

YNOT at the Movies

Understand the world, one movie at a time...

Contributors

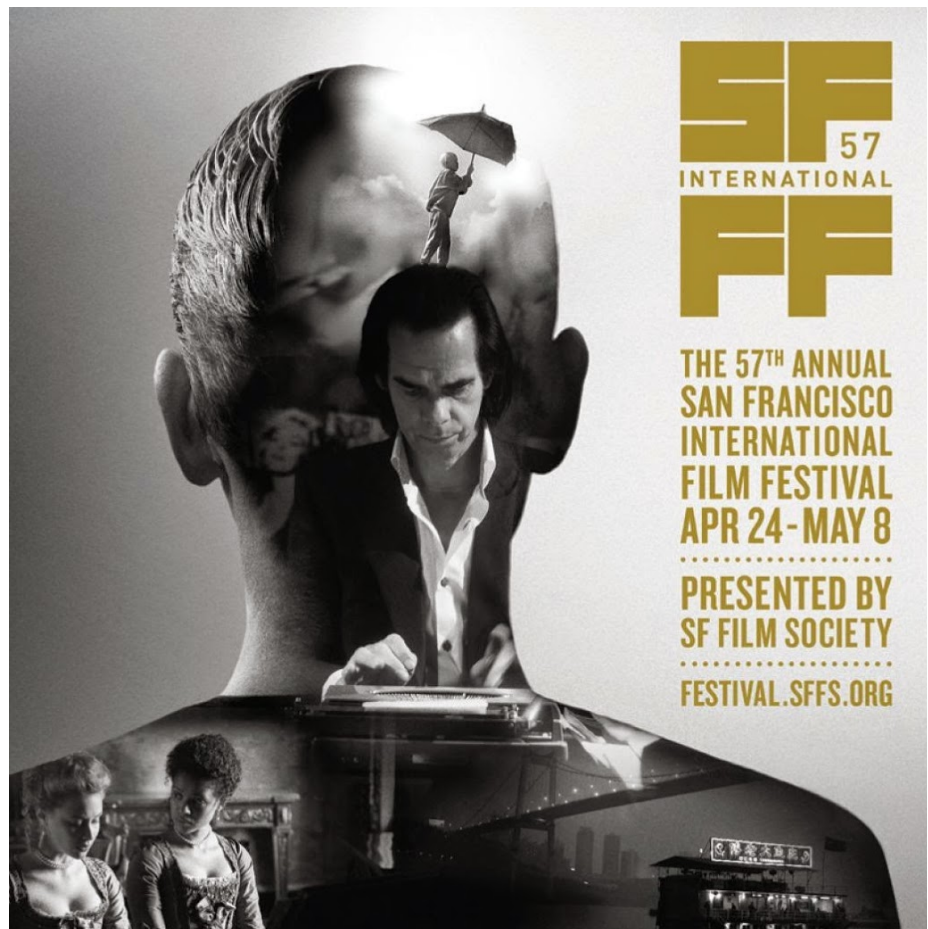
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The 57th San Francisco International Film Festival

For the fourth consecutive year, the San Francisco Film Society gets a new executive director. However, year after year, the society's terrific programming team has been consistent in curating excellent world and independent cinema and in presenting the "crown jewel of the society"—the San Francisco International Film Festival (SFIFF), the longest running film festival in America.

There is no exception this year either. In fact, the festival only looks better, despite a challenging timing sandwiched between the Sundance Film Festival and the Cannes Film Festival.



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- **Watermarks: Three Letters from China** (Switzerland 2013 | in Chinese | 80 min. | Documentary)

Swiss documentarian Luc Schaedler's fascination about China is evident by each documentary he made every eight years—"Made in Hong Kong" (1997), "Angry Monk: Reflections on Tibet" (2005), and the latest "**Watermarks: Three Letters from China**" (2013). In this final installment of the trilogy, he tells three stories that represent millions of ordinary Chinese people who live in the rapid changing contemporary Chi

Among the three letters, the first story is the most poignant and heartfelt one. Wei Jinhua works in a dirty coal mine and lives with his wife and young son far from his hometown—a severely drought village in Northern China where his elderly parents live. Being the only son, Jinhua is torn between the responsibility to take care of his agin

parents and the obligation to provide a better future for his young family. They all v extremely hard yet hardly make ends meet and live in harsh conditions. Their story i a sharp contrast to the new riches who benefit the most from the booming economy China. However, the love in this three generation family is heartfelt and deeply tou

The second letter comes from Guangxi (广西), in Southern China, with words from a retired intellectual. He is opinionated and outspoken about China's past, present, an future, particularly addressing the devastation and lasting effects caused by the Cul Revolution. His voice surely strikes a chord with many Chinese people.

The final letter is composed in Chongqing (重庆), focusing on a 19-year-old free spiri girl Chen Chaomei. She was found on a tree when she was an infant by her adopted parents. Despite being punished by the one-child policy, they brought her up as thei child. Chaomei is surprisingly at peace with her past and presents herself with a cari persona, often dressed as a boy. But deep down, she concerns about if she might be abandoned again by the changing society and if she can finally find her place in an unsettling China.

Through these three stories, the director Luc Schaedler paints striking portraits of re Chinese people and their daily struggle to cope with the fast moving world and to se for a better future. These stories are both touching and inspiring.

