

## **FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS**

**Mon Oct 20, Tuesday Oct 21 and Friday Oct 24**

Jack H. Skirball Series

\$11 [members \$8]

## **China Onscreen Biennial**

Co-presented with the UCLA Confucius Institute

Opening on October 17, at the UCLA Film & Television Archive with iconic Sixth Generation director Wang Xiaoshuai's *Red Amnesia* (*Chuangru zhe*), a suspenseful psychological drama featured in competition at this year's Venice Film Festival, the expanded second edition of the four-week, multi-city showcase surveys the rich multiplicity of voices that have established China as arguably the world's most dynamic film and media environment. REDCAT is one of several L.A. venues offering a thrilling array of work—from the latest internationally acclaimed auteur films and homages celebrating major figures of Chinese cinema, to experimental media and countercultural forays. COB screenings are preceded by slideshows commissioned from some of China's most accomplished visual artists.

The *LA Weekly* wrote:

"A black-box theater with a great bar and cafe, REDCAT is one of the avant-garde/experimental film hubs in the city. The theater, part of the Disney Hall complex and affiliated with CalArts, and it's the kind of place that honors art that wouldn't even be screened anywhere else."

In step with this appreciation of our work, Film at REDCAT is proud to present some of the most cutting-edge, experimental and daring films of the array of work selected by the team of curators of the second China Onscreen Biennial. We want to continue the conversation started in a highly successful program that took place in our last season, "Far from Beijing: The State of Independent Chinese Cinema," at a time when that cinema has become both more precarious and more imaginative. Expect to be surprised, challenged, entertained and delighted.

**Mon Oct 20 | 8:30 pm |**

**Cong Feng:**  
***Stratum 1: The Visitors***  
**(*Diceng yi: laike*, 2013)**

West Coast premiere | 2013, 127 min., Mandarin with English subtitles, digital video

**Dir, Scr, Edit, DP:** Cong Feng; **Music:** Cong Feng (with some classical music from Bach and Mozart; original folk music; **Prod:** Wang Lidong, Cong Feng; **Cast:** Fan Yuansheng, Tong Dazhuang

*Stratum 1: The Visitors* is possibly the most original in a series of films addressing the pervasive reality of ruins in contemporary China – as illustrated by Wang Bing’s tracking shots, Jia Zhangke’s montage sequences, fictions by Ying Liang or Wang Quan’an, documentaries by Ou Ning, Shu Haolun, Cui Zi’en or the US anthropologist JP Sniadecki. Piles of rubble, half-standing buildings with empty windows, crumbling factories, vacant lots littered with gravel and the pitiful remnants of previous domestic lives are now a most common Chinese spectacle – be they the result of aggressive “urban renewal” or violent displacement/relocation of rural populations.

Cong Feng has built a compelling structure in two parts mirroring each other, with fictional and documentary elements running through them. In part A, two men (Fan Yuansheng, Tong Dazhuang) – credited as “tour guides–actors–experience providers” – meet in an abandoned building and share memories of their past lives, then roam into the night. In Part B, they return to the site, which is now being destroyed by bulldozers. Part A is “a stage,” while Part B documents the demolition of this stage. The “stratum” of the title refers to “the stable basis of society that no longer exists” as well as to the different layers of urban landscape piled on top of each other.

As Cong Feng functions as his own DP, the status of the image is questioned as well: in a field of rubble, near a hill made of piled-up construction waste, the filmmaker is an “image scavenger,” partaking in the overall process of discarding/recycling. He creates a complex visual texture of crumbling walls, graffiti, discarded lives and occasional violence, both evoking and obliterating the passing of time. Ruins are the end of history, they stand as signposts/scars of what is no more, yet they are also the mark of human labor, economic activity

and suggest a leap towards the unknown. *Stratum 1*'s alluring experimental strategy was awarded the Jury's Award at the Beijing Independent Film Festival.

Preceded by:

## **Sun Xun:** ***What Happened in Past Dragon Year*** ***(Longnian wangshi, 2014)***

International premiere | color | 10 min., HDCAM

This dazzling animation work by artist/filmmaker Sun Xun, "the dark magician of Chinese animation," is inspired by Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and René Magritte's painting *The Spontaneous Generation*.

### The filmmakers

In another life, **Cong Feng** (b. 1972, Chengde, Hebei Province) worked for the weather bureau. He also published two books of poetry: *Invisible Train*, and *Masmediacspoeshitry*. He directed the *Italy of Gansu Trilogy*, which includes *Religion (Xin Yang, 2006)*, *Doctor Ma's Country Clinic (Ma daifu de zhensuo, 2008)* that won many awards including the NETPAC award in Berlin and the Directors' Guild of Japan Award in Yamagata, and *The Unfinished History of Life (Wei wancheng de shenghuo shi, 2010)*. His works have been shown at the Berlin and Rotterdam International Film Festivals, Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, and across the independent film festival circuit in China. He is an editor of the online magazine *Film Auteur (Dianying zuozhe)*.

