention, chief among them Cui Jian,

China's rock pioneer, who plays himself and contributes several songs. Zhang Yuan has an acute feel for street-level realities, and gets very close to these kids blowing their lives on drink, dope and petty squabbles. Not exactly a blank generation, but they sure do look lost. SupChina Review: <https://supchina.com/2019/08/02/beijing-bastards-an-unsavory-portrait-of-90s-beijing-with-cui-jian/>

Stream entire movie here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=9&v=X2nYdij2Khc&feature=emb_logo

FOR FUN – 1992 (97 MINUTES)

<https://www.yimovi.com/en/movies/for-fun>

To fill the emptiness that recent retirement has thrust upon him, Old Han, a recently retired caretaker and backstage assistant at the Beijing Opera Academy, conceives of a new role for himself as the manager of a raggle-taggle troupe of elderly operatic amateurs whom he encounters in a Beijing park. Enthused with the possibility of turning them into serious contenders at the New Year competition, he negotiates for a place to rehearse. The rehearsals, however, become a battlefield between Old Han's authoritarian, rule-bound approach to direction and the more relaxed attitude of his fellow retirees, in particular, that of the troupe's lead performer and opera buff, Qiao Wanyou who plays the female roles. The ensuing conflict between Old Han's humourless and dictatorial manner, on the one hand, and the hysterical, affected behaviour of the effeminate drama queen, on the other, heighten the film's dramatic tension, as Old Han's imperious barrage of stage directions reaches apoplectic levels as the troupe compete in the local talent show.

Clips and more: <https://www.yimovi.com/en/movies/for-fun>



THE STORY OF QIUJU – 1992 (100 MINUTES)

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/searchresults_detail.html?biblioId=2531

The Story of Qiu Ju is a Chinese film directed by Zhang Yimou (*Ju Dou, Raise the Red Lantern*). Gong Li, who starred in the director's two previous movies, plays a stubborn and idealistic peasant woman who wants a wrong righted. She seeks redress from the Chinese bureaucracy after the village chief kicks her husband in the groin in this comedy of justice. As she is frustrated by each level of the hierarchy and travels farther and farther away from the countryside the viewer is also provided with a look at the changing Chinese society through the verite camera used in most scenes.

Education About Asia review:

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/searchresults_reviewavailable.html?biblioId=2531

Curriculum unit (30 pages):

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/publications/lessonplans/chinesefilm_summerinstitute/Qiu_Ju.pdf

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOS2f3iQ_T4





RAISE THE RED LANTERN – 1991 (125 MINUTES)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0101640/plotsummary>



China in the 1920's. After her father's death, nineteen-year-old Songlian is forced to marry Chen Zu oqian, the lord of a powerful family. Fifty-year-old Chen has already three wives, each tough, as their master's attention carries power, status and privilege. Each night Chen must decide with which wife to spend the night and a red lantern is lit in front of the house of his choice. And each wife schemes and plots to make sure it's hers. However, things get out of hand...

Review: <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/great-movie-raise-the-red-lantern-1990>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8kwb4qFrT4>



JU DOU – 1990 (95 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0099902/>

Ju Dou directed by Zhang Yimou and Yang Fengliang takes place in the early 20th century in rural China. A woman married to the brutal and infertile owner of a dye mill in rural China conceives a boy with her husband's nephew but is forced to raise her son as her husband's heir without revealing his parentage in this circular tragedy. This tale of romantic and familial love in the face of unbreakable tradition is more universal than its setting.

Review: <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/ju-dou-1991>

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5p_6plTrCM



RED SORGHUM – 1987 (95 MINUTES)

<https://supchina.com/2018/10/05/film-friday-fifth-generation-of-chinese-filmmakers/>

The narrative is related by a nameless man, telling the tragic story of his grandma Jiu'er and how she came to meet his grandpa.

