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The 2012 inaugural COB has been made possible with generous support from the following Program Sponsors

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The COB is grateful to the China Film Archive for its cooperation

Fu Hongxing  Director and President
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www.confucius.ucla.edu/cob
The first China Onscreen Biennial (COB) coincides with the 40th anniversary of President Nixon’s visit to China, a pivotal moment in US-China relations that opened doors and fostered communication between the two countries for the following decades. The State of California possesses a remarkably rich history of relations with China, present even in the infrastructure that survives today that Chinese American immigrants were vital in helping create at the turn of the 20th century. The UCLA Confucius Institute seeks to recognize and foster the historic connection between the United States and China through a wide variety of programs and outlets, from jump-starting Chinese language programs in Los Angeles K-12 schools, to supporting East-West integrative medical practices, to bringing together Los Angeles and overseas Chinese opera artists. We believe that there are many pathways to learning about China, and recognize the film medium, in particular, as an exceptional way for multinational audiences to immerse themselves in stories that are not necessarily their own. The COB is a refreshing, innovative way to engage Americans with what is currently happening in China through a variety of lenses, from artistic, perhaps esoteric, films to popular, crowd-driven blockbusters – all of which reflect the diversity inherent in the Chinese (and American) 21st-century experience.

UCLA is in a unique position to support the COB’s initiatives and ideals. Not only is UCLA a comprehensive research university, but also one recognized for its world-class arts programs and resources that include an extensive film archive second only to the US Library of Congress. UCLA’s identity as an urban campus located in Los Angeles, an international crossroads of culture, art, and commerce and home to the largest Chinese population in the United States, exerts its influence on the way we work. This year we proudly mark the Confucius Institute’s fifth year at UCLA with the launching of the China Onscreen Biennial. In collaboration with our distinguished presenting partners we hope to continue every two years this tradition of celebrating the deep-rooted connections between the people of the United States and the People’s Republic of China, while planting the seeds for honest exchange and cooperation that will flourish for years to come.

Susan Pertel Jain
Executive Director, UCLA Confucius Institute

2012 marks the 40th anniversary of the opening of bilateral relations between the US and China, and we are delighted at the synchronicity, even if coincidental, this year of launching a new showcase of Mainland Chinese cinema for American audiences in Los Angeles and Washington, DC.

We believe the China Onscreen Biennial (COB) is in scope and design the first of its kind. The event is unprecedented as a bicoastal partnership among eight distinguished non-profit American educational and cultural organizations to promote US-China dialogue through the art of film.

The curation of the COB has also been unique, a truly collaborative effort across institutions rather than the more centralized model of programming by a standalone entity, whether a film festival or cinemateque.

My programming partners — Bérénice Reynaud at Film at REDCAT, Ellen Harrington at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Shannon Kelley and Paul Malcolm at the UCLA Film & Television Archive, Tom Vick at the Freer and Sackler Galleries, and Jonathan Hall at Pomona College — and I have taken our cues from realities on the ground in China, rather than hew to longstanding taxonomies of Chinese cinema that have focused more narrowly on Chinese independents, documentaries or state-approved commercial films as discrete entities — an approach favored in the West since the 1980s.

We have tried to take into account the great flux and media convergence taking place on the Chinese film scene with richly diverse, genre-crossing programming. The result are COB selections encompassing short and feature-length animation, documentaries and narrative films, as well as works originated for different platforms — theatrical release, internet viewing and art installations. The selections not only look at the Chinese cinema present, but also its past. Some of the best examples of contemporary Chinese filmmaking, archival rarities and film restorations will be on view during the COB, many as North American and US premieres.

The COB is an initiative of the UCLA Confucius Institute and its Executive Director Susan Pertel Jain, and much appreciation goes to Susan, Professor Zhuang Lailai of Shanghai Jiao Tong University, the COB Project Manager Stefanie Adcock and Ma Xiaojie for seeing this project from idea to realization. An Advisory Board of UCLA faculty and international film professionals have also shared their considerable knowledge and expertise to shape this inaugural COB.

And beyond the US media drumbeat of China as simply one humongous economic growth machine, the COB offers a refreshing multiplicity of voices — sometimes in synch, sometimes discordant, but always vital and individual. But as no film cultural project is ever complete without an audience, we invite you to complete the COB.

Cheng-Sim Lim
Chief Curator, China Onscreen Biennial
ALL APOLOGIES

2012

CINEMATOGRAPHER
Lai Yiu-fai

PRODUCTION
Yang Jian, Chow Keung

SCREENWRITER
Han Jie, Emily Tang, Dong Keung

EDITOR
Chow Keung, William Kwok

COMPOSER
Yang Jian, Chow Keung

CAST
Alex Chung, Dear Elsa

DIRECTOR/CINEMATOGRAPHER/EDITOR
Li Hongqi

PRODUCER
Alex Chung, Dear Elsa

HDCAM, color, Mandarin with English subtitles, 87 min.

