

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

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MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE PRESENTS 'TALES FROM THE NEW CHINESE CINEMA' WITH FOCUS ON EIGHT EMERGING FILMMAKERS

April 29–May 1, 2011

In recent years, independent Chinese cinema has experienced an astonishing resurgence. Digital equipment has allowed filmmakers to be bolder, more daring, and to explore hybrid forms of documentary and fiction, and mix found and live footage while playing with varied formal strategies. Reaching beyond nostalgia and social protest, emerging filmmakers are plumbing surprising corners of Chinese reality with humor that is alternately light, dark, saucy, dry, raunchy, and conceptual.

Museum of the Moving Image will present a weekend-long series, *Tales from the New Chinese Cinema*, from April 29 through May 1, comprised of six feature films and two short works that showcase some of the most exciting and important filmmakers to emerge in recent years. The series was curated by Bérénice Reynaud (Co-Curator, Film at REDCAT) and Cheng-Sim Lim.

The films in the series are notable for their sharp contemporary sensibilities and their bold formal inventiveness. Among the emerging directors to be featured during the series are: Zhu Wen, a novelist turned filmmaker whose film *Thomas Mao* charts the culture clash between an American painter and a Chinese “hillbilly”; Li Wongqi, whose deadpan slacker comedy *Winter Vacation* has been a hit on the international film festival circuit; Liu Jiayin, whose stunning and audacious feature film *Oxhide II* was filmed in just nine long takes in her parents’ cramped apartment; Hao Jie, director of the bawdy rural sex comedy *Single Man*; Huang Weikai, director of the dazzling city symphony *Disorder*; and Lu Chuan, whose powerful *City of Life and Death* is a breathtaking dramatization of the Japanese army’s occupation of the former Chinese capital, a violent period known as the Rape of Nanking.

Tales from the New Chinese Cinema is presented in collaboration with REDCAT (The Roy and Edna Disney / CalArts Theater), Los Angeles Filmforum, Echo Park Film Center, Pomona College Museum of Art / Media Studies, and UCLA Film & Television Archive.

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(Images and screeners are available.)

SCHEDULE FOR 'TALES FROM THE NEW CHINESE CINEMA,' APRIL 29–MAY 1, 2011

All screenings take place at Museum of the Moving Image (36-01 35 Avenue, Astoria, NY) and are included with Museum admission.

Thomas Mao (Xiao Dongxi)

Friday, April 29, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 1, 5:00 p.m.

Dir. Zhu Wen, 2010, 80 mins. Digital projection. One of the most original voices of post-socialist China, novelist/filmmaker Zhu Wen has crafted, for his third feature, a droll, surreal and ironic tale in which East meets West... or does it? Thomas is a painter trekking through the grasslands of Inner Mongolia, and Mao, the scruffy "innkeeper" who lodges him. Gradually, what appears to be "reality" shifts. Who is the butterfly, who is the philosopher? "An intellectually teasing absurdist comedy with a touch of Zen, Thomas Mao ostensibly dramatizes the culture shock between a Chinese hillbilly and an American backpacker but goes beyond that to smudge the boundaries between art and life, dream and reality." — *Hollywood Reporter*

Zhu Wen (born 1967) became one of the figureheads of the "newly-born generation" literary movement with his first novella, *I Love Dollars* (1996). After his collaboration with Zhang Ming (*In Expectation*, 1995) and Zhang Yuan (*Seventeen Years*, 1999), he turned to directing with *Seafood* (2001), the first Chinese narrative digital feature (Grand Jury Prize in Venice). His second film, *South of the Clouds* (2003), won the NETPAC Award in Berlin.

Preceded by: ***21G (21 KE)***

Dir. Sun Xun, 2010, 27 mins. Digital projection. A disturbing and enchanted voyage through what the filmmaker describes as "world without specific time... in which we live in vanity... There is no law, no rule... lying and being lied to only..."

After studying printmaking at the Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou, Sun Xun (born 1980) founded the animation studio Pi in 2006. His meticulous animations have been shown in festivals in China, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Italy, and media art centers in the US. His drawings and installations have been exhibited in galleries and museums in China, Europe and the U.S. *21G* premiered at the Venice Film Festival.

Oxhide II (Niupi II)

Saturday, April 30, 2:00 p.m.

Dir. Liu Jiayin, 2009, 133 mins. Digital projection. *World premiere at the Cannes Film Festival.* In 2004, at 23, Liu Jiayin stunned the world by shooting *Oxhide (Niupi)* in CinemaScope in her parents' 50-square-meter apartment. She returns with an even bolder "sequel." More tightly constructed—nine shots that go around a kitchen/workshop/dining table in 45-degree increments, performing a complete 180-degree match—*Oxhide II* is also dryly humorous, intelligent, and insightful, deconstructing the dynamics of a family in crisis. David Bordwell called the film "a masterpiece... inventive, quietly virtuosic," while Peter Rist (*Offscreen*) described Liu as "arguably the most interesting new Chinese director to emerge since Jia Zhangke."

Liu Jiayin (born in 1981) studied screenwriting at the Beijing Film Academy from 1999 to 2006,

and is now part of the faculty of her alma mater. While getting her M.A., she wrote, directed, shot, and edited her first film, *Oxhide* (2004) which revealed her as one of the most original directors of her generation and won a flurry of international awards (FIPRESCI Prize and Caligari Award in Berlin).

Disorder (Xian Zai Shi Guo Qu De Wei Lai)

Saturday, April 30, 5:00 p.m.

