



## Screening international queer cinema in China

Ting Guo & Jonathan Evans

To cite this article: Ting Guo & Jonathan Evans (2023) Screening international queer cinema in China, *Transnational Screens*, 14:3, 217-235, DOI: [10.1080/25785273.2023.2231754](https://doi.org/10.1080/25785273.2023.2231754)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/25785273.2023.2231754>



© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 06 Sep 2023.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 736



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

## Screening international queer cinema in China

Ting Guo <sup>a</sup> and Jonathan Evans <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Languages, Cultures and Films, University of Exeter, Liverpool, UK; <sup>b</sup>School of Modern Languages and Cultures, University of Glasgow, Scotland, UK

### ABSTRACT

Given the restricted number of foreign films which can be officially screened in Mainland China and restrictions on the portrayal of LGBTQ+ characters in visual media, international queer cinema tends to be screened at non-theatrical events such as film festivals, film clubs and café screenings. Building on existing work on Chinese film festival studies, this article draws attention to the wider ecosystem of screening practices in China, which engage with international queer film culture through their choice of films and also their mediations of LGBTQ+ cultures. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork, this article examines how such events navigate language difference through translation, how they engage audiences through discussion or other means, and how they participate in the pink economy. The sorts of negotiation of meaning taking place demonstrate the complexity of transcultural queer cinema practices. The reception of films in translation leads to a notion of queer cinema in China as a cosmopolitan but local activity that contributes to local worldmaking practices.

### KEYWORDS

Translation; screening; queer cinema; China; film festival

Shanghai Pride Film Festival has, as of summer 2020, been cancelled (Shen 2020). It was one of several film festivals in the People's Republic of China to screen Sinophone and translated queer cinema, which is effectively banned from being screened in mainstream cinemas and on national television. Despite the difficulty of doing so, there are various grassroots groups screening translated queer cinema in China, as we explore in this article. These screenings are one of the places where Chinese audiences negotiate international – often but not only North American – understandings of queerness. They are one of the specific transcultural practices that Rofel (2007, 89) argues are constitutive of gay identities in China.

This article examines how the screening of international queer cinema in Mainland China frames the films and their connection with the Chinese public, exploring the ways in which identities are negotiated in transcultural practice. The word 'queer' is used here in an inclusive sense to include all forms of non-heteronormative sexualities, though in practice the films we discuss tend to be focused on lesbians and gay men, with some representation of transgender characters.<sup>1</sup> An inclusive sense of 'screened' is also used: we investigate film clubs and collectives, film festivals and other non-theatrical events in

**CONTACT** Jonathan Evans  [e.evans@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:e.evans@glasgow.ac.uk)  School of Modern Languages and Cultures, University of Glasgow, Scotland, UK

© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

order to give a fuller sense of how these films are shown and watched in Mainland China and how they negotiate imported images and ideas of queerness and their relation to local and Sinophone production.<sup>2</sup> Here, we draw on a mix of ethnographic observation, interviews with key participants and textual analysis of film paratexts on websites and elsewhere.

We argue that the complexity of queer film screening in China reflects the increased connections between Chinese grassroots LGBTQ+ groups and international organisations and networks. We also suggest that Chinese local LGBTQ+ communities' different responses to and appropriations of global queer film culture, have constituted and shaped Chinese queer cinematic culture through translation activities.<sup>3</sup> We go beyond Rofel's (2007) work on Chinese gay identities in our focus on translation, film festivals and screenings as sites of transcultural practice. We argue that the public created by these screenings is both cosmopolitan and local, but tending, as we shall discuss, towards a more neoliberal individualist approach than a more collective approach. Therefore, we challenge the idea that international conceptualizations of queer are straightforwardly imported in the film screenings (see Schoonover and Galt 2016, 174). We begin with a discussion on the Chinese media environment before moving on to discuss Shanghai Pride Film Festival, the queer cinema collective CINEMQ and café screenings.<sup>4</sup>

## The media environment

To understand the Chinese media environment for queer cinema, it is worth reviewing its somewhat convoluted development in recent decades. Since 1997, homosexuality has not been a crime in the People's Republic of China and it stopped being officially considered a mental illness in 2001.<sup>5</sup> In addition, because there are no policies or legislation in place to protect the rights of LGBTQ+ people in China (Yang 2019, 663), the situation is more precarious than in countries such as the UK where there are protections for the rights of the LGBTQ+ community. Admittedly, cultural attitudes toward homosexuality, transgender people and representations of LGBTQ+ characters on screen have altered in the years following the legalisation and depathologisation of homosexuality and they continue to alter as government policy and public opinion changes. There was a period of relative openness in the early 2000s. For example, *Danlan.com*, an online non-profit gay community committed to preventing HIV/AIDS and promoting gay culture was set up in Mainland China in 2000 (Zhao, Yang, and Lavin 2017, xx). In 2001, the film *Jin nian xia tian/Fish and Elephant* (Dir. Li Yu) openly addressed lesbian relationships and 2005 saw the founding of the magazine *Les+*, aimed at lesbians and queer women, in Beijing (Zhao, Yang, and Lavin 2017, xx).

However, there has been a hardening of attitudes towards LGBTQ+ content in China in recent years. In 2008, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television effectively banned images of homosexuality in public media such as broadcast TV and cinemas (Zhao, Yang, and Lavin 2017, xvi; Bao 2018, 156). Yet, as Zhao, Yang, and Lavin (2017, xvi) argue, this has not fully eliminated the presence of non-heterosexual characters from mainstream media, though they have diminished in number. There has also been a migration online of queer fandoms, which seek LGBTQ+ representations in various forms of popular media. There are thriving boys love (*danmei* in Chinese, *yaoi* in Japanese) fandoms in China that work with Japanese media (Yang and

Xu 2017).<sup>6</sup> There was also a growth in queer webcasts in Mainland China from 2007 (Deklerck and Wei 2015) which helped to develop an online space for LGBTQ+ people in China. While LGBTQ+ representations may have officially been banned, there was a certain amount of space that could be carved out for them in other media and online.

More recent changes in the government's policy about the representation of non-heterosexual relationships complicate the situation further. According to Yang (2019, 663), in 2016 all LGBTQ+ content was banned from TV in China, thus tightening up the restrictions from the 2008 ban. In addition to the specific targeting of LGBTQ+ representations on screen, the Chinese government also introduced the Film Industry Promotion Law in 2017, which now requires the approval of scripts by the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, or one of its regional associates (Zhang 2017). The law also requires film release licenses and imposes a number of expectations on films to include core socialist values and for film professionals to act ethically and with integrity (even though such terms may not be clear; Tsui 2017). Independent filmmakers such as Popo Fan had already commented on the 'challenge' to official power that independent films represented (Fan 2015, 81). It seems that this law has now limited the possibility of making films independently of government approval in China, which will also affect the production of LGBTQ+ content, as this is more likely to be censored.

