Exhibition

Wang Bing: Memories

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cercle cité
LUXEMBOURG

Press kit

Exhibition

Wang Bing: Memories

Organised with the support of the Luxembourg City Film Festival

09/02/2024
— 14/04/2024
11:00 - 19:00

Cercle Cité
Luxembourg

Free entrance

In his very first exhibition in Luxembourg, the acclaimed Chinese filmmaker Wang Bing puts memory in relation to history by retracing personal recollections of the Anti-Rightist Campaign or the Cultural Revolution of 20th century China. Its collective memory is expressed through three individual stories and four films, selected in close collaboration with the artist. The exhibition, in coherence with Wang Bing's *modus operandi*, adopts a minimalist approach by showing a concise excerpt of his body of work on mono screen, allowing the audience to experience and focus on the powerful, concentrated, and extensive content of the work.

Memory in the work of Wang Bing is expressed through individual recalling of a collective past, through one-on-one encounters with his subjects. Where individual destinies evoke the fated destinies of many millions, the personal becomes political, the individual becomes societal. Here, memory is painful and death is inherently present. The audience is confronted with the vulnerability of the storytellers, with their bareness, their losses, or their inability to object.

In the utterly confrontational ***Mrs. Fang***, the audience is directly confronted with the subject of death, as Wang Bing transgresses the boundaries of cinema by filming the last ten days of Fang Xiuying, a former farm worker and a mother of a friend, who is suffering from severe Alzheimer symptoms. Eyes wide open, unable to speak, to eat, to move, to communicate nor to set boundaries, the woman is slowly dying in extreme pain. In her modest or even precarious living conditions, she is surrounded by family and neighbours who drink, eat, gamble, leave to go fish or smoke, until the event of her death provokes silence.

Wang Xilin unveils the utterly painful marks that Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution left on his body, mind, and soul. Over the course of his life, he captured his memories of prison, torture, death, dehumanisation, agony, and persecution in his symphonies, which made him one of the most important modern Chinese composers. During the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, intellectuals, scientists, scholars, and artists were severely persecuted. Set in the historic Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord in Paris, ***Man in Black*** is a biographical one-on-one encounter with the stripped composer, showing all the vulnerability of an elderly body and the scars left by fourteen years of persecution. Xilin, both performer and spectator, walks around in the dark theatre, on and off stage. He recalls his life, the political terror, the censorship, the many colleagues driven to suicide, the humiliation, the beatings. "The Chinese are a long line of prisoners with no end in sight."

In ***Fengming, a Chinese memoir***, the horrors of recent Chinese history as well as the promise and betrayal of communism are revealed to the audience through the heartbreaking story of an elderly woman's life in the People's Republic of China, confided in over three hours of monologue. She is addressing her engagement and hope as a young communist journalist, the anti-rightist campaign, the silencing, humiliation, suicidal thoughts, the omnipresence of hunger, the life-or-death struggle in the re-education through labour camps, and especially Jiabiangou, where she lost her husband. She recalls their love, their letter, and her attempt to save her husband. Her tears, cannot leave anyone indifferent.

In July 2005, Wang Bing visited the Gobi Desert with a 35 mm camera held in his hand. He walks at a fast pace, through the fields that used to be the infamous anti-rightist re-education through labour camp Jiabiangou, where many thousands of deportees died of starvation, capturing ***Traces*** of human lives - quilts, blankets, bones, traces of people's work, life, and death, remnants of an abandoned past.

Wang Bing sees the camera as a neutral instrument. Even while breaking taboos and showing painful subjects, he does not intervene, but remains an enduring and often solitary observer, sometimes spending hundreds of hours filming in places such as mental asylums or factories. Through his minimalist approach, his patience, concentration, and dedication, he strives for the truth and closeness to real life, which he transmits in his long-durational and impressive work.

Cercle Cité would particularly like to thank: Wang Bing, Lihong Kong, Wil Productions, Gladys Glover Films, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Goodman Gallery London, Centre national de l'audiovisuel.

Organisation	Cercle Cité
With the support of	Luxembourg City Film Festival
Curator	Anastasia Chaguidouline

Biography of the artist

For the past twenty years, **Wang Bing** has been an independent filmmaker and chronologist of contemporary China, caught between a sorrowful past and an image of the future, tracing its unofficial and hidden history.

