

CHINA BLUE

SHORT SYNOPSIS

CHINA BLUE takes us on a poignant journey inside a blue-jeans factory, where the working conditions Jasmine and her teenage friends must endure are harsh beyond imagination. They are also unlawful by international standards, and tensions in the factory are running high. So when the factory owner strikes a deal with a Western client and demands around-the-clock production to meet the deadline, a confrontation becomes inevitable. Shot clandestinely in China, under difficult conditions, this is a deep-access account of what both China and the international retail companies don't want us to see — how the clothes we buy are actually made.

CREDITS

PRODUCER/DIRECTOR

Micha X. Peled

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Song Chen

CAMERA

Micha X. Peled

EDITOR

Manuel A. Tsingaris

COMPOSER

Miriam Cutler

SOUND

Song Chen

ADDITIONAL EDITING

Micha X. Peled

The shooting of this film was interrupted numerous times by the Chinese authorities. The crew was arrested and interrogated, and tapes were confiscated. Contact with Jasmine and others was terminated.

Jasmine's diary excerpts are based on actual diaries and interviews. Voice-over sections are read by Zhongbao Wu and Su Guo Liang.

ROLLING CREDITS:

ADDITIONAL CAMERA

Monica Lam
Michael Kwong
Vicente Franco
Wang Chi Wu
Wan Sha Ming
Guo Xi Tsu
Danny Lai
Song Chen
Zong Hwa

TRANSLATION SUPERVISOR

Song Chen

TRANSLATION CONSULTANT

Bonny Lin

CHINESE DIALECT TRANSLATION

Liang Song
Joanne Lee
Xin Yae
Shihling Ming
Dr. Wenli Wang
Ming Ji Hong
Ting Louie

"Marching into the New Era"
performed by
Zhang Ye

ROLLING END

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR (China)

Chee May Chow

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR (U.S.)

Lawence Lerew

EDITING CONSULTANT

Max Salomon

ASSISTANT EDITING

Chuck Smith

POSTPRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Jill Fincher
Jicheng ("Chairman") Deng

TITLE DESIGN

Jim Branstetter

POSTER DESIGN

Ken Korematsu

STILL PHOTOGRAPHY

Chi Chun Ya
Wu Yung Jing

ON-LINE

Video ARTS, Inc.
Ed Rudolph
Kim Salyer
Jesse Spencer
John Vargo

SOUND MIX

Berkeley Sound Artists
Jim Lebrecht
Patti Tauscher

MUSICIANS

Strings: Noviola, Nan Picceli
Exotic Flutes: Charlie Adelpia
Acoustic and Electric Guitars: Ira Ingber
Bass: Carl Sealove
Piano: Deborah Sealove
Vocals: Vicki Randle
Additional Engineer: Ian Zehith

Funding provided by the Corporation for Public
Broadcasting, National American Asian
Telecommunications Association (NAATA),
and the Sundance Film Fund

Executive Producer for ITVS- Sally Jo Fifer

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and the Independent Television Service(ITVS).
This program was produced by Teddy Bear Films,
which is solely responsible for its content.

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Press Quotes

- "The tacit fury of *China Blue*..."

-Richard Corliss, *TIME* magazine

- "Pic's degree of access and intimacy is surprising, even more so when closing intertitles reveal Chinese authorities did try to shut down the filmmakers several times...engaging in character and narrative terms...much of *China Blue* is charming, because its subjects are...Micha Peled's docu *China Blue* makes a stronger case against worker exploitation than any news item could..."

-*Daily Variety*

- "The Best Documentary of Toronto 2005 Micha Peled's *China Blue*, a heartbreaking, truly unforgettable *cinéma-vérité*"

-The *Boston Phoenix*

- "The most heartbreaking, moving film in theaters right now is not *Babel*, *Letters From Iwo Jima* or *Little Children*. It is *China Blue*, a documentary about sweatshop workers at a denim factory...This is an unforgettable film."

