

## LENS ON CHINA

Since the end of Cultural Revolution in 1976, China has undergone a series of profound, ever-accelerating transformations spurred by experiments with a market economy and a more open approach to foreign investment and external culture. In the last decade the consequences of these changes have dramatically impacted China and its place in the world. What have the dynamic developments meant for its 1.3 billion citizens? There are, of course, almost as many stories to tell. For millions there has been astounding opportunity. For millions more, the more things change the more they stay the same. Concurrent with the Portland Art Museum's CHINA DESIGN NOW exhibition, the Northwest Film Center explores the perspectives of Chinese, and western, filmmakers whose works reflect on the broad currents of contemporary change in Chinese society. As China's past and future collide, the works by these media artists provide unique insight into the social and aesthetic confusions, obstacles and opportunities being navigated in the cusps between history, daily reality, and the future's promises.

SEPT 24 THUR 7 PM

GOOD CATS

CHINA 2008

DIRECTOR: YING LIANG

Ying Liang's bleakly comic story of a young man from the country trying to find opportunity in a new world order slyly explores the impact of an unregulated, ends-justify-the-means capitalism. (103 mins.)

SEPT 27 SUN 4:30 PM

BIRD'S NEST—HERZOG & DE MEURON IN CHINA

GERMANY 2008

DIRECTOR: CHRISTOPH SCHAUB, MICHAEL SCHINDELM

BIRD'S NEST follows star Swiss star architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron (London's Tate Modern, Barcelona Forum, San Francisco's de Young Museum), as they literally and metaphorically built bridges between two cultures, two architectural traditions, and two political systems. (88 mins.)

OCT 1 THUR 7 PM

THE OTHER HALF

CHINA 2006

DIRECTOR: YING LIANG

Playfully pitting youth culture against tradition, Ying interrelates a young professional woman's (the other half) reality with the changing economic and social structures of contemporary China. (111 mins.)

OCT 4 SUN 4:30 PM

UMBRELLA

CHINA

DIRECTOR: DU HAIBIN

Filmed in five different regions of China, UMBRELLA offers telling perspective on the massive migration from the countryside to the cities, the rise of a prosperous new class of businesspeople, millions of new college graduates competing for a shrinking number of jobs, and the neglect of China's largest population group, its rural peasants. (90 mins.)

OCT 8 THUR 7 PM

HOW IS YOUR FISH TODAY?

CHINA/UK 2007

DIRECTOR: GUO XIAOLU

Xiaolu's novelistic film ruminates on urban isolationism in a rapidly expanding China. While Rao inhabits a decidedly prosperous circle of artists and intellectual elite in Beijing, the barren hinterland of Mohe seems to him a much more attractive world. (93 mins.)

OCT 11 SUN 4:30 PM

CHINA POWER

BRITAIN 2008

DIRECTOR: PIA GETTY

Getty's film takes a look at the vibrant contemporary art scene in Beijing and Shanghai at a time when the world is looking to the East. Rather than simply holding a mirror up to society, is it leading the way forward? (70 mins.)

OCT 15 THUR

MY CHINA NOW-PART I

CHINA 2005-08

DIRECTORS: VARIOUS

The first of two programs of short films showcasing the creative voices of over 30 Chinese artists and filmmakers who are defining contemporary Chinese culture. Capturing the prevailing mood and diversity of life in China today, the subjects of the films range from the social effects of urbanization and the fascination with China's new wealth, to skateboarding, fashion, and pop culture. (120 mins.)

OCT 18 SUN 4:30 PM

UP THE YANGTZE

CHINA/CANADA 2007

DIRECTOR: YUNG CHANG

With a humanist gaze and wry wit, Chang returns to the gorgeous, now-disappearing landscape of his grandfather's youth to trace the surreal life of a "farewell cruise" that traverses an epic waterway forever changed by a globalized China. \*89 mins.)

OCT 22 THUR 7 PM

THE WORLD

CHINA 2004

DIRECTOR: JIA ZHANGKE

Zhangke casts a compassionate eye on the daily loves, friendships and desperate dreams of the twenty-something's from China's remote provinces that come to live and work at Beijing's World Park—a bizarre cross-cultural pollination of Las Vegas and Epcot Center. (139 mins.)

OCT 29 THUR  
MY CHINA NOW—PART II  
CHINA 2005-08  
DIRECTORS: VARIOUS

The second of two programs of short films showcasing the creative voices of Chinese filmmakers who are defining contemporary Chinese culture. (120 mins.)

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These films (tentatively) will be in the NOV/DEC Film Schedule. Additions/changes likely...