As a young woman, Jiu'er's poor father forces her into an arranged marriage, exchanging his daughter for a donkey. Jiu'er's husband Li Datou is an old leper, but he's also the owner of a wine distillery. In a vivid opening scene, Jiu'er is carried off in a red sedan chair, held by a group of cheerful, singing men. After coming into a sorghum field, the party is ambushed by a masked bandit, and Jiu'er is nearly abducted before one of the chair bearers rescues her. The man who saves her turns into her lover, and when Li Datou inexplicably dies, Jiu'er inherits the distillery and all the problems that come along with it.

The story of *Red Sorghum* is evocative of an old family legend or folktale, with some of the most gorgeous images you'll ever see on a movie screen. It was not only an important work for Zhang Yimou, now the best-known Chinese director in the world, but it also helped launch the careers of its two leads, Gong Li and Jiang Wen.

Clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cmuh3Tgcp6U>

Stream entire film here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-E31v5HJsCI>



THE LAST EMPEROR – 1987 (163 MINUTES)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0093389/>

Bernardo Bertolucci's sweeping account of the life of Pu Yi (John Lone), the last emperor of China, follows the leader's tumultuous reign. After being captured by the Red Army as a war criminal in 1950, Pu Yi recalls his childhood from prison. He remembers his lavish youth in

the Forbidden City, where he was afforded every luxury but unfortunately sheltered from the outside world and complex political situation surrounding him. As revolution sweeps through China, the world Pu Yi knew is dramatically upended.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A4cH6glwD5g>

KING OF THE CHILDREN – 1987 (110 MINUTES)

<https://www.timeout.com/movies/king-of-the-children>

An unschooled young man, one of the countless victims of Mao's Cultural Revolution, is labouring in the countryside when he is suddenly assigned to teach in a near-by village school. Gradually, he finds the confidence to ditch the Maoist textbook and encourage the barely literate kids to write about their own lives and feelings. At the same time, through a series of dream-like meetings with a young cowherd, he begins to sense the possibilities of a life beyond the parameters of traditional education. There are echoes here of a film like *Padre Padrone*, but Chen Kaige's film is completely free of flabby humanist sentimentality. It takes its tonality from the harsh beauty of the Yunnan landscape of soaring forests and misty valleys: a territory of the mind where hard-edged realism blurs easily into hallucination. By Chinese standards, this is film-making brave to the point of being visionary. By any standards, this follow-up to *Yellow Earth* and *The Big Parade* is also something like a masterpiece.

Stream entire movie here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISMEuHCX8JQ>



A GIRL FROM HUNAN – 1986 (110 MINUTES)

<https://www.cinemas-asie.com/en/archives-en/item/3704-a-girl-from-hunan.html>

In 1910, in a village in Hunan, a wedding is being celebrated according to the tradition: twelve-year-old Xiao Xia is being married to two-year-old Chun Guan. The two children grow up as brother and sister. Xiao Xiao, who is now a young woman, falls in love with Hua Gou, a seasonal worker. Her husband is still a boy, she gives in to temptation. The very day she tells Hua Gou that she is pregnant, a young widow is drowned, and her lover beaten as per the burden of traditions. Hua Gou does not feel brave enough and decides to flee, abandoning Xiao Xiao. She is first rejected by her family but finally she is forgiven. She brings up her son who, according to the tradition, is married as soon as he is weaned. Later, when he is back from the city where he studied, he rebels and refuses his forced marriage.

Directed by Xei Fei and Lan U. *A Girl from Hunan* is an intimist film about a theme considered as taboo. Women have been overwhelmed under the weight of traditions and yet, they keep them alive... In that sense, it is a pessimistic film.

Review: <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/03/04/movies/film-girl-from-hunan.html>

Clip:

https://search.alexanderstreet.com/preview/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C2053508

THE HORSE THIEF – 1986 (88 MINUTES)

<https://supchina.com/2018/10/05/film-friday-fifth-generation-of-chinese-filmmakers/>

The Horse Thief is one of the most difficult — and fascinating — movies to come out of the Fifth Generation. Director Tian Zhuangzhuang has made several movies about China's ethnic

minorities, and *The Horse Thief* is an ethnographic study of the old Tibetan way of life, complete with Buddhist rituals and sky burials. There's barely any dialogue, and the cast is made up of non-professional actors, giving the movie a documentary-like feel.