All Apologies is a subtle study of the subterranean way two couples are tragically connected through the death of a child. Yonggui and his wife, Yun Zhen, left the countryside years ago, and he’s now a hardworking construction foreman, an agent of the urban renewal policy that has been profoundly affecting the Chinese cityscape. Hotheaded Herman used to be Yonggui’s driver; now Herman and his wife, Qiaoyu, run a tiny grocery store. After the unbelievable happens, Yonggui is convinced that a life is “owed” to him, and that he is entitled to take what he wants or needs. Qiaoyu is no less convinced that it is her duty to “pay” for her husband’s mistake and misfortune. Emily Tang’s mise en scène eschews melodrama, and instead paints an impressionistic picture of the changing relationships between men and women in contemporary China, calling forth a wealth of details, gestures, off-screen gazes and intimate moments.

All Apologies was shot in and around the city of Guilin in Guangxi Province, the atmosphere and landscapes of which are rendered with documentary-like precision. On art direction, Tang collaborated with Hong Kong filmmaker William Kwok (author of the moody Darkness Bride, 2003), composing a palette of ochres, browns and greys, dusty streets, dirt roads, modest domestic spaces and dimly lit interiors. Through their own expressive qualities as well as the structure of the shots and the editing strategy, the decors are narratively as important as the ethical and affective dilemmas of the protagonists.

Bérénice Reynaud

Born in Sichuan province and raised in Beijing, Emily Tang (Tang Xiaobai) studied at Beijing University before joining the drama and directing program at the Chinese National Institute of Arts and the Central Academy of Drama. Her independent debut feature Conjugation (2001), an elegiac look at a generation lost in a historical void, world premiered at Locarno. Her second feature, Perfect Life (2009), which delves into the mirrored destinies of two women, received an award in Venice. All Apologies is showcased in the Main Competition at the San Sebastian International Film Festival. Tang lives in Beijing and Hong Kong.

After the critical acclaim of his fiction feature Winter Vacation (2010), filmmaker Li Hongqi shifted his focus to documentaries. Li hoped to shake up his methodology: “I am too controlling… So for now I want to extract myself from my way of thinking and do something that is the complete opposite.” Are We Really So Far from the Madhouse?, Li’s first work since shifting course, flirts with letting go even as Li throws down the gauntlet of rigorous formal experimentation. The results are by turns mesmerizing and unsettling.

Following China’s post-punk art rockers P.K. 14 (short for “Public Kingdom for Teens”) on their first national tour, Li lets his camera run, surrendering to the flow of life on the road, documenting the cycle of movement and stasis that shapes the band’s daily grind. In between energetic gigs at lo-fi venues, the group’s four members kill time in hotel rooms and over long stretches in their van, staving off boredom with an arsenal of distractions – books, iPods, PSP.

It’s standard concert film stuff that Li renders utterly alien – and absorbing – through shot duration, intercutting color with black-and-white and de-linking sound from image. While P.K. 14’s own grungy sonic swirls accompany footage of the band on the road, when they come to rest, a discordant mashup of guttural human noises and wild cat growls overlays the scenes. There’s no dialogue throughout – short of the band’s lyrics – and not even the performance footage is in sync. It is, to borrow a line from one of P.K. 14’s songs, a “mysterious chaos” that nevertheless seems to capture the restlessness of contemporary China.

Paul Malcolm

A poet and novelist before turning to film, Li Hongqi was born in Shandong Province and graduated from China Central Academy in 1999. His first feature So Much Rice (2005) won the NETPAC award at Locarno, and his second feature Routine Holiday (2008) was nominated for the FIPRESCI Award at the London Film Festival. His third feature Winter Vacation (2010) won the KNF award in Rotterdam in 2011, with the festival jury noting that in the film, Li transformed the daily routine of a small Mongolian town into something “astonishingly beautiful.” Madhouse is his first work of non-fiction.
BEIJING FLICKERS POP-UP EXHIBITION

《有种》流动展览

Opening reception starts at 4:00 pm on Saturday, October 20, followed by a conversation with filmmaker Zhang Yuan, a Chinatown artist and curator Lois Lambert at 5:30 pm.

In 2010, a photography commission from one of China’s foremost contemporary art venues, the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), prompted Zhang Yuan to tweet a casting call for Beijingers born after 1980. Almost two decades after Beijing Bastards (1993), his landmark Sixth Generation film about the artistic underground in 1990s China, Zhang was curious about the new generation of dreamers and strivers in Beijing. Of the 200-odd people who tweeted him back, among them “rock-and-roll musicians, artists, actors, stock scalpers, bodyguards, social workers, university students, the unemployed” (Zhang Yuan) – the filmmaker chose 10. The still and video portraits of the chosen 10 – a chiaroscuro of faces and bodies surrounded by irky darkness or the muted browns and greys of the Beijing winter when the photography took place – debuted in an exhibition at UCCA later that year. The stories the young people told of living in the margins of China’s mega-capital subsequently became the basis for Zhang Yuan’s new film, with a few of the storytellers now cast in it.

