

AAD 550 Field Guide PART 2

***Field guide assignment
Screen stories of a glorious generation
——Feature films about 1911-1945 China***

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A brief overview

Key term

The key words of the field guide are basically two elements: the time period, which is what was going on during **1911-1945 of China**, and the **screen stories** about that time period.

1911-1949 of China

China was under a historical turning point during 1911 to 1945, this is the history period called as “National Republic of China”. The republic was formally established on 1 January 1912 following the Xinhai Revolution, which itself began with the Wuchang Uprising on 10 October 1911, replacing the Qing Dynasty and ending over two thousand years of imperial rule in China. From its founding until 1949 it was based on Mainland China. Central authority waxed and waned in response to warlordism (1915-1928), Japanese invasion (1937-1945), and the Chinese Civil War (1927-1949), with central authority strongest during the Nanjing Decade (1927-1937), when most of China came under the control of the Kuomintang (KMT) under an authoritarian single-party state. Which in 1949 the communist party take over the mainland China by Civil war and end the “Republic China” to a totally different social formation, “The People’s republic of China”.

Screen stories

Film is a special art form, film makers use visuals and sounds to tell stories, to show the artist’s mind with actual pictures, the length of a film can gain its creator enough “inches” to have “dialogues” with their audiences. And by the help of pictures, can the history shown by later generation a clear vision. Commercial films have, no doubtful, a larger audience group than other film forms, and with a 90 minutes entire sealing dark environment, high qualify vision and sounds is the best way a film can be presented. To remember history is a hard thing, especially such chaos decades, textbooks can definitely work their own way, photos and paintings are visual, music can do hearings. But they have their own limits, however imagining with those elements combine together, it is stimulated with a story coming through the screens. That is the reason I choose the word “screen”, it is to point out the subject is only going to be commercial films about 1911-1949 China.

Historical Context

The first feature film about that time period is actually made in that time period, the *Sing-song Girl Red Peony*, made in 1930, shown on the next year in Shanghai. And by 1987, foreign director begin to participate in this feature as well, the famous Italian director Bernardo Bertolucci, made a film about the last emperor of China, made and even shoot in the forbidden city, this is the first feature film of republic China that have another view out of Chinese filmmaker.

The feature film begin to increase as the technics development, with cameras designed being able to shoot large scene of wars and crowd people, this feature become one of the most popular in Mainland China film industry at the 90s. TV plays about that time period begin to emerge as well.

By 2011, with Christian Bale starring, the feature film named *the flower of wars* was shown on the US commercial cinemas.

Setting

Participations

The field guide contains commercial films made by domestic and international filmmakers, with or without a political trend, shot in or outside Mainland China, but have one thing in common: they are the stories of Republic China, which is a glorious generation.

In this case, the participation of art creators contains all kinds of filmmakers that have a passion for this time period or simply those who work for them to create those works.

The box office record of *Flower of Wars* is 6.5 billion RMB, which is a definitely good result than among other films in 2011, while the critics claim that it is the result of famous director and Christian Bale, other feature films had as well shown an outstanding mark, *The Message*, directed by an unknown director in 2009, ended up with a result of 2.5 billion RMB on box office.

With all those dates, it is no doubt this feature is a welcome topic in Mainland China.

Community:

- People who are interested in that time period of China.
- A guide for filmmakers.

Since the feature is currently a hot topic. The field guide can also be a guide for screenwriters to consult from the past works of the feature. Last year I took an offer to accomplish a 40-episode play about that time period, the complex and various history time line make the task really hard, I was hoping deeply if there could be a field guide of the topic.

Transmediations

Feature films about 1911- 1949:

The Transmedias I used for my field contain the feature films as subject, going with a brief introduction of all those films listed, which include years, directors, starring and director of those films. This information is the basic transmedia I use to define the subject.

Posters of the films:

With the introduction of each film, the field guide goes with an official poster to show a vision, which can be the first impression of each film for people who read the guide.

Trailers:

After a vision picture of the film, for people who would like to go deeper in any of those films, A link of the trailer from the Youtube is easy to find below the poster.

Rating:

In order to make an objective judgment, the ratings are dates collected from users in IMDB, however since the topics are Chinese film, not all the objects can be found in IMDB, or if can be found, there is only a few people who have really watched the film.

I choose another film website for ratings, the Mtime (<http://www.mtime.com/>). Although there is no English version, the Mtime is the most professional website for Chinese film lovers to critic.

Critics:

The Critics are critical wrote by professional experts or ordinary audiences of the films from IMDB or Mtime.

Box office record:

The box office records can show directly how many audiences have viewed the subject.

Books of 1911-1949:

Books and articles record that time period.

Analysis

The idea comes out when we are discussing how history can effect on art topics. History is social relevant, art are the expression of society. And film is a convenient tool of the later generation to feel and remember history events.

By documenting films of a historical period, a field guide can even have education function.

Film is a comprehensive art form, it include vision, performing, directing, sound, screen writing and editing, it is an art form include an enrich art form itself. By editing information of those films, especially coming them out in a transmedia way, I feel the participation of the art world we keep discussing on the class.

As for the outside resources, there are field guides on other kinds of feature films online, it is easy to click on a tag under “romance” or “action” to view those feature films, however, there is at all no guide for history feature of a exact time period.