



'TIL MADNESS DO US PART

An Icarus Films Release
A film by Wang Bing

North American Theatrical Premiere
Exclusive Engagement at Anthology Film Archives
Opens in New York City on June 9, 2016

Contact: (718) 488-8900 www.IcarusFilms.com
Serious documentaries are good for you.



LOGLINE

The lives of inmates locked in an isolated rural Chinese mental asylum are documented by modern master documentarian Wang Bing.

SYNOPSIS

Master director Wang Bing documents the inmates of an isolated mental institution in rural Zhaotong, in China's southwestern Yunnan province, in 'TIL MADNESS DO US PART. Within the facility's gates, the patients are confined to one floor of a single building. Once locked on that floor, with little contact from the outside world, anything goes.

The facility's inmates have been committed for different reasons: perhaps they have a developmental disability; perhaps they committed murder; perhaps they angered local officials. But once inside, they all share the same life and cramped living quarters, staring at a barren, iron-fenced courtyard and seeking comfort and human warmth wherever they can find it.

Often compared to films like Frederick Wiseman's *Titicut Follies* (1967) and Milos Forman's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975), the immersive *'Til Madness Do Us Part* uses handheld camerawork and digital video to interrogate mental illness and criminality, therapy and incarceration, and the relationship between individuals and society. *Madness* is a riveting, terrifying, surprising and tender documentary portrait that viewers will not soon forget.



SELECTED FESTIVALS

Toronto International Film Festival
Venice Biennale Film Festival
Documentary Fortnight, The Museum of Modern Art
Rotterdam International Film Festival
CPH:DOX Copenhagen Documentary Festival
Edinburgh International Film Festival
Three Continents Film Festival
Rio International Film Festival
Vancouver International Film Festival
Busan International Film Festival
Seoul Independent Film Festival
Hong Kong International Film Festival
Nuremberg International Human Rights Film Festival
Documentary Fortnight Festival, The Museum of Modern Art

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In the fall of 2003, I randomly discovered a mental hospital near Beijing. There was nobody outside. It seemed empty. I walked inside it alone.

I began to feel very strange. All the doors and the windows were closed and sealed. The walls were falling apart and all mottled. I was attracted by the strangeness there. Suddenly, behind a locked door, I faced a group of men. They were wearing blue and white gowns. A nurse came and told me that they were the patients of the hospital. I talked with her. She said many of them had been living there for between 10 and 20 years. I felt something very strong towards them, which made me want to make a film. But the hospital refused to let me shoot.

In 2009, I went to the hospital again. Some of the patients I had seen had passed away. I keep thinking that I should make a film about the lives of the men inside this Chinese asylum.

In 2012, I went to a different mental hospital and this time they let me inside with my camera. So I started *'Til Madness Do Us Part*.

There is no freedom in this hospital. But when people are locked inside a closed space, with iron wire fences and no freedom, they are capable of creating a new world and freedom between them, without morality or behavioral restrictions.

Under the night light, their bodies are like ghosts, looking to fill the need for love: physical or emotional.

This film approaches them at a moment when they have been abandoned by their families and society. The repetition in their daily life amplifies the existence of time. And when time stops, life appears.

—Wang Bing

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

"In chronicling individual, present-day lives, Wang gives a sense of his country's recent history. The films rarely delve directly into discussions of government policies, with works such as 2007's *Fengming: A Chinese Memoir* and 2010's *The Ditch* (which recall the fates of victims of the Cultural Revolution through documentary interviewing and fictionalized re-enactments, respectively) proving more exceptions than rules in this regard.

"Political critiques are instead largely left implicit, and made through Wang's act of allying himself with people that have been pushed onto his culture's fringes. The films suggest that China's transition from Maoism to an assimilation of capitalism has not only failed to improve, but actually worsened the lives of many of its citizens, who survive in spite of it. The people that Wang records are ones who move him, as evidenced by his willingness to let them guide the films."

—Aaron Cutler, *Cineaste*



Wang Bing has been a leading documentary filmmaker of the burgeoning independent documentary scene in China for the past decade. Widely recognized by critics as one of the most important Chinese artists and filmmakers of his time, his work has garnered awards and international praise at major film festivals.

Born in 1967 in China's central Shaanxi province, Wang studied first photography at the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Art, and then cinematography at the Beijing Film Academy. He began his career as an independent filmmaker in 1999. Released in 2003, his feature directorial debut *West of the Tracks* is a monumental documentary work, exceeding 9 hours in length, that was a great success internationally. Filmed in the northern Chinese district of Tiexi, *West of*

the Tracks is a strikingly profound contemplation on the lives of workers in the decaying industrial district. Since 2003, Wang has made 10 documentaries, many of which have been released theatrically to wide acclaim. A retrospective of his entire oeuvre was presented in Centre Pompidou in Paris.

In addition to documentaries, Wang also produced two acclaimed fiction films *Brutality Factory* and *The Ditch*, as well as *Crude Oil*, 14-hour long documentary video installation and photographic series.

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

- 2016 TA'ANG Documentary, 148 minutes
- 2014 FATHER AND SONS (FU YU ZI) Documentary, 97 minutes
- 2014 TRACES (YIZHI) Gallery Installation, 25 minutes
- 2013 'TIL MADNESS DO US PART (FENG AI) Documentary, 227 minutes
- 2012 THREE SISTERS (SAN ZIMEI) Documentary, 153 minutes
Best Film, Venice Film Festival
Best Film, Doc Lisboa
Best Film, Audience Award in Festival des 3 Continents
Best Documentary, Asia Africa Award at the Dubai International Film Festival
Grand Prize, E-changer Award, Don Quijote Award at Fribourg Film Festival
- 2010 THE DITCH (JIA BIAN GOU) Narrative Feature, 113 minutes
Venice Film Festival
- 2009 MAN WITH NO NAME (WUMINGZHE) Gallery Installation, 97 minutes
- 2008 COAL MONEY (TONG DAO) Gallery Installation, 52 minutes
- 2008 CRUDE OIL (YUAN YOU) Documentary film installation, 14 hours
Rotterdam International Film Festival
Hong Kong International Film Festival
- 2007 FENGMING, A CHINESE MEMOIR (HE FENGMING) Documentary, 184 minutes
Cannes Film Festival
Toronto International Film Festival
Rotterdam International Film Festival
- 2007 BRUTALITY FACTORY (BAOLI GONGCHANG) Short film
Director's Fortnight, Cannes Film Festival
- 1999-03 WEST OF THE TRACKS (TIE XI QU) Documentary in three parts, 554 minutes
Part 1: RUST (244 mins); Part 2: REMNANTS (178 mins); Part 3: RAILS (132 mins)
Grand Prize, Lisbon International Documentary Festival
Grand Prize, Marseille Festival of Documentary Film Festival
Best Documentary, Three Continents Nantes Film Festival
Flaherty Prize, Yamagata Documentary Film Festival

More Information:

<http://icarusfilms.com/filmmakers/wangbing.html>

<http://www.icarusfilms.com/dgenerate/tilm.html>

IN THE PRESS

*"There are endurance tests, and then there is this...
An unsparing chronicler of the abused and neglected in his country's darkest corners,
Chinese documentarian Wang Bing pushes his starkly immersive strategies to a
grueling yet empathetic extreme."
—Justin Chang, Variety*

*"A Foucaultian vision, Bing's documentary lays the patient's plight and vulnerabilities
bare before the camera."
—Ela Bittencourt, The Brooklyn Rail*

*"Mundane activities such as dressing and undressing oneself, lighting a cigarette, and
lying beneath a blanket with another inmate come to seem like peoples'
declarations of their own humanity. ...In chronicling individual, present-day lives,
Wang gives a sense of his country's recent history."
—Aaron Cutler, Cineaste*

*"Til Madness Do Us Part [captures] a full and complex range of patient behaviors,
from compassion to brutality, gentleness to abuse, longing to violent estrangement,
both in the relationships among the patients and between them and the hospital
officials. Forced from the open, everyday world into a microcosm of surveillance,
treatment, and punishment, these prisoners are the negative image of refugees,
though their plight captures plenty of a refugee's terror, subjection, displacement,
and confinement. As usual, Wang offers a visual critique that goes much deeper
than a simple microcosm of a larger authoritarian society, and provides nuance and
ambiguity as rich and as perplexing as the world itself. He is always interested in
minutely detailed observational research into individual behaviors in a group context
and discovers how people behave when external circumstances impose severe
restrictions on their ability to survive in the ways they are accustomed, or how they
can even sometimes thrive in ways that accord with their hopes or dreams. Rather
than a depressingly bleak tale of suffering under incarceration and punishment,
Wang's powers of observation and synthesis reveal uncanny, minor epiphanies
amidst the general squalor. He finds capacities for happiness and freedom that many
of the patients create under their bleak conditions. Over the film's almost four-hour
running time, we learn how various kinds of companionship and association can
thrive (and sometimes break down) when wounded souls are thrown together, left to
their own devices. These refugee-prisoners, isolated from the outside world, forge
relationships which can embrace companionship, partnership, longing, erotic
tenderness, imaginative romance, and mutual support.
The film's Chinese title, after all, is *Feng ai, Love-Madness*."
—Shelly Kracier, Cinema Scope*

Press Room
Download images, press kit, poster and more at
<http://icarusfilms.com/pressroom.html>
User: icarus Password: press

FILM CREDITS

English Title: *'Til Madness Do Us Part*
Chinese Title: *Feng Ai*
Written and directed by: Wang Bing
Produced by: Louise Prince, Wang Bing
Production companies: Y. Production, Moviola
World sales: Chinese Shadows
Co-produced by: Mukul Patel
Composer: Siegfried Friedrich
Animators: Hannah Norholt, Fritz Steingrobe
Cinematography: Wang Bing, Liu Xianhui
Editing: Adam Kerby, Wang Bing
Sound: Zhang Mu

Running time: 238 minutes
Image: Color
Country: Hong Kong / France/ Japan
Production year: 2013
Release: 2016
Aspect ratio: 16:9
Sound: Stereo
Language: Yunnan dialect with English subtitles

The dGenerate Collection

An Icarus Films Release



Icarus Films
32 Court Street, Floor 21
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 488-8900
mail@IcarusFilms.com
www.IcarusFilms.com