



## I Want to Grow Old in China

Director: Sameer Farooq and Ursula Engel, Canada, 2008, 50 minutes

Welcome to Park Tuanjiehu in China's capital. Early each morning, it is host to a stunning multimedia spectacle performed by thousands of the city's elderly. From gymnastics to disco-dancing, bird training to singing, together they have a hunger for living. Intimate and character driven, the documentary follows four distinct groups as their lives and rituals unfold each morning.

*I Want to Grow Old in China* highlights the spontaneity, passion, diligence, and poetry created in the public spaces of Beijing, creating a unique situation where longevity meets performance. This film could not come at a better time as issues of aging populations are at the forefront of international debate. By following the stories of the park's most colourful figures, the film offers an alternative view of growing old.

*I Want to Grow Old in China* presents an alternative angle on China, enriching our understanding of one of the most discussed countries of the moment. The filmmakers take us deep into a world many of us have not had the chance to experience.

### FILMMAKERS IN ATTENDANCE

#### DIRECTORS BIOGRAPHIES

Sameer Farooq is originally trained as a cultural anthropologist, earning his Bachelor of Arts degree from McGill University. Following his studies, he accepted a post with the Canadian Embassy in Beijing, China. He continued his studies at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam, focusing on film and graphic design, earning a second degree in 2005. Sameer currently resides in Toronto and is a member of the documentary film collective Smoke Signal Projects. Along with a number of short films, Sameer has completed three previous

documentaries. He has exhibited and participated in film festivals in Switzerland, The Netherlands, Belgium, Canada, and China.

Ursula Engel was born in 1980 in Basel, Switzerland. In 2001 she lived in Beijing for eight months to study the Chinese language at the Central Academy of Art and Design. In 2001 she started studying film and graphic design at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. After her graduation in 2005 she interned as an editing assistant at Point de Vue, a Swiss film production company. In 2005 she founded the film collaborative Smoke Signal Projects with Stijn Deklerck and Sameer Farooq. She currently lives between Basel, Switzerland, and Utrecht, Holland, where she works as a freelance graphic designer and documentary filmmaker.

#### PRECEDED BY:

##### **Requiem for Mrs. H.**

Director: Philipp Hartmann, Germany, 2007, 5 minutes

An old woman has died. Workers move her things out of her apartment and take off the wallpaper. A requiem in super-8 images with the soprano aria of Johannes Brahms' *German Requiem*.

##### **Steel Homes**

Director: Eva Weber, Scotland, 2008, 10 minutes

Self-storage units are windows into human histories; the silent cells with their discarded objects and dust-covered furniture are inscribed with past dreams, secret hopes, and lives we cannot let go of.

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