-*San Francisco Chronicle*

- "Moral outrage is the only civilized response to what "China Blue" reveals...[the film] presents a fairly balanced and richly human story while exposing the blatant labor-law violations of multinational corporations."

-The *Seattle Times*

- "Without (Chinese) government knowledge or approval, San Francisco filmmaker Micha X. Peled shot a stunningly candid portrait of the lively teenagers who make blue jeans..."

-*Release Print*

- "A heartbreaking and meticulous documentary about life inside a blue-jeans factory."

-The *New York Times*

- "The film is an unflinching indictment of globalization and the unfettered consumerism that fuels it. The cheap clothes we wear come at a high price, for real people."

-*Marin Independent Journal*

- "Peled was harassed at every turn by Chinese officials, but he managed to get this shocking film made. That's just one reason *China Blue* is worthy of praise."

-*The New York Post*

- "Like some of Micha X. Peled's previous films (*Store Wars, Inside God's Bunker*), *China Blue* is primarily a deep-access film..."

-*The Vancouver Sun*

- "Mr. Peled has achieved some amazing footage of life in the factory...If you were ever curious about the people who make your blue jeans, *China Blue* is the film for you."

-*The Royal Gazette (Bermuda)*

- "What stands out is the filmmaker's remarkable level of access and the complex portrait of globalization as an intractable beast that relies on consumer complicity in viewing foreign laborers as subhuman. Buy American."

-*Time Out New York*

- "Surprisingly fair-minded...it gives its heart and soul to the girls."

-*The Nation*

- "No, this isn't softcore for Asiaphiles. Ducking Chinese government watchdogs (who tried to shut him down several times), Bay Area documentarian Micha X. Peled got unprecedented access to a blue jeans factory in the southern garment-manufacturing city Shaxi thanks to its proud owner, who no doubt has come to regret his decision...It's a *vérité* portrait of adolescents who are instantly recognizable, though their sweatshop environs strike us as nearly unendurable."

-*San Francisco Bay Guardian*

- "One of the hottest titles at IDFA this year...Go, see and feel guilty about being a rich European. You know you want to."

-IDFA (Amsterdam), Europe's premier doc film festival

- "It is difficult, but necessary, to watch *China Blue*. For those who take shopping for consumer goods for granted...this behind-the-scenes look at how one popular item is produced will leave you chilled...*China Blue* is a must-see."

-*Film Journal International*

- “Shines a light on the inhumane working conditions...Will stay with you.”

-The *Toronto EYE*

- Micha X. Peled’s documentary is shockingly thorough...and highly provoking. It may be close to impossible to mandate responsible capitalism, but *China Blue* shows us exactly what’s at stake.”

-*The Stranger*

- “The making of *China Blue* provides enough drama to be a film of its own... Peled’s crew was able to smuggle equipment across the border, but Chinese police interfered with filming on numerous occasions. A cameraman and associate producer were arrested and tapes were confiscated.”

-The Ashland (VA) *Herald-Progress*

- "There's a terrible irony, then, to the designer jeans uniformly worn by teenage laborers featured in *China Blue*, Micha X. Peled's meticulously livid expose of a sweatshop in Southern China."

-*Seattle Weekly*

- “Micha Peled's docu *China Blue* makes a stronger case against worker exploitation than any news item could, simply by showing the everyday lives of some Mainland China factory girls. Engaging in character and narrative terms much of *China Blue* is charming, because its subjects are. Finding amusement in the few spare moments they can, sweet-natured Jasmine and her more citified zipper-installer friend Orchid (who's found time for a boyfriend) are disarmingly natural on camera. Their welfare becomes of real concern to the viewer as the exhaustion and ill health wrought by brutal work stints grow apparent. Pic's degree of access and intimacy is surprising, even more so when closing intertitles reveal Chinese authorities did try to shut down the filmmakers several times. Lensing and tech contris are just OK, but good enough under what were at least sometimes clandestine circumstances.”

-*Variety* 10/13/05 – Toronto Film Festival

Activism Quotes

- “Film director Micha Peled hopes shopping will never be the same again for people who see his new film, *China Blue*.”

