

Contact: Elaine Merguerian 212.327.9271 or elainem@asiasoc.org

Asia Society presents Film Series:
China's Past, Present, Future on Film

*****Post-screening discussion with acclaimed director Jia Zhangke on March 6*****

March 6–April 16, 2010
Asia Society and Museum, 725 Park Avenue at 70th Street, NYC



Fujian Blue (dGenerate Films)

A series highlighting Chinese independent filmmaking runs at the Asia Society on March 6–April 16. China's film industry is enjoying an unprecedented vibrancy, thanks to an explosion of independent filmmaking since the early 1990s. The series opens with a documentary about Sixth Generation award-winning film auteur Jia Zhangke, whose early works *Xiao Wu* (1997) and *Platform* (2000) propelled him to worldwide admiration. Many younger filmmakers have joined his rank with the help of affordable digital technology and a fast-changing, dynamic China that provides limitless inspiration.

China's Past, Present, Future on Film spotlights six additional recent independent films, including two produced by Jia Zhangke, that examine a dark chapter in China's past, take penetrating looks at current social phenomena, portray individuals caught up in the tidal waves of China's transformation, and explore the hearts and minds of the country's future generations. La Frances Hui, series curator and Senior Program Officer of Cultural Programs, Asia Society says, "Whether these films are about the past, present, or future, they all carry a sense of urgency—to tell stories and reveal the truth—in an attempt to counteract the rapid pace of change in China. The result is a stark realism adopted by many films as a response to the crude realities faced by many people who live on the margin."

For stills and screeners, please contact 212-327-9271 or pr@asiasoc.org.

For trailers and more information on the series, visit www.AsiaSociety.org/China-Past-Present-Future/.

Tickets for individual programs are: \$7 members; \$9 students/seniors; \$11 nonmembers. Series discount: buy tickets to 4 or more films in one transaction to receive \$1.50 off each ticket. To purchase tickets or for more information, please call (212) 517-ASIA or visit www.AsiaSociety.org.

This film series is funded, in part, by the Asia Society Center on U.S.-China Relations.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE (all films with English subtitles)

Xiao Jia Going Home (Xiao Jia Hui Jia)

Saturday, March 6, 2010, 2:30pm. *Post-screening Q&A with Jia Zhangke*****

Dir. Damien OUNOURI. France/China. 2008. 54min. Documentary. Digibeta.

French-Algerian documentary filmmaker Damien Ounouri follows leading Chinese Sixth Generation film director Jia Zhangke to his small home town of Fenyang in Shanxi province after he won the Golden Lion Award at the Venice Film Festival for *Still Life* (2006). The experiences of his childhood, the people he grew up with, and the changing landscape of his home town gave Jia the inspiration to make his first films. The documentary forms a poignant inquiry into the director's life and Chinese society at the same time. In Mandarin w/ English subtitles.

DOKU.ARTS International Festival for Films on Art
Melbourne International Film Festival
Munich FilmFest

Walking on the Wild Side (Lai Xiao Zi)

Thursday, March 11, 2010, 6:45pm

Dir. HAN Jie. China. 2006. 89min. Narrative. Digibeta.

Autobiographic in nature, Han Jie's feature debut draws on his experiences growing up in a desolate mining district in northern China's Shanxi province. A Chinese road movie, *Walking* charts a young gang's continuous flights from one trouble to the next. Mirroring the stark and barren landscape, the film relays the grim story of these troublemakers' dreams of liberty and easy money. Played by non-professional actors who are real-life delinquents, the film offers realism that is both oppressive and sympathetic.

Produced by Jia Zhangke. In Shanxi dialect w/ English subtitles.

"Han excels at capturing the deadening landscape of barren hills and exhaust-filled skies, physical manifestations of the numbed inhabitants." – Jay Weissberg, *Variety*
Rotterdam International Film Festival – Tiger Award
Vancouver Film Festival
Sao Paulo Film Festival
Taipei International Film Festival

Perfect Life (Wan Mei Sheng Huo)

Friday, March 19, 2010, 6:45pm

Dir. Emily TANG (TANG Xiaobai). China/Hong Kong. 2008. 97 min. Narrative/Documentary. Digibeta.

