



FIRST PERSON FILM

NEWS RELEASE



17, 18 OCT. @ ICA, London
Online, 24 OCT.-19 DEC. 2024



PERSONAL CINEMA FROM CHINA

CATHAYPLAY



NFTS

NATIONAL
FILM AND
TELEVISION
SCHOOL



PERSONAL CINEMA FROM CHINA SEASON: 17 OCT. - 19 DEC. 2024

3 Screenings at the ICA (17, 18 OCT.) + 7 Films streaming on www.curate-it.co.uk,

**Rarely seen films in UK Cinemas, curated by First-Person Film in Collaboration with
Chinese Independent Film Archive (CIFA), Newcastle University and CATHAYPLAY.**

Program: PERSONAL CINEMA FROM CHINA

Screening Venue: ICA, 12 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AH

Date: Thursday 17 at 6:30pm and 8:45pm; and Friday 18 Oct. at 6:30pm

Book online: <https://www.ica.art/films>

Streaming <https://www.curate-it.co.uk/>

Dates: From 24 OCT. to 19 DEC. 2024

(Edinburgh—October 17, 2024) — *PERSONAL CINEMA FROM CHINA* is a season of fiction and non-fiction films from China curated by Wifak Gueddana as part of an MA in Film Studies, Programming and Curation at the NFTS. The season is also the first in a series of seasons and films for streaming presented by First-Person Film, an online initiative for the curation of personal films from China, Japan, South Korea and other countries in East Asia. The website will continue in the future to release new seasons and films for streaming, as well as, notes, film reviews and links to resources online.

PERSONAL CINEMA FROM CHINA will run for ten weeks online. The launch of the season will be at the ICA cinema in London on the 17 Oct with two screenings of Lina Yang's films *Spring Tide* and *Leap of Faith*. The film programme features eight works, with the UK premiere of *Leap of Faith* by filmmaker Lina Yang, and seven films rarely seen in the UK (Book online: <https://www.ica.art/films>).

In the lineup are works from known Chinese indie directors as well as artist and amateur filmmakers. Works by directors such as Lina Yang, Shu Haolun, Pan Lu, and Yu Araki are personal films that investigate the social, political, and cultural conditions of contemporary China. Produced in the last decade or so, between 2010 and 2023. The works in this season offer urgent and often raw insights into issues of personal struggle, family, belonging and social justice. Selected from hundreds of indies made in China over the past decades, many of the films in “PERSONAL CINEMA FROM CHINA” are made by writers and artists with little to no cinematography training, who have been able to take advantage of the proliferation of digital video technology to tell stories about contemporary China even as they face severe challenges in producing and distributing their work. Despite the dramatic economic and societal changes in recent years, the state maintains control over all media, including films, and recent documentaries reflecting social conditions in China are often censored.

The title of the season suggests a personal and matter-of-fact-approach that the filmmakers have taken to place themselves in front of the camera or simply turn it outside to record the old home ‘*lao jia*’, reflecting on the psychological difficulty of positioning themselves in relation to China rapid transformations and urbanization.

Schedule and Films Synopsis

Screenings: ICA, London: book from <https://www.ica.art/films>

Introduction by Prof. Sabrina Qiong Yu, and curator, Wifak Gueddana

➤ **Spring Tide, Directed by Lina Yang**

Mandarin with English subtitles| 124 min. | 2019 | Drama| Thursday, October 17, 6:30 pm

Single Mother and Journalist, Guo Jianbo lives together with her mother and daughter. Walled in traditional family conventions, the relation of three generations of women is distant and uneasy; but behind the silence of Guo Jianbo, her daughter's insecurity and the grandmother's constant whining, there are conflicting undercurrents of rebellion, family care and resilience. Yang Lina uses the story of an all-female family to present a series of multi-levelled themes, epitomising women relations in Chinese society.

➤ **Leap of Faith, Directed by Lina Yang**

Mandarin with English Subtitles| 102 mins | 2023 | Documentary | UK Public Screening Premiere |Thursday, October 17, 8:45 pm and Friday October 18, 6:30 pm

Young girls Haolin, Yini, Zining, and Yujia are about to compete in an equestrian championship tour in China. Told from the gaze of three mothers, including the director herself, the film is a gallery of personal moments, happy and sad. We are brought to follow fragments of the girls' trip, as they learn to trust each other, experience intimacy with the horses, go through difficult times, slowly grow and develop genuine bonds. Lina Yang's film is an eulogy to the energy of youth, while it tries to bring in mature voices, and nuanced angles for a richer and more granular texture. .

