

February 2016 No.36

THE *Chinese*

華語電影市場 **FILM MARKET**

2015 China Film Industry Overview

Six Keywords for the
Chinese Films Market

Yangtze Story- Director Yang Chao
and His Film Crosscurrent



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出版单位:《华语电影市场》杂志社

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美术设计:太和世纪文化传媒有限公司

《华语电影市场》杂志是一本由香港华语电影市场发行公司发行的月刊。了解更多杂志信息, 请关注各大新媒体平台(twitter, facebook, Instagram and tumblr) @cfilmart, 更多咨询与合作请发送邮件至: info@chinesefilmmarket.com。

发行注册登记证号: ISSN 1801-240X

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PUBLISHER: The Chinese Film Market Magazine

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The Chinese Film Market is a monthly published by Chinese Film Market Publishing Hong Kong. Follow us on twitter, facebook, Instagram and tumblr @cfilmart. Please send email to: info@chinesefilmmarket.com for any questions or collaboration.

Registered Publication Number: ISSN 1801-240X

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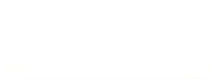
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The most famous monkey in China Monkey King

2016 is Chinese lunar year of monkey, but in Chinese culture, one of the most famous image of monkey is the Monkey King-Sun Wukong. Sun wukong's image comes from one of China's four great classical novels *Journey to the West*, which says there is a stone monkey, aggregated by essence of heaven and earth to be king on Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. Because of mastering all kinds of power, Chinese people affectionately call it as Monkey King. For hundreds of years, the image of Sun Wukong in folk has been performed in various art forms, and is popular among all ages of people, not only for its innocent and lively figure, but also the courage to challenge enemies and spirit of loyalty.

Story of Havoc in Heaven was created by Chinese animation films pioneers WJH brothers Wan Lai-ming in 1961-1964, built entirely by hand, and had numerous awards at home and abroad, to become global animation classic in the history of the cinema. In the film, the Monkey King wears a yellow blouse, girded with tiger short skirt, red pants, a pair of black boots, with neck also around a green scarf, healthy and energetic, which simply lined the Monkey King's earliest classical appearance. For decades, generations of Chinese parents brought and recommended their childhood the infinite happy film.

In 1986, China had just reformed and was vibrant, a television play *Journey to the West* once again successfully created classic works in the small screen, which was still the hit show for children during vacations. Due to the technical and financial restrictions, the show's sets and stunt were sort of poor, but it succeeded in shaping the real image of Sun Wukong, Pigsy, Sandy monk, Tripitaka, especially the Monkey King, who almost become irreplaceable. Although

many years later, with abundant funds, and advanced technology, a number of remakes appeared, that still can't replace the 86' version of *Journey to the West* in people's mind.

In the beginning of 2016, a well-known brand invited the famous actor who played the classic role of Monkey King in *Journey to the West* Liu Xiao Ling Tong to take a commercial advertisement for welcoming the Chinese year of monkey. In the ad, he tells the story of how he and his family continuously played the dramatic role of Monkey King on the stage and screen for generations as an art mission. The touching promo was widely spread on social networking, and once again aroused people's memory to this classic.

The most special image of Sun Wukong was shaped by a famous Hong



Kong director Jeffrey Lau and a famous Hong Kong comedian Stephen Chow in *A Chinese Odyssey* series, which caused no sensation when released in 1995, but in two years, the film has been dramatically popular among the youth of mainland. The sense of humor and the spirit of the leading role turned out to be a trend, which also enriches the personality of Monkey King as a folk after emotional suffering in *A Chinese Odyssey* series. The film reveals more profound philosophical and cultural meanings.

Nowadays, the development of China's film and television industry has changed, with more financial and technical power, the vivid visual effect and imagination involved in the story of *Journey to the West* and its roles would be revealed more perfectly and more striking visual display background has been created. Especially with the rapid development of Chinese film industry in recent years, the Monkey King and the creation of the *Journey to the West* have become the most popular Intellectual Property.

In 2008, the film *The Forbidden Kingdom*, jointly produced by Lionsgate Company and Huayi Bros. Media Group in China, was released worldwide. The martial arts superstars Jet Li and Jackie Chan played the leading roles in it, which was the guarantee in box office. Jet Li performed as Sun Wukong, although not the thread of the film, but is undoubtedly the most excellent Monkey King mastering Chinese Kung Fu. It won for 128 million dollars at the global box office, with 70 million dollars investment. *The Monkey King* received 1.046 billion RMB at the box office, which won the most popular movie during New Year's

2014. The film worked marvelously with the latest movie technology.

In July 2015, just three days after hitting the screen across China, the Chinese animation film *Monkey King: Hero is Back* evoked enthusiasm among audience and the box office broke a new record in China animation films. The image of Monkey King in this film is performed in a more fashionable and emotional way, which made a breakthrough and succeeded in both commercial and commends. 2016 is Chinese New Year of Monkey, a number of amazing Monkey King thematic films are coming. Let us look forward to it!





The Monkey King II

The Monkey King II is supposed to be released in 2016 Chinese New Year, which is created by the Hong Kong director Pou-Soi Cheang and Aaron Kwok in 3D version. Liu Xiaoguang, the producer, said the special effect in the film would broaden horizon of Chinese films, "The effect part is not only surprisingly large workload but also of amazing quality, and we are confident the movie can satisfy all ages audience appetite". According to the director, Hollywood team has been joint to the production in addition to more innovative elements.

A Chinese Odyssey III

Filming on *A Chinese Odyssey III* directed by Hong Kong director Jeffrey Lau got under way in Yinchuan, in which leading role was played by the mainland youth actor Han Geng, and the martial arts star Wu Jing performed as Tripitaka in a creative way. According to the producer Lv Jianmin's words, "the film combined *Journey to the West* and *A Chinese Odyssey* which is supposed to guarantee the box office. The film script has been well polished, expected to be worthy of the name END of the classic series. Classic scenes will appear, and a generation's memory of *A Chinese Odyssey* series will be evoked again when it was exactly in the 20th anniversary of the establishment.

Journey to the West: Conquering the Demons II

The movie *Journey to the West: Conquering the Demons II* has been officially started to shoot and coproduced by Hark Tsui and Stephen Chow. The casts are reported as followed: Yao Chen as the female leading role, Kris Wu as Tripitaka; Kenny Lin as Monkey King, Mengke Bateer as Sandy Monk, Tony

Wang as Pigsy. The cooperation of Hark Tsui and Stephen Chow both of whom are innovative is the hit news in Chinese film. This movie is supposed to hit the big screen in 2017.

Where The Road Leads To

Another movie based on the Chinese classic *Journey to the West* is set to be jointly produced by Chinese and American moviemakers, and the well-known actors from 1986 classic TV version of the novel will appear in the movie. Liu Xiao Ling Tong, who previously portrayed the Monkey King and the current leading role as well as the art consultant of the movie, said though a number of projects about Monkey

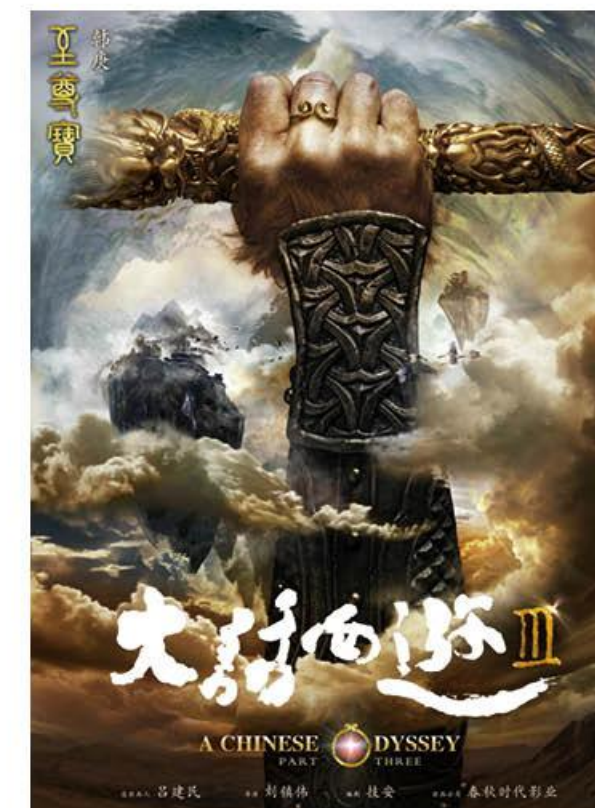
King were recommended to him, he insists of the authentic style of the novel, and so as the film *Where The Road Leads To*. Paramount has also joint the production, and Rob Moor, Paramount's vice president, said the Monkey King is a world-famous character, and the novel is an extremely magical story that will work marvelously with the latest movie technology.

Kong

The animation film *Kong* was produced by Aquamen company, and directed by Barry Cook one of whose masterpiece is the famous *Mulan*. The film is invested with 40 million dollars and tells the stories in the beginning of Sun Wukong's

birth. Based on the traditional myth, more scientific elements like alien and robots would be involved into it. There are always interesting things that could be found in cultural shock, which we are looking forward to from *Kong*.

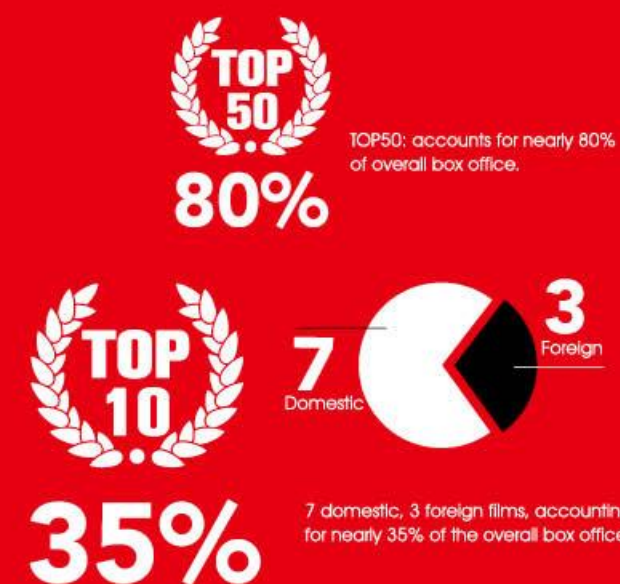
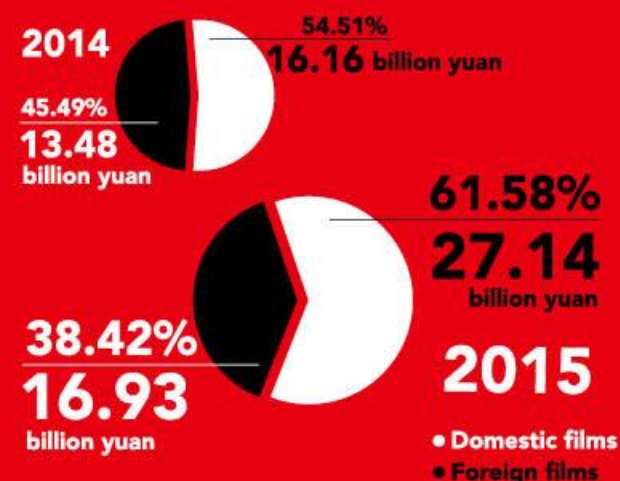
(Editorial by
Alexandra Yang,
Christina Chao)



2015 China Film Industry Overview



Comparison of 2014-2015 domestic and foreign films share

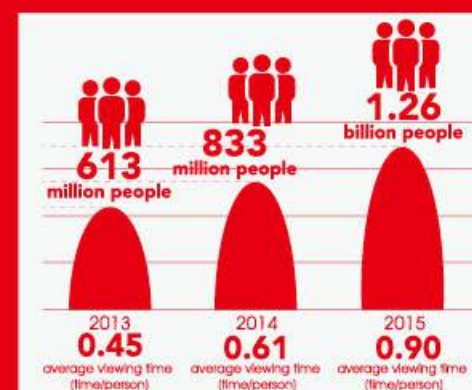


Domestic films generates 2.77 billion yuan overseas sales, with a year-on-year growth of 48.13%.

2015 Chinese citizens' theater visits



Calculated by 1.4 billion population, the viewing rate in 2015 reaches **0.9/year/person**.

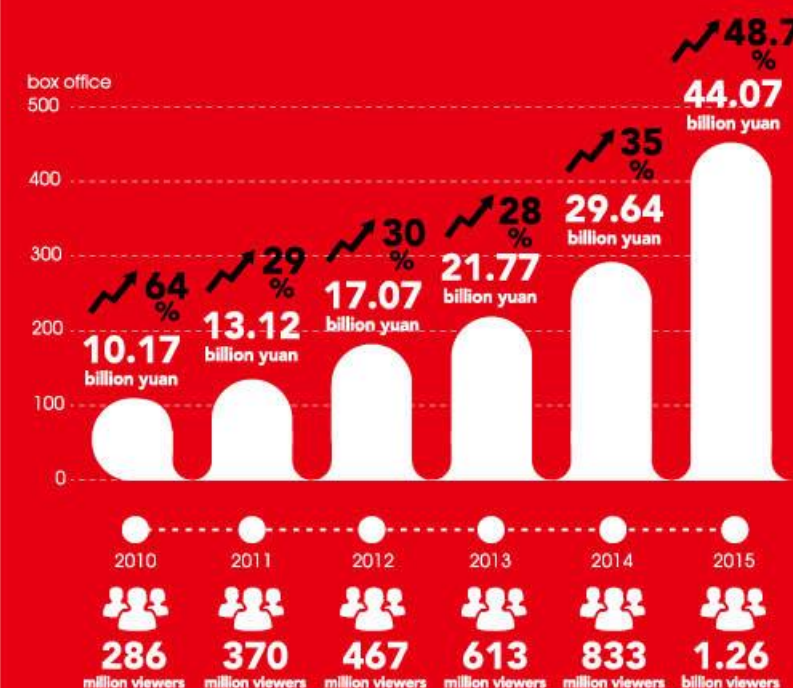


2013-2015 viewing rates comparison



The total gross of box office for 2015 hit 44.069 billion yuan, with a year-on-year growth of 48.7% from 29.639 billion yuan in 2014.

2010-2015 box office trend



Six Keywords for the Chinese Films Market in 2015

The yearly box-office revenues of films in China reach RMB 44 billion Yuan in 2015, which creates a new record in history, and the film market has begun a new development stage. When we are looking back at the extraordinary year 2015, there are some keywords deserving our careful review and memory in Chinese film industry.

The yearly box-office revenues of films in China reached RMB 44 billion Yuan in 2015, which created a new record in history, and the film market has begun a new development stage.

According to the data released by the Film Bureau in the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television of PRC, the total box-office revenues of films in China in 2015

reached RMB 44.069 billion Yuan, increasing by 48.7% in comparison with that in 2014. Among them, the box-office revenue of Chinese domestic films is RMB 27.136 billion Yuan, accounting for 61.58% of total box-office revenue, which maintains the leading role of Chinese domestic films in the film market of China by a wide margin.

The most exciting and encouraging thing for Chinese filmmakers in this year is the continuous improvement of creation level for Chinese films and the continuous enrichment of film types, and besides, many films get great achievements in both box office and word of mouth. There are many outstanding films, such as *CUG: King of Heroes*, *Monster Hunt*, *Go away Mr. Tumor*, *The Wolf Totem*, *The Dead End*, *Wolf Warrior*, *Saving Mr. Wu*, *Mojin-The Lost Legend*, *Mr. Six*, and so on, and they all show the great vitality of Chinese



native films. According to the satisfaction investigations for general film audiences carried out in the important schedules in 2015, film reviews were no longer just based on box office, and there were also more and more public praises for Chinese domestic films.

It was the first year when the yearly box-office revenues of films exceed RMB 40 billion Yuan in China. From the beginning of industrialization reform for Chinese films in 2002 to 2010, it took nine years for Chinese films industry to realize the target that box-office revenue reached more than ten billion yuan and then it took another three years to realize the leap to RMB 20 billion Yuan. From RMB 20 billion Yuan to 40 billion Yuan, it only took one year for Chinese film industry to realize the leap.

When we are looking back at the extraordinary year of 2015, there are some keywords deserving our careful review and memory in Chinese film industry.