-*Dominion Post* (New Zealand)

- “*China Blue*, a damning tale of sweatshop conditions in Chinese jeans gets much of its impact by personalizing the issue.”

-*Stuff.co.nz*

Scholars Recommending *CHINA BLUE*

- Prof. Andrew Nathan, Chairman of the Political Science Department at Columbia University:

"*China Blue* lends itself to sparking classroom discussion because the story it tells is both crystal-clear and complex. The camera team got amazing access, so we feel in touch with what is real. And as a result, there are no bad guys. Everyone is trying to survive and succeed. Where is it in the system — that starts with a factory in China and ends with us as consumers — that the problems we see are going to be fixed?"

- Prof. Tom Gold, Chair of Sociology, UC Berkeley and Director of Berkeley China Initiative:

"*China Blue* puts a human face on the contentious issue of "cheap Chinese labor." It shows us the links between the rural and urban areas, the farms and factories in China. Although the work is grueling and bosses often unscrupulous, we do see that the young workers who migrate to the burgeoning industrial zones have unprecedented opportunities to meet people from elsewhere in China, learn about city life and global popular culture. The film makes an excellent tool for stimulating classroom discussion on a broad range of topics impacting not only China, but the rest of the world as well."

- Dr. Dara O'Rourke, Assistant Professor of Environmental and Labor Policy, University of California at Berkeley:

"*China Blue* offers an illuminating window onto the normally hidden worlds of global production. It provides unparalleled access to the everyday lives of garment workers in China, giving them voice, and giving a face to the reality underlying China's emergence as the factory floor to the world. For those interested in globalization, economic development, or current controversies around sweatshops, *China Blue* is an excellent introduction to the experiences of workers from developing countries - even those supposedly 'winning' through globalization."

Awards and Festivals

- **Amnesty Human Rights Award**, International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (IDFA)
- **Nominated, Joris Ivens Award**, IDFA
- **Honorable Mention**, Vancouver International Film Festival
- **Best Documentary**, International Independent Film Festival (Argentina)
- **Honorable Mention**, Vermont International Film Festival
- Toronto International Film Festival
- **Opening Night Film**, Human Rights Film Festival (South Korea)
- Full Frame Documentary Film Festival
- Margaret Mead Film Festival
- ZagrebDox International Documentary Film Festival (Croatia)
- One World International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival (Prague)
- Thessaloniki International Film Festival (Greece)
- San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival
- Bermuda International Film Festival
- It's All True International Documentary Film Festival (Brazil)
- Hong Kong International Film Festival
- Calgary Imagine Asian Film Festival
- EDOC International Documentary Film Festival (Ecuador)
- Warsaw Planete Doc Review (Poland)
- Crakow International Film Festival (Poland)
- Jerusalem International Film Festival
- New Zealand International Film Festival
- Mill Valley Film Festival
- Hawaii International Film Festival
- CPH:DOX International Documentary Film Festival (Denmark)
- Dallas Video Festival
- Big Sky Documentary Film Festival

- Toronto Sprockets Film Festival
- Films from the South (Norway)
- Discovery - International Film Festival for Children (Scotland)
- Filmfest Hamburg (Germany)
- 3-Continental Film Festival (South Africa)
- Cork International Film Festival (Ireland)
- Nazareth International Film Festival (Israel)
- Rocky Mountain Women's Film Festival
- DocsLisboa (Portugal)
- Tempo Documentary Film Festival (Sweden)
- Beirut Docudays (Lebanon)

The Int'l Documentary Festival of Amsterdam (IDFA) jury president had this to say about CHINA BLUE:

A crucially important documentary for our times. Told from the inside, this is an account of modern slavery in a global market. It shames us all. Blue jeans are the iconic style item of the departed century and perhaps the next one too. The Jury wish to applaud the integrity, resourcefulness and courage of the film makers who took us on a shocking journey – one that confronts us with the real human costs of our easy choices and our bargain hunting.