

Gullane and Xstream Pictures present



Plastic City

A film by Yu Lik Wai

65
VENEZIA 2008
COMPETITION

TORONTO
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
OFFICIAL SELECTION
2008



Gullane and Xstream Pictures present
in co-production with Bitters End, Sundream Motion Pictures, Paris Filmes
in association with ARTE France, Media Factory Inc., Ozone Network Co. Ltd., and TeleImage

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A Film By Yu Lik Wai

Brazil / China / Japan - 2008 - 118min - Color - 2:35 - Dolby Digital - Portuguese / Mandarin / English

World Sales

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Synopsis

Liberdade, Sao Paulo – a multi-ethnic neighborhood with the largest Japanese immigrant community in the world. Here, traditional Japanese architecture clashes with the gritty urban landscapes, while people of all races come here to do business – legal or illegal. This is where the story of PLASTIC CITY begins...

Yuda, a feared Chinese outlaw, and his adopted son Kirin, an impulsive young dreamer, together rule the pirated goods racket in the ultra-liberal Brazilian metropolis. The magnate and his heir control all of Liberdade, from rival gangs to street hawkers, corrupt politicians to erotic dancers. But an empire that takes years to build can also crumble to the ground with one fatal mistake...

A conspiracy between politicians and the mafia begins to threaten Yuda's power. Little by little, he loses control of his business and is ultimately arrested. Kirin struggles to re-conquer his father's honor, fighting this city's wars single-handedly. But Yuda, tired of the bloodshed and feeling the weight of his years, abandons his son, falsifies his own death and returns to the jungle in a last attempt to put an end to his criminal life.

Escaping from a complex maze of violence, Kirin sets out to find his father. In the mysterious jungle, father and son both have to wipe the slate of their past clean. Only in the end will Kirin discover the ultimate answer to the search for his own destiny.





Interview with Yu Lik Wai

Is Brazil different from 'developing countries' in East Asia, or is the presence of East Asians making such countries very similar to each other?

The fashion these days is to bracket Brazil, Russia, India and China together as the 'BRIC', the so-called 'emerging' countries. Socially and politically, they are all alike in one way: they are all ready to buy into becoming the next 'First World'. It's like playing the game Monopoly: the stakes are high, and the rules are harsh. Once, on a street in Sao Paulo, I saw a slogan on a T-shirt: "Asian People, Stop Stealing Our Jobs!" The game is all about the redistribution of wealth and when you play it, it becomes very hard to be sure who are the bad guys and who are the victims. Causes become effects, or vice versa.

Were you inspired by real people and incidents in Brazil? Or were you primarily going for the more 'spiritual' questions of the father-son gestalt?

Four years ago I read the story of Law Kin Chong, the 'king' of private enterprise in Brazil. I find the stories of these Asian neo-bandits really captivating. I find myself imagining their untold stories – and their eventual damnations. Their fragility, the absurd socio-economic system surrounding them ...

Plastic City is a story about survivors. It starts and ends in the mystic forest of the Amazon, where the wrestling-match between body and soul finds its full expression. I'm particularly interested in those two, linked aspects of survival: the duality of a gangster's hedonism and his spiritual reality.

It is, indeed, also a father-son story. For Kirin, his adoptive father Yuda is radically "other": parental, yet erratic. And yet the disabused Yuda finds his ultimate liberation and spiritual equanimity by killing himself in front of his 'son'. His final gesture kills one world and makes way for the birth of a new one.

Your last film was a kind of future-world science fiction and this one is set in the present, but they have certain things in common ... such as polyglot societies and a mix of more or less interchangeable languages. Is this a real Brazil or a Brazil of the mind?

Sao Paulo is so 'real' that it's sometimes vertiginous! I consider the film as a modern fable. In this Mestizo city, there are no facts, only fairy tales. I always have some vague sense of an imminent Utopia, an inexplicable longing for "somewhere else". In one way, Brazil is a Utopian society. Generations of immigrants have come to its virgin land to fashion a new world and a new god for themselves. If Utopia is a glorious dream of the future, then Plastic City is a pensive elegy for our future world.

The film contains elements of the thriller genre (especially in the plotting and some of the visual motifs), but it morphs into something very different as it goes along. Do you think of yourself as a genre film-maker?

My film-making is always tempted by genre. Plastic City is a variant on the thriller genre. I want to experiment with different hybrids of narrative codes and visual forms. From film noir to oriental swordplay movies, elements are borrowed and crossbred. For me, a good genre movie is always expressionist and somehow transgressive. In this respect, I have a great admiration for Suzuki Seijun. His later films are always acts of subversion. Stylistically, he excels in a synergy of action and psychology. In my film, I also have this urge to recreate my vision of plastic city: a metaphysical atrocity.

Did you write these roles for these actors?

Joe Odagiri and Anthony Wong were the obvious choices to play the leads in this film. Both of them have a physical presence which is very different from what we usually find in Asian male actors. They can be exuberant yet very oriental, virile yet delicate. They blend incredibly well into this Mestizo city.



You've spoken about being inspired by Cassio Vasconcellos' photographs and Murcof's music. How exactly did they influence the film's images and sounds?

A few years ago, by pure chance, I picked up a book called *Noturnos* in a local bookstore. Dysfunctional buildings, eccentric flyovers ... São Paulo, in short, as a naked city. When I discovered Cassio Vasconcellos' impressive work, it was love at first sight. I told myself that it would be great to animate these Polaroid images, to have a swordfight on that flyover... Obviously no-one took my ravings seriously at the time, but Cassio's book stayed with me as a visual bible.

In terms of the sound design, Murof's music helped me to 'find' the film. It kept me company during the long nights writing the script.

I think you're the first Chinese film-maker since Wong Kar-Wai to shoot in Latin America. Does your film have any oblique connection with his *Happy Together*?

The adventure I made with this film might be some kind of *Alone Together*! My first impression of Sao Paulo was a mixture of homeliness and alienation. Whenever I saw an obscure alleyway or a shabby neon sign, I immediately had a mental short-circuit to images of my hometown, Hong Kong. And then, one moment later, I felt overwhelmed by a desolating disaffection. My location manager asked me once, "Hey, man, why you spend an hour staring at this empty neighborhood?" I couldn't even explain it to myself, maybe this is the magic spell of my Plastic City ...

From an interview by Tony Rayns (August 2008)





Director - Yu Lik Wai

Born in Hong Kong in 1966, he graduated from the film school INSAS (Institut National Supérieur des Arts de Spectacle, Belgium) in 1994, majoring in cinematography. His directorial debut was the medium-length documentary *Neon Goddesses* (1996). He followed this with *Love Will Tear Us Apart* (1999, In Competition Cannes Film Festival) and *All Tomorrow's Parties* (2003, Cannes Film Festival Un Certain Regard). As a cinematographer he has shot all of Jia Zhangke's films to date, from *Xiao Wu* (1997) to *24 City* (2008), and has worked with Ann Hui (*Ordinary Heroes*, *The Postmodern Life of My Aunt*), and Wong Kar Wai (*In the Mood for Love*), amongst others. *Plastic City* is his 3rd feature film.

Filmography

As Director

- 2008 Plastic City - Official Selection - Competition, Venice
- 2003 All Tomorrow's Parties - Official Selection - Un Certain Regard, Cannes
- 1999 Love Will Tear Us Apart - Official Selection - Competition, Cannes
- 1996 Neon Goddesses

As Cinematographer

- 2008 24 City - Directed by Jia Zhang Ke
- 2006 Going Home - Directed by Zhang Yang
- 2006 Still Life - Directed by Jia Zhang Ke (Golden Lion, Venice Film Festival)
- 2006 Post Modern Life of Aunt - Directed by Ann Hui
- 2004 A One - Directed by Gordon Chan
- 2004 The World - Directed by Jia Zhang Ke
- 2001 Unknown Pleasures - Directed by Jia Zhang Ke
- 2000 Platform - Directed by Jia Zhang Ke
- 2000 In the Mood for Love (2nd Unit Cinematographer)- Directed by Wong Kar Wai
- 1998 Ordinary Heroes - Directed by Ann Hui
- 1997 Xiao Wu - Directed by Jia Zhang Ke



Yu Lik Wai



Gullane Company Profile

Founded in 1996, Gullane is one of today's better known and most respected Brazilian production companies. A focus on international co-productions is the company's trademark. Besides Plastic City, Gullane presents in Venice two other films: the Italian-Brazilian co-production, also in Competition, Birdwatchers, by Marco Bechis and the horror film Embodiment of Evil, by José Mojica Marins, Out of Competition. Also in September Gullane is releasing in Latin America with HBO the television series Alice.

Main feature productions

Birdwatchers, by Marco Bechis, 2008

Classic's production, in co-production with RaiCinema, Karta and Gullane, Fiction, 108min
COMPETITION – VENICE FILM FESTIVAL

Embodiment of Evil, by José Mojica Marins, 2008

In co-production with Olhos de Cão, Fiction, 90 min
OUT OF COMPETITION – VENICE FILM FESTIVAL

The Ballroom, by Laís Bodanzky, 2008

In co-production with Buriti Filmes and Miravista, Fiction, 94 min

Querô, by Carlos Cortez, 2007

Fiction, 90 min

The Year My Parents Went on Vacation, by Cao Hamburger, 2006

In co-production with Caos Produções and Miravista, Fiction, 104 min
COMPETITION – BERLIN FILM FESTIVAL AND TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL

Carandiru, by Hector Babenco, 2003

HB Filmes' Production, in co-production with Sony Pictures Classics, Globo Filmes, Fabiano Gullane and Flavio Tambellini, Fiction, 147 min
COMPETITION – CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

Brainstorm, by Laís Bodanzky, 2001

In co-production with Buriti Filmes, Dezenove and Fabrica Cinema, Fiction, 88 min
YOUTH JURY AWARD AT LOCARNO / BEST FILM AT BIARRITZ / BEST FIRST FILM AT TRIESTE, CARTAGENA, CRÉTÉIL / OFFICIAL SELECTION AT TORONTO, MONTREAL



Xstream Pictures Company Profile

Xstream Pictures founded in 2003 by Jia Zhang-Ke, Yu Lik Wai and Chow Keung, it has offices both in Hong Kong and Beijing. It aims to explore and to promote talented young directors throughout China. Since then its success receives a well recognition from festival circles and cinema industry.

Filmography

24 City (2008)

by Jia Zhang-Ke in co-production with Shanghai Film Group, doc-fiction, 104 min

- In Competition at the 62nd Cannes Film Festival

Walking On The Wild (2006)

by Han Jie in co-production with Les Petites Lumières, drama, 89 min

- Best Film of the 36th Rotterdam Film Festival

Still Life (2006)

by Jia Zhang-Ke in co-production with Shanghai Film Group, drama, 108 min

- Best Film of the 63th Venice Film Festival

The World (2004)

by Jia Zhang-Ke in co-production with Office Kitano, Celluloid Dreams and Shanghai Film Group, drama, 105 min

- In Competition at the 61st Venice Film Festival

- Best Foreign Film of Toronto Films Critics Association

Cast

Joe Odagiri

Anthony Wong

Huang Yi

Tainá Müller

Jeff Chen

Phellipe Haagensen

Antônio Petrin

Milhem Cortaz

Alexandre Borges

Cláudio Jaborandy

Kirin

Yuda

Ocho

Rita

Mr. Taiwan

Tetsuo

Coelho

Not Dead

Danilo

Mário

Crew

Production

In co-production with

In association with

Gullane and Xstream Pictures

Bitters End, Sundream Motion Pictures, Paris Filmes

ARTE France, Media Factory Inc., Ozone Network Co. Ltd., and TeleImage

Director

Yu Lik Wai

Screenplay

Yu Lik Wai, Fernando Bonassi

Director of Photography

Lai Yiu Fai

Lighting Designer

Wong Chi Ming

Production Designer

Cassio Amarante

Body Art Design

Jun Matsui

Visual consultant

Cássio Vasconcellos

Editors

Wenders Li, André Finotti

Music

Fernando Corona, Yoshihiro Hanno

Sound Designer

Ken Wong

Costume Designer

Cristina Camargo

Make-up

Gabi Moraes, Kathy Kelso

Visual Effects

Sinai Mountain

Poster & press book design

Mun Wong of 3PCS Ltd.

Casting (Brazil)

Alessandra Tosi

Line Producers

André Montenegro, Rodrigo Castellar Magoo

Associate Producers

Manuela Mandler, Patrick Siaretta, Paulo Ribeiro

Co-Producers

François da Silva, Jaqueline Liu, Fumiko Osaka

Executive Producers

Tom Cheung, Rui Pires, Sônia Hamburger

Producers

Fabiano Gullane, Caio Gullane, Chow Keung, Jia Zhang-Ke, Yuji Sadai,
Siuming Tsui, Debora Ivanov, Gabriel Lacerda



the directors label