After studying printmaking at the Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou, **Sun Xun** founded the animation studio Pi in 2006. To make his meticulous animations, Sun uses traditional calligraphy techniques to produce drawings on canvas, silk and printed matter. These are then hand-copied frame by frame to create flickering effects and complex, multilayered textures. Sun's films have been shown in festivals in China, France, Germany and at New York's Anthology Film Archives. His original drawings, meanwhile, have been exhibited in galleries and museums in China, Japan, Europe and the U.S.

**Tuesday Oct 21 | 8:30 pm |  
"Wild Women"**

**Leslie Tai (Dai Jiaxin):  
*The Private Life of Fenfen (Yilun Fenfen)***

Los Angeles premiere | 2013, 29 min. USA / Mandarin with English subtitles, digital video

**Dir, DP, Edit:** Leslie Tai (Dai Jiaxin); **Video Diary Footage:** Guo Lifen; **PA/Sound:** Sarah Berkovich, Chocho Tang, Wang Yixuan

In 2007, while a Fulbright resident in master documentarist Wu Wenguang's Caochangdi Workstation, Leslie Tai met Guo Lifen (Fenfen), a feisty young migrant worker from southern China. After making a first film in collaboration with the young woman, Tai dug deeper into the *mise en abyme* of this multi-level representation by collecting more than 100 hours of footage of Fenfen's video diary and constructing a faux television broadcast inside cheap restaurants, hole-in-the-wall cigarette shops, and alley hair salons across China. There, other migrant workers can watch Fenfen and consume her real life as would-be entertainment.

**Fan Popo:  
*The VaChina Monologues (Laizi yindao)***

North American premiere | 2014, 30 min., Mandarin with English subtitles, Blu-ray

**Dir & Edit:** Fan Popo; **Consultant:** Jia Tai; **DP:** Yuan Yuan, Zhang Xinwei, Fan Popo, Zhang Xuezhou; **Prod:** Wu Xiaoyan, Chen Zhongqin

As international queer culture often borrow from American lingo, not surprisingly valiant women of all sexual persuasions have appropriated Eve Ensler's landmark *Vagina Monologues* (1996) since its Chinese debut at Sun Yat-sen University (Guangzhou) in 2003. And no less surprisingly independent queer filmmaker/curator/activist Fan Popo (born in 1985 and proudly proclaiming "I have a vagina in my heart") has devoted his latest opus to documenting the "vagina hurricane that blew all over mainland China." Called *Cloudy Vagina*, *Our Vaginas*, *OurSelves*, and *For Vagina's Sake*, the play has been performed on campuses, in theaters, in cafes, in the streets and public transportation... with exhilarating results!

## **Yang Mingming:** ***Female Directors (Nv daoyan)***

North American premiere | 2012, 42 min., Mandarin with English subtitles, digital video

**Dir, Scr, Edit, Art director:** Yang Mingming; **DP:** Yang Mingming, Guo Yue; **Prod:** Yang Jing; **Cast:** Yang Mingming, Guo Yue.

A most exhilarating directorial debut, *Female Directors*, joyously treads the seductive boundaries between documentary and fiction (it's been called a "mockumentary," but who's to know?). When job prospects elude them, two sassy, foul-mouthed twenty-something art school graduates (Yang Mingming and her co-conspirator Guo Yue) decide to film each other's lives instead, passing the camera back and forth. This involves talking candidly about sex, trading "pussy" for material and emotional gain, and sleeping with the same man, nicknamed "Mr. Short" in a hilarious phone conversation. "My best toy is my small camera, not pretty boys, because it can be a gun sometimes," says Yang.

### The filmmakers

**Leslie Tai** is a Chinese-American filmmaker hailing from San Francisco, California. After graduating from UCLA with a B.A. in Design|Media Arts, she moved to China in 2006 and earned her filmmaking chops in the underground Chinese documentary world as a student of Wu Wenguang, a founding figure of the New Chinese Documentary Movement. A 2007 Fulbright Scholar to China in Filmmaking and a graduate of the MFA Program in Documentary Film and Video at Stanford University, she has shown her films at Tribeca Film Festival, Visions du Réel, International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA), and The Museum of Modern Art (Doc Fortnight).

**Fan Popo** is a queer independent filmmaker and curator. Born in 1985, he graduated from the Beijing Film Academy. He published "Happy Together: Complete Record of a Hundred Queer Films" (Beifang Wenyi Press, 2007). He directs 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 since 2010. In 2011, he became the youngest winner of the 22nd Hong Kong Lesbian and Gay Film Festival. Focusing on LGBT/Gender issues,

his documentary works have been shown in film festivals in numerous cities, including Beijing, Taipei, Hong Kong, Mumbai, Jakarta, Tokyo, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Vancouver, Amsterdam, and Helsinki.

