



Cinema/Chicago Education Program Screening: *Made In China*
(Director : Judi Krant)
2009, 87 minutes)
In English and Chinese (with subtitles), not rated

Please use the below synopsis, study ideas and questions, and helpful websites to lead your students in preparation and post-screening discussion. Following the film, students in the audience are required to respond to the screening with a one page essay that is sent to Cinema/Chicago.*

Synopsis

"Ever since I was young, I knew I was destined for great things," says Johnson. A self-styled entrepreneur, Johnson's heroes are the often unrecognized investors of novelty toys like the hand buzzer and the Whoopee Cushion. Brimming with can-do energy and confidence, this wide-eyed Texan hayseed travels to the mecca of low-cost manufacturing -China- to find a factory that can make his own novelty item, "a humorous domestic hygiene product" he hopes will put him right up there with the guy who invented fake dog poo. But when he gets sucked into a world of scammers and schemers, this eternal optimist will have to figure out just how far he's willing to pursue the American Dream.

Themes

determination, culture clash, the American Dream, invention, creativity, film and video.

Discussion questions

1. Johnson says, "Persistence is the secret to success. Procrastination is the secret to failure." Do you agree? What was a situation in your life where you procrastinated? What were the results? What was a situation where you persisted and what were the results?
2. Johnson speaks almost no Chinese; how does he communicate with the people he encounters in China? Have you ever had to communicate with someone who couldn't understand you? What did you do?
3. Johnson gets scammed, losing most of his money. Do you sympathize with him or do you feel he shouldn't have been so trusting of someone he had never met?
4. What does the American Dream mean to you? What does it mean to Johnson?
5. Have you ever been in a foreign country or an unfamiliar area (state, community, city, etc.)? What challenges did you face and what did you learn?
6. *Made in China* was made on a very small budget with limited time. How did it differ from other films you've seen in the theatre? Have you ever seen an "independent film" before?
7. How does Johnson change from the beginning of the film to the end?
8. What do you think of Johnson's invention? Did you think it was funny? Did you agree with Johnson that it was both useful and a novelty or not? Why?
9. The producer of the film, James Choi, will be speaking after the film. What do you think a producer does? What do you think his challenges were in making this film?
10. Johnson has a clear personal plan for success. Do you have a plan for success? Why or why not? If so, what is it?

Helpful websites

www.cinemachicago.org/education

www.micthemovie.com

http://www.metacafe.com/watch/3430234/made_in_china_official_trailer

<http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/97/dream/thedream.html>

*Teachers who do not facilitate the completion of this requirement will not be invited to attend future Education Program Screenings