

## A Touch of Sin

Tian zhu ding

China 2013

**Directed by**  
Zhang-ke Jia

**Written by**  
Zhang-ke Jia

**Cinematography**  
Yu Likwai

**Music**  
Giong Lim

133 mins

**Cast**  
Wu Jiang  
Dahai

Baoqiang Wang  
Zhou San

Tao Zhao  
Xiao Yu

Lanshan Luo  
Xiao Hui

*Our next screening...*

### Wrinkles

Tue 31 Mar 2015 8:00pm

Dir: Ignacio Ferreras

An astonishing Spanish animated cocktail of friendship & life set among the unexpected landscape of an old folks' home.

**Tonight we're delighted to be showing a film from one of the world's finest contemporary directors, China's Zhang-ke Jia.**

Inspired by true-life tales culled from Chinese social media website Weibo, Jia Zhangke's attention-grabbing epic teases together four disparate stories of people driven to violence by the purgatorial pain of their modern existence. Inflected by genre (the martial arts films of King Hu are evidently an influence), the film counterbalances its social-realist reflections on life under creeping neo-capitalism with depictions of cinematic splatter. The results are deliberately disorienting, with some fans of previous films such as *The World* and *Still Life* apparently alarmed by the stark (a)tonal shift of Jia's latest. Certainly, as a state of the nation document, it paints a poisonous picture of people pushed beyond the boundaries of civilised behaviour by the sickness of the circumstances in which they live. This is a world of corruption, violence and despair depicted in a manner that not only flirts with, but positively embraces, the cathartic pleasures of exploitation cinema. In China, the film's release has been delayed amid official worries that it might provoke social unrest; proof, perhaps, that Jia's scattershot approach has hit at least some of its targets.

Mark Kermode, *The Independent*

A blistering fictionalized tale straight out of China, *A Touch of Sin* is at once monumental and human scale. A story of lives rocked by violence, it has the urgency of a screaming headline but one inscribed with visual lyricism, emotional weight and a belief in individual rights. You can feel the conviction of Jia Zhang-ke — one of the few filmmakers of any nationality who weighs the impact of social and political shifts on people — in every shot. In *A Touch of Sin*, the world isn't an amorphous backdrop, it is a stage on which men and women struggle to fulfill basic moral obligations, including recognizing one another's humanity. Luxury items are in striking contrast to the village's forlorn statue of Mao (representative of a fading belief system) and its Buddhist temple (symbol of yet older beliefs), at which Dahai takes a brutal, lonely stand. Yet while he is a man alone, his presence, fight against corruption and convictions rise like ghosts later in the movie, when prostitutes march out in versions of Red Army uniforms that are perverse mockeries of Dahai's humble coat. In some movies, such connecting moments can be quasi-mystical and sentimental and tend to gut whatever political point hovers in the vicinity. Here, the characters are connected by their existential reality of being alive in contemporary China.

Manohla Dargis, *New York Times*



Voting for *The Past*: A-42 B-16 C-3 D-1 E-0 Attendance: 65 Rating: 89.9%