

Chinese Independent Documentary Cinema in the Age of New Media From 1990 to 2020

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to take new media as an entry point to discover the development of Chinese independent documentary cinema from 1990 to 2020. It will be divided into three main sections, and each section will have different historical contexts. Section one will explore how the introduction of Digital Video (DV) changed the way independent documentary filmmakers produced documentaries in the 1990s. Section two will explore how the independent film festival brought 'underground' documentaries from 'underground' to the 'public' in the 2000s. Section three will examine the 'death' and 'birth' of Chinese independent documentary cinema in the 2010s.

Keywords: Chinese Independent Cinema, New Media, Chinese Independent Documentary

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Introduction

In 2019, Chinese filmmaker Jiang Nengjie completed his documentary, *Miners, The Horsekeeper, and Pneumoconiosis* (2019). The film was shot over nearly ten years, following the life of a miner until his death. With no traditional platform to release the film without the risk of censorship, Jiang decided to share it with viewers on Douban who had marked 'want to watch'. This move shocked many viewers and raised an important question: "what drives Chinese documentary filmmakers bypass traditional channels and share their work for free"(Fu, 2020, p.5).

Guided by this question, I conducted a literature review and found that there are a number of key texts explore Chinese independent cinema from the perspective of political and social discourse (Berry, 2007; Edwards, 2017; Johnson, 2006), here, compared with focusing on political dimensions and government's policy, this research mainly focus on how filmmakers use new media to respond to each historical background.

The 1990s: the 'Birth' of Chinese Independent Documentary Cinema

Background of 1990s, Betacam and the Conception of Independence in China

In the 1980s, 'special topic documentary' (zhuanti pian) was the major form of documentary, the state-owned system using "spontaneous shooting and location sound"(Hong, 2018, p.3) to introduce ordinary people's lives. Though instead of shooting historical heroes, 'special topic documentary' started paying attention to ordinary people, it was still another form of newsreel which told the story of ordinary people in an official voice. Filmmakers began disgusting with such format, in 1991, Wu Wenguang and others gathered together to discuss the importance of documentary and its implications, and they decided to launch a new documentary movement (Robinson, 2013). They set two requirements for this movement, which were thinking independently instead of speaking for the state, and producing independently instead of using money from the institution(Zhang, 2004). The conception of 'independence' is worth to be discussed here because in the Western context, it mainly refers to making films independent from the main studio production system(Baltruschat & Erickson, 2015). In China's context, Chris Berry (2007) believes that although those independent filmmakers decided to produce independently, most of them remained working in the state-owned television and, not to mention most of them were trained by the state. For example, independent filmmaker such as Li Hong and Shi Jian worked within the state-owned system in the late 1990s. Moreover, *Bumming in Beijing* (1990), produced by Wu Wenguang and seen as the first independent documentary in China, was a no-budget production because Wu used borrowed equipment from the state-owned system.

Here, introducing the background of 1980s may help us understand why it was hard for those independent documentarists to produce their works 'independently' within the Chinese context. In the late 1980s, Betacam appeared in China and was quickly used by the government. Before 1990, all documentaries were produced by the state, and it was strictly controlled by the government (Chu, 2007).The introduction of Betacam did change the way the state produce television, but it was only available within the state-controlled system. There might only be two ways for independent documentarists to produce a documentary at that period, either they had to borrow equipment as Wu did, or like Shi Jian, worked within the system. It seems like if we followed Berry's reading of the conception of 'independence',

under this circumstance, it looks like those independent filmmakers failed to accomplish their goals.

However, during the 1990s, the boundary between the independent and the official was quite blurred. In 1993, the CCTV “adopted a producer responsibility system, permitting programme producers to recruit their own crew” (Chu, 2007, p. 95). In such circumstances, Jiang Yue directed a series of short films for the system. This new producer responsibility system did not appear out of nowhere, it might be a response to the “withering of the state-owned studios”(Z. Zhang, 2007, p. 12). When the government placed restrictions on the films produced by independent filmmakers, it not only threatened the status of independent filmmakers but also led to the decline of film production by the state. It is not hard to find that even the state-owned film production system would be affected by the status of the ‘independent’ films. In the meanwhile, the so-called ‘independent’ filmmakers could not operate without the state-owned institutions completely. Thus, the relationship between the independent documentary cinema and the ‘official’ can not be seen in a binary way, in China’s context, “ ‘independence’ is also ‘in dependence’ ” (Berry, 2006, p. 111). Thus, the Chinese independent documentary’s independence does not simply refer to producing documentaries without the state sector completely, their relationship with the ‘official’ is complicated.

The New Chinese Documentary Movement

While the new Chinese documentary movement could be seen as a response to the historical change in the 1980s China (Hong, 2018), Duan Jinchuan, one of the originators of the movement, thought that their meeting might not be seen as a movement. Yingjin Zhang (2004) agreed with Duan's idea and believed that ‘movement’ might be too strong a word for describing Chinese independent documentary in the 1990s, because there was limited influence on domestic audiences, and most of the works of independent documentarists were not available to the public. On the one hand, since the term ‘movement’ in China could be link with metaphor of ‘rebellion’, Duan declined to use the term ‘movement’ may be that “the heavy ideological baggage the term ‘movement’ carries in modern Chinese culture” (Y. Zhang, 2010, p. 137). On the other hand, Zhang's attitude toward the new documentary movement may be a little bit pessimistic. From one perspective, not all the documentaries produced by independent documentarists were unavailable to the public. When CCTV adopted the new producer responsibility in China in 1993, it gave independent documentarists chance to be exposed in the public when they began working within the system for years. For example, Shi Jian’s programme, *Oriental Moment* (dongfang shikong) (1993) was popular with Chinese audiences (Berry, 2007).

From the other point of view, the movement also impacted how people made documentaries in the state-owned system in China. During the 1990s, influenced by the independent documentary filmmakers, the state-owned system started to shift from using scripted content to showing the real view of normal people. Thus, the new documentary movement not only had a certain number of domestic audiences but also had a profound effect on the official media. Certainly, there were also a number of independent documentaries which were not available to the public in China. However, changes in the production of Chinese documentary were fueled by this movement, and most importantly, in Berry and Rofel's words, “the local significance of the New Documentary Movement in China goes beyond filmmaking and is more fundamentally rooted in its commitment to record contemporary life in China outside any direct control of the state” (Berry & Rofel, 2010, p. 10).

Independent Documentarists' Dilemma in 1990s and the Shift of Their Position

When the introduction of new media-Digital Video (DV) accelerated the second transformation in how independent documentarists make documentaries in the late 1990s, it presented a shift from 'observational' to 'personal' style. In the 1990s, most of the mainstream feature films produced in China used the historical setting as a metaphor for the contemporary, such as Zhang Yimou's *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991) (Berry, 2007). On the contrary, independent documentarists decided to use documentaries to directly show people's present life. After making *Bumming in Beijing*, Wu Wenguang felt confused about the future once again which might be because most independent documentarists only had an impulse to make documentaries in the early 1990s but have no idea how to make them. In 1991, in Ogawa Shinsuke's documentary workshop, he was inspired and started to understand a documentary should not only be treated as an art form but should also "build a direct relationship with the reality that we live in every day" (Wu & Clayton, 2006, p. 138). It was in his studio that Wu found the charm of the 'present scene' (xianchang). In the meanwhile, after watching Frederick Wiseman's documentary, Wu found it could unfold the 'present scene'(xianchang) greatly, and he decided to "follow Wiseman's formula of pure observational work" (Berry, 2007, p. 125). Given the circumstance in early 1990s China, most documentaries still used official voice-over, scripted content, and emotional background music to show the official attitude toward the culture, Wu considered this 'observational' style as a big revolution (Wu 2001, as cited in Johnson). But why did the "observational" style so appeal to and other independent documentaries in China during that period?

In 1993, China's Film Bureau placed bans on several independent filmmakers nationally because they screened their films in international film festivals without official approval (Z. Zhang, 2007). However, although this ban did marginalize those independent filmmakers, it also gave chance to those filmmakers to resist such restrictions. Independent documentarists were no longer satisfied with the official voice and used documentary as a means of propaganda, they decided to give voice to the normal people to present the real contemporary China from the 'bottom-up' to resist the 'voice of the Party'. Thus, Wiseman's observational cinema and its cinema verité style perfectly fit their pursuit in the China context. The term 'Cinema verité' was introduced by America scholars, it is a form of filming that the director should avoid intervening and explaining (Ellis, 2012). Because this form of filmmaking emphasizes the process of observing, the process when the director films the movie and the audiences watch the film is quite similar, even though the director does not know what may happen in the scene. It seems like Chinese independent documentarists believed that this style of filming was fairly objective because they will not intervene in the process and their documentary was just an objective reflection of reality.

Observational cinema did play an important role in China's context because it "once again taught the camera how to watch" (Macdougall, 1995, p. 125), but the issue is that the documentarists did not show their attitude and sometimes it is misleading because they just simply record the subjects, Wang (2018) found that even the documentarists consider this as rebellious the western film critics could not find that and still think that as similar as 'special topic documentary' made by the state. When independent documentarists had the opportunity to tell the story beyond the mainstream, they did not show their attitude and that might be seen as a concession to the restrictions initiated by the government. Moreover, in 1997, provincial television stations tried to use Duan Jinchuan's *No. 16 Barkor Street* (1996) South as a template to catch the latest documentary trend, the official media "aimed at bringing independent documentary's 'look' into line with industry standards" (Johnson, 2006, p. 61).

Seeing those changes made by the official media, Wu Wenguang went through a period of self-criticism, he kept questioning himself about the future of Chinese independent documentary cinema (Y. Zhang, 2004). Luckily, Wu was not trapped in there for too long, he found the answer in Wiseman's studio. This discovery was making an independent documentary as “a way of life” (Wu & Clayton, 2006, p. 138), producing an independent documentary was no longer a process to fight against the government, rather, it was showing the personal view of the world (Y. Zhang, 2004). When Wu found the voice he lost in the early period of filmmaking, the introduction of Digital Video (DV), greatly helped Wu and other independent documentarists to present their own voice.

The Introduction of Digital Video

When Betacam was introduced in China in the late 1980s, due to its expensive and heavy features, it might fail to free independent filmmakers from the state-owned system and allow them to work individually. Unlike Betacam, the appearance of DV allowed filmmakers to make documentaries with relatively low-budget, and non-professionals could have the opportunity to operate it without training by the official media. However, professionals did not treat DV seriously at first, because they consider it as a medium which would be used by non-professionals. During that period, many independent documentarists faced a dilemma that whether they should use DV to film works, in Wu's words, “maybe 'use film, not video...only in this way could a work be considered a professional documentary” (Wu & Clayton, 2006, p. 137). This attitude toward DV shows the long-standing hierarchical relationship among filmmaking systems in China, the analogue film which was strictly controlled by the government standing for ‘official’ and ‘professional’.

While independent documentarists still had no idea how to face this new media, Jia Zhangke noticed the potential future of DV and claimed that the “DV age is just around the corner” (Wang, 2005, p. 19). In 1997, when Yang Lina (aka Yang Tianyi) decided to film a group of elderly men in China after she employed several workers and borrowed Betacam to shoot, soon she found that those elderly men feared the big equipment and the film crew. She then dissolved her film crew and bought a mini-DV to film those elderly men by herself. *Old Men* (1999) was known as the first DV documentary made in China (Zhen, 2015). When Wu watched the footage of *Old Men* in the late 1990s, Wu quickly realized the importance of DV as a working medium, he found that he could not imagine how to use Betacam to film such scenes while DV might change the way they film a documentary.

Jiang Hu: Life on the road (1999) was Wu Wenguang's first DV-made documentary, and the production of this documentary is a turning point for Wu. Before this film, the subjects of his documentaries almost all came from elite, educated backgrounds and he began using this documentary to show a perspective of almost unseen China from a non-educated, marginalized community. The way he actively turned his camera to these marginalized groups shows Wu realized the need of those people and the responsibility of “being-for-the-other” (Perpich, 2008, p. 120) which can be seen as the essence of documentary filmmaking in China's context. The Chinese documentary is not merely an art form, but also a way documentarist responded to the need of the marginalized groups. Here, a quotation from Wu could help us understand the importance of DV in China's context, “when talking about my relationship to documentary film, I can only speak about DV. I also must say that I want to thank DV: it was DV that saved me” (Wu & Clayton, 2006, p. 140).

The 2000s: Chinese Independent Documentary Cinema: From the ‘Underground’ to the ‘Public’

Conception of ‘Underground’ in China

If the term ‘independent’ shows independent filmmakers’ ambition of representing reality from the perspective of ordinary people, then the term ‘underground’ characteristically depicts the status of them, which is their works can not be screened in the public space. Yet many of them resisted being labelled as ‘underground’ because they insisted that being an independent filmmaker did not mean that they have to take an oppositional position to the government or the state-owned system (Berry, 2007). However, they had already been defined as illegal by the state.

New Media in the 2000s

In 1997, the introduction of mini-DV in China accelerated the development of the New Documentary Movement and the low-cost production of a documentary (Berry & Rofel, 2010). Independent filmmakers benefited from this new media, and it provided a lower barrier for more independent filmmakers, including “amateur” filmmakers. During the same period, along with the cost decline of video projectors, the domestic demand for LCD projectors increased in China (Gao, 2015). The computing capability feature of LCD projectors made it compatible with computers (ibid). The appearance of these two new media brought a new possibility to Chinese independent documentary cinema. Compared with the conventional working medium- Betacam, DV was relatively easy to operate, and it allowed filmmakers who were not trained systematically by institutions to use DV to film their own documentaries. Moreover, the computing compatibility of digital projectors led to the appearance of ‘non-theatrical’ screenings. Here, ‘non-theatrical’ screening refers to films screened outside of the traditional cinema spaces. Benefited by the accessibility and low cost of digital projectors, many universities began organizing digital screenings (ibid). In the meanwhile, venues such as movie bars, karaoke bars and gallery bars “registered as commercial establishments, they take advantage of the loose regulations applied to the service industry” (Z. Zhang, 2007, p. 28) and provided a space for screening ‘underground’ films. It was the first time that those films had an opportunity to be seen in a public space, in Wu Wenguang’s words, “I was excited. Despite being a simple and dim bar, this is a public space” (Wang 2010, as cited in Gao, 2015, p. 169).

As discussed in section one, rural reform and social change led to the ‘birth’ of Chinese documentary movement and at the same time, many peasants immigrated from the rural area to the urban city to make money, but those migrant workers “are constantly regulated and exploited” (Tan, 2015, p. 191). When those migrant workers were marginalized by the state, independent documentarists turned their cameras to them, and it is worth noting that venues such as film bars appeared also because of the “development of the state’s economic policy of marketization” (Nakajima, 2010, p. 129). Moreover, it also constructed a narrative for the emergence of various film festivals in China. In 2001, Beijing Queer Film Festival was organized in December, which aims at exploring gender identity issues. Then, the non-profitable China Independent Film Festival was founded in Nanjing in 2003, aiming to bridge the gap between independent filmmakers and domestic audiences. Most of these film festivals were determined to take a position as independent events, dedicated to showing independent movies and keeping a certain distance from the local government. However, officially recognized festivals also occurred at the same time, such as Guangzhou

International Documentary Film Festival (known as GZDOC), organized by Guangzhou province in 2003, which states that they are “the only state-level professional platform with documentary financing and trading functions” (Guangzhou International Film Festival, n.d., pp.1). At this juncture, it is important to point out the difference between the original title of these ‘film festivals’ and their translations. Apart from GZDOC, while the English title of the other film festivals is ‘festivals’, actually, their original Chinese titles are rather exhibitions (yingzhan), not festivals (jieri). The reason for that is “the Film Bureau of the State Administration for Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) claims jurisdiction over any film ‘festival’” (Berry, 2009, p. 1). Thus, calling the event an ‘exhibition’ rather than a ‘festival’ is to circumvent the censorship from the state. Apparently, since GZDOC was organized by the local government, not like other independent film festivals, which were almost ‘unofficial’ events, they had the power to call themselves a ‘festival’ rather than an “exhibition”.

Yunnan Multi Culture Visual Festival (Yunfest)

In 2003, the first Yunfest was held in Yunnan. It is a biennial independent documentary festival that shows programmed independent documentaries for about a week of film screenings in the spring. Shanghai International Film Festival (SIFF), which was launched in 1993, also lasts for about a week every June, but attracts attention from all over the world (Berry, 2017). It seems like compared with SIFF, Yunfest was relatively small in scale and in Chris Berry’s words, “anywhere else in the world, such an event would be a minor festival attracting little” (Berry, 2009, p.2). However, in China’s context, such ‘minor’ festival plays a crucial role in bringing independent films from the ‘underground’ to the ‘public’. Yunfest is more like a community-based festival in opposition to ‘mainstream’ festivals such as SIFF. The community-based festival here refers to places that “encourage filmmakers to develop their voice in dialogue with eager audiences from specific communities...that present a different vision of the world (and themselves) than that of a dominant order of representation” (Rastegar, 2016, pp. 181–182). Since most of the subjects of the Chinese independent documentaries are marginalized by mainstream cinema, such community-based festival offers an irreplaceable platform for them to be no longer invisible within Chinese cinema.

Moreover, since Yunfest is free to all audiences, it enables audiences from different backgrounds to discuss films and engage in such social discourse. To some extent, it creates a “public”, a term borrowed from Michael Warner, arguing that “a public...have some way of organizing itself as a body and of being addressed in discourse” (Warner, 2002, p. 51). When such “public” is formed, a festival not only shifts domestic audiences from being passively exposed to mainstream cinema culture to actively trying to understand the sociopolitical significance of independent documentary. However, it also develops a set of ethical issues around documentary in the viewing process.

When Xu Tong’s *Wheat Harvest* (2008) premiered at Yunfest, it suddenly led to controversy around the relationship between the subject and the filmmaker. The subject of *Wheat Harvest* is a 20-year-old woman who came from the countryside and works as a prostitute in Beijing to make money to take care of her ill father. Since Xu admitted that he showed this documentary to the public without the permission of the subject (Chinese Version, 2018), audiences believed that public screening of this voyeuristic documentary might be harmful to the subject, and they also questioned that whether the director was taking advantage of the subject to gain reputation. To avoid such ethical issues, programme called ‘Participatory Visual Education (PVE)’ as part of Yunfest, aiming at teaching marginalized groups such as ethnic minorities to use DV to document their own life (Chio, 2017). Through this

programme, these marginalized groups were no longer the subjects of other filmmakers, and it was a rare opportunity that they were able to invite audiences from different backgrounds to have a closer look at their life directly. According to Chio (2017), there were 50 films coming from PVE which were screened in Yunfest in 2011 and they opened a window for audiences to rural areas.

The 2010s: the ‘Death’ and ‘Re-birth’ of Chinese Independent Documentary Cinema

Compared with small-scale event in the film clubs, the proliferation of independent film festivals gained attention from the government, the state no longer turned a blind eye on them, and many independent film festivals were shut down one by one by the government in the 2010s. It was quite a bumpy start for the Chinese independent documentary cinema.

Wang Xiaolu borrowed the term ‘orphan film’ to describe the phenomenon that there was almost no room for independent films (Xiaolu, 2020). It precisely described the status of independent films which was “unseen, unknown and forgotten without a showcasing and circulation channel” (Wu, 2022, p. 7). After seeing the government’s attitude toward independent festivals and films in the 2010s, Chris Berry aired his grievance and questioned whether it was the time of death of Chinese independent cinema.

The Internet and Chinese Independent Documentary Cinema

Luckily, it was not the end of the existence time of Chinese independent cinema, with the introduction of the Internet, it opened a window for independent cinema. To Chinese Internet users, the Internet might not be seen as a ‘new’ media in the 2010s because it was introduced in China in the late 1990s. However, it was worth noting that because of the strict restrictions on independent films, the Internet played an important role in offering a platform to allow audiences to view and discuss independent films in the 2010s. If in the 2000s, domestic internet users used the internet as an alternative way to maintain their relationships with other cinephiles. Then, from the 2010s, with the development of digital technology, such as the appearance of smartphones, laptops, Video Compact Disks (VCD) and Digital Video Disks (DVD), domestic audiences began getting used to using the internet to watch independent films on smaller screens.

With the accessible equipment, the independent documentarists tend to work as “solo or quasi-solo productions, which also leads to the opening up of nonprofessional, amateur cinematic practices” (Voci, 2010, p. 25). Their practices soon showed two trends: one was using the internet to create ‘de-intellectualized’ videos and the other treated the internet as a serious tool to develop independent documentary films. An example of this was the spoof of independent documentary, Yang Yishu’s *Who is Haoran* (2006), it was re-edited by using misleading titles and put on TikTok to gain attention from internet users. Originally, the director tried to use the documentary *Who is Haoran* to shed a light on the life of adolescents who lived in a small town and explore their identity issues as invisible groups. However, these adolescents were misinterpreted as ‘troubled’ youth by this internet user, and since this short video was widely spread through TikTok, the subjects of this documentary were recognized by others, which inevitably affected the subjects’ lives. This case reveals the negative consequences of the internet, because of the ‘lightness’ of the smaller screens, it tends to promote videos with “non-seriousness and the pleasure-oriented format” (Voci, 2010, p. xxii). Paola Voci introduced the term ‘lightness’ in her book and defined ‘lightness’ as “a marker of these movies’ small production costs...limited audiences, quick and volatile

circulation” (Voci, 2010, p. xx). Since Chinese independent documentaries were unable to screen in conventional cinemas, they could only screen in non-theatrical spaces. However, the ban on independent films made many public spaces no more screen them because the organizers of these spaces were no longer willing to host such an illegal event at high risk. Under this circumstance, independent films were more likely to be circulated online which means mostly on smaller screens, borrowing the term ‘lightness’ from Voci helps us to understand the dilemma faced by independent filmmakers, and issues brought by the internet. To audiences, the internet allowed them access to various films without leaving their rooms, and it seemed like it was more beneficial than harmful to watch films online. However, as the previous case shows, to independent documentarists and the subjects of their documentaries, the introduction of the internet accelerated the misunderstanding of the independent documentary. The main reason for that was, unlike the film festivals, the internet failed to provide a context for the film screening.

While some use the internet to make spoof videos and indulge in such entertainment activities, others treat the internet as a serious tool to develop Chinese independent documentary cinema. Since most independent film festivals were shut down by the government, to survive in the market, most independent documentarists would try to find distributors in international film festivals. To find potential distributors of their documentaries, they would consider the audiences’ endurance of the length of their documentaries (Johnson, 2006) and cut their works into a shorter version. Guo Jing observed this, and suggested every documentarist should try to build a three-layered database system, composed of unused footage of a documentary, footage which shows relevant themes, and the final version of a documentary which will be screened (Guo, 2021). He believed that the unused footage of a documentary still plays an important role, and it should not be simply overlooked, thus he proposed this thought of building a database system to preserve relevant footage as early as 1999. Subject to the technology, it was hard to build such a database system in 1999, however, with the introduction of the internet, Guo found now almost every documentarist could build their own database system with Network Attached Storage (NAS) system (Ibid). Guo’s idea was adopted by Yunnan cultural research center, they used this database system of documentary as a way of “cultural preservation and education” (FOE, n.d., p.2), here, a documentary was not simply an art form, it was also a tool to reveal the hidden history beyond mainstream cinema.

Controversies Over International Distribution of Chinese Independent Documentaries

Though international film festivals did provide a platform for filmmakers to find distribution, it inevitably led to controversy over international distribution. Dai Jinhua (2002) claimed that compared with the aesthetics of Chinese independent documentaries, the western was more interested in the political issues. For instance, Wu Wenguang’s *Bumming in Beijing* won international film awards and gained attention from international film critics, even though the fact that there were still some apparent technological insufficiencies in his works.

Since making independent documentary had already been defined as illegal activity, to find potential distributors in international festivals, their production style and topics would be shaped by these venues. Besides, originally, independent documentary filmmakers try to offer a way for both domestic and international audiences to engage with Chinese hidden history and marginalized groups beyond the mainstream cinema, their primary goal was to be independent from the official system to represent a ‘real’ China. However, even though we have to admit that the international distributions offer a way to distribute Chinese independent documentaries, Chinese independent filmmakers inevitably move from one

official system to another official system, and more importantly, the international distributors have the right to decide to show “Chinese work fits their definition of truth and reality in China” (Y. Zhang, 2010, p. 140). The problem with this approach is that it inevitably shows an imaginary China from the Western gaze instead of showing a ‘real’ one.

Conclusion

This research fill the gap by using new media as an entry point to map out a relatively comprehensive history of the development of Chinese independent documentary cinema from 1990 to 2020. I found that the introduction of new media leads to the diversification of documentaries and independent film festivals, and allows filmmakers to have more choice to produce and promote their works. But with the closure of film festivals, the public space failed to provide a plural space for audiences to view and discuss films. And I have to admit that there are still limitations in the study, due to the sensitive content of Chinese independent documentary, many works or relevant materials were not available to the public, and some part of this research based on information found online, we could not provide a perspective from 'inside' to view it.

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