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China launches art house film circuit

Description

China has gotten its first circuit of cinemas specializing in the exhibition of art-house films. The long-awaited move involves a coalition of public and private companies. This creates a third distribution channel for specialist and award-winning titles in China, which have struggled to enter the market through the existing quota system.

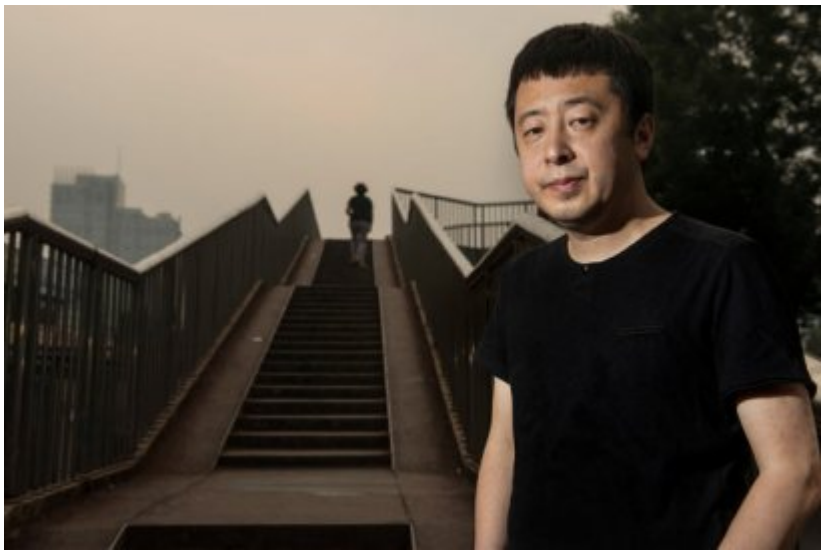
The network is formally headed by Beijing-based China Film Archive. Other members include Huaxia Film Distribution, Wanda Cinemas, Lumiere Pavilions, and online ticketing firm Beijing Weying Technology, giving it an initial footprint in 31 towns and cities.

It will see its first release handled in November. CFA is expected to curate a series of thematic strands, but each cinema is free to choose its own program within that.

â??We have 100 cinemas that are already part of the network with 400 more being added. Each cinema is committed to screening three art-house films per day in at least ten prime time slots per week,â?• said Sun Xianghui, director of China Film Archive.

There is expected to be an accent on premium and award-winning titles. That emphasis is understood to be part of the reason that the circuit may be able to show films that are not imported as part of the commercially-driven, revenue-sharing quotas and then released by the state-owned distributors China Film Corp and Huaxia.

Auteur director Jia Zhangkeâ??s newly launched Fabula Entertainment is also part of the network.



Beijing based auteur director Jia Zhangke (Photo credit: NY Times.com)

> â??We will have a small committee. This committee is composed of film scholars, film historians and curators, who will determine which films meet our requirements for the entire circuit. So it is not just for Chinese young directors. We also want to introduce international filmmakers to Chinese audiences. It is a bilateral communication,â?• said film director Jia Zhangke.

The move is part of a long-gestating initiative by the Chinese government to increase diversity in the China film market, which is dominated by mainstream Hollywood and Chinese titles.

(Source: http://www.cctv.com)

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