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Title:
Projecting influence: Mapping Chinese films' global impact at film festivals

Abstract

Films (and film festivals) would seem an ideal way to project China's image internationally. Moving images, in engaging stores sanctioned by Beijing, seemed a highly effective way to enhance foreigners' positive attitudes towards the People's Republic. The reality has been different. When international film festivals in the 1980s started to take an interest in films from China they became occasions for the display of allegedly dissident views of Chinese society and history. Chinese government efforts to shape film selection rarely worked. Technological change – in the form of the digital camera and the Internet – has ensured in this century that the Chinas seen on global screens were far from the soft-power ideal officials in Beijing envision. This paper will draw on personal experience as well as published materials.