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MUSIC BY
MOCKY

SHI KE UDO KIER

UFO IN HER EYES

A FILM BY XIAOLU GUO



WWW.UFOINHEREYES.COM

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY SABOTAGE SISTER A.K.A. XIAOLU GUO DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAL TYWONIUK ART DIRECTOR JUN YAO DIRECTOR OF SOUND PHILIPPE CIOMPI EDITOR NIKOLAI HARTMANN ORIGINAL MUSIC BY MOCKY

COPRODUCER NDR/ARTE COMMISSIONING EDITORS JEANETTE WÜRL ANDREAS SCHREITMÜLLER ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS ALBERTO FANNI FLAMINIO ZADRA EXECUTIVE PRODUCER FATH AKIN PRODUCED BY KLAUS MAECK

STARRING SHI KE UDO KIER BASED ON THE NOVEL "UFO IN HER EYES" BY XIAOLU GUO PRODUCED BY CORAZÓN INTERNATIONAL IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH NDR/ARTE IN ASSOCIATION WITH DORJE FILM

THE MATCH FACTORY

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SYNOPSIS

Simple woman Kwok Yun leads a peasant's life in the peaceful mountains around remote Three-Headed Bird Village. She lives with her grandfather and works as a laborer. She has no dreams of a different life, no great plans for the future.

One day, after a countryside tryst with a married man, Kwok Yun sees a UFO - a giant glowing thing in the shape of a dumpling! Later that same day, she also helps a snake-bitten American businessman, who disappears as mysteriously as the UFO.

The ambitious village leader Chief Chang uses Kwok Yun's unexpected events for political gain. She stimulates tourism with UFO tours and gets the local economy roaring with progress. Busy aspiring to strengthen relations with the USA, she

is blind to the dangers such radical change can bring, especially to the environment.

Kwok Yun is also transformed into the shining example of a "model peasant." She is promoted and groomed for a bright new future by pushy Chief Chang. But Kwok Yun's heart is whispering that she's destined for something more than the government's power-hungry plans ...

COMMENTS FROM WRITER-DIRECTOR XIAOLU GUO

GROWING UP IN RURAL CHINA

I grew up in a rural Chinese village in Zhejiang province of south China. I remember the old peasants with white hair carrying their water buckets up and down on the hills, farmers who suffered from drought plowing in their fields, full of bitterness and dark emotions. The oldest were always the most fascinating because they have lived through it all. They had witnessed the radical changes of China's history, and experienced first hand the chaos of changes of the last half-century - from Feudalism to Communism, and now Capitalism. Most of them had grown up with memories of the Emperors' time of slavery, and now kids drank Coca Cola and sat before the computer all day long playing games. The old ones could not adjust to the new society and lived the rest of their lives steeped in sorrow and anger.

The young ones were bored by the village and just wanted to leave. I remember this because I felt it myself - the troubled feeling under the hot sun in the abandoned rice fields where there was no other choice in your life. There was nothing apart from poverty and the oppression of a very strong tradition and a even tougher totalitarian society.

IN THE TURMOIL OF GLOBALIZATION

As a filmmaker from a rural village, I wanted to tell a story of China in the turmoil of globalization. I think that radical industrial and economic change can overpower any cultural identity. It forces reevaluation of the old values. I often think China is progressing greatly not in a Chinese way, but in an American way. When one understands his or her roots and has a deep connection to the

land and its history, then there is an understanding about reality and a cautiousness toward current events. But I think that China is being carried away by this global commercial fever.

This phenomenon is not restricted to China, so UFO IN HER EYES is a local yet totally universal story. It's universal in the sense that no one, no matter how unimportant they might seem, is immune from the big economic machine rolling over our lives. This could happen in a small village in Spain or a farm in Germany, anywhere land, inhabited or not, must be destroyed to make room for a new airport or a mobile phone company.

The victim of blind progress is manifested by older peasants, farm land and our natural landscapes. Now this balance is being destroyed and we won't be able to get it back.

A PATH FOR SURVIVAL

I'm particularly drawn to the idea of how a small person tries to find a path for survival, amid the playing of a historical game within a totalitarian society - it is the perpetual story of Sisyphus and his task which can never be completed. In UFO IN HER EYES, the character of Kwok Yun is being tested by reality in an almost gulag-like environment. At the cost of her personal life, she is the catalyst of a certain system. Although she is largely punished in her present life in the village, I didn't want her to be punished in the future. I am intrigued by the scope of past and future coming together in one's destiny. But I didn't want to wrap up the story with some general assertion, so Kwok Yun's future is left somewhat open, in a bewildered and fable-like way.





