

#MeToo and Film School in the PRC:
Yang Mingming's *Female Directors* (2012) and *Girls Always Happy* (2018)

Proposal for
'Teaching Women's Filmmaking'
16-17 April 2021
Department of Film and Television at Istanbul Bilgi University

By Gina Marchetti (University of Hong Kong)

One of the first responses to the massive media blitz surrounding the Weinstein allegations from the People's Republic of China came in the form of an opinion piece denying the existence of sexual harassment in mainland China published in the English-language edition of the government-run newspaper *China Daily*.¹ Christoph Rehage, who had studied at the prestigious Beijing Film Academy, wrote the following on *Twitter* in response: "The Chinese movie industry is full of abuse. Many actresses, especially the younger ones, are being treated like prostitutes."² In fact, a sexual assault at the Beijing Film Academy in May 2017 opened up an outpouring of additional allegations involving sexual harassment at other institutions of higher education in China.

With #MeToo as a backdrop, this presentation explores the semi-autobiographical work of independent female filmmaker Yang Mingming. Yang has made two films loosely based on her experiences as an aspiring filmmaker in Beijing, the short *Female Directors* (2012) and the feature-length *Girls Always Happy* (2018). Focusing primarily on her more recent feature *Girls Always Happy*, this analysis zeroes in on the ways in which Yang interrogates the gendered politics of the camera gaze as she reflects on the contemporary Beijing filmmaking scene.

Gina Marchetti (University of Hong Kong) is the author of *Romance and the "Yellow Peril": Race, Sex and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fiction* (California, 1993), *From Tian'anmen to Times Square: Transnational China and the Chinese Diaspora on Global Screens* (Temple, 2006), *The Chinese Diaspora on American Screens: Race, Sex, and Cinema* (Temple, 2012), and *Andrew Lau and Alan Mak's INFERNAL AFFAIRS—The Trilogy* (HKUP, 2007), and *Citing China: Politics, Postmodernism, and World Cinema* (Hawai'i, 2018).

¹ <http://shanghaiist.com/2017/10/18/no-sexual-harassment-in-china.php>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/17/anger-as-chinese-media-claim-harassment-is-just-a-western-problem>