Set in 1923, *The Horse Thief* is centered on Norbu, a Tibetan man who steals and sells horses to provide for his family. Everybody in Norbu's community knows about his stealing, and when he's finally confronted by his clan's elders, Norbu and his wife and son are exiled. Their lives in the harsh Tibetan mountains now get even harder, and Norbu's son soon falls sick and dies. After his wife gives birth again, Norbu is determined to change, but finds it difficult to feed his family living an honorable life.

Clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_dEk4iE_AA&t=18s

Stream the entire movie here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZSjjOQUtHY>

BLACK CANNON INCIDENT – 1985 (96 MINUTES)

<https://supchina.com/2018/10/05/film-friday-fifth-generation-of-chinese-filmmakers/>



This was the first satire to come out of China's movie industry since the late 1950s, skewering the absurdities and paranoia of the Chinese bureaucracy. It follows a man named Zhao Shuxin, who works as an engineer and German interpreter at a mining company. Shuxin is a loner obsessed with Chinese chess, carrying a set of pieces wherever he goes. After coming back from a business trip, Shuxin discovers that his black cannon piece is gone. Anxious, Shuxin rushes to the post office and sends a telegram, asking the hotel he stayed at to find it.

The innocent message is completely misinterpreted by the authorities, who believe the black cannon is a weapon. While the police secretly investigate the mysterious "Black Cannon Incident," Shuxin is replaced at his post without even knowing what he's done wrong. For a ridiculous misunderstanding, Shuxin and his company suffer a series of misfortunes that could easily have been avoided. It's a dark and dry comedy, and Huang would later continue the story with *Dislocation*, a sci-fi sequel in which Shuxin creates a robot clone to do his job for him.

Clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5-LQ-i9MRY>



YELLOW EARTH – 1984 (89 MINUTES)

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/searchresults_detail.html?biblioId=4574

Based on Ke Lan's *Echo in the Deep Valley*, Chen Kaige's *Yellow Earth* focuses on the story of a Communist soldier who is sent to the countryside to collect folk songs for the Communist Revolution. There he stays with a peasant family and learns that the happy songs he was sent to collect do not exist; the songs he finds are about hardship and suffering. He returns to the Army, but promises to come back for the young girl, Cuiqiao, who has been spellbound by his talk of the freedom women have under Communist rule and who wants to join the Communist Army.

According to Australian scholar Bonnie McDougall, the success of *Yellow Earth* "constituted altogether such an event in Chinese film history that the Chinese film world has never been the same since."

Book Excerpt:

<https://books.google.com/books?id=b5URtH1dWFkC&pg=PA17#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIhuNRtGHtQ>

ONE AND EIGHT – 1983

<https://supchina.com/2018/10/05/film-friday-fifth-generation-of-chinese-filmmakers/>

Set during the Second Sino-Japanese War, *One and Eight* is the story of nine men who are kept as prisoners by the Communist Eighth Route Army. One is an innocent soldier accused of being a traitor, and the others are a collection of criminals, including bandits, deserters, and a spy. With a group like this, none of these guys are anybody's idea of a patriot. When a battle erupts with Japanese forces though, the group's courage is challenged, forcing them to fight the enemy and redeem themselves.

THE TRUE STORY OF AH Q – 1981 (125 MINUTES)

<https://www.cinemas-asie.com/en/archives-en/item/3706-the-true-story-of-ah-q.html>

Ah Q is a unsuccessful man who yet tries to find happiness by turning his failure into positive events. He has the capacity to easily adapt himself and always finds a good reason to cheer up. Everyone despises him. The Zhao, a rich family in the village, forbid him to wear the same name as theirs, a Chinese man deprives him of revolution, a nun predicts he will die without descendant, and his master Wu Ma Bai dares slap him one day. Ah Q has never been with a woman, and when he tries to seduce the servant of the Zhao family, he painfully fails. When Revolution starts in 1911, the naive man thinks that life will radically change, that everyone will love him and that he will be able to do everything he wants. He rebels and is sent to jail. He is even exhibited. Before dying, he shouts " In twenty years, another hero will come! "

Ah Q is the universal candid man, remarkably incarnated by the actor Yan Shunkai. *The True Story of Ah Q* is the second faithful adaptation from Lu Xun's short story. It was selected in 1982 for the official competition in Cannes Festival.