The COB is proud to present for the first time anywhere the audacious voices of the Sixth Generation/Urban Generation of Chinese filmmakers returns to his inspiration in the 1990s, and artfully mixes documentary and fiction to delve into youth subculture in a society changing at full blast. In the last 20 years, however, disparities between rich and poor have become even starker. And Zhang Yuan is no longer the skinny young man who didn’t have enough to eat. In Beijing, he makes a cameo appearance as a drunken “big brother” that a penniless young driver has to bring back home – one generation of misfits looking the other in the eye with gentle irony.

The film stems from interviews Zhang conducted with hundreds of 20-somethings when he was working on his photography exhibition, the sitters’ stories are the foundation of the screenplay. Dumped by his girlfriend for a rich man, San Bao descends into a self-destructive spiral and meets several other kindred souls: a narcissistic drug queen addicted to cosmetic surgery and poetry; a female singer kicked out by her band because the other musicians hope to win a record contract by hiring someone else; a girl jilted by her corporate boss/lover. In Beijing’s melting pot of social contradictions and hybrid cultural values, Zhang Yuan captures the vulnerability, but also the energy, the idealism and the romanticism of the new “lost generation” bypassed by China’s entry into the globalized market economy.

Born in Nanjing, Zhang Yuan received a BA in Cinematography from the Beijing Film Academy in 1989. Refusing his assignment to the August Film Studio, he directed Moma (1990), the first Chinese independent film since 1949, triggering what became known as the Sixth Generation. Zhang fused documentary and fiction in Beijing Bastards (1993) and Sons (1996), and directed the first Chinese gay film, East Palace West Palace (1997), which showed at Cannes. He started working in the official studio system with Seventeen Years (1999), and directed two films inspired by the “hooligan” writer Wang Shuo: I Love You (2002) and Little Red Flowers (2006).

BEIJING FLICKERS

With his 13th film Beijing Flickers, one of the most original and audacious voices of the Sixth Generation/Urban Generation of Chinese filmmakers returns to his inspiration in the 1990s, and artfully mixes documentary and fiction to delve into youth subculture in a society changing at full blast. In the last 20 years, however, disparities between rich and poor have become even starker. And Zhang Yuan is no longer the skinny young man who didn’t have enough to eat. In Beijing, he makes a cameo appearance as a drunken “big brother” that a penniless young driver has to bring back home – one generation of misfits looking the other in the eye with gentle irony.

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LA In person: Zhang Yuan, Li Xinyun

LA Premiere

BEIJING FLICKERS

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– Bérénice Reynaud
Peng Tao's remarkable feature achieves a soaring humanism and lyricism from out of darkness in its portrait of the lowly and the lonely. Peng's "cremator" is Cao, a man who makes an official living incinerating the dead, and a secondary one selling "ghost wives" to bereaved families seeking companions to be interred with their deceased, single sons -- a feudal tradition that still survives in some areas of China. Cao has become an effective matchmaker though he finds this clandestine work wearying and alienating. Single and unwell himself, he begins to form a plan for his own afterlife. His plot is upended, however, by the arrival of a young woman at the morgue, seeking her long-missing sister. Cao's succeeding journey with this young woman sets up the film's second half, in which his new companion battles her own mounting hardships, and gradually becomes embroiled in his, leading to a denouement of exceeding loveliness.

Peng’s understated direction guides the protagonists through a succession of solitary experiences as they quietly negotiate the moral thicket of their choices. An intricate sound design powerfully evokes their inner world. With a light touch, Peng sets up a contrast between elaborate ceremonies of death and bereavement and the private practice of human kindness, delicately suggesting that transcendent grace is sometimes best proven by its human expression.

– Shannon Kelley

Born in Beijing in 1974, Peng Tao graduated in 2004 from the Beijing Film Academy, where his short films received a number of awards. In 2006, he made a film about the Cultural Revolution called Red Snow. His breakthrough came with Little Moth (2007), a neorealist drama about a young girl bought by professional beggars. The film premiered in Locarno, was shown widely, and had a commercial release in France. His most recent feature, West of the Tracks (2009), was supported by the Sundance Institute Feature Film Program and the Hubert Bals Fund, and screened in Rotterdam.

Beginning in the late 1950s, thousands of Chinese citizens deemed right-wing dissidents were sent to forced labor camps to be "re-educated." Filmed in secret in the Gobi Desert, and based on interviews with survivors as well as Yang Xianhui's book, Goodbye, Jiabangou, The Ditch is a harrowing depiction of life at the Jiabiangou Camp, where some 3,000 intellectuals were sent for years of backbreaking labor in the desert's relentlessly harsh environment. In his first dramatic feature, director Wang Bing vividly recreates the brutal conditions at the camp, where prisoners labor at the very edge of human endurance. The prisoners seem resigned to death, until a woman appears, searching for her husband, and inspires some of them to plot an escape.

With its emphasis on sensory details from the incessant, blinding desert sun to the slurping of the thin gruel on which its characters subsist, The Ditch is an intensely visceral experience, and a look at a period of Chinese history still rarely discussed today. Blending documentary and drama, Wang, best-known for the epic documentary West of the Tracks (2003), employs his eye for detail and meticulous research to create a visually and emotionally intense narrative, providing a perfect companion piece to his 2007 documentary portrait of a survivor of the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Cultural Revolution, Fengming: A Chinese Memoir.

