love lives away

original title: ai qing ji ju
“My response to ‘love lives away’ is astonishment not only at its high production values but its complexity and thematic depth. I like the articulation of interior space for ambience and formal elements.”

Prof. Dr. Lutz Bacher, FIPRESCI Film Critic
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More and more Chinese youth are coming to Germany to study. They are full of hope before they set off, only to find that the reality is not at all as cosy as those proverbial Tudor style houses. Their new life is crushed into the rusty, steel frames of the post-industrial society.

Xiao Ping (Hsiao Joping) and A Yi (Zhang Yi) are Chinese students in the Ruhr Area. They meet in Germany, get frequent contact out of loneliness. Finally they move in together to save money.

Xiao Ping studies opera. She is an ardent singer on the stage, but her offstage life fills her with loneliness and ruthless competition. She knows that A Yi is not her future, but the shared apartment is a good nest for her, like a shell for hermit crab. A Yi is a chemistry student and a part-time cook in a cinema restaurant. The hard work is always his excuse for his laziness in his studies. Back at the apartment, he takes care of everything, big or small, and expects to keep Xiao Ping with him in this way.

Of course, there are the moments of sentiment between them, but as time passes, Xiao Ping gets bored. She moves into another room in the apartment. Her mind strays away when they stay together, but she gets more attached in daily life. She becomes silent, to ignore her real feelings. A Yi has also feels the change, and works harder to save the relationship. But A Yi does not know that Xiao Ping is secretly
online-dating a singer in a student band, Xiao Yu (Xiang Xiaoyu). Xiao Yu flirts aggressively online, and performs wildly onstage, which stirs up Xiao Ping's curiosity. She just lets the secret romance go on....

The inevitable dramatic turn happens when Xiao Ping disappears, and several days later returns with Xiao Yu, hand in hand, to stand in front of A Yi.... The old relationship ends, as the three share the apartment now.

Xiao Ping thinks that the story between her and A Yi is over, but can she ignore the imprints left by the past? Is Xiao Yu the right man? What kind of trouble will the careless Xiao Yu bring? How will A Yi face the abrupt turnover, and what kind of complex does he have now? One unexpected embarrassment happens after another....

Then a new girl, Dandan (Ling Dandan), appears in A Yi's life. One sunny day, Dandan rings the doorbell of the apartment. A Yi and Xiao Ping come to open the door and find Xiao Yu standing just behind Dandan....

**Synopsis Short**

Many Chinese youth study in Germany. This film tells a story of their puzzled love and fragile relationship in the foreign land.

Xiao Ping (Hsiao Joping) studies opera, and a passionate singer on the stage. A Yi (Zhang Yi) studies chemistry and working as a part-time cook in a cinema restaurant. They know there is no future between them. The breakup is only when and how.

When the inevitable dramatic comes, Xiao Ping thinks that she can handle the new relationship. But one unexpected embarrassment happens after another....
“Ai Qing Ji Ju” (love lodging) is a term for a more and more pervasive phenomenon, in which a young man and woman cohabit, not out of love, but to find a place to allow their lonely hearts and bodies to check in and check out anytime.

Among the Chinese students abroad, this phenomenon is occurring more frequently. Loneliness, brought on by lodging in a foreign land, is one of the probable reasons; another is more straightforward – to save money.

This kind of “love lodging” occurs around us one after another, which stirs me and I cannot remain indifferent any more, as what I have seen is not at all as simple as they have assumed. On the contrary, when both sides become pestered in the relationship, they hurt each other. What's more painful is that they have to be confronted with each other daily. The pictures become so clear in my mind that I cannot get rid of them.

Therefore, Xiao Ping and A Yi, a cohabiting couple, became active in my mind. What will happen between them? If their cohabitation can hardly go on, and at that time a right
man appears, what will become of Xiao Ping? Furthermore, if Xiao Ping stands in front of A Yi with a new man one day, how will A Yi react? If the three have to live in a WG (shared student apartment in Germany) together, what kind of embarrassments will happen?

I wonder, when Xiao Ping stops the relationship as if she were just stopping a contract, whether she will find that the experience is not erasable, and that she cannot devote herself to another relationship. I wonder when the third part appears whether A Yi will indulge more deeply into his own passion. I wonder whether they will repeat this attitude - love lodging, when they go on with another relationship.

All these assumptions and questions have led to the creation of this film. In the film, we narrowly eye this couple, and observe their entanglement, their suffering, and get a glimpse into the involvement of Xiao Yu and Dandan. We have a view of our contemporaries, their hesitation in the face of love and their fragile relationship.
After I finished my pre-diploma, I went back to China and did a practicum. I met many old friends and complained in front of them, that surrounded by a foreign language and unacquainted with the culture, my creativity faded, I became “dumb” and my short films were nondescript. After nearly one year, I returned to Germany, and I had to speak my rusty German. In relatively long period, I went to great lengths to avoid speaking, because the long speech would make me physiologically sick; I had “aphasia”.

I think that my constant interest in interpersonal silence comes somewhat out of this background. I am quite pessimistic regarding modern interpersonal communication. Certainly, this is not the only reason; I also found that silence is sometimes not an intended method of communication, but people do it anyhow.

Xiao Ping’s silence is an escape from her feelings for A Yi, and she has lost her confidence in verbal communication. And A Yi’s silence after the third person appears may be
tongueless shock, and shows his force in the passive situation. The silence tightens the tension, like a string drawn by both sides. Silence can prevent lies, but its damage is sometimes greater. When Xiao Yu and Dandan become involved, the silence goes on among the three, then the four. We observe it all, and feel the ridiculousness and confusion.

A real life may not be so wordless. But silence gives the film the force -- to approach the reality of our humanity.
I have tried to collect images of Chinese students in Germany – faces flashing cross U-Bahn (Underground) stations, isolated figures on campus, crowds in language classes, job agencies, and Asian shops. On the other hand, you hear loud dormitory parties, dishes from different owners, chopsticks fluttering with forks and knives, Huo guo (hot pot) boiling in electric-rice-cookers, laughter, singing, teasing.... after the noises come computers, games, the Internet, social withdrawal (御宅族 yu zhai zu) ……

I attempt to find a vision, encapsulating all these images, which expresses our collective perception – cold winter in Germany, withered, desolate, distant - in a word: “outside cold”. In the vision “outside cold”, you see a slim light in a dominant cold grey. This is what I want to deliver: in this non-immigrant country, with long and cold winters, among the sober local people, the Chinese students escape into their apartments.

The film “love lives away” happens in a apartment. The vision of “outside cold” appears when Xiao Ping and A Yi, in thick winter overcoats, pass by Berliner Square, stay briefly and look at the huge poster in the distance. It appears when we watch through the balcony glass and see the dining-room submerged in warm light.
Wang Dong

was born in Nov, 1976, outskirt of Xi’an city.

After high school, he studied Civil Engineering in Tongji University, Shanghai. He saw many film masterworks in University, and found great enthusiasm and wild imagination in the films. He didn’t want just to see, and began to try. In 2000, he and his college friends made a long feature film “Days Walking On”, which was the first campus film in Shanghai and awarded the “Excellent Work” in Beijing Student Film Festival. But, was film really his future? He was already a postgraduate student at that time. His parents couldn’t accept his new choice.

In 2001, he decided to go to Germany. He wanted to study film in the country, while his parents expected that he could give up the idea in front of the difficulties in the foreign land. He knew that future would be decided whether he could enter a film college in short time.

In 2002, he has finally got the admission from University of Applied Science and Arts, Dortmund, Film and TV Cinematography. During the study, he was attracted by the works of I. Bergman and R. Bresson. He is interested in how to
approach an individual with camera, how to unroll the charming moment which is beyond explanation, while how to push a better communication with audience. The stories of young Chinese abroad gave him many inspirations for his future work.

In 2004, he went back to hometown with his pre-diploma work — “Dancing Feathers”, and got the “Best Documentary” in a film festival. His parents have also understood him and given him great supports.

From end 2005 to beginning 2008, he finished his long feature film “love lives away”, also the first theatrical film, which concentrates in the Chinese Students in Germany, and premièred in Filmfestival Max-Ophüls Preis 2008.

He has also engaged in several documentaries and commercial film projects. Besides, he is preparing his next feature film project.
“love lives away” (“Ai Qing Ji Ju”) 80 min., FEATURE, writer, director, editor, 2008, Ruhrgebiet, Germany Film Festival Max-Ophüls Preis 2008 Saarbrücken, Portobello Film Festival 2008 London.

“Rivalin” 14 min., SHORT, cinematographer (director: Sebastian Jobst) 2006, Bochum, Germany

“The Loft” (“Ge Lou”) 90 min., FEATURE, assistant director, (director: Andrew Cheng Yusu), 2004, Shanghai, China

“Kids in the Wind” (“Tong Nian You Xi”) 90 min., FEATURE, assistant director, (director: Tong Xiaofeng), 2004, Xi'an, China Best Family Film in CCTV Film Channel 2004

“Dancing Feathers” (“Tanz der Feder”) 12 min., SHORT, 2004, Bochum, Germany, Best Documentary in Xi'an Youth Independent Film Festival, 2004

“Blood Rose” 22 min., SHORT, 2003, Dortmund, Germany

“Rain and Sun” (“Regen und Sonne”) 15 min., SHORT, 2002, Essen, Germany

“Days Walking On” (“Xing Zou De Ri Zi”) 75 min., NON-THEATRICAL PROJECT, writer, director, editor, “Excellent Work” Beijing Student Film Festival, 2001, Shanghai, China
Sebastian Jobst

was born in October 1982 in Kötzting, Germany. He is the youngest son in a family of doctors.

After he got technical diploma at the FOS-Passau he began his study at University of Applied Sciences Dortmund, for Film-Television Cinematography, in 2002, where he met Wang Dong. They began their friendship and cooperation from then on. They made their pre-diploma work “Dancing Feathers” together and won best Documentary at a film festival.

During his six months internship, he worked in the camera department of Bavarian Broadcasting Corporation. Back to Dortmund he began to work on several film projects of different length. Mostly works together with Wang Dong. In 2005 he made the cinematography for Wang Dong’s theatrical film “love lives away”.

2008 he finished his his diploma work “Munakuy”. It’s a long essay-film about healers and shamans in Peru. He is working at several documentaries and commercial film projects now.
“Munakuy " 90 min. ESSAY-FILM, writer, director, cinematographer, editor, 2007/2008, Peru

“Kukuruza" (AT) 90min., EXPERIMENTAL-MUSICIFILM, writer, director, cinematographer, editor, 2007/2008, Germany, Holland


“Rivalin” 14 min., SHORT, 2006, Bochum, Germany

“Leik Eick” 90 min., LONGTIME-DOCUMENTARY, writer, director, cinematographer, 2005-?, Ruhrgebiet, Deutschland

“Der Zauber eines zerbrochenen Regenschirms” (“The Magic of a Broken Umbrella”) 9 min., SHORT, 2005, Dortmund, Deutschland

“Dancing Feathers” (“Tanz der Feder”) 12 min., SHORT, 2004, Bochum, Germany “Best Documentary” in Xi’an Youth Independent Film Festival, 2004

“Blood Rose” 22 min., SHORT, 2003, Dortmund, Germany

“Obscurity in Sunrise” 60 min., FEATURE, writer, director, cinematographer, 2001, Grafenau, Germany
Isabel Shuxue Zhou

was born in 1975, Xi’an, China.

She got her B.A. in Chongqing Jianzhu University.

After two years work as a median officer in Shanghai, she went to Germany. She studies Magister in HHU Duesseldorf, major in Anglistics, Medieval Study and Information Science.

She was the production director of the film “Days Walking On” and producer of the film “love lives away”. Since 2005 she began to work as film producer and grafic-animation designer for WANGZHOU Film Production, which is founded by her husband Wang Dong and her.
Credit List

Lead Cast

Xiao Ping - Hsiao Joping
A Yi - Zhang Yi
Xiao Yu - Xiang Xiaoyu
Dandan - Ling Dandan
Tingting - Yu Linna

Supporting Cast

Wen Yanfen
Marcus Koeper
Shi Guowei
Li Di
Wang Bo
Wang Yufei
Huang Meng
Xu Taichong
Gui Qinying
Sun Heyang
Udo Irmler
Bridget Marie Leifeld
Bjarke Tetsuo Leifeld
Amelie Tsunami Leifeld
Oliver Kreis
David Kluge
Alexander Lugna
Alexander Hesener
Stephie
Lin Yan
Crew List

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Screenplay / Director</td>
<td>Wang Dong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Producer</td>
<td>Zhou Isabel Shuxue</td>
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<td>Cinematographer</td>
<td>Sebastian Jobst</td>
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<td>Post Production</td>
<td>Uli Esser</td>
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<td>Music</td>
<td>Wang Bo</td>
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<td>Foley</td>
<td>Wang Bo</td>
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<td>Sound</td>
<td>Wang Bo / Fu Shanshan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sound Mixer</td>
<td>Gordon Rijnders / Fu Shanshan</td>
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<td>Sound Assistant</td>
<td>Peng Cheng / Liang Hui</td>
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<td>Editor</td>
<td>Wang Dong / Sebastian Jobst</td>
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<tr>
<td>Piano</td>
<td>Teng Manman / Shino Watanabe</td>
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<td>Recording Studio</td>
<td>ETI, Hochschule für Musik, Detmold</td>
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<td>G.o.d. studios, Köln</td>
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Crew List

Location Supporting  - Shi Guowei / Yang Tingting
Site Supporting    - Yang Tingting / Wang Nan
Costumer           - Hsiao Joping / Zhou Isabel Shuxue
Casting Assistant  - Xiang Xiaoyu / Sun Heyang / Sebastian Jobst
Subtitle           - Zhou Isabel Shuxue / Sebastian Jobst
Translation        - Zhou Isabel Shuxue / Sebastian Jobst
Make-up            - Hsiao Joping
Graphic-Design     - Katja Nikolic
Website-Design     - Zhou Isabel Shuxue
Still Photography   - Alex Luna
Press-kit Proofreading - Kate Butkus
Music

Johann Sebastian Bach
Sinfonia 11 in G minor, BWV 797
Inventio 15 in B minor, BWV 786
Sinfonia 9 in F minor, BWV 795
Piano - Shino Watanabe

Ich folg dir gleichfalls BWV 245
Soprano - Hsiao Joping
Piano - Elzbieta Sukniewicz

Suse, liebe Suse, Brüderchen komm, tanz mit mir,
from Hänsel und Gretel
Musiker - Engelbert Humperdinck
Soprano - Hsiao Joping

Vocalise love lives away
Musiker - Wang Bo
Soprano - Xu Jingyi
Mezzo-Soprano - Luise Kimm
Piano - Teng Manman

Recording-Studios:
ETI, Hochschule für Musik, Detmold
Tonaufnahmestudio, ICEM Folkwang Hochschule

Soundtrack copyrighted. WANG DONG/ FH Dortmund 2008
### Technical Details

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<td>Screen Ratio</td>
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- Dong Wang /
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