

FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

Mon Nov 30 | 8:00 PM |

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To Be Young, Queer and Chinese

Program curated by Jenny Man Wu, with Popo Fan and Yang Yang
Presented in collaboration with Love Queer Cinema Week (former Beijing Queer Film Festival, BJQFF)

Love Queer Cinema Week was funded in 2001 by university students as the first LGBTQ film festival in mainland China – where it remains one of the few grassroots events involved in independent queer film screenings and cultural exchange, providing a platform for sexual and other minorities worldwide. It has hosted international guests and offered travel grants to young Chinese participants. It has created ties with queer film festivals/events in Brazil, Belgium, Italy and Denmark, and the Berlinale Teddy Awards. Often harassed by the authorities and forced to change locations, it has survived as a site of resistance for social, cultural and artistic fluidity. Three festival organizers will hold a panel discussion on the evolution of queer media in China. Also: screening of Popo Fan's *The Drum Tower* (*Gu Lou Xi*, 2019) and Yang Yang's *Our Story - 10-year "Guerrilla Warfare" of Beijing Queer Film Festival* (*Wo men de gu shi*, 2011)

In person via Zoom from Beijing and Berlin: Director on Duty Jenny Man Wu (rotating position), Committee Members Yang Yang and Popo Fan

"... what made the BJQFF screening among the most moving and memorable experiences we've had on the festival circuit was the realization that it was more than an entertainment, it was a statement. Every single person in the room was risking something just to be there. It was a rare opportunity to see how a community under duress depends on the power of film and storytelling to help bring about change." – *Filmmaker Magazine*

"The BJQFF champions a type of social activism and cultural practice: as it broadens the practices of film festival, it also initiates an open, democratic and egalitarian form of public culture." – Hongwei Bao, *Queer Comrades*

The first Beijing Queer Film Festival (BJQFF, now **Love Queer Cinema Week**) was organized in December 2001 by a group of students from the Peking University Student Cinema Association. The festival was then called "China Homosexual Film Festival" and attracted a lot of attention. The second edition took place in 2005 under the name "Beijing Gay & Lesbian Film Festival," the third edition happened in 2007 under the name "Beijing Queer Film Forum," and in 2009, for its fourth edition, the festival adopted the title "Beijing Queer Film Festival."

It's currently the only film festival in mainland China to offer a public forum for films and discussions exploring sexuality and gender identities. Operating under difficult social and political conditions, the festival has faced many problems in its years of existence. Thanks to the valiant support of individuals and social organizations, it has managed to keep going forward and to resist all kinds of pressures, providing a voice to the queer minority in China.

Whereas the first editions only screened mainland China films, the festival has evolved into an international happening which showcases the newest Chinese-language films (including films from Taiwan, Hong Kong and mainland China) and numerous foreign films. Every year, the festival hosts many domestic and foreign guests, and welcomes an ever-growing number of viewers coming from all around the country.

Internationally, the Beijing Queer Film Festival/Love Queer Cinema Week has steadily built up its reputation and continuously works on developing networks. During recent years, it has created ties with queer film festivals in countries from all over the world, including Brazil, Belgium, Italy and Denmark. Since 2009, it has been sending a representative to the Teddy Awards Section of the Panorama Section at the Berlin Film Festival, and as such it is included in the international network of queer film festivals.

See: <https://www.bjqff.com/关于影展-about/北京酷儿影展简介/#more-15>
for more information.

Film Program

Gu Lou Xi (The Drum Tower), PRC, 2019, 18 min.

Written and directed by Popo Fan.

Produced by Jin Rui and Jenny Man Wu.

In the historical district of the Drum and Bell Towers in the center of Beijing, where longtime local residents are threatened by eviction caused by "urban

renewal” and real estate development, an introverted senior student and a transgender vintage shop owner meet: two lonely souls swimming in the ever-changing pool of the city Beijing. They try to break through a wall in front of them, heading to a place they don’t know.

Wo men de gu shi (Our Story - 10-year "Guerrilla Warfare" of Beijing Queer Film Festival), PRC, 2011, 42 min.

