



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
SÉLECTION OFFICIELLE
COMPÉTITION

JBA Production, Homegreen Films and the Louvre museum present

FACE a Tsai Ming-Liang film

Taiwan / France / Belgium / Netherlands

2009 / 2h21 / original version in French and Chinese / 35mm color I,85 Dolby SRD / visa I19458

With Fanny Ardant, Laetitia Casta, Jean-Pierre Léaud, Lee Kang-Sheng, Lu Yi Ching, Norman Atun • And the exceptional appearances of Jeanne Moreau, Nathalie Baye, Mathieu Amalric, Yang Kuei Mei, Chen Chao Rong • Cinematography Liao Pen Jung • Sound Roberto Van Eijden, Jean Mallet, Philippe Baudhuin • Art direction Patrick Dechesne, Alain-Pascal Housiaux, Lee Tian Jue • Choreography Philippe Decouflé • Costumes Anne Dunsford, Wang Chia Hui with the participation of Christian Lacroix and the Comédie Française • Editing Jacques Comets • Coproducers Vincent Wang, Henri Loyrette, Joseph Rouschop, Stienette Bosklopper • A coproduction JBA Production (France), Homegreen Films (Taiwan), The Louvre museum, Tarantula (Belgium), Circe Films (Netherlands) and ARTE France Cinéma • In association with Fortissimo Films • With the support of CNC (France), GIO (Taiwan), Nederlands Fonds voor de Film (Netherlands), Eurimages (Conseil de l'Europe), La Région Ile-de-France • With the participation of ARTE France, Cinécinéma, Tax Shelter ING Invest, Department of Cultural Affairs Taipei City Government • Script developed with the support of the programme MEDIA and the Atelier of the Cannes Film Festival.

Produced by Jacques Bidou and Marianne Dumoulin • Directed by Tsai Ming-Liang
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SYNOPSIS

A Taiwanese filmmaker makes a film based on the myth of Salomé at the Louvre. Even though he speaks neither French nor English, he insists on giving the part of King Herod to the French actor Jean-Pierre Léaud. To give the film a chance at the box-office, the production company gives the role of Salomé to a world famous model. But problems arise as soon as filming begins...

Amidst all this confusion, the director suddenly learns of his mother's death.

The producer flies to Taipei, to attend the funeral. The director falls into a deep sleep where his mother's spirit does not seem to want to leave her old apartment. The producer has no choice but to wait, alone and lost in a strange city.

As after a very long voyage, filming will resume with all who were lost in the underground of the Louvre.

TSAI Ming-Liang interview

I am very proud and honored to have been invited by the Louvre museum to make *Face*. Confronted with this gigantic museum, known all over the world, which holds such works of art over the centuries, it was an unprecedented challenge for me. I told myself: « how can I create a work which may stand side by side with masterpieces which have crossed the ages and time and are absolutely unique? ». What reassured me, as I stood under the pyramid conceived by Mr. Pei, I told myself, one must be oneself, just do what you want to do, to do what I think I must do, then I will be accepted and tolerated by these giants who have traversed time.

The Louvre

The Louvre contacted me to go scout the locations.

I therefore systematically explored the painting galleries, behind the scenes, and the history of Western art. The collections are so rich that it is difficult to apprehend them, to find one's way. I was overwhelmed. The structures of the buildings were so complex that as soon as I had finished a visit, I would forget what I had seen. I would go, return again and again. I didn't stop discovering new things. It is in these circumstances that two events happened. I found a focal point among the paintings. To be more precise, among the religious paintings of the Renaissance. Of all the characters represented, it's Saint-John the Baptist who struck me. Later on I discovered that he was a central character in the story of Salomé, the one who asked for his head. He was everywhere. Then, while visiting behind the scenes of the Louvre, I met a fireman who was different from all the others, Jean-Pierre D. He carried huge bunches of keys, each door had to be opened and then locked by him. On the first day of our visit, he told me he had seen many of my films. He knew where to take me. It is one of the elements which started everything.

Birth of a film

My first "idea", was the encounter of Jean-Pierre Léaud and Lee Kang-Sheng. That's what I was most interested in. Because, in a previous film, "Over there what time is it?" one was in Taipeh, the other in Paris, but they never met. It is during the shooting of that film that I met Jean-Pierre Léaud. After that, we saw each other a few times. At each meeting, I was moved. I would tell myself I really have to film him. The first time was insufficient, almost simplistic, as if I had made an inaccessible divine creature out of him, but I got to know him more, as I saw his aged face, it made me want to film him, maybe I had to hurry up...

I asked myself: "What can I do to have Kang-Sheng and Léaud meet?". I imagined a whole series of solutions. Even imagining Kang-Sheng as a salesman of miniature Eiffel towers for tourists, and that Jean-Pierre Léaud wanted to bury his dead bird inside the Louvre. That's what I remember.

But little by little, the character of Salomé imposed herself. The more I scouted, the more the character haunted me. The main challenge became how do we have all these characters meet in the Louvre, or still, in these hidden parts of the Louvre, these places underground, these labyrinths...

Then, I thought of the shooting of a film. But I felt this way of getting them together was not very realistic. Something was missing to launch the writing. Realizing this was very troubling. I wrote a lot, reflected a lot, searched. Keeping the idea, above all, of Léaud and Hsiao Kang: not losing them, keeping them indispensable at every moment...

I wavered constantly between "real-believable" and unreal. I have a feeling the film matured for a long time, maybe two years. The way I handled the project took up a lot of my time.

With a certain degree of anxiety, even envisioning dropping the project, I said to myself: It's terrifying, this thing. I will never succeed. I even had the feeling that all of this would be ridiculous. It is at that moment that my mother passed away. Another reality imposed itself on me. I saw how this could influence everything.

What guides the relationship between a mother and her filmmaker son. There are always many reasons not to be by one's mother. Until one discovers she has cancer and you have to decide to be by her or not. I decided to accompany her to her last moment in life. These circumstances shook me; as if after so many years of wandering, I violently found a reason to be by her side. The illness of the mother transformed my gaze on things.

Well, she left, I saw her die; hence mourning and loss became the themes of the film.

The way this film takes shape remains very complex. It integrates many real circumstances which belong to

me personally. This film brought about a questioning of my inner world, started a motion in my concept on life. Hsiao Kang's character incarnates this state of mind: he is a filmmaker. Lee Kang-Sheng himself became a filmmaker in real life. I was certain he would be able to play the part and share with us the double anxiety of the artist facing life and the creative act. At the moment when Laetitia, who plays Salomé, is about to cut his head, there is a feeling of void and absence of meaning. As if after having possessed the object of our love or our hate, there was but a gap and the absurdity of our actions. I am profoundly moved by Laetitia's performance in this scene, what she expresses reflects what I feel. Each one of us makes such an effort to build his life following one's quest for truth and love, but in the end it is absurd. So it is with the human condition. Life is painful. We are powerless before it. But it is only by experiencing it, by living, that one may understand what it is.

The structure of the film unfolds the tale as one peels an onion. Through humor, caustic irony, the absurd and fantasy elements of the story, it constantly exposes the complexity of the act of filming, and the paradoxes of the creative process balancing between true and fake, virtual and real. It minutely explores the mysterious inner world of these artists, sent by the gods or moved by the demons. Their constancy creates anguish, their excessive desires, their inconsolable solitude, their nervous state, their physical limits, their resistance to cold, as the paintings exhibited at the Louvre, whose backs might hide a secret bitterness of the genius who is gone.

If the metaphor of the onion which is peeled can be applied to life, one might then say that a situation in real life will be observed by peeling one layer after the other, until there is nothing left but tears running down the face. If you break out in laughter, does this mean there is no sense?

The Actors

In Europe there is an actor I admire above all, he's Jean-Pierre Léaud. I discovered his face for the first time in *Four hundred blows*, he was fourteen years old. He became like a familiar neighbor, more of a friend than a well known actor. I have the impression of having an intimate relationship with this man as I see his films, but even further still, he manages to transmit an intimate relationship with cinema itself. One has the impression that the character comes out of the film but also a man who enters the screen, travels through fiction, lives, gives life to cinema. The meaning of cinema for me, one can find it on the face of Jean-Pierre Léaud.

One may say actors are the "seeds" of the film and they are also what motivate my desire to make this film. The most important thing for the actor is to find the right place, to be more precise, one must conceive the image and the aesthetics of this image is different from other forms of aesthetics, it is the cinematographic aesthetic. Of course the actor participates in this aesthetic, his way of acting, etc... Temporality is also important, as well as every detail which appears in the image, my job consists essentially in creating the most impacts possible for each image in the film. In this film, the actors are freer than in my previous films. Each has something which is his own. This time, I have the impression I tried to follow the actors, to walk with them, to see where they were going, I followed them while leading them to where I wanted them to go.

I chose Laetitia, because, as Robert Bresson, I love the idea of the film star model. She is now an actress. When we began working together, I told her: I like you as a model, if I call upon you it is because you are a model. When I saw your photos, I loved your image. Your photos are beautiful, it's innate in you, you are photogenic, your poses are perfect. And that belongs to you. Don't worry about whether you act well or not, forget that, it's something you cannot judge by yourself, it is a collective work. From the very beginning of the shoot, she understood very quickly what I had told her, in particular when we shot the extreme close up in the musical comedy scene, she was completely relaxed. It is by letting go that she showed many possibilities, she became very supple, she could always find where she should be and she followed this way. The more we shot the more evident it was for her; it's with Laetitia that it was the easiest; I knew she could do what I expected of her. She has a lot of talent.

The meaning of cinema is the face of the actors. It is a gift of heaven to the director, to the public. These faces are not products of the star system. They are not images of idolatry either. They allow the observation of the passage of time, the change of a natural order, of life. It is thanks to the actors that cinema reaches another dimension.

« I felt an enormous force »

Ever since I started making films, I have the impression I must ceaselessly confront the environment, be at

war with the cinema system. I don't make very commercial films, but I want people to see them. Including by selling tickets on the street, I already did that in Taiwan.

If I look back on these last seven years, at times it was really almost an unbearable trial, but I continued. For this film, a lot of people gave me strength: the Louvre, the French actors, all of them, the French artists who joined me, Lacroix, Decouflé, I felt an enormous force.

Usually one must submit to so called problematic things... such as the length of the film, the "needs of the market". Everyone has an opinion, suggestions, demands... It looks as if one should make a film they want, which has nothing to do with you. But on this film, I had a very particular experience. In the evening, after shooting, I went home happy. But I was all the more anxious. How will the next shot be? In the morning when I came out, I was anxious. An anxiety I had never felt before at this level. I didn't sleep well. Until the last days when I suddenly discovered that in fact each shot I made was exactly in the image of Léaud: I had put all my energy into it. What I find most admirable in Léaud, is that he is totally sincere. He gives himself totally with a dedication which is somehow ingenuous. Like a child. It is what I like the most in him. And I, I am the same.

«Flowers in the mirror, moon in the water»

In fact, there is a created world and a real world. The created world is that of the film within the film, in the worlds of mythology and the Bible, but in the end everything mixes and blends together.

All the characters mix constantly, legend and reality do not cease to be confused, Laetitia plays a character who rejects reality and enters the inner world of Salomé. For Lee Kang-Sheng, he will transform things in life, death or emotional shocks into a creative force. Fanny is ceaselessly looking for something. Her meeting with Jeanne Moreau resembles a dream. She traverses a world of death to reach an oneiric world. When she is with Jean-Pierre when are both in reality and in a dream, the barriers between the two no longer exist, it is not that the worlds are not in relation to each other, it is that I have abolished the barriers which separate them.

The same goes for Jean-Pierre, from a poor fallen actor, he becomes a hero and then returns to reality. In the film, he is for me a real hero, but a hero must at one point leave the stage.

The way I film is similar to the work of a painter. Each of my films is a painting and here it is a big painting which has no logic in its dramaturgy as we are used to seeing. I abolished a certain logic to show but a world of dreams intertwined with reality.

As it is said in the Buddhist proverb: «Flowers in the mirror, moon in the water», all is but illusion.

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TSAI Ming-Liang

Tsai Ming-Liang was born in 1957 in Malaysia. In 1977, he goes to Taiwan to study in the Chinese University of Culture. He gets his diploma in theater in 1981. During his studies he writes plays and directs three of them: *Instant Bean sauce Noodle* (1981) and *A Sealed Door in the Dark* (1982) which explores with humor the solitude of men in the city.

Ming-Liang dedicates the following years to television production and writing film scripts. By 1989 he directs several television films among which *The Corners of the World* and *The Kid* .

During the shooting of *The Kid* he meets Lee Kang-Sheng, who even if he has no acting training, quickly becomes Tsai Ming-Liang's favorite actor. Inspired by his story, Tsai Ming-Liang writes his first feature film *Rebels of the Neon God*.

The film is awarded the Bronze Sakura at the Tokyo Festival and the First Work Prize at Nantes in 1993.

In 1994, his film *Vive l'Amour* is awarded the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival, the Fipresci prize and Best Director Prize.

The River is awarded in 1997 the Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival as well as the Silver Hugo at the Chicago Film Festival.

In 1998, he participates in Taiwan on a huge project set forth by the Franco-German channel Arte on the year 2000 by making *The Hole*. The film is awarded the Fipresci Prize at the Cannes Film Festival, as well as the Silver Hugo and the Best Director Prize and Best Asian Film at the International Singapore Festival.

In 2001, *What Time Is It Over There?* is awarded Best Soundtrack at the Cannes Film Festival and numerous other prizes in various festivals such as the Chicago International Festival.

In 2002, he directs the short film *The skywalk is Gone* and his film *Goodbye Dragon Inn* which he finishes in 2003. That same year, he produces Lee Kang-Sheng's first film *Missing*.

In 2002, he is awarded by the French Government the distinction of Chevalier des Arts et Lettres.

In 2004, *The Wayward Cloud* is crowned three times at the Berlin Festival, the Silver Bear for its exceptional artistic contribution, the Alfred Bauer Prize and the Fipresci Prize.

In 2006, *I don't want to sleep alone* is selected by the « New Crown Hope Event » in Vienna, which is organized for the 250th anniversary of the birth of Mozart. The film is selected in Competition in the official selection at the Venice International Festival.

In parallel to his activity as a filmmaker, Tsai Ming-Liang carries his reflections on the relationship between the image, man and space through video installations; he creates in 2007 « It is a dream » and « Erotice Space ».

His new film *Face* is a project which comes from an invitation by the Louvre museum in Paris.

Comments by Henri Loyrette, President-director of the Louvre Museum

There is, behind everything Tsai Ming-Liang did and behind *Face* a considerable amount of work. He tamed what he calls the dragon.

All the reflections out of this work on the Louvre, on cinema, at the heart of this museum, on François Truffaut, whom he particularly admires, it's very interesting, this combined look on a history of French cinema and on the Louvre which is also, not only the symbol, but also in its very core a living history of French heritage.

What Tsai Ming-Liang shows, people wandering in the great gallery or dining in the salon Napoléon III, it is not at all strange or foreign to the vocation of this Palace. There is in this Palace a theatrical potential, all of history shows it. He recreates fictions that could have occurred, inspired by the very nature of our collections, with its great themes.

Laetitia Casta

It's Ming-Liang's poetry which carried me.

What I felt strongly is that, through me, I had the impression that I spoke of Ming-Liang's emotion, of his emotion.

I was a puppet of the director, but this time in all its beauty, I have no problem saying that because it is very pleasant.

LEE Kang-Sheng

Even though we did not speak the same language, maybe it's as in Tsai's film, there is little dialogue, but we understand each other with the heart.

CAST & CREW

JBA Production, Homegreen Films and the Louvre museum present
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2009 / 2h17 / original version in French and Chinese / 35mm color 1,85 Dolby SRD / visa I 19458

With

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And the exceptional appearances of Jeanne Moreau, Nathalie Baye, Mathieu Amalric, Yang

Kuei Mei, Chen Chao Rong

Cinematography Liao Pen Jung

Sound Roberto Van Eijden, Jean Mallet, Philippe Baudhuin

Art Direction Patrick Dechesne, Alain-Pascal Housiaux, Lee Tian Jue

Choreography Philippe Decouflé

Costumes Anne Dunsford, Wang Chia Hui with the participation of Christian Lacroix and the

Comédie Française

Editing Jacques Comets

Production Manager France Christophe Désenclos

The Louvre museum cinema production Catherine Derosiers-Pouchous

Coproducers Vincent Wang, Henri Loyrette, Joseph Rouschop, Stienette Bosklopper

A coproduction of JBA Production (France), Homegreen Films (Taiwan), The Louvre museum, Tarantula

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International sales Fortissimo Films

THE ACTORS IN FACE

Fanny ARDANT

Her first appearance, in *Marie-poupée*, directed by Joël Séria, in 1976, was auspicious. She acts in various films for television, some of which come to the attention of François Truffaut, who gives her the leading part in *The Woman Next Door* (1981), and becomes his companion.

She works with Vittorio Gassman in *Benvenuta* (1983) by André Delvaux and in Alain Resnais' *Life is a bed of roses* (1983). After the death of Truffaut, in 1984, Fanny Ardant acts in *Swann in love* (1984), in *Family business* (1986) by Costa-Gavras, and in *The Family* (1986), by Ettore Scola, again with Gassman.

We see her on the screen in *Colonel Chabert* (1994), *Sabrina* (1995) by Sydney Pollack, and above all in *Beyond the clouds* (1995), by Michelangelo Antonioni. She joins Mastroianni in *One hundred and one nights* (1996), and is awarded the David di Donatello Prize for the film *Di giorno e di notte* (1996), a comedy by Gabriel Aghion, and the well known *The dinner* (La cena) (1998) by Ettore Scola, the last appearance of the Ardant-Gassman couple.

The years 2000 give her important parts, in *8 Women* by François Ozon (2002), *The smell of blood* (2003), or *Crossed Tracks* (2007) by Claude Lelouch.

Laetitia CASTA

Muse of L'Oréal and model for Jean-Paul Gaultier, as well as Yves Saint-Laurent, Chanel, Givenchy, Louis Vuitton... She has worked for the greatest couturiers of the planet all over the world. She was chosen "the sexiest woman" by Rolling Stone magazine in 1998. In 1999, she is chosen to personify the new Marianne of the French Republic.

In 1998, the public discovers her in a first film, *Astérix and Obelix vs Cesar* by Claude Zidi. Her new career as an actress takes shape: *The Blue Bicycle* in 1999, *Gypsy* by Manuel Palacios in 2000, as well as *Savage Souls* by Raoul Ruiz. *Love street* by Patrice Leconte in 2001, *Errance* of Damien Odoul in 2003 and *La déraison du Louvre* by Ange Leccia in 2004. In 2006, Pascal Thomas offers her the part of Francesca in the film *Le grand appartement*. Then in 2007, *The Maiden and the wolves* of Gilles Legrand, *Face* by Tsai Ming-Liang in 2008 and *Serge Gainsbourg (Heroic Life)* by Joann Sfar, in 2009.

In 2004, she decides to go on stage and asks Jacques Weber to direct her at the Saint Antoine theater, in *Ondine*. The Jean Giraudoux play will be a great success in Paris and on tour all over France. Florian Zeller asks her to be Anna in *Elle t'attend*.

Jean-Pierre LÉAUD

As early as 1959, his notoriety is established thanks to François Truffaut, who was looking for a young boy to be *Antoine Doinel*, the turbulent hero in *Four Hundred Blows*, his first, autobiographical, feature film. It is then that he is called upon for a screen test with a hundred other candidates. He is astounding in his spontaneity and freedom in improvisation. His moving portrayal fills with enthusiasm the jury of the Cannes Film Festival in 1959 and its honorary president, Jean Cocteau, hires him immediately for his film *The Testament of Orpheus*.

Jean-Pierre Léaud becomes the cult actor of the Nouvelle Vague and meets the other mavericks of the period such as Jean-Luc Godard with whom he will work on several films between 1964 and 1969 such as *La Chinoise* (1967) and *Masculin, féminin* with Chantal Goya.

With François Truffaut he plays other *Antoine Doinel* characters with Claude Jade in the films: *Stolen Kisses* (1968), *Bed & Board* (1970) and *Love on the Run* (1979).

His career reaches its peak with Jean Eustache's film *The Mother and the Whore* in 1972. In 1985, among other films he acts in *Detective* behind the star couple Johnny Hallyday and Nathalie Baye, in the noticeable character part of a nosy detective. Jean-Pierre Léaud wins back real leading parts after a certain eclipse, notably with Philippe Garrel, or with young directors. Olivier Assayas chooses him in 1991 as a disoriented

father whose companion takes off with his son, in *Paris awakens*, and in 1996 as René Vidal, in *Irma Vep*.

LEE Kang-Sheng

Lee Kang-Sheng was born in Taipei in 1968. In 1991, he was discovered in the streets of Taipei by Tsai Ming-Liang to act in his TV drama, *The Kid*. From then on, Lee has starred in every film that Tsai has made, bringing to life Tsai's filmic visions and becoming an important figure in Tsai's cinema. Although not trained as an actor, his unique presence, slight melancholy, detached and cool expressions with a sense of rebellion, and his off beat slow pacing with a slightly nervous temperament makes his performance one of a kind, thus becoming one of the most representative actors of Taiwanese cinema.

In 1994, his performance in *Vive L'amour* was awarded Best Actor Award at the Nantes International Film Festival in France and the Golden Horse Film Festival in Taiwan. Many famous Asian directors praised his unique acting style. In 1996, he starred in Lin Cheng Sheng's *Sweet Degeneration*. In 1998, he made his Hong Kong film debut with Ann Hui's *Ordinary Heroes*.

In 2003, drawing upon his filmmaking experience as an actor, he made his directorial debut with the feature film, *The Missing* and won the prestigious New Currents Award at the Pusan International Film Festival and the Tiger Award at the Rotterdam International Film Festival. In 2007, he wrote, directed and starred in his second feature film, *Help Me Eros*, which went on to compete for the prestigious Golden Lion Award in Venice.

JBA Production

Jacques Bidou & Marianne Dumoulin

Since its creation in 1987, JBA Production has explored new cinematic worlds and focused on new talent joining high stakes in both content and cinematic form. With this goal in mind, we have produced over 120 films.

Including *Rice people* first feature film by Cambodian filmmaker Rithy Panh (Cannes 1994 - Competition), *Bab El Oued City* by Merzak Allouache (Cannes 1994 - Official Selection), *Hey cousin!* by Merzak Allouache (Cannes 1996 - Directors' Fortnight), *The mutants* by Teresa Villaverde (Cannes 1998 - Official Selection), *One evening after the war* by Rithy Panh (Cannes 1998 - Official Selection), *Lumumba* by Raoul Peck (Cannes 2000 - Directors' Fortnight), *April Captains* by Maria de Medeiros (Cannes 2000 - Official Selection), *Pau and his brother* by Catalan filmmaker Marc Recha (Cannes 2001- Competition), *A piece of sky* first feature by young Belgian director Bénédicte Liénard (Cannes 2002 - Official Selection), *Feathers in my head* first feature by young Belgian filmmaker Thomas de Thier (Cannes 2003 - Directors' Fortnight), *Where is Madame Catherine?* by Marc Recha (Cannes 2003 - Official Selection), Patricio Guzman's feature documentary *Salvador Allende* (Cannes 2004 - Official Selection), *Zulu Love Letter* by Ramadan Suleman (Venice 2004 - Official Selection), *Salamandra* first feature by Argentinean director Pablo Agüero (Cannes 2008 - Directors' Fortnight) and *Salt of this sea* by young Palestinian filmmaker Annemarie Jacir (Cannes 2008 - Official Selection) and *Face* directed by Tsai Ming-Liang (Cannes 2009 – Competition).

www.jbaproduction.com

Homegreen Films

Vincent Wang

Homegreen Films based in Taipei was established in 2000 by Vincent Wang in association with Tsai Ming-Liang and Lee Kang-Sheng. Our international productions in cooperation with our European partners have been successful in many international film festivals and film markets.

Filmography :

2009 *Face* by Tsai Ming-Liang (Official Selection Cannes 2009 - in Competition)

2007 *Help Me, Eros* by Lee Kang-Sheng (Official Selection Venice 2007 - in Competition)

2006 *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone* by Tsai Ming-Liang (Official Selection Venice 2006 - in Competition)

2004 *The Wayward Cloud* by Tsai Ming-Liang (Silver Bear, Alfred Bauer and Fipresci Awards - Berlin 2005)

2003 *The Missing* by Lee Kang-Sheng (Tiger Award, Dutch Critic and NEPAC Awards - Rotterdam 2004 & Best Film Award - Pusan 2003)

2003 *Goodbye Dragon Inn* by Tsai Ming-Liang (Fipresci Award - Venice 2003 & Best Director - Festival des Trois Continents Nante)

2001 *What time is it, there?* by Tsai Ming-Liang (Best Sound in the Official Selection Cannes 2001 - in Competition & Silver Hugo - Chicago 2001)

Clay Pot “Lion Head” (Braised)

Ingredients:

625 grams of pork (front leg)

Seasoning: 1 egg, 1 tablespoon of wine, 1½ teaspoon of salt, 1 tablespoon of corn flour, ¼ teaspoon of ground pepper, ½ cup of onion-ginger water.

In addition, prepare 500 grams of Chinese cabbage, ½ cup of cooking oil, 4 cups of clear stock, 2 tablespoons of soy sauce, 1 teaspoon of salt.

Preparation:

1. After dicing the pork finely, mince it until it becomes sticky. Put it in a large bowl and mix in the seasoning. Stir in one direction.

Once it is well mixed, toss and throw the meat until it is slightly bouncy.

2. Remove four large pieces of leaves from the Chinese cabbage. Cut the remaining into broad strips and fry briefly with 2 tablespoons of cooking oil before placing them at the bottom inside the clay pot.
3. Heat the oil in a wok. Once the oil is hot, gently put in the pork, now rolled into 4 separate meatballs, and fry until golden brown. Remove from wok and transfer to the clay pot. Place the large pieces of Chinese cabbage leaves
4. Heat the oil in a wok. Once the oil is hot, gently put in the pork, now rolled into 4 separate meatballs, and fry until golden brown. Remove from wok and transfer to the clay pot. Place the large pieces of Chinese cabbage leaves on top and pour in the clear stock. Cook slowly over gentle fire for 3½ hours (if the stock is not enough, water may be added).
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Finally, add some salt and soy sauce to taste and pour 1 tablespoon of hot oil over it before serving.

Leonard da Vinci (Vinci, near Florence, 1452 - Amboise 1519)

Saint-John the Baptist

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Wood (walnut) H.0,69 ; L. 0,57 cm

« Holding the cross, symbol of the Passion of Christ, but wearing a panther's hide, attribute of Bacchus, this Saint-John the Baptist is of pagan beauty. It renews through its syncretism the traditional Tuscan iconography of the Florentine patron saint.

The perfection of his idealized androgyny, the eloquence of the gesture, the power of the smile make of it the masterpiece of the end of Leonardo's career painted around 1513-1516, and the culminating point of his somber and melting manner, monochrome and transparent, the pictural technique called « sfumato ».

Saint John the Baptist, the Announcer, the Precursor is also "He who comes from the Light". With Leonardo da Vinci, finding the gesture, the index pointing to the sky, the body in a spiral and the emergence in the light perfectly conveys the theme.

It is "the right distribution of the light" which gives the figure its sculptural volume and expresses the slight passages between the background and the form. The sfumato "which blends the contours in a vapor of light" is here majestically illustrated. The body "turns" thanks to the use of light, and hence the painter rivals the sculptor. No use of color; on the contrary, the work is all the more perfect, that it pushes away the artifice of color.

The face of Saint-John the Baptist, with a sweet smile, oscillates between the feminine and the masculine, in accordance with the identification of the Precursor and the New Adam who, on the day of Creation, carried with him both natures.

