

Beat: Entertainment

Writer Director Zhang Wei to tackle transgenderism in China

in his next film called *The Rib*

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USPA NEWS - Chinese writer, director and producer, Zhang Wei (*Factory Boss*, *Destiny*, *The sound of a dream*), announced today that his upcoming project in his series of socially conscious films will be *THE RIB*. The film, boldly dealing with the intersection of transgendered youth, religion & family life in China

Chinese writer, director and producer, Zhang Wei (*FACTORY BOSS*, *DESTINY*, *THE SOUND OF A DREAM*), announced today that his upcoming project in his series of socially conscious films will be *THE RIB*. The film, boldly dealing with the intersection of a transgendered youth, religion and family life in China today, is currently in pre-production with principal photography set to commence in Q1, 2017.-----

THE RIB" FILM IS BASED ON TRUE EVENTS ABOUT A CHRISTIAN TRANSGENDER TEENAGER IN CHINA-----

"*THE RIB*" is loosely based on true events and follows the story of a transgender teenager who is born into a devoutly Christian family. When his mother discovers that he wants to transition from male to female she is filled with grief, rage and confusion as she struggles to come to terms with his life changing decision. Their once peaceful home becomes a battlefield between religion and freedom of choice as mother and child fight to overcome their differences and to face a society where prejudice against the underground LGBT community is rife.

Zhang Wei is an ambitious, independent filmmaker who has built his career on daring, socially conscious films that artfully expose the underbelly of today's China, where exclusion is still the norm, but where progress is being made. His previous work includes *FACTORY BOSS* (2014); an award-winning drama and Festival favourite that depicts China's global economic crisis from the perspective of a sweat shop boss, *DESTINY* (2015); which presents an autistic child's struggle for the right to education, *THE SOUND OF A DREAM* (2016), which deals with the struggle of young blind Tibetans to make their mark; and *SHADOW* (2011); a story reflecting the sorrow of traditional Chinese culture threatened with extinction. Under the banner of his production company, Huahao Film & Media, Wei has made a name for himself by presenting these candid visions of a China increasingly willing to look at itself through his work. *DESTINY* is set to make its World Premiere in-competition at the Far East Film Festival this Saturday.-----

Zhang Wei's next film is one of his most topical and challenging yet. Although transgender narratives have very much entered the mainstream in Western television and cinema, they are still uncommon in many parts of the world, including China. Not only is Wei facing the challenge of bringing a rare and controversial genre to Chinese audiences, but by contextualising his story around the Christian faith, he also faces a potential backlash from the religious community.-----

"Filmed entertainment has always been at the forefront of tackling contemporary social issues, with directors such as the UK's Ken Loach (*KES*); the US's Oliver Stone (*PLATOON*, *JFK*); France's Jean Luc Godard (*VIVRE SA VIE*, *ALPHAVILLE*) and Taiwan's Ang Lee (*BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN*) being just a few that I admire. I am hopeful that my own modest efforts will influence positive change here in China and I am grateful to have obtained a permit from the Chinese government to tackle subjects that might have been taboo only a few years ago. I am determined to tell this important story despite any roadblocks I might face." said Zhang Wei. Both *FACTORY BOSS* and *DESTINY* are represented by Fortissimo Films for Worldwide Sales excluding China under a multi-year, multi picture arrangement entered into earlier this year. Source Fortissimo Films

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