Saturday, March 17, 2012

11:00 a.m.  Screening of *Bing Ai* 亲爱 (2007)

With the completion of the Three Gorges Dam, now under construction, 1.13 million people along the Yangtze River will have been dislocated. The majority of them are farmers. *BING AI* features one woman farmer who refuses to move away from her village. The audience will follow her seven-year struggle with officials who pressure her to relocate, while a strong devotion to her land compels her to remain in the place she calls home.

(117 minutes)

1:00 p.m.  Q&A with Director Feng Yan 冯艳
2:15 p.m. DOUBLE FEATURE:
*My Fancy High Heels* 我的高跟鞋 (2010) and
*Women 50 Minutes* 女人50分钟 (2006)

*MY FANCY HIGH HEELS* is a film about dreams, and a tale bound together by beautiful high-heeled shoes. Brand-name high heels costing anywhere from $300 to $1000 – exactly who is it that makes them? From procuring the leather, to the assembly line, to the contract manufacturer, to the moment when lily-white feet slip into each pair of high heels, how many people’s hands do these shoes pass through? The farming woman who tends the cattle, the worker, the manager of the contract manufacturing firm, the young New York woman from a wealthy family who wears the shoes – they all have their own difficulties and little sources of happiness in life. This film adopts their dreams as its central theme, and reveals the story that lies behind a pair of beautiful high heel shoes.

(56 minutes) Directed by Ho Chao-ti.

*WOMEN 50 MINUTES* was mainly shot on the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, where remote southwestern Chinese metropolitan cities are developing, from 2000 to 2004. They document the social changes occurring in contemporary China. Women from different backgrounds and places are working, praying, skylarking and falling in love. Everything shall change for sure.

(54 minutes)

4:30 p.m. Q&A with Director Shi Tou 石头

5:30 p.m. DOUBLE FEATURE:
*Speaking Up 2* 问--大陆小学 (2007) and
*Rice Distribution* 平安米 (2003)

About two dozen students from a well-respected primary school in Jiangxu (near Shanghai) are interviewed in *SPEAKING UP 2*. They are asked to express their views on different topics such as personal issues, family, gender, society, etc. Their answers highlight the changing face of today’s China.

(31 minutes)

*RICE DISTRIBUTION*: During the seventh lunar month, when the Ghost Festival takes place, Chinese pay tribute to their ancestors and offer food to the deceased to appease them and ward off bad luck. In Hong Kong, besides staging ceremonies to honor the dead, many Taoist organizations give away rice to the elderly and the poor. The rice distribution depicted in this film was one of the largest events, and attracted over eight thousand people. The event was scheduled to last from nine in the morning to six in the evening. In order to ensure a place in the line, most of the participants arrived before dawn.

(36 minutes)

6:35 p.m. Q&A with Director Tammy Cheung 张虹
11:00 a.m.  Screening of *Beijing Taxi* 北京出租车 (2010)

*Beijing Taxi* is a feature-length documentary that vividly portrays the ancient capital of China undergoing a profound transformation. The intimate lives of three taxi drivers are seen through a humanistic lens as they navigate a quickly morphing city, confronting modern issues and changing values. The three protagonists radiate a warm sense of humanity despite the struggles that each faces in adapting to new realities of life in the modern city. With stunning imagery of Beijing and a contemporary score rich in atmosphere, the film communicates a visceral sense of the common citizens’ persistent attempts to grasp the elusive. The 2008 Summer Olympic Games serve as the backdrop for the film, a coming out party for a rising nation and a metaphor for Chinese society and its struggles to reconcile enormous contradictions while adjusting to a new capitalist system that can seem foreign to some in the Communist-ruled and educated society. Candid and perceptive in its filming approach and highly cinematic and moody in style, *Beijing Taxi* takes us on a lyrical journey through fragments of a society riding the bumpy roads to modernization. Though its destination unknown, the drivers continue to forge ahead.

(78 minutes)

12:20 p.m.  Q&A with Director Miao Wang 王淼

1:30 p.m.  DOUBLE FEATURE:

*Money and Honey* 面包情人 (2011)

*City of Memories* 思念之城 (2007)

*MONEY AND HONEY* intimately portrays the lives of Filipino migrant workers and elders in a Taipei nursing home. Living away from their loved ones, both the Filipino caretakers and the elderly residents suffer from homesickness, and exchange stories of joy and sorrow. The Filipino caretakers comfort themselves with humor, singing the self-mocking song: ‘No money, no honey.’ Wives, mothers, migrant workers - these Filipino women are smart, they know how to survive, and yet the road home seems to grow longer and longer. What price do they have to pay for love and livelihood? Can their dreams ever come true?

(73 minutes)

This film is the fourth documentary in the tetralogy “The Realm of Womenhood,” after “Where is My Home?,” “Dear My Love,” and “The Ballads of Grandmothers.” *CITY OF MEMORIES* depicts the lives of elderly people living in a nursing home; their agony, longing and loneliness is illustrated via the visual medium of film – a painting of their lives. Love is after all an everlasting treasure intertwined in bittersweet sorrow. Caught in the space between dream and reality, images of wintry Taipei, with its drizzling rain and gloomy sky, reflect the fading minds of these aged women. *CITY OF MEMORIES* illustrates the friendships and interactions that form between these seniors, as well as their longing for companionship, and their experiences of surviving the turmoil of war.

(101 minutes)

4:30 p.m.  Q&A with Director Lee Ching-Hui 李靖惠