

VideoFilmes presents

Jia Zhang-ke, a guy from Fenyang



Synopsis –“Jia Zhang-ke, a guy from Fenyang”

Directed by Walter Salles

Produced by VideoFilmes

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

For “A guy from Fenyang”, Jia Zhang-ke returns to his birthplace, the Shanxi province in Northern China, and to the locations of his films. His actors, friends, and close collaborators join him as Jia Zhang-ke retraces the inspirational sources behind “Xiao Wu”, “Platform”, “Unknown Pleasures”, “The World”, “Still Life”, “24 City”, and “A Touch of Sin”, among others. Through these films, the reflection of a country in convulsion gradually reveals itself.

Filmed entirely in China and most specifically in the places in which Jia Zhang-ke is intimate, the documentary portrays the profound and complex relation between the director and his environment.

“Jia Zhang-ke, a guy from Fenyang” was shot in Fenyang, Pingyao, Hong Nanche, and other cities and villages near the Shanxi region, and also in Beijing, at the World Park, the Film Academy, the Fine Arts School, and Jia Zhang-ke’s production company, Xstream Pictures.

The interviews in the film were conducted by Walter Salles and Jean Michel Frodon. The documentary also gave birth to a book, “The World of Jia Zhang-ke”, which was also organized by Jean Michel Frodon.



Short synopsis –“Jia Zhang-ke, a guy from Fenyang”

“Jia Zhang-ke, a guy from Fenyang” is the portrait of a young Chinese director, who for many has become one of the most important filmmakers of our time. The documentary, directed by Walter Salles, dwells on the question of memory and cinema, as it follows Jia Zhang-ke to his birthplace, the Shanxi province in Northern China, and the locations of his films. With the help of his actors and collaborators, Jia Zhang-ke retraces the inspirational sources behind his films and, in doing so, unveils the reflection of a culture in convulsion.



JIA ZHANG-KE OR THE MEMORY OF PRESENT TIME

Walter Salles

“Xiao Wu”, Jia Zhang-ke’s first film, premiered at the Berlin Film Festival in 1998, the same year I came to the Berlinale for the first time (with “Central Station”).

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

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

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

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

Credits

Directed by Walter Salles

Interviews by Walter Salles and Jean-Michel Frodon

Director of Photography Inti Briones

Executive Producer Maria Carlota Bruno

Edited by Joana Collier

Sound Designer Li Dan-Feng

2015, running time: 105'



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