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love labor, love science, love
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愛社會主義

Chimeras

叠像

"This intellectually bracing, visually arresting documentary freeze-frames China at a moment when its aspirations are at war with its sense of identity."

VARIETY

"Thought-provoking "Chimeras" is able to home in on the smallest of details."

Los Angeles Times

"Mattila's masterstroke is not to force comparisons. Instead he opens up space for the viewer to draw their own connections. "Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry", while enjoyable, never dug particularly deep... Chimeras fills in the yawning gaps.."

Sight&Sound

"Chimeras successfully illustrates a rather abstract theme in this intriguing film."

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LOGLINE

Portraying two minds in identity crisis — the troubled contemporary-art giant Wang Guangyi and the up-and-coming photographer Liu Gang, Chimeras freeze frames China at a moment when its aspirations are at war with its sense of identity.



SYNOPSIS

Liu Gang, the only child of a humble rural family, gets a dream start for his art career as an American curator invites him to exhibit in the most prestigious art gallery in China. Film follows his metamorphosis from a humble photography graduate into a rising art star. While enjoying his new life within Beijing's jet set world of westernized luxury, embassy parties and promises of international career, he starts to wonder who he is and where he is heading to.

A parallel storyline follows an international art star, Wang Guangyi, an aging multi-millionaire pop-artist. He is obsessed with questions of his legacy and feelings of emptiness after having achieved it all. He seems to be living off from the golden memories the glorious 80's when he was on the forefront of modernizing China with the revolutionary Western avant-garde ideas. As we get deeper into his story, there emerges another side to his success, as he starts to doubt his achievements. In the end he seems to have turned into an open rebellion against his own glorious past and converts into a fierce crusader against the dominance of Western influences.

Through these two artists and their parallel destinies within China's turbulent contemporary art scene, Chimeras reflects on the formative questions of modern Chinese identity.

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CHIMERAS

A Feature Length Documentary
87 min.

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE



Why does Chinese art scene matter? For me, what happens in Chinese art scene, not only encapsulates the underlying currents of Chinese society, but tells us something about the world we are about to enter.

For the years that I've made Beijing my hometown, the art community has been my home base. I saw how the art scene could offer a window into Chinese modernity like no other segment in the society quite did. Contemporary art scene is perhaps the clearest segment of modern Chinese culture that is both deeply integrated with global scene, but also domestically "free" enough to flourish. During the 3 years of making the film, the Chinese art markets have steadily grown from the third place behind France and USA, into a biggest art market in the world. Yet very few in the West can name a single Chinese artist, besides Ai Weiwei. How can it

be that we know so little about the modern culture of the biggest country and oldest continuously existing civilization in the planet? And when we do know something, why is it only from the singular perspective of politics, seen largely from the Western perspective in regards of China's political system.

There is a precedent for our ignorance that perhaps illustrates the point. When the British Empire tried to reason with the Middle Kingdom, wanting to lure them into relationship with the Europeans, the common understanding in China was that there was nothing of great value in the West. Weapons and some technical gimmicks might be useful, but all in all West was deemed a barbaric hinterland, culturally not worth another look. Western culture was seen as an exotic curiosity that would eventually either be drawn into the influence of Chinese cultural sphere or else vanish back into oblivion. Even if the Europeans clearly possessed plenty of power, they certainly had nothing to offer culturally. It was not considered ignorance, if one knew nothing about the West. Chinese Empire paid dearly for their arrogance, and only after two humiliating centuries is China recovering from their inability to adapt. The same questions still remain relevant within China's cultural discussion: What is useful to adopt from the West? What is useless? Or even worse, what is harmful? Is modern always synonymous with Western? What most worries me is how little of this kind of reflection we do in the West. Perhaps we are where China was few centuries ago: the dominant culture, ignorant, arrogant and certain of the inevitability of our ways.

Even if much of the fuss about Chinese art boom could be dismissed as a passing trend, I strongly feel that what is happening in the contemporary art scene today is just foreshadowing something more significant and widespread that will follow. I feel that through these artists and their reflections, we can perhaps open a window into realm of thinking that many of us are not familiar with. A realm, often clouded behind the clichéd imagery that our medias are so costumed to recycle in connection to other cultures. A realm that is getting more significant to us by every day, as Chinese influence in the world inevitably grows and old ways of seeing are forced into history.

DIRECTOR BIO

Mika Mattila, born in Helsinki, Finland 1974. He graduated from Tampere School of Arts & Communications in 1998, majoring in cinematography. *Chimeras* is his directorial debut. For years he was based permanently in China, working as cameraman in Asia. Today he divides his time between Helsinki and Beijing. His cinematography credits include: *Thunder Drum* by Katariina Lillqvist, *Red Forest Hotel* by Mika Koskinen and the upcoming *Ecopolis China*, by Anna-Karin Grönroos and *Gesar Bard's Tale*, by Donagh Coleman



"I've been brainwashed many times... That's how it should be. All these brainwashes have left an emptiness in my mind, a clarity. Only if your brain has been washed clean enough can you start to see clearly. I don't think they can understand this in the West."

Wang Guangyi

DETAILED SYNOPSIS

Through two artists and their parallel destinies inside China's turbulent contemporary art scene, *Chimeras* explores the formative questions of modern Chinese identity.

Liu Gang is the only child of humble family origins in Hunan province. Through his admission to the prestigious art academy in Beijing, he has become the great hope for better future in the eyes of the whole family. In Beijing the young photography graduate has become fascinated by the Chinese dreams of Westernized "better life". He spends his days wandering around Beijing's luxury districts or photographing the often absurd magazine ads promoting fantasies of Western lifestyles. Paper Dreams, as he calls them. His work gets the attention of an American curator and Liu Gang is invited to exhibit his first solo show with the most prestigious art gallery in China. Paper Dreams becomes a great success, traveling around the globe and almost overnight Liu Gang metamorphosis from a humble student into a rising star.

Second storyline follows an international art star, Wang Guangyi, an aging multi-millionaire pop-artist. He is obsessed with questions of his legacy and plagued by feelings of emptiness after having achieved "everything". He seems to be living off from the golden memories of his idealistic youth, the freewheeling 80's, when he and his colleagues introduced the revolutionary Western ideas into Chinese art world, thus radically changing China's cultural landscape. However, as we get deeper into his story, another side to his success emerges. Due to the gradual, bitter realization of the complete dominance by Western values within the art world, he starts to doubt the value of his achievements. In the end he seems to have turned into an open rebellion against his own past glories and becomes a fierce spokesman against the Western influence within Chinese culture.

