



BUSAN
International Film Festival

international
documentary film festival
amsterdam



idfa

CHINESE PORTRAIT

我的镜头 (*Wode Jingtou*)



A FILM BY WANG XIAOSHUAI

Hong Kong | 2018 | Color | Creative Documentary | 79 min

DCP | 24 fps | 16:9 | DOLBY 5.1

INTERNATIONAL SALES: ASIAN SHADOWS

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SYNOPSIS

What if you were a passer-by in the Beijing streets, a peasant hoping for the rain to fall, a steelworker in disappearing factories, a tourist on a packed beach, praying in Ningxia or Qinghai, a construction worker after an earthquake, a fisherman repairing his fishnet, or a dancer waiting to get on stage? A personal contemporary portrait of a country, a population and a society by Wang Xiaoshuai.

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

The land I live in has been undergoing tremendous changes within the last decades. These changes took place in my parents' generation and the generation before them, but also during my time, as I witnessed them when entering adulthood.

The idea of making this documentary is derived from my contemplations of life beyond the realm of feature films. One of the duties that art bear - be it painting, documentary, or photography - is to record; and many of the art works have kept their focus on the changes of our society. People and landscape that are preserved on film, represent the reality of time so vividly that they deeply fascinate us. As we follow them, we also walk through time and History, as the glamour of the bygone era generated from images is beyond words. Image is without doubt the most effective form to all history. The faces and the land will be our windows to the reality of the China today and yesterday.

CHINESE PORTRAIT brings together the style of documentary, painting and photography, with a mixture of moving and still images. As plays within the movements inside the frame: the characters stand still, looking at us, while wind blowing in the trees, birds or machines moving by their side, as if it was a time lapse or a moving painting.

The objects being recorded interrogate us with their very presence. We may not get any precise answers, but I hope they can bring the audience to dream by these scenes and people, so that we may reflect and connect with our own fate. When we meet with the coalminers, we ask, who are they? What are their names? Where are they from? What made them become who they are today?



I know that my camera won't record the historical reality, but my narration and the images provide a contrast to the vicissitudes.

We focus on today's rural towns, including traditional villages that have disappeared and new communities that are rising. The historical changes of the farmers, the dilapidation of the factories, the urbanization of the nomads, as well as the formation of ghost towns due to over-development, all these stories will combine into a portrait and chronicle of the rapidly changing China, which turns into a moment frozen in a photographic style.

I feel that no matter where I go, in addition to taking photo cameras, including our film cameras, we should do our best to record and reflect on the current changes in this society as much as possible. But if we try to make this in the direction of a feature film, then there are many limits. When facing an ever-changing China, it becomes meaningful to record the portraits of the Chinese.

Therefore, the Chinese title is "My Lens", it equates to the director holding the camera, and the camera replacing the director's eyes, to look and document China's societal and current status.

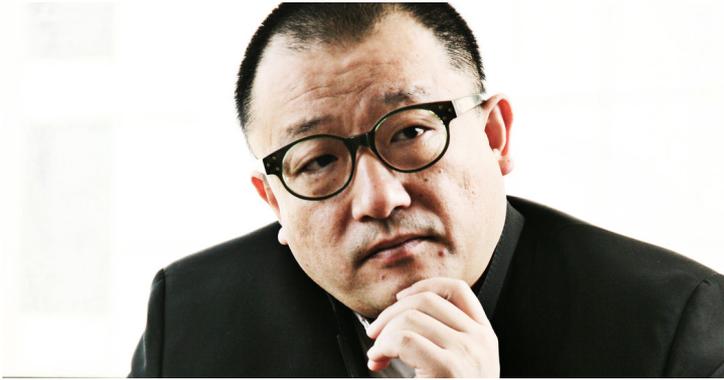
In the latter part of the shooting, film disappeared and we moved onto the digital age. I wanted to put in a collage the age of the digital with the age of the film, to allow the audience to feel this change.

There is no sequence in the shots within the film, it doesn't require a fixed order. It doesn't matter if you separate these images and display them in an exhibition hall, or edit them into a film of 70 minutes, it doesn't affect the relationship. we invited a French editor and through her eyes, without the context of a storyline, to piece together these shots and groups of images, she becomes a part of the audience, she steps into the viewing hall from one image to the other, and through it forms an accidental yet organic combination. Actually if we used another editor, his or her way of editing and the order will also be affected. It becomes a different audience.

I think it is never too late. As time goes by, when we stand in the future and look back, I want to see my camera trying to present - as much as it could - my land.



DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY



After graduating from the Beijing Film Academy, Wang Xiaoshuai wrote and directed his first feature *THE DAYS* (*Dongchunde rizi / 冬春的日子*, 1993) when he was 27. Acclaimed at first, the film was soon after blacklisted, and its distribution was banned in China. The film depicted the last days of a deteriorating relationship between two artists in Beijing.