Emily Tang's second feature tells the bleak stories of female migrant workers in China. Two women, one fictional and one real, struggle for a new life in southern China. Their lives converge in Shenzhen (bordering Hong Kong), a city of dreams and survival for over 10 million migrant workers. Intricately blending documentary and fiction, Tang takes realism, a preoccupation of contemporary Chinese independent filmmakers, to a new level.

Co-produced by Jia Zhangke. In Mandarin, Cantonese, Dongbei dialect w/English subtitles.

"[A]n intimate and complex picture of the female condition in China, *Perfect Life* reasserts Tang as an original, insightful and highly talented director. – Bérénice Reynaud, CalArts REDCAT
Vancouver International Film Festival – Dragons and Tigers Award

Betelnut (Bing Lang)

Friday, March 26, 2010, 6:45pm

Dir. YANG Heng. China. 2005. 112 min. Narrative. Digibeta.

Along a sleepy Hunan riverside, two delinquent boys experience a summer of love and violence in Yang Heng's visually stunning debut. Ali and Xiao Yu are two teenage rebels idling away their days along the banks of a river in Jishou, a quiet town. They steal motorbikes, bully and rob kids, sing karaoke and get into fist fights. But their rough exterior belies a deeper romanticism, and a tenderness unfolds between them and their teenage loves.

In Hunan dialect w/ English subtitles.

“Exquisite!” – Tony Rayns, *Film Comment*
“Pure cinema” – Susanna Harutyunyan, FIPRESCI – The International Federation of Film Critics
Hong Kong International Film Festival - FIPRESCI Jury Prize
Pusan International Film Festival – Best New Asian Filmmaker
3 Continents Festival Nantes – New Vision Award

Little Moth (Xue Chan)

Friday, April 2, 2010, 6:45pm

Dir. PENG Tao. China. 2007. 99 min. Narrative. Digibeta.

An impoverished country couple buys a crippled young girl and puts her to work begging on city streets. Her desperate condition is heightened in a gripping episode of escape with a one-armed boy who is also forced to beg. Using a cast of non-professionals, Peng Tao turns the sordid street life of small town China into a chain-reaction tale of human cruelty and unforgettable suspense.

In Hubei dialect w/ English subtitles.

“This is tough realism in the best sense, where drama and doc intertwine.” – Robert Koehler, *Variety*

“A nearly perfect little film.” – Shelly Kraicer, Vancouver International Film Festival

Hong Kong International Film Festival – Silver Digital Award

Locarno International Film Festival – NETPAC Award

Vancouver Film Festival

Gai Shanxi and Her Sisters (Gai Shan Xi He Ta De Jie Mei Men)

Friday, April 9, 2010, 6:45pm

Dir. BAN Zhongyi. China. 2007. 80min. Documentary. Digibeta.

This documentary tells the story of several women’s brutal ordeal as “comfort women“ for the Japanese Army during World War II. At the center is Hou Dong-E, known as “Gai Shanxi,” the most beautiful woman in Shanxi province. The filmmaker unearths Gai Shanxi’s tragic life through the stories of other surviving women in the region. Included are critical and revelatory testimonies from former Japanese soldiers stationed in Shanxi during the war.

In Mandarin, Shanxi dialect, Japanese, w/ English subtitles.

Amnesty International Film Festival

Yunnan Multi Culture Visual Festival (YUNFEST)

Fujian Blue (Jin Bi Hui Huang)

Friday, April 16, 2010, 6:45pm

Dir. Robin WENG (WENG Shouming). China. 2007. 87 min. Narrative. Digibeta.

“The whole world fears Fujian!” announces a TV pundit, commenting on the notoriety of China’s southeastern province as the country’s center for illegal emigration and human trafficking. Made with a cast of non-professionals playing characters very much like themselves, Robin Weng’s pin-sharp feature debut reveals why and how so many young Chinese pay to be smuggled in containers to the West.

In Fujian dialect w/English subtitles.

“Weng has created a compelling portrait of the motivations and pressures facing the people of Fujian.” – Cameron Maitland, *Schema Magazine*

Vancouver International Film Festival – Dragons and Tigers Award

About the Asia Society

Founded in 1956 by John D. Rockefeller 3rd, Asia Society is a nonprofit nonpartisan educational institution. Through exhibitions and public programs, Asia Society provides a forum for the issues and viewpoints reflected in both traditional and contemporary Asian art, and in Asia today. Asia Society is located at 725 Park Avenue (at 70th Street), New York City. www.AsiaSociety.org

###