Both of them try to make sense of their place in rapidly modernizing China and both stories offer complementing and contrasting reflections on the paradoxes of Chinese modern identity. After the intoxicating haze of his first success clears out, Liu Gang begins to feel lost in his newly acquired status within Beijing's cosmopolitan elites. Gradually he realizes himself being trapped into the very same cycle of imitating the West, that he is criticizing in his artworks. He starts to see through the chimeras of Beijing's art circles and begins contemplating who he is and what is he becoming. In similar vein, Wang Guangyi turns towards his childhood memories of the Mao's collective frenzies. In these frantic images of the grand utopias he finds an inspiration and with a renewed vigor he establishes for himself a bold mission to find a marriage between Chinese tradition and modern global culture. In the Shanghai's World Expo, he finds a fitting backdrop for his crusade to ignite the Chinese Renaissance.

Liu Gang is confronting the same paradoxical co-existence of global modernity and Chinese tradition within his own personal life. His family has little understanding for his new art project: One Child Policy. Where he sees the defining issue for his generation, his family only sees a dangerous political subject matter, a threat to their only son's pathway into greatness. Even worse, they refuse to back Liu Gang's marriage plans, asking him to make his mark in the history before committing himself into a relationship. One pressure gets tangled into another and finally he is paralyzed by all these contradicting value systems clashing within his persona. Instead of observing the pressures of being the only child as an artist, he becomes the subject himself.

Search of identity is a central theme for the whole film. Through Liu Gang's journey we get to examine the balancing act between the seemingly all-pervasive allure of western modernity and the individualism that it seems to promote as opposed to the anchoring collective and Confucian values of Chinese society. Wang Guangyi's struggle with his past and his paradoxical existence in-between the roles of contemporary art star and traditionalist renaissance man embody the paradox of emerging cosmopolitan China: How to modernize and yet remain Chinese?



PRODUCTION NOTES

Considering the title, somehow it seems quite fitting that the director **Mika Mattila** originally started to make completely different film than what *Chimeras* ended up being. Mattila chose contemporary art scene as his subject matter because of its familiarity and cosmopolitan nature – essentially because of the non-chineseness of it. He felt that in some sense he had no right to meddle with subject matters that were too “Chinese” by nature, subjects that were too far from his own experience. He didn’t want to be another westerner representing and commenting China and Chineseness to other westerners. In other words, he didn’t want to make another “*China-documentary*”. He felt irritated by the fact that every documentary coming **out of China** - whatever the subject matter - seemed to always be reduced to being **about China**. Why was nobody talking about “*America-documentaries*”? Films coming out of Western countries seemed to usually be about something more universal, but China seemed destined to be the subject matter of everything produced in China. Mattila was determined to make a film about *his* Beijing, the cosmopolitan city he believed to be living in. He wanted his film to open a window into a metropolis not too different from London, Tokio or New York. The contemporary art was global after all and Beijing was the up-and-coming self-declared capital of it. The art scene and its dynamics were what mattered. China was of secondary interest, merely a setting.

Initially the project focused heavily on the Chinese art boom that was taking the global scene by storm. He wanted to capture the often-baffling dynamics of the art markets and to do this he decided on painting a kaleidoscopic view of the cultural landscape by following 6 parallel storylines. In addition to the two artist that are featured in the finished film, he started with an American artist, an infamous Basquiat forger who had made his brake as an artist on his own right with the exhibitions he smuggled out of prison. He had moved from New York to China in order to make his fortunes in this new Wild East of the art world, but instead ended up as a penniless and homeless illegal immigrant squatting in the abandoned warehouse. Ultimately he was deported back to US, not a fate too different from countless of Chinese immigrants in the West. Then there was an idealistic art dealer looking for the next Chinese Picasso from the provinces. In the end she ends up disillusioned by the “New chic China” as her ambitions were crushed by the strict censorship rules. For a while Mattila also filmed one of the biggest art collectors in China, before his mysterious arrest by the authorities. The sixth “character” was not a person at all, but an outrageously ambitious cultural center being built by Mongolian billionaire “*Citizen Khan*” in the middle of Inner Mongolian desert. An entire community was supposed to be erected amid the dunes far away from the nearest town – kind of a Las Vegas of highbrow culture. Before even roads were built a shiny Contemporary Art Museum was already braving the desert winds.

Despite the “juicy” stories, gradually Mattila’s focus started to shift away from the hubris of the scene. The ongoing debate behind the scenes about the nature of Chinese modernization in between Western and Eastern influences captivated him. Undoubtedly this was connected to his own peculiar position as a foreigner trying to adapt into a culture as alien as China. As the artists were battling with their sense of identity within rapidly transforming cultural climate, so was he able to reflect on the myths, histories, fantasies and brainwashes that had made him Western, European or Finnish. The making of the film started to function as a mirror for his own identity issues. As these questions started to dominate, it became obvious that the film really needed to get deeper into the thinking of its characters. The kaleidoscopic structure of multiple storylines did not facilitate this and one by one characters were dropped. In the end film found its form through the interplay between two generations of artists, two visions of future of China.

So in the end Mattila found himself having made exactly the kind of “*China-documentary*”, that he had vowed not to make. On the course doing this he had however been forced to realign his own worldviews, his beliefs in the universalities and somehow he didn’t seem to mind anymore. By making this film he had perhaps lost the Beijing he had lived in, the cosmopolitan city he had believed in, but in return he had perhaps acquired another sense of the world, one much more confusing, but definitely a richer one.

CHARACTERS

WANG GUANGYI

“Using Western logic and language to judge or evaluate our own culture... That is truly a horrible thing!”

Story of Chinese avant-garde without Wang Guangyi would be a story short of one of its principal characters. He was one of the pioneers of the Contemporary Art movement in China and one of the first ones to find success out in the world. Wang was, from the very beginning, driven by the inexhaustible desire to place China on the international cultural map, seeing perhaps himself as its champion. While so many of his peers left China after the Tiananmen square incident, he never left. He says he cannot breathe outside China. Today he is one of the most successful Chinese artists, commercially, critically and in terms of influence and power. His works have become symbolic images of the New China and yet, he also suffers from the image of having become one of the “commercial” hit painters, accused from time of solely imitating their past successes. Wang’s best known series “*Great Criticism*” gave birth to a domineering trend within Chinese art scene, labeled *political pop*. Numerous younger artists came after him, adopting his basic stance and style, none with the same level of success.

