

# Dr Zhang Yimou

Doctor of Humanities *honoris causa*

## Citation

Zhang Yimou was born in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province in 1950. During the Cultural Revolution, he was sent down to the countryside and put to work in a cotton mill. After the Cultural Revolution, Zhang went back to school in the Department of Cinematography at the Beijing Film Academy. After graduation in 1982, he was assigned to Guangxi Film Studio. There he served as cinematographer on his first film, 'One and Eight', which heralded the beginning of the fifth generation of Chinese films. His next two films as cinematographer were 'Yellow Earth' and 'The Big Parade', both fifth generation classics directed by Chen Kaige. He returned to Xi'an in 1985 to work as a cinematographer at Xi'an Film Studio. Two years later, Zhang made his directorial debut by helming 'Red Sorghum', an adaptation of Mo Yan's novel of the same name. The breathtaking cinematography, soaring folk music, crisp editing, and gripping magic-realist narrative successfully complemented an unforgettable romance plot. One of the finest Chinese films of the 1980s, 'Red Sorghum' received numerous awards, including the Golden Rooster Award for Best Picture, the Hundred Flowers Award for Best Picture, and the Golden Bear Award at the Berlin International Film Festival. The film established Zhang's reputation as an auteur of the highest rank.

The success of 'Red Sorghum' was just the beginning of a wide-ranging creative career – both in the cinema and beyond. Over the next decade, films such as 'Judou', 'The Story of Qiu Ju', 'To Live', 'Raise the Red Lantern', 'Not One Less', and 'The Road Home' dazzled both Chinese and international cinephiles, and won him two Golden Lions at the Venice Film Festival, the Cannes Jury Prize, the Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize in Berlin, and the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. By the turn of the millennium, Zhang was the most decorated Asian film director in the world.

Globalisation was radically transforming the Chinese film industry at the time. Zhang responded to the trend with a trilogy of China-Hong Kong co-productions, 'Hero', 'House of Flying Daggers' and 'Curse of the Golden Flower'. These were epic *wuxia* (martial arts) films that reinterpreted Chinese history and classic literature. Zhang was richly rewarded for his efforts to develop the commercial market with the arthouse film: he set the box office record for Chinese films twice, and was crowned the annual Chinese-language film box office king four times. What a contribution he has made to the development of the film industry in China! He showed the world how a Chinese director could revitalize the *wuxia* heritage with state-of-the-art film technique and magnificent *mise-en-scène*.

Zhang's box office gold has never tempted him to debase his artistry; he has, to the contrary, continued to challenge himself creatively with every new project. In films such as 'Under the Hawthorn Tree', 'Coming Home', 'Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles', 'One Second', 'Cliff Walker' and 'Sniper', Zhang broke new ground by probing traumatic episodes in recent Chinese history, offering the reassurance that this too shall pass, that penitence will lead to forgiveness, and that basic human decency will see us through the worst of times.

In the late 1990s, Zhang made his first foray into the wider world of the visual arts, when he was invited by Maestro Zubin Mehta to direct Puccini's 'Turandot' at the Florence Opera. Zhang's incorporation of Chinese elements in his interpretation of a classic Western opera met with rapturous applause. In 2000, Zhang worked with conductor Zubin Mehta to stage in 'Turandot' in the Forbidden City. The film Zhang made of the gorgeous live production brought his work to a worldwide audience of film goers and opera lovers. He entertained an even larger audience, which has been described as 'the biggest live audience in human history', by directing the opening ceremonies of the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympic Games. Making innovative use of colour, graphics, costumes, dance, and technology, Zhang contributed enormously to the host country's enthusiastic welcome to athletes from all over the world, both in 2008 and for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games.

Zhang's works, especially his experiments with Chinese and Western cultural elements and his groundbreaking film scenarios, are difficult to sum up in so many words. They must be seen and heard in order to appreciate their true rhythm and beauty.

Mr Chairman, in recognition of Zhang Yimou's extraordinary achievements in the field of visual arts, particularly his tremendous contribution to cinema, I respectfully request that you confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Humanities, *honoris causa*.

*The citation was written and delivered by Professor Emilie Yeh Yueh-yu*

# 張藝謀博士

榮譽人文學博士

## 贊辭

張藝謀，1950年生於陝西西安。文化大革命期間，張藝謀下鄉勞動，之後到棉紡廠工作。文革結束後，張藝謀進入北京電影學院攝影系進修，1982年結業後分配到廣西電影製片廠，拍了他的第一部攝影作品《一個和八個》，打響了中國第五代電影的第一炮，緊接著他拍攝了由陳凱歌執導的《黃土地》和《大閱兵》兩部作品，奠定了第五代電影的殿堂地位。1985年回到西安，擔任西安電影製片廠的攝影師。兩年後，張藝謀首執導筒的《紅高粱》面世。這部改編自莫言小說的作品，以濃烈的攝影，高亢的民族音樂，俐落的剪輯，和魔幻寫實的敘事，勾勒出別樹一格的高粱浪漫，成為八十年代中國電影的驚世之作，不僅獲得金雞獎及百花獎最佳故事片獎，更在柏林國際影展奪下最佳影片金熊獎，充分展現了張藝謀電影藝術的魅力。

《紅高粱》的成功只是張藝謀創作力爆發的一個開端，接著他以《菊豆》、《秋菊打官司》、《活著》、《大紅燈籠高高掛》、《一個都不能少》、《我的父親母親》等一次又一次地衝擊中國電影與世界影壇。這些作品分別為他贏得兩屆威尼斯國際電影節金獅獎、康城評委會大獎、柏林銀熊獎以及奧斯卡最佳外語片獎。在千禧年前，張藝謀成為獲獎最多的亞洲導演。

全球化為中國電影帶來另一個巨大轉變。張藝謀以《英雄》、《十面埋伏》、《滿城盡帶黃金甲》等中港合拍片打造武俠史詩電影，重新闡述中國歷史與經典。張藝謀以藝術電影開拓商業市場的努力，不僅兩次刷新中國電影票房紀錄，更四度奪得年度華語片票房冠軍，為中國電影產業的市場化做出重大的貢獻。同時，更讓世界清楚看到中國導演如何以嶄新的電影技術和精巧華麗的場面調度活化固有的武俠遺產。

票房成功並未讓張藝謀志得意滿。作為殿堂級的電影藝術家，他不斷在中國當代歷史的缺口中，尋找新題材。在《山楂樹之戀》、《歸來》、《千里走單騎》、《一秒鐘》，以至近年的《懸崖之上》、《狙擊手》等影片中，張藝謀的攝影機定格在歷史變化中被壓抑和埋藏的情感，表現時代的無常、人性的溫情、無私與救贖。他用樸實的風格，娓娓道出人物的困境與無盡的悲傷。這些元素構成同理心的感知結構，深深觸動了千萬觀眾。

早在90年代後期，張藝謀已跨界到不同的藝術領域，於1997年應邀到佛羅倫斯歌劇院執導普契尼的《杜蘭朵》。他用豔麗的中國元素詮釋西方歌劇經典，結果大獲讚揚。之後更在2000年聯同著名的指揮家祖賓·梅塔在北京紫禁城上演《杜蘭朵》，讓中國觀眾一睹電影與歌劇的完美結合。更令全球觀眾讚歎的是在2008北京奧運會開幕式和2022冬季奧運會開幕式中，他以獨到的色彩、構圖、服裝、舞蹈和科技，精彩展現了東道主對全世界運動員的盛大歡迎。

張藝謀的作品，特別是他對中西文化元素的合成，還有他不斷創新的電影語言，均難以文字還原，必須親眼目睹，方能體會他作品中的氣韻與美感。

主席先生，為表彰張藝謀導演在視覺藝術領域的非凡成就，以及對世界電影做出的巨大貢獻，本人謹恭請閣下頒授榮譽人文學博士學位予張藝謀博士。

贊辭由葉月瑜教授撰寫及宣讀