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present



SEMAINE
DE LA CRITIQUE
CANNES 2018
CLOSING FILM

DWELLING IN THE FUCHUN MOUNTAINS

A film by
GU XIAOGANG



ARP Sélection
present



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DWELLING IN THE FUCHUN MOUNTAINS

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Director's note

During the summer of 2016, I went back to my hometown to do research for my writing. Fuyang was always a quiet and uninspiring small town in my memories. But the longer I stayed, the more I was surprised by the constant transformations happening there. This humble place is being overwhelmed by social and economical upheavals; as it was newly designated a municipality of Hangzhou city, it will be the location of the next G20 Summit. I understood that I was actually lucky to witness this immense and emotional transformation of the city. Floating along these currents and waves of change, every ordinary person and every average family has a profound connection to its surroundings, which inevitably affect one's inner world. Their lives unfold slowly in the film as in a contemporary scroll painting that I would call "Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains".

Gu Xiaogang

Synopsis

One family's destiny, rhythmmed by the course of nature, the changing seasons, the life of a river.

Interview with Gu Xiaogang

Director

This is your first feature film. How do you present it in a few words?

In an instant, every river, every mountain, every man and woman, is endowed with dignity and elegance.

What is the initial idea? A direct link with the famous painting Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains?

My parents used to run a restaurant in the place described by this ancient painting. Due to the renovation and demolition of the city, they ended their career as restaurant managers. Initially, I wanted to write a story to commemorate their stories with this restaurant. So I come back to my hometown to do research of the script. When I devoted myself to living in this homeland, the great changes in the city have given me more excitement and inspiration. So I decide to write a new story. China and the West have their own artistic aesthetics. There is no better or worse, but just differences. Western painting pays attention to express the space, while Chinese traditional landscape painting attempt to play the game of time, in order to archive a sense of universe – eternity of time and infinity of space.

To accomplish this, sometimes it strategically sacrifices other elements, as realistic expression of lights and shadows. Just as Huang Gongwang, the painter of Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains, he constantly adjusted the focal point of the painting,

and constructed various angles into an unified and complete visual experience.

The viewers are sometimes situated in the sky, sometimes down to the earth, sometimes into the forest, as they are flowing and tripping. It totally surpasses the shackles of two-dimensional painting. The way the ancients opened the scroll painting was also from right to left, slowly. More images and further plots are seen little by little only with the rolling. It's somehow like a film movie.

Are you from the region? Did it influence you?

The location of the film, Fuyang, is my hometown. Although she was only a small town in the south-east of China, she has a profound historical and cultural accumulation. The famous writer and poet Yu Dafu is also a fellow village. Like Huang Gongwang, he created beautiful literature based on the landscape here. Now Fuyang has become a district of Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang Province and the city that is hosting the 2022 Asian Games.

How did the writing go? What guided you?

The way of writing is very similar to filming a documentary. I'm like a human camera, collecting material everywhere. Writing is like the process of editing, except when there is no material, I can make up my own one.

I wish, through the medium of film, to place the tradition into the present as empirical, rather than

a formal retro or symbol. It's relaxing, natural, fun, and nourishes life and spirit. My calligraphy teacher once said: Here we enjoy the Western, modern and the wild and vigorously growing things at present, we can also let our spirits stay in an ideal era.

How did you produce the film? Difficult to produce an independent film in China these days? Is it a coproduction between several independent Companies?

Our film took two years to shoot. We couldn't find a suitable production company at the beginning. Because all of them doubted a shooting during four-seasons and the long-term cycle of making, especially with a first-time director.

Then at the time, I was aware that the city was undergoing dramatic changes. I could not wait. So when I finished the script writing, I started shooting with very little financial support.

In the beginning, it relied mainly on friends' help, online and social loans, etc. In the process, we also won cash awards in some film festival's project market programs. When it came to the second year, I met with Factory Gate Films that helped me to pay off my debt and so it became our delegate production company. We finished the shooting one year later, with Qu Jing Pictures and my company Chu Xiao Films together.

How did you choose your interpreters and on what basis?

The actors I chose were as ordinary local people as possible. They are my family and friends, and the right local people I found and scouted. I believe that every mile of the landscape, every character, is given dignity when reflected on the screen as time passes by.

And you needed precise sets?

While I was writing, the script was mainly based on the real nature of these characters. But the story has been carefully arranged and designed. However, in the actual shooting, there were also cases where the script was modified according to the progress of the event and the performance of the character.

The shooting took place over a long period of time? A choice on your part or a constraint?

Since the story itself happens all year round, it determines that I need a minimum of one year's shooting cycle so that the characters and landscapes in different seasons can be presented to the audience. But on the one hand, because of the financial problems; on the other hand, the film and the characters were in desperate need of changes and rhythms. I finally decided to continue shooting, so the final filming spanned two years.

Have you encountered any particular difficulties?

The biggest difficulty was still the funding problem. Apart from that, because it was my first film, I was very idealist at many points at the beginning. But in the face of a lot of difficulties, reality is reality. Passion was so easy to wear out. We borrowed funds from friends to finish the summer shooting, before repaying the debt, we started to worry about the autumn shooting. When I tried my best to survive the autumn shooting, the winter and the spring were in the face. It was also desperate at the time. The first year was more of a fight with the movie really.

When there was no shooting, we had been preparing for the next stage and maintaining relationships with the actors, everyday praying everyone was safe and happy. Our actors all had their own jobs. Like when a fisherman was shooting, he would take time to deliver fish to his clients. When we needed him again, we often had to wait for him to come back at the site. And because the shooting cycle was very long, some actors were psychologically exhausted. We had made a lot of efforts to maintain their enthusiasm for making the film.

Fortunately, with the help of the family, the beliefs of the production team and the crew, it was finally finished.

This film is the beginning of a trilogy? Where are you with this project?

Yes, this film is our volume one. In the intro of this first film, I actually have put a secret clue of «Spring River Joins the East China Sea at Qiantang». So for the next volumes, first of all, there will be a geographical transfer along the Yangtze River, unfolding a new city in the “scroll painting”. Volume 2 and Volume 3 will be brand new stories. Some of the characters in the volume 1 might be developed in the new story of Volume 2. It is very similar to the Chinese famous long scroll painting Along the River During the Qingming Festival.

This five-meter long painting shows the urban appearance of the ancient Chinese capital and the living conditions of the people of all classes at that time. There are all kinds of people, plants, animals and buildings in it. And there are so many details that you can't finish looking in a few days.

Does the closing of Critics' Week have a special meaning for you?

First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Charles Tesson and his entire team of Critics' Week for their recognition of the film.

Being selected is a precious recognition of the work of all our crew. The film selection committee can sympathize and resonate the story of an ordinary family in China, which has given us a lot of moving and encouraging. I am also particularly grateful to

Mr. Tesson for his generous evaluation of the film when it was officially announced.

Like every year, there were countless masterpieces at Cannes film festival this year. It is a great honor that my film has become the closing film of Film Critics' Week this year, and will be shown at the same time of these masterpieces in Cannes.

Director's biography

Gu Xiaogang was born in Fuyang, Hangzhou. While studying Costume Design and Marketing in University, he discovered filmmaking and started to be interested in documentaries.

His first feature, "Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains", which was shot during the four seasons over the course of two years, is selected as the Closing Film of Critics' Week of Cannes Film Festival in 2019. It is the first film of a trilogy.

Cast

Qian Youfa.....	Youfu
Wang Fengjuan	Fengjuan
Sun Zhangjian.....	Youjin
Sun Zhangwei.....	Youhong
Zhang Renliang.....	Youlu
Zhang Guoying.....	A-Ying
Du Hongjun.....	Mum
Peng Luqi.....	Gu Xi
Zhuang Yi.....	Jiang Yi
Sun Zikang.....	Kangkang
Dong Zhenyang.....	Yangyang
Zhang Lulu.....	Lulu
Mu Wei.....	Wang Wei

Crew

Director.....	Gu Xiaogang
Screenwriter	Gu Xiaogang
Editing.....	Liu Xinzhu
Director of photography.....	Yu Ninghui
.....	Deng Xu
Art director.....	Zhou Xingyu
Original Music.....	Dou Wei
Costume Design	Wang Lina
Sound	Li Danfeng
.....	Ma Cong
Artistic Consultant.....	Mei Feng
Executive producer.....	Li Jia
Associate Executive producers.....	Bai Yali
.....	Zhou Jiansen
Chief Producers.....	Huang Xufeng
.....	Zhang Qun
Producers.....	Song Jiafei
.....	Suey Chen
.....	Ning Xiaoxiao
.....	Liang Ying
Associate Producers	Yang Xiaopeng
.....	Yu Yongyang
.....	Zhang Qiang
.....	Wang Lei

Sound

5.1



Format

1.85

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