Power is the central thread of Wang Guangyi’s story. It manifests in his rise to prominence, in his domineering presence, through his works of art, his visions of future and his uncompromising worldview. In the film we see a millionaire artist looking for a lasting legacy, personal as well as national. In some sense he seems to be trying to emulate his personal success for the whole China. He dreams of renaissance of Chinese culture, a revolution that the contemporary art would spearhead. As he looks back at his career there’s a bitter aftertaste in the realization of the fact that he had to be accepted by western eyes in order to make his mark in the art history. Today he is a fierce spokesman against the blind acceptance of the influence of the western values and norms in China and does not hesitate to confront those who dare to disagree with him. The contradiction between his revivalist message and his “westernized” lifestyle, his own western influences and success forged in the west, is the central conflict in Wang’s story. In some sense he embodies the paradox of Chinese modernity: how to be contemporary, yet remain genuinely Chinese?





LIU GANG

“Biggest misunderstanding between the cultures happens when one thinks he understands the other, but actually he does not.”

Born prematurely in 1983, Liu Gang was considered so sickly that his parents were given an option to get another child. They refused, deciding to pour all of their attention to Gang. Like so many of the only child generation, Gang was at the same time spoiled with the undivided family attention and burdened by enormously high expectations. In school he started to show interest in arts and unlike most kids at the time, he was encouraged to pursue his artistic inclinations. Gang did not disappoint and was selected to China's most revered art school, Central Academy of Arts in Beijing. Gang specialized in photography and started to examine the often absurdly overblown fantasies of Western better life that dominate the 21st century Chinese dream. His BA graduation work *Paper Dreams* got the attention of curators David Spaldin and Snejana Krasteva and was chosen to be exhibited in perhaps the most revered contemporary art organization in China, Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art. *Paper Dreams* became a success and was exhibited in galleries and museums around the globe. For awhile it seemed Gang could establish himself as a professional artist almost overnight and he decided not to continue his studies at CAFA, becoming full time professional artist instead. His next show *Better Life* quickly followed, with less of an attention and the everyday realities of living as a professional artist started to dawn to him. Due to the lack of sales and growing responsibilities to take care of his family, Gang decided to take a regular, well paid position as a liaison officer for Dutch Cultural organization. His last art project on one-child policy is yet to be finished.

VARIETY

Film Review: 'Chimeras'

MAY 6, 2013 | 05:36PM PT, by John Anderson

This intellectually bracing, visually arresting documentary goes far beyond character study into a search for Chinese identity

The West's obsession with all things China should make helmer Mika Mattila's intellectually bracing and visually arresting "Chimeras" a highly viable commodity, just like the art being scrutinized during this ethereal journey into a creatively conflicted East. Portraying two minds in aesthetic crisis — the troubled contemporary-art giant Wang Guangyi and the younger, tentative Liu Gang — Mattila also freeze-frames China at a moment when its aspirations are at war with its sense of identity. The film's aesthetics should give it a shot at specialty play, but its political subtext could also win over audiences intrigued by the psychology of world power.

There's an obvious kinship between Wang and Gang, the former a pillar of the '80s-'90s Chinese New Wave, the latter a fledgling photographer with an ironic eye. Both have assailed advertising and pop culture: Wang's more famous canvases (one of which is shown going on sale at Sotheby's for an opening bid of \$1.5 million) synthesized the social-realist propaganda of the Mao era with corporate advertising for products like Coca-Cola, and dared the viewer to find a difference. Gang's work, which becomes the subject of his first gallery show, are photographs of photographs — pictures of highly stylized Western banalities, which Gang carefully folds, spindles, mutilates and then reshoots. ("This one's damaged," his shopkeeper father says at the gallery, in one of the film's more revealing and touching moments.)

There's the suggestion of a Cezanne tablecloth in a Gang landscape; there are echoes of Warhol in Wang's satirical paintings. And there are Western influences everywhere in Mattila's China: Tai chi practitioners exercise before an enormous, illuminated Cartier storefront; Gang photographs in a section of Beijing that might as well be Paris. The emulation of European and American architecture is everywhere in the city, suggesting a Chinese Las Vegas. It also seems that the gatekeepers of the Chinese art world are all Caucasian; in a fashion show captured early in the film, Dior appears to have co-opted the entirety of Chinese culture. (At this point, it's worth noting that a chimera can refer to not only a mythological beast, but also an organism composed of two or more sets of genes, or an illusion.)

Underneath the film's shiny surfaces and lush photography (Mattila himself handled the superb lensing) is a sense of consternation. Wang states that he was brainwashed multiple times over his life — by the Cultural Revolution, for instance, and by the Western canon of art. In one scene, he boils over with anger toward a friend with a less-than-Sino-centric view of the world, but one senses Wang's anger at himself, for having played into what he now sees as artistic imperialism. Gang, meanwhile, wants to devote his next effort to interpreting what he sees as his generation's most important and influential issue: the one-child policy. But he's constantly being told it's a bad career move (i.e., dangerous).

Both men are caught on the horns of dilemmas, but Wang's is particularly sharp: Although he wants to be more nationalistic in his art, he also sees the Chinese ethic as contrary to individual expression. How else could the biggest disaster of his generation — namely, Mao — have been allowed to happen? In this, Mattila goes far beyond a character study of two fascinating artists into a search for Chinese identity, at precisely the right time.

Los Angeles Times

Documentary spotlights Chinese artists Wang Guangyi, Liu Gang

By Clarissa Sebag-Montefiore

May 10, 2013 9:00 a.m.

BEIJING -- One scene of the new documentary "Chimeras" shows the young Chinese artist Liu Gang wandering with his camera around a town in China that's been built to resemble an English village. Liu is in Thames Town, a development outside Shanghai that's eerily empty, aside from the couples posing in matching outfits for wedding photographs on faux cobbled streets.

In a series of satirical, candid shots called "Better Life," Liu explores China's conflicted aspirations. Our ideas of a better life, the artist explains, are "all indeed fantasies from the West."

Finnish filmmaker Mika Mattila's thought-provoking "Chimeras" -- which played this week at the San Francisco International Film Festival -- is a documentary about the search for a uniquely Chinese aesthetic in an international art world dominated by the West. But it is also an intimate portrait of two very different artists -- Liu Gang and Wang Guangyi -- as they navigate an explosion of possibilities along with feelings of frustration, even confusion.

Mattila first wanted to make a documentary that elevated itself above "China" as subject matter. With this in mind, he chose what he considered to be the suitably global world of Chinese art and picked five subjects to film.

"I wanted to focus more on the dynamics of how the art boom was operating," he explained. "But as I went along, the issues of identity, and East and West, emerged more and more. And Liu Gang and Wang emerged as the more central characters. Artists constantly examine themselves and how they are in relationships with society."