Dir. Huang Weikai, 2009, 58 mins. Digital projection. A splendid, original experiment in translating urban texture onto the screen. Huang Weikai collected more than 1,000 hours of footage shot by amateurs and journalists in the streets of Guangzhou. He then selected about twenty incidents, reworked the images into quasi-surreal grainy black-and-white, and montaged them to create a kaleidoscopic view of the great southern metropolis, in all its vibrant chaos. "Aesthetically mesmerizing," wrote *The Leap*, a leading contemporary art magazine in China.

After graduating from the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, Huang Weikai (born 1972), directed his first short film, *Laden's Body Could Be Nothing But a Copy* in 2002. He shot a number of independent documentaries and was involved in Ou Ning's and Cao Fei's multi-media *Dazhalan Project* (2005-2006). In 2005, he directed his first feature documentary, *Floating*.

Preceded by ***Condolences (Wei Wen)***

Dir. Ying Liang, 2009, 20 mins. Digital projection. Unfolding through a brilliantly composed one-shot sequence, this award winning film (Rotterdam Tiger Award for Best New Short) reconstructs the cruel aftermath of a highly mediatized bus accident.

Ying Liang (born 1977), graduated from the Department of Directing of Chongqing Film Academy. His first feature, *Taking Father Home* (2005) was invited to more than 30 international film festivals and received numerous awards. Subsequent films include *The Other Half*, which won the Special Jury Prize at Tokyo Filmex, and *Good Cats* (2008).

Single Man (Guangyun)

Saturday, April 30, 7:00 p.m.

Dir. Hao Jie, 2010, 95 mins. Digital projection. *Special Jury Prize (KODAK Vision Award), Tokyo Filmex*. "This is a strange and delightful thing from China: a sex comedy, bawdy and a little raunchy, about four elderly farmers... all non-professional actors playing fictionalized versions of themselves. New director Hao Jie, with a bit of Boccaccio and a dollop of Rabelais, reveals a side of rural China you've probably never seen before... Chinese indie cinema at its most wryly entertaining."—Vancouver International Film Festival

"The deceptively unsophisticated *Single Man* is hilarious and appalling by turns, but it always feels true."—*Variety*

Born in 1981 in the same village of Gujiagou where he shot *Single Man* with his neighbors and relatives, Hao Jie is a graduate from the Directing Department of Beijing Film Academy.

Preview Screening:

City of Life and Death (Nanjing! Nanjing!)

Sunday, May 1, 2:00 p.m.

Dir. Lu Chuan, 2009, 132 mins. 35 mm print courtesy of Kino International. "In 1937, the Japanese Army occupied the former Chinese capital and instituted a horribly violent period that has become known as the Rape of Nanking. This is the first big-budget Chinese film to dramatize this seminal event in their modern history. Shot in black-and-white, with a gripping visual style that effortlessly glides between the intimate and the spectacular, director Lu Chuan crafts a multicharacter drama that, for the most part, refuses to caricature the Japanese as monsters."—Seattle International Film Festival. *City of Life and Death* opens at Film Forum on May 11.

Lu Chuan (born 1971) graduated with a Master's in directing from the prestigious Beijing Film Academy before going on to make his first film *The Missing Gun* which premiered at Sundance. His second film, *Kekexili*, became the first mainland Chinese film to win the Best Picture prize at Taiwan's Golden Horse Awards.

Winter Vacation (Han Jia)

Sunday, May 1, 7:15 p.m.

Dir. Li Hongqi, 2010, 91 mins. Digital projection. *Winner, Golden Leopard, Locarno International Film Festival.* Slackers in Inner Mongolia meet the poetry of the absurd. In a dreary little northern town, kids have nothing to do... while the adults are wily or apathetic. For his third feature, poet/filmmaker Li Hongqi effortlessly leads the viewer through a series of breathtaking tableaux in which tension accumulates and then releases in unexpected, and often wickedly funny, ways.

"This guy is something of a Chinese Jarmusch, who, instead of US punk youth, films Communist teenagehood."—*Libération*

"An absurdist sense of humor, that reminds us of Beckett, or, in cinema, of Aki Kaurismaki's icy laughter."—*Le Monde*

After graduating from the painting department of Beijing's China Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), Li Hongqi (born 1976) became involved with the Nanjing-based group of "Tamen" poets. He published a poetry anthology, *Cure* and a novel, *Lucky Bastard* (2004) before directing *So Much Rice* (2005, NETPAC Award in Locarno) and *Routine Holiday* (2008).

Press contact for interviews, screeners, film stills:

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MUSEUM INFORMATION

Hours: Tuesday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, 10:30 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, 10:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. **Holiday Openings: Monday, April 18, and Monday, April 25 (Spring Recess for NYC public schools), 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** (Closed on Monday except for holiday openings).

Film Screenings: See schedule above for schedule.

Museum Admission: \$10.00 for adults; \$7.50 for persons over 65 and for students with ID; \$5.00 for children ages 3-18. Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free. Admission to the galleries is free on Fridays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. Paid admission includes film screenings (except for special ticketed events and Friday evenings) Tickets for special screenings and events may be purchased in advance online at movingimage.us or by phone at 718.777.6800.

Location: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street) in Astoria.

Subway: R or M trains (R on weekends) to Steinway Street. N or Q trains to 36 Avenue.

Program Information: Telephone: 718.777.6888; Website: <http://movingimage.us>

The Museum is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and its operations are made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation). The Museum also receives generous support from numerous corporations, foundations, and individuals. For more information, please visit <http://movingimage.us>