

SODIUM PRODUCTIONS

presents

Longing for the Rain

(CHUNMENG)

a film by **YANG Lina**

Hong Kong 2012 / 98 min. / Color / Feature

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

CHINESE SHADOWS

contact@chineseshadows.com

SYNOPSIS

Fang Lei, a Beijing housewife, is leading a peaceful and affluent life with her husband and daughter.

Life goes by until one day a man appears in her dreams. His appearance is unclear, but the touch of his body is awakening a woman Fang Lei didn't know she could be.

This shadow slowly becomes the lover she can't live without. Afraid of starting to lose her mind, she turns to a Taoist Monk for help. But the separation with her inner ghost is too painful and she soon returns to him.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Longing for the Rain can be considered a biographical film. The ghost in this film accompanied me through the years of my youth. A lot of the time I could not tell whether he was just my way of escaping from the real world or whether he really existed. I sometimes even wonder whether every other woman has a hidden ghost lurking around in her conscience just like I did.

In my culture, ghosts are both mysterious and frightening. Many people are not believers but they believe, as the ancient Chinese saying goes, that three feet off the ground there are god-like beings. Although this sort of belief is officially frowned upon in China, I think that, deep down, Chinese people still believe in that saying.

We are living in crazy times, in a kingdom of desire, where it is difficult to distinguish ideals from desires. I can see the fatigue and anxiety in people's faces as I walk down the streets. They all look like copies of each other. Caring, trust, kindness, and independence have all become a luxury when it comes to social relationships. I have also been infected by this time and age, so I have been drifting along a track I have designed for myself.

China has been a patriarchal society since ancient times and women have always had nothing more than a subsidiary status in society. No one, in my family or at school, ever told me the importance of women in society. It was my life experience that made me understand my female identity and give me the awareness of what it is to be a woman. When I became clear of that awareness, the idea for the script of *Longing for the Rain* began to take shape. Just as many writers have written about their own life experiences, I want to express my own experience at the right point in time. If I don't, it would simply become a burden, something I would have to keep hidden deep inside. I would go so far as to say that making this film has been a process of self-liberation and self-redemption.

Thirty years ago, China was a very sexually conservative country. It is now becoming a sexually freer society. Marriage and love can even be bought and sold like products. But economic development and an increased awareness of sexual issues does not, to a great extent, liberate people. On the contrary, they make women sink into the whirlpool of this materialist age, and can at time make our lives spin out of control.

The heroine walks freely between Yin and Yang, shuttling between fantasy and reality. She finds her own way to deal with the world around her, and enjoy it. Talent and morbidity, commonality and peculiarity, loss and freedom... If you say that *Longing for the Rain* is a film about women, I would agree. In China, there are not many films about women. In fact, we are perhaps used to expressing ourselves through the language of a patriarchal society.

I have some experience of making documentary films. However, making an intimate film like this one cannot be done in documentary form. Feature films are more expressive when it comes to this type of film. And making a feature film has also always been a personal dream of mine. I attempted many different things - trying to blur the boundaries between documentary and feature films - but it was not easy. In the end, I went with the feature film option. The final result is a bit like a magic mirror constantly urging me to touch it.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY and FILMOGRAPHY

Born in 1972 in China, YANG Lina graduated from the Art Academy of the People's Liberation Army in 1995. She then danced and acted in numerous ballets, theater plays and feature films, including JIA Zhangke's « PLATFORM ».

YANG Lina started to work as an independent documentary filmmaker in 1997. Her first film, OLD MEN, about the daily life and loneliness of her old neighbors, was largely acclaimed internationally. Followed an even more personal work HOME VIDEO about Yang's own family history and trauma, she then filmed retired couples who meet and fall in love on the dance floor of the gardens of Beijing's Temple of Heaven for LET'S DANCE TOGETHER and THE LOVE OF MR AN. She returned to her neighborhood for MY NEIGHBOURS AND THEIR JAPANESE GHOSTS where she interviewed unknown senior about their impression and memory of the Japanese during their occupation of China. Her last documentary, WILD GRASS, follow over 14 years the kids of an orphanage in the North of China. *Longing for the Rain* is her first fictional film.

Old Men (Laotou), 1997-99, 94 min, documentary

- 1999 Winner of the «Merit Prize», Yamagata Festival, Japan.
- Winner of the «Golden Pigeon» and the jury prize, Leipzig Festival, Germany.
- Winner of the SCAM prize, Cinéma du Réel, Paris, France.

Home Video (Jiating luxiangdai), 2001, 60 min, documentary

- 2001 Selection, Leipzig Festival, Germany.

Let's Dance Together (Yiqi tiaowu), 2007, 78 min, documentary (Produced by NHK)

The Love of Mr. AN (Lao An), 2007, 85 min, documentary

- 2008 Competition, Hong Kong International Film Festival
- Amsterdam International Documentary Festival
- Vancouver International Film Festival
- Melbourne International Film Festival
- 2011 San Sebastian Film Festival, Digital retrospective

My Neighbors and their Japanese Ghosts (Wo de linju shuo guizi), 2003-08, 52 min, documentary

- 2008 Hong Kong International Film Festival

Wild grass (Yecao), 1995-2009, 75 min (Co-produced by INA and Arte)

- 2009 Vienna Film Festival

Longing for the Rain (Chunmeng), 2012, 98 min, Feature

- 2013 Competition, International Film Festival Rotterdam
- 2013 Hong Kong International Film Festival - Special Mention
- 2013 Sydney Film Festival
- 2013 Edinburgh International Film Festival

WORK-IN-PROGRESS

« Half the Sky » : Head of Women Affairs (Funu Zhuren)

2004 - 2008 In production.

Old Gong (Lao Gong).

2004 - 2008 In production.

The Temple (Miao)

2009 – 2012 In production

CREDITS

Director	YANG Lina
Screenplay	YANG Lina
Cinematographer	WANG Min
Art Director	PENG Shaoying
Editor	LIAO Chingsong, YANG Hongyu, Matthieu LACLAU
Sound	ZHANG Yang
Music	Yoshi HANNO
Sound	ZHANG Yang
Main cast	ZHAO Siyuan, FU Jia, Dej PONGPAZROJ, XUE Hong
Producers	Vivian QU, YANG Lina
Production	SODIUM Productions
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