Keyword No.1 : Multiple Types of Attempts

Based on reviewing the Chinese domestic films in 2015, from *Taking Tiger Mountain By Strategy* released at the beginning of 2015 to *The Wolf*

Totem released in the schedule of Chinese Spring Festival, from *Wolf Warrior* with good reviews on the Internet to *Monster Hunt*, *CUG: King of Heroes*, *A Hero or Not*, *To The Fore* and *Go away Mr. Tumor* which do wonders in the box-office revenue of Chinese domestic films in July, and from *Lost in Hong Kong*, *Goodbye Mr. Loser*, *Chronicles of the Ghostly Tribe* and *Saving Mr. Wu* which raised a fire storm in the schedule of Chinese National Day to *Mojin-The Lost Legend* and *Mr. Six* released

in the schedule of New Year... it can be found that there were good Chinese domestic films coming out nearly every month, and they not only included the films with small and medium-sized investment which gave full play to native advantages and showed different styles but also included some films which produced with industrial strength and enhance technical improvement. It was more gratifying that *The Dead End*, *Mountains May Depart*, *The Coffin in the Mountain*, *River Road*, *Ladder to Paradise* and other relevant films with humanistic care and artistic personality not only drew wide attention but also struggled for more space for growth.

Therefore, some reviews pointed out that the typed development of Chinese films has entered in a new stage, there are some iconic films for comedies, fantasy films, animations and other different types of films, which not only meets the need of different levels of audiences for watching films but also lays a more solid foundation for the comprehensive development of Chinese film industry.



Keyword No.2 : Chinese-style Blockbusters

In July 2015, *Monster Hunt*, a film for whole families' viewing in the summer vacation, broke the record made by an imported blockbuster *Fast & Furious 7* with a box office of more than RMB 2.4 billion Yuan, and became the first Chinese domestic film entering the Club of More Than 2 Billion Yuan, so it became the champion of box office among single films in the history of Chinese films. The novel topic selection, the elaborate special effects and the accurate audience orientation link Chinese traditional cultural elements to popular interests creatively, which becomes the key for the success of this film. Meanwhile, in terms of the film, the large investment in the production and the industrialized links for division of labor also draw the wide attention in the industry, and although it does not get rid of the traces of following the Hollywood model, the Chinese-style blockbuster finally gets rid of the previous image of bamboozling and becomes a high-quality product really created by the film industry.

After entering the schedule of New Year, The Chinese domestic film *Mojin-The Lost Legend* which triggers a great upsurge for watching the movie, continued to explore the future development of Chinese-style



blockbusters. Audiences are greatly impressed about the shocking visual effects, the high-level film sets and the excellent post-production effects, and it also filled in the weakness of Chinese native films in genre films. Although still under the shadow of Hollywood, Chinese filmmakers are doing their best to catch up. With the obvious improvement of overall production level for Chinese domestic films, Chinese-style blockbusters are produced based on Chinese stories and Chinese sentiments, and it may not be very long time that the Chinese national film industry develops continuously and stands up to Hollywood films as an equal.

Keyword No.3 : A Great Upsurge of IP

The year 2014 was known as the year for the birth of IP films in the industry, and with the rapid development of Chinese film industry and film market, the great upsurge of IP (Intellectual Property) develops continuously and becomes one of the popular professional terms in the industry. Various film companies and giants in the cultural industry were crazy for hot IPs, and creating powerful IP also became an important direction for various picture companies, medias and cultural companies to build diversified platforms

of business development.

Based on enumerating the hot Chinese domestic films in 2015, including *One Hundred Thousand Bad Jokes*, *Surprise*, *Go away Mr. Tumor*, *Chronicles of the Ghostly Tribe*, *The Wolf Totem*, *Mojin-The Lost Legend*, *Running Man*, *You Are My Sunshine*, *Forever Young*, *The Left Ear*, *Goodbye Mr. Loser*, and so on, it is roughly estimated that there were 28 IP films released in the year, obtaining a box-office revenue of nearly RMB 8 billion Yuan. After studying the source of those IP films, it can be found that there were 15 films created based on novels, accounting for a big proportion. In addition, cartoon, variety show, radio play, song, drama and even online hot post also become important sources of IP for film creation.

However, behind the great upsurge, there are some problems that the relevant personnel in the industry should think about. Could it make top-selling films as long as the film has a so-called hot IP? Does it reflect the exhaustion of sources for film creation behind the rapid development of IP films? Just like the previous consensus in the industry, targeting an IP is just the first step and it still needs some time to give full play to the maximum value of IP, which also needs continuous attempts. How to keep the content that fans like in cinematographic adaptation and consider the other elements of film art form to attract more common audiences to watch

those films, becomes the key to the great success of IP films.

It can be predicted that IP films will continue developing in 2016. There will be more films adapted from the popular novels with great fan groups in cinemas. It deserves our expectation that whether the films created based on popular IPs can reach and exceed the level of original works in art quality and whether the great upsurge of IP can be maintained in the film industry.

Keyword No.4 : New Force

The clustering rise of new creation talents is particularly prominent in 2015. The works created by the new generation of filmmakers have occupied the principle position in Chinese film market.

According to some reviews, the inter-generational and ethnic barriers among Chinese filmmakers are disappearing after the fourth generation of film language reform and the fifth generation of film aesthetics exploration. From a TV host He Jiong and some Korean-style idols Lu Han and Wu Yifan, to Jing Boran and Li Yifeng who come from talents shows and now become very famous and a director of literary films Chen Jianbin who used to be a famous actor...steady fresh blood comes into Chinese film industry, and there are also more and more opportunities for newcomers, which changes the situation that several famous directors and stars play a dominant role completely. Lots of cross-sectional talents with rich practice experience, good understanding about the demand on market segmentation and flexible Internet thinking come into the film industry, which makes the creation of Chinese native films show a new atmosphere of embracing everything that is useful and being tolerant to diversity. A large number of outstanding young professional talents of film also stand out in succession, and new directors, new screenwriters, new actors and actresses and new technical experts also gradually carry the burden of film creation and production, which brings a new force for Chinese film industry and calculates

the most valuable talent resources and experience for the future development of Chinese film industry.

Newcomers appear in the field of creation continuously and new reforms are carried out in the field of technology, virtual reality technology brings 360-degree immersive view experience; Screen-X achieved the image projection to the walls on the left and right of theatre through 270-degree projection technology, which made audiences get the new experience of extension in three sides; and in order to solve the problem about the insufficient life and brightness of xenon lamps in 3D projectors, the laser era of projection equipment is coming.

Keyword No.5 : Town Youth

1.26 billion tickets were sold in Chinese film market in 2015, which was nearly close to the total number of Chinese people. The number of Chinese audiences is huge, which still goes up gradually, and they are the real unsung heroes for Chinese film industry to develop continuously. Nowadays, with the continuous upgrading of film industry and the gradual subsidence of Chinese cinema layout, more and more young people from second-tier cities or bellow become the main force for watching films in Chinese film market.

According to some relevant investigation data, the percentage of film audiences from first-tier cities decreases from 25% to 18% in the film market while the percentage of audiences from second-tier cities goes up from 75% to 82%, and among it, the percentage of the audiences from fifth-tiers cities reaches 17%, which is catching up the percentage of audience from first-tier cities gradually. In addition, the generation after 1990s becomes a main group of film audience, and among them, the number of audiences who are the generation born after 1995 is increasing rapidly, and a great number of people from the generation after 1990s choose to buy film tickets online, accounting for 57% of the total users who buy film tickets online.

With the rise of town youth among all Chinese film audiences, in order to make Chinese domestic films get close to people's real life, Chinese film industry needs to find a diversified development path, so as to meet the different levels and different cultures of demand for film watching. But on the other hand, it is also necessary for the marketing link of film industry to enhance the guidance and cultivation for audiences and promote the overall quality and aesthetic standards of audiences.

Keyword No.6 : Internet plus

Internet plus is one of the keywords in the economic development of China in 2015, and besides, Internet is also widely used in the various links of film industrial chain.

With the help of Internet, various new commercial activities began to enter the film industry---online IPs became abundant sources of film ideas, BAT (Baidu, Alibaba and Tencent) and other Internet giants participated in the creation and production of films positively, online sales of tickets and online seat selection became the mainstream in the market, online social platforms turned into the new channels for film marketing, and Internet became an important marketing channel for the derivatives of films, which also promoted the development of more post-cinema products, and the big data of Internet also provided important data for the development of film industry. Meanwhile, the film industry also provided a wider platform and new development opportunities for Internet economy.

(The article is an extract from the Xinhua News Agency, the original author is Shi Jingnan, and it is slightly abridged and modified in the publication based on the original text)



The previous review



Since 2013, China International Film Festival London has been successfully held for three years. More than 40 films have been featured at the film festival. Also, more than 10 film forums and conferences has been held at the film festival. China International Film Festival London had a great impact in China and UK's film cultural field and society, which gave a stronger assurance for the exchange and development of Chinese and British films.

Fan Bingbing, Yang Mi, Li Bingbing acted as the image ambassador for each China International Film Festival London respectively. Famous filmmakers, like Simon Yam, Nick Cheung, Leo Ku, Li Xiang, Wang Likun has attended the previous film festival, as well as well-known directors, like Peter Chan, Zhang Yibai, Xie Fei, Teddy Chan, Wang Yuelun, Ho Leung Lau, Ann An, etc. Outstanding films, including Dearest, Blind Massage, Lost In Thailand, The Golden Era, Brotherhood of Blades, The Taking of Tiger Mountain, have got prizes. The film festival has got great support from China and Britain government.



Prospects

The upgraded China Britain Film Festival 2016 will be held in May in London. The film festival will continue to focus on the promotion of film communication between China and UK to export more outstanding Chinese films, and to present more excellent Chinese filmmakers' work to British audiences.



中英电影节
China Britain Film Festival

2016.5 中英电影节 China-Britain Film Festival

Predecessor of the film festival

China Britain Film Festival grew out of its predecessor China International Film Festival London. China International Film Festival London has been jointly supported by Film Bureau of State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (SARFT), British Film Institute (BFI), British Council (BCF), China Film Association, Beijing International Film Festival Organizer, and Beijing Film Academy. It was one of the largest and most influential Chinese film festival overseas. In 2015, The director of Film Bureau of SARFT Zhang Hongsen suggested rename China International Film Festival London as China Britain Film Festival. The president of China International Film Festival London Mr. Kong Xiangxi will take up the post of the president of China Britain Film Festival.

Aim of the film festival

The aim of the film festival is to provide a platform for the close relationship between Chinese film industry and global film industry, realizing the prosperity and development of the film industry. Meanwhile, as a professional film exchange platform, the film festival will also give support for the promotion of international films in China and Asian market.

2015 China Box Office TOP50

The gross of those 50 films reached 32.32 billion yuan and accounted for 84.71% of total gross of China's box office in 2015.



Rank	Film Title	Gross(million yuan)	Adminssions(million)	Showings	In Release(days)
23	Spectre	541.99	17.18	618517	43
24	Stand by Me Doraemon	530.19	15.29	680067	48
25	Big Hero 6	526.13	14.27	548007	64
26	Go Away Mr. Tumor	510.97	15.19	602845	82
27	Tiny Times 4.0	488.56	15.76	475302	49
28	The Left Ear	485.21	14.27	579821	64
29	Kingsman: The Secret Service	484.43	14.28	484109	38
30	Mr. Six	467.12	14.88	314360	22
31	Cinderella (2015)	444.55	14.07	591713	38
32	Minions	435.70	12.80	653794	49
33	Running Man (2015)	434.04	13.87	559492	41
34	The Taking Of Tiger Mountain	427.83	10.53	440092	139
35	The Hundred Regiments Offensive	413.43	10.08	210869	131
36	Snow Girl and the Dark Crystal	408.80	10.15	318262	51
37	Monk Comes Down the Mountain	400.76	9.95	422302	42
38	Forever Young	379.00	11.98	373386	41
39	Miss Granny (2015)	365.89	11.62	598719	89
40	Our Times (2015)	361.84	12.82	513667	48
41	You Are My Sunshine	353.51	10.72	552899	71
42	Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb	322.92	9.91	568276	39
43	Hollywood Adventures	322.32	8.90	457191	37
44	Surprise - Journey To The West	320.54	11.17	465184	30
45	The Dead End	304.80	9.74	470561	58
46	Boonie Bears: Mystical Winter	295.33	8.57	373685	69
47	Let's Get Married	284.46	8.51	392687	49
48	Jupiter Ascending	284.26	7.57	410029	48
49	Somewhere Only We Know	283.33	8.54	365399	44
50	Ex-Files 2: The Backup Strikes Back	251.97	8.34	447679	55

Foreign Films Overview

Comparison of domestic and foreign films



Among 8 films with over 1 billion box office: 5 domestic films, 3 foreign films

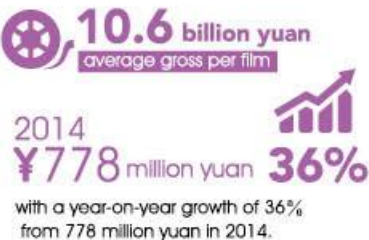
Box Office TOP10



2015 foreign films box office TOP10



Box Office TOP20

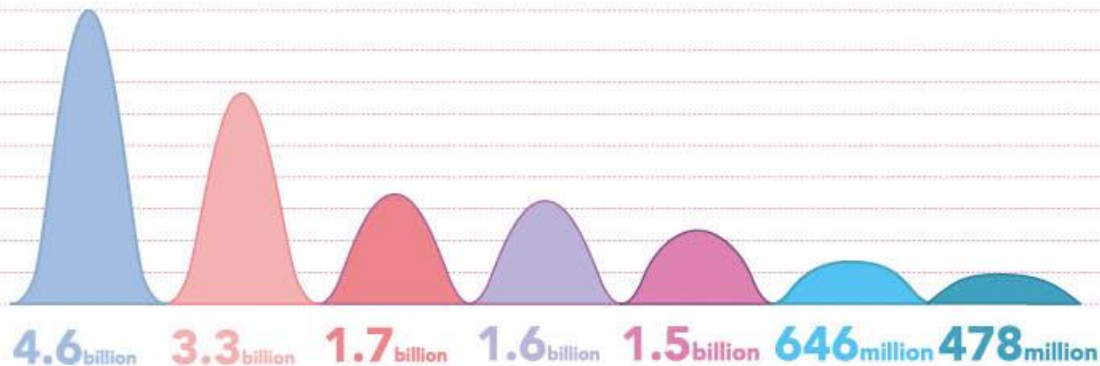


2015 domestic films box office TOP10 (by December 31)



Box Office Performance of Hollywood Companies in China (yuan)

- Universal Pictures
- Disney
- Warner
- Paramount Pictures
- Fox
- Columbia Pictures
- Lionsgate