– Tom Vick

Born in Xi’an in 1967, Wang Bing studied photography at the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Art and cinematography at the Beijing Film Academy. In the late 1990s, he lived with a community of factory workers in an industrial complex that was being dismantled, and completed the monumental, nine-hour West of the Tracks (2003). Afterwards, he collected hundreds of video interviews with survivors of the Anti-Rightist Campaign, including a female journalist who became the subject of Fengming, A Chinese Memoir (2007). The same research was used for The Ditch (2010), his first narrative film. He continues to make documentaries about industrial workers (Coal, 2008; Coal Money, 2008) and peasants (The Man With No Name, 2009; Three Sisters, 2012).
**DOUBLE XPOSURE**

二次曝光

2012

**Director**
Li Yu

**Producer** Fang Li, Screenwriter Li Yu, Fang Li, Cinematographer Florian J.E. Zinke, Production Designer Liu Weimin, Editor Li Yu, Yuan Ze, Sound Du Du-chih, Composer Howie B.

**Cast** Fan Bingbing, Feng Shao Feng, Huo Siyan, Joan Chen, Yao Anlian.

Since debuting with her first narrative feature Fish and Elephant in 2001, director Li Yu has gone from rough-and-ready documentary realism with non-professional actors to working with some of the biggest Chinese stars. While the production values in each of her films have scaled successively upwards – Double Xposure, her fifth feature may be the most visually ambitious yet, with underwater and helicopter shots and CGI figuring into its geographically sprawling canvas – some of the constants in her earlier work have happily remained. There is her abiding interest in exploring the complexities of female psychology and penchant for testing both filmic and film industry boundaries. Fish and Elephant broached the taboo subject of lesbians; her last film Buddha Mountain blazed the trail for independent distribution in China, becoming the first “art film” hit in an environment notoriously inhospitable to independent distribution.

Double Xposure overtly brings together both tendencies in Li Yu’s filmmaking career. This stylish and briskly paced psychological thriller (the subgenre already making the film somewhat of a novelty in the Chinese context) plumbs thriller staples of dualities and doubling in its geographically sprawling canvas – some of the constants in her earlier work have happily remained. There is her abiding interest in exploring the complexities of female psychology and penchant for testing both filmic and film industry boundaries. Fish and Elephant broached the taboo subject of lesbians; her last film Buddha Mountain blazed the trail for independent distribution in China, becoming the first “art film” hit in an environment notoriously inhospitable to independent distribution.

**Composer** Weixin.

**Cinematographer** Florian J.E. Zinke.

**Sound** Du Du-chih.

**Production Designer** Liu Weimin.

**Director**
Li Yu

**Cast** Fan Bingbing, Feng Shao Feng, Huo Siyan, Joan Chen, Yao Anlian.

35mm, color, Mandarin with English subtitles, 105 min.

**Screening preceded by Shanghai Strangers** *(p.17)*

This program has been made possible with the generous support of East West Bank.

Wuhan wife and mother Li Baoli seems poised for a secure and happy family life. She has a steady gig as a shopkeeper’s helper, her husband Wu Xuewei has been newly promoted to a middle-management position at his factory, and the family is about to move to a new, high-rise apartment. And yet happiness strangely eludes Baoli’s grasp, a fact viewed with grave concern by her family and friends. Citing deprivation in her early life, and clearly driven by unseen demons, she relentlessly harasses and belittles Xuewei, calling him weak and inadequate even in front of their son, to whom she shows little maternally love or attention. When Xuewei predictably warms to the tenderness of a female colleague and Baoli senses the truth, she contrives a revenge that leads to disaster in the workplace, her marriage and her family.

Baoli’s fortunes are changed again, triggering a second act in which the consequences of her actions continue to unfold, and denial and delusion serve as buttresses from the pain of it all.

Director Wang Jing renders this family story with shrewdness and compassion, creating characters with specific complexes, but implicitly locating the seeds of trouble in powerful crosscurrents of class and gender – aptly analogized by the intersection of multiple busy streets at the family’s new home. At the center of this chaotic convergence is Li Baoli, a woman perpetually clouded by the intersection of multiple busy streets at the family’s new home. At the center of this chaotic convergence is Li Baoli, a woman perpetually clouded by the intersection of multiple busy streets at the family’s new home. At the center of this chaotic convergence is Li Baoli, a woman perpetually clouded by the intersection of multiple busy streets at the family’s new home. At the center of this chaotic convergence is Li Baoli, a woman perpetually clouded by the intersection of multiple busy streets at the family’s new home. At the center of this chaotic convergence is Li Baoli, a woman perpetually clouded by the intersection of multiple busy streets at the family’s new home. At the center of this chaotic convergence is Li Baoli, a woman perpetually clouded by the intersection of multiple busy streets at the family’s new home.

