

April witnesses wave of new directors' films

By Wan Xuming

April, a traditional off-season for films, becomes a stage for new directors and literary films this year.

Us and Them, a film directed by new director Rene Liu and starring Jing Boran and Zhou Dongyu, will be released on April 28. Telling the story of a young couple heading home for Spring Festival, the film focuses on young people's lives of wandering and their love stories in metropolises.

Seek McCartney, a film directed by Wang Chao and funded by Wuhan Film and Television Co., Ltd., will be released on April 13. Adapted from *Once in Tibet*, the film tells a story between a Chinese man and a Frenchman.

Among the international films to be released in April, *Isle of Dogs*, a stop-motion animated film directed by Wes Andersen, is one of the most anticipated apart from the commercial blockbusters *Ready Player One* and *Big Meets Bigger*. This animated film is from the perspective of a dog. It will be released nationwide on April 20.

Another imported film *Annihilation*, a science fiction film directed by Alex Garland, will be released on April 13.



Poster of *Us and Them*

Epitaphs today are not *muzhiming*

By Wan Jianhui

The past Qingming Festival (Tomb Sweeping Day) saw thousands of Wuhan citizens visit the tombs of their ancestors and commemorate the lives of the departed whose biographical accounts are inscribed on the grave markers. These epitaphs are commonly called "*muzhiming*" in Chinese. However, according to Wang Ran, a professor of archaeology from Wuhan University, and Zeng Pan, a researcher at the Hubei Provincial Museum, epitaphs are not the same thing as *muzhiming*.

Zeng said that *muzhiming* and today's epitaphs share much in common in that both

of them are biographical accounts of the deceased. The difference lies in the fact that epitaphs are brief inscriptions carved on grave stones above ground, while *muzhiming* is found inside the tomb, usually in the form of a subtle and elegant essay. *Muzhiming* is more like an introduction letter for the deceased in the underground world.

Muzhiming is comprised of two parts: *zhi* and *ming*. The *zhi* gives the name, the birthplace, and the life story of the deceased. *Ming* is an eulogy in rhyme. According to Wang, the earliest *muzhiming* dates back to the Spring and Autumn

Period (771 to 476 BC).

Initially, it appeared in the form of a brick placed in the tombs of the lower classes. The brick was usually carved with several characters indicating the name and birthplace of the deceased. The rituals of *muzhiming* were further developed in the late Eastern Han Period (25–220 AD) when the de facto ruler, Cao Cao, who opposed luxurious burial services, compelled people to place epitaphs on underground graves.

The practice of *muzhiming* gradually disappeared in the late Qing dynasty when China began to embrace modern burial practices.

2017 report of Wuhan citizens' reading habits

A report assessing the reading habits of Wuhan citizens was released to the public on April 7. The report shows that in 2017 the average Wuhan citizen read eight books and spent over two hours reading from any medium every day.

The statistics also show that 75.1% of Wuhan citizens bought books in 2017, with online purchases amounting to 47.8% of all book purchases.

Online or digital reading accounted for the majority of reading time. Of those interviewed, 87.5% said they love reading both digital materials and physical books. Over 70% of digital material readers are below 28 years of age. People read books or online materials mainly during their daily commute and at midday.

Three Wuhan authors among 2017 Influential Writers

By Zhou Manzhen



Three young authors from Wuhan, Li Xiuwen, Feiwo Sicun, and Ding Mo, recently made the list of Dangdang's Influential Writers of 2017.

Li was chosen as one of the influential novelists for his first collection of prose works, *Landscape Kasaka*. Having been busy travelling around over the past decade, Li wrote the book and recorded the emotion and dignity of ordinary people. Since its publication at the beginning of 2017, it has been well received and highly praised on almost all book reviews in 2017. It also won the Best Popular Works Award of the Year awarded by www.book.sina.com.cn.

Many readers said that they saw the reflections of themselves in the guard, vendor, umbrella mender, tinker, courier, and cleaner portrayed by Li, and gained courage to fight against life's difficulties.