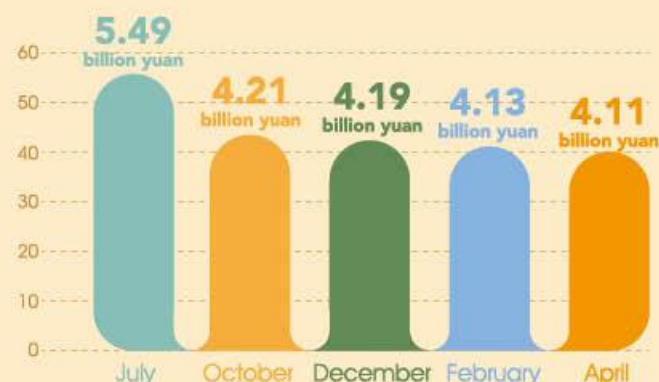


Schedule Analysis

Week Box Office TOP3 in 2015



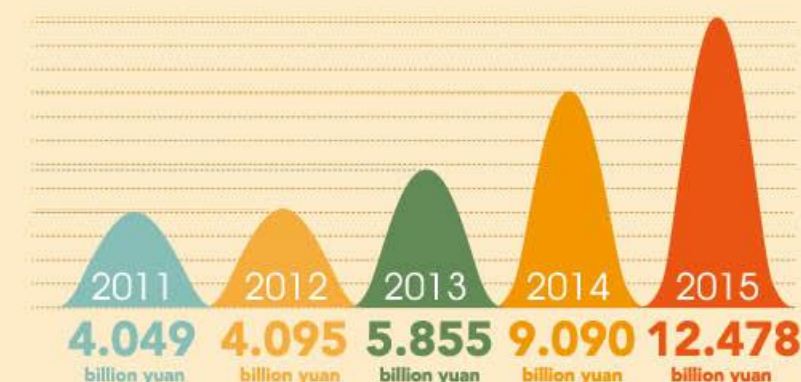
Month Box Office TOP5 in 2015



2011-2015 National Day Box Office comparison



2011-2015 Summer Holiday Box Office comparison

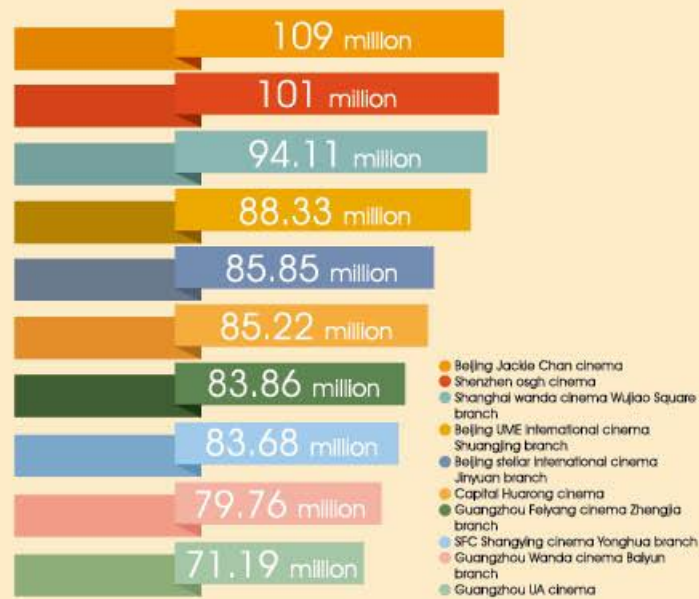


2015 Schedule Capacity:

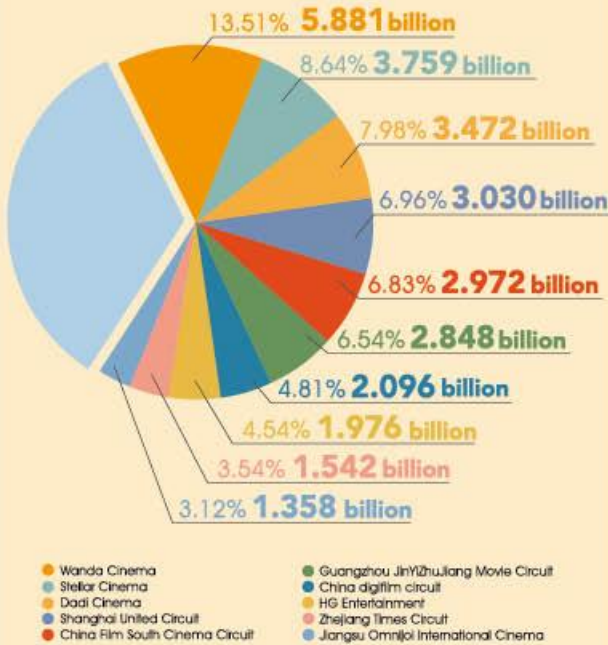


Theater & Chains

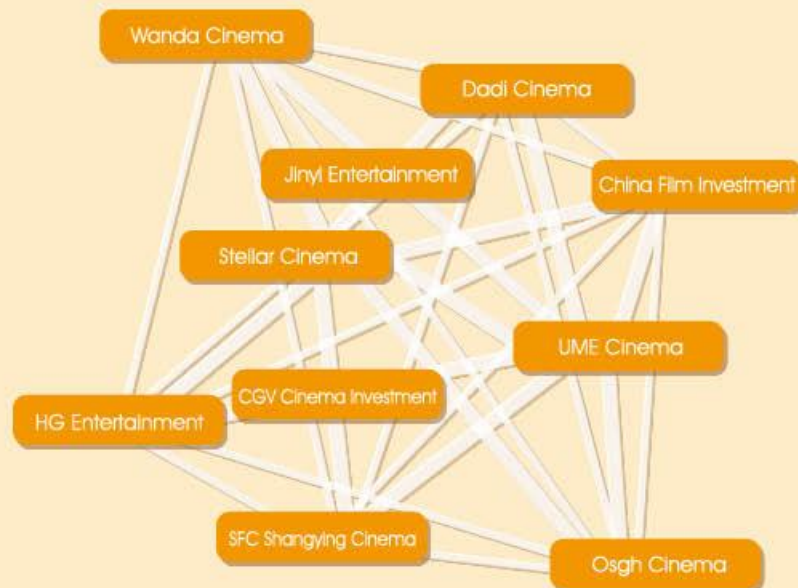
2015 TOP10 theater with the most box office sales



2015 TOP10 theater chains with the most box office sales



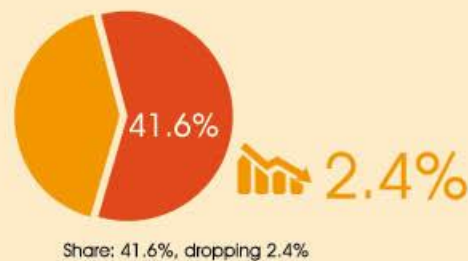
TOP10 theater investment Management companies



Total gross of box office

18.24 billion yuan

5.3 billion yuan
a growth of 5.3 billion from last year

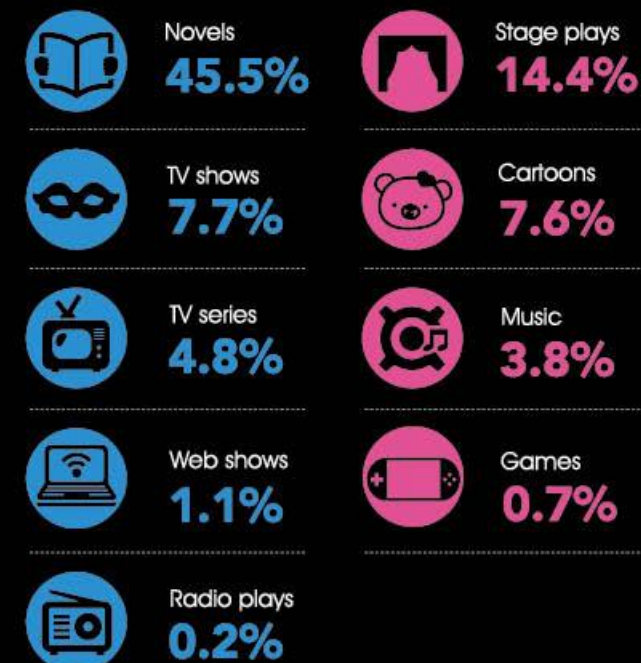


IP & Genre Films

Due to the lack of original content, adaptation from IP becomes the major trend in 2015.

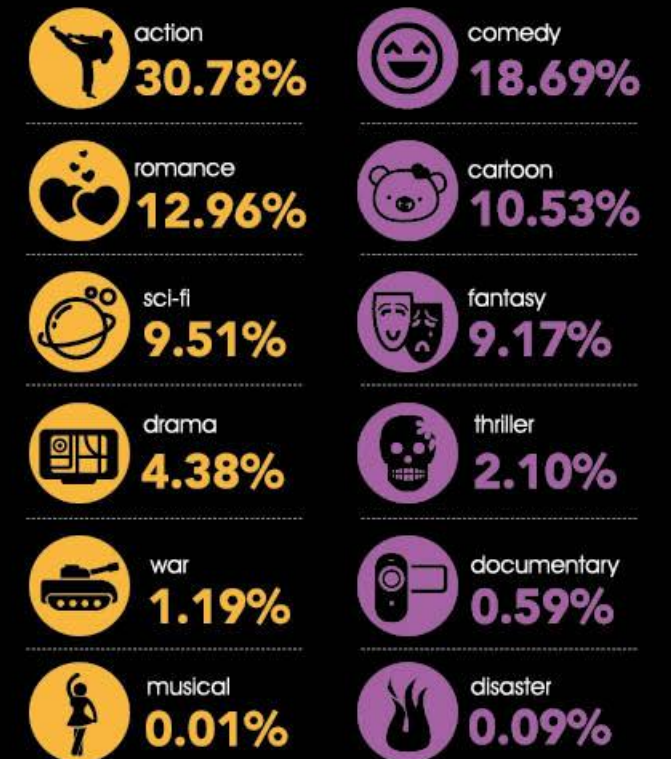


Proportion of IP films box office

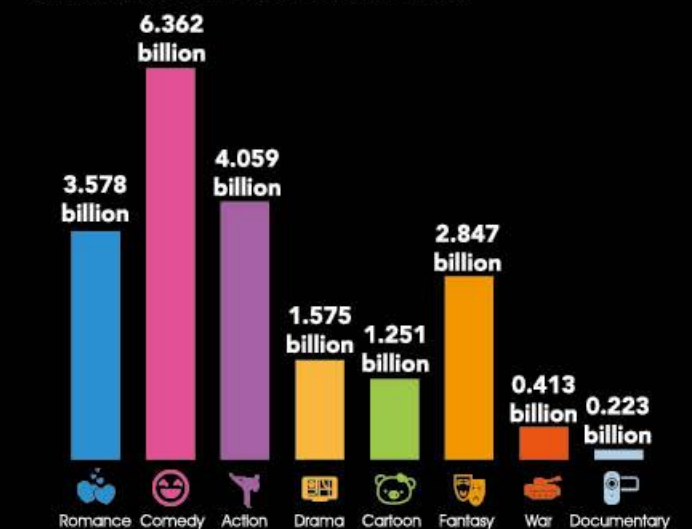


The rise of genre films and the diversity of subjects could be found in 2015. Comedy is the most popular genre in China.

Proportion of 12 genre films' box office



Genres of 2015 Chinese blockbuster films



Mojin: The Lost Legend

—A Benchmark for Chinese Film in its New Golden Age

Although the concept of genre films is gradually seeping into the collective consciousness of Chinese filmmakers and audiences, domestic genre movies are still by and large confined to four types: comedy, love, youth, and martial arts. Major films in the American market are concentrated in magic, science fiction, superhero and low-middle budget films, and types such as gangster, spy war, love and even art. Numerous classic cases of low-budget films defeating large ones have emerged in the Chinese film market, such as *Lost in Thailand* released in 2012, *Jian Bing Man* and *Goodbye Mr. Loser* in 2015, allowing “light” movie products such as teenage romance and comedy to occupy the market. In contrast, “heavy” film products such as *Monster Hunt* and *Mojin: The Lost Legend* are rare in the Chinese film market. Even though China has become the world's second largest film market, this current imbalance in film types does not fit such a massive market. The overall development of domestic

film categorization still remains in the exploratory stage.

The “tomb adventure” was once the “dead zone” of Chinese genre films. How can it appeal to general audiences? How large is the market capacity for this genre? When shooting began for *Mojin: The Lost Legend*, the answers to these questions were unknown. The trial of the new model for domestic blockbusters begins with this film project.

The production scale of *Mojin: The Lost Legend* is unprecedented, as proven by the hundreds of sophisticated design drawings of the scenes, up to 2,742 hours of shooting within the studio, construction of dozens of underground real-world scenarios, and the gathering of numerous film elites from all over the world. This gives Chinese audiences new expectations for the production and development of domestic films. Insiders commented that *Mojin* would be a new benchmark for the Chinese film industry.

The ‘Big Three’ Behind the Film

In 2012, the popular novel series *Ghost Blows Out the Light* caught the eye of Song Ge, then general manager of Wanda (Film). After Shanghai Huaying Culture Media Co., Ltd. bought the rights to the first four volumes, Wanda Media managed to acquire the film rights to the last four. In the middle of 2012, Song Ge appointed Wuershan as the director and Chen Kuo-Fu as the producer.

After the brokerage contract with Huayi Group expired in March 2013, Chen Kuo-Fu officially signed a contract with Wanda Media to be the producer of this movie. While organizing the preview ceremony of *Young Detective Dee: Rise of the Sea Dragon* in September 2013, Wang Zhonglei (President of Huayi Brothers Media) entered a collaboration with Ye Ning (Vice President of Wanda Cultural Industry Group) and Wang Changtian (President of Enlight Media Group) to jointly invest in the filming of *Mojin: The Lost Legend*.

Having their respective advantages and sufficient funds, the three companies were able to undertake the filming independently. They chose to cooperate because the Chinese film industry had been calling for a more standardized industrial system; such an alliance between giants fit the bill. As the largest investor, the well-capitalized Wanda Media is the copyright owner of the original novel and has the most powerful theater system in China; by virtue of its vast experience in film production and rich resources in terms of movie stars, Huayi Group helped build a cast featuring Chen Kuo-Fu, Wuershan, Chen Kun, Huang Bo, Shu Qi and Yang Ying at the initial stage of film preparation; as for Enlight Media Group, it has plentiful resources for ground network distribution

and abundant experience in Internet-based marketing.

The initial investment ratio of Wanda Media to Huayi Group to Enlight Media Group was 6:2:2. At the final stage, other two companies obtained part of the shares from Wanda Media and were involved in the investment. Thanks to the vertical and horizontal industrial integration of the three companies, *Mojin: The Lost Legend* was positioned as a commercial blockbuster in line with Hollywood production standards. It did exceptionally well at the IMAX box office soon after its release, breaking the three-day opening and single-day box office records for IMAX local films previously held by *Monster Hunt*, as well as IMAX box office earnings from midnight screenings. On January 8, 2016, cumulative box office takings for *Mojin: The Lost Legend* (which had been running for 22 days) overtook that of *Lost in Thailand* (which earned 1.613 billion Yuan), making it a runner-up among Chinese-language films.

The expected production cost of *Mojin: The Lost Legend* was 150 million to 180 million Yuan, but it ended up overrunning 250 million. Fees for film publicity and distribution caused the overall project costs to double. Along with 250 million Yuan of investment costs, the total income for the investors will be around 500 million Yuan if the box office totals 2 billion Yuan.

Seeking Multilateral Balance and Setting a Standard for the Film Industry

In the process of filming *Mojin: The Lost Legend*, pressure came from fans of the original novels as well as from general audiences. The State Administration of Radio Film and Television (SARFT) stated that films with this subject needed to express creativity despite budget overruns. Not only did the creative staff overcome these difficulties, they also translated this pressure into a highlight of the film.





THE GHOULS
鬼吹燈 尋龍訣

監制 陳國富

烏爾善 導演

Maintaining the Essence of the Original Novel vs. Creating New Stories

Unlike the “diverging” structure of network creation, filmmaking has a “focused” structure. When adapting a movie from a novel, the further the film is from the original text, the better it will be, and the more likely it is to become a classic. Movie creators decided to write a story based on the original novel, keeping the essential view of the world and character design, but allowing the “Mojin Xiaowei” (grave robbers) to embark on a new adventure.

The relatively mature four-act structure was chosen for the narration of *Mojin: The Lost Legend*. After the hero fights with his girlfriend and Wang Kaixuan, the latter goes back to China.

Act I: Hu Bayi tells Shirley Yang the reason for Ding Sitian’s sacrifice: he decided to return to China against the will of his girlfriend, which forms the falling dramatic paragraph structure featuring negative value in Act I.

Act II: Wang Kaixuan is kidnapped by a false cult leader. Shirley Yang follows Hu Bayi to the grassland and recalls a love story from her youth. Conflict between Shirley Yang and Hu Bayi is temporarily resolved. These are the altered elements in Act II.

Act III: At the crucial moment, Hu Bayi helps Wang Kaixuan solve his problem, but is then controlled by the false cult leader. The opinions of the three people diverge, forming the falling structure of Act III.

Act IV: The three characters fight the final devastating blow, and plot of the story reaches a climax in super-intense action scenes. The structure of the overall story is a perfect “W” shape.

The plotting of the first half adopts classic scenes, and a cause-effect series that holds the audience’s interest. The film has sufficient scenes, dramatic conflicts, angular movement, fast-

moving plots and a sense of direction. Unfortunately, the second half is not as classically-focused and rigorous as the first half.

Censorship from SARFT vs. Oddness and turmoil from the screen

Fear of censorship should not become an excuse for filmmakers to produce mediocre movies. When outline of this story was submitted to SARFT for examination, the body proposed three requirements: First, the name of the film could not be *Ghost Blows out the Light*. This is why Wuershan used *Mojin: the Lost Legend* (from the original novel) instead. Second, the main characters should not commit crimes. At the beginning of the story, the protagonists

had given up their old business and returned to the underground world not for the purpose of taking money, but to recall the past. Finally, SARFT required that the supernatural phenomena had rational explanations.