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Coming from a TV and documentary background, Li Yu tasked the film world by surprise with Fish and Elephant (2001), the first Chinese independent feature about the lives of lesbians that was shown in Venice and about 50 other international festivals. Her subsequent films – Dam Street (2003), Lost in Beijing (2007), in which she starts a long-term collaboration with actress Fan Bingbing, and Buddha Mountain (2010) which stars, in addition to Fan, Taiwanese pop cultural legend Sylvia Chiang – all explore the plights, troubles and pleasures of women in a changing society.

**Director**
Wang Jing

**Based on a novel** by Fang Li, Cinematographer Liu Younian, Production Designer Bai Hao, Editor Feng Wen, Sound Wang Changrui, Composer Yang Sili, Cast Yan Bingyan, Jiao Gang, Chen Gang.

HDCAM, color, Mandarin with English subtitles, 120 min.

**SCREENING PRECEDED BY SHANGHAI STRANGERS** *(p.17)*

**Director**
Wang Jing

**Screenwriter** Wu Nan

**Composer** Weixin.

**Cinematographer** Florian J.E. Zinke.

**Production Designer** Liu Weimin.

**Editor** Li Yu, Yuan Ze.

**Screenwriter** Wu Nan.

Based on a novel by Fang Li, Cinematographer Liu Younian, Production Designer Bai Hao, Editor Feng Wen, Sound Wang Changrui, Composer Yang Sili, Cast Yan Bingyan, Jiao Gang, Chen Gang.

HDCAM, color, Mandarin with English subtitles, 120 min.

A former documentary filmmaker, Wang Jing has been noted for expertly framing human stories within larger, contemporary social examinations in feature films such as The End of Year (2008), Invisible Killer (2009) and Vegetate (2010), though his work is as yet little known in the West. His most recent film is Guo Mingyi (2011). He is an associate professor in the Beijing Film Academy’s Cinematography Department.

**Director**
Wang Jing

**Based on a novel** by Fang Li, Cinematographer Liu Younian, Production Designer Bai Hao, Editor Feng Wen, Sound Wang Changrui, Composer Yang Sili, Cast Yan Bingyan, Jiao Gang, Chen Gang.

HDCAM, color, Mandarin with English subtitles, 120 min.

**Composer** Weixin.

**Cinematographer** Florian J.E. Zinke.

**Production Designer** Liu Weimin.

**Editor** Li Yu, Yuan Ze.

Since debuting with her first narrative feature Fish and Elephant in 2001, director Li Yu has gone from rough-and-ready documentary realism with non-professional actors to working with some of the biggest Chinese stars. While the production values in each of her films have scaled successively upwards – Double Xposure, her fifth feature may be the most visually ambitious yet, with underwater and helicopter shots and CGI figuring into its geographically sprawling canvas – some of the constants in her earlier work have happily remained. There is her abiding interest in exploring the complexities of female psychology and penchant for testing both filmic and film industry boundaries. Fish and Elephant broached the taboo subject of lesbians; her last film Buddha Mountain blazed the trail for independent distribution in China, becoming the first “art film” hit in an environment notoriously inhospitable to independent distribution.

Double Xposure overtly brings together both tendencies in Li Yu’s filmmaking career. This stylish and briskly paced psychological thriller (the subgenre already making the film somewhat of a novelty in the Chinese context) plumbs thriller staples of dualities and doubling in dazzling permutations (past indistinguishable from present, reality entangled with illusion, guilt and terror shadowing feelings of love) to a clincher of an ending. Joan Chen in a supporting role impresses, as does Chinese superstar Fan Bingbing, playing a young urbanite whose façade of certainties and comforts – boyfriend, apartment and car – violently dizzying permutations (past indistinguishable from present, reality entangled with illusion, guilt and terror shadowing feelings of love) to a clincher of an ending. Joan Chen in a supporting role impresses, as does Chinese superstar Fan Bingbing, playing a young urbanite whose façade of certainties and comforts – boyfriend, apartment and car – violently...
One morning a young man, Shen Wei (Shawn Yue, famous for his roles in Hong Kong director Pang Ho-cheung’s recent comic diptych, Love in a Buff and Love in the Buff), and a young woman, Tong Xin (Zhang Jingchu whose breakout role was in Gu Changwei’s Peacock), wake up in each other’s arms in the “Bed and Bath” section of a deserted high-end Beijing department store – without any idea of how they got there. They had drunk a lot the night before (their amnesia is severe enough to suggest that different substances may have been ingested), and they spend the rest of the movie struggling to figure out what happened – retracing their steps, trying to find where the car was parked and where the bag containing the money was stowed, having to bring a very unusual “pet” to the Nativity set of a Chinese film called O Mary Jane, and having flashbacks at inopportune moments.

Produced by the maverick Pang, who recently relocated to Beijing, Lacuna is a sophisticated, charmingly madcap rom-com that explores the way young people inhabit the rapidly changing urban space of Beijing. As Shen Wei is a Hong Kong executive, and Tong Xin a Mainlander, the film becomes a metaphor for the relationship between Hong Kong and China – that involves sleeping in the same bed, but also experiencing flashbacks at inopportune moments.