Streaming for Free <https://www.curate-it.co.uk/>

➤ **Anachronic Chronicles: Voyages Inside/Out Asia, Directed by Lu Pan and Yu Araki**

With English Subtitles| 63 mins | 2021 | Documentary | Thursday, from October 24, to November 7, 2024

Lu Pan and Yu Akari share home video-footage of their 90s childhoods in all their funny, celebratory, awkward and banal glory. Edited together remotely during the pandemic, the two artists discuss early home video technology, the social status of this footage in different contexts (both migrated as children), and also how these images were made and circulated. Their playful yet insightful conversation stitches the chaotic footage together and gives new life to a nostalgic form of cinema. (Hyun Jin Cho)

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are actually conflicting undercurrents of rebellion, family care and resilience.

➤ **NO. 89 SHIMEN ROAD, Directed by Shu Haolun**

Mandarin / English subtitles | 85 mins | 2010 | Drama | Thursday, from November 14, to November 28, 2024

16 year-old Xiaoli lives in a communal block on Shimen Road, a close-knit neighbourhood that no longer exists in Shanghai. It's the late 1980s; while his teachers talk about China's recovery from the devastation of the Cultural Revolution, the allure of new cultures and ideas sweeps through Xiaoli and the two young women closest to him. His best friend Lanmi carouses with foreigners, scandalizing the neighbourhood. Lili, an idealistic classmate whom he loves, wants to quit school and join the student democracy demonstrations that have started in Beijing. Xiaoli must decide where his future lies in a world suddenly robbed of stability and innocence.

➤ **Nostalgia Directed by Shu Haolun**

Mandarin / English subtitles | 70 mins | 2012 | Documentary | Thursday, from November 14, to November 28, 2024

Acclaimed filmmaker Shu Haolun explores the rich culture and history of his Shanghai neighbourhood upon its impending destruction. While sharing a wealth of memories, Shu uses his camera to capture the everyday details of his home before they are wiped out forever.

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➤ **Shorts:**

- Shape (2022) by Linlin ZHU -7 mins

- Aïeules (2021) by Zou Yang -20 mins

With English Subtitles | Experimental films | Thursday, from December 05, to December 19, 2024

A collection of amateur films from the Cathayplay platform. The shorts explore themes of motherhood, ageing and female body.

➤ **-Export My Love, by Li Jinglin**

With English Subtitles | Documentary | 99 mins | 2020 | Thursday, from December 05, to December 19, 2024

Shot in both China and America, the documentary follows four Chinese women who try to pursue love by finding American husbands. Although they've never been to America before and most of them cannot speak English. They try to overcome barriers and start new lives.

Organiser



First-Person Film is a newborn digital platform for the promotion of personal indie cinema from China, Japan and other countries in East, and Southeast Asia. It is built with awareness, and when possible in collaboration, with the existing initiatives in this space, online and offline. Its aim is to promote collaboration with indie film artists, distributors and curators in the UK and in other places around the world. In the long term, this will help establish an ecosystem, facilitating access to resources and enabling a free circulation of personal indie works.

Note: First-Person Film website will go live on Thursday 17 October.

In collaboration with



[The Chinese Independent Film Archive](#) (CIFA) is the world's largest publicly accessible archive of independent Chinese cinema, established with the help of UK Arts and Humanities Research Council. It is home to over 800 independent films and their associated material culture (e.g. posters, photos, publications), and around 170 oral history video interviews with a wide range of stakeholders. The archive provides a rare and invaluable resource for teaching and researching contemporary China, opening a window onto China's culture, history, society and politics for academic communities and the general public alike. CIFA regularly curates screenings, exhibitions, and academic events with individuals and organisations across the world to promote the exhibition of, and research into, Chinese independent cinema, as well as multidisciplinary use of CIFA's collection.



Launched in 2019, **[CathayPlay.com](#)** is a streaming platform dedicated to Chinese independent cinema, offering near 800 globally acclaimed films in various dialects and genres like drama, documentary, and animation. With a mission to bridge cultural divides, it features special content for female directors and the LGBTQIA+ community, emphasizing diversity. Catering to students, scholars, and industry professionals with tailored subscriptions, CathayPlay also distributes DVDs and publishes related content, organizing events around Chinese independent film. It aims to be more than a streaming service, fostering a community connected by a passion for diverse and authentic Chinese narratives. Subscribe to Cathayplay and get a discount with promo code: 1personfilm2024