It is easy to perceive the “tricks” employed by the filmmakers to avoid censorship by SARFT. They used “mojin” to replace “tomb robbing” and even clean up the “Mojin Xiaowei”, who are hired at high pay by alleged “brokers”. Thus, the legendary outlaws have respectable jobs. Every time the protagonists go into the graves, they are threatened by villains at every step. By giving consideration to both creativity and censorship, *Mojin: The Lost Legend* serves as a classic case for future films with the same subject.



Local Mystical Culture vs. Hollywood-Style Narration

Wuershan and Chen Kuo-Fu agreed to graft the Hollywood fantasy adventure thriller genre onto Chinese films, using the subject of tomb robbing. Wuershan drew reference from overseas fantasy adventure films such as Hollywood classics *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Tomb Raider*, *National Treasure*, and *The Mummy*, as well as genre films from Europe, Germany, and France. He also drew reference from the narrative viewpoint of video games such as *Tomb Raider 9* and *Uncharted 2 & 3* before eventually writing a paper on the subject. To graft Hollywood’s narrative structure seamlessly onto Chinese tomb raiding culture and localize American elements to the maximum degree, Wuershan also read books such as *The Chinese History of Tomb Raiding* and *Art of the Yellow Spring*, and studied papers on grave customs in the Liao Dynasty (907-1125). He even led a team to explore Liao Ching Ling, the Eastern Qing tombs, and the Ming tombs.

In addition to creating a thrilling and comic adventure film, Wuershan wanted audiences to notice the time marks that appear in the film: the craze for doing business and going abroad in the late 1980s, the Cultural Revolution and the educated youth going to the countryside in the 1960s, the War Against Japanese Aggression in the 1940s, as well as ancient history. “It is actually associated with the real history experienced by the Chinese people. I suppose that’s why this film is quite realistic in this regard. It is a film with intertwined fantasy and reality,” Wuershan says.

An Underworld Spectacle

The move was filmed on a vast set that occupied almost all of China film studios, including Asia’s first and second largest studios (at five thousand and three thousand square meters respectively) to build an enormous underground space. Each scene had to comply with the following two requirements: First, it had to have a visual fulcrum, inspired by northern nomadic shaman culture. Second, all scenes had to be connected by a timeline to justify the three graves. In creating the Japanese base, art director

Hao Yi designed a mixture of rust iron and cement for maximum effect. The zombies refer to Zdzisław Beksiński's utopianism and *Alien* director H. R. Giger’s dark aesthetics.

In the tomb design, cool colors were used to create the gloomy atmosphere of the underground world. The stone door reproduced the ferocious stone figures of the concept map, with stone and gravel replacing hard rock to reflect the grave’s age. The moment the tomb door is opened, the stone “gatekeeper” horse and shaman zombies hove into view. Like a temple maze, the scene at the gate of hell shows Buddhist mural paintings on the walls with huge stone beasts arranged in invisible Eight Diagram configuration, awing the intruders while offering the only chance of survival. "The gate of hell" borrows elements from Turkish grottoes; holes in various sizes and shapes in the stone walls form a horrific skull in random combinations. After escaping from the gate of hell, the protagonists must walk through a narrow cliff full of sharp rocks. The art department designed this on purpose, to create a semi-enclosed space with a tinge of purple to transform the sense of eeriness into mystery.

In *Mojin: The Lost Legend*, passing the Bridge of Hades is a huge scene featuring several iron walkways over dozens of stone pillars, where legions of shaman zombies await intruders. In the scene design, the color green was used frequently to portray the strangeness of the bridge; every stone pillar is like a bone. The fracture of the wooden bridge floor – falling into disrepair and ready to break off – also refers to the principle of the Eight Diagrams: one has to be on the right spot every step to cross the bridge. The unique shaman zombie is a new Chinese-style creature with reference to China's blue ghost. The zombies’ clearly visible veins use scar transferring technology, in which every part of the body is made into a mold and then divided into different groups, including the rise and fall of its vessels.

The Goddess statue is the core of the underworld system. For the design of this scene, the director visited Liaoning Tombs in Chi Feng. He looked at looters’ holes and furnishings, but found that the

real tomb was not so large, and lacked poisoned gas and arrows. This meant that there was no real scene to inspire the Goddess statue. The director had to use his imagination, to eye-catching effect.

Core Design Concept

Some commentators believe that aesthetically speaking, the best part of this film is that all the elements can be justified. That is not to say the symbols and patterns have been examined, but that – more importantly – all of the design is meaningful. Although a magical movie, not a single pattern is used purely for decoration. Instead, all designs were developed from the core concept, right from the start of the script writing process. This stems from the film's concept designer Xu Tianhua’s cooperation with director Wuershan and art director Hao Yi. From the original concept stage to the formal preparatory period, Xu communicated with both; the latter was in charge of the big picture while Xu was responsible for the details of the design. They maintained a high degree of unity in aesthetics with a clear goal and logical production process.

The tomb’s design comes from the Liao Dynasty, which was a grassland kingdom established by Khitan. Although affected by the civilization of the Central Plains, the Liao dynasty’s religion was mainly Shamanism inherited from their ancestors. This was the basis of the design in the first version of the script. For example, the Hezhen Masks derived from the worship of the natural world. As an ancient branch of northern Chinese shamanism, Hezhen’s shaman worship has a certain kinship with that of the Khitan people. Therefore, in the early study of conceptual aesthetics, these masks’ sense of style and decoration found its way into the movie.

The movie comprises a total of 1,800 scene, of which 1,530 involve special effects, 70% of which were moderately difficult to produce. At first, the producers planned to cooperate with a foreign special effects company, but eventually chose Beijing Phenom Films Corp., partner of *Painted Skin: The Resurrection*,

given its deeper understanding of Chinese culture. However, for some highly difficult special effects that the domestic company was unable to accomplish, the producers turned to American and South Korean companies for help. The producers also invited Douglas Smith, who’s *Independence Day* won the Academy Award for Best Visual Effects, as visual effects supervisor. Douglas worked on the film from the end of 2013 until November 25, 2015. There were also some new attempts at technical detailing. For enhanced visual expression, *Mojin: The Lost Legend* uses two kinds of frame ratios: cropping of 1:2.40: for the overground part and the flashback; and full frame 1:1.85: for the underground world of the Bridge of Hades and the scenes after entering the underground palace. The use of full frame 1:1.85 offers the audience an unobstructed view with an immersive feeling. The film also pioneers the 3D left/right swap in two subjective lenses where the equinox flowers turn yellow. The intentional swap and restoration augur a brief sense of dizziness in the viewer, exactly matching the sensory experience of the characters, so that the audience can enter the strange world of the equinox flowers.

A Chinese Blockbuster With No Weak Points

Wuershan admitted that he still has many regrets, "in every link, from the script, performances, and production to the special effects, there are unsatisfactory parts that

didn’t meet my expectations”, but he also said that the value of this film is that it has "no weak points." "There are no obvious flaws in the creative or technical aspects. Keeping that balance and reaching the cut-off score is great progress for the Chinese film industry," he said.

Mojin: The Lost Legend may not be the best Chinese fantasy adventure film ever made, nor did it set out to reform the industry. However, its value lies in its achieving a balance between many conflicting factors, such as the expectations of both readers and viewers, artistic integrity and awareness of taboos, and Hollywood narrative versus indigenous tomb culture. For local fantasy adventure, this is not a mediocre start; it demonstrates moderation – the cardinal value of Confucian thinking. Zhou Kaixuan, a senior cultural industry observer, believes that “*Mojin: The Lost Legend* has the quality of a genre film. However, we can’t always expect a dark horse to push any real development within China's movie industry. The film industry should be improved to narrow the gap with Hollywood movies." The credits at the end of the film last for nearly 10 minutes, which is rare for a local movie. However, quality



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Behind the 250 million film *Mojin: The Lost Legend*

An Interview with Wu Ershan

Article source: Chief Entertainment Officer

Q: How did you work with the film crew of *Mojin-The Lost Legend*

Wu Ershan: Before I shot the *Painted Skin 2*, the company owning the copyrights of the first four books of *The Adventures of Three Tomb Raiders* approached me, inquiring about my interest in producing a movie. I read about *The Adventures of Three Tomb Raiders*, but I was occupied with filming the *Painted Skin 2*, so our conversation stopped right there. Around the year of 2011, when I was filming the *Painted Skin 2*, the film producer Chen Guofu asked me what I would be filming next, I told him that I didn't want to make another costume drama. Then he asked me if I would be interested in making

The Adventures of Three Tomb Raiders into a movie, I said yes.

At the end of 2011, Wanda Group invited screenwriter Zhang Jialu, producer Tao Kun and me together to talk about the adaptation of the book for the first time. Back in 2006, Director Du Qifeng and Xu Ke from Hong Kong seemed to be involved in this adaptation, but it didn't work out, I figured that there must be some very complicated reasons, not in terms of the creative work, but might be other hindrances. In a word, it is not easy at all as it appears. I myself can't solve them, so I invited Chen Guofu into our team to shoulder the pressure together. I tried hard to convince him to be the film's producer.

Q: Why did the film's budget go up?

Wu Ershan: We made the budget of 150 million to 180 million in 2012, now is 2015, the number would be greater if you factor the inflation rate in; meanwhile, the film-making itself is costly, encountering some unexpected situation is very normal. The work of each department needs considerable budget. In addition, we invited the top-tier actors and actresses in the mainland, and made our 3D shooting in this studio with the unprecedented scale of set construction. 1530 scenes of visual effects took us a year to complete. Every step cost money. We were granted Dragon Brand (permit for public projection) during the first review of the film bureau, which drew very clear boundaries for us, and we recalculated our budget in line with these boundaries.

Q: How do you choose and comprehend genre film?

Wu Ershan: I decided to make mainstream films in 2006, then made a selection among different types. I lack interest in certain genres, such as romance, while I don't have the freedom to make some other types such as crime

movies. So I chose fantasy, action and epic as my focus points, because these genres have relatively more space for creation and I'm also interested in these subjects. Our current technology, capital and market are able to support the making of fantasy movies, so I think there are opportunities, and I hope not to repeat what others have done before.

After my work of *Mojin-The Lost Legend* coming to an end, I must dive into the making of *The Legend of Deification* right away. War epic film has never been shot before in China.

Q: In your opinion, how should the Chinese genre films reflect their own cultural characteristics and not become replicas of Hollywood?

Wu Ershan: Learning from Hollywood is not to imitate it, but to fathom their rules. Hollywood movies are produced based on in-depth study on the audience psychology and the regularities of creation. Their summary of creative process, research of market, and comprehension of drama represent the highest standard of the film industry. We need to learn from their scientific spirit.

I deeply respect the experience of film-



making in Hollywood, but Chinese movies must have our own sense of local culture. *Mojin-The Lost Legend* is ultimately a Chinese adventure story, which is based on the Chinese history, myth and legend, and historical background, full of imagination of the Chinese people. I sincerely hope that I tell Chinese stories well.

Q: From your experience, what professional qualities should a Chinese director possess in order to make a more mature genre film? What are the missing qualities?

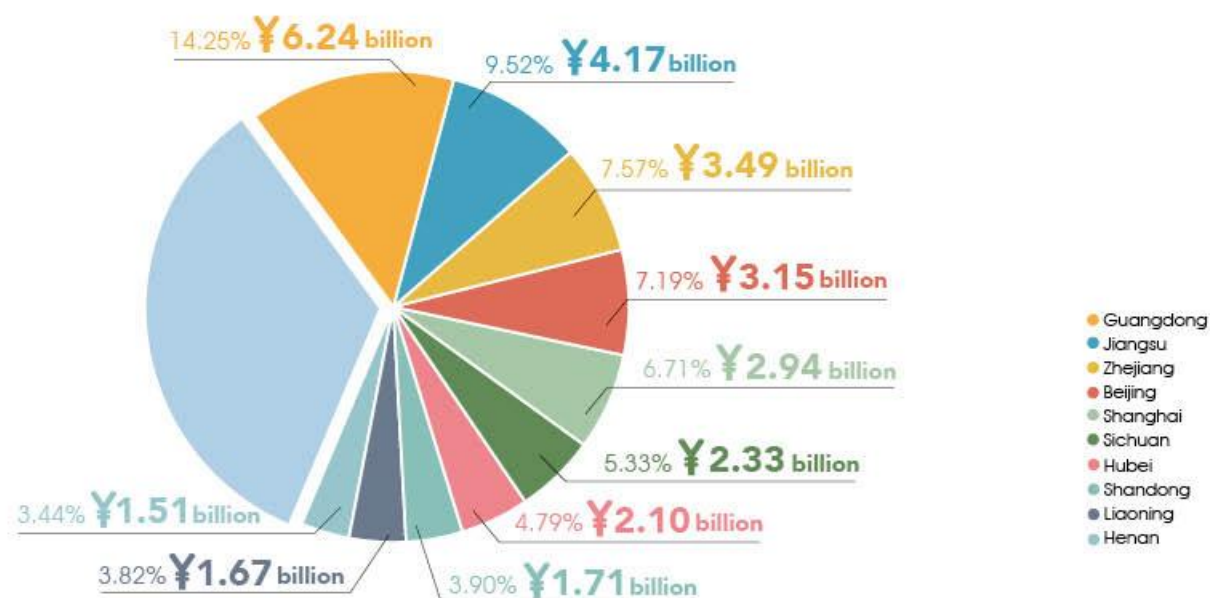
Wu Ershan: First, a director must have

a clear understanding of the genre, because genre is not decided by yourself, be it comedy or adventure, every genre has its own rules accumulated through numerous works, and directors need to know them. Otherwise, the film may go awry without sticking to the rules, so you must do thorough research in this aspect. In addition, you need to know about yourself, your true passion for which type of film, because each director has his own abilities, strengths and shortages, you can't be good at making all types of films, you may want to find the genre that you like the most, study it, then start your own creation.

(This article is based on the original interview script)

Region Analysis

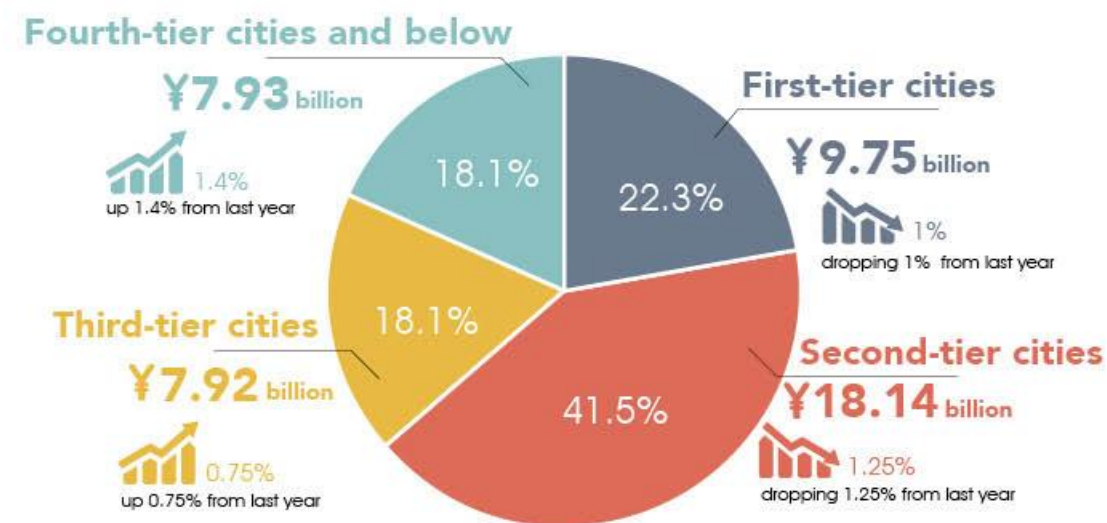
TOP 10 regions with the most box office sales in 2015(yuan)



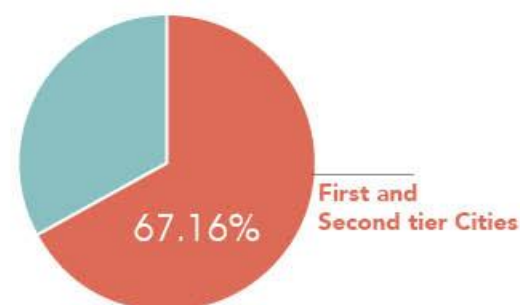
TOP 10 cities with the most box office sales in 2015(yuan)