The more famous of the two featured artists, Wang is a striking, uncompromising, erudite man in his 50s often seen wielding a smoldering cigar. Early on in the film, an auction of one of his pieces starts at \$1.5 million -- and we learn that in 2008, a year before filming began, the annual auction sale of his works totaled \$23 million, ranking him eighth among living artists in the world.

Wang made his name, and fortune, in his "Great Criticism" series that combined Mao-era social-realist propaganda with Western brand logos such as Cartier, Hermes and Walt Disney. He has heavily drawn on the Western canon. But looking back, Wang believes he has been brainwashed -- first, by Mao Tse-tung during his childhood in the Cultural Revolution, and second by Western art history. He mourns: "We are always blatantly imitating the West."

"He is a paradoxical character," said Mattila. "His opinions can be challenging for a Westerner. What he says and what he does, sometimes, at least, it feels contradictory."

This is displayed starkly. Wang attends glitzy dinners and hobnobs at Dior events. But during one informal gathering of artists and academics, he declares that every Chinese who has studied abroad should be executed. His friends take it as a joke but Wang is not laughing. You cannot help but think he is most angry with himself.

Liu, by contrast, is tentative and contemplative, observing the world through a boyish fringe and his camera lens. He is torn in different directions: his girlfriend is pressuring him to get married; his parents want him to save marriage for later and concentrate on his career.

He lives in a cramped apartment in Beijing and his parents are cooks at a school canteen in the southern province of Guizhou. At one of his first solo exhibitions in the capital's most prestigious art gallery, where he is propelled to 15 minutes of fame, he is told: "Only in China could this happen."

If Wang's story shows an artistic and intellectual giant at work, Liu's is just as compelling, largely because it

dives more deeply into his personal life. Mattila spent four years trailing both subjects and previously worked as a news cameraman in Beijing (“Chimeras” is his debut film). He is able to home in on the smallest of details.

Some are painful. At one point, Liu’s father points out a crease in a photo during his son’s first big art opening, saying awkwardly, “This one’s damaged.” The young artist winces at the comment, because the crease is deliberate. At another moment, Liu rubs his eye as his family warns him against tackling the country’s one-child policy as a subject of his art -- it is too political, they say.

Liu’s work, like Wang’s, merges his personal quest for answers with China’s. His first series consists of photographic advertisements of housing developments and highways from newspaper. He cuts them out, creases them, folds them and crumples them before reshooting them. Sitting in a coffee shop in central Beijing this week to discuss the documentary, he explained that he named the series “Paper Dreams” because “paper is fragile. You can see it is easily destroyed.”

In the documentary, Liu says: “I myself don’t have such big dreams. I just hope I can concentrate on my art.” Since filming finished earlier this year, however, the 30-year-old has taken a break from art to take up a stable job to better provide for his wife and new baby.

A chimera is defined as a thing that is hoped for but is in fact illusory, or an organism containing a mixture of genetically different tissues, formed from fusion, grafting or mutation. Both definitions seem to pertain to Wang and Liu, as they examine and try to reconcile Chinese life and culture with global influences such as Coca-Cola and villa developments -- both in their art and for themselves.

“Where are our roots?” Wang asks simply.



Chimeras: Can China's art stars create a truly Eastern art?

KATE TAYLOR

The Globe and Mail

Published Wednesday, Apr. 24 2013, 6:23 PM EDT



- Directed by Mika Mattila
- Classification G
- Genre documentary
- Year 2013
- Country Finland
- Language Chinese

Finnish director Mika Mattila successfully illustrates a rather abstract theme in this intriguing film: Can China’s international art stars escape Western influence to create a truly Eastern art? His approach is to contrast the careers of two artists confronting the issue. The established Wang Guangyi, once a revolutionary pioneer of a Western-style avant-garde in newly opening China, is increasingly nationalist and seeks to Easternize art. Rising photographer Liu Gang, who is exploding into a white-hot art market with a critique of China’s new materialism that appeals to Western curators, still needs to placate anxious parents, a demanding girlfriend, interfering mentors and government censors.



Fest Notebook: Form-Busting Films Get Warm Welcome at Hot Docs

MAY 7, 2013 | 07:17PM PT, John Anderson

If you want to take the temperature of the documentary, go to Toronto in the spring, when Hot Docs delivers its cinema-crazed citizenry the cream of global nonfiction. Intl. Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam may have more films, and some of the U.S. docu fests, like True/False, may have more curatorial chutzpah. But Hot Docs, which just turned 20 last week, remains a hot spot for doc lovers. Unlike certain major festivals, this relatively intimate, decidedly democratic affair attracts more civilians than press and industry; there are free screenings for seniors and students; and ever since the festival moved into venues downtown (like its bigger cousin, the Toronto Film Festival), there's more of a geographical balance as well.

But among the films themselves — 205 this year, from 43 countries — one could detect a kind of stratification going on, not so much a class system or hierarchy, but rather a formation of genres within the genre. There was also a more-than-insistent suggestion that, at this particular moment, the documentary is the freest format for movie art.

This is a contrary notion, to be sure: The nature of the docu, conventional wisdom says, is to be constrained by truth. But with 3D technology, CGI and a franchise philosophy controlling so much studio product, and the so-called independent world afflicted by the kind of conventional thinking imposed by economic insecurity, the documentary — with fewer commercial expectations anyway, and more of a cowboy attitude — has become a wellspring of formal innovation.

Over 11 days, Hot Docs presented 11 official programs and **handed out 13 official awards**. Unofficially, films fell into messy categories: Political films became art films became socialissue docs became biographies, and music docs seemed to attract the lion's share of audience voting. Some of the hardcore political docs, such as **"Pussy Riot: A Punk Prayer," "The Kill Team," "Narco Cultura"** and the more-than-cautionary online privacy movie **"Terms and Conditions May Apply,"** incorporated a variety of stylistic flourishes and inventions, while more straightforward films — the Sundance-preemed Anita Hill bio **"Anita"** and **"Occupy the Movie,"** a fluid but clip-heavy assessment of the Occupy movement — relied on the traditional interview/archival structure.

Then there were hybrids: Patrick Reed's **"Fight Like Soldiers Die Like Children"** (pictured above) featured former United Nations general Romeo Dallaire and graphic-novel-style animation; Penny Lane's **"Our Nixon"** made inventive use of White House homemovies. Even when addressing the weightiest subject matter, documakers have been freed to use what they feel is necessary and right to make their statements, and perhaps their always-limited commercial options have loosened up accordingly. As noted by filmmaker and Hot Docs regular Peter Wintonick, there were a lot of tube-friendly 56-minute movies in Toronto, which indicated some optimism in advance.

