

Department of Film,  
Theatre & Television

## INTERMEDIA/INTERARTS WORKSHOP

# CHINA & THE UK IN FOCUS

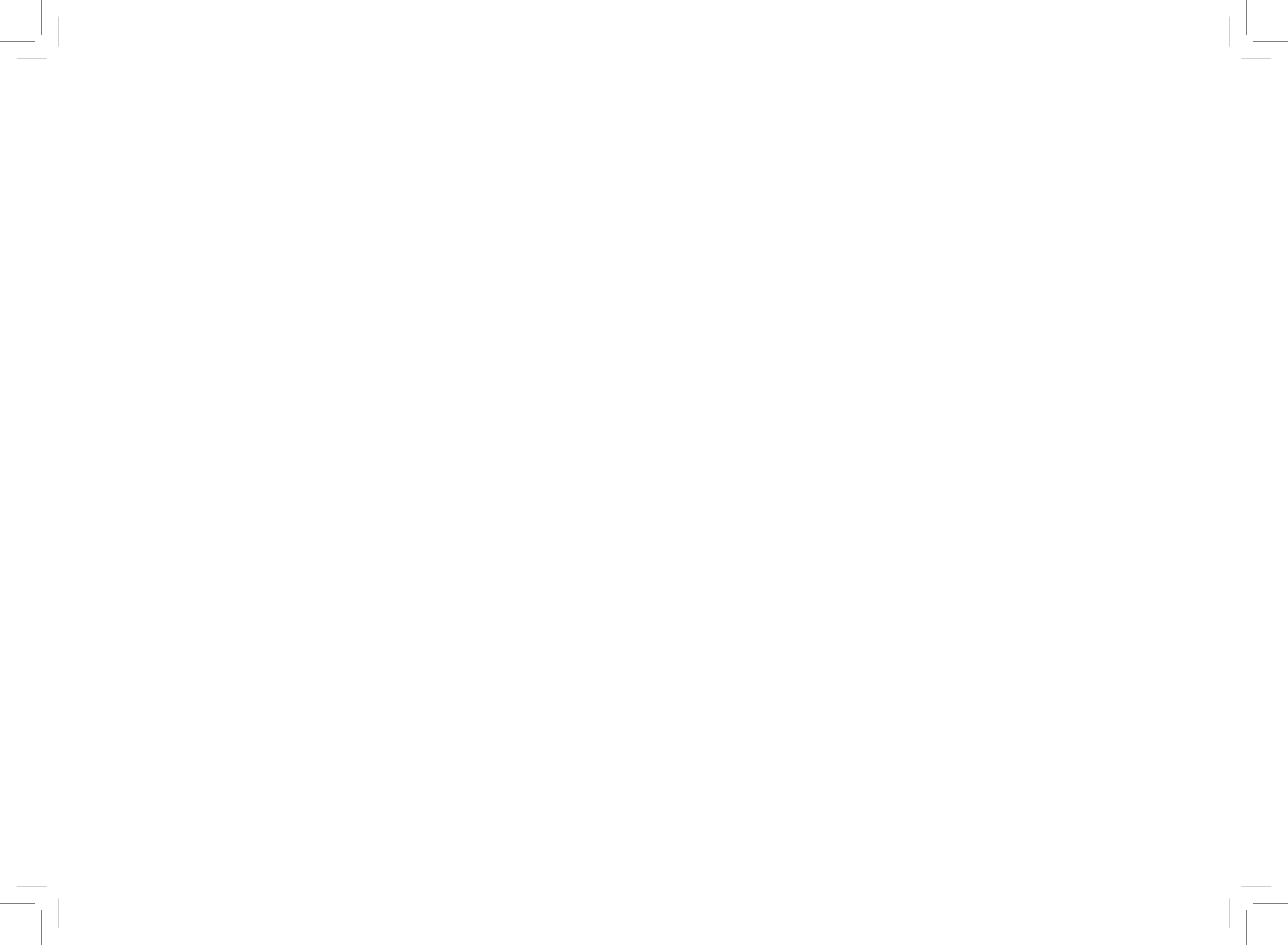
Convened by **Dr. Tamara Courage**  
General Supervision by **Prof. Lúcia Nagib**



28 May 2019 | 9am - 8pm | Minghella studio



LIMITLESS **POTENTIAL** | LIMITLESS **AMBITION** | LIMITLESS **IMPACT**



## INTERMEDIA/INTERARTS WORKSHOP

# CHINA & THE UK IN FOCUS

As East Asian cultures become a global force, it is increasingly important to understand the ways in which they blend, interact or clash with other cultures across the world. Within this context, the notions of 'intermediality' and 'interarts' seem ideally poised to evaluate social and cultural practices involving the local and the global. Border-crossing by definition, intermedia and interarts are emerging fields of scholarship that function across disciplines in the humanities. This project draws on the assumption that they can be instrumental in understanding complex developments in the Sinosphere and its increasing encroachment onto the wider world, as much as the UK which is currently under pressure both to retract from the wider sphere to a more marked national context, and to continue to engage vigorously with Europe and the rest of the world. Despite the global potential for understanding intermediality and interarts through their discursive and creative practices across geographical, cultural, political and aesthetic borders, there has been very little attention to the potential for cross-cultural and interdisciplinary dialogue between China and the UK in this respect.

How can intermedia/interarts help us to understand the parallels and relations between the two countries? What role does intermedia/interarts play in the understanding of historical and cultural transformations? How is an increasingly globalised system of mediated communication impacting on the humanities?

**28 May 2019**

Minghella Studios, Whiteknights Campus,  
University of Reading RG6 7BT



Workshop Convenor:  
**Dr Tamara Courage**



General Supervision:  
**Prof Lúcia Nagib**

Supported by the British Council through the UK-China Humanities Alliance and drawing on a collaboration between the University of Reading and Hangzhou Normal University, this workshop will explore ways in which scholars, artists and theorists engage with border-crossings on all levels. Including speakers from Mainland China, Hong Kong and the UK, film screenings and a lecture-performance by pioneer documentary filmmaker Wu Wenguang and choreographer and filmmaker Zhang Mengqi, it will open up a new platform for the study of the dialogue across the arts and media on a global scale.

# INTERMEDIA/INTERARTS | SCHEDULE

## MORNING

**9.00–9.15 Institutional and Workshop Introductions** Studio Space  
 Prof. Lúcia Nagib (University of Reading) and Dr. Tamara Courage (University of Reading)

**9.15–11.00 Panel 1** Studio Space

Chair:	<b>Prof. Ou Rong</b>	<b>Dr. Gao Yunwen</b>	<b>Dr. Tamara Courage</b>
Prof. Lúcia Nagib	Hangzhou Normal University	Chinese University of Hong Kong	University of Reading
	Traditional Chinese Painting: An Intermedial Play of Sister Arts	Storytelling and Map Making: Intermedial Practices in Jin Yucheng's <i>Blossoms</i> and its Adaptations	Videographic Illuminations: Archiving Memory in Chinese Independent Cinema

**11.00–11.15 Coffee Break**

**11.15–13.00 Panel 2** Studio Space

Chair:	<b>Dr. Simone Knox</b>	<b>Prof. Stephanie</b>	<b>Dr. Cecília Mello</b>
Dr. Cecília Mello	University of Reading	Helmeryk Donald	University of São Paulo
	Television and Intermediality: <i>Friends</i> and its Unofficial Chinese Adaptation	University of Lincoln	Realism and Intermediality in Jia Zhangke's Cinema.
		Red Aesthetics, Intermediality and the Use of Posters in Chinese Cinema after 1949	

**13.00–13.30 Book Launch of *The Cinema of Jia Zhangke: Realism and Memory in Chinese Film* by Dr. Cecília Mello**  
 Minghella Atrium

**13.30–14.30 Lunch**

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## AFTERNOON

**14.30–15.30 Panel 3** Studio Space

Directors **Wu Wenguang** and **Zhang Mengqi**  
 Lecture-Performance: 'The Art of Unforgetting: Folk Memory Project'

**15.30–16.15 Discussion with Wu Wenguang and Zhang Mengqi**  
 Studio Space

Chair: **Dr. Tamara Courage**

**16.15–16.30 Tea break**

**16.30–18.10 Screening of *Self-Portrait: Sphinx in 47 KM*, Zhang Mengqi, 2018** Cinema

**18.10–18.15 Comfort break**

**18.15–19.35 Screening of *Investigating My Father*, Wu Wenguang, 2016**  
 Cinema

**19.35–20.00 Q&A with Wu Wenguang and Zhang Mengqi**  
 Chair: **Dr. Tamara Courage**

# PANEL I

## PROFESSOR OU RONG

Hangzhou Normal  
University, China



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## *Traditional Chinese Painting: An Intermedial Play of Sister Arts*

Ou Rong is Professor of English and Dean of the School of International Studies at Hangzhou Normal University, China. She graduated from Shanghai International Studies University in 2007 with a doctorate degree of English Language and Literature. She has been a visiting scholar to the Agriculture & Technology Institute of Saint-Hyacinthe (1998), the University of Cambridge (2009-2010) and UC Berkeley (2012-2013). Her scholarly interest focuses on modern and contemporary English literature, East-West literary relations and inter-arts studies. Her most recent collaborated books are *Ezra Pound among Chinese Talents* (2015) and *Les Fleurs du Mal: Urban Writing in Anglo-American Modernist Poetry* (2018).

Traditional Chinese painting is rarely a pure painting, but a collective art with the dynamic intermedial play among painting, poetry, calligraphy and seal in one scroll. Using a case study of Tang Yin's 'Lady Ban Holding a Fan' and Wen Zhengming's 'Orchid and Bamboo', this paper explores the complex relationships of different media in traditional Chinese painting.

On the one hand, there is a strong collaboration among different agents. Very often, after a painter finishes his/her share of work, a poet who may be his/her friend, patron or customer, composes an ekphrastic poem for the painting, then a calligrapher

writes the poem on the painting, and the artwork is not completed until the seal(s) is stamped. The ekphrastic poem helps to provide the background information of the painting, to highlight what is depicted, to reveal the intention of the painter, to make a comment on the painting, and/or to extend the poet's emotion inspired or epitomized by the painting. The ekphrastic poem survives on the scroll with the effort of the calligrapher, and the seals help to identify the painter and the calligrapher. Sometimes, the painter, the poet, the calligrapher and the seal engraver are identical of one versatile talent; in this case, the intermedial collaboration is most integrated, illustrated by Tang Yin's 'Lady Ban Holding a Fan'.

Nevertheless, when they are different operators, there is subtle rivalry among them: the painter dominates the scroll, sparing limited space for other actors, while the poet intends to go further through the verbal depiction of what is visual and the nuance of what is not visual, the calligrapher competes with the ink brush, the same medium as the painter's, and the seal engraver strives to be independent with a strikingly red pattern on the ink scroll, all of which provide clues what roles the different media play in the performance and participation of the art, best illustrated in Wen Zhengming's 'Orchid and Bamboo'.

## DR. GAO YUNWEN

Chinese University of  
Hong Kong



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### *Storytelling and Map Making: Intermedial Practices in Jin Yucheng's Blossoms and its Adaptations*

Yunwen Gao is Assistant Professor of the Centre for China Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong where she teaches courses on Chinese literature and research methods. Her research interests include modern Chinese literature and culture, Sinophone studies, oral tradition, and dialect literature. She is currently working on her book project titled 'Language, Soundscape, and Identity Formation in Twentieth-Century China'.

Since its publication, Jin Yucheng's *Blossoms* (Fan Hua, 2013) has won many prestigious literary awards in China, including the Mao Dun Literature Prize in 2015. Adaptations of the book have been attempted in all types of media, including *Pingtán* performances, drama, movie, and comics. The author also expanded the repertoire of illustrations from the book and branded them as part of his grand project of maps and memories of the city.

The adaptability of the novel further proves its 'Sinophone intermediality'. In this talk, I discuss the role of Sinophone intermediality in Jin's reconstruction of Shanghainese. I first trace the incorporation of features of internet literature in the book, followed by the integration of interactive storytelling strategies. I then examine the use of illustrations, maps, and music scores as a supplement to the narrative, conflating time and space in the story. Finally, I situate Jin's story within the network of Sinophone cultures from Hong Kong and Taiwan. The intermedial practice reconstructs Shanghainese shaped by the sounds, voices, and lived experiences of the city of Shanghai.

## TAMARA COURAGE

University of Reading



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### *Videographic Illuminations: Archiving Memory in Chinese Independent Cinema*

Tamara Courage is a Lecturer of Film at the University of Reading where she teaches courses on practical and theoretical film and television studies. Her research interests include Chinese independent cinema, documentary film, migration, memory and marginalised representations on screen. She is currently working on turning her PhD thesis 'Contemporary Chinese Independent Cinema: Urban Spaces, Mobility, Memory' into a monograph.

When a historical event is captured in the moment by the photographic image, it leaves an indexical trace which film theorist André Bazin in his essay 'The Ontology of the Photographic Image' (1967) likens to fingerprints, moulds or death masks. This indexical trace provides the structural spine of Chinese artist Hu Jie's documentary film *Though I Am Gone*. By combining individual testimonies, legal documents, newsreel footage and photographs, Hu Jie reconstructs and rearticulates the details surrounding the murder of Vice-Principal Bian Zhongyun by her students at the All Girls Beijing Middle School on 5 August 1966, during the youth rebellion-led Red Guard Movement.

The aim of this paper is to examine how the filmmaker revives, exposes and re-examines Chinese cultural memory through a persistence of subjectivity, brought about by key witness accounts of the violent event. On the one hand, the film relies heavily on a witness, Bian's husband Wang Jingyao, a former photojournalist who provides comprehensive photographic archival material for the filmmaker to record. On the other hand, the filmmaker's aesthetic choices create spatial and visual juxtapositions that unearth historical gaps in cultural memory and the limits of documentary discourse on the theme of death and mourning.

Through textual analysis of *Though I Am Gone*, I will highlight the filmmaker's encounter with intermedial relations in the form of archival footage and still photographs. However, I will also explore these findings through my own methodological experimentations with the videographic essay mode of storytelling.

## PANEL II

### SIMONE KNOX

University of Reading



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### *Television and Intermediality: Friends and its Unofficial Chinese Adaptation*

**Simone Knox is Associate Professor of Film and Television at the University of Reading. She sits on the board of editors for *Critical Studies in Television* and her publications include essays in *Film Criticism*, *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* and the *Journal of British Cinema and Television*. With co-author Kai Hanno Schwind, she is currently completing the monograph *Friends: A Reading of the Series* for Palgrave.**

Just as intermediality has not been a high-profile point of reference within television scholarship, so television has not been a dominant point of debate in discussions on intermediality. (William Uricchio's work (1999, 2009) is a welcome exception here.) This is despite the fact that on a number of levels, television has been located at an intermedial intersection with film and theatre, with long-standing aesthetic, industrial and technological links with these two media.

Such links continue into the present day and are perhaps most visible in the continuing popularity of the multi-camera situation comedy. With historical roots in music hall and vaudeville as well as radio, multi-camera sitcom consists of a filmed performance realised in conditions drawing on theatre. Interestingly, it has not been understood as an intermedial genre. Instead, it has received

rather strong criticism in a number of discourses. These include scholarship, with John T. Caldwell (1995) and Jeremy Butler (2010) having critiqued it for its 'zero-degree style', by which they mean that multi-camera sitcoms are marked by stylistic conservatism, transparency, functionality and lack – or 'antistyle'. (Butler sees the single-camera sitcom, which has risen in prominence since the 1990s, the 'resurrection' of the genre, because of its engagement with the film-making apparatus.)

This paper seeks to challenge such views, aiming to unpick how the aesthetic qualities of sitcom may be understood as intermedial achievements. It will do so through exploring *Friends* (1994–2004), the most globally significant multi-camera sitcom in the history of television, arguing that *Friends* is marked by a structure of feeling of intimacy that is facilitated by its intermediality. It will compare and contrast *Friends*' stylistic sensibility with one of the many unofficial adaptations it has spawned, namely the Chinese sitcom *iPartment*. Premiering in 2009 and going on to win the China TV Drama Awards for Most Popular Television Series, *iPartment* noticeably draws on *Friends* both in terms of its story-telling and jokes. However, I will highlight how it significantly differs from its progenitor and displays a noteworthy intermedial stylistic sensibility as a single-camera show that deploys a laughter track..



## STEPHI HEMELRYK DONALD

University of Lincoln



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### *Posters of the People's Republic of China: an intermedial obsession*

Stephi Hemelryk Donald FASSA, FRSA is Research Director for the Centre of Culture and Creativity and Distinguished Professor (Film and Media ) in the College of Arts. Immediately prior to her appointment at Lincoln she was Professor and Australian Research Council Future Fellow at UNSW (Sydney). She has served as Chair of the ARC Humanities and Creative Arts College, and Deputy Chair of the Hong Kong RAE Humanities panel. Her book, *There's No Place Like Home: The Migrant Child in World Cinema*, won a Choice Outstanding Academic Title Award in 2018. Other titles include *Childhood and Nation in World Cinema: borders and encounters* (2017), *Inert Cities: Globalization, Mobility and Suspension in Visual Culture* (2014), *Little Friends: Children's Film and Media Culture in New China* (2005) and *Public Secrets: Public Spaces: Cinema and Civility in China* (2000). Her current research looks at images of migration, detention and childhood, and she is pursuing a project with Yi Zheng on socialist feeling in Chinese culture.

This presentation revisits three exhibitions - in the UK, the US and Australia, - between 1996 and 2011, where I was either a curator (1996, 2010) or advising as a research fellow (1999).

In each case the show included posters, didactics, talks in the gallery and in 1996 and 2010-11 there was also a film component. The 2010-2011 show(s) was also developed into a website with further films material (the website has now expired after an 8 year life online). Publicity included large banners hung on Sydney's Broadway, and a well-co-ordinated campaign run schools and local media run by RMIT gallery in Melbourne. What was conspicuously lacking of course was any social media or blogging attached to the show's media footprint and legacy. The work all occurred in that hiatus between the birth of social media and its massive take-up in the academy. Given the inherently political nature of the works shown and the debates provoked by those works, it may now be time to imagine what such a social media campaign may have looked like. What and who would we have tagged? What images would we have chosen to exemplify the event and how would we have sold it across different platforms? What, in there words has the short passage of eight years, revealed about the place of the image in our political consciousness and the role of the gallery in sharing the fruits of research.

## CECÍLIA MELLO

University of São Paulo



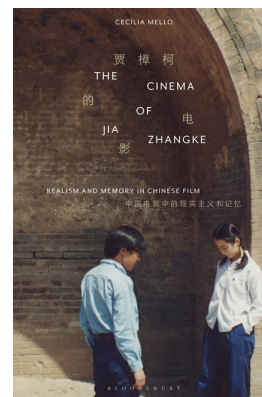
cecilia.mello@usp.br

## Realism and Intermediality in Jia Zhangke's Cinema

Cecília Mello is Lecturer in Film Studies and Film Editing at the Department of Film, Radio and Television, University of São Paulo, Brazil, and Vice-Director of CINUSP 'Paulo Emilio'. She is the recipient of a number of Research Grants, the most recent being the MOFA Taiwan Fellowship in 2017. Her research focuses on world cinema – with an emphasis on British and Chinese cinemas – and on issues of audiovisual realism, cinema and urban spaces and intermediality. She has published several articles and book chapters, co-edited the books *Realism and the Audiovisual Media* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), *The 21st Century Film, TV & Media School: Challenges, Clashes, Changes* (Cilect, 2016) and edited the book *Phantasmagorical Realism* (University of São Paulo, 2015). Her latest book *The Cinema of Jia Zhangke: Realism and Memory in Chinese Film* is out with Bloomsbury in 2019.

This paper aims to explore how the cinema of Chinese director Jia Zhangke responds to a new historical and social conjuncture through the articulation of an original aesthetics, born out of the intersection between realism and intermediality. As I will argue, a belief in cinema's natural inclination towards realism transforms Jia's camera into a source of power and has firmly established the filmmaker as one of contemporary world cinema's

most notable realists. On the other hand, his cinema's articulation of reality is not only reshaped by his and his director of photography Yu Lik-wai's powerful use of digital technology, but also deploys an intermedial stylization through the sharing of aesthetic resources with other artistic traditions, such as painting, opera and architecture. This gesture positions his cinema in the juncture between the realist and the impure cinema impulses theorized by André Bazin, inviting a reading that combines the cartographic and the geological approach to the study of individual films and their national and transnational interconnections.



Cecília Mello  
*The Cinema of Jia Zhangke*  
(Bloomsbury 2019)

## *The Art of Unforgetting: Folk Memory Project (Lecture and Performance)*

### WU WENGUANG



Caochangdi  
Workstation in Beijing

### ZHANG MENGQI



Caochangdi  
Workstation in Beijing

#### **Knocking on Memory's Door with the Video Camera (Wu Wenguang).**

**A handful of people took video cameras and returned to their respective villages. They went in search of the older generation that was still living there in dim, stark houses. They went to uncover the memories hidden deep inside them. Each filmmaker had some prior relationship to the village. Some of them were born or grew up there, some still live there, some had never lived in the village but had parents or grandparents who had. For the old people in the village, this was the first time anyone had come with a camera to ask them to open their memory chests. Here was the younger generation, leaping over their parents' generation-- that generation wiped clean of memory- to ask the elders about the past. This meeting may be awkward and uncomfortable but it is also an exciting adventure. Their stories are now documentary films presented in this program.**

Caochangdi Workstation is an independent space which was founded in Beijing in 2005 by myself, a filmmaker/theater creator. In the summer of 2009, I began a documentary film project to chronicle the events that took place during the '3 year famine' period of 1959 and 1961. By the summer of 2010, we had 21 people participating, making this Caochangdi Workstation's landmark Folk Memory Project. These

21 participants returned by their own accord to their respective villages to interview and take notes of this event. Among the participants were people aged above 60, people with experience in making documentaries, theatre and other arts-related individuals, as well as existing university students. This project had a snowball effect, with an increasing number of participants joining in, creating a large volume of records and village interviews for the archives.

Since 2018, we have had 216 participants going back to their villages for interviews, with 1480 interviewees coming from 22 provinces and 323 villages. Interview topics ranged from the '3 year famine', the 'Great Leap Forward', the 'Land Reform' and the 'Cultural Revolution,' across different historical periods. In summary, this project is a trial in creating folk memory archives. Since 2010 till 2018, to follow with the Memory Project, there are a total of 56 films produced by 20 filmmakers.



## FILM SCREENINGS

### *Self-Portrait: Sphinx In 47km*

By Zhang Mengqi  
(2018, 94 min)

Zhang Mengqi graduated from the Dance Academy of Minzu University of China in 2008. Since 2009, she has been a resident filmmaker and choreographer at Caochangdi Workstation in Beijing. A founding member of the Folk Memory Project, Mengqi has made eight feature-length documentaries filmed in her father's village in Hebei Province, known as her 'self-portrait series'. Her films have been selected by Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, Cinéma du Réel, Visions du Réel and others.

The eighth film in Zhang Mengqi's extraordinary survey of life in 47km, a rural village in Hubei Province, China named after its distance from the nearest city, Suizhou, *Self-Portrait: Sphinx In 47km* explores the terrible legacy of the 'Great Leap Forward' through the contrasting perspectives of two generations of women. An elderly woman tells the harrowing story of her son's death; whilst a teenager paints murals imagining a brighter future. This split structure connects the memories of a disappearing generation to the hopes of a new one, finding space for political and personal reflection in a country experiencing great change.





## *Investigating My Father*

By Wu Wenguang  
(2016, 80 min)

My father was a landowner's son and an ex-Kuomintang Air Force pilot, who remained in mainland China after 1949. For survival, he tried to transform himself from a man of the 'old society' to a man of the 'new society'. As his son, I started investigating his 'history before 1949', which he had kept away from me. This film documents the process of my investigation over twenty years.



# 民间记忆 → 非虚构创作



# NOTES

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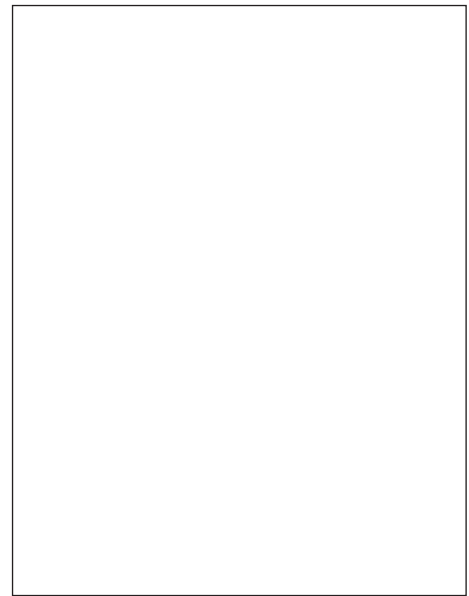
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The UK-China Humanities Alliance is supported by the British Council as a mechanism to promote dialogue, strategic collaboration and research in the humanities and humanities education between the UK and China.

