

Nezha Bros. Pictures Company Limited, Modern Sky Entertainment Company  
Limited  
and China Academy of Art, School of Film and Animation  
present

# ART COLLEGE 1994

a film by Liu Jian



China / Animation / 118 min / 5.1

International Press in Berlin

WOLF Consultants  
G. Spragg, L. Dietrich, M. Arnon  
[hello@wolf-con.com](mailto:hello@wolf-con.com)  
+49 157 7474 9724  
[www.wolf-con.com](http://www.wolf-con.com)

International Sales & Festivals

Memento International  
[sales@memento-films.com](mailto:sales@memento-films.com)  
[festival@memento-films.com](mailto:festival@memento-films.com)  
+33 1 53 34 90 33  
[www.memento-international.com](http://www.memento-international.com)

# SYNOPSIS

---

*ART COLLEGE 1994 is a portrait of youth set on the campus of the Chinese Southern Academy of Arts in the early 1990s. Against the backdrop of reforms opening China to the Western world, a group of college students live in full swing as they take their first steps into adulthood, where love and friendships are intertwined with artistic pursuits, ideals and ambitions. Caught between tradition and modernity, they now have to choose who they want to become.*



# DIRECTOR'S INTERVIEW

---

Why did you choose to set the story in the early 1990's? How do you feel about this very specific time period, especially in China?

The nineties were a very special time in the development of the Chinese society. The average people's daily lives were going through huge changes. Along with the shift to a market-driven economy, the Western culture and thoughts flooded people's horizons. It was a time where we were discussing philosophy, literature, art and so on... A time full of hope and ideals! I was enrolled in an art college in the early nineties and I devoted myself to artistic creation passionately. I felt that everything around me on the campus was lively, hopeful, new. This is the background I chose for ART COLLEGE 1994.

The film clearly depicts this struggle Chinese young adults have – to choose between tradition and modernity – how did it shape the way you wrote the script?

At this time, modern art became very popular in Chinese art schools. Both scholars and students talked and did modern art all the time. People were arguing passionately about ideas, designs, style but the biggest topic of discussion was the conflict between the traditional heritage and the modern development of society. And I believe that – to some extent – this is a topic that everyone has to face, but at various degrees. What was happening in college campuses was part of the larger social transformation of China. I feel like this is something that has touched everyone.

ART COLLEGE 1994 is about the stories taking place in colleges back then. I want to depict the most valuable and lively parts of these stories. I want to expose the choices and dilemmas people had to make in artistic creation, personal goals, love, friendships... All of these choices and dilemmas reflect this constant struggle between tradition and modernity.

ART COLLEGE 1994 and your previous film HAVE A NICE DAY are each very distinctive, but they share this focus on young people navigating a quickly changing world. What makes this stage of life and these themes so resonant for you?

The world we are living in is in constant change, and China in particular has experienced huge transformation in the past few decades. Every individual who is part of this trend is experiencing the impact generated from this change, especially young people.

Their destinies are being pushed by the waves of the time, and they live between the clashes of ideals and realities, tradition and modernity, hope and desperation. And these destinies, these destinations are themselves full of uncertainties. I count

myself among those individuals who also experience these same things, and also become obsessed with these uncertainties.

I want to express this feeling with my films, telling the stories of those lives floating up and down the river of history. Their lives sometimes shine and sometimes darken, sometimes they are strong and sometimes weak, sometimes joyful and sometimes sad. Those who were once young people all have left lively footprints on their own times, and it will be the same for those who are still living out their own youth.

Can you tell us more about your technique and creative process? How has your background in art influenced your work in the film medium, and was there a special tone you wanted to bring to this film?

I have always made my animated film in the traditional 2D animation style, and the production process is very simple. To me, the major change in technique is between drawing on paper, or drawing on a digital pad. Digital is more efficient and it's easier to adapt and make changes. During production, I also like to use some live-action films as references. I also take photographs of the actual landscapes or their inspirations, and then use them as a base when I'm drawing the backgrounds.

I love telling stories, and I love watching movies. Telling stories with cinematic language is a very joyful thing. In the film ART COLLEGE 1994, besides trying to tell an authentic and enjoyable story, I'm trying to achieve the goal of, on an aesthetic level, expressing the unique life power of each character.

My major at college was traditional Chinese painting. So in the production of my animated films, the color of the image, the composition of a picture, the use of lines; they are all deeply influenced by my major, and the personal style that I like has also been formed this way. The fine arts education I received at school did have a huge positive impact on my filmmaking.

ART COLLEGE 1994 takes us back to this college campus life of the 1990s. It's a time that is both far away but also very close, both distant but also intimate. To me, recreating that period with animation is more free, more accurate, and easier to control. But more importantly, I hope to create a sense that this world is both real and surreal. If the audience can feel that sense of beauty while watching this film, that would be very special.

The film confronts different visions of art and what it means, what is your own definition of art?

It's very difficult to define art, to describe what it is in a simple way. I think that the essence of art is the sensation one has about the things surrounding them. It's a form of expression of the emotions someone has inside of them.



## DIRECTOR - Liu Jian

---

Liu Jian (China, 1969) majored in Chinese Painting and graduated from the Nanjing Art Institute in 1993.

Since then, he has made various works that met with the criteria of modern art and that were presented in some of the most important exhibitions in China and abroad. He is one of the representative artists of Gaudy Art and Conceptual Photography. He began working on animations in 1995 and founded Le-joy Animation Studio in 2007.

His first feature animation, *Piercing 1*, screened in numerous film festivals, including Holland Animation FF, Annecy International Animation FF, and Hong Kong International FF. The film also won Best Animated Feature Film at the 4th Asia Pacific Screen Awards.

Liu Jian also teaches animation filmmaking at the China Academy of Art. In 2017, his feature animation film *Have A Nice Day* premieres in competition at the Berlin Film Festival before being screened in more than 50 festivals worldwide including BFI London, Sitges, Thessaloniki and Annecy.



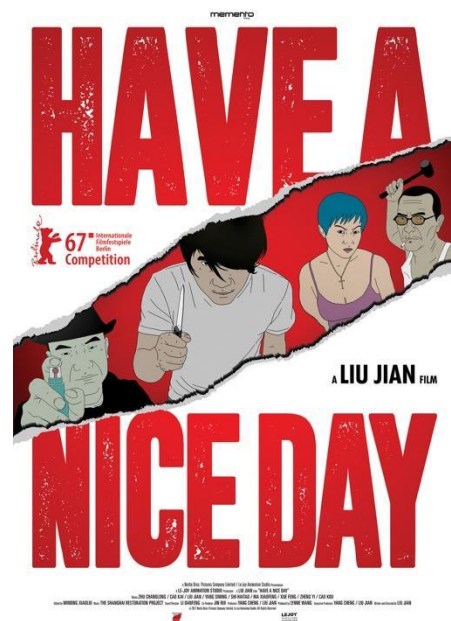
## FILMOGRAPHY

---

2023 – ART COLLEGE 1994, Writer & Director  
*Berlin Competition*

2017 – HAVE A NICE DAY, Writer & Director  
*Berlin Competition / Golden Horse for Best Animation Feature / Best Narrative Feature at Philadelphia Film Festival*

2011 - LOOK AT THIS MAN (short), Writer & Director



2011 - FACE (short), Writer & Director

2011 - CHAOS & ORDER (short), Writer & Director

2010 - PIERCING 1, Writer & Director  
*Anney International Animated Film Festival / Best Animated Feature Film at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards*

2002 - CHICKEN POETS, Animator

2001 - DA WAN, Animator



# CREW

---

Editor	Liu Jian
Producers	Yang Cheng
Art Advisor	Lai Baoer
Executive producer	Lynne Wang
Screenwriters	Lin Shan Liu Jian
Post-production	Zhu Changting
Sound director	Li Dan-Feng
Animation director	Li Jiajia
Background director	Zeng Hongyu
Line producer	Guan Bo
Production coordinators	Zhu Changting Yang Xinxu
Script supervisors	Xiao-Long Yang Xinxu
Key animators	Li Jiajia Wang Mile Guo Xiaoruo
Sound designers	Li Dan-Feng Gao Ruifeng
Music	Cui Jian Chen Li Yunfan Sun David Wen-Wei Liang Alex Liu

# CAST

---

Zhang Xiaojun	Dong Zijian ( <i>Chinese movie star</i> )
Hao Lili	Zhou Dongyu ( <i>Chinese movie star</i> )
Gao Hong	Papi Jiang ( <i>Chinese internet celebrity and actress</i> )
Zhao Youcai	Huang Bo ( <i>Chinese movie star</i> )
Skinny Horse	Renke
Wu Yingjun	Dapeng
Hu Tianming	Wang Hongwei ( <i>Chinese famous actor</i> )
Gu Yongqing	Jia Zhangke ( <i>world famous director</i> )
Lin Weiguo	Bai Ke
Luo Hao	Bi Gan ( <i>director and writer</i> )
Xiaomei	Bu Guanjin
Guo Sixiang	Kevin Tsai
Li Baichuan	Xu Zhiyuan
Curator	Peng Lei ( <i>lead singer of New Pants</i> )