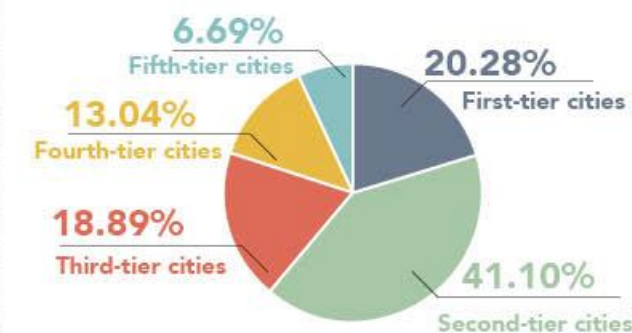
Box office shares in 1-4 tier cities



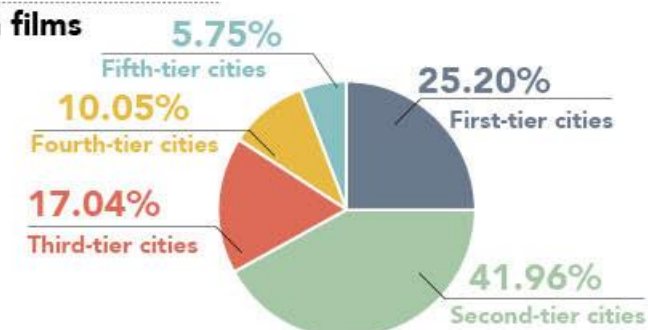
67.16% of foreign films box office comes from first and second tier cities



Box office share for Domestic films in 1-5 tier cities



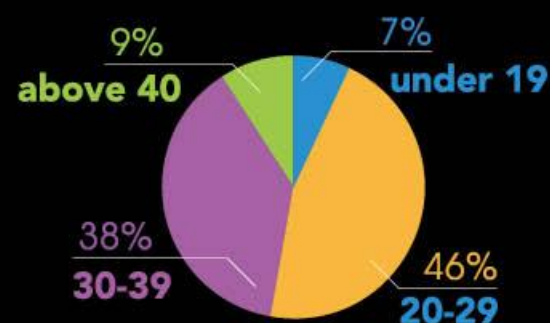
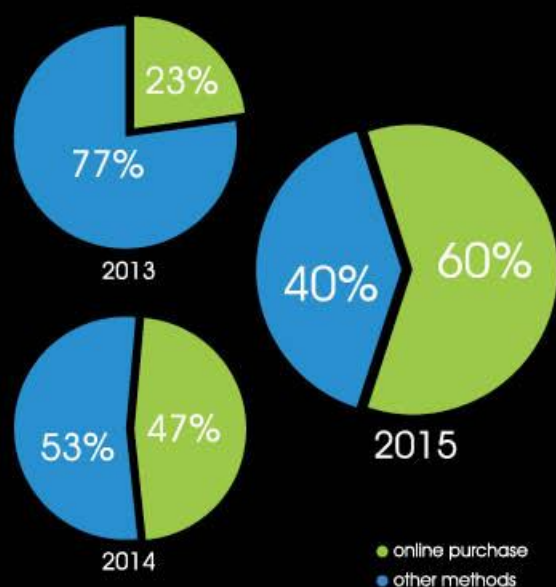
Box office share for Foreign films in 1-5 tier cities



Film-watching Habit and Young Actors

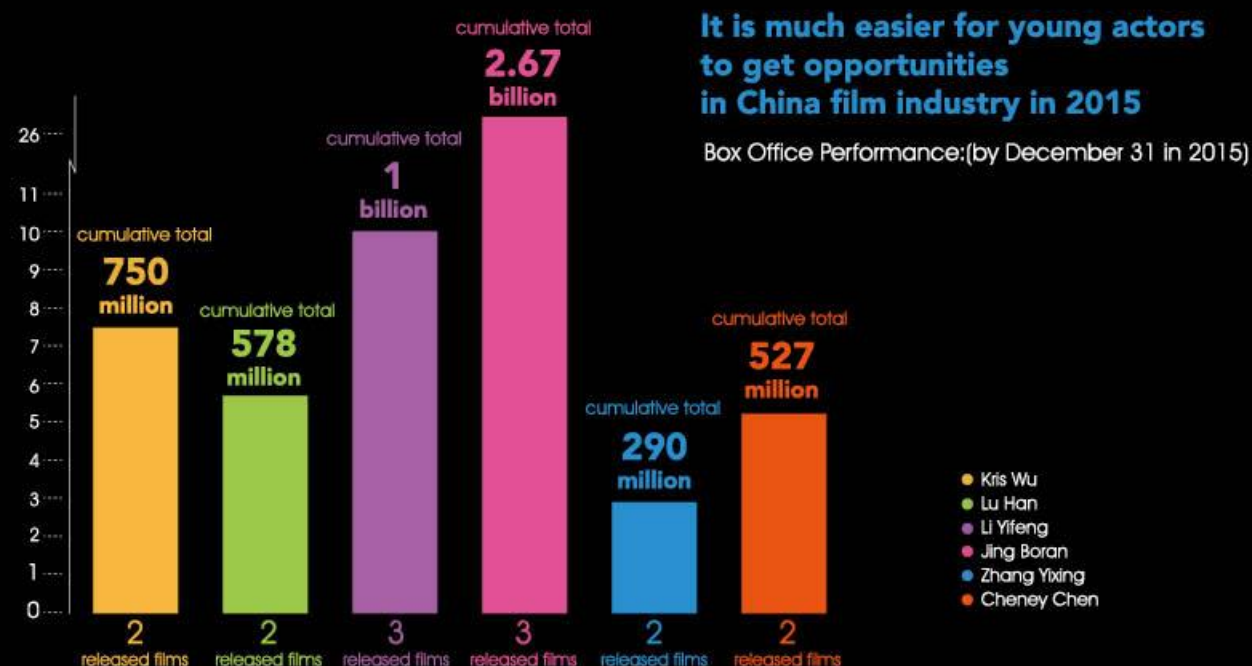
The post 90s have become the major group of moviegoers in China, with post 95s moviegoers increasing rapidly. Online purchase becomes mainstream.

2013-2015 ticket purchase methods



Quantity of Cinemas and Screens in China

Newly built



It is much easier for young actors to get opportunities in China film industry in 2015

Box Office Performance:(by December 31 in 2015)



Box office revenue per screen TOP2



China upcoming Films Schedule in 2016

China Film Co., Ltd.

For 2016: 33 films in total, including films to be released, to be shot and to be prepared.

To be released:(16 films)

My War, Xuan Zang, Chinese Salesman, Kung Fu Panda 3, The Mermaid, The Great Wall, Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon : Sword of Destiny, Warcraft, Kong Fu Yoga, My Best Friend's Wedding, Arctic, Tik Tok, Everybody's Fine, The Monkey King II, Little Door Gods, Cold War II



To be shot:(9 films)

The Founding of PLA, Dong Ji Rescuing, The Eternal Wave , Perfect Moon, The Legend of the Mongol Khan, A Journey through China, Genghis's Treasure, Plump Chicks, The Legend of the Magic Mammoth

To be prepared(8 films)

Sha Jia Bang, National Operations, Zheng He 1421, Sou Shen Ji, Code of Shanghai, The Wandering Earth, The Era of Supernova, Yijie Jiadao

Huayi Brothers Media Corp.

Huayi Brothers published 15 upcoming films for 2016.



Run For Love

Directed by Zhang Yibai, Guan Hu, Zhang Meng, Teng Huatao, Gao Qunshu
Starring: Zhang Ziyi, Peng Yuyan, Tong Liya, Zhou Dongyu, Chen Yanxi, Zhang Yi, Liang Jing, Wang Qianyuan, Wu Mochou.
Brave for true love.

New York, New York

Directed by Luo Dong
Produced by Guan Jimpeng
Starring: Ruan Jingtian, Du Juan, Miao Qiaowei, Ye Tong
Ups and downs in the ocean of lust in the days of gold rush

It's a Wonderful Life

Directed by He Weiting

The Legend of Lei Zhenzi

Directed by Xu An, Yang Longcheng

The Wasted Times

Directed by Cheng Er

Starring: Ge You, Zhang Ziyi, Tadanobu Asano, Zhong Xintong, Du Chun, Ni Dahong, Yuanquan, Yan Ni, Zhao Baogang, Han Geng,

Huo Siyan, Zhong Hanliang, Wang Chuanjun, Du Jiang, Lv Xing

Four Idiots

Directed by Cui Junjie

Who's Next

Directed by Tian Yusheng

My Name is Xuelian Li

Directed by Feng Xiaogang

Adapted from I am Not Pan Jinlian written by Liu Zhenyun, Back to realistic theme.

The Boy

Directed by William Brent Bell

The "boy" has his own rules.

Free State of Jones

Directed by Gary Ross

Starring: Matthew McConaughey

An epic action-drama film to establish a free state

The Nice Guys

Directed by Shane Black

The first cooperation between Ryan Gosling and Russel Crowe, a pair of fighting but lovely business partners, show a startling conspiracy

Warcraft

Directed by Duncan Jones

Rock Dog

Directed by Ash Brannon

Original comics of Zheng Jun, Chinese story+ China investment + top-notch Hollywood production team

Create a new modal for animated movie

Out of This World

Directed by Peter Chelsom

Talented child star Asa Butterfield+ Gary Oldman

A cute child from Mars comes to the earth to seek Dad.

Savage Lawyer

Directed by Peter Segal

The first cooperation between Chinese baldheaded Mr.McDreamy and the Hollywood stylish guy

Bona Film Group Limited.

26 films from nearly 30 Chinese filmmakers including Ang Lee, Tsui Hark, Derek Yee Tung-sing, Andrew Lau, Siu-Fai Mak, Andy Lau, Shaohong Li, etc.

International project: *Billy Lynn's Long*

Halftime Walk

Action films: *Death Duel, Monsters of Martial Arts, the Matchless, Legendary Outlaw*

Gangster films: *Zhuai Long (Chasing the Dragon), Mekong, Tang Kou, the Deadly Reclaim, Red Spy*



Comedy films: *From Vegas to Macau3, the Dirty Dozen, Mysterious Treasure*

Suspense films: *The House That Never Dies2, Ghosts Don't Say, Catch the monkey*

Drama films: *When will the moon be clear and bright, Change of Heart, Moonstruck, Spell of the Fragrance, SPL III, Unbroken, a new unnamed movie directed by Huang Jian, a new unnamed movie directed by Shaohong Li*

Love films: *Pre-nup, Bold Journeys of Love, How much love can be messed up*

Others: *Play version of Mojin: the Lost Legend, the Internet drama the Great "Crack"*

Le Vision Pictures

In 2016, Le Vision Pictures will provide a total of 20 films of different types to cater to different groups of audiences, including the young, parents and children views, movie fans, etc.

1 film for parents and children: *Boonie Bears III*

6 youth films: *Perfect Lady, Being Lovelorn*

on School Opening Day, Mr. High-heel, Fashion Together, Beauty queen's personal expert, Who Sleeps My Bro

7 fantasy films: *The Grave Robber's Chronicles, Criminal Minds / Profiler, Bounty Hunters, Love in Restaurant, Agent Man, Jumper, CRI ICAL*

2 humanitarian literary films: *Redemption of an Evil Tramp, Kangrinboqê*

3 Hollywood blockbusters: *Mechanic: Resurrection, Criminal, Gods of Egypt*

1 Sino-US co-production: *The Great Wall*

Enlight Media Corp.



Conquering, English, Man Zhou Kuai Che, Shanghai Beach, Shaolin Temple, Shaolin Temple: Thirteen Cudgel Monks Protecting the Tang Prince, Yesterday Once More, I Belonged to You, Swords of Legends, I am Gonna Marry You, The Legend of the Condor Heroes, Everyone Knows, Sandglass, Europe Adventures, Eastern Palace, Transformation, Crying Out Love, in the Center of the World, The Devotion of Suspect X

Fujian Hengye Film Distribution Co., Ltd

From 2016 to 2017, Hengye plans to release 28 films in total with the targeted box office 3 billion Yuan.

Movie to be Release

The Secret, The Guest, The Mysterious Family, MBA Partners, The Bodyguard, The Floating Planet, One Night Only, Imperfect Couple, Oolong courtyard, Peaceful Island, Girls II, The Road Not Taken, All's Well Ends Well Too III, The House That Never Dies II, MIN & MAX, Hi, Nuts, Childhood Buddy, Neighbors from Hell



Films in production

The House That Never Dies III, Black Pupil, Glorious Mission, We can't do anything except love, Mu Lan Qi Yuan, I Love You, Community, Welcome to San Francisco, The Last Taoist Priest

Alibaba Film Co., Ltd

Ten great III of peach blossom, The Ferryman

MPA YEAR-END APPRECIATION RECEPTION CELEBRATES ACHIEVEMENTS, AS WELL AS ASPIRATIONS, IN CHINA



as they helped celebrate MPA's contributions to promoting copyright protection, U.S.-China cooperation and co-productions, and work to build a platform for international exchange from within China. Media partner *Chinese Film Market* magazine was in attendance.

"I am grateful for all the contributions of the past year, especially those that supported the development of Chinese film industry, and building exchange and cooperation between our two film industries," said William Feng, the event's host and MPA China Chief Representative. "Chinese audiences' passion for movies has the power to have a global impact. Please allow me to extend MPA's sincere congratulations to all those who work in films and our appreciation of Chinese audiences as we mark the passing of a great 2015."



The Motion Picture Association's (MPA) star-studded year-end appreciation reception in Beijing gave voice to attendees' aspirations for increased and fruitful cooperation between China and the U.S.' film industries, as China's film market grew to become the world's second largest in 2015. On Jan. 9, more than 150 Chinese and overseas filmmakers and celebrities looked toward jointly building a bright future



1. Wanda Group: Jack Gao; China Film Co. Ltd: Kuang Xiaolin; One Foundation: Wang Yiyang; Max Screen Distribution: Zhang Xun; China Film Co. Ltd: Jiang Ping; CCTV Movie Channel: Jia Qi; China Film Co. Ltd: Xiao Ping; MPA: William Feng
2. National Copyright Administration of China Copyright Department: Yu Cike
3. Film Bureau, State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television of the People's Republic of China: Luan Guozhi
4. China Film Co. Ltd: Jiang Ping
5. Chinese Film Market: Wang Yu (Center)
6. MPA: William Feng

Guests included: Yu Cike, Director General of the National Copyright Administration of China Copyright Department; Luan Guozhi, Deputy Director of Film Bureau, State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television of the People's Republic of China; Jiang Ping, General Manager of China Film Co. Ltd; Jia Qi, Deputy Director of the Program Center, CCTV-6; Miao Xiaotian, President of China Film Co-Production Corporation; Famous hostess Xu Gehui; Actors Zhang Guangbei and Aisin Gioro-Qi Xing; Film Directors Zhang Yibai, Guo Fan, Lu Yang and Zhouwen Wubei.

Influential industry attendees included: Jack Gao, Group Vice President and CEO of International Investments and Business Development for Wanda Group; Liu Shabai, Vice President of Hunan TV & Broadcast Intermediary Co., Ltd; Zhou Tiedong, President of Beijing Novo United Films Co., Ltd.; Gong Lanwei, President of ICFF; Li Yansong, President of IQiYi Pictures as well as representatives from MPA's membership companies, which include Warner Bros, Paramount, 20th Century Fo, Sony/Columbia, Buena Vista and Universal.

China produced 686 feature films in 2015, with an annual box office reaching 44 billion RMB and 49% year-on-year growth, well beyond the industry's expectation of a 40 billion RMB box office. These developments signal China's potential to soon become the world's largest film market with the greatest box office.

Chinese Film Market interviewed attendees as they talked about their impressions of the Chinese and American film markets and their hopes for the New Year. Several in-depth



interviews with influential guests will appear in future issues of *Chinese Film Market*, which is dedicated to presenting accurate and timely reports on China's film business and presenting it to the world.



