

JIA Zhangke

China / Film

The Core of JIA Zhangke's Work: Capturing 'Contemporary' China in Film

■ Date: Wednesday, Sep. 19, 2018 (18:30-21:30) ■ Participants: 260
 ■ Venue: United cinema CANAL CITY 13

Part 1 Screening of *Mountains May Depart*

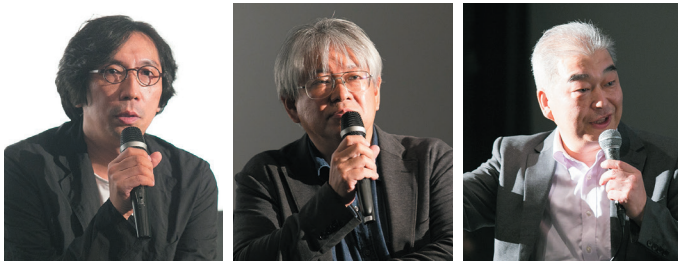
A film capturing the emotions of people swept away by a changing society



The public lecture, held at United cinema CANAL CITY 13, began with a screening of the director's *Mountains May Depart* to a packed theater. The work portrays the love between a mother amid the upheavals in Chinese society and her son, living in a distant land with his father. It was an official competition entry in the Cannes International Film Festival, garnering the Taiwan Golden Horse Best Original

Screenplay and Audience Choice Awards, the Asian Film Awards Best Screenplay Award, and more. The audience was enthralled for over two hours by the moving tale of the bonds of love in a changing society.

Part 2 Panel Discussion



Commentator
YUKISADA Isao
(Film Director)

Commentator
ICHIYAMA Shozo
(Film Producer)

Coordinator
ISHIZAKA Kenji
(Prof., Japan Institute of the Moving Image; Tokyo Asian Film Festival Asian film director)

Films have a duty to record the shape of society

In the panel discussion, Professor ISHIZAKA coordinated a discussion with film director Mr. YUKISADA Isao, Mr. ICHIYAMA Shozo, who has produced a number of Mr. JIA's films.

Mr. YUKISADA began by praising Mr. JIA as a director who can truly portray China today, and drive the film industry in Asia. Mr. ICHIYAMA agreed, saying that he felt Mr. JIA was an outstanding director after watching *Xiao Wu* [*Pickpocket*], adding that he offers realism not found in other Chinese films.

Mr. JIA described his joy at receiving the Fukuoka Prize, explaining that he had come to love Japanese film through screenings of KUROSAWA Akira's *Rashomon*, and films directed by OZU Yasujiro, OSHIMA Nagisa, and others. "I feel I have developed together with



Chinese society, and its changes have transformed me. I am fascinated by depicting Chinese society, and have tried to capture it in film from my first attempt. Films have a duty to record the shape of society, and tell us what types of people are living in it. I think OZU does something similar for Japanese households in *The Only Son*, for example. In China, the prime movie audience is said to be from 16 to 20 years old, and even though film is trending toward mere entertainment, my belief is that it should remain a mirror to examine society and the era we live in."

The commentators then introduced their own favorite films by Mr. JIA. Mr. YUKISADA selected *Unknown Pleasures*, praising it as a masterpiece in the 'teen film' genre. "The characters try to resist but cannot escape, revealing they lack of any vision for the future." A line made by one of the characters that "It's enough to live to 30" struck him as realistic, making the film unique. Mr. ICHIKAWA chose *Platform*, explaining that it was the first film they had worked on together and revealing that while "...his filming process is superb, my recollection is that it took an awfully long time."

In closing, Mr. JIA introduced his latest film, *Ash Is Purest White*, which was just released in China, leaving an audience eager to see his newest work.

School Visit

■ Date: Friday, Sep. 21 (10:40-12:10)
 ■ Venue: Kyushu Sangyo University

This was Mr. JIA's first talk at a Japanese university. The auditorium was packed with students as he revealed various episodes from his own time as a student.

Feeling a need to express what he felt after various events, such as when one of his friends died in his childhood, he became engrossed in writing in high school, he explained, but after graduation entered an art school to create art during the day and continue to write at night. He was unsatisfied with the results, feeling that neither could adequately capture the tides of the era. He happened to see *Yellow Earth*, directed by CHEN Kaige, and realized that the film was the best medium for him. After entering the Beijing Film Academy, he made an indie called *Xiao Shan* [*Going Home*] with friends. "Film directors," he said, "are like mailmen, conveying the events of the world to us all. Instead of missing the real for the virtual, I hope that you will grow richer and deeper through real experiences."