Directed by Yang Yang.

Produced by Cui Zi'en.

Based on footage recorded by the BJQFF every year, but told in the first person by the filmmaker, *Our Story* is a heartfelt, deeply moving, engrossing and detailed personal account of the “guerilla warfare” waged by the BJQFF in its first ten years to survive government harassment and censorship: changes of location from the West to the East side of Beijing, from the city to an artists village in the suburbs, flexibility and creativity in outreach strategies, fine points of semantics in coining a name for the event, and, last but not least, political courage.

"The greatest value and ultimate goal of holding a queer film festival [consists in] challenging and opposing mainstream ideology."

- Yang Yang, Program Notes, 5th Festival

Curators/Filmmakers/Panelists

Jenny Man Wu is an independent director, producer and curator based in Beijing. Currently working for the international distribution company Fortissimo, she was previously in charge of the China Project at Bridging the Dragon Sino-European Producers’ Association (2015-2018). A long-time committee member of the BJQFF, she is currently its Director on Duty. In addition to the BJQFF, she has curated a number of short film showcases for the Helsinki Festival, Istanbul Museum of Modern Art, Beijing Design Week, Camera Stylo and UCCA Beijing. She was assistant curator for the retrospective “New Voices of Chinese Cinema 2000-2015” in Jan-Feb 2017 at the French Cinematheque, Paris France. The films that she directed and produced (including Popo Fan’s *The Drum Tower*, included in this program) were screened at the Berlinale, Viennale, Women's Film Festival of Brussels, Dortmund International Women's Film Festival, SEOUL International Women's Film Festival, FIRST Film Festival, and Beijing Independent Film Festival, etc. She directed the following shorts: *Some Sort of Loneliness* (2012), *A Choice, Maybe Not* (2013), *Crime Scene* (2013), *Last Words* (2013), and is currently working on a new project, *Vagabonds*.

After graduating from Peking University with a degree in French linguistics and literature in 2004, **Yang Yang** went to Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium) to study cultural management from 2007-2010. Her master thesis "From Queer to Tongzhi – a comparative case study about thematic film festivals related to sexuality and gender in Belgium and in the three Chinas" – received a major award in Europe. She worked for the Chinese Film Fund of the Belgian Royal Film Archives, served as artistic director for European-China-Audiovisual-Network, and curated a number of film cultural events and retrospectives. A writer, film editor and director as well as a translator, she is currently curator at Broadway Cinematheque MOMA, Beijing's first art house cinema.

Born in 1985, and a graduate of the Beijing Film Academy, **Popo Fan** is a queer filmmaker, writer, and activist. In 2007, he published *Happy Together: Complete Record of a Hundred Queer Films*. He has directed the China Queer Film Festival Tour and has been a committee member of the Beijing Queer Film Festival since 2009, and a board member of Beijing LGBT Center 2010-2017. In 2011 he became the youngest winner of the prism award from the Hong Kong Lesbian and Gay Film Festival. His films have been shown in numerous film festivals, including Beijing, Taipei, Hong Kong, Mumbai, Jakarta, Tokyo, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Vancouver, Amsterdam. Selected filmography: *New Beijing*, *New Marriage* (2009), *Chinese Closet* (2009), *Be A Woman* (2011), *Mama Rainbow* (2012), *The VaChina Monologues* (2013) (shown at REDCAT in 2014), *Papa Rainbow* (2016), and *The Drum Tower* (2019). He currently lives in Berlin.

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REDCAT is CalArts' downtown center for contemporary arts, a multidisciplinary hub for innovative visual, performing and media arts in the Performing Arts Center for Los Angeles County in downtown Los Angeles. Through performances, exhibitions, screenings, and literary events, REDCAT introduces diverse audiences, students, and artists to the most influential developments in culture from around the world and gives artists in the region the creative support they need to achieve national and international recognition. REDCAT extends the tradition of the California Institute of the Arts by encouraging experimentation, discovery, and lively civic discourse. To learn more or subscribe to our weekly newsletter, please visit redcat.org.