He made his public debut with *West of the Tracks* (1999-2003), a nine-hour trilogy tracing the decline of a vast derelict industrial site near Shenyang in China. This work received numerous awards and distinctions, including the Grand Prize at the Festival international du documentaire in Marseille, and established Wang Bing as a leading figure in contemporary Chinese cinema. His interest in the documentary genre came as early as his student days, and allowed him to avoid censorship in those years, as the Chinese government was mostly targeting fiction films. His documentaries often address sensitive topics in Chinese society; however, he does not want to use his films as a political tool. Today, though he was not officially censored during filming, his movies are banned or remain officially unreleased in China.

Almost entirely documentary, his films have all been shown at international festivals including Cannes, Venice, Berlin and Locarno, where he won the Golden Leopard in 2017 for his film ***Mrs. Fang***. At the same time, Wang Bing has created video installations and shown his work in contemporary art institutions such as the Centre Pompidou (Paris), Le Bal (Paris), Kunsthalle Zürich, the Museo Reina Sofía (Madrid) and documenta 14 (Athens/Kassel). His video installations can be found in numerous collections, including those of the M+ Museum (Hong Kong), the Centre Pompidou and the Centre national des arts plastiques (Paris) and the Museo Reina Sofía (Madrid). In 2017, Wang Bing received the EYE Art & Film Prize in Amsterdam for his body of work. In 2021, he was one of the ten winners of the Chanel Next Prize.

Wang Bing was born in Xi'an, China, in 1967. He has studied at the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts, then at the Beijing Film Academy (BFA). He lives and works between France and China, and is based in Paris.

Public program

From 29 February to 10 March 2024, the 14th **Luxembourg City Film Festival** will focus on the work of the Chinese artist and film director Wang Bing. This focus will include an exhibition at the *Ratskeller*, a masterclass and the screening of *Youth (Spring)*, which is co-produced by the Luxembourg production company Les Films Fauves. The full programme is available on www.luxfilmfest.lu.

In March 2024, a focus on Wang Bing's work is to be seen at the **Cinémathèque of the City of Luxembourg**. Find all information on the screenings as well as the full programme on the Cinémathèque's website and on their Facebook and Instagram pages.

WORKSHOP

Camera Roll: Shortfilm workshop
with Kim El Ouardi

Two dates:
08.03.2024 from 14:00 until 17:00
09.03.2024 from 10:00 until 13:00
Ratskeller exhibition space (Entrance: rue du Curé)

Do you dream of making a short film but lack the resources and know-how?

In this workshop, participants will learn some basic concepts for making a low-budget, experimental film. These techniques will be explored from a theoretical and practical point of view in order to explore their possibilities.

Throughout the workshop, Wang Bing's films will be analysed in order to highlight his practices and relate them to the concepts learned.

Together, we will develop a key theme related to Luxembourg, the different facets of which will be translated into the form of an experimental film.

Equipment required: A cell phone with video function or a video camera.

Kim El Ouardi, 34, is an independent filmmaker from Luxembourg. Since 2017, he has been working there as a cameraman and image technician. Thanks to a wide variety of projects, he has been able to deepen and broaden his audiovisual production know-how: from pre-production to finishing, via shooting, lighting, VFX and colour grading. He draws inspiration not only from his distant travels but also from observing his surroundings and everyday life.

Price: 15€
Multilingual workshop: FR / EN / LU / DE

Payment on site in cash or by credit card.
Registration mandatory on cerclecite.lu

GUIDED TOURS

Free guided tour every Saturday at 3 p.m.

10.02 (FR)
17.02 (EN)
24.02 (LU/DE)
02.03 (FR)
09.03 (EN)
16.03 (LU/DE)
23.03 (FR)
30.03 (EN)
06.04 (LU/DE)

Curatorial visit with Anastasia Chaguidouline

13.04 at 15:00 (FR)

For all guided tours: free entrance and without registration

Practical information and press contact

Exhibition	« Wang Bing: Memories »
Dates	From February 9th until April 14th 2024
Opening hours	Free entrance, every day from 11:00 to 19:00
Venue	*Ratskeller* exhibition space, entrance via rue du Curé
Accessibility	Exhibition accessible to people with motor disabilities and reduced mobility
Press visuals	cerclecite.lu/en/press
More information	cerclecite.lu
Press contact	Iyoshi Kreutz, Communications manager T : +352 46 49 46-25 iyoshi.kreutz@cerclecite.lu Laurène Him, Communications and media officer T : +352 46 49 46-20 laurene.him@cerclecite.lu