

## WIP D Born to Be Second



**REGION:** China

**GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME:**

Documentary | Digital Format | Mandarin, Sichuan Dialect | 90mins

**DIRECTOR:**

FAN Jian

**PRODUCER:**

Richard LIANG

S. Leo CHIANG

**HAF GOALS:**

Funds, Sales agents, Pre-sales, Festival Screening

**Budget:** US\$ 399,633

**Secured Budget:** US\$ 208,251

**DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY**

2016 *Still Tomorrow*

2015 *My Land*

2015 *Manufacturing Romance*

2011 *The Next Life*

2006 *Dancing in The City*

**ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS**

*Born to Be Second* follows two families haunted by their painful past as they build towards an uncertain tomorrow.

## SYNOPSIS

When the 2008 Sichuan earthquake razed a Chinese city to the ground, thousands of families lost their only child, and were permitted to try and have another in an effort to fill the void created by this tragedy. *Born to Be Second* follows two of these families. Mei and her husband Sheng had a biological son, Chuan, while their friends, Ying and her husband Ping, opted to adopt a daughter, Sunny. In 2017, Chuan was six years old. He is starting to make sense of the unusual burdens his parents place on him, and of the wound that time has never healed. Sunny, now eleven, had always been told that Ying and Ping were her birth-parents. She can recall having lived somewhere else as a very young child, but she has chosen to accept her parents' white lie. Soon, however, fragments of the truth will emerge and it will be impossible for the families to confront them together. Both families are arriving at critical junctures in their lives, challenging how they have been living for the past ten years.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*Born to Be Second* is a quintessential Chinese story. It scrutinizes the parent-child relationship, arguably the foundation of Chinese society. Many in the older generations do not fully comprehend that one person — one child — cannot substitute for another. This puts tremendous pressure on the younger generation, but it will not deter them from finding their own identity. The film leads our audiences through a complex examination in the evolving value of individual life and identity through a Chinese point-of-view. The parallel narratives of the two families form the crux of our structure. Scenes in which the two families come together — when the two narratives overlap — provide insightful moments where audiences can track and reflect on each family's process. Visually, with *Born to Be Second*, we will build a strong cinematic experience on a character-driven story. My team's ability to create this experience is evident our most recent film, *Still Tomorrow* (2016), which won a Special Jury Award in the IDFA 2016 Feature-Length Competition. The jury noted that "this film explores the complexity of the human experience in a poetic, intimate and powerful way".

## DIRECTOR

### FAN Jian

Fan Jian is a documentary director who focuses on Chinese social issues through character-driven storytelling. He is a Documentary Branch member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS). He has directed six feature documentaries, most recently *Still Tomorrow* (Winner, Special Jury Award at IDFA 2016). His other films include *My Land* (HAF 2013; Berlinale 2016; supported by the Sundance Fund) and *The Next Life* (IDFA 2011). His work has screened in competition at Hot Docs, Full Frame, Sheffield, Busan, and many other world festivals. Jian studied at the Beijing Film Academy and is based in Chongqing, China.

## PRODUCER

### Richard LIANG

Richard Liang has been producing documentaries for fifteen years. He has produced Chinese documentaries with international partners, most recently *The Road* (IDFA 2015, co-production with DR, SVT, IKON, and NHK) and *The Next Life* (2011, dir. Fan Jian, co-production with NHK & Al Jazeera).

### S. Leo CHIANG

S. Leo Chiang recently completed *Our Time Machine* (2019), which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival and has earned six international festival awards. Other films include *Out Run* (2016), *Mr. Cao Goes to Washington* (2012) and the Emmy-nominated *A Village Called Versailles* (2009). He is a member of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences (AMPAS).

## PRODUCTION COMPANY

### FAN Film Studio

FAN Film Studio was established in 2011 by well-known Chinese director Fan Jian, focusing on documentary filmmaking. Its productions *The Next Life* (2011) and *Still Tomorrow* (2016) have both been selected into IDFA, the largest documentary film festival in the world. *Still Tomorrow* won the Special Jury Award at IDFA 2016, and was nominated for Best Feature Documentary at the Shanghai International Film Festival 2017. Another feature documentary production, *My Land* (2015), was selected in Berlin Film Festival 2016. The documentary series *Ten Years: Forget Me Not* (2018) won the Best Documentary Series at West Lake International Documentary Festival 2018.