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Director Derek Tsang Jimmy Wan

HDCAM, color, Mandarin with English subtitles, 96 min.
Screening preceded by Shanghai Strangers (p.17).
In person: Derek Tsang.

One of the most famous characters in Chinese mythology, Sun Wukong, a mischievous monkey with supernatural powers, made his first appearance in the 16th century in Wu Cheng’en’s epic, Buddhist-themed novel Journey to the West. Sun Wukong, a.k.a. the Monkey King, has been the subject of numerous big-screen adaptations, perhaps none more beloved than Wan Laiming and Tang Cheng’s 1960s’ gloriously animated feature, Uproar in Heaven. A landmark of Chinese animation, Wan and Tang’s masterpiece returns to theaters after a painstaking, frame-by-frame restoration (though the 2012 version is shortened from the original two-part), and a dazzling 3D makeover led by co-directors Su Da and Chen Zhihong, and experts at Los-Angeles-based Technicolor.

A trickster figure who delights in tweaking authority, Monkey King leaves chaos in his wake wherever he goes, from the Dragon King’s palace at the bottom of the Eastern Sea to the heavenly halls of the Celestial Emperor himself. When the Emperor tries to put the devilish upstart in his place, Monkey King declares himself the “Equal of Heaven” and rallies his monkey followers to Flower Fruit Mountain in a full-scale revolt against the gods.

Wan and Tang bring the film’s dreamy, ethereal worlds to life with flowing, intricately detailed animation composed of 130,000 hand-drawn ink illustrations. Respectfully rendered in 3D, the Monkey King’s adventures take on a wonderfully immersive quality that heightens the film’s enchanting spell. With a lush soundtrack inspired by Beijing Opera, the whole experience is a spectacle of mythic proportions.

– Paul Malcolm

Su Da was born in Nanyang. She studied media management and trained in animation at the Beijing Film Academy. One of the creators behind the popular Chinese television series Dear Tutu, she ranks among China’s most successful animators working today.

Born in Gauchun, Jiangsu Province in 1970, Chen Zhihong planned to study painting, but by happenstance he joined an animation class at the Beijing Film Academy instead. He has been working as a director for the Shanghai Animation Film Studio since 1999.

Wan Laiming (1900-1997) and his three brothers pioneered animation in China. The Wan Brothers made China’s first animated short Uproar in the Art Studio in 1926, China’s first sound animation The Camel’s Dance in 1933, and China’s first animated feature Princess Iron Fan in 1947. Wan Laiming joined the Shanghai Animation Film Studio in the 1950s, and remained active as an animator until the Cultural Revolution.

Tang Cheng (1919-1986) was born in Anhui Province, grew up in Shanghai and trained as a painter, whereupon she joined the animation department at the Shanghai Film Company. She is best-known for co-directing Little Tadpoles Look for Their Mother (1960) with Te Wei, and the second part of the animation classic Uproar in Heaven (1961-64) with Wan Laiming. She was a member of the National People’s Congress.

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Loosely inspired by the Qing Dynasty writer Pu Songling’s Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio (c. 1679-1707) that has spawned countless cinematic adaptations and television series, Wuershan’s Painted Skin is a visually sumptuous, shamelessly romantic take on the paranormal question: Can humans and demons fall in love with each other? Produced by Taiwanese critic-director Chen Kuo-fu for the Huayi Brothers (one of China’s biggest studios), the film smashed box-office records this summer to become the highest-grossing Chinese domestic release of all time.

Five hundred years ago, the fox spirit Xiaowei (Zhou Xun of Suzhou River fame) was imprisoned under a frozen lake as a punishment for having saved a man. Bird spirit Qu’er (Mini Yang) breaks Xiaowei free with her beak, and the two beautiful women venture forth into a world where Xiaowei must devour men’s hearts to survive. Attacked by bandits on the road, Xiaowei is saved by a masked warrior, who turns out to be a woman in drag: Princess Jing (Vicky Zhao). Jing has been disfigured by a bear, and dares not confront her love for the young general Huo Xin (Chen Kun) while betrothed to a barbarian prince she has never met. Xiaowei attaches herself to the service of the princess, and the two women become tantalizingly close. If they exchange identities, Jing could be beautiful again, and Xiaowei could become a woman. Meanwhile, Qu’er has met a self-styled “demon hunter” (William Feng), and outside the fortress gates, the barbarians are clamoring to become a woman. Meanwhile, Qu’er has met a self-styled “demon hunter” (William Feng), and outside the fortress gates, the barbarians are clamoring to become a woman. Meanwhile, Qu’er has met a self-styled “demon hunter” (William Feng), and outside the fortress gates, the barbarians are clamoring to become a woman.

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— Bérénice Reynaud

Wuershan was born in 1972 in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia. He studied painting at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, then attended the directing program at the Beijing Film Academy. An award-winning director of commercials, he completed a number of short experimental films before making the critically acclaimed independent feature Soap Opera (2004). His next feature, The Butcher, the Chef and the Swordsman (2010), garnered international attention. Painted Skin: The Resurrection is Wuershan’s third feature.

