



SÉLECTION OFFICIELLE
UN CERTAIN REGARD
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

I Wish I Knew

a film by Jia Zhang-Ke



Synopsis

Shanghai, a fast-changing metropolis, a port city where people come and go.

Shanghai has hosted all kinds of people – revolutionaries, capitalists, politicians, soldiers, artists, and gangsters. Shanghai has also hosted revolutions, assassinations, love stories.

After the Chinese Communists' victory in 1949, thousands of Shanghaier left for Hong Kong and Taiwan. To leave meant being separated from home for thirty years; to stay meant suffering through the Cultural Revolution and China's other political disasters.

Eighteen people from these three cities - Shanghai, Taipei and Hong Kong - recall their lives in Shanghai. Their personal experiences, like eighteen chapters of a novel, tell stories of Shanghai lives from the 1930s to 2010.

An eternally wandering soul returns to Shanghai and, walking along the banks of the Huangpu River, awakens to all the changes the city has undergone.



Director's note

After examining China's historic changes through my films for over a decade, I've developed a growing interest in history. It has dawned on me that the causes of almost all of the problems facing contemporary China can be found taking shape in the depths of its history.

In mainland China as well as in Taiwan, the true nature of many events in China's modern history has long been hidden, blocked from view by those in power. Like an orphan anxious to learn the truth about where he comes from, I felt an urgency to learn just what lies behind the familiar official historical narratives. What in fact have individuals really experienced?

So I came to Shanghai with my movie camera and traced the footsteps of Shanghaiers who left this city for Taiwan and Hong Kong. Shanghai is closely tied to the lives of almost every important historic figure in the modern history of China. And events of national significance in the life of the city also destined Shanghaiers for lives of painful, life-long separation.

I hope that *I Wish I Knew* can transcend party politics (whether it be the Communist Party of China or Taiwan's Nationalist KMT) and directly touch the sufferings of the Chinese people.

A complicated lexicon of historical terms is inscribed on Shanghai's history: from «colony» in the 19th century to «revolutionary» in the 20th; from 1949's «liberation» through the «cultural revolution» of 1966 to 1978's «reform» and Pudong's «opening up» in 1990.

What I care about, however, is what lies behind these abstract terms: the individuals buffeted by politics, and details of their lives forgotten by time.

When I sat face-to-face with characters in my film, and listened to them talk ever so calmly about the hair-raising events in their pasts, I suddenly realized what it was that I captured with my camera: - "a dream of freedom" twinkling in their eyes.

This moved me to tears.

Jia Zhang-Ke - writer and director

Jia Zhang-Ke was born in 1970 in Fenyang, Shanxi Province of China. He was graduated from Beijing Film Academy and made his first feature film *Xiao Wu* in 1998. He is now settled in Beijing and actively involved in filmmaking over China. His *Still Life* won the Golden Lion Award (Best Film) of 63rd Venice International Film Festival in 2006.

Filmography

2008	24 CITY 61 st Cannes Film Festival Official Selection in Competition
2007	USELESS (documentary)64th Venice Film Festival Venice Horizons Documentary Award
2006	STILL LIFE 63 rd Venice Film Festival Golden Lion Award
2006	DONG (documentary)63 rd Venice Film Festival Official Selection in Horizon
2004	THE WORLD 61 st Venice Film Festival Official Selection in Competition
2002	UNKNOWN PLEASURE 55th Cannes Film Festival Official Selection in Competition
2001	IN PUBLIC (documentary)13th International Documentary Film Festival of Marseilles Grand Prix
2000	PLATFORM 57th Venice Film Festival Official Selection in Competition
1998	XIAO WU 48th Berlin International Film Festival Young Filmmakers Forum, Netpac Award Wolfgang Prize

Zhao Tao - Cast

Born in Shanxi province of China, famous Chinese actress, graduated from the Department of Chinese Folk Dance of Beijing Dance Academy in 1998, Zhao Tao obtained several awards in domestic dancing competitions and began to work with director Jia Zhang-Ke as the lead actress in five of his films. She was also one of the producers of Jia Zhang-Ke's documentary *Useless* (2007).

Filmography

2010	TEN THOUSAND WAVES (Audio-visual Installation)(dir: Issca Julien)
2008	24 CITY (dir: Jia Zhang-Ke)
2008	WAIT (dir: Peng Tao)
2007	USELESS (as producer)(dir: Jia Zhang-Ke)
2006	STILL LIFE (dir: Jia Zhang-Ke)
2004	THE WORLD (dir: Jia Zhang-Ke)
2002	UNKNOWN PLEASURE (dir: Jia Zhang-Ke)
2000	PLATFORM (dir: Jia Zhang-Ke)



Shanghai Film Group Corporation, Xstream Pictures, NGU Group Ltd., Star Art Vision and Bojie Media

Present

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a film by Jia Zhang-Ke

Filmmakers

Director – JIA ZHANG-KE

Screenplay – JIA ZHANG-KE

Executive producers - REN ZHONGLUN, CHOW KEUNG, AN GANG, LI PENG, LI PENG

Producers – WANG TIANYUN, YU LIKWAI, MEG JIN, LIN YE, XIONG YONG

Associate producers - XU WEI, ZHANG DONG, MARIA JIN, LI JINGYI, LIU XIAODONG

Advisors - LIN XUDONG, CHEN DANQING

Director of photography - YU LIKWAI

Sound designer - ZHANG YANG

Composer – LIM GIONG

Editor - ZHANG JIA

Cast

ZHAO TAO, LIM GIONG

Interviewer

LIN XUDONG

Interviewees

CHEN DANQING, YANG XIAOFO, ZHANG YUANSUN, DU MEI-RU, WANG PEIMIN, WANG TOON, CHANG LING-YUN, LEE CHIA-TUNG, CHANG HSIN-I, HOU HSIAO-HSIEN, ZHU QIANSHENG, HUANG BAOMEI, WEI RAN, WEI WEI, BARBARA FEI, REBECCA PAN, YANG HUAIDING, HAN HAN.

Technical information

Production company - SHANGHAI FILM GROUP CORPORATION, XSTREAM PICTURES, NGU GROUP LTD., STAR ART VISION and BOJIE MEDIA

Production year - 2010

Format - 35MM

Ratio - CINEMASCOPE/2:35

Running time - 138 MINUTES

Language - MANDARIN

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