**Yang Mingming**, a female independent director of the Hui minority, was born in 1987 in Beijing and graduated from the Directing Department of the National Academy of Chinese Theater Arts. "For Yang, Ah-Ming and Yue Yue's dependency upon a man is inseparable from the issues of class, and the loss in Chinese society of all values but material aspiration. 'Most women think that if you're a waitress or a cleaner, you can't be happy, because you don't have any status in society. Women have other choices, but they attach themselves to men because they think it's the best way for them to get ahead. It's like an import-export business, the transaction occurs because it's mutually beneficial. The responsibility to change this state of affairs,' says Yang, 'falls on women. It's possible for a woman in China to support herself and to be happy. But they aren't brave enough to do it.' " (*Time Out Beijing*)

**In person: Leslie Tai (schedule permitting)**

**Friday Oct 24 | 8:30 pm |**

**Wang Haolin:**

***Erdos Rider (E'erdusi qishi)***

World premiere | 2014, 86 min, Mongolian and Mandarin with English subtitles, HDCAM

**Dir, Scr, Edit, Art dir:** Wang Haolin (AKA He Jia); **DP:** Liu Xiang, Chen Xiaomeng; **Music:** Laurent Couson; **Prod:** Sun Kui, Qiu Yijing; **Cast:** He Yufan, Liu Yang, Gandige, Li Qiuchen, Mata, Murigen

The China Onscreen Biennial and REDCAT are extremely proud to be able to present the World Premiere of Wang Haolin's latest feature, following the tracks of his award-winning experimental documentary, *The Land* (2009), praised by the NETPAC jury "for achieving in cinema what is impossible through any other art form by showing how humanity remains unchanged with the passage of time." Time is indeed the subject of Wang's cinema, which limns the in-between spaces inhabited by non-Han minorities and *de facto* breaks down the Grand Narrative of the Chinese nation, specifically its post-1949

iteration. In *The Land*, Wang was attentive to minute, usually unreported details. In *Erdos Rider*, he coins an alluring, fragmented structure, in three parts with secret correspondences between them, that takes us from the wide expanses of Mongolia (in the film's most lyrical moments) to the confines of a Beijing hotel room (where a wickedly sarcastic scene of sexual mismatch unfolds). Whether rural, desert or urban, the landscapes are crisscrossed by lines of desire and loss, abutting against an oneiric encounter with a white horse. A young lad looks for his little brother; a man looks for a missing archeological team, or maybe for a woman; a woman is looking for something she cannot find in men; once, in the folds of a bygone time, she was looking for a disappeared child; and, in the tale about Genghis Khan, the mares were looking for their slaughtered colts...

With breathtaking images and a healthy sense of humor, Wang elegantly navigates through the multiple levels and locations of his fragmented "story," asserting himself as an original *auteur*, and heralding the blossoming of experimental narrative in Chinese independent cinema.

Preceded by:

## **Geng Yi : *Barking* (Fei)**

Los Angeles premiere | 2013, 20 min., Mandarin with English subtitles, digital video

**Dir, Prod:** Geng Yi; **Scr:** Chen Dan, Geng Yi; **Edit:** Song Song, Wu Shaowei; **DP:** Li Binkai, Lv Wenzhi; **Sound:** Liu Ruiqing; Music: Pentatonic

In collaboration with investigative reporter Chen Dan, art photographer Geng Yi has coined a fascinating hybrid of *vérité* document and reconstructed scenes posited at the uncanny interface of man and animal, urban dwelling and garbage. As other filmmakers (Wang Bing, Jia Zhangke, Cong Feng) have explored how the leftovers of socialism turn into ruins, Geng shows how the rejects of post-socialism become trash. Migrant workers and stray dogs uneasily coexist on the giant dumps littering the outskirts of Beijing. Under the dry cold sky of winter, dogs eat garbage, migrant workers live, work and sleep on construction sites or landfills, and men eat dogs.

[The filmmakers](#)

**Wang Haolin** (AKA He Jia), born in Kunming in 1981, currently lives in Beijing. He graduated from the New Media Production Department of the University of Sunderland. During his time in the UK, he made the documentary *Apu*, about a street band from Peru. After returning to China, he worked as a director and photographer for Explore - Discovery, Greenpeace, and Médecins sans Frontières. In 2006, he formed his own studio, Da Di, with his friends. In 2007-2008, he worked on the studio's first production, *The Land* (2009), about Hmong children. Screened at the International Film Festival Rotterdam, the film received the NETPAC Award.

A professional photographer, **Geng Yi** has been teaching in the School of City Design at China Central Academy of Fine Arts since 2011. His photographic work has been published in the Chinese National Geography Magazine and exhibited in a variety of art venues in Hong Kong, Beijing, Shanghai, Xinjiang, Vienna and Michigan. *Barking* is his first film as a director.

For information/schedule about the other COB screenings, please visit: **[www.global.ucla.edu/cob](http://www.global.ucla.edu/cob)**.