Zou Peng’s dazzling second feature witnesses life at a boisterous sauna/brothel in the Southern Chinese manufacturing heartland of Guangdong. Fount of China’s market-oriented economic reform, Guangdong is shown here as a setting of extreme contrasts between socioeconomic classes. The film’s rapt focus on the residents of one brothel points up the dizzying and surreal effects of these contrasts, as older and younger women rehearse the erotic arts, in the interest of creating the region’s leading pleasure palace for high-reaching “special guests.”

Escriving easy moralistic conclusions about the politics of power, the film instead portrays a social ecology built around the unabashed pursuit and uses of money; indeed, the house in which the characters live. Their daily experiences, arranged in a cyclic rather than linear “order,” become a self-contained moral and experiential universe comprised of endless contradictions and ambiguities. Exploitation and even violence are among the dynamics at work, but also family feelings, illustrated in celebrations and exchanges of affection between the workers and the middle-management figures, all of whom, together, pursue their goals of excellence. A distant outer world is also sketched, through glimpses of the past working-class drudgery of one woman, and the dreams of another to become a popular singer. The fantastical factory that they have entered becomes a vortex of ironies, prompting both scopophilic pleasure and an uncanny catalog of the effects of China’s economic divides.

— Shannon Kelley

Born in 1971 in Harbin, and a student of painting as a child, Zou Peng pursued a career in the fashion world, developing his own line of clothing over a ten-year period. He left this trajectory to study filmmaking at the Beijing Film Academy in 2005, and in 2009 his first feature film A North Chinese Girl screened at Berlin. It later went on to win the FIPRESCI Prize at the Hong Kong International Film Festival. Sauna on Moon screened at the International Critics’ Week at Cannes and is Zou’s second feature film.
Master documentarist Wang Bing turns his observational gaze to the most invisible and disenfranchised among the Chinese population: poor peasants eking a meager living in the remote, rural areas. In a small village perched nearly 10,000 feet up in the Yunnan highlands, three little sisters — Yingying (ten years old), Zhenzhen (six years old) and Fenfen (four years old) — are left to fend for themselves. They are vaguely taken care of by an auntie who does not have enough food for her own family. Their mother is gone, their father works in a small city reachable only after a long walk and a rickety bus ride.

Day in and day out, the little girls collect peat to make fire, tend sheep, wash their own clothes at a water pump and perform all sorts of chores. Zhenzhen and Fenfen’s hair is cropped short because they are infested with lice, their feet bleed when they wear plastic boots without socks, and Yingying always wears the same hoodie, with the words “Lovely Diary” emblazoned in the back. In spite of their hard life and constant toil, the little girls are playful, happy as children can be, and very affectionate towards each other. Gradually, the film refocuses on the oldest sister, Yingying, who has been shoulderling most of the responsibilities. As it’s no longer possible for the girls to depend on the auntie’s generosity, their father comes home to take the two younger sisters with him to the city, creating major changes and a huge void in Yingying’s life.

– Bérénice Reynaud

Born in Xi’an in 1967, Wang Bing studied photography at the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Art and cinematography at the Beijing Film Academy. In the late 1990s, he lived with a community of factory workers in an industrial complex that was being dismantled, and completed the monumental, nine-hour West of the Tracks (2003). Afterwards, he collected hundreds of video interviews with survivors of the Anti-Rightist Campaign, including a female journalist who became the subject of Fengming, A Chinese Memoir (2007). The same research was used for The Ditch (2010), his first narrative film. He continues to make documentaries about industrial workers (Grude Oi, 2008; Coal Money, 2008) and peasants (The Man With No Name, 2009; Three Sisters, 2012).
HDCAM, color, 13 min.

Composer
Sun Xun

Director/Producer/Screenwriter
Sun Xun

Editor
Xu Chong, Sun Jin Shan.

Screens with Beijing Flickers (p. 7) and The Cremator (p. 8).

"I only ask questions," says animator Sun Xun. "It's up to the viewer to think about what he has seen. And to come up with his own answers." Animated using woodblock prints created by Sun, Some Actions uses pulsating, hallucinatory imagery to evoke a Kafkaesque atmosphere of grotesquery and vague ideological constructions. It may be tempting to view Some Actions as a metaphor for contemporary China, but its surreal images and permuting metamorphoses draw from a universal well of anxiety: the subconscious.

– Tom Vick

Born in 1980 in Fuzan, China, Sun Xun graduated from the China Academy of Fine Arts with a printmaking degree in 2005. He has had solo exhibitions at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, the Drawing Center in New York and Kunsthall Basel in Basel, among others. In 2006 he established 11 Animation Studio in order to expand his practice to the moving image. His animated films have been invited to dozens of film festivals around the world. In 2010 he won the Best Young Artist Award at the Chinese Contemporary Art Awards. He has and works in Beijing.