1. Director: Guo Fan; Film Finance: Zhu Li; Famous Hostess: Xu Gehui; Actress: Aisin Gioro-Qixing; MPA: William Feng
2. Dr. Song Miao; Film Bureau, State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television of the People's Republic of China: Luan Guozhi & Liu Chun
- 3&4. Guests with Chinese Film Market
5. Paramount Pictures: Yan Xiaodong; MPA: Peng Wei; Twentieth (20th) Century Fox Film Corporation: Xie Fei; Twentieth (20th) Century Fox Film Corporation: Liu Siru; MPA: William Feng; The Walt Disney Company: Sun Jing; MPA: Niu Meng; Sony Pictures Entertainment: Huang Dai; Twentieth (20th) Century Fox Film Corporation: Shen Hui

長江

CROSSCURRENT

圖

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY YANG CHAO STARRING QIN HAO XIN ZHILEI

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NATACHA DEVILLERS WANG HONGWEI SHAN DONGBING GAO FENG TAN FEI ZHOU ZHI WANG XUEFENG
ALSO STARRING WU LIPENG WANG HONGWEI JIANG HUALIN TAN KAI ZHAO YE AN WEI FANG TAO HAO ZHIYU
EDITORS YANG MINGMING KONG JINLEI DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MARE LEE PING-BING

Berlinale

11-21 Feb

2016



#Berlinale

Meryl Streep Appointed Jury President of the Berlinale 2016

Oct 14, 2015



American actress and three-time Academy Award winner Meryl Streep will be Jury President of the 66th Berlin International Film Festival. It will be the first time in her longstanding career that this world famous star takes on the role of a juror at a film festival.

"Meryl Streep is one of the most creative and multifaceted film artists. To mark our enthusiasm for her extraordinary talent we awarded her the Honorary Golden Bear in 2012 for her lifetime achievement. I am very happy that she is returning to Berlin and with her artistic experience will take on the chairmanship of the International Jury", says Berlinale Director Dieter Kosslick.

Meryl Streep has appeared in over 40 films and is considered one of the world's most talented and versatile actresses. She has received countless awards

and nominations, including her unprecedented 19 Oscar nominations, which she went on to win three times. She was honoured with a Golden Globe eight times and nominated a further 20 times. Meryl Streep has been a guest at the Berlin International Film Festival on a number of occasions: in 1999, she was awarded the Berlinale Camera, and in 2003, together with Julianne Moore and Nicole Kidman she shared the Silver Bear award for their performances in *The Hours*. In 2006, she could again be seen in the Berlinale Competition in Robert Altman's ensemble comedy *A Prairie Home Companion*. In 2012, the Berlinale dedicated a homage to Meryl Streep and awarded her the Honorary Golden Bear for her lifetime achievement. "It is a thrill to return to the festival under any circumstances, but it is with great relish and anticipation I look forward to jury duty. The responsibility is somewhat daunting, as I have never been President of anything before, and I hope I can come up to the precedent set by the distinguished juries of preceding years. Grateful for the honor", says Meryl Streep with regard to her jury presidency.

Hail, Caesar! Directed By Joel and Ethan Coen, to Open the 66th Berlinale

Oct 14, 2015



On 11 February 2016, *Hail, Caesar!* by Academy Award winning director duo Joel and Ethan Coen will open the 66th Berlin International Film Festival.

Hail, Caesar! takes place during the latter years of Hollywood's Golden Age, during the studio system's heyday, and features an all-star cast including Josh Brolin, George Clooney, Alden Ehrenreich, Ralph Fiennes, Jonah Hill, Scarlett Johansson, Frances McDormand, Tilda Swinton and Channing Tatum. The comedy follows a single day in the life of a studio fixer who is presented with plenty of problems to fix.

The renowned directors Joel and Ethan Coen have been a prominent fixture in international cinema for more than 30 years. After their sensational debut *Blood Simple* (1984), the Coen Brothers have enjoyed international successes with audiences and critics alike for



films such as *Fargo* (1996, Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay), *No Country for Old Men* (2007, three Academy Awards in the categories Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Film and Best Director), *Burn After Reading* (2008), *A Serious Man* (2009) and *Inside Llewyn Davis* (2013). In 1998, the Coen Brothers presented their brilliant comedy *The Big Lebowski* in the Berlinale Competition programme, and their dramatic western *True Grit* opened the 61st Berlin International Film Festival in 2011.

"It's wonderful that Joel and Ethan Coen are once again opening the Berlinale. Their humour, unique characters and fantastic narrative skill are guaranteed to thrill the audience. *Hail, Caesar!* is the perfect start for the 2016 Berlinale," says Festival Director Dieter Kosslick.

The film is released by Universal Pictures worldwide and will open in German cinemas on February 18, 2016.



(All the information provided by Press Office of the 66th Berlin International Film Festival.)

Berlinale 2016: Competition Complete

Jan 20, 2016

The Competition of the 66th Berlin International Film Festival is now complete. 18 of the 23 films in the Competition programme will be vying for the Golden and Silver Bears. 19 films are world premieres.

The Award Ceremony will take place at the Berlinale Palast on Saturday, February 20th, 2016.

The complete list

24 Wochen (24 Weeks)

Germany

By Anne Zohra Berrached

With Julia Jentsch, Bjarne Mädel,

Johanna Gastdorf, Emilia Pieske

World premiere

Chang Jiang Tu (Crosscurrent)

People's Republic of China

By Yang Chao

With Qin Hao, Xin Zhi Lei

World premiere

Chi-Raq

USA

By Spike Lee

With Nick Cannon, Wesley Snipes,

Teyonah Parris, Jennifer Hudson,

Angela Bassett, John Cusack,

Samuel L. Jackson

International premiere – Out of competition

Des nouvelles de la planète Mars (News from planet Mars)

France / Belgium

By Dominik Moll

With François Damiens, Vincent

Macaigne, Veerle Baetens, Jeanne

Guittet, Tom Rivoire

World premiere – Out of competition

Inhebbek Hedi (Hedi)

Tunisia / Belgium / France

By Mohamed Ben Attia

With Majd Mastoura, Rym Ben

Messaoud, Sabah Bouzouita,

Hakim Boumessaoudi, Omnia Ben

Ghali

World premiere – First feature

Mahana (The Patriarch)

New Zealand

By Lee Tamahori

With Temuera Morrison, Akuhata

Keeffe, Nancy Brunning, Jim

Moriarty, Regan Taylor, Maria

Walker

World premiere – Out of competition

Saint Amour

France / Belgium

By Benoît Delépine, Gustave

Kervern

With Gérard Depardieu, Benoît

Poelvoorde, Vincent Lacoste,

Céline Sallette

World premiere – Out of competition

Soy Nero

Germany / France / Mexico

By Rafi Pitts

With Johnny Ortiz, Rory Cochrane,

Aml Ameen, Darell Britt-Gibson,

Michael Harney

World premiere

Cartas da guerra (Letters from War)

Portugal

By Ivo M. Ferreira

With Miguel Nunes, Margarida

Vila-Nova

World premiere

Ejhdheha Vared Mishavad! (A Dragon Arrives!)

Iran

By Mani Haghighi

With Amir Jadidi, Homayoun

Ghanizadeh, Ehsan Goudarzi,

Kiana Tajammol

International premiere

Fuocoammare (Fire at Sea) –

documentary

Italy / France

By Gianfranco Rosi

World premiere

Hele Sa Hiwagang Hapis (A

Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery)

Philippines / Singapore

By Lav Diaz

With John Lloyd Cruz, Piolo

Pascual, Hazel Orencio,

Alessandra De Rossi, Joel

Saracho, Susan Africa, Sid Lucero,

Ely Buendia, Bernardo Bernardo,

Angel Aquino, Cherie Gil

World premiere

Kollektivet (The Commune)

Denmark / Sweden / Netherlands

By Thomas Vinterberg

With Trine Dyrholm, Ulrich

Thomsen, Helene Reingaard

Neumann, Marta Sofie Wallstrøm

Hansen, Lars Ranthe, Fares

Fares, Magnus Millang, Anne Gry

Henningsen, Julie Agnete Vang

International premiere

L'avenir (Things to Come)

France / Germany

By Mia Hansen-Løve

With Isabelle Huppert, Roman

Kolinka, Edith Scob, André

Marcon

World premiere

Quand on a 17 ans (Being 17)

France

By André Téchiné

With Sandrine Kiberlain, Kacey

Mottet Klein, Corentin Fila, Alexis

Loret

World premiere

Smrt u Sarajevu / Mort à Sarajevo

(Death in Sarajevo)

France / Bosnia and Herzegovina

By Danis Tanović

With Jacques Weber, Snežana

Vidović, Izudin Bajrović, Vedrana

Seksan, Muhamed Hadžović,

Faketa Salihbegović-Avdagić, Edin

Avdagić

World premiere

Zjednoczone Stany Miłosci (United States of Love)

Poland / Sweden

By Tomasz Wasilewski

With Julia Kijowska, Magdalena

Cielecka, Dorota Kolak, Marta

Nieradkiewicz, Łukasz Simlat,

Andrzej Chyra, Tomek Tyndyk

World premiere

Boris sans Béatrice (Boris without

Béatrice)

Canada

By Denis Côté

With James Hyndman, Simone-

Elise Girard, Denis Lavant, Isolda

Dychauk, Dounia Sichov

World premiere

Genius

United Kingdom / USA

By Michael Grandage

With Colin Firth, Jude Law, Nicole

Kidman, Laura Linney, Guy

Pearce, Dominic West

World premiere - first feature

Alone in Berlin

Germany / France / United

Kingdom

By Vincent Perez

With Brendan Gleeson, Emma

Thompson, Daniel Brühl, Mikael

Persbrandt

World premiere

Midnight Special

USA

By Jeff Nichols

With Michael Shannon, Joel

Edgerton, Kirsten Dunst, Adam

Driver, Jaedan Lieberher, Sam

Shepard

World premiere

Zero Days - documentary

USA

By Alex Gibney

World premiere

Berlinale Special

The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo

Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble -

documentary

USA

By Morgan Neville

European premiere

The Seasons in Quincy: Four

Portraits of John Berger -

documentary

United Kingdom

By Colin MacCabe, Christopher

Roth, Bartek Dziadosz, Tilda

Swinton

World premiere

Where To Invade Next -

documentary

USA

By Michael Moore

European premiere

Yang Chao's travels on the Yangtze River in 2006 inspired his latest movie. And this film **Crosscurrent** successfully entered the 66th Berlin Film Festival main competition finals. He directed the movie with devotion and painstaking effort. Yang says that **Crosscurrent** is an art-house film because of its artistic and aesthetic construction.

Director Yang Chao



Yangtze Story

- Director Yang Chao and his film *Crosscurrent*

When interviewed, Yang Chao speaks in an intellectual, logical and methodical manner, reflecting his role as a college teacher. Although not a prolific film director, he has created many long and short films that have won awards at the International Film Festival. In 1997, his short film *Run Away* won the 54th Cannes International Film Festival Cinéfondation Award; in 2002, his long film *Passages* won the Golden Camera-Special Mention at the 57th Cannes International Film Festival; he has also received the Fourth Gwangju International Film Festival Jury Prize, and the Seventh Barcelona Asian Film Festival Special Jury Prize. These achievements would not have been possible without Yang's perseverance and relentless pursuit of artistic expression. "Every movie is relevant to my life, my thoughts and what really concerns me," he says. "That's where my themes come from."

Yang's travels on the Yangtze River in 2006 inspired his latest movie. "I have always loved the river, even when I was just a kid." His nighttime descriptions of the Yangtze create vivid scenes, demonstrating the soft, sensual temperament behind his intellectuality. After the scriptwriting in 2009, the shooting in 2012, and the final editing in 2015, *Crosscurrent* was finally born, and successfully entered the 66th Berlin Film Festival main competition finals. "I was happy that it was selected," Yang remarks. He directed the movie with

devotion and painstaking effort. It tells the story of a man and a woman who meet by chance in intertwined time and space. In the double narrative, there are clues about the river and the place where they met, fell in love, lost and searched for each other - a unique picture with multiple meanings. Yang says that *Crosscurrent* is an art-house film because of its artistic and aesthetic construction.

The film was shot by renowned Taiwanese cinematographer Mark Lee Ping Bin, whose aesthetic sense matches Yang's, and made for smooth cooperation. Yang says, "It's like I was learning film all over again from him." The shooting was as poetic as the plot. Most of the scenes were shot along the river, with the crew on a rented passenger boat. As the boat moved, the travelers' stories developed. Yang stuck to the original intention of the original screenplay, which meant great difficulties for the final editing process. A few editors participated in the tasks, but the

story remained unclear. It was a difficult time for Yang. To come to a final version, he had to let go of his expectations. He believes that this movie, while challenging traditional movie-viewing habits, will offer something new. "Film is supposed to have the ability to deliver a complex, sometimes psychic message. Without this, it is doomed," he says. Regarding the current situation of the Chinese film market, Yang is both rational and logic, recognizing the success of many commercial films. "Only when the market is healthy can superior films be made." He compares filmmaking to a Transformer - steel giant with a hardened surface that relies on a spiritual core of flesh and blood to come alive. Yang's metaphor is appropriate and vivid.

"People should have the ability to love others. The least that an intellectual and a director can do is to make others better," he says.



Q: Even though you aren't so prolific, you won awards at the Cannes Film Festival in 2010 and 2014. What principles do you adhere to, in order to ensure success?

Yang Chao: I don't have many products because every movie I make is related to my own life. Whether it is a short film, long film, or *Crosscurrent*, they all come from my thoughts and my experiences. I will only take what's really in my life as the theme. It's not easy to find themes; "eureka" moments don't happen all the time.

Q: Crosscurrent was a long time in the making. How was the process of creation?

Yang Chao: I got the idea for the film in 2006 when I began to travel on the Yangtze River. My imagination gave birth to the idea of filming, but it wasn't the official starting point of the creative process. I started to write the screenplay in 2009, and I wrote on and off for three years until I finally finished in 2011. The shooting began in 2012, but the actual creation of the film started in 2010 - nearly six years from its completion. The reason I couldn't finish it in 2014

or 2015 is that I encountered great difficulties in the editing process. With the help of several friends, I finally figured out what the film was supposed to be. There were several edits, and three editors have joined the work. I myself also edited. This final version was created with the help of a more open-minded, younger female editor and director, Yang Mingming. I'm basically satisfied with it.

The film's creation, from writing the script to shooting and editing, was a new process of re-learning for me. Many ideas that I was certain of when I shot my film debut *Passages* were challenged. It's of great significance to me to be able to complete such a process.

Q: What is Crosscurrent about?

Yang Chao: It is difficult to sum up this film by ascribing a theme. It is about a river and how two lovers are separated by time and space, the love between a young girl and an older, frustrated literary failure of a man. The characters and theme are relatively new for Chinese film. I feel that now, when the whole world is looking at China, they only see the most

immediate appearance - the economy, life, and even frustration, conflict and change. Similarly, a Chinese movie is constrained by how the world looks at China; most directors are telling the story of what China appears to be in varying degrees. What makes this film unique is that it penetrates those appearances, going into the soul, spirit and even the aesthetic confidence of the Chinese people, to show their beauty, culture, and image. I hope this film can become a meaningful addition to the art-house canon.

It is difficult to describe the meaning of this film since it's new in the field. Eventually it can be understood as a love story, but a strange one. It not only happens against the background of a river with an Eastern setting, but also tells the story of how the hero and heroine meet at different times and spaces. They seem to fall in love all over again, when actually it's just a lengthy separation. It ends with two people separated, with one at the head and the other at the end of the Yangtze River, just like the beginning, with only their locations changed. The film

is about the process whereby they keep missing each other. Since this narrative approach is relatively new, the audience may find it challenging and even obscure. The film also presents the basic features of a river, its changes in space and time, the differences between the old and new Yangtze, and how it is affected by contemporary human life, industry, and civilization. This river is both time and space. It is one of the narrative clues of the film, exploring the results of the progress of human civilization from the space-time changes, the arrival of a new era, and an elegy to a bygone age.

Q: Why did you choose the Yangtze over of other rivers?

Yang Chao: The poet Du Fu once wrote, "The boundless forest sheds its leaves shower by shower; the endless river rolls its waves hour after hour." All the masters have written about the Yangtze and all poets have been nourished by it. They regard it a river of time. It was where my own imagination started, and I wanted to unveil its many wonders. I hope audiences will appreciate its charm. Understanding the film should not be purely rational. When an audience is

immersed in the sounds and images of the Yangtze River through visual effects, they will gain an emotional understanding. The charm of this film is that it can offer people a new awareness of themselves.

Q: How did the shooting go?