NOV 1 SUN 4:30 PM  
USELESS  
CHINA 2007  
DIRECTOR: JIA ZHANGKE

Juxtaposing three places, three modes, and three eras, all co-existing in contemporary China, Jia Zhangke offers a sometimes devastating, but always-compassionate image of its fashion world, the largest exporter of garments on the planet. (80 mins.)

NOV 5 THUR 7 PM  
STILL LIFE  
CHINA/HONG KONG 2006  
DIRECTOR: JIA ZHANGKE

Zhang-ke's empathetic portrait of those left behind by a modernizing society is a breathtakingly poetic hybrid of documentary and fiction that charts the great changes that come to the Yangtze River town of Fengjie and the countless families who have had to relocate to other cities. (108 mins.)

NOV 15 SUN 4:30 PM  
YOUNG AND RESTLESS IN CHINA  
CHINA/US 2007  
DIRECTOR: SUE WILLIAMS

Williams tracks five wildly ambitious graduates over four years—a media savvy hip-hop artist, two migrant workers living precariously on society's edge, a dedicated medical resident, and a courageous environmental activist. Some find themselves torn between traditional culture and tantalizing new opportunities, while others begin the heady ride to wealth and power. (106 mins.)

NOV 19 THUR 7 PM  
MEISHI STREET  
CHINA 2006  
DIRECTOR: OU NING

MEISHI STREET shows ordinary citizens taking a stand against the planned destruction of their homes and neighborhood for the Beijing Olympics. Given video cameras by the filmmakers, they shoot exclusive footage of the eviction process, that adds vivid intimacy to their story. (85 mins.)

NOV 22 SUN 4:30 PM

24 CITY

CHINA 2008

DIRECTOR: JIA ZHANGKE

Jia's cameras capture the last days of a storied airplane factory in Chengdu, Sichuan, by zeroing in on the people who used to work there—and the people who will move into the new apartments that will take its place—making palpable both irretrievable loss and irresistible progress (98 mins.)

NOV 29 SUN 4:30 PM

MANUFACTURED LANDSCAPES

CANADA 2006

DIRECTOR: JENNIFER BAICHWAL

Internationally acclaimed for his large-scale photographs of “manufactured landscapes”— quarries, recycling yards, factories, mines and dams—Edward Burtynsky creates stunningly beautiful art from civilization’s materials and debris. The film follows him through China, as he shoots the evidence and effects of massive industrial revolution. (90 mins.)

it seems as though Burtynsky’s name should be in the title of the documentary?

DEC 3 THUR 7 PM

SAN YUAN LI

CHINA 2003

DIRECTORS: OU NING, CAO FEI

The site of the 1841 Opium War that led the revolt against colonial British authority, San Yuan Li Village is a “village-amid-the-city” that is typical of the urbanization process in Guangzhou in Southern China. Commissioned by the 50th Venice Biennale, this modern day “city symphony” is a collaborative work that documents contemporary life along the Pearl River Delta. (40 mins.)

WITH

WHOSE UTOPIA?

CHINA 2006

DIRECTOR: CAO FEI

With a critical eye on China’s culture and its ever-expanding urban environment Fei portrays workers who left their small hometowns to pursue dreams of becoming dancers, singers, and musicians in the big city. Instead, they found work in factories. Focusing on employees at a light bulb plant, Fei shows these workers performing their greatest dreams amid their austere reality. (20 mins.)

WITH

SEVEN INTELLECTUALS IN A BAMBOO FOREST, PART 1

CHINA 2003

DIRECTOR: YANG FUDONG

Based on the account of seven gifted intellectuals in the Chinese ancient Wei and Jin Dynasty known for their remarkable passion, talent, and camaraderie, Fudong updates the tale by portraying a group of present-day Chinese youths responding to an almost overnight cultural transformation from agrarian culture to post-industrial society. Fudong’s work epitomizes how the recent and rapid modernization of China has overthrown traditional values and culture..

(30 mins.)

DEC 10 SUN 7 PM

I LOVE BEIJING

CHINA 2001

DIRECTOR: NING YING

Circuiting between Beijing's fancy nightclubs, restaurants, and affluent shopping districts and the old, poor parts of the city, on-the-make taxi driver Dezi evokes the layering of realities in a city with a vanishing past and a rapidly arriving future. (80 mins.)

DEC 13 SUN 4:30 PM

PERPETUAL MOTION

CHINA 2005

DIRECTOR: NING YING

In this Chinese "Sex and the City," affluent editor Niuniu, suspecting that her husband is having an affair, invites three girlfriends to lunch in the hoping to uncover the secret woman. But more than that is unburied. (90 mins.)