BOYS, GIRLS, QUEER DESIRES AND FANTASTIC TOPOGRAPHIES: THE CHINESE QUEER FILM
PIONEER CUI ZI’EN RETURNS TO HIS NARRATIVE AND LYRICAL ROOTS IN LAST DAYS. CUI WEAVES A SURREAL TALE FROM THE MATERIALITY OF LOW-BUDGET FILMMAKING, NEVER FORGETTING FILM’S ABILITY TO VISUALIZE DESIRE IN WAYS BOTH ALLURING AND PROVOCATIVE. LI JIAN’S LYRICAL CAMERA PROVIDES STRONG SUPPORT FOR CUI’S ALLEGORIES OF LOVE, LUST AND TRANSFORMATION. DESIRE HERE IS A MEANDERING MOVEMENT BETWEEN PERSON, BODY AND GENDER, AND IT ALSO COALESCES INTO BONDING AND COMMUNITY.

– Jonathan Hall

Sun, Xun

FILM AS CULTURE | CULTURE IN FILM
作为文化的电影与电影中的文化

LA Saturday, October 27, 2:00–3:30 pm
UCLA FTV ARCHIVE

This panel discussion will address the interactive relationship between the film industry and Chinese culture, with a focus on how films are regarded as an integrated part in both the official ideology and popular culture, how the changing landscape of local culture and society is reflected in the media, and how Chinese consumers are actively engaged in both receiving and redefining films and the film industry alike. This thought-provoking conversation will broach the implications of Chinese politics, consumerism and the global influence reflected through films in a country that has quickly become one of the most powerful economies in the world.

Panelists to be announced.
Presented by the UCLA Anderson Center for Global Management, UCLA Center for Chinese Studies and UCLA Film & Television Archive

FREE ADMISSION

2012 CHINA ONSCREEN BIENNIAL
2012 QUEER CHINA ONSCREEN
**LITTLE TADPOLES LOOK FOR THEIR MOTHER**

**小蝌蚪找妈妈 1960**


HDCAM, color, Mandarin with English subtitles, 10 min.

Little Tadpoles is the first of the “ink wash” masterpieces by Te Wei, the only Chinese animator ever to have been recognized with a lifetime achievement award by ASIFA. The film, co-directed with the female animator Táng Chéng, is exemplary of Te Wei’s poetic and painterly style, harking to nature and the artist Qi Baishi.

**THE COWHERD’S FLUTE**

**牧笛 1963**


HDCAM, color, 20 min.

From the imaginative use of negative space to the haunting lilt of the flute, Te Wei – in his second “ink wash” film, and aided by Qiànjùànn – transforms the simple story of a cowherd who loses then finds his water buffalos into a magnificent evocation of classical Chinese aesthetics.

**THREE MONKS**

**三个和尚 1980**


HDCAM, color, 20 min.

Often considered the greatest of the animators of the second Golden Age of Chinese animation (late 1970s-80s), A Da brings a playful, stripped down modernism to his telling of a parable about three monks being too many at a temple. With its wordless humor, simple lines and bright, flat planes of color, this Berlin award-winner remains an enduring Chinese audience favorite.

– Cheng-Sim Lim

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**PIGSY EATS WATERMELON**

**猪八戒吃瓜 1958**


HDCAM, color, Mandarin with English subtitles, 20 min.

This brilliantly colored paper-cut animation by one of the pioneering Wan brothers typifies the turn towards indigenous artistic expression of China’s first Golden Age of animation pre-Cultural Revolution. The characters of Pigsy, Monkey, Sha Seng and plaus Táng Sèng are drawn from a favorite subject of the Wāns, Journey to the West.
The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-76) is often remembered now as a dark period of politics and violence in China. But it also saw the creation of spectacular works of art known as yangbanxi (revolutionary model dramas). Drawing upon traditional Chinese opera, Chinese novels and films of the 1950s and 1960s, Western symphonic music, and even ballet, the yangbanxi defined the culture of the Cultural Revolution. One of the most iconic of these hybrids, The Red Detachment of Women itself appeared in many forms from film to opera to posters and picture books. In the last dozen years, The Red Detachment of Women along with other yangbanxi have been revived numerous times as stage performances and television series.

Based upon the real tale of a 1930s women’s militia in exotic Hainan Island off the south coast of Mainland China, The Red Detachment of Women follows the heroine Wu Qinghua as she escapes enslavement by the evil landlord Nan Batian and emerges as the leader of the women’s militia – guided and inspired all the while by the dashing Communist Party secretary Hong Changqing.

We are very pleased to present the 1970 ballet film version of The Red Detachment of Women, courtesy of the China Film Archive, for the first officially approved screening of the film in the US in two decades. The presentation also marks the 40th anniversary of President Nixon’s visit to China, during which he watched the live stage production of The Red Detachment of Women.

— Robert Chi

LA Post-screening panel discussion moderated by UCLA professor Robert Chi, with Beijing opera master and former yangbanxi performer Qi Shufang, theater director and UCLA professor Peter Sellars, and UCLA professor and Director of the UCLA Center for Chinese Studies Yan Yunxiang.

DC Post-screening panel discussion with scholars and artists to be announced.

LA Friday, October 19, 7:30 pm UCLA FTV ARCHIVE
DC Sunday, November 11, 2:00 pm FREER