Two years later, he directed *FROZEN* (*Jidu hanleng / 极度寒冷*, 1995) under the pseudonym Wu Ming (*Without a name*). The film was selected at many international festivals and was awarded Special Mention by the jury in Rotterdam in 1995. The film offers a look at the Beijing avant-garde world, where a young artist organized a set of performances culminating in his own suicide as the final act.

The same year, he directed *A VIETNAMESE GIRL* (*Biandan guniang / 扁担·姑娘*) for the Beijing Film Studio. The film was refused by the censorship committee, and it took 3 years of re-editing and a new title (*SO CLOSE TO PARADISE*) to finally get approval for a (limited) screening in China. *SO CLOSE TO PARADISE* tells the story of two rural migrants, a naïve young boy and a small-time con man, trying to make ends meet living in the city of Wuhan, and falling in love with a female bar singer they abducted.

In 1998, it was selected for *Un Certain Regard* at Cannes Film Festival. His fifth feature, *BEIJING BICYCLE* (*Shiqisuide danche / 十七岁的单车*) won the Grand Jury Silver Bear Award at the 2001 Berlin International Film Festival, and the two leading male actors received the Best Young Actor Prize. The film had a great international career.

In 2003, *DRIFTERS* (*Erdi/二弟*) was screened at *Un Certain Regard* at Cannes Film Festival.



In 2005, his following film, SHANGHAI DREAMS (Qinghong/青红), was selected for competition for the 2005 Cannes Film Festival where it won the Jury Prize.

In 2008, IN LOVE WE TRUST (Zuoyou/左右) won the Silver Bear for the best screenplay in Berlin. In 2010, CHONGQING BLUES (Rizhao Chongqing/日照重庆) was selected in competition at Cannes Film Festival. The film received the Chinese Director Association Award for Best Director. His following film, 11 FLOWERS (Wo 11/我11), was the first Sino-French official coproduction. The film was presented at Toronto International Film Festival and in Competition at San Sebastian Film Festival.

RED AMNESIA (Chuangru zhe/闯入者) opened in Competition in Venice in September 2014.

CHINESE PORTRAIT (Wo de Jingtou/我的镜头) is Wang Xiaoshuai's 11th feature film. After its premiere at Busan Film Festival in 2018, the documentary was screened in different festivals including IDFA, Taipei Golden Horse, MoMA, etc.

In 2019, SO LONG, MY SON(Dijiu tianchang/地久天长) premiered in Competition at the 69th Berlinale and won Silver Bears for best actor and actress respectively.



DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

SO LONG, MY SON (Dijiu tianchang/ 地久天长)

2019, feature

- Berlinale Film Festival, Competition

CHINESE PORTRAIT (Wode jingtou / 我的镜头)

2018, documentary

- Busan Film Festival, Wide Angle

- IDFA 2018, Master Section

- MoMA 2019, Doc Fortnight

RED AMNESIA (Chuangru zhe / 闯入者)

2014, feature

- Venice Film Festival, Competition

- Toronto Film Festival, Special Presentation

- Busan Film Festival, A Window on Asian Cinema

11 FLOWERS (Wo 11/ 我11)

2011, feature

- Toronto Film Festival

- San Sebastian Film Festival, Competition

- Busan Film Festival

CHONGQING BLUES (Rizhao Chongqing / 日照重庆)

2010, feature

- Cannes Film Festival, Competition

- Chinese Director Association, Best Director Award

IN LOVE WE TRUST (Zuoyou / 左右)

2008, feature

- Berlinale, Silver Bear for Best Screenplay

SHANGHAI DREAMS (Qinghong / 青红)

2005, feature

- Cannes Film Festival, Jury Prize

DRIFTERS (Erdi/二弟)

2003, feature

- Cannes Film Festival, Un Certain Regard



BEIJING BYCICLE (Shiqisuide danche/十七岁的单车)

2001, feature

- Berlinale, Grand Jury Silver Bear Award and Best Young Actor Prize

SO CLOSE TO PARADISE / A VIETNAMESE GIRL (Biandan guniang/扁担·姑娘)

1995, feature

- Cannes Film Festival, Un Certain Regard

FROZEN (Jidu hanleng/极度寒冷)

1995, under the pseudonym Wu Ming, feature

- Rotterdam Film Festival, Jury Special Mention

THE DAYS (Dongchunde rizi/冬春的日子)

1993, feature



C R E D I T S

Director	WANG Xiaoshuai
DOP	WU Di
	ZENG Jian
	ZENG Hui
	PIAO Xinghai
Editing	Valérie LOISELEUX
Art Director	LV Dong
Sound Design	Valérie LOISELEUX
Sound Mixing	Mikaël BARRE
Producers	Isabelle GLACHANT
	LIU Xuan
in Association with	LIANG Ying
Executive Producer	QIAN Yini
Production	Front Films Co LTD
	Chinese Shadows
With Support from	Vision Sud Est
International Sales	Asian Shadows

