

Advisors Report by
Ondřej Zach

of the diploma thesis
Contemporary Chinese Art-house Cinema and Genre Wenyi
Five case studies from 2015-2017
by
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Master Thesis

The student examines the phenomenon of art-house cinema in the contemporary Chinese film industry. In the first part of the work, she defines the term 'art-house cinema' and matches it with the specific Chinese term Wenyi used for this kind of films. She dedicates a chapter to the definition of this term. She describes the contemporary status of the Chinese film industry in terms of production, box office and state political control (censorship). She then puts art-house production in context with the overall cinema industry in China. In the second part of the work, the student uses five films, described in a combination of facts summarizing and essayistic manner, as case studies documenting the researched subject. In conclusions, she looks at the current status of art-house production in China through the eyes of the aspiring filmmaker, identifying the key practical factors influencing the potential success in this area, including the promotion and distribution of films.

It is obvious that the student did research into the subject matter, cites its information sources correctly and lists them out in the bibliography part of the thesis. Given the contemporary topic, a large part of the bibliography is online sources, the list of which provides an interesting and useful outcome of the student's research. Another important and potentially valuable part of the research is the description of the current status of the Chinese industry, and the insight into the specific genre or Wenyi. In fact, those two parts could be investigated further and more in-depth, looking more into the history of the Chinese film industry and its development, and into the history and genesis of the Wenyi genre in particular. Each of the topics could form the subject of an individual research project, and it is to be regretted that the student did not choose to focus on them more.

In the second part of her work, the student chooses a more descriptive approach. While the five films selected fulfil the role of an illustration for the topic of contemporary Chinese art-house cinema, the criteria of their selection appear to be rather intuitive.

The conclusions formulated as a filmmaker's practical view of the opportunities that the art-house production market offers in China is another useful part of the work.

On the formal side, the student chose not to follow the recommended format of citation of non-Latin written language, which means including the English transcript of the title in the original language before the English translation, and decided to work only with English translations. I consider this a minor mistake. A more serious omission is the missing dates of access to the quoted online sources and also the fact that the bibliography is not organized alphabetically by the authors' names.

I consider this work suitable for the defence and propose it to be rated "D".

