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From Underground to Independent: Alternative Film Culture in Contemporary China (Asia/Pacific/Perspectives)

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This groundbreaking book presents a critical introduction to the cultural and political dimensions of contemporary Chinese cinema. Leading Western and Chinese scholars trace the changing dynamics of Chinese film culture since the early 1990s as it moves away from underground and toward independence in the new century. Yet as the rich case studies illustrate, the sheer variety of alternative film culture itself provides sufficient opportunities for different—at times contradictory—configurations of cinematic products. Drawing on vigorous interdisciplinary scholarship, the book investigates the objects of its study from various methodological perspectives, ranging from historical and literary to sociological and ethnographic. In addition to offering critical readings of specific texts, this book explores alternative film culture through personal interviews, on-site observations, and media interrogations, from traditional print media to the visual media of film, television, and video, including the new digital media of the Internet. The contributors also consider the flourishing independent documentary filmmaking scene, highlighting a crucial part of alternative film that has been previously obscured by an almost exclusive attention on the fifth- and sixth-generation directors of fictional movies. With its fresh and knowledgeable analysis of Chinese underground and independent filmmaking, this book will be essential reading for all those interested in a society caught between socialism and global currents.

Contributions by: Chris Berry, Jim Cheng, Valerie Jaffee, Matthew David Johnson, Tonglin Lu, Chen Mo, Seio Nakajima, Paul G. Pickowicz, Zhiwei Xiao, and Yingjin Zhang.

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