

MARCH 14 – 24, 2013  
**CAAMFEST**  
FILM. MUSIC. FOOD.

**CAAMFest Contextualizes Contemporary US-China Relations, Foregrounds Chinese/Chinese American Women and Established Luminaries**

**SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. 13, 2013** - CAAMFest offers a striking array of timely, gender-inclusive and high-profile Chinese and Chinese American films. In the spirit of demystifying China's economic ascendance and contextualizing contemporary US-China relations, this year's festival includes a special focus on the flesh-and-blood realities of present-day Chinese and Chinese American lives. CAAMFest ventures beyond cold statistics and sensationalistic "Chinese superpower" rhetoric with rich and deeply humanistic films like *THE MOSUO SISTERS*, award-winning director Marlo Poras' poignant account of Beijing's dwindling economy and its impact on the lives of two sisters, and *XMAS WITHOUT CHINA*, Alicia Dwyer's fascinating exploration on the challenge of an American family Christmas spent without Chinese products.

Additionally, women take the lead adding new voice and vision to the Chinese/American media landscape. These include *NICE GIRLS CREW*, a popular CAAM-produced comedy now in its second season, and *WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS*, Ji Dan's potent documentary about family life on the outskirts of Beijing. Topping things off are a number of films with Chinese connections that are directed by renowned auteurs such as celebrated actress-director Joan Chen (*SHANGHAI STRANGERS*), controversial provocateur Ann Hui (*BEAUTIFUL 2012: My Way*) and art cinema giant Tsai Ming-liang (*BEAUTIFUL 2012: Walker*).

**ECONOMIES OF POWER: EXAMINING PRESENT-DAY CHINA**

In *BEIJING FLICKERS*, the latest film from controversial filmmaker Zhang Yuan (*Little Red Flowers, Beijing Bastards*), the displaced youth of Beijing are down and out, but they find solace in a makeshift family – one another. Together the group of unsettled youths form a community in a beautiful, gritty and poignant film that straddles the thin line between comedy and drama.

Second on *Indiewire/Criticwire's* "Top Documentaries of 2012" list, Stephen Maing's *HIGH TECH, LOW LIFE* explores the closing of China's digital divide, the rise of its netizen culture and its government's relationship with the "Great Firewall." Documentarian Stephen Maing offers a glimpse past the firewall by way of the brazen young reporter Zola and the seasoned blogger "Tiger Temple," who bridges China's information gap by riding miles into the countryside to report on the invisible and forgotten

Marlo Poras (*Mai's America*), whose work has been cited by the *Los Angeles Times* and featured at the South by Southwest Festival, creates another exquisitely realized documentary with *THE MOSUO SISTERS*. After losing their jobs in Beijing, two sisters from a matriarchal ethnic minority in China must find a way to support their family and negotiate the issues of modern life.

Steve, an aging white man with "yellow fever," finds a young Chinese bride named Sandy through the Internet in Debbie Lum's *SEEKING ASIAN FEMALE*. The couple soon discovers that their dreams of a perfect love and life greatly contrast from their bitter reality in this highly intimate documentary that addresses larger issues of the immigrant experience, cultural conflict and what it means to love.

STORIES TO LIGHT

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In *WHEN NIGHT FALLS*, acclaimed director Ying Liang (*The Other Half*) dramatizes the controversial real-life tale of Yang Jia, a young man who stabbed six policemen to death in Shanghai after being abused by officers. Ying's cool camera and subdued lighting make palpable the oppressive atmosphere underlying the bleak inevitability of state power in "a movie China doesn't want you to see" (*The New Yorker*).

In their new documentary *XMAS WITHOUT CHINA*, filmmakers Alicia Dwyer and Tom Xia set out to discover if an American family can survive Christmas without Chinese goods. One brave family, the Joneses, accepts the challenge, and what results is an offbeat, thought-provoking examination of the global market economy, US-China interdependency and China's economic rise.

