

## SHENG Zhimin



Genre: Drama  
Format: 35mm  
Estimated Running Time: 100 min.

Budget:  
US\$ 600,000 (HK\$ 4,680,000)  
Funds Secured:  
US\$ 400,000 (HK\$ 3,120,000)

Producers:  
Olivier MILLE  
Fruit CHAN

Production Company:  
Artlinefilms

HAF Goal:  
Co-producers

Contact:  
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## INTRODUCTION

The story of a spoiled boy suddenly burdened with responsibilities, *Cosplay* is adapted from a novel by the great Italian absurdist writer, Luigi PIRANDELLO. But rather than conclude, as PIRANDELLO's novel did, with a suicide, director SHENG Zhimin is determined to find the strength inside his main character and bring him to a different ending.

## SYNOPSIS

Xiaoyu's mother is a mysterious woman, always surrounded by dignitaries and wealthy men. Xiaoyu accepts that this is his mother's life, never questioning it, but he hates Beijing, where they live. To him it's just another boring city, same as every other boring city. His mother arranges a posh private boarding school for him and then she takes off to some other international location. Xiaoyu is used to it by now.

Xiaoyu starts his new life at boarding school and soon meets two people who will become his closest friends: Xiaoran, who is also a student, and his diving coach. Xiaoyu is a swimmer, and he knows he's gay, but he keeps this hidden from everyone else. At night, he sneaks out to gay bars to hook up with random men. But at school, he splits his time between Xiaoran and his coach. He likes the bright, sunny disposition of Xiaoran, but he also enjoys the physical, athletic relationship he has with his coach. Xiaoran is straight but he develops a platonic crush on Xiaoyu, completely unaware of the fact that his friend is gay.

Several months later, Xiaoyu learns that his mother has died overseas, leaving nothing behind for him but a box of ashes and a newborn baby brother. He drops out of school, at the same time that his friend, Xiaoran, transfers to another school, too. A new stage in his life has begun.

The police begin harassing Xiaoyu, trying to shake him down to get information about all the important men who surrounded his mother, and so police intimidation becomes a constant part of his life. His next-door neighbor was involved in a suicide and she gets trapped at home as well. She sees Xiaoyu's little brother and volunteers to take care of him, and Xiaoyu accepts her kindness. And so, a motley family of three is formed.

Suffering non-stop questioning from the police, Xiaoyu loses all his dignity and even thinks of killing himself and his little brother, but he knows that his cowardice would disappoint everyone. But he has to do something to get his normal life back, and so he finally decides to find the baby's real father and give his little brother up.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This film is based on a story by Luigi PIRANDELLO, but in the original novel the main character chose suicide. In this adaptation, I want him to choose compromise. I want him to choose a way to live that lets him survive.

Whenever I see Beijing with its bright lights and all those smiling faces full of simple happiness I feel pessimistic. There are no rules or restrictions on our behavior these days, but I believe we have paid a terrible price for this freedom. This high-speed development has brought on a kind of madness. Human nature is warm and strong at heart, even though many people perceive those qualities as a weakness. I cannot believe that we have lost this part of who we are. Only human nature can conquer the madness of modernity and this film is my way of encouraging people to stay strong no matter how crazy the world becomes.

## DIRECTOR

SHENG Zhimin was born in Beijing in 1969. He graduated from the Beijing Radio & Television University in 1992 and began his career in 1997 as an assistant director on ZHANG Yang's *Spicy Love Soup*, and as line producer for Fruit CHAN's films including *Public Toilet*, *Durian*, *Durian* and *The Longest Summer*, as well as for JIA Zhang-ke's *Platform*. He made his directorial debut in 2002 with the video feature *Two Hearts*, which was selected to participate in the Berlinale Forum in 2003. *Bliss*, his first 35mm feature film, won the NETPAC Award at the 59<sup>th</sup> Locarno International Film Festival and the Asian New Talent Prize for Best Feature Film at the 11<sup>th</sup> Shanghai International Film Festival. *Bliss* was also selected for the 31<sup>st</sup> Toronto International Film Festival and the 11<sup>th</sup> Pusan International Film Festival. French documentary *Chine, L'empire de l'art?* in 2009 was his latest effort.

## PRODUCERS

Olivier MILLE is a producer and film director born in 1957. He taught cinema studies and literature at the University of Basel, Switzerland, for seven years before

founding the production company Artlinefilms in 1987. Since then, he has continued to be a film director as well as a film producer, directing over 20 documentaries and producing over 150 films in collaboration with major French broadcasters like TF1, France 2, France 3, ARTE and Canal+. He has been a member of several film commissions and served on many film festival juries. He was vice-president of USPA (Union of Television Producers), and in 2007/08 was president of PROCIREP (Cinema and Television Producers Association). In 2009, he became president of the FIPA (International Festival of Audiovisual Programs) in Biarritz, France.

Fruit CHAN was born in Guangdong Province, China, in 1959, he began his film career in 1982 as an assistant director to Terence TONG, Alfred CHEUNG and Kirk WONG. After joining Golden Harvest in 1984, he held various posts — assistant director, line producer and production manager — on several productions starring Jackie CHAN and Sammo HUNG. He went on to make his mark as an independent writer-director-producer with *Made in Hong Kong*. Over the years, his films have won numerous awards at international film festivals in Venice, Locarno and Gijon. *Hollywood Hong Kong* won him best director at the 39<sup>th</sup> Golden Horse Awards. In 1999, he was named Artist of the Year by the Hong Kong Artists' Guild.

## PRODUCTION COMPANY

For 25 years, Artlinefilms has been one of the top French production companies, co-producing documentaries and feature films with all the major national channels. Thanks to its long experience in international broadcasting, Artlinefilms has worked with many foreign partners around the world. Artlinefilms is particularly known for producing films dealing with historical, geo-political, cultural, sociological (and even gastronomical) topics. Artlinefilms's catalogue of over 150 documentaries and feature films has garnered prestigious awards from many festivals around the world.