EMBRACING VISUAL POWER

Most of my past novels are more into playing with language, and have not been very visual nor composed with multiple characters. *UFO IN HER EYES* is the first novel that I wrote that appeared to me right away as a possible film story. The adaptation from novel to script seemed very natural. What inspired me about filmmaking is that I can visually deliver so many strong and unique faces, voices, laughs, so many different landscapes. With words alone, I cannot possibly give such specific depiction. That said, I never want to make a gray film with lifeless images. I believe in embracing visual power. As a writer and filmmaker, I think that my style is that of a fabulist, a tale teller, even when I write autobiographical material. Rural life is very much rooted in myth, fantasy, folklore. I believe that a story should not retain its potential. It should be stretched horizontally and vertically, as long as it holds on to its original roots.

CHIEF CHANG & BILL HUANG

Village Chief Chang is played broadly satirical by Mandy Zhang, a professional actress from Shanghai. She's a very open person in real-life, which is probably why she was able to have so much fun in creatively bringing this character to life. Similarly in *UFO IN HER EYES*, the character of Bill Huang is also a satirical character based on reality. New millionaire Bill Huang is obviously a Chinese version of Bill Gates. China is now full of these Bill Huang-like businessmen. Entrepreneurs from peasant backgrounds who got rich by selling simple goods like wash basins or pig feed. Then they transform themselves into modern urban figures and start conducting bigger business in the major cities. Like Bill Huang in the film, they share their experiences by giving seminars like "10 Rules for Getting Rich."

UDO KIER AS "THE AMERICAN"

German actor Udo Kier was perfect to give the alien hint necessary for the American man that peasant Kwok Yun finds stranded in the rice fields. I didn't want someone with a typical all-American look to play the role. I was looking for a Western face, but an ambiguous one. Someone not so easily read or identified. Someone you would ask instantly when you see him: "Who is he? Where does he come from?" Udo actually lives in Los Angeles. Since Americans are basically immigrants - foreigners in the first place - it made sense to me that Udo could play this mysterious American. His character also represents the fascination, admirable or negative, for all that is American.

SENSITIVE TO DAILY LIFE

In *UFO IN HER EYES*, the camerawork was very sensitive to the villagers' daily activities, as well as to the mountains, the vegetation and the animals - to show their physical beauty and their changes through the story's timeline. For example, from the start, I imagined close ups of earthworms under a farmer's tool or roots being pulled out from the soil, closeups of fields being dug up and destroyed by tractors. I took this a step further by filming the point of view of certain animals to enhance the political fable tone of *UFO IN HER EYES*. Those moments might seem odd but they become more coherent by the end of the film. We are those powerless insects, those earthworms, observing this powerful and indifferent universe. I wanted the film to have a surreal touch, a tone that goes beyond those naturalistic realist works which Chinese cinema is known for.

THE LOOK OF NEW CAPITALISM

In terms of set design, we used real locations and real houses, but we modified them towards a more subjective and representational style. The first part of the film is about the “memory of under-development”, with Village Chief’s old communist office still decorated with Mao and Che posters, while old fisherman Carp Li’s pond is like a peaceful fairy tale land. The second part of the film - “the future is unwritten” - combined locations from the old village with locations in a nearby town to achieve the multi-perspective that the village is developing fast and loud. The set in the second part was exaggerated and made ridiculous. For example, millionaire Bill Huang’s golden conference hall and the Village Chief’s CCTV monitor-filled new office, both display the characteristic look of new capitalism.

OPENING UP DIALOGUES

I believe that the West’s knowledge about China is limited. It’s generally either very negative because of our communist background, or very idealistic and old-fashioned because of the opinions of certain foreign academics. However someone feels about China, whatever someone knows about China, I hope that they will be moved by the story’s conflicts and those magnified characters, by the questions raised between the different landscapes seen in UFO IN HER EYES. I believe that watching a film is not simply about enjoyment, but also about opening up dialogues, encouraging self-examination and hopefully leading to some sort of enlightenment or discovery.

NOT DISTANCED FROM CHINA

Although I have been based in London for several years now, I still spend a couple months per year in China. So, despite the rapid changes, I don’t feel distanced from China. What I consider to be the “American-style” China has been going on for the past 20 years, most of my life. As naturally interested in China as I am, I would like to tell all kinds of stories in all kinds of settings. Whether in China or somewhere else, the themes would be more or less the same - love, belonging, freedom, spirituality ...

DIRECTORIAL STYLE

I think that my personal style is the combination of the documentary approach and improvisational method with actors. I am used to no-budget filmmaking and I have used whatever was available - a shaky small DV camera or filming in my own neighborhood to discover the conflict of everyday reality. This way of filmmaking becomes a sort of political attitude. Even in the Chinese movie industry, there exists the big budget epic martial arts genre, but I have never been interested in that. I believe in exploring narrative form, whether documentary or fiction. Be it fable or essay, I am for trying all means to compose a good story, as long as I don’t have to rob a bank.





UFO
SIGHTING
←

UFO



XIAOLU GUO

UFO IN HER EYES is Xiaolu Guo's second feature film, adapted from her own novel of the same name. Her first feature SHE, A CHINESE won the Golden Leopard for Best Film at the Locarno Film Festival. The story of a 23-year-old Chinese woman who travels from a village to Beijing and then on to London was praised for its authenticity, sensitivity and energy. The same year, Guo completed the documentary ONCE UPON A TIME PROLETARIAN, which premiered at the Venice Film Festival, about people from different classes living in modern Chinese society and in conflict with time and history.

Xiaolu Guo was born in 1973 in a Chinese fishing village and comes from a family of sea lovers. Her grandfather was a fisherman, her father was sent to

a labour camp in 60's because he wanted to paint the sea instead of being a farmer. At 19 she left her hometown and studied at Beijing Film Academy. As a student, she was honored as "Best Screenwriter" at the 1998 National Filmwriter Prize for her script LOVE IN THE INTERNET AGE. After she received MA on cinema and literature, she moved to London in 2002 to continue her film studies. Her acclaimed documentaries include THE CONCRETE REVOLUTION (2004), about the construction boom in Beijing, which won the Special Jury Prize at the International Human Rights Film Festival in Paris; HOW IS YOUR FISH TODAY? (2006), about an unusual journey to a northern Chinese provincial town, which was presented at Sundance; and WE WENT TO WONDERLAND (2008), shot on a small digital still camera with video function,

which was presented at MoMA New York's New Directors/New Films and at Rotterdam.

Xiaolu Guo is also a successful writer. Her 2007 novel "A CONCISE CHINESE-ENGLISH DICTIONARY FOR LOVERS" (Random House, UK and USA) has been published in more than 25 countries and will soon be made into a film by renowned director Wayne Wang. Other novels include "VILLAGE OF STONE," "20 FRAGMENTS OF A RAVENOUS YOUTH" and "UFO IN HER EYES".

In 2009 Xiaolu Guo founded "Metaphysical Cinema Syndicate" in London and Beijing, producing guerrilla style films to promote a free cinema beyond narrative conventions.

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

- 2011 UFO IN HER EYES
- 2009 ONCE UPON A TIME PROLETARIAN (documentary)
- 2009 SHE, A CHINESE
- 2008 WE WENT TO WONDERLAND (documentary)
- 2006 HOW IS YOUR FISH TODAY? (documentary)
- 2004 THE CONCRETE REVOLUTION (documentary)



SHI KE

Shi Ke was born 1964 in Hubei Province, China. In 1985 she took part in the examinations of the Central Drama Academy of Beijing and was being selected as one of ten new students out of 6000 contestants. After graduation she quickly rose to national prominence in films such as SHA SHOU QING (A killer's love) and YIAO GUEN QING NIAN (Rock'n' Roll Youth) and became a teenage idol. With numerous starring roles in TV and a reputation for a standout singing talent in the Chinese 1990 musical "Richu" (Sunrise) she won the multitiered performer ringing award. Her career almost crashed down in 1995 during some false accusation and Cultural Revolution-style political campaign against

her. There was a controversial dispute between the first privately financed stage play and the government owned theatre troupe, but Shi Ke steadfastly endured this year of nationwide media blackout. This incident made her even more well known than before and could not remove her stardom. She made several movies, plays, TV shows and outstanding performances in stage plays and is now recognized as a successful and powerful artist and one of the important celebrities in China. She has met the director Xiaolu Guo in the late 90s in Beijing, UFO IN HER EYES is her first international arthouse film.

UDO KIER

Udo Kier has acted successfully in over 160 American and European productions, working with a number of important directors such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder, he has also been in all of Lars von Trier's movies since 1987. He has collaborated with many other acclaimed directors including Dario Argento, Wim Wenders, Gus van Sant and Werner Herzog, to name a few. In the last two years he

has been in seven Productions, from playing the pope in the highly acclaimed TV Mini Series "THE BORGIA" directed by Oliver Hirschbiegel, playing Béla Bartók in a turkish production directed by Ali Özgentürk, in Lars von Tries "MELANCHOLIA", beside Isabella Rossellini in "KEYHOLD" directed by Guy Maddin and the latest he played the leader on the movie "IRON SKY" by Timo Vuorensola.





MUSIC SCORE: MOCKY

Mocky (real name Dominic Giancarlo Salole) is a Canadian-born musician with a reputation for eclectic songs, humour and blending musical depth with a pop sensibility. Although he is mostly known for his pop and electronic albums and wildy entertaining live shows he is also a multi-instrumentalist, drummer, producer and songwriter. He is widely renowned for his collaborations with Gonzales, Jamie Lidell, Feist or Peaches. This soundtrack is his first work as a composer for a film.

"Mocky dwells in his own musical universe, swathed in an air of mystery, and his unique vibe has charmed many a critic, fellow musician, and discerning fan. His is a land of soul minimalism, his sparse, leisurely compositions drawing upon funk,

Afro-beat, free jazz, classical, and whatever else might curry his flitting (but not fleeting) fancy. While dealing mostly in instrumentals, when Mocky injects words into the mix, he does so with a Nick Drake-esque feather touch, in both his vocals and his lyrics." (All Music Guide)

Solo Albums:

- 2009 Saskamodie
- 2006 Navy Brown Blues
- 2004 Are + Be
- 2003 In Mesopotamia (JD Slazenger version)
- 2002 In Mesopotamia (original version)

Website: www.mockyrecordings.com

PRODUCTION: CORAZÓN INTERNATIONAL

corazón international came into being in 2003 while producing HEAD-ON, founded by Fatih Akin, Andreas Thiel and Klaus Maeck as directors and equal partners. Primarily, the company was set up to represent Fatih Akin and his projects, but is also realizing films by other directors. Meeting the needs of each individual project, corazón accompanies the director in the development of the script, coordinates film funding and acquires TV stations and distributors. corazón carefully looks after its rights itself and in

collaboration with suitable partners. The world-wide presence at festivals and licensing deals for Fatih Akin's films have enabled corazón to establish a great many contacts to international partners and distributors. Like the music business, the film business has its own language, visible through the exchange between different cultures. One of corazón's main aims is to make a contribution towards enhancing this global language, and to improve German cinema's esteem on the international stage.

CAST

SHI KE as KWOK YUN

UDO KIER as STEVE FROST

MANDY ZHANG as CHIEF CHANG

Y. PENG LIU as BICYCLE REPAIRMAN

Z. LAN as HEADMASTER LEE

MASSELA WEI as SECRETARY ZHAO

DOU LI as OLD KWOK

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Format: 35mm / 24 fps / 1:2,35 (Scope)

Sound: Dolby Digital Surround Ex

Length: 110 min.

Language: Mandarin, English

Filming format: HD

Production Country: Germany, 2011

CREW

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY
SABOTAGE SISTER A.K.A. XIAOLU GUO

CO-WRITER
PAMELA CASEY

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
MICHAL TYWONIUK

ART DIRECTOR
JUN YAO

DIRECTOR OF SOUND
PHILIPPE CIOMPI

EDITOR
NIKOLAI HARTMANN

ORIGINAL MUSIC BY
MOCKY

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ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS
ALBERTO FANNI, FLAMINIO ZADRA

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
FATIH AKIN

PRODUCED BY
KLAUS MAECK

BASED ON THE NOVEL "UFO IN HER EYES"
BY XIAOLU GUO

THIS FILM IS DEDICATED TO
"SOY CUBA" BY MIKHAIL KALATOZOV

PRODUCED BY
CORAZÓN INTERNATIONAL

IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH
NDR/ARTE

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
DORJE FILM

SUPPORTED BY
FILMFÖRDERUNG HAMBURG SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN
FILMFÖRDERUNGSANSTALT
FONDATION GROUPAMA GAN POUR LE CINEMA
- CINEFONDATION
THE HUBERT BALS FUND
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ROTTERDAM
EED

ASIA LINK
THE MATCH FACTORY

WWW.UFOINHEREYES.COM



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