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EXCLUSIVE LIMITED RUN!

*"The best new film I saw anywhere
in 2004."* – Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Chicago Reader*



THE WORLD

(SHI JIE)

Director: Jia Zhangke

China/Japan/France 2004 140 minutes

Cast: Zhao Tao, Chen Taisheng

*Cinemathèque Ontario,
SP. '05*

There is unlikely to be a more thrilling film this year than Jia's latest, an exhilarating and expansive, funny and anguished vision of the new China (and of, well, the world). Moving away from the northern provincial settings of his previous films, and extending his reach in every way, Jia interweaves the stories of several young people who work at the World Park on the outskirts of Beijing, a 114-acre stretch of detailed scale replicas of famous international landmarks (e.g. the Taj Mahal, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Eiffel Tower, London Bridge, the Pyramids). This enclosed, artificial setting – a kitsch version of the global village, edited to just its tourist "high points," consumable all in one monorail trip – provides the metaphor of forgery, fakery, and facsimile that connects many of the film's teeming subplots. At the centre of Jia's sprawling masterpiece is his muse Zhao Tao, who plays a dancer in the park's lavish "ethnic" extravaganzas, spectacles that sample the world's cultures for the delectation of tourists. Her relationship with a security guard smitten with a married designer whose company does cheap fashion knockoffs (more imitation, more fraudulence) provides the central story of Jia's complex narrative, in which every aside offers another instance of loss, dashed dreams, unreciprocated love. Interspersed with musical numbers, flash animated cell phone text messages, and unnerving tours of the World Park, the film reaches past audacity to a full-bodied and moving realism.

Jia Zhangke will be present for the screening on March 18.

Friday, March 18 8:15 p.m.

Sunday, March 20 3:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 19 8:15 p.m.

Thursday, March 24 6:30 p.m.

Patrons please note special ticket prices: \$7.25 (including GST) for seniors and members; \$11.50 for non-members.