CHINA FILM RESOURCES

JUSTWATCH (search where to stream a film!)

<https://www.justwatch.com/us>

CHINESE INDEPENDENT FILM ARCHIVE (CIFA)

<https://www.chinaindiefilm.org/films/>

DGENERATE FILMS

<https://www.dgeneratefilms.com/>

ASIAN EDUCATIONAL MEDIA SERVICE (AEMS) DATABASE

<http://www.aems.illinois.edu/>

CAMP ASIAN MOVIE PULSE

<https://asianmoviepulse.com/about-us/>

THE INTERNET MOVIE DATABASE (IMDb)

<https://www.imdb.com/>

CHINA-UNDERGROUND MOVIE DATABASE

<https://china-underground.com/wp/movies/til-madness-do-us-part/>

CHINA FILM INSIDER (CFI)

<http://chinafilm insider.com/category/news/>

DOCUMENTARY EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (DER)

<https://www.der.org/films/overview/>

KANOPY (search Chinese film/documentaries)

<https://spl.kanopy.com/>

NETFLIX (search Chinese film/documentaries)

<https://www.netflix.com/>

MODERN CHINESE LITERATURE AND CULTURE (MCLC RESOURCE CENTER)

<https://u.osu.edu/mclc/journal/>

LETTERBOXD: CHINESE INDEPENDENT DOCUMENTARIES ETC

<https://letterboxd.com/godspeed/list/chinese-independent-documentaries/>

<https://letterboxd.com/samcmac/list/the-8th-chinas-next-wave-directors/>

<https://letterboxd.com/squirt/list/sinophone-cinema/>

ICARUS FILMS

<http://icarusfilms.com/>

JAVA FILMS

https://javafilms.fr/?s=China&post_type=film&x=0&y=0

RADII

<https://radiichina.com/category/videos/>

ASSOCIATION FOR CHINESE ANIMATION STUDIES

<http://acas.ust.hk/>

SUPCHINA'S WEEKLY FILM REVIEWS

<https://supchina.com/tag/film-friday/>

EDUCATION ABOUT ASIA FILM REVIEWS

<https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/eaa/>

BOOKS

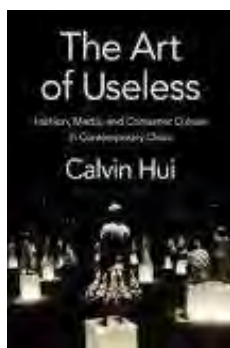
Published 2000 - 2021

The Authorship of Place: A Cultural Geography of the New Chinese Cinemas

Dennis Lo / 2021

Chinese Film Classics, 1922–1949

Christopher G. Rea / 2021



The Art of Useless: Fashion, Media, and Consumer Culture in Contemporary China

Calvin Hui / 2021

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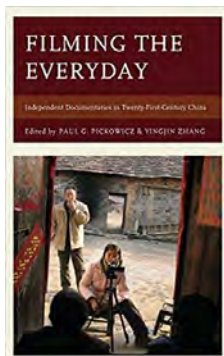
Animation in China: History, Aesthetics, Media by Sean Macdonald
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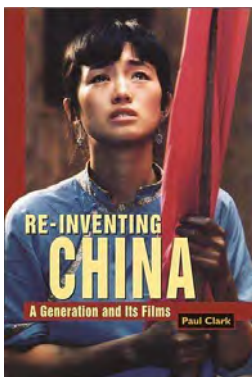
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