Yang Chao: It was very interesting. Because I like the Yangtze River so much, the framing before the shooting began was very memorable for me. During the actual shooting, we rented a passenger boat and sailed from Shanghai to Yibin with all the crew living together. We started out from Shanghai on January 3, 2012 and sailed on and off all the way while shooting. We also had a props boat and a shooting boat. Looking back, this wasn't economical in terms of pure costs, but the process was very interesting. On the top floor of the boat there was a cafe, and the producer also opened a bar where everyone could go for a drink and a chat, or to watch a movie. We shot at the coldest time of year on the Yangtze River. To save money, the producer put the heating on at 11:00 at night and shut it off 3:00 a.m. A lot of people woke up at midnight because it was too cold. The harsh river wind was



often painful; we only started to warm up when the boat passed from Hubei into Sichuan. I encountered a lot of difficulties during the shooting process, mainly because I underestimated the complexity of shooting on water. The first shoot went from January 3 to March 7, lasting about 60 days and sailing over 2000 km. A lot of time was wasted on the transition period. Every time we wanted to re-shoot, the boat had to turn back. A shot that could be retaken quickly on land would require five to six times as long on the river, which resulted in a very short working session every day. This was due to my lack of experience; if I could do things again, it would be different. If I have more time and investment in future, I may do a final edit.

Q: Why did you choose to shoot in the winter?

Yang Chao: It certainly wasn't rational! It may have something to do with my early experiences. I had already accumulated some emotional inspiration and wonderful experience since shooting with my DV. I remember the first time I took the Yangtze River ferry. Noises within the cabin subsided as everyone went to sleep late at night. I went to the deck to admire the dark view outside. It actually took me half an hour to adapt to the darkness. I was gradually able to distinguish the sky from the water as well as the contours of

the land, although there was very little light at all. On the background of the distant mountains, cars headlights could occasionally be seen, twinkling for a while before disappearing. It's a kind of darkness that is thick and beautiful, with distinguishable gradations. I was amazed that the river could still be so beautiful at night after going through so much. This early experience was very important to me, and that's why I wanted to shoot in the winter at night. I knew it would be very cold, but that was what I wanted. My idea was to create a sense of bleakness instead of a lively and bustling atmosphere. Actually, we rarely had the opportunity to shoot when the waves were high. We could barely see them unless it was very windy, which it rarely was.

Q: You hired Mark Lee Ping-Bin as your cinematographer. How was he to work with?

Yang Chao: Mark expressed great interest in this film when I first got in touch with him. He was keen to work with me, since we share a highly consistent purpose. He was really helpful in shooting the film. He's a big fan of traditional Chinese poetry, and we often talk about it when we spend time together. He knows a lot about traditional Chinese culture, and is single-minded in his work. He is professional and technically accurate in process photography as well. However,

as a man, he is very easygoing and low-key.

We took his advice to use real film. Of course he is capable of using digital techniques, but he figured that the Yangtze River should be captured on film. It was only the re-shoots—taking up 10 %—that were not shot on film. It now seems that *Crosscurrent* will be the last batch of Chinese movies shot on film. Shooting with film worked very well with the contrast of light ratios inside and outside the ferry, as well as better color reflection. We didn't feel that we needed high-definition digital, since it can create a strong sense of coldness. Scenes shot on film, in contrast, are always very warm. Cooperation with Mark gave me an opportunity to learn from a more experienced practitioner, and allowed me to brush up on traditional culture while figuring out how to use modern storytelling methods. It's like an inheritance. I integrated plenty of Western music with the Eastern landscape of the film. What's more, the story itself carries a Western temperament, which Mark appreciated. He agrees that it's an inheritance.

Q: Were you impressed with the two lead actors, Qin Hao and Xin Zhilei?

Yang Chao: Qin Hao is a professional literary film actor, and is unique today. Most actors of his age work in commercial or dramatic movies. He volunteered to

Director Yang Chao

star in the movie as soon as he read the script. I admire his intelligence. He understands literary screenplays because he has worked with Lou Ye and Wang Xiaoshuai in the past. He has a discerning eye for quality. I can say for sure that he did a great job with *Crosscurrent*. As for the heroine, it was hard to find the right person for the role. The target candidate needed to be hard working and dedicated, but also intrinsically brave and unique. When Xin Zhilei first came to audition, I nearly missed her. She was talking with the deputy director outside, and I met her during my tea break. She had already been rejected, but I figured I should give her a second chance. She was not so experienced, but struck me as talented, and brave enough for the role. Imagine if she hadn't been there when I went outside for a cup of tea!

Q: The development of independent and art-house Chinese films has been fraught with difficulty. Have you encountered any financial pressure during the filmmaking process?

Yang Chao: It's not directing a movie or shooting an art-house film that is difficult. I'm not rich of course, but I don't think it's difficult to shoot an art-house film. The only source of difficulty comes from the creation itself. That is to say, being unable to find a way out, or not being powerful and smart enough, or failing to understand the technique of filmmaking profoundly – all this can lead to real problems in the creative process. A total of five funds were provided for shooting *Crosscurrent*, probably overtaking similar films over the years in this regard. Initially, because our screenplay was approved, the film was included in the Cannes Film Studio Project. Later, we were given the Rotterdam Fund as well as the Southern Fund. We were also lucky to have support from a wide range of friends in the preliminary preparatory stage. The film needed to present something





spectacular, so wasn't a small investment, and financing was really tricky.

Crosscurrent should be counted as an art-house film. This kind of film is relatively rare in the Chinese movie market. Shooting art-house films is riskier than literary films because they depend more on individual creativity. It's a case of offering audiences a brand new perspective through transforming a personal spiritual world into images.

In the process of creation, we were under pressure from investors and distributors. But everyone involved understood the risk and value of producing such a film. Both our past producer and present producer, Wang Yu, are able men. They gave me a lot of help.

Q: The editing process was lengthy. What kind of obstacles did you encounter?

Yang Chao: The final version lasts 116 minutes, which I am happy with. The fundamental reason for so many rounds of editing is that the editors and I were not confident enough. We were not sure if we could tell a story in such a way, or if the positive and negative narratives could be used simultaneously in each scene, or even if our crazy ambition could finally make its way onto the screen. Another factor is that, as a filmmaker, I always want to add more to a film. I've always wanted my films to cross genres, which is an unrealistic idea. So, we made detours

and finally gave up on the interpretative model exclusive to genre films. Instead, we put the focus on clarifying the main plot, and thus adjusted the sequence of the screenplay. Initially, I believed I had done a

perfect job in shooting, and thus refused to change the material or the original sequence of the screenplay. I insisted that the original intention should not be altered, which was a mistake on my part. The final version of the film was finalized, to a large extent, by a young director Yang Mingming who broke my fantasy with his dauntless courage. The lesson I've learnt is that I should never take the structure and sequence of the screenplay

too seriously. Rather, I should regard the shot materials and the existing situation as a basis for rearranging the screenplay. After I lost my arrogance, I resumed creation with the real materials, and proceeded with my original intention. The final sequence of the screenplay ended up being different to the original one. The adjustments of the sequence, although plentiful, are not radical. Generally speaking, only 3 to 5 adjustments are required to produce a very different effect. This kind of adjustment in turn makes room for the preservation of many scenes. I originally wanted to keep the order of the voyage and attempt to present the original appearance of the Yangtze River. However, I later discovered that the cast performance and the logic of the story could not be realized that way. The result of the adjustment turned out to be positive, so I changed my perspective. Shooting an art-house film is like building a new world, which is risky. Success is not guaranteed.



Q: *Crosscurrent* has been shortlisted for the competition program of the 66th Berlin International Film Festival. How do you feel about the nomination?

Yang Chao: I feel very happy about being shortlisted. This at least is a recognition for the film itself. The West and Western film festivals have always wanted to see China's reality in Chinese movies, which is difficult to live up to. I am particularly grateful to the Berlin Film Festival Selection Committee this year for having the courage to choose a brand new movie. I think this is a result of mutual understanding about the art of filmmaking. We are very pleased. Whether we win the prize depends on the quality of rival entries, and the preferences of the judges. I believe that *Crosscurrent* will be a challenge for them. Admittedly, these judges hold some fixed ideas about Chinese film and Chinese society, so it remains to be seen if the power hidden in the film can break these strongly held viewpoints.

Q: Currently, the global film industry's eyes are firmly fixed on the Chinese film market. What is your personal evaluation of its development?

Yang Chao: First of all, I think the market has become healthier. I am a voracious movie fan who takes in all types of films, especially thrillers, and magic & fantasy movies. After the market gets back on the right track, the survival of the fittest mechanism will be gradually adopted. I have noted the success of genre films such as *Goodbye Mr. Loser*, *Breakup Buddies* and even *Jian Bing Man*. They have been able to satisfy audiences, maintain strong plots, and carry a spiritual message, which is quite remarkable. There has been little room for Chinese art-house films or independent movies. Of course, audiences are not to blame. They are only likely to watch other kinds of movies until they become fed up with genre films. They are not obliged to enjoy art-house films. As for capital, it is profit-



driven and therefore is not responsible either. I suppose that administrative, institutional and government cultural departments should assume responsibility for cultural inheritance and promoting the development of independent films and documentaries. The benefits brought by these films cannot be measured by commercial interests. It is their spiritual influence that counts. With this influence, quality will improve and the happiness index of the general public will rise. The government should act as a guide by preventing the capital and audiences from hurting these creators and works, and by taking a long-term perspective in considering the influence of art-house films. The government must make room for the development of independent and art-house films.

I once came up with a metaphor to describe the core value of film industry:

it's like a Transformer – a gigantic steel robot that is powered by a real heart. This symbolizes the status quo of the film industry. At its heart is fragile human nature, and a spiritual life made of flesh and blood. Even commercial films with large-scale investments are driven and powered by it. This gigantic monster (commercial films) is ultimately supported by the heart of flesh, i.e. emotional resonance. The difficulty comes when the steel and the flesh meet. The heart of flesh will be shattered without protection. As a result, the steel giant will be reduced to scrap metal.

(By Huang Baowen & Alexandra Yang)

Youth Hidden in the Darkness

– Interview with Director
Wang Yichun

This interview with director Wang Yichun was conducted in a studio at the FIRST International Film Festival Xining. It was a clear winter afternoon in Beijing – cold, but sunny. Wang Yichun's temperament reflected the weather. No gloomy literary-film director she. Modern, liberal and stylish to boot, she appeared at the door in a cloak, with a fashionable handbag and black-framed glasses.

We took several photos before the interview began. Just as Wang Yichun picked up a book from the shelf, a little girl ran in like a gust of wind, crying "Mom!" Just as quickly she disappeared, leaving me and the photographer astonished. "Was that your daughter?"

"Yeah." "Such a big girl!"

Wang Yichun laughed. "It's sunny. Let's take some photos outside." During the shoot, she offered frequent suggestions. "It might be better here. It feels right, somehow." "It's so unoriginal to stand like this. Shoot me when I am walking." Then she would stride in front of us swinging her hands, wearing her constant smile.

Wang Yichun is nothing if not honest and sincere. Our interview was more like a casual chat between friends. She is a new director without a significant background in film. These are competitive times, and there's a myriad of new directors on the scene. However, as a newcomer, she has made waves. Her first work *What's in the Darkness*

won her Best Director at the 9th FIRST International Film Festival Xining, and was nominated in the new generation segment of the Berlin International Film Festival.

Wang began writing a novel in 2002. Others spoke highly of her work and encouraged her to turn it into a film. Ten years later, she finally decided to adapt it as a film script, which took another few years. It then took two more years from shooting *What's in the Darkness* to the upcoming red-carpet show in Berlin. The film tells the story of a girl becoming a wife and then a mother.





Lucky, but no fluke

Wang Yichun spent a lot of time finding a name for her maiden work. In her own words, it was a tortuous process. *What's in the Darkness* came to her unexpectedly. "It was lucky!" she says. *What's in the Darkness* was originally the name of a book conceived by the writer Wang Shuo, but

he never ended up writing it. "I don't care where it came from," Wang Yichun says with a laugh. "I know it is mine!" Then she laughed. For Wang, Wang Shuo is the master. She read almost all the books he wrote during her juvenile time.

Another stroke of luck for Wang Yichun was the film's female lead, Su Xiaotong,

who plays Qu Jing. A young actress, she was born in 1997. She played Su Fei in Director Zhang Li's *Forty Nine Days*, to wide acclaim. Wang Yichun interviewed many actresses in this age group when casting the film. She chose Su Xiaotong the moment she laid eyes on her.

Although young, Su came highly recommended by her agent. However, she was late to sign up for shooting. "Can you imagine that the actress had not checked in one day before the official shooting?" Wang recounts good-naturedly. "While I was waiting for her, the cinematographer asked me, 'Director, are we shooting tomorrow?' I answered, 'Yes!

Let's shoot the part without the lead actress.' He replied, 'But she's in in every scene!' As it happened, Su was worth waiting for. She played the role of Qu Jing perfectly." Wang Yichun is persistent when she sets her mind to something. She has always had a penchant for literature, and has written since she was a young child. *What's in the Darkness* was written as a novel at first, recounting Wang's growth. During a period of more than 10 years, she experienced her father's death, her marriage, and the birth of her daughter. She recorded everything, and used it as her plot.

Adolescence

– we never forget

Few who have watched *What's in the Darkness* would call it a youthful melodrama. Wang Yichun agrees. "Youth films don't reflect my own adolescence, nor do they describe the majority of people. It isn't about whitewashing bad memories. I want to depict genuine stories that can touch people and remind them about their teenage years in an honest way."

What's in the Darkness opens in 1991. The shooting was done in Henan Province, where Wang Yichun grew up, in a declining state-owned factory. She is still acquainted with many people at the factory, whom has known since childhood. Initially, Wang wanted to make a film that would appeal to post-1970s and post-1980s audiences, but she's found that post-1985 and even post-1990 audiences have fallen in love with it, too.

Adolescence – good or bad – is impossible to forget.

Wang Yichun's aim with this movie was to offer a version of her own story

both as a cautionary tale, and to chime with audiences who may have gone through something similar.

"I remember when I was a child, I would complain that my waist was hurting. Adults would say that a child didn't have a waist. Later, when I was in senior middle school, a teacher said in the first day class: 'You're grownups now, so you should know how to save face. Do not force me to scold you!' From this, it seems that we didn't know how to save face before that. It always seemed that adults knew better. I want to remind them that I've never forgotten their overbearing attitudes."

"Later on, I learnt that many people have stories of being picked on. It's not melodramatic; it's a common adolescent experience.

With *What's in the Darkness*, Wang Yichun has demonstrated her ambition for filmmaking. The movie combines a suspenseful suicide with the growth of an adolescent girl. The two storylines are both probe into the identity of the "murderer": one is visible, the other invisible. From the perspective of a young girl, it is ubiquitous emotional abuse, incompetent love and exaggeration, as well as ignorance of self-esteem. All



Brief Synopsis

In the summer of 1991, a rape case breaks the peace of a small town. The fathers of two girls in the local middle school are the policemen in charge of the case. Nevertheless, they have very different working styles: QU's father is a stubborn legal medical expert always insisting on ironclad evidence, while ZHANG's father is a retired soldier who handled cases relying on his intuition and often extorted confessions through torture. The supposed criminal is caught by ZHANG's father yet similar cases keep happening. Nobody has noticed ZHANG's disappearance since she was kicked out of class.



this is a fertile field for the sin of false and erroneous cases. Respect and justice is more or less a “luxury” for adults and children alike. Wang Yichun says, “In a film critic’s words, this is NOT a story asking who the murderer is. It is a story telling who the murderer is!”

Some may say that this is a literary film, but Wang Yichun cannot offer a very accurate confirmation. In her eyes, this question is hard to answer. She doesn’t claim to be a professional director, so isn’t restrained by technical or professional terms and jargon. Her language might be literary, but the story must be popular. What she fears most is unreasonableness. She would never present a hypocritical or empty story, because it would not be authentic. This is why audiences from many different age groups have found resonance in *What’s in the Darkness*.

Filmmaking is a serious job



Wang Yichun believes herself to be an unrestrained and fussy person. But if she is unrestrained, how as she found her way into the film circle? She studied French at university and has held many jobs. She once worked for a French company, and then a media company firm, before opening her own advertising agency. So she isn’t short of experience. She believes that



Q&A with Director and Writer- Wang Yichun

What’s in the darkness?

There are unrecognizable scents of flowers, the stirring desire of love, a cold-blooded killer, the selfish, the indifferent and the helpless cries of the weak. Not to forget there are simple but kind people who help guard and illuminate the path for you with a small glimmer of light.

However, for the young girl in the movie who has a pair of big, dark eyes, the harder she tries, the more difficult it gets for her to understand what lurks in the darkness.

Why does the real criminal never appear?

He doesn’t appear because even I don’t know who the real killer is, like many cases of that period. I have researched many misjudged cases for this story, and later realized those exposed to be misjudged are merely the tip of the iceberg. Among the cases, the chance for those who had been wrongfully accused to prove the truth was usually random and rare. I want to tell a murder story without knowing who the murderer is. On a broader prospective, the killer could be anyone. The passive aggressiveness from the family and school and the disrespect for individuality both help plant and nurture the flowers of evil.



these previous jobs prepared her for making a film. “All experience in life is useful. You might feel it is something of a waste, but only when you look back will you see that it was indeed meaningful.”

When asked about the rumor that she sold her house to shoot the film, she laughs to deny it.

All of the money used to shoot *What’s in the Darkness* came from Wang Yichun’s careful planning. Because she raised the funds herself, the process was long and difficult. She faced plenty of doubts and mockery. Some

people felt that she wanted the money to start a new life. Others saw her as deluded.



She tried to explain that she was shooting the film for fun, as well as for professional purposes, but not everybody was convinced.

When she decided to shoot the film, Wang did not think it would prove popular with viewers. She was a film fan, but not a lover of literary movies, preferring commercial offerings instead. Because she is also the screenwriter, she considers how to meet an audience’s expectations. The story should not be boring. The director should not be conceited. No one would be interested in that. She says, “I hope to say what I want to say clearly, but at the same time I must consider the audience’s feelings, and raise a smile.”

It was with this ideology



Please tell me about the beginning, the eye exam scene. Also about the ending. It’s a fascinating open ending, but it seems like the young protagonist Qu Jing has chosen to head into “the darkness” of some kind?

The eye exam at the beginning of the film is a metaphor. There are many things in the world that the harder you try to focus on, the more obscure they become. All you can do is to stagger along the path to adulthood. The ending to some extent is a reflection of the beginning. Qu Jing thinks she has seen through everything, but Zhang Xue’s postcard subverts the understanding she has just built of this world. She feels so shocked and overwhelmed that she walks into the darkness to find the truth.

You majored in French in university. What changed your mind to become a filmmaker? Probably because people who was born in the 70s and the 80s are gradually influencing the conversation in the society these days. Some of them have made films about growing up in 90s. However, I feel like the scenes in those films are very



in mind that Wang Yichun began the creation of her maiden project. To raise funds, she gave up many of her happiness as a little woman. During the shooting, she often joked with the production manager that with one truck running out, one bag was gone, then 10

lipsticks. "Because I raised all the financing myself, they thought that I was playing for fun. They didn't know that I live very frugally. Everything I did, I did it for the movie. I alone knew how nervous I was. Even at the time of writing the script, I would refuse invitations to dinner."

different from those in my memory. It's almost like everyone decided to Photoshop, maybe even embellish their past. Therefore I wanted to make a different film about true youth and growth. I think it resonates with many people because it confronts the confusion and awkwardness of growing up.

I heard that you wrote, directed and invested in the film all by yourself with a very small group behind you. It is a very typical way of making an independent film, but your film's values are somehow different from typical independent films. Can you summarize the differences? I have never thought about this, but it is an interesting question. Each generation in modern China lived through a vastly different experience. Therefore each generation has unique ways of expression. Several days ago, director CHEN Kaige at one occasion stated that those who were born in the 70s and 80s have nothing to reminisce about, because they never suffered. In my opinion this is a bit too harsh. Every generation has its unique struggles.

We were born at the beginning of China's economic reform. When we were children, all of our essays opened with cliché lines like 'the breeze of the reform caresses our motherland'.

The father in the film says that our generation is born in a honey jar, and arrived just in time to eat, as previous generations suffered so much hunger. But does having enough food mean everything? This is the question the little girl in the film wants to ask her father, and the same question the activists and intellectuals in the 80s and 90s wanted to ask the government officials. I almost named this film 'In the Honey Jar'. I hope this film will at least encourage more open expression of our generation.

(Provided By Wang Yichun, the material has been edited and condensed.)

Some might feel that Wang Yichun was risking her life shooting this film, given all the problems that arose. The actual shooting only took 30 days, and the crew worked day and night. Due to the excessive workload, they nearly went on strike. Wang was reduced to skin and bone by the end. She returned to Beijing a shadow of her former self. An aunt who'd known her since her childhood took pity on her. "Money is not earned overnight! Why do you work so hard?" she asked. For this, Wang Yichun had no reply. "I didn't know how to explain to them that it wasn't about earning money, and that I may end up losing it."

For Wang, it was well worth shooting her favorite story, even if the film fails at the box office. Her devil-may-care attitude is at once

admirable and astonishing. Lack of experience, Wang's preparation for the movie is trying her best to write as detailed as possible, even the wearing and dialogue of the background characters are considered.

Although her attitude is admirable in a way, the final effect is lacking in tactics, and appears immature. However, this chimes with the status quo of an adolescent girl in 1991.

With this experience behind her, Wang Yichun is now looking ahead. Her next film will be another youthful story with some dark and absurd elements, and she plans to prepare more carefully.

In December 2015, *What's in the Darkness* was nominated in the new-generation segment of the Berlin International Film

Festival, gaining access to a wider platform. Although Wang's skills are still immature, she is full of hope and enthusiasm. She respects her audience as much as her own mindset. This is possibly the most valuable quality in a Chinese film director at present.

If *What's in the Darkness* attracts comparisons to a literary film, it is only because of Wang's artistic temperament. In today's diverse Chinese film circle, it is indeed an eye-opener to see such a young female director. Let's hope that she comes back from Berlin with a Silver Bear. If not, a Teddy Bear will suffice.

(By Huang Baowen)



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38	4Square Films	248	Contents Panda (NEW)
22	9ers Entertainment		Copenhagen Bombay Sales
A		35	Co-production Office
	Ablaze Image		CPHDOX Copenhagen Int'l Documentary Film Festival
149	ACEK	38	Creative England
23	AGADIC — Associação Galega das indústrias Culturais	24	Creative Europe MEDIA
17	AG DOK / German Documentaries		Creative Europe MEDIA - European Commission
149	Adriana Chiesa Enterprises	38	Creative Scotland
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8	Akdis Film International	139	Czech Film Center
110	Albanian Film Center & Media Desk	D	
35	Alfama Films	25	Danish Film Institute
147	All Rights Entertainment	103	Darlight Films
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134	Altitude Film Sales	155	Devilworks
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103	Arclight Films	114	Dutch Features Global Entertainment
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10	ARRI Media	103	Easternlight Films
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114	Austrian Films	102	Embankment Films
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35	Bac Films	120	Empress Road Pictures
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122	Bielberg Entertainment	38	Evolutionary Films
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38	British Film Commission	153	Fabrication Films
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153	CineTel Films	17	Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein
242	CJ Entertainment	8	Film-Line
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101	Content	1	FilmNation Entertainment

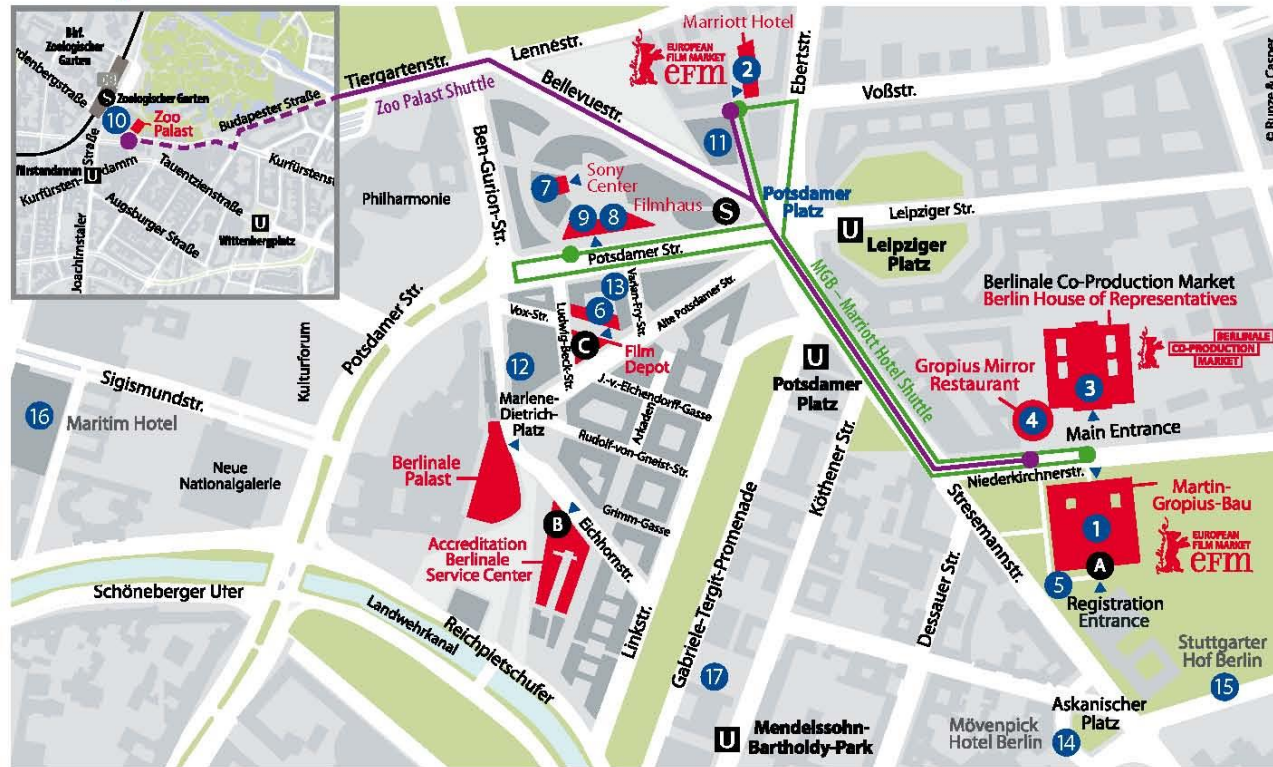
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G			
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17	MFG Filmförderung Baden-Württemberg	107	Reflexion Films
148	Minerva Pictures Group	101	Rewind Film
101	Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo		Riga Film Fund
119	MIPTV / MIPCOM		Rija Films
107	Mirsand	101	Roma Lazio Film Commission
30	MK2		Romanian Film Center
228	M-Line Distribution	107	Roskino
15	Mongrel International	107	Russian World Vision
146	MonteCristo International	S	
252	Moonrise Pictures	142	Sahamongkolfilm International
109	Moroccan Cinematographic Center	226	The Salt Company
131	Movie View International	101	Sardegna Film Commission
250	MPI Media Group	38	SC Films International
113	Multivisionnaire Pictures	120	Screen Australia
34	Myriad Pictures		Screen Flanders
N		37	Screen International
132	National Film Board of Canada	153	Screen Media
	National Film Centre of Latvia	1010	Seville International
41	National Film Development Corporation Malaysia (FINAS)	38	Sheffield / Doc Fest
	NATIVE — Indigenous Cinema	125	Shochiku
	Netherlands Film Commission	244	Showbox
	Netherlands Film Fund	41	Singapore Film Commission
141	New Europe Film Sales	139	Slovak Film Institute
153	New Films International	139	Slovenian Film Centre
21	Nikkatsu Corporation	133	SNO — Groupe M6
111	Nippon TV	8	Sola Media
17	nordmedia	222	The Solution Entertainment Group
38	Northern Ireland Screen	23	Spain Film Commission
25	Norwegian Film Institute	1018	Spotlight Pictures
O		107	Star Media Film
21	OCVB Okinawa Film Office	268	Studio 100 Film
11	Odin's Eye Entertainment	1020/1024	StudioCanal

200	Sundance Institute	T	
25	Svensk Filmindustri		Taiwan Cinema
25	Swedish Film Institute		Taylor & Dodge
115	Swiss Films	153	TBS — Tokyo Broadcasting System Television
		21	Telefilm Canada
		132	Terra Mater Film Studios
		1014	TF1 International
		136	Toei Company
		110	Toho
		143	Tohokushinsha Film Corporation
		21	TomCat Films
		129	Toscana Film Commission
		101	Trentino Film Fund & Commission
		101	TriCoast Worldwide
		157	True Colours
		101	TrustNordisk
		25	Turkish Films
		112	Ukrainian Film Corner
		116	Umedia International
		246	Unifrance
		35	Unifrance
		21	Unifrance
		22	United Pictures
		V	
		102	Variety Communications
		8	Verband Deutscher Filmproduzenten
		35	Versaille
			Vietnam Cinema Department
		21	Village
		153	Vision Films
			Visions Du Réel
		12	Visit Films
		104	Visual Media Institute
		153	VMI Worldwide
		W	
			Walonie Bruxelles Images
		240	WestEnd Films
		35	Wide
		35	Wide House
		40	Wild Bunch
		128	Wind Child Entertainment
		107	Wizart
		140	The Works
		35	WTFilms
		X	
		124	XVIII Entertainment
		100	XYZ Films
		Y	
		154	The Yellow Affair
		Z	
			Zigoda

European Film Market 2016



Main Locations

European Film Market (EFM)

- ① EFM / Martin-Gropius-Bau (MGB)
Niederkirchnerstr. 7
- ② EFM / Marriott Hotel
Inge-Beisheim-Platz 1
- ③ Berlinale Co-Production Market /
Berlin House of Representatives
Niederkirchnerstr. 5
- ④ Gropius Mirror Restaurant
EFM Industry Debates
Shortcuts for First-Timers

Registration

- Ⓐ Registration at the MGB
for Foreign Film Industry &
International Festivals
- Ⓑ Accreditation at the Berlinale
Service Center (debis Atrium)
for SPIO & German Film Industry

EFM Screening Facilities

- ① MGB Cinema
Martin-Gropius-Bau
- ② Marriott Studio
Inge-Beisheim-Platz 1
- ③ Parliament Studio
Berlin House of Representatives
- ⑤ EFM Cinemobile
Martin-Gropius-Bau,
Registration Entrance
- ⑥ CinemaxX
Entrance: Voxstr.
- ⑦ CineStar (Sony Center)
Potsdamer Str. 4
- ⑧ Arsenal (Filmhaus)
Potsdamer Str. 2, Basement
- ⑨ dffb cinema (Filmhaus)
Potsdamer Str. 2, 9th Floor
- ⑩ Zoo Palast
Hardenbergstraße 29a

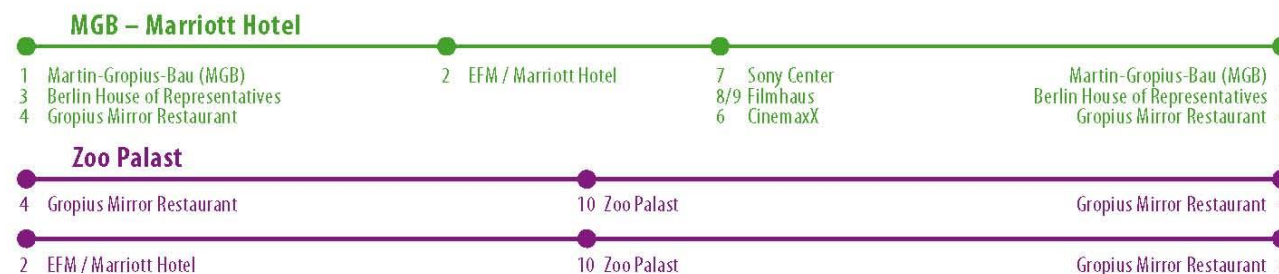
EFM Film Depot

- Ⓒ Film Office
Voxstr. 3, 2nd Floor

Hotels (selected)

- ② Marriott Hotel
- ⑪ The Ritz-Carlton Berlin
- ⑫ Grand Hyatt Hotel
- ⑬ The Mandala Hotel
- ⑭ Mövenpick Hotel Berlin
- ⑮ Stuttgarter Hof Hotel
- ⑯ Maritim Hotel
- ⑰ Scandic Hotel

EFM Shuttle Routes



第十九届上海国际电影节
19TH SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

THE 19TH SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL June 11-19, 2016

Grounding in Asian Market Promoting Chinese Films Supporting New Talents

- Golden Goblet Award
- Asian New Talent Award
- International Panorama
- SIFFMART
- SIFFORUM
- Opening & Award Ceremony
- I-SIFF
- Jackie Chan Action Movie Week

Submission Dates

SIFFMART
Booth Application: 2016.01.01-2016.05.15
Buyer Registration: From 2016.01.01
Project Entry: 2015.12.10-2016.03.31

Film Competition/Panorama: 2015.11.15-2016.04.15

For details, please visit: www.siff.com

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