

FEAR

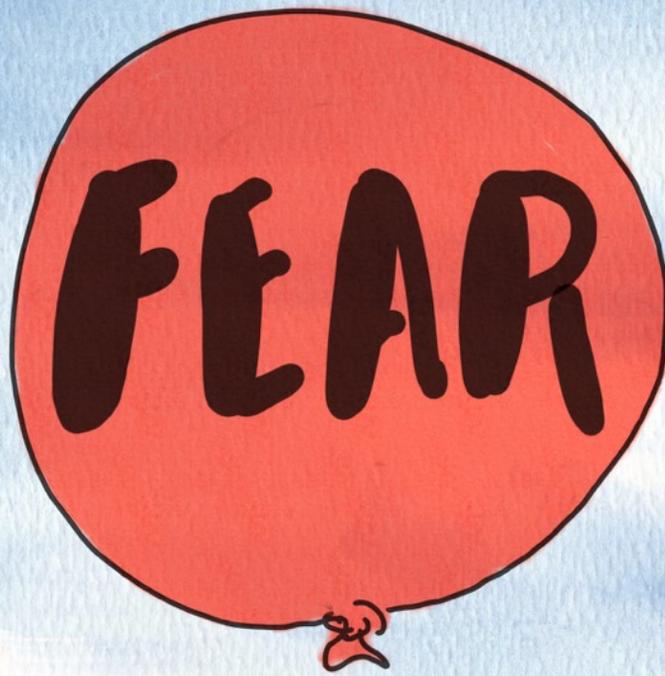
SOMETIMES, THE
ONLY THING TO FEAR
IS FEAR ITSELF.



A Short
documentary by
DAWN DREYER
&
ANDREA LOVE



CRACKED WINDOW STUDIOS PRESENTS
FEAR FEATURING **DR. ZENGLI CHEN**
ANIMATED BY **ANDREA LOVE** PRODUCED BY
DAWN DREYER MUSIC BY **ERIC KUHN** ©2016



A SHORT DOCUMENTARY By
DAWN DREYER & ANDREA LOVE

SCREENING INFO

WHOOPI'S SHORTS

This animated shorts program, curated by Whoopi Goldberg, showcases imaginative storytelling and captivating craft from around the world.

WORLD PREMIERE

Sunday, 4/17 ● 12:30 PM ● Festival Hub 6th Floor ● Spring Studios ● 50 Varick Street

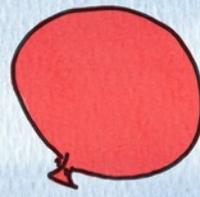
1ST PRESS AND INDUSTRY SCREENING

Monday, 4/18 ● 4:15 PM ● Regal 07 ● Regal Battery Park Stadium 11 ● 102 North End Avenue

FILM CONTACT

Dawn Dreyer ● 919.682.1690 ● dawn@bipolargirl.doc.com

SYNOPSIS



TAG LINE

Sometimes, the only thing to fear is fear itself.

SHORT

Dr. Zenglo Chen was four when his parents disappeared, victims of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Through Zenglo's own words and exquisitely crafted hand-drawn and stop-motion animation, *Fear* considers the tensions between fear and safety; faith and psychology; Chinese and American identity; and acceptance and healing.

LONG

Dr. Zenglo Chen remembers his childhood in Beijing at the height of the Chinese Cultural Revolution:

