

HAF 11 Leftover Women



COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Israel, Germany

GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME: Documentary | HD | English, Mandarin | 90 mins

DIRECTORS:

Shosh SHLAM, Hilla MEDALIA

PRODUCERS:

Hilla MEDALIA, Shosh SHLAM, Jürgen KLEINIG (Co-Producer)

HAF GOALS:

Funds, Co-producers, Sales agents, Pre-sales

BUDGET:

US\$534,700

SECURED BUDGET:

US\$20,000

DIRECTORS' FILMOGRAPHY

Hilla MEDALIA & Shosh SHLAM

2014 *Web Junkie*

Shosh SHLAM

2008 *Good Garbage*

Hilla MEDALIA

2013 *Dancing in Jaffa*

ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS

Leftover women, “Shengnu” in Chinese, are single, educated women in their mid-20s who live in China’s big cities, referred to and treated as “leftovers” and too old to marry.

SYNOPSIS

In China, they are called "shengnu"; in English, “leftover women.” They are educated women in their mid-twenties, who live in China’s big cities and are single.

Government-controlled Chinese media have waged an aggressive campaign to promote the term and all that it stands for. Educated single women are targeted in news reports, articles, editorials and caricatures urging them to marry.

Leftover Women follows three women in their mid-twenties, contending with the stigma of "shengnu", rooted in traditional Chinese values and attitudes. In response to overwhelming social pressures, they set off on a quest to find “Mr. Right”, facing frustration, humiliation, helplessness and shame on a daily basis. They battle emotionally oblivious parents who represent China’s traditional patriarchy and old world values that consider their purpose to be married and have children before they become “too old”.

One of the consequences of the one-child-policy enforced by China is demographic imbalance: there are 20 million more men than women under the age of thirty, posing a threat to social and political stability. These women provide a tool to solve this urgent demographic problem.

We join the women as they visit matchmakers and dating sites, go on blind dates, singles parties, government-sponsored events and social gatherings for singles. They attend a “Dating Camp” and “The Academy for Wisdom and Love,” where they learn the “true meaning of love,” and receive tips on how to behave on a first date. The film will shed light on how women contend with the campaign of incitement against them.

Leftover Women explores the "shengnu" phenomenon in depth, showing how women born after 1980 have become victims of an old-new way of thinking and examining how antagonism toward unwed women has created a matchmaking industry with far-reaching economic implications.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The phenomenon of “leftover women” is the result of an aggressive government campaign that shares sexist messages about single women across social media. It is a very prominent aspect of the revival of gender inequality in post-socialist China.

In Chinese society, old and new values clash constantly. Modern China is contending with serious demographic issues and it has decided to promote marriage as one means of restoring a more tenable balance. Similarly, the government has announced a policy to “upgrade the quality of the population” as one of its main objectives. In order to achieve this goal, however, it needs

educated women “of quality” to give birth to “quality children.” In other words, it is using genetics for the benefit of the country, or perhaps, to improve the race. While this has many troubling connotations, it is undoubtedly a gross violation of women’s rights.

Leftover Women offers a rare chance to get an in-depth look at the lives of the educated young women, who represent China’s next generation. These women are subjugated socially and consciously. They are ordered to comply with social dictates that reflect a very conservative society, even though the achievements of Chinese women this past decade have been nothing short of remarkable.

Leftover Women is a protest film, screaming out on behalf of educated young women who have been silenced by the Chinese authorities just because they dared to act counter to their government’s conservative chauvinism.

Our examination of the social phenomenon of “leftover women” will offer a rare glimpse into Chinese society today. At the same time, it will also provide us with plenty of food for thought about how women around the world are still struggling for their rights.

DIRECTORS

Shosh SHLAM

Award winning filmmaker Shosh Shlam is director and producer of *Last Journey into Silence* (2003), *Be Fruitful and Multiply* (2005), *Good Garbage* (2008) which was the award winner for Best Documentary at the Shanghai Film Festival in China and FICA Film Festival in Brazil. and co-director and producer of *Web Junkie* (2014). Shosh holds an MA in Comparative Literature from Bar Ilan University. She also graduated from the Theatre Department at Tel Aviv University, and studied at New York’s School of Visual Arts.

Hilla MEDALIA

Peabody award winner, three-time Emmy® nominated director and producer, founder of Medalia Productions, a creative documentary production company operating in Israel and in the US. Her films have garnered critical acclaim, screened internationally in theaters and on television including HBO, MTV, BBC and ARTE. Her range of titles include *To Die in Jerusalem* (2007, HBO), *After the Storm* (2009, MTV), *Numbered* (2012, ARTE), *Dancing in Jaffa* (2013, Tribeca, IFC Sundance selects), *Web Junkie* (2014, Sundance Film Festival, POV, PBS, BBC), *The Go Go Boys* (2014, Cannes Film Festival) and *Censored Voices* (2015, premiere at the Sundance Film Festival and Berlin Film Festival and released theatrically in the US and Europe). She holds an M.A. from Southern Illinois University.

PRODUCERS

Hilla MEDALIA (also director)

Shosh SHLAM (also director)

Jürgen KLEINIG (Co-Producer)

While studying biology, he also worked for Marco Polo Film AG. After graduation, he was appointed director of the newly formed Marco Polo Archive GmbH in Halle. Between 2004 and 2008, he worked as project developer and producer for various companies in central Germany. In 2008 he founded Alte Celluloid Fabrik Filmproduktion. He lives and works in Leipzig.

PRODUCTION COMPANIES

Medalia Productions

Medalia Productions is a creative media firm that produces feature films, documentaries, television shows and commercials. Our projects have garnered critical acclaim, earning us three Emmy nominations and a Peabody award. We also collaborate with international companies, providing them with a variety of production services in the US, Europe, and Israel. Our projects have aired around the world on networks including HBO, MTV, BBC, AOL and Arte.

Shlam Productions

Shlam Productions produces feature documentaries directed by Shosh Shlam about social and political issues. The company is active in Israel and internationally and its films are screened on TV stations and theaters around the world.

Celluloid Fabrik

Celluloid Fabrik was set up by Tina Leeb and Jürgen Kleinig in 2011 with the aim of producing bold, artistic documentaries; films that take a stance, asking questions searching for answers; films that move people, broaden horizons and provide inspiring insights and outlook. Our primary production focus lies on current issues, social and environmental documentaries. We develop and produce our projects for the German and European television markets, as international co-productions, as well as artistically and visually exciting films about important issues for the big screen.