### **ABOVE THE LINE: CHINESE/AMERICAN WOMEN IN MEDIA**

After a sizzling debut in 2012, Sheetal Sheth, Lynn Chen and Michelle Krusiec return in the CAAM-produced, web comedy *NICE GIRLS CREW* about three best frenemies and their crazy antics in a book club. For Season 2, Leonardo Nam, Parvesh Cheena, and the iconic Tsai Chin join the crew for an unforgettable mix of taut one-liners and explosive conversations.

Best Documentary winner at the 2012 Millenium Festival, *WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS* is a powerful documentary about a family living on the edge of Beijing. Two young girls and their brother struggle to improve their lives—with little to no help from their parents—in this galvanizing, unblinking look at the underclass in China, directed by one of China's top female filmmakers, Ji Dan.

Set in 2041, *ADVENTAGEOUS* is a deeply moving short from Jennifer Phang (*Half-Life*, winner of the Best Narrative Feature Award at SFIAAFF '08) that depicts a mother's struggle and sacrifice to ensure her daughter's future in a time when education and employment is limited.

### **ESTABLISHED LUMINARIES**

A collaboration between the Hong Kong International Film Festival Society and the Chinese Internet TV company Youku, *BEAUTIFUL 2012* is an omnibus of four short films, each by an acclaimed Asian director. Shorts by art cinema giant Tsai Ming-Liang (*Walker*), controversial provocateur Ann Hui (*My Way*), Korean maestro Kim Tae-yong (*You are More than Beautiful*), and legendary cinematographer-director Gu Changwei (*Long Tou*) all wrest moments of rapture from unexpected places.

Celebrated actress-director Joan Chen (*Twin Peaks*, *Saving Face*, *Xiu Xiu: The Sent Down Girl*) directs *SHANGHAI STRANGERS*, an evocative short about love in the time of SARS. A blackout on Christmas Eve in Shanghai makes intimates of strangers, as a Chinese woman reveals a long-kept secret to a British man.

### **CAAMFEST GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES ITS SUPPORTERS**

CAAMFest is supported in part by the following: Comcast, Asian Art Museum, B'stro, Pacific Islanders in Communications, Eagle Press, FilmFest, Gala Festival Engine, Southwest Airlines, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, San Francisco Grants for the Arts/Hotel Tax Fund, National Endowment for the Arts, San Francisco Foundation and Cal Humanities. CAAM is supported with major funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

### **GENERAL FESTIVAL INFORMATION**

CAAMFest is a presentation of the Center for Asian American Media. CAAMFest, formerly the San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival (SFIAAFF), is a celebration of film, music, food and digital media from the world's most innovative Asian and Asian American artists. CAAMFest takes place March 14-24, 2013 in the Bay Area. San Francisco venues include: Castro Theatre, 429 Castro Street; Sundance Kabuki Cinemas, 1881 Post Street; New People Cinema, 1746 Post Street; Great Star Theater, 636 Jackson Street; Asian Art Museum, 200 Larkin Street; Hotel Kabuki, 1625 Post Street; Rickshaw Stop, 155 Fell Street; Slate Bar, 2925 16th Street; and Superfrog Gallery at New People, 1746 Post Street. Berkeley venues include: Pacific Film Archive Theater, 2575 Bancroft Way. Oakland venues include: Oakland Museum of California, 1000 Oak Street.

### **FESTIVAL TICKET INFORMATION**

Excluding special events, panels, galas and special screenings, advanced general admission tickets are \$12. Students, seniors (65+) and disabled adults are \$11 (Limit 1 per program with ID only). Tickets for Center for Asian American Media members are \$10 (Limit 2 per program per ID). There is a \$1.50 service charge for all tickets purchased online. Tickets go on sale to CAAM members only on Wednesday, February 13, 2013 (online only) and open to the general public beginning Sunday, February 17, 2013 (online only). Tickets can be purchased in person at our CAAMFest box office at Sundance Kabuki Cinemas starting Thursday, February 28, 2013.

#### **About CAAM:**

CAAM (Center for Asian American Media) is a non-profit organization dedicated to presenting stories that convey the richness and diversity of Asian American experiences to the broadest audience possible. CAAM does this by funding, producing, distributing and exhibiting works in film, television and digital media. For more information on CAAM, please visit [www.caamedia.org](http://www.caamedia.org).

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