

JIA ZHANGKE, A GUY FROM FENYANG

A film by
Walter Salles



Panorama Berlin Film Festival 2015

Brazil 2014 / 105 minutes / Mandarin with English subtitles / cert. tbc

Opens Spring 2016

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SYNOPSIS

“Jia Zhangke, A Guy from Fenyang” is the portrait of a Chinese director who has become one of the most important filmmakers of our time. The documentary, directed by Walter Salles, dwells on the question of memory (individual as well as collective) and cinema.

For “A Guy from Fenyang”, Jia Zhangke returns to his birthplace, the Shanxi province in Northern China, and to the locations of his films. His actors, friends, and close collaborators join him as Jia Zhangke retraces the inspirational sources behind “Xiao Wu”, “Platform”, “Unknown Pleasures”, “The World”, “Still Life”, “24 City”, and “A Touch of Sin”, among others. Through these films, the reflection of a country in convulsion gradually reveals itself. Filmed entirely in China and most specifically in the places in which Jia Zhangke is intimate, the documentary portrays the profound and complex relation between the director and his environment.

“Jia Zhangke, A Guy from Fenyang” was shot in Fenyang, Pingyao, Hong Nan-che, and other cities and villages near the Shanxi region, and also in Beijing, at the World Park, the Film Academy, the Fine Arts School, and Jia Zhangke’s production company, Xstream Pictures. The interviews in the film were conducted by Walter Salles and Jean Michel Frodon. The documentary also gave birth to a book, “The World of Jia Zhangke”, which was also organized by Jean Michel Frodon.

JIA ZHANGKE OR THE MEMORY OF PRESENT TIME

Walter Salles

When I saw “Xiao Wu” and later “Platform”, I was completely taken by the visionary talent of Jia Zhangke. Sometimes we doubt that film might still be the place where we can resort to better understand the world around us. Jia Zhangke’s films are fundamental to grasp the complexity of the culture he unveils. He brought cinema back to where it belongs - to the heart of the discussion. “The World” and “Still Life” reaffirmed and deepened that perception.

To a growing number of film lovers, Jia Zhangke has become the most important filmmaker of our time. This was the feeling that united us - Leon Cakoff and Renata de Almeida from the Mostra Internacional de Sao Paulo, Jean Michel Frodon and I. In 2007, Leon and I interviewed Jia Zhangke at the Mostra de Sao Paulo, thinking already of a book and a documentary on this remarkable, singular filmmaker.

For Jia Zhangke, cinema is a medium for recording a memory in danger of being erased, the brutality of contemporary lives, and what will no longer be. His films offer a portrait of common people, those that, in his own words, are “non-holders of power” in a world of accelerated deconstruction. His films are also a place where an entire generation expresses the desires and anxieties of their time.

At the end of “Still Life”, we see a man walking on a tightrope between two buildings. The tightrope and its unstable balance, with a man confronted with something that seems greater than him, is perhaps the meeting point of the characters in all of Jia Zhangke’s films. It is in moments like this that we realize his films are made of a matter that transcends a specific physical or human geography. His characters may come from the Shanxi region, but their existential quests have no borders and concern us all.

CREDITS

Directed by	Walter Salles
Interviews by	Walter Salles and Jean-Michel Frodon
Director of Photography	Inti Briones
Executive Producer	Maria Carlota Bruno
Edited by	Joana Collier
Sound Designer	Li Dan-Feng
Production	Videofilmes

2015, running time: 105'

Download photos from wetransfer.com

WALTER SALLES

Born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1956, his film **CENTRAL STATION** won the Golden Bear at the 1998 Berlinale as well as a BAFTA and a Golden Globe and received two Oscar nominations. In 2000 he was a member of the Berlinale's International Jury. **THE MOTORCYCLE DIARIES**, about the young Che Guevara's journey through South America, won a BAFTA, the London Film Critics' Circle Award and an Oscar. Alongside his directing work, he also produces the debut feature films of up-and-coming Brazilian filmmakers.

FILMOGRAPHY

1995 **TERRA ESTRANGEIRA** (Foreign Land)
1998 **CENTRAL DO BRASIL** (Central Station)
2000 **O PRIMEIRO DIA** (Midnight)
2001 **ABRIL DESPEDAÇADO** (Behind the Sun)
2002 **UN PETIT MESSAGE DU BRÉSIL** (short)
2004 **DIÁRIOS DE MOTOCICLETA** (The Motorcycle Diaries)
2005 **DARK WATER**
2006 **PARIS JE T'AIME: EPISODE - LOIN DU 16EME**
2007 **CHACUN SON CINEMA: EPISODE - A 8.944KM DE CANNES, LETTER TO V**
2008 **LINHA DE PASSE**
2012 **ON THE ROAD**
2013 **THE SQUARE** (short)
2014 **JIA ZHANGKE, A GUY FROM FENYANG**



JIA ZHANGKE

He was born in Fenyang, Shanxi, in 1970 and graduated from Beijing Film Academy. His debut feature *Xiao Wu* won prizes in Berlin, Vancouver and elsewhere. Since then, his films have routinely premiered in the major European festivals. *Still Life* won the Golden Lion in Venice in 2006, and *A Touch of Sin* won the Best Screenplay prize in Cannes in 2013. Several of his films have blurred the line between fiction and documentary. He has also produced films by many young directors, and has made cameo appearances in films for other directors.

In 2015, Jia Zhangke returned to Cannes to receive the Carrosse d'Or Prize and his feature *Mountains May Depart* was selected in Competition.

FILMOGRAPHY

2015 **MOUNTAINS MAY DEPART**

- In Competition, 68th Cannes International Film Festival

2013 **A TOUCH OF SIN**

- Best Screenplay, 66th Cannes International Film Festival

2010 **I WISH I KNEW** (documentary)

- Un Certain Regard, 63rd Cannes International Film Festival

2008 **24 CITY**

- In Competition, 61st Cannes International Film Festival

2007 **USELESS** (documentary)

- Venice Horizons Documentary Award, 64th Venice International Film Festival

2006 **STILL LIFE**

- Golden Lion Award, 63rd Venice International Film Festival

DONG (documentary)

- Horizon, 63rd Venice International Film Festival

2004 **THE WORLD**

- In Competition, 61st Venice Int'l Film Festival

2002 **UNKNOWN PLEASURES**

- In Competition, 55th Cannes Int'l Film Festival

2001 **IN PUBLIC** (documentary)

- Grand Prix, 13th International Documentary Film Festival of Marseilles

2000 **PLATFORM**

- In Competition, 57th Venice International Film Festival

1998 **XIAO WU**

- Wolfgang Staudte Award & Netpac Award,

The International Forum of New Cinema, 48th Berlin International Film Festival