What stood out in particular were the films lurking around the margins of the form, expressionistic exercises in creative filmmaking that would only barely fit any purist's definition of a documentary — and one needn't go as far as the work of Canadian avant-gardist Peter Mettler, who received a mid-career retrospective from the festival (and gave a live filmperformance presentation with the musician Biosphere).

"Aatsinki: The Story of Arctic Cowboys," by the gifted Jennifer Oreck (**"Beetle Queen Conquers Tokyo"**), is a work of ethereal beauty that employs no music, no narration and very few

explanatory titles, offering a strictly observational, utterly engrossing account of the lives of reindeer herders in Finnish Lapland. “Expedition to the End of the World,” a travelogue/thriller set among previously inaccessible fjords of northeastern Greenland, was a meeting of the Stone Age and state-of-the-art, a cutting-edge portrait of a pristine world. And Mika Mattila’s “Chimeras,” an oblique take on the Chinese mind at a key historical moment, used the art of its two principal subjects, and a survey of the Western influences permeating Beijing architecture and culture, to create an ominous portrait of a global power in transition.

What “Chimeras” and some of the other more adventurous docs at Hot Docs noted was the ability of filmmakers — and the capacity of the genre, in league with modern technology — to make movies about abstract ideas, even when conventional visual materials aren’t readily available and may not even exist. In many cases, documentaries are becoming art films, whether or not their subject is art.

Sight&Sound

More Bests of Sheffield Doc/Fest 2013

Chimeras

July 10th, 2013

The teasing question of whether or not Chinese contemporary art can escape the suffocating tendrils of globalisation and, specifically, Western influence, is central to Mattila’s elegantly shot, drily amusing dual character study.

We’re first introduced to young photographer Liu Gang, a working-class student making waves at the prestigious Beijing School of Arts. His sly, [John Stezaker](#)-esque collage work is concerned with skewering China’s ongoing cultural colonisation by the West, even if he himself seems defeated by it (“My generation has grown up in the globalised world. It’s impossible to resist it”).

Seemingly bearing out his prematurely jaundiced worldview is his counterpart in the film: leonine fiftysomething Wang Guangyi, founder of the trailblazing avant-garde North Art Group in the 1980s and now one of the world’s wealthiest artists. Secreted in a modernist palace of riches, Wang cuts a palpably uncomfortable figure, struggling to reconcile his current moneyed status with his radical revolutionary past.

Over and above finding such richly compelling figures upon which to focus, Mattila’s masterstroke is not to force comparisons between the two men. Instead, though intelligent, theme-driven editing, he opens up space for the viewer to draw their own connections and process the fount of cultural and historical information dispensed and discussed by Gang and Guangyi in sensitively captured private moments. (An unobtrusive, restrained presence, Mattila has snagged tremendous access to his subjects.)

Alison Klayman’s 2012 film [Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry](#), while enjoyable, never dug particularly deep into the core sociopolitical issues underpinning Chinese contemporary art; thankfully, Chimeras fills in the yawning gaps created by Weiwei’s gigantic personality.

Ashley Clark

THE *Hollywood* REPORTER

Chimeras: Film Review

1:15 PM PDT 10/30/2013 by John DeFore

Mika Mattila follows two Chinese artists whose work critiques China's embrace of the West.

THE HAMPTONS, NEW YORK — A doc about culture change in China that doesn't stop at lamenting vanishing folkways or cluck-clucking at rampant consumerism, **Mika Mattila's** *Chimeras* looks at the struggle between Eastern and Western mindsets through the work and lives of two celebrated artists. Tightly focused but appealing to both art lovers and those seeking insight into an evolving China, the picture should satisfy at festivals and in niche theatrical engagements.

The artists in question are a young, timid-seeming photographer, **Liu Gang**, and **Wang Guangyi**, the Pop-leaning art star who emerged in the Eighties with the North Art Group. (We're told that 2008 auctions of his work reaped around \$23 million.) Mattila shadows both men, avoiding talking-head interviews in favor of narration accompanying well photographed scenes of them at work -- Liu with his camera, looking lonely amid the pastiche architecture of China's faux-European theme parks -- or in social settings -- like the gathering of North Art Group vets where Wang silences a room by declaring that a colleague's work is meritless, even destructive to Chinese identity.

The nation's soul is the central theme here. Wang says he has been brainwashed many times in his life -- not just by Mao's Cultural Revolution, but by the West's art history, a system of aesthetics that had no room for traditional Asian art. Liu has based whole series on deconstructions of the luxury being hawked to newly wealthy Chinese: His photos of crinkled-up newspaper advertisements turn glossy fantasies into soulless, degraded ephemera.

Mattila spends enough personal time with both artists to find ironies in the contrast between how each man lives and the philosophical underpinnings of his work. But he doesn't harp on these observations, and this thoughtful, serious film instead positions them as more clues about a nation struggling to understand itself while being forced to assert its place in a world long dominated by Western Civilization.

DOCUMENTARY



The Great Gallery Wall of China: Mika Mattila's *Chimeras*

China is at a crossroads, caught between a traditional past and a globalised, consumerist future. In *Chimeras*, Mika Mattila dramatises this conflict through the lives of two artists, Wang Guangyi and Liu Gang, and depicts the tribulations that arise in mediating both worlds, writes **Mike Walsh**.

It is nothing new to suggest that China's emergence as an economic power obliges us to come to terms with a nation that is both steeped in tradition and looking towards the future. In this culture, contradictions abound, and startling juxtapositions – such as tai chi classes in front of Cartier signs or fake Tudor villages in the middle of Chinese cities – are easy to come by. It is no wonder, then, that the title of *Chimeras* (Mika Mattila, 2013), which invokes the hybrid beast of mythology, signals that we should expect no easy truths about contemporary China.

Along with works such as Jia Zhangke's *Dong* (2006) and Alison Klayman's *Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry* (2012), Mattila's documentary tackles China through an analysis of contemporary artists who are ambivalent about the social and political



implications of the country embracing the globalised market economy. Yet the artists in *Chimeras* are no critics of the system in the way that Ai is; that would be too simple. Mattila's tactic is to propose a dialectic, contrasting Wang Guangyi, a painter and conceptual artist who began working in the 1980s and now sits atop the Chinese art world, having turned over US\$23 million in 2008,¹ with Liu Gang, a young photographer who is just starting to exhibit in galleries. Wang grew up through the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Although he is aware of their catastrophic failings, he recognises his own sensibilities as being forged by the context of large-scale collective action. Liu, on the other hand, is a product of the one-child policy and is painfully aware that he has no perspective other than that of global consumerism and the

intense expectations of family. To further sharpen the opposition, Wang is a northerner, hailing from Harbin, while Liu is from China's south. The two artists never cross paths – though, in the tradition of associative montage, the process of watching the film is an exercise in constructing connections between the two figures.

Contemporary Chinese have lived through a lot of history. Mattila begins the film with a quote from the eighteenth-century emperor Qianlong asserting that 'outside barbarians' have no hope of understanding Chinese culture, given that the two cultures differ so completely. Things have certainly changed. The art world provides both a convenient microcosm through which to study the effects of globalisation, as well as a sphere in which participants make a living by reflecting self-consciously on those effects. The question arises, however: does modernisation necessarily equate to



Westernisation? The Moët flows like Jacob's Creek at Beijing gallery openings, and the major curators, critics and buyers are clearly Westerners who have descended on The Celestial City, eager to feed the world's appetite for the new.

Mattila initially planned to make his film exclusively about the Chinese art scene, which he claims is now the largest art market in the world.² He explains that he has an aversion to documentaries by Westerners that end up being 'about China', converting every gesture into a signifier of national significance. However he admits that his film couldn't avoid becoming that very thing: 'I thought that's a bit outrageous, that I'm here telling you what China is.'³ Mattila inevitably succumbs to presenting diagnoses of the state of the nation and looks to both artists for zeitgeisty interpretations of contemporary Chinese culture through art. Thus, we hear Liu assert in the film that his photographs form 'a record of our state of mind in this moment', while Wang is framed via his more interventionist background, seeing art as a tool that influences society rather than reflects it.

Both Wang and Liu acknowledge that the world of contemporary art is a heavily globalised one. Wang's early political pop works, notably his *Great Criticism* series, mix heroic socialist imagery with Western logos for Coca-Cola and other products, and are clearly influenced by pop art. In *Chimeras*, he declares that he may have been brainwashed, not just by communist propaganda but also by Western art movements. While it is one thing to badmouth the institutions



of the art world, it is another thing entirely to walk away from them. His work may now be auctioned for millions by Christie's and by Sotheby's, giving him some licence to be a little more bolshie, but as Wang advises one of his cronies, you still know you've arrived once you're exhibited at the Venice Biennale. In contrast, Liu is more resigned to the influences of Western consumer culture; he has never known a society without its ubiquitous presence. At one moment of nervousness in front of the camera, he reflexively reaches for a Coke can. The only weapon that is available to him is ironic distance as he re-photographs advertising images after having wrinkled or added reflections to them.

Nevertheless, both characters are inevitably compromised. In one scene, Wang powerfully declares: 'Art has made me rich and famous but left me disappointed.' He points out that artists are damned both if they are failures and if they are successes, as they fall prey to having their ideas commodified and turned into 'fashionable vulgarities'. He plays ping-pong in his big mansion, smokes fat cigars and contemplates what a

CHIMERAS
 YEAR: 2013
 DIRECTOR:
 MIKA MATTILA
 RUNNING TIME:
 88 MINS

Chinese 'essence' might look like and whether Chinese values might one day become the central values in a new global system. This search for a cultural essence, in both life and art, leads Wang to speculate on the roots of modern Chinese society. Perhaps these roots can be found in living history, he ponders. Wang has gone beyond lamenting the ambiguous legacy of Maoism and nostalgia for its stress on a collective society (albeit one that went spectacularly wrong). At times his search for this essence has pushed him in the direction of nationalism but, finally, it leads him to Buddhist metaphysics as the site of an Eastern tradition – he becomes a Buddhist with a big cigar.

For Liu, the struggles are encapsulated by the expectation that he will respect Chinese traditions – as he puts it: 'if I want to find myself, I need to start from my family.' He is confronted on a daily basis by the importance of filial obligation, which is felt more acutely within families of the one-child-policy era. His parents work in a regional school's canteen and have sacrificed to get him through the prestigious art schools where he has come to the attention of the Moët-drinkers. His father and mother have a down-to-earth belief in art simply as a means of becoming successful. For them, the advancement of the nation comes about, first and foremost, through the material success of the family. Liu feels his distance from them, and from his obligations towards them, in equal measure. He notes that the Chinese 'live for others, families, societies but not ourselves'. He is undoubtedly ambitious, but he has also internalised the lesson that to put oneself at the centre of one's decisions is to be selfish.

On the other side of the equation is Liu's girlfriend, who is pressuring him to get married. The final section of the film is entitled 'The Marriage', and it shows how the joining together of East and West, and of man and woman, are problematic processes. Marriage photography becomes a key motif in the sequences featuring Liu. We see him prowling around tacky theme parks, with the film ironically reframing the brides in their fancy white dresses and the grooms incongruously shoe-horned into tuxedos. There seems to be no better symbol of the alien nature

PREVIOUS SPREAD,
 CLOCKWISE FROM
 LEFT: LIU GANG
 PHOTOGRAPHED
 WITH HIS NEW WIFE;
 WANG GUANGYI
 WITH HIS WORK,
 INCLUDING MAO A0
 AND A PAINTING
 FROM THE GREAT
 CRITICISM SERIES
 (LEFT) AND THE
 THING-IN-ITSELF
 INSTALLATION
 (RIGHT) ALL OTHER
 IMAGES: SCENES
 FROM CHIMERAS

of the global commodity form than Western wedding paraphernalia. Yet, as Liu observes, Chinese culture will eventually absorb all this – and in a way, it already has, as these wedding spectacles are distinctive displays of how international influences have been assimilated into China. *Chimeras* shows how globalisation does not efface cultural differences, but rather brings them into sharper focus as they coexist and collide on a daily basis.

While Liu starts out as the agent of photography, he ends as its object when he agrees to marry, dons his tuxedo and poses for the wedding portraits that contain nary a hint of irony. At the end of the film, Mattila provides us with a rather forlorn denouement: Liu has taken an 'ordinary job' at a cultural centre, and he and his wife now have a baby son. The gap between the rarefied atmosphere of the globalised economy and the everyday life of most Chinese people yawns wide, and Liu, like his parents, has sacrificed for the sake of family, giving up his chance to be part of the global art world. He arrives at a point of resignation, stating that: 'A better life is the kind of life that is impossible.'

Yet Wang and Liu are not the only compromised figures here; we might add Mattila himself to this list. At a drunken dinner party depicted in the film, we watch as Wang suggests with a straight face that every Chinese person who has studied abroad should be executed, and goes on to call out a Beijing university art professor for orientalism – that is, assuming the central place of Western values and then judging Chinese art on those terms.⁴ This charge of orientalism might also be brought to bear on this film. We might ask why documentaries about China but made by Westerners enjoy more wide-ranging exposure on the international film-festival circuit than similar documentaries made by Chinese filmmakers (for example, Yao Hung-i's 2011 documentary *Hometown Boy*, about artist Liu Xiaodong). *Chimeras* was shopped around a number of the world's leading doco project markets, including Canada's Hot Docs and the Sheffield Doc/Fest, demonstrating that the globalised structure of the Chinese art world is reflected in the world of film. The emblematic image here is a silent



Mattila inevitably succumbs to presenting diagnoses of the state of the nation and looks to both artists for zeitgeisty interpretations of contemporary Chinese culture through art.

shot of Liu at his gallery opening, staring into space while a Westerner talks nonstop, presumably explaining Liu's own work back to him.

The ambivalence about China's new openness to international influence is evident in the way artists such as Wang criticise the hegemony of the West while simultaneously giving access to Western filmmakers. Liu is notably more reticent, though he has the good sense to know that European documentary makers mean money in the bank. Mattila identifies a willingness among the Chinese to talk in front of cameras, which he attributes to a lack of any tradition of reality television or vérité documentary. However, I am left with a strong suspicion that the extensive access that Mattila was granted can be attributed, in large part, to his status as a foreigner. In one scene, while discussing the one-child policy, one of Liu's family members makes the point that the topic is best dealt with internally and not in front of foreigners. Yet, having given this disclaimer, he goes ahead and discusses it anyway.

This is no criticism of Mattila, who has been based in China for a number of years. *Chimeras* is a beautifully shot and deeply insightful film. The film's complexity stems from its knowledge that there are no simple answers to the contradictory pulls that are experienced within rapidly changing cultures. Art is a business, but it is also an ongoing attempt at finding a synthesis of social contradictions. By the end of the film, Wang finds his resolution in the epic minimalism of Buddhist-inspired installations. Maintaining the contrast,

Liu goes in the other direction towards the cluttered imagery of a consumerist wedding. The chimera is a hybrid beast, suggesting that there can be no easy synthesis of the film's disparate themes and two subjects. They all emerge as irreconcilably split personalities that nevertheless try to mediate between the past and the present, the art world and the social world, and the widening divisions of class and wealth in China.

<http://www.chimerasfilm.com>

Mike Walsh is an associate professor in the Department of Screen and Media at Flinders University, Adelaide. **m**

Endnotes

- Clarissa Sebag-Montefiore, 'Documentary Spotlights Chinese Artists Wang Guangyi, Liu Gang', *Los Angeles Times*, 10 May 2013, <<http://articles.latimes.com/2013/may/10/entertainment/la-et-mn-chimeras-documentary-china-artists-wang-guangyi-liu-gang-20130509/>>, accessed 15 May 2014.
- Mika Mattila, 'Director's Note', *Chimeras* press kit, p. 3.
- Mark Mann, 'HotDocs Picks: A Critical and Unflinching Frame on the Chinese Art World in *Chimeras*', *Blouin Artinfo*, 3 May 2013, <<http://ca.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/696609/hotdocs-picks-a-critical-and-unflinching-frame-on-the-chinese/>>, accessed 15 May 2014.
- Locally, we need look no further than David Roach and Warwick Ross' 2013 documentary *Red Obsession*, which seems a little scandalised by the effects that nouveau Chinese money is having on the French wine industry.

HELSINGIN SANOMAT

Kaksi taiteilijaa, kahdenlaiset arvot

Mika Mattilan erinomainen esikoisdokumentti pääsee syvälle nyky-Kiinan henkiseen ilmapiiriin

Leena Virtanen | HS, Julkaistu: 17.02.2014 06:3

Mika Mattila saattaa hyvinkin olla seuraava kansainvälisen tason suomalainen dokumenttiohjaaja, tai oikeastaan hänestä tuli jo sellainen heti tämän ensimmäisen dokumentin myötä. *Chimeras, unelmia Kiinasta* on herättänyt huomiota maailmalla ja kerännyt kehuja esimerkiksi Variety-lehdessä.

Mattilan (s. 1974) nimi putkahtaa melkein tyhjästä. Hän on tätä ennen toiminut kuvaajana, ja Kiinassa hän on kuvannut muun muassa **Mika Koskisen** dokumentin *Punaisen metsän hotelli*.

Mattila on asunut Kiinassa useita vuosia, ja tänä aikana hän on myös kuvannut materiaalia debyyttiinsä.

Kiinassa on miljardi tarinaa, ja lännessä tehdään jatkuvasti dokumentteja, joissa yritetään tavoittaa edes ripaus siitä, mitä mahtimaassa on parhaillaan tapahtumassa. Useimmat niistä kaatuvat siihen, että perspektiivi on sittenkin auttamattoman kapea.

Mattila on sukeltanut Kiinan henkiseen ilmapiiriin kahden nykyaikaisen taiteilijan ajatusten kautta. Hän on oivaltanut, että juuri taide voi heijastaa niitä hitaita prosesseja, jotka liikuttavat ikivanhaa kulttuuria.

Kiinalaisen nykyaikaisen taiteen nousu taidemaailman keskipisteeseen on ilmiö sinänsä, ja sitä on syytä lähestyä kriittisesti. Ovatko kaikki **Mao** -kuvat oikeasti arvokasta taidetta vai pelkästään länsimaisten taidekeräilijöiden pinnallinen päähänpintymä?

Mattila on seurannut kahta eri-ikäistä taiteilijaa. **Wang Guangyi** on yksi Kiinan menestyneimmistä taiteilijoista, joka oli perustamassa legendaarista pohjoisen taideryhmää 1980-luvulla. Nykyään hän on miljönääri.

Nuori **Liu Gang** on Wangille loistava vastapari, joka vasta aloittelee uraansa. Dokumentissa mennään Liun ensimmäisen näyttelyn avajaisiin. Teosten hinnat alkavat 10 000 dollarista, ja näyttely päättyy suoraan Newsweekin sivuille. Avajaisyleisöstä näkee, että vähintään puolet on länsimaisia taidekeräilijöitä.

Liu on kuitenkin vaatimaton mies, joka pitää koko ajan yhteyttä vanhempiinsa ja kotiseutuunsa. Sitä kautta myös dokumenttiin tulee sivujuonne, joka kuvaa kiinalaista arkitodellisuutta.

Liu on vanhempiensa ainoa lapsi, ja häntä kiinnostaa yhden lapsen politiikan vaikutus koko hänen sukupolveensa. "Emme elä itsellemme", Liu tiivistää hienosti kiinalaisen kollektiivisuuden, jota länsimaisen ihmisen on aina vaikea täysin tavoittaa. Se on oleellinen ero idän ja lännen välissä.

Samaan aikaan Wangin ja hänen kollegoidensa keskustelut herättävät hämmennystä. He toivovat kiinalaisten arvojen leviämistä laajemmalle. Toisaalta ne arvot asettuvat juuri länsimaista materialismia vastaan. Kiinalaisen nykyaikaisen taiteen menestystarinassa yhdistyy monta kulttuurista paradoksia. "Ristiriita on minussa", Liu sanoo.

Mattilan dokumentti on jopa kiinnostavampi kuin supertähtitaiteilija **Ai Weiwei**stä tehty parin vuoden takainen *Never Sorry*, jonka heikkous on siinä, ettei taiteilijan kanssa puhuta juuri lainkaan rahasta.

Mattila ei osoita ihailua vaan jättää runsaasti tilaa katsojan omille pohdinnoille.

Chimeras on myös toteutukseltaan upea, ja erityismaininnan ansaitsee siinä käytetty moderni kiinalainen musiikki, jota kuuntelisi mielellään vaikka erikseen soundtrackinä.

EXCERPTS FROM OTHER MEDIAS

"...the least classifiable titles often prove to be Hot Docs' most memorable"

- Artforum

"Finns – like the Danes – know how to do docs..... Artistically crafted, Mattila's doc is even more memorable for its philosophical content."

-Filmmaker Magazine

"La regia di stile nord europeo di Mattila si sposa perfettamente alle ambientazioni sospese degli ambienti metropolitani cinesi.Chimeras" è cinema documentario puro con influenze visive che vanno da Kaurismaki a Jarmusch per passare ad atmosfere "alla Tokyo – Ga" di Wenders."

(The directorial style of north European Mattila , the perfect answer to the lingering expectations of Chinese metropolitan environments...Chimeras " is pure documentary film with visual influences ranging from Kaurismaki to Jarmusch with nod to the atmosphere "at Tokyo - Ga " Wenders)

-Cinema Italiano

"Subtle and thought-provoking....fascinating glimpse of contemporary Chinese artistic culture, and an extremely absorbing watch."

- Grolsch Film Works

"Mika Mattila is ingenious in the way he makes the two artists strong contrasts, and at the same time a single voice of Chinese contemporary art's uneasy relationship to the West... this is, already by this point, a beautiful and elegant film."

- Flickfeast

"... a critical and unflinching frame on the Chinese art world..."

- Blouin ArtInfo

"Mattila's camera steps back and observes, offering a contemplative work on a complex subject.... as committed to deep thinking as it is to art."

-Torontoist

...shot in a beautifully naturalistic style with an artistic eye -- is imbued with layers of meaning and profound moments of intimacy with his subjects."

- Rabble

"Mika Mattila has the courage and the skill to bring us stories of contradictory men who work within the system, without judging their motives or choices."

- Next Projection

"File Chimeras under the "food for thought" category of doc and watch it for a thoughtful probing into some very relevant and urgent questions."

- Pretty Clever Films

"Mattila's debut is undoubtedly one the year's most successful Finnish feature documentaries.... considerable cinematic, aesthetic and technical flair."

-YLE News

"Mika Mattilan esikoisdokumenttielokuva on kansainvälistä tasoa... hienossa dokumenttielokuvassa globaali brändimaailma törmää kommunistisen taiteen raunioihin."

-Voima

PRINCIPAL CREDITS

DIRECTOR	<i>MIKA MATTILA</i>
CAMERA	<i>MIKA MATTILA</i>
EDITING	<i>MIKKO SIPPOLA</i>
SOUND	<i>JUHA HAKANEN</i>
PRODUCER	<i>MARKKU NISKA</i>

IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH

YLE, FINNISH BROADCASTING CO. / IIKKA VEHKALAHTI, ERKKI ASTALA
SVT, SWEDISH BROADCASTING CO. / EMELIE PERSSON; HJALMAR PALMGREN

WITH THE SUPPORT OF

FINNISH FILM FOUNDATION / ELINA KIVIHALME, MIIA HAAVISTO
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ARTS PROMOTION CENTRE FINLAND

AVEK
THE PROMOTION CENTRE FOR
AUDIOVISUAL CULTURE



CHIMERAS PROJECT WAS PITCHED AT

IDFA FORUM, AMSTERDAM/ASIAN SIDE OF THE DOC, SEOUL/HOT DOCS FORUM, TORONTO/SHEFFIELD
DOC/FEST MEETMARKET, SHEFFIELD/EAST EUROPEAN FORUM, JIHLAVA

CHIMERAS HAS BEEN SELECTED FOR THE FOLLOWING FESTIVALS:

- HOT DOCS IFF, Toronto, Canada, 04/2013, WORLD PREMIERE
- SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, USA, 05/2013, IN COMPETITION
- SHEFFIELD DOC/FEST, UK, 06/2013
- TOPANGA FF, Los Angeles, USA, 07/2013, GRAND JURY PRIZE in DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION
- NEW HORIZONS IFF, Wroclaw, Poland, 07/2013, IN COMPETITION
- BORDOCS Documentary Forum, Tijuana, Mexico, 09/2013
- NORDISK PANORAMA, Malmö, Sweden, 09/2013, NEW NORDIC VOICES COMPETITION
- LOVE & ANARCHY - HELSINKI IFF, Finland, 09/2013
- HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, NY, USA, 10/2013, IN COMPETITION
- ADELAIDE FILM FESTIVAL, Australia, 10/2013
- MARGARET MEAD FILM FESTIVAL, New York City, USA 10/2013
- DMZ DOCS, Seoul, South Korea, 10/2013, IN COMPETITION
- AARHUS FILM FESTIVAL, Denmark, 11/2013
- INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF INDIA, Goa, 11/2013
- FESTIVAL CINE//B, Santiago de Chile, 11/2013
- FESTIVAL DEI POPOLI, Florence, Italy, 12/2013
- DOCPOINT, HELSINKI INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FF, Finland, 01/2014
- BIG SKY INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FF, Montana, USA, 02/2014
- REEL ARTIST FILM FESTIVAL, Toronto, Canada, 02/2014
- AMERICAN DOCUMENTARY FF, Palm Springs, CA, USA, 03/2014
- SALEM INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Salem, Maine, USA, 03/2014
- BYRON BAY FILM FESTIVAL, Australia, 04/2014
- ARIZONA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Tuscon, AR, USA, 04/2014
- DOXA, Vancouver, Canada, 05/2014
- DOCUMENTARY EDGE, Auckland & Wellington, New Zealand, 06/2014

- HARBOURFRONT FESTIVAL**, Toronto, Canada, 07/2014
- SPLIT INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Croatia, 09/2014
- **HAMBURG FILM FEST**, Germany, 09/2014