While these events might not be supported by changes in official government policy, it is clear that the environment for LGBTQ+ people and media has become somewhat more complex in China in the last few years. There is little public discussion of homosexuality or transgender people, which Yanzi (quoted in Agence France-Presse 2019) views as leading to 'discrimination and injustice for the gay community'. It is in this context that we are analysing the screening of (often not formally imported and distributed) queer cinema in China: an environment that makes it difficult to make and show domestic queer media and which is constantly changing. The situation is made more complex still by the quota for foreign films in China, which limits them to 34 films a year, 14 of which should be in IMAX or 3D formats (Song 2018, 180). Given the censorship of queer representations in China, queer films are unlikely to be included in the 20 non-3D or IMAX film format. Film festivals, online forums and film clubs, then, offer ways in which queer cinema can be screened. The importance of informal distribution (Crisp 2015; Lobato 2012) of queer media, as we investigate here in film clubs, lies in the way that it can open up a public space, or at least a counterpublic (Warner 2002), for queer media and, concurrently, a space of discussion for the LGBTQ+ community.

## Queer film screening in China

Since their early appearance in the gay rights movement in the 70s in the U.S., queer film screenings, as an important way for LGBTQ+ people to experience and celebrate queer culture, have proliferated across the world and attracted much attention from scholars, especially on the topic of queer film festival (e.g. Damien 2020; Richards 2016). There are a number of queer film festivals in Mainland China, but many of them are in the first- or second-tier cities.<sup>7</sup> In Shanghai, there are both the Shanghai Pride Film Festival (2015–2020) and the Shanghai Queer Film Festival (2017–). In Beijing, there is the Beijing Queer Film Festival (2001–), and in Guangzhou there is also the Guangzhou International LGBT

Film Festival (2015-). In addition, a smaller touring festival, the China Film Festival Tour ran between 2008–2012 (Bao 2018, 149–173; Fan 2015). However, to think of these film festivals in the same way as large mainstream festivals like Cannes or indie festivals such as South by Southwest would be rather misleading. Even a comparison with established, Global North LGBTQ+ film festivals such as BFI Flare or the Melbourne Queer Film Festival would demonstrate the complexity of approaching Chinese queer film festivals with Global North expectations: the London and Melbourne festivals are stable events that take place in cinemas or, in the case of BFI Flare at the British Film Institute in London. Therefore, while acknowledging the role of LGBTQ+ film festivals in community building and identity forming (Bao 2020b, 370), the central concern of the existing scholarship tends to be on the, political activist side of Chinese LGBTQ+ film festivals, highlighting the participation of queer film festivals in identity politics and queer cinema in China. For example, Bao (2017) discusses the ‘guerrilla’ forms of film screening that the Beijing Queer Film Festival (BQFF) has undertaken to be able to screen queer cinema, which include showing films on public transport and sharing USB sticks. Film festivals are seen as ‘sensitive activities’ in China and can be interpreted as being ‘anti-government’, as Fan (2015, 81) argues; this is exemplified in the forced closure of the first BQFF which was scheduled to take place at Peking University in 2001. Some film festival organisers in China avoid the term ‘film festival’ (*dianyingjie*) in favour of ‘film exhibition’ (*yingzhan*), which Bao (2018, 155) argues is a ‘pragmatic’ manoeuvre by the organisers in order not to require state approval for the events. Scholars such as Tan (2019, 213–214) also discuss the various tactics that queer film festivals use, including the use of non-theatrical screening locations and limited advertising and registration also promoted at short notice). Another way Chinese LGBTQ+ film curators’ circumvent censorship is through the transformation of the BQFF in 2015 into Beijing Love Queer Cinema Week. This is now hosted by a foreign cultural institute, the Institut Français of Beijing, to mitigate political sensitivity in the eyes of local authorities (Bao 2020b, 370).

However, as Victor Fan (2015) notes, the level of surveillance and control that Chinese queer film festivals receive also varies at city level and this has consequently affected the strategies that their film festival curators have taken. For example, compared to the BQFF, the Shanghai Pride Film Festival (ShPFF) enjoyed more publicity and was tolerated more by Shanghai municipal government, until recently (Fan 2016). In parallel with festivals, there are also other forms of queer film screenings that take place more frequently and in more accessible venues such as cafés, galleries and bars in China. In comparison with film festivals, there has been less work on these diverse and semi-public screenings of transnational queer films in China (though see Bao 2020a, 2020b). Through an examination of screenings organised at a film festival, by film clubs, and by owners of small businesses such as cafés, we explore how transnational queer film screenings in the Chinese context negotiate the global context for local audiences.

### Shanghai pride film festival

In this section, drawing from our fieldwork at the ShPFF in 2019,<sup>8</sup> we will analyse how Anglophone queer cinema is screened as part of the festival, how the festival frames such films and how audiences negotiate foreign forms of queerness in the films shown. We focus on forms of linguistic translation such as the subtitling of films and the live

interpretation of and for invited speakers in order to develop the notion of the film festival as a 'site of translation' proposed by Berry and Robinson (2017). As Bao (2018, 168–173) notes, the queer film festival is a form of queer public space: a temporary space where queerness (in all its forms) can be discussed and celebrated. In this way, Chinese queer film festivals do not differ significantly from queer film festivals elsewhere (Richards 2016, 22). Yet the difficulty of having public discourse about queerness in China makes them different: a more precarious form than established, European or American queer film festivals. The Chinese queer public, as noted by Bao (2018, 151) is therefore more clearly a form of Warner's (2002) counterpublic than might be the case in London or San Francisco, where media with representations of LGBTQ+ characters are increasingly mainstream. Yet it may not be as oppositional as Warner's original formulation suggests: given the difficulty of visibly protesting in China, film festivals often frame themselves as cultural events.

It is important to note that despite the local government's 'open' attitude to LGBTQ+ culture in general, the ShPFF curators are still very cautious in their curation and organisation. Their precariousness can be seen firstly in the festival's choice of screening locations: none of the events took place in cinemas, with most taking place in European consulates or in spaces related to the consulate. Some events took place in corporate locations.<sup>9</sup> Even in such locations, one film was 'co-presented' by the French consulate in Shanghai. In fact, many foreign consulates in Shanghai are directly involved in the selection of films to be screened and the sourcing of screening rights and subtitles. It has also become routine for a short speech to be presented by an officer or consular official from participating consulates, expressing their support for the festival.

The presence and involvement of international (mainly European) consulates and enterprises suggest the precarity of it as a queer film festival in China on the one hand: it might be possible for screenings to take place without their help, but the fact that almost all the screenings took place in international locations suggests that these spaces are more willing to risk screening queer films in China and also have the capacity to do so. On the other hand, the sponsorship of these foreign consulates in Shanghai also framed the ShPFF as a cosmopolitan, high level cultural event, shielded until recently from potential risks associated with the Chinese LGBTQ+ movement. For Chinese LGBTQ+ people, especially those who are young and have little social and cultural capital, the ShPFF is thus not just a celebration of LGBTQ+ cinematic culture, but also an opportunity to develop connections and accumulate cultural capital. In this context, ShPFF's screening of Anglophone queer films, at the British Centre and US Consulate, provides an important site for local LGBTQ+ communities to legitimate their social status and enhance their visibility as well as cultural capital.

The involvement of various international consulates in ShPFF also complicates the practical side of attending the screenings. For example, the screening venues were often within the consulates or office buildings rented by the consulates. In most cases, it was necessary to register to attend an event and then, on arrival, pass through at least two security points. The first of these was usually the buildings' own security, which is a common aspect of office buildings in Shanghai but security records could be used to monitor the attendance of the event. Then, once in the building, there would be a stricter security check by the security guards employed by the consulate. In addition, there was little or no

publicity within the office buildings themselves, making it difficult to actually find where the films were being screened, although there would likely be volunteers in Shanghai Pride t-shirts who would guide people to the screening locations. This low key presentation of course limits the publicity of the ShPFF, though the festival did have a website that would allow those interested to find out about events.

The choice of non-theatrical locations also has an effect on the screening of the films themselves. As might be expected, the sound and visual quality of the films was not of a cinematic standard. This was an expected feature of the setting, though, and people in the screenings appeared more interested in seeing the films than in the cinematic experience. Partially the shift to post-cinematic forms of film watching, including streaming and home viewing, and the prevalence of people watching media on mobile phones and tablets in China, may have changed expectations of the exhibition experience, at least in relation to queer cinema.<sup>10</sup> The seats used were typically conference room style seating, in rows, which became uncomfortable in the longer screenings. During screenings, some people would move in and out of the room, making the event space more porous than typically expected in a film screening (where viewers would be expected to sit throughout a film).

It is worth noting that all films that we saw in the 2019 ShPFF had subtitles, typically in both English and Mandarin Chinese (including those shot in other languages). However, on more than one occasion, due to the layout of the room, it became impossible to actually see the subtitles as they were at the bottom of the screen. People did sometimes move in order to be able to see the subtitles better. Thus the screenings did not have the same level of material comfort as going to the cinema.

While all films were subtitled (even those shot in Mandarin Chinese), it was clear from our observations that many people in the audience spoke functional English. This was demonstrated in the post-film discussion, which, though interpreted by one of the organisers, often took place in both English and Chinese. Some members of audience clearly had good English language competence, as they would ask questions in English (which would then often be interpreted in summary form into Mandarin Chinese) and would respond even before the translation was provided. However, it was not clear if this reflected the linguistic skills of the majority of the audience. Some viewers could, then, watch the Anglophone films without subtitles, but for others, these subtitles were essential. Throughout the festival, there was a clear attempt to make the space inclusive for Chinese speakers (who were the vast majority of the audience). In contrast, the Hong Kong Lesbian and Gay Film Festival seldom included Chinese subtitles for the local audience (Richards 2016, 205). At the festival, most of the on-site interpreting was undertaken by the organisers and tended to be very adaptive: statements were summarised, discussions could go on for a little while without interpretation, the third person was used to refer to speakers rather than using the professional standard first person (Jones 2014, 17). Only for a French invitee who was affiliated with a foreign Consulate in Shanghai did we see a professional interpreter, who was dressed formally, took notes and followed professional norms of consecutive interpreting. The more informal interpreting for Anglophone guests (and guests who were comfortable speaking English, such as the invited Danish director), while not always perfect in terms of interlingual translation, made the events feel inclusive: it may not have been perfect, but nor was it an

afterthought. It was clear to the audience that the festival needed to address local, Chinese speaking audiences through the use of Mandarin.

The film screenings therefore took on what Sakai (1997, 1–17) calls ‘heterolingual address’, that is, addressing a linguistically (and culturally) diverse group of people as an audience. Sakai contrasts this to speaking to (and writing for) an audience made up of a linguistically and culturally homogenous group, which he calls ‘homolingual address’. The audience at the film screenings were majority Chinese, but also included foreigners, who may or may not have had access to material in Mandarin. The result was that the screenings addressed a heterogenous audience in two languages and had, therefore, to avoid linguistic and cultural presuppositions that would address only one part of that audience. This heterolingual address mirrors in many ways the position of Chinese queer discourse which is influenced by and connected to international (often English-language) discourses, but which also addresses a local audience and local conditions. The film screenings, therefore, enacted the double (or multiple) orientation toward the global and local and the on-screen translation and live interpreting made visible the sorts of negotiations involved in this combination of global and local.<sup>11</sup>

This heterolingual address was also seen in the programming of the event. The film festival showed over 60 films from 20 countries (Shanghai Pride 2019). Many (33) of these were short films that had been entered into competition and included local, Chinese language short films. These were not originally named in the programme, but they were in the report of events that were posted on the website. This created a sense of unexpectedness to the films which may have made the screenings more exciting in their unpredictability, but also seems, given the context of LGBTQ+ cinema in China, to be a pragmatic measure in case films were withdrawn at the last minute. However, it is incorrect to assume that all of the Chinese queer films were Chinese-language films: *The Last Lesbian* (Dir. Jingyu Liu, 2018) had all of its dialogue in English, thus complicating the notion of it as a ‘Chinese’ film and highlighting the imbrication of the Chinese LGBTQ+ community with the rest of the world.

The connection that ShPPF has with other events around the world can be demonstrated through its highlighting of its affiliation with other film festivals, suggesting that the LGBTQ+/queer/*tongzhi* community in China is also part of a larger global community.<sup>12</sup> This can be best seen in a passage from the Shanghai Pride website promoting the feature length films to be screened:

Among the films, the highlights include romance between two women, *Carmen & Lola*, a Cannes Film Festival Queer Palm Nominee; *Voice for China LGBT*, a documentary of the LGBTQ community in China; *Jose*, the Venice Film Festival Queer Lion Award Winner which focused on the gay community of the lower-class; *The Fruit Machine*, the Inside Out LGBT Film Festival Audience Award winner; *A Woman is A Woman*, the closing film of Amsterdam TranScreen Film Festival; and *This Perfect Day*, which just had its world premiere at the 2019 Tribeca Film Festival.<sup>13</sup>

Through reference to these international festivals, ShPPF portrays itself as a Chinese LGBTQ+ event keeping up with international trends. Associating with these other, prestigious festivals, further demonstrates the cultural capital of the event and its organisers. Yet to assume that this use of international cinema was a matter of copying international moves overlooks the importance here of 1) connecting the Chinese



community to the international community and 2) the importance of demonstrating the validity of LGBTQ+ media in China.

ShPPF's explicit references to the internationally prestigious festivals could be also seen as a kind of disavowal and dissociation, which cannot be overlooked given the sensitivity of queer media in China and the difficulties LGBTQ+ film festivals have faced in the past.<sup>14</sup> Within this list of films that have had accolades from other, international film festivals, there is space to say that the organisers are following trends rather than trying to intervene in domestic debates. Interestingly, one of these 'internationally renowned' films, *A Woman is A Woman* (Dir. Maisy Goosy Suen, 2018), is a Hong Kong film shot mainly in Cantonese (which most Mandarin speakers – the majority of the audience in Shanghai – cannot speak well enough to watch a film without subtitles), thus troubling the notion that LGBTQ+ filmmaking is something that happens far from China: the actors look Chinese and the culture of Hong Kong is recognisably a Chinese culture. *A Woman is A Woman* was co-presented by the French consulate, which could lead readers of the publicity material to think it was a French film. Looking it up on the Chinese search engine Baidu, the first result is *Une femme est une femme/A Woman is A Woman* (Dir. Jean-Luc Godard, 1961), which is not a queer film and, given the fact that it was directed by Jean-Luc Godard, the film has something of a cult status.<sup>15</sup> This possible confusion of films also serves as one of the 'tactics' that may be used to avoid drawing attention to the event (Tan 2019): it is hard for a casual searcher to find the Hong Kong film as they will find the French title, opening up a space of ambiguity that does not deny the film that is being shown but at the same time allows confusion or distraction about the nature of the film. The publicity material does not discuss Suen's *A Women is A Woman* as a trans\* film, yet its narrative focuses on two transwomen, one post-operation and another about to come out as trans\*. This silence is not a strategy of trans\* erasure, rather it does not draw attention to a focus that is known to be sensitive in China: the presentation of the film, both pre- and post-screening, included discussion of the problems facing trans\* people in China and their relationship with the international trans\* community.

While the selection of films does not position English-language films in a central position, through the prevalence of Chinese short and feature films and the presence of films in other European languages (e.g. Norwegian, Swedish, Danish), the use of foreign films also opens up a space for negotiating the meaning of those films in a Chinese (and often Shanghai-specific) context. This took place informally, in viewer interactions both during and after the event, and it was also a formal part of the Shanghai Pride film festival through the introductions and post-screening discussion that was hosted by the organisers. In these discussions, questions would be asked about, for example, how typical the experience of the characters in *A Woman is A Woman* was in relation to the experience of transwomen in France, leading to further discussion about trans\* experience.

Shanghai Pride did more, then, than just introduce foreign films to a Chinese audience. It actively supported local short film production through its programme and offered a space for discussion and meeting. Given the complex nature of screening queer cinema in China, it engaged in multiple tactics in order to reduce publicity about its activities, while offering inclusive environments to those who did attend, through its programming and its use of translation and interpreting. At the same time, it translated through its introductions and discussions of the ideas about queerness that

were manifest in the films: these are not seen as something to emulate, but rather evidence that LGBTQ+ communities elsewhere face problems that are similar to those faced in China and making the Chinese community feel part of that international community. However, the framing of the event as cosmopolitan itself suggests an audience capable of undertaking this sort of translation, i.e. more educated and already connected with the wider world outside China, even if the programming and sessions aimed to be inclusive. While Shanghai Pride Film Festival was a multiday, large event, even if one that was precarious, given its closure, and needed support from the international diplomatic community, there are other, smaller events taking place in China where queer films are shown.

### **“Queer is our purpose”: CINEMQ and queer film clubs**

Apart from annual big events such as film festivals, an important site for queer film screening in China is (semi-) public settings such as bars or clubs in Chinese cities. Given the sensitivity of organising any large scale of social gatherings in China, queer film screenings in small groups and in (semi-) public settings are more likely to happen and find it easier to engage with local communities.<sup>16</sup> In this section, we turn our attention to CINEMQ, a small, queer film collective based in Shanghai as an example of queer film club culture in China. The technology allowing such events has become cheaper and more readily available,– from the introduction of 8 mm and 16 mm film to more recent developments in high definition digital projectors. It is therefore possible to run film nights in almost any event space providing one has a copy of the film and a means of displaying it, as seen in our discussion of Shanghai Pride Film Festival. Some bars already have projection equipment due to the popularity of big screen sports, but portable projectors, screens and audio equipment can also be used. These screenings can form part of the ‘formation of a counterpublic’ as Powell (2019, 47) notes and are certainly part of queer worldmaking (Berlant and Warner 1998) as they help to elaborate a social world for queer viewers, yet these two American concepts may not map entirely onto the Chinese experience. The film screenings, by showing films that are effectively banned from theatrical exhibition, exist outside of the hegemonic media sphere in China. Being outside does not mean being unaffected by this media sphere: CINEMQ and other queer film screenings gain their relevance to the LGBTQ+/queer community through this very exceptionality and the fact that they offer (temporary) spaces that are otherwise unavailable. As with LGBTQ+ and queer film festivals in China, film clubs are precarious: they risk being shut down or no longer being able to continue.

CINEMQ was initially established as ‘a screening and party series to build an audience for Shanghai Pride Film Festival’ by Matthew Baren, a foreigner and filmmaker in Shanghai, and Alvin Li, a Chinese curator, who were also the organisers of the first ShPFF, in 2015 (Baren in Schreurs 2017). CINEMQ describes itself as an ‘unrefined queer cinema collective’ based in Shanghai, with the slogan of ‘Queer is our purpose’ on its website. In an interview with Margaux Schreurs for *TheBeijinger.com*, Baren revealed that as one of the organisers of the first ShPFF, despite its many merits, the ShPFF was limited in terms of the range of audience it could reach and represent, so CINEMQ was set up to ‘create a space for fringe queers, people of non-distinct sexuality or gender, for people who wanted to be challenged by what they saw on a night out whilst still having

fun' (Baren in Schreurs 2017). From the very beginning CINEMQ did not intend to simply screen queer films but to queer existing categories of sexuality and gender and address the 'undefined' minority group, although its political aspect is deliberated diluted through emphasizing its entertaining aspect in its offline activities. This unspoken sense of precarity and uncertainty can be also found in CINEMQ's selection of queer films for screening, many of which are arthouse/experimental short films.<sup>17</sup> These films are usually hand-picked from platforms such as Filmfreeway.com, Vimeo.com and YouTube, and collectively presented around a specific theme set for the event. For example, in a CINEMQ screening+party event titled 'Juno•宙元' (see Figure 1) that we observed in a local bar in Shanghai, in June 2019, four short films with almost no plot or dialogue were screened.<sup>18</sup> However, apart from a brief line in the event advertisement indicating the topic of these films, 'a night of queer short film exploring new worlds of the queer imaginary, celebrating 50 years since Stonewall', there were no detailed introductions or discussions after the screening, although private conversations were very active in the after-screening disco. This intentional silence after the screening interprets queer film watching as a background setting for social networking and entertainment. In fact, in this screening, foreign participants accounted for almost half of the audience and the whole event was operated in both Chinese and English and supervised by two Chinese coordinators. To some extent, CINEMQ's screening could be seen as a model for queer foreigners to display their queer identity and connect with the local queer communities (and for the latter to also connect with the former). As Bao (2020a, 141) notes, it is the 'shared sense of identity and community' that provides foreign queer people in Shanghai with a shared 'sexual citizenship' (Weeks 1998 quoted in Bao 2020a, 141). The origin of queer films, be they Anglophone, European or African, screened by CINEMQ are thus irrelevant, but together serve as a general background for the connections and socialization taking place within and beyond the local LGBTQ+ community.

The connections that CINEMQ has committed to build between expatriate foreigners and local LGBTQ+ communities in turn nurture and encourage a cosmopolitan queer cinematic culture in Shanghai. A good example is CINEMQ's recently live streamed 'Queer Screen Chitchat' biweekly program at SHCRAD.IO since April 2020 (Shanghai Community Radio is an online broadcast hub connecting underground music community, DJs and artists).<sup>19</sup> Conducted fully in Mandarin and in the form of conversations with local Chinese guest speakers, this program explores issues such as the Chinese consumption of queer cinema, the representation of sexual minorities such as trans\*, lesbians in global queer cinema and film festivals as a community

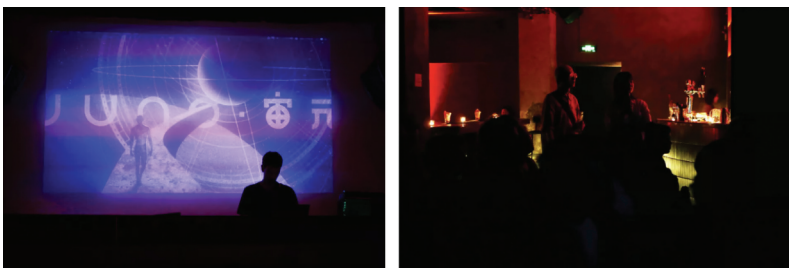


Figure 1. CINEMAQ's screening of "Juno •宙元" (left), CINEMAQ's audience watch the films (right).

space in China. The discussion is carefully kept to ‘non-political’ and ‘artistic’ foci and clearly targets an audience who are familiar with and have up to date knowledge of current global queer cinema, because many films are referred to by their English titles without too much further explanation. This online broadcast exemplifies how CINEMQ can serve as a platform for local LGBTQ+ people to gather and respond to the influence of international, especially Anglophone, queer cinema on the Chinese audience on the one hand; on the other hand, it also suggests a more diverse profile of CINEMQ online, beyond the ‘entertaining’ and ‘avant garde’ screening + party collective, and its intersection and integration with other local queer film groups. In fact, on its English-language website, CINEMQ provides much richer information on queer cinematic culture, especially in the form of its East Asian queer cinema focused ‘zine’ postings, and its editors have been actively engaged in and reporting on events related to LGBTQ+ films in China. Having said that, CINEMQ does publish information on its Wechat channel in bilingual Chinese and English, mainly to promote its events.

CINEMQ has recently extended its activities beyond China and played an active role in promoting East Asian Queer Cinema to an international audience. For example, in 2018 CINEMQ participated in Scottish Queer International Film Festival and presented its documentary *Extravaganza* (2018 Baren) and several short queer films from Greater China. In 2019, collaborating with ‘Queer’ Asia, CINEMQ co-presented the ‘Queer’ Asia Film Festival in London and organized screening events such as ‘Performing Gender’ (followed by discussions with Chinese drag artists), ‘Point, Shoot’ (on activist and grassroots filmmaking in East and South Asia) and ‘Dreams+Nightsapes’.

All this demonstrates that CINEMQ adopts an international facing, but locally adapted positioning in order to engage with local LGBTQ+ communities and culture. Its focus on East Asian Queer cinema exhibited via its online activities complements its offline screening activities by leading its interested audience back to local queer cinematic culture, which can also be seen as an indirect way of engaging with the local LGBTQ+ communities. These engagements are undeniably limited, given the fact that CINEMQ mainly targets ‘an international and cosmopolitan audience’ in Shanghai (Bao 2020b, 370) who are young and relative affluent to participate in the screening+parties. However, CINEMQ’s continuous offline screenings in Shanghai since 2015, despite changing local conditions, provide evidence of its effective strategies and sustained interest in this form of queer cinematic culture among a local audience.

### **Queer film screening as a form of pink economy?**

A notable factor underlying CINEMQ’s success in Shanghai is the support that it receives from the various local bars and nightclubs in Shanghai which host and help advertise CINEMQ’s screening and after-screening events. After all, CINEMQ is only a virtual community and all its offline screening events cannot happen without physical spaces. This kind of support is not rare in Shanghai given the fact that China has become the third pink economy in the world (Campbell 2017) and Shanghai, as an international metropolitan city, has been relatively friendly to LGBTQ+ people in general. The possibility of branding the business and attracting

more customers who are relatively well off and keen to socialize encourages some independent cafés and bars in Chinese cities, especially those owned by LGBTQ+ friendly or LGBTQ+ identified individuals, to organize regular LGBTQ+ related events, including film screenings. Already equipped with seats and sound system, these cafés and bars can usually be quickly converted into screening spaces without much investment. Although the screenings are open to the public for free, attendees are encouraged to buy drinks from the sponsoring bars and cafés where possible. This seemingly win-win operation, however, by no means suggests that the commercial model supporting the operation of film clubs such as CINEMQ applies to everywhere in China, nor that all businesses sponsoring LGBTQ+ film screenings are simply driven by pink money.

After all, many of CINEMQ's audience are affluent Chinese youth and foreigners in Shanghai who are interested in art house LGBTQ+ films and/or the after-screening entertainments and chance to socialize, which can be converted into valuable cultural and social capital by some participants. However, many LGBTQ+ film screenings in China do not target this group. A more common model is the regular screening of feature films by LGBTQ+ friendly organisations and businesses. Unlike the screenings that targeted the local LGBTQ+ communities and were set up to serve certain political purposes at specific occasions (e.g. The International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia) screenings at these cafés and bars tend to be less political, loosely organised but more inclusive. Usually located in relatively quiet areas in the cities (so the rent is not so high), but with convenient public transport links, these businesses are open to the public as others, but also often known in the local communities as friendly places for LGBTQ+ people to meet and hold events, without attracting too much unwanted attention. To appeal to both the general public and LGBTQ+ people, the films chosen for screening are often recent international award winners (e.g. *Beloved* (2018), *Dear Ex* (2018)), or classic Sinophone productions (e.g. *Bà Wáng Bié Ji/Farewell My Concubine* (1993, Dir. Chen Kaige), *Chūnguāng zhàxiè/Happy Together* (1997, Dir. Wong Kar-wai)) that are well-known to the public, but currently unavailable for screening in mainstream Chinese cinemas. Social media has also made the publicity of screening events much easier. Apart from various online platforms such as Douban and Sina Blog, many of these businesses now have their own Wechat public accounts and can publish information on upcoming screening events, although some will choose to leave the film's LGBTQ+ theme unmentioned or ambiguous. Since many owners of these businesses are LGBTQ+ people themselves, screening LGBTQ+ films is not simply a way to attract customers and increase sales, but to provide a platform for exchange and communication among local LGBTQ+ communities as well as make LGBTQ+ culture more open and accessible to the Chinese public.

A good example is 'A Café' in Beijing, see [Figure 2](#).<sup>20</sup> Founded in 2011, 'A Café' advertises itself as a platform for introducing Taiwanese culture and art, including films. However, without explicit labelling itself as a LGBTQ+ friendly venue, 'A Café' has actively engaged with various local LGBTQ+ events since its founding, including organizing gay dating events, hosting film talks and exhibitions and art events. These activities have unavoidably attracted the police's attention and accordingly, the café has faced regular check-ups or visits from local police, especially during sensitive periods such as March when both the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's



**Figure 2.** The inside of ‘A café’.

Political Consultative Conference, the two important national political meetings, are held in Beijing.<sup>21</sup> However, despite the pressure, the café has continued to organise regular LGBTQ+ themed events, especially film screenings (e.g. Sunday film screening, LGBTQ+ film exhibition in June, the Pride month, and important dates such as the International Day Against Homophobia).

Situated in a courtyard deep in a *hutong* (a traditional style narrow alley) in Beijing, ‘A Café’ is definitely not the sort of café that is designed to attract businessmen or tourists. With its single wooden door entrance at one corner of the courtyard, the café does not look much different from a common residence from outside. Only after walking through a narrow corridor from the entrance do you get a full view of the café. Decorated in Scandinavian style, the café has an open space with 20–30 seats and a small loft on one side with a glass wall facing the main seating area downstairs. The whole café is dotted with green plants as well as piles of books for customers to read. Many of these books are the owners’ private collection of Taiwanese publications on LGBTQ+ culture, suggesting the connections and exchanges that the café has brought to local communities. In fact, the café has hosted several Taiwan related cultural events, often addressing gender and sexual minorities. Examples are its exhibition of films by young Taiwanese directors in 2015 and its collaboration with La Vie Ciné in 2017 to host Taiwanese artist Zoe Weng Yu Tong’s ‘Féminin Masculin Touring Exhibit’, a visual exhibition dedicated to gender and sexual minorities. This history gives context for the screening of LGBTQ+ films taking place at the café.

There is normally a 25 yuan (around £3) minimum spend requirement for attending a screening. Given Beijing’s high property prices and 240K yuan average annual income in 2019, this fee is modest and good value when compared to a ticket to see in a film in a cinema, which will cost easily cost 100 yuan in Beijing. On the café loft’s glass wall hangs a white canvas, which is used for screening and can be rolled up during normal business hours. Film screenings use a laptop connected to a projector and speakers. The viewing experience is not as good as in commercial cinemas, as not all seats provide a good view of the screen, especially when films have subtitles in a small font at the very bottom of the screen. As we observed in the café’s screening of *The Favourite* (2018) in June 2019, all attendees, some of whom were lesbian couples openly holding hands, acted very comfortably in the café, and attendees were respectful of each other. There is usually a half-hour discussion session following the screening, which adds value beyond what

viewers would get from going to a cinematic screening or watching the film at home. Usually facilitated by one of the Café owners, the discussion provides audiences with opportunities to connect with others by sharing their viewing experience and debating issues related to the film screened.

This connection with the local community at the café, has also sustained, nurtured and developed the screening activities. In fact, nowadays many films screened at the café are requests by its regular customers, some of whom even volunteer to supply the digital copy of the films and their Chinese subtitles, if they are foreign productions.<sup>22</sup> Since many of these films requested are not officially released in Mainland China, they are sourced from the internet (especially from Chinese virtual LGBTQ+ communities) and translated by Chinese fansubbing groups. This shows that offline screenings in China, to some extent, have become an extension of online screenings and intersect with Chinese LGBTQ+ communities' online activities. It might be incorrect to claim that independent businesses such as 'A Café' provide a haven for Chinese LGBTQ+ people, but it is clear that LGBTQ+ film screenings are not simply an expression of pink economy. Despite the dubious legal status of these informal screenings, given the fact that no licensing rights are paid for, they serve as a channel to enrich local popular culture and connect within and beyond the local LGBTQ+ communities.

## Conclusion

While it is beyond the scope of this article to address all the aspects of queer cinema screening in China,<sup>23</sup> the diverse spaces of film screening that we have covered – queer film festivals, screening parties and café screenings – demonstrate that there is a vibrant community around queer film in China, which exists outside of the norm of theatrical presentation and in the shadow of censorship. The screenings offer an important space where 'diverse queer publics can frame their attendance as a formation of community' (Rich 1999, 82) and provide the public with access to what are often relatively mainstream films outside of China, consequently enabling Chinese audience to stay connected with global LGBTQ+ film culture. As such, film screenings act as a site where Chinese LGBTQ+ people can negotiate and make meaning from international queer cinema in a form of 'transcultural practice' (Rofel 2007, 89); however, this meaning making is itself individualized and depoliticized through its connection to film consumption, rather than any other form of activism. Film screenings offer a queer public space that includes a heterolingual (Sakai 1997) address that speaks to both cosmopolitan, mobile audiences and more Asian focused, locally-oriented audiences. They thus incorporate neoliberal aspects of personal consumer choice in the sense of film watching as developing cultural capital but also going beyond this by providing spaces for discussion and belonging. While this could appear to be a 'counter public', following Warner's (2002) formulation, it is also not as visible or oppositional due to the difficulty of protest in China and the need to maintain a low profile, demonstrating once again the problems around applying ideas from North America in other contexts. This space is also precarious: even relatively established film festivals, such as Shanghai Pride Film Festival, can be closed down.

International institutions, such as foreign embassies and cultural organisations, play an important role in these major screening events in China: through sourcing screening rights and providing sponsorship, these institutions have exerted a prominent influence

on the events' programming, choice of venue and forms of screening. As a result, screening queer cinema in China often involves translation, both at the linguistic and cultural level, as many films that are shown are imported films, with international directors and activists being involved in discussions with majority Mandarin speaking local audiences through interpreting, fostering a transnational queer public in China. Translation allows a negotiation of those international ideas through linguistic choices and selectivity, offering a space that is not straightforwardly accepting or resisting. The idea of a globalising 'Gay International' (see Schoonover and Galt 2016, 174) which threatens the integrity of local practices is, at the very least, complicated when attending to these translations and the receptions of them as there is always an element of negotiation in such translation.

Small scale screenings organised by local LGBTQ+ communities, in contrast to film festivals, usually enjoy less publicity but actively correspond to the diversity of the audience. They represent another form of transcultural practice that offers an enlarged understanding of how queerness is imagined in China, focusing on a more local population that may not be as cosmopolitan as the audiences for the film festivals. Despite some blending of business branding, these community-based queer film screenings, exemplified by CINEMQ and 'A Café' in this article, usually operate autonomously and benefit from the businesses' close relationships with local communities. Their existence and prosperity demonstrate their effectiveness as well as the significance of addressing local specificity in studies of queer film screening in China.

In closing, we note that our fieldwork was done in 2019, before changes in political culture in China have made certain forms of (queer) public culture more difficult. Certainly, the closing of Shanghai Pride means that were we to repeat our observations today, there would be very different results.

## Notes

1. In this sense, we are retranslating the Chinese term '*tongzhi*', which originally means 'comrades' but which has been adopted by the LGBTQ community to refer to itself and which is used in a similar way to the more inclusive versions of 'queer'.
2. In this way, our research echoes the sites of analysis in Powell's (2019) work on early 'gay' cinema in the U.S.A. Powell investigates a network of sites including mail order, screenings in bars and homes, and screenings in independent cinemas.
3. While there is a thriving, if illicit, online culture around queer cinema in China, this article will not discuss it due to our focus on screening films as a collective (physical) experience. There are clear overlaps between this online culture and the physical events we discuss, but due to the limited space, we cannot explore them in detail here.
4. Before beginning this research, ethical approval was sought and received from the Faculty of Humanities Ethics Committee at the University of Exeter, Application Number 1819-001. Interviewees were given a Participant Information Sheet and this was discussed with them, and they signed a Consent Form for the interview allowing for the use of interview data in publications. For ethnographic activities, due to the fluid nature of the environments, it would be impossible to ask all participants to sign a consent form, as they might enter and leave the site during the observation, and the consent form itself would alter the nature of the event. In such cases, consent was sought from the event organisers. The events we attended were themselves public (though ticketed) events.
5. Most scholars agreed on a date of 2001 (e.g. Yang 2019), though Wang et al. (2019) date it to 2000. It should be noted that some hospitals continue to offer 'sexual orientation conversion



- efforts' (Wang et al. 2019), demonstrating that the medical discourse around homosexuality and bisexuality has not yet achieved a consensus of acceptance.
6. For wider discussion of queer fandom in China, see essays collected in (Lavin and Yang 2017).
  7. The situations are different in Hong Kong and Taiwan, where there are also queer film festivals. See Richards (2016) for work on the Hong Kong Lesbian and Gay Film Festival Tan (2019) analyses the network of Asian queer film festivals and includes comparison between those in Mainland China and elsewhere in the Asia Pacific region.
  8. Before the event, we obtained permission to observe the festival from the organisers. We draw here from our fieldwork notes and publicly available data about the festival (from, for example, its website) and we will not name anyone or any corporation not named in that publicly available material.
  9. These corporations are not mentioned by name in the series of recaps of events on the Shanghai Pride Film Festival website (<https://www.shpride.com/films/?lang=en>).
  10. Jiang et al. 2014 explore the use of mobile phones as screen time for adolescents in China, but uses the rather vague term 'playing with mobile phone' to describe the activity, so it is unclear what people are actually doing with them, i.e. what media they are viewing, reading or playing.
  11. This was also visible through the inclusion of a session on translation and subtitling as part of the festival.
  12. Shanghai Pride Film Festival was also a member of Asian Pacific Queer Film Festival Association (APQFFA).
  13. Shanghai Pride Festival, <https://www.shpride.com/2019/06/02/shpff-25/?lang=en>
  14. And indeed, ShPFF itself has faced since we undertook our fieldwork.
  15. This result dominated the search on Baidu and Google when we searched from the UK on 2 December 2019.
  16. The status of queer film clubs in China is complicated by the historical existence of government sponsored and supported film discussion groups (Yang 1994), thus giving a precedent to state supported screenings. However, the film screenings we observed were not supported by the Chinese state. Scholars who have worked on amateur and non-theatrical distribution in China include Ran (2014) and Gao (2015), among others.
  17. We define arthouse here as non-mainstream, i.e. the sort of film seldom seen at a multiplex, and which may include narrative cinema, documentaries, and experimental or other non-narrative works.
  18. We obtained permission from the organisers to observe this public event.
  19. Although the program is live streamed, its recordings can be accessed via Shanghai Community Radio's channel at Bilibili.com as well as YouTube.
  20. While the owners of this café gave us permission to use the name in our research, we have chosen to anonymise it.
  21. Interview with one of the café's founders; this interview informs much of the following discussion.
  22. Interview with the owners, 2019.
  23. We have not been able to address, for example, the internet cultures of queer cinema and their online screening of films. For a discussion of the lesbian fansubbing group Jihua in this context, (see Guo and Evans 2020).

## Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank participants for their time for interviews and discussion. This work was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK [grant number AH/S00209X/1].

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Funding

This work was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK, under grant number AH/S00209X/1.

## Notes on contributors

*Ting Guo* is Senior Lecturer in Chinese and Translation Studies at the University of Liverpool, UK. She is the author of *Surviving in Violent Conflicts* (2017). She is Associate Editor of the journal *Target*.

*Jonathan Evans* is Senior Lecturer in Translation Studies at the University of Glasgow, Scotland, UK. He is the author of *The Many Voices of Lydia Davis* (2016) and co-editor of *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Politics* (2018). He is Deputy Editor of *The Journal of Specialised Translation*.

## ORCID

Ting Guo  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1726-8682>

Jonathan Evans  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9913-8207>

## Data availability statement

Anonymised transcripts of interviews cited are available from the authors on request.

## References

- Agence France-Presse. 2019. "Fewer Rainbows, Less Social Media for China's LGBT Community." *South China Morning Post*. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3010475/fewer-rainbows-less-social-media-chinas-lgbt-community>.
- Bao, H. 2017. "Queer as Catachresis: The Beijing Queer Film Festival in Cultural Translation." In *Chinese Film Festivals: Sites of Translation*, edited by C. Berry and L. Robinson, 79–100. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-55016-3\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-55016-3_5).
- Bao, H. 2018. *Queer Comrades: Gay Identity And Tongzhi Activism in Postsocialist China*. Copenhagen, Denmark: NIAS Press.
- Bao, H. 2020a. *Queer China: Lesbian and Gay Literature and Visual Culture Under Postsocialism*. London, UK: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003027898>.
- Bao, H. 2020b. "Screening Sexualities, Identities and Politics: Queer Cinema in Contemporary China." In *Routledge handbook of Chinese culture and society*, 360–374. London, UK: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315180243-28>.
- Berlant, L., and M. Warner. 1998. "Sex in Public." *Critical Inquiry* 24 (2): 547–566. <https://doi.org/10.1086/448884>.
- Berry, C., and L. Robinson. 2017. *Chinese Film Festivals: Sites of Translation*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-55016-3>.
- Campbell, C. 2017. "China's LGBT Citizens are Coming Out as an Economic Force." *The Times*. <https://time.com/4696923/china-lgbt/>.

- Crisp, V. 2015. *Film Distribution in the Digital Age: Pirates and Professionals*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137406613>.
- Damien, A. 2020. *LGBTQ Film Festivals: Curating Queerness*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Deklerck, S., and X. Wei. 2015. "Queer Online Media and the Building of China's LGBT Community." In *Queer/Tongzhi China: New Perspectives on Research, Activism and Media Cultures*, edited by E. L. Engebretsen and W. F. Schroeder, 18–34. Copenhagen, Denmark: NIAS Press.
- Fan, P. 2015. "Challenging Authorities and Building Community Culture: Independent Queer Film Making in China and the China Queer Film Festival Tour, 2008–2012." In *Queer/Tongzhi China: New perspectives on research, activism and media cultures*, edited by E. L. Engebretsen and W. F. Schroeder, 81–88. Copenhagen, Denmark: NIAS Press.
- Gao, D. 2015. "Chinese Independent Cinema in the Age of "Digital Distribution." In *DV-Made China: Digital Subjects and social transformations after independent film*, edited by Z. Zhen and A. Zito, 163–184. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press. <https://doi.org/10.21313/hawaii/9780824846817.003.0007>.
- Guo, T., and J. Evans. 2020. "Transnational and translational queer fandom in China: the fansubbing of Carol." *Feminist Media Studies* 20 (4): 515–529. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2020.1754630>.
- Jiang, X.-X., L. L. Hardy, D. Ding, L. A. Baur, and H.-J. Shi. 2014. "Recreational Screen-Time Among Chinese Adolescents: A Cross-Sectional Study." *Journal of Epidemiology* 24 (5): 397–403. <https://doi.org/10.2188/jea.JE20140006>.
- Jones, R. 2014. *Conference Interpreting Explained*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Lavin, M., and L. Yang. 2017. *Boys' Love, Cosplay and Androgynous Idols: Queer Fan Cultures in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan*. eds. Jing Jamie Zhao, Hong Kong: Kong Hong University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1rfz65>.
- Lobato, R. 2012. *Shadow Economies of Cinema*. London: BFI. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-84457-583-1>.
- Powell, R. 2019. *Coming Together: The Cinematic Elaboration of Gay Male Life, 1945-1979*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226634401.001.0001>.
- Ran, M. 2014. "Regarding the Grassroots Chinese Independent Film Festivals: Modes of Multiplicity and Abnormal Film Networking." In *China's iGeneration: Cinema and moving image culture for the twenty-first century*, edited by M. D. Johnson, K. B. Wagner, T. Yu, and L. Vulpiani, 235–254. New York: Bloomsbury Academic. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781501300103.ch-013>.
- Rich, R. 1999. "Collision, Catastrophe, Celebration: The Relationship Between Gay and Lesbian Film Festivals and Their Publics." *Queer Publicity, a Dossier on Lesbian and Gay Film Festivals.* *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian & Gay Studies* 5 (1): 79–84.
- Richards, S. J. 2016. *The Queer Film Festival: Popcorn and Politics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US. <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-58438-0>.
- Rofel, L. 2007. *Desiring China: Experiments in Neoliberalism, Sexuality, and Public Culture*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Sakai, N. 1997. *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Schoonover, K., and R. Galt. 2016. *Queer Cinema in the World*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Schreurs, M. 2017. "Shanghai-Based Queer Film Platform CINEMQ Talks Beijing and Shanghai Queer Scenes, Queer Cinema," *The Beijinger*, May 31. <https://www.thebeijinger.com/blog/2017/05/31/shanghai-based-queer-film-platform-cinemq-talks-beijing-and-shanghai-queer-scenes>.
- Shanghai Pride. 2019. Shanghai Pride Film Festival. <https://www.shpride.com/films/?lang=en>.
- Shen, B. 2020. "More Info on ShanghaiPride Shutdown: Team Members Asked to 'Have tea'." *SupChina*. <https://supchina.com/2020/08/17/more-info-on-shanghaipride-shutdown-team-members-asked-to-have-tea/?fbclid=IwAR0sCKCfCkgBAqXVUp8fa7iWkeLJ3PbDLXQ7GrwcrsBHgZII0mmgbAfCA>.

- Song, X. 2018. "Hollywood Movies and China: Analysis of Hollywood Globalization and Relationship Management in China's Cinema Market." *Global Media & China* 3 (3): 177–194. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2059436418805538>.
- Tan, J. 2019. "Networking Asia Pacific: Queer Film Festivals and the Spatiotemporal Politics of Inter-Referencing." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 20 (2): 214–219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649373.2019.1613727>.
- Tsui, C. 2017. 'New Chinese Film Law Fails to Resolve Confusion Over Censorship Rules.' *South China Morning Post*. <https://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/arts-music/article/2083175/man-mission-raise-quality-chinese-cinema-through>.
- Wang, Y., H. Zhishan, K. Ping, Y. Xin, Y. Yang, J. Drescher, R. Chen, et al. 2019. "Discrimination Against LGBT Populations in China." *Lancet Public Health* 4 (9): e440–e441. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667\(19\)30153-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(19)30153-7).
- Warner, M. 2002. *Publics and Counterpublics*. New York: Zone Books.
- Yang, M. M.-H. 1994. "Film Discussion Groups in China: State Discourse or a Plebeian Public Sphere?" *Visual Anthropology Review* 10 (1): 112–125. <https://doi.org/10.1525/var.1994.10.1.112>.
- Yang, Y. 2019. "Bargaining with the State: The Empowerment of Chinese Sexual Minorities/LGBT in the Social Media Era." *Journal of Contemporary China* 28 (118): 662–677. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2018.1557943>.
- Yang, Y., and Y. Xu. 2017. "Chinese Danmei Fandom and Cultural Globalization from Below." In *Boys' Love, Cosplay and androgynous idols: Queer Fan cultures in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan*. eds, 3–19. Hong Kong: Kong Hong University Press. <https://doi.org/10.5790/hongkong/9789888390809.003.0002>.
- Zhang, L. 2017. "China: First Law on Film Industry Effective in March." *Global Legal Monitor*. <https://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/china-first-law-on-film-industry-effective-in-march/>.
- Zhao, J. J., L. Yang, and M. Lavin. 2017. "Introduction." In *Boys' Love, Cosplay and Androgynous Idols: Queer fan cultures in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan*, edited by M. Lavin, L. Yang, and J. J. Zhao, xi–xxxiii. Hong Kong: Kong Hong University Press.