

WUHAN WUHAN

A film by Yung Chang



Photo credit: Dr. Sun



[KEY IMAGES](#)

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: [@wuhanwuhandoc](#)

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90 minutes, English subtitles, color, 2021

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Wuhan Wuhan | SYNOPSIS



90 minutes, 2021, USA

Logline:

When the city of Wuhan, China locked down at the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was nearly impossible to get a clear sense of what was happening. But award-winning filmmaker Yung Chang (*Up the Yangtze*) and a group of intrepid videographers were able to document life at the epicenter, including portraits of a couple expecting a baby, quarantined families in a byzantine shelter, dedicated medical workers, and a psychologist facing her own family crisis while helping patients with the unknown threat. In a time when the world needs greater cross-cultural understanding, *WUHAN WUHAN* is an invaluable depiction of a metropolis joining together to overcome a crisis.

Synopsis:

WUHAN WUHAN is an observational documentary unfolding during February and March, 2020 at the height of the pandemic in Wuhan city, where the coronavirus began. With unprecedented access at the peak of the pandemic lockdown, *WUHAN WUHAN* goes beyond the statistics and salacious headlines and puts a human experience into the early days of the mysterious virus as Chinese citizens and frontline healthcare workers grappled with an invisible, deadly killer.

The film focuses on five heart-wrenching and endearing stories: a soft-hearted ER doctor and an unflappable ICU nurse from the COVID-19 hospital; a compassionate volunteer psychologist at a temporary hospital; a tenacious mother and son who are COVID-19 patients navigating the byzantine PRC healthcare system; and a volunteer driver for medical workers and his 9 month pregnant wife whose heartfelt story forms the backbone of this film. In a time when the world needs greater cross-cultural understanding, *WUHAN WUHAN* is an invaluable depiction of a metropolis joining together to overcome a crisis.

Wuhan Wuhan | CHARACTERS



Yin, 30, volunteer medical driver and factory worker

After being furloughed from his job in a tobacco factory during the lockdown, Yin works as a volunteer driver for medical workers shuttling them between the quarantine hotels and the hospitals. Unable to endure the monotony of his lockdown daily routine at home with his wife, Xu, who is 37 weeks pregnant, Yin seeks advice from his passengers and fulfils his sense of duty during the pandemic.

Xu, 23, tour guide, wife of Yin

Xu is in full term pregnancy and is expecting to give birth to a “pandemic baby” during the extraordinary lockdown period in Wuhan. She is as nervous as any first-time-mother, but with the added stress of protecting her family from an invisible virus. This is doubly aggravating to her since her husband, Yin, decides to be a volunteer medical driver risking his own safety for others and, in her eyes, neglecting his role as a father-to-be.

Dr. Xiannian Zheng, 35, ER Chief Physician

Dr. Zheng works at Wuhan No. 5 Hospital which is the first designated hospital for critical COVID-19 cases. As the ER chief doctor, he faces insurmountable pressure, known and unknown obstacles, and the high risk of catching the virus himself. Though the hospital is constantly in lack of medical supplies, he races against time, dedicated to save more lives and embolden the spirits of his overworked colleagues.

Dr. Guiqing Zhang, 55, Psychologist

Arriving from Xinjiang province as a volunteer, Dr. Zhang, a psychologist, provides professional support for thousands of patients in Fangcang Temporary Hospital. Dealing with the unexpected news of her father’s terminal lung cancer, she nonetheless forges ahead to help her patients heal and find ways to endure their mandatory quarantine.

Susu, 34, ICU Nurse

Working in the ICU with the most severe COVID-19 cases, Susu uses her patience and kindness to take care of each of her patients, especially “Grumpy Grandpa” in Bed 15. Quarantined in a hotel for medical workers and unable to return home to see her two children and her husband, Susu perseveres by turning her love for her family towards her patients.

Xiuli Liu, 41, Lailai’s Mother

After testing positive for COVID-19, Mama Liu and her son, Lai Lai, are quarantined in the Fangcang Temporary Hospital for treatment and observation. To be released from the mandatory quarantine, you must test negative for COVID-19 three times. With the impending closure of the temporary hospital and not knowing the prospects of their recovery, Mama Liu fights to protect her son and their livelihoods in a byzantine medical system bogged-down by bureaucracy.

Lailai, 9

As a 9-year-old boy, Lai Lai is still trying to understand what living in the Fangcang Temporary Hospital means, which largely means escaping into his mother’s smartphone and video games. Seeing his mother being so protective of him, he decides that even if he recovers first, he will never leave his mother’s side.

Grandpa Shen, 56

Under Nurse Susu’s watchful eye in the ICU, Grandpa Shen is Bed Patient 15 recovering from COVID-19. Amongst the medical staff, he is jokingly known as “Grumpy Grandpa”, a common stereotype for Wuhan senior citizens who have the national reputation of being curmudgeonly and stubborn.

Wuhan City

Population: 11 million

Wuhan, the sprawling capital of Central China’s Hubei province, is a commercial center divided by the Yangtze and Han rivers. The city contains many lakes and parks, including the expansive, picturesque East Lake. Nearby, the Hubei Provincial Museum displays relics from the Warring States period, including the Marquis Yi of Zeng’s coffin and bronze musical bells from his 5th-century B.C. tomb. (From Google)

From CNN: [From one-time Chinese capital to coronavirus epicenter, Wuhan has a long history that the West had forgotten](#)

Wuhan Wuhan | FILMMAKER STATEMENT



As a Chinese person who grew-up in North America, I feel strongly committed to telling a nuanced story that doesn't generalize a population of people and reveals them to be individuals, not just a monolith. Nationalism builds walls and this is not the intention of this film. In WUHAN WUHAN, the lives of the people we follow are individually a document of perseverance, but collectively they represent the profound humanity

we universally hope for in times of crisis. I'm driven to make this film because of anti-Asian racism quelled by double-speak and mis-truths from leaders around the world, who obfuscate the realities of this pandemic; that in the end it is the everyday person, the essential frontline workers, the volunteers, the intergenerational families, it is us, who must navigate the ups-and-downs of this unprecedented and historic event that will shape our lives forever. In a way, as systems and governments fail us, the people have come together. We will survive.

- *Yung Chang, Director*

Wuhan Wuhan | FILMMAKERS



YUNG CHANG (DIRECTOR) is the director of *Up the Yangtze* (2007), *China Heavyweight* (2012), and *The Fruit Hunters* (2012). He is currently completing a screenplay for his first dramatic feature, *Eggplant*, which was selected in 2015 to participate in the prestigious Sundance Labs. Chang's films have premiered at international film festivals including Sundance, Berlin, Toronto, and IDFA and have played theatrically in cinemas around the world. *Up the Yangtze* was one of the top-grossing documentary releases in 2008. In 2013, *China Heavyweight* became the most widely screened social-issue documentary in Chinese history with an official release in 200 Mainland Chinese cinemas. His films have

been critically-acclaimed, receiving awards in Paris, Milan, Vancouver, San Francisco, the Canadian Genie, Taiwan Golden Horse, Cinema Eye Honors, among others and have been nominated at Sundance, the Independent Spirit Awards and the Emmys. Chang's films have been shown on international broadcasters including PBS, National Geographic, ARTE, ZDF, Channel 4, HBO, TMN, NHK, CBC, TV2, SBS and EBS. Chang is the recipient of the Don Haig Award, the Yolande and Pierre Perrault Award, and the Guggenheim Emerging Artist Award. He is a member of the Directors Guild of Canada. In 2013, he was invited to become a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.



DONNA GIGLIOTTI (PRODUCER) is one of only nine women to win an Academy Award for Best Picture. She received the 1998 Oscar for producing *Shakespeare in Love*. Ms. Gigliotti received three additional Academy Award/Best Picture nominations for *Hidden Figures* (2016), *Silver Linings Playbook* (2013) and *The Reader* (2008.) In 2019, she was nominated for an Emmy for producing the ABC/Academy Awards telecast, the shortest Oscar show in modern history. Ms. Gigliotti sits on the Board of Governors of AMPAS, as well as the National Board of the Producers Guild. She is Chairwoman of PGA/East and an associate arts professor at NYU/Tisch School of the Arts.



PETER LUO (PRODUCER) graduated from the Directing Program of Beijing Film Academy and has now been involved in film and commercial production for decades. He entered Hollywood in 2013 and founded Starlight Media Inc. Since then, he has served as CEO of Starlight and has fully developed the business. Under his direction, the company has signed 11 Hollywood top-ranking directors, including James Wan, Jon M. Chu, F. Gary Gray, Roland Emmerich, Bryan Singer, Alan Taylor, Robert Zemeckis, Jonathan Liebesman, Sylvester Stallone, Nattawut Poonpiriya, and Sam Raimi. In addition, Luo executive

produced the 2017 film *Marshall*, which was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Original Song in addition to winning 3 awards and receiving 17 nominations. Next, Starlight co-financed the 2018 hit, *Crazy Rich Asians*. The film was a milestone for Asians in Hollywood, with a global box-office of over \$280 million. It was nominated for Golden Globe Award for both Best Motion Picture-Musical or Comedy and for Best Actress in a Motion Picture-Musical or Comedy. Starlight was also behind the outstanding thriller *Greta*. Premiering at TIFF in 2018, the film was part of a bidding war before finalizing a deal with Focus Features. Luo also co-financed and executive produced the 2019 film *Midway*. Directed by Roland Emmerich and featuring multiple top stars, the film was one of the most expensive independent films ever made. Within 3 to 5 years, Peter plans to continue to create partnerships with established directors, while also signing on 30-50 diverse and emerging filmmakers under its "Stars Collective Initiative".



DIANE QUON (PRODUCER) is an Academy Award-nominated producer who worked as a marketing executive for 17 years at NBC and Paramount Pictures before moving back to her hometown of Chicago. Quon has produced the Kartemquin Films documentaries: Oscar and Emmy nominated, Peabody and Sundance award-winning film, *Minding the Gap* directed by Bing Liu; *The Dilemma of Desire* with Peabody Award-winning director Maria Finitzo (SXSW and HotDocs 2020); *Finding Yingying* with director Jiayan "Jenny" Shi (MTVDocs; SXSW 2020, Special Jury Recognition for Breakthrough Voice); and *For the Left Hand* along with Howard Reich, and co-directed by

Leslie Simmer and Gordon Quinn. She is also producing the documentaies *Untitled Sam Project* directed by Nadav Kurtz and the *Untitled 19th* News Film* directed by Heather Courtney and Chelsea Hernandez. In addition, Quon is developing a fiction film based on the NY Times best-seller, *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* and Bing Liu's original screenplay. Quon is an AMPAS Member, a Sundance Creative Producing Fellow, and the recipient of the 2020 Cinereach Producer Award.



DONNIE YEN (EXECUTIVE PRODUCER) - Martial arts movie icon Yen is one of the cinema world's most acclaimed action filmmakers, and is a visionary who has illuminated the screen both in the eastern and western cultures. Since he exploded onto the Hong Kong cinema scene in the kung fu *Drunken Tai Chi*, Yen has blazed a bright trail across the action genre. He has pioneered the depiction of Mixed Martial Arts moves in such films as *Tiger Cage 2*, *SPL/Kill Zone* and *Flashpoint*, while projects like *Iron Monkey*, *Bodyguards* and *Assassins*, *Wu Xia* and *Kung Fu Jungle* have set a new standard for on-screen kung fu fighting. One of his most successful films was the SFX-packed *Monkey King* which was a which smashed box office records in Mainland China. Yen has gone

on to play lead roles in three prominent, high profile features: Star Wars standalone film *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, *XXX: Return of Xander Cage* and Disney's epic *Mulan* which combined the

world class talent of east meets west for a major Hollywood take on the kung fu genre. Meanwhile, Yen is also an award-winning film actor and action director, and enjoyed his greatest success to date when he played the lead role in the hugely popular *Ip Man*. The film was hailed as the most influential martial arts movie of its decade, and its sequel was an even bigger hit leading to a series of four films all shot and released in a decade. With his ground-breaking work on and off camera, Yen continues to entertain worldwide audiences with the range and depth of his talents.

Photo by Olivia Tsang



EVITA YUEPU ZHOU (EDITOR) is a film and TV editor who has worked in both documentary and narrative in the U.S. and I'm China. Her documentary credits include *Making a Murderer* Season 2 (Netflix), *Childhood in China* (Discovery Asia), and *Confucian Dream*, which premiered at Hot Docs, won the Special Jury Prize at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, and won Best Feature Documentary at the Guangzhou International Film Festival, China's largest documentary festival. The doc short *Organizing Happiness* was China's official entry in the HIGH 5 Series at the 2018 BRICS Film Festival in Durban, South Africa. Zhou's narrative work has also gathered acclaim: *Film Kama'Ānia* won the best short in 2020 Palm

Springs International Film Festival; *Human Terrain* took part in the prestigious AFI Directing Workshop for Women and the short *The Visit* has screened at over 100 festivals. Her recent work includes *A Town Called Victoria*, a docuseries pilot that won the 2018 Austin Film Society New Texas Voices Grant, IFP/HBO New True Stories Initiative, and ISF Documentary Fund Grand Prize.



ZIMO HUANG (EDITOR) is a film editor based in West Hollywood, California, and he's been editing since the mid 2000s. Before going into the narrative feature world, Huang edited documentary films, including additional editing on the 2015 Academy Award nominated documentary feature *Glen Campbell: I'll Be Me*. His feature credits also include *Dominion*, *Moss*, *77 Days*, *Sprinter* and *Buffalo Girls*. His latest feature film *The Tomorrow Man*, starring John Lithgow and Blythe Danner, premiered at Sundance Film Festival 2019. Born in Beijing before moving to the U.S. at age 13, Huang's creative process is a mixture of traditional Eastern culture and modern Western style.



HUALUN (ORIGINAL MUSIC BY) - Formed in 2004, Hualun (花伦) is a rock band from Wuhan, China. Hualun was a vital part of the early years of the "Wuhan punk" scene and the explosive Chinese "post rock" wave. Since then, Hualun has been exploring new ways of developing their music, focusing on creating mesmerizing and immersive soundscapes, and diversifying their music, as experienced in the soundtrack for the independent film *An Elephant Sitting Still* and the impromptu project "wändærlænd" in 2018 and 2019. Known as a group of musicians who rely on their intuition, they are leaders in experimenting with sound, and exploring the source of natural growth with their music.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



KARTEMQUIN FILMS is a collaborative center empowering filmmakers who create documentaries that have consequences in the world and foster a more engaged and just society. In 2016, Kartemquin celebrated 50 years of sparking democracy through documentary.

The organization's films have received four Academy Award® nominations and won several major prizes, including six Emmys, four Peabody Awards, multiple Independent Spirit, IDA, PGA and DGA awards, and duPont-Columbia and Robert F. Kennedy journalism awards. Kartemquin is recognized as a leading advocate for independent public media, and has helped hundreds of artists via its filmmaker development programs that help further grow the field, such as KTQ Labs, Diverse Voices in Docs, and the acclaimed KTQ Internship. Kartemquin is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization based in Chicago. www.kartemquin.com

Wuhan Wuhan | CREDITS



director
YUNG CHANG

producers
DONNA GIGLIOTTI
PETER LUO
DIANE QUON

editors
ZIMO HUANG
EVITA YUEPU ZHOU

executive producers
DONNIE YEN
CHENG YANG
YUKI ZHANG

co-producers
NANCY XU
JUEFANG JENNIFER ZHANG

original music
HUALUN

post-production supervisors
MATT TAYLOR
RYAN GLEESON

associate editors
EMILY ZHAI
DORA SIYI WU

digital finish/color
REDLAB

audio post-production
REDLAB

motion graphics
ALEX KURINA

production companies
SA Inc.
Starlight Media Inc.

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