



Hutong Productions & CVB
present

THE WATCHMAN

A FILM BY
LOU DU PONTAVICE & VICTOIRE BONIN GRAIS

THE WATCHMAN

A FILM BY
LOU DU PONTAVICE & VICTOIRE BONIN
GRAIS

France, Belgium
2024 / 77 min / DCP / color / 1.85 / 5.1

Language : Chinese

CAT&DOCS

Ventes internationales
<http://www.catndocs.com/>
melle@catndocs.com

HUTONG PRODUCTIONS

Production France
<http://hutongproductions.com/>
lucie.rego@hutongproductions.com

CVB (Centre video de Bruxelles)

Production Belgium
<https://cvb.be/fr>
joel.curtz@cvb.be

LOGLINE

Guangdong and his wife Baoyan have organized their entire lives with the sole aim of supporting the education of their only son, a student at the prestigious Beijing Academy of Music. But now that Zhaohang is finally fulfilling his parents' dream and moving abroad to pursue his career, they must face up to and make sense of this absence.







LOU DU PONTAVICE film director

After studying literature, philosophy and film, Lou joined the INSAS film school in directing (2014). Until 2019, she directed documentary and fiction shorts. Since then, she has been working as both a director and a scriptwriter (e.g. *Les Intranquilles* by Joachim Lafosse). Her previous short film won the Cinergie prize at Millenium documentary film festival and was selected at BAFF, CAMERIMAGE, PerSo Perugia Social Film Festival, Festival Filmer le Travail Poitiers etc. She is currently developing her first feature fiction, *Maïa*, produced by Rezo Films. *The Watchman*, shot between China and Estonia, is her first feature-length documentary.



VICTOIRE BONIN GRAIS film director and cinematographer

Victoire joined the INSAS film school in Image in 2014, after studying history and Theory of the Arts in Paris. She works both as a director and a cinematographer (*Berlin Bytch Love* by Heiko Aufdermauer, *(Y)our mother* by Samira El Mouzghibati, *Rainbow Children* by Maryam Bayani). Or as camera assistant (*Peter Von Kant* by François Ozon, *Simone*, *Le Voyage du Siècle* by Olivier Dahan...).

The Watchman, shot between China and Estonia, is her first feature-length documentary.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

We have spent the past five years observing Guangdong's life journey and his intimate relationship with his son, Zhaohang. From his fourteen to his eighteen years old. Guangdong devoted himself body and soul to the musical education of Zhaohang. But behind his role as a strict educator, Guangdong has another ambition : to take his son out of China and to allow him to be free.

Five years after our first encounter, Zhaohang has grown up and has now been accepted in Tallinn Classical Music Conservatory in Estonia. Left on his own for the first time, Zhaohang must learn English and rebuild everything. The influence and omnipresence of his father during his education make us wonder: how does Guangdong manage to reinvent himself after so many years of living for the main goal of raising his unique child?



More generally, how can Guangdong and Baoyan live not only as a father and a mother, but as a man and a woman? Together as life companions, and separately? Now that Zhaohang is no longer there to fulfill his father's dreams, Guangdong must confront his own desire. It is the void that Zhaohang leaves behind that reveals Guangdong to himself and his deepest desires. On the other side, how can a child emancipate himself and build his own identity when a father has expected so much from him and organized all his life for 17 years? Similarly, The challenge is for the viewers to understand without interviews and through the staging, the strong stakes behind a strictly regulated daily life. The rhythm of each shot must allow time for the words to emerge, for the intimacy to be expressed, which are only visible with time. Cracks gradually appear within their rigorous lifestyle. Our images tell the growing gap between two lives whose paths separated at the airport on the day Zhaohang left.



THE WATCHMAN

CREW

Directors	Lou du Pontavice & Victoire Bonin Grais
Cinematography by	Victoire Bonin
Editing	Tom Denoyette
Sound recording	Li Ran, Eliot Ratinaud
Original Music	Camille El Bacha
Produced by	Lucie Rego, Pauline Tran Van Lieu, Joël Curtz
Production	Hutong Productions (France) Centre Vidéo de Bruxelles (Belgium)

International Sales Cat&Docs

In association with France Télévisions - 25 nuances de doc

With the support of

Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée (CNC)

PROCIREP & ANGOA

Fondation Lagardère

Regions Nouvelle-Aquitaine & Provence-Alpes Côte d'Azur

Department Dordogne

Cinema and Audiovisual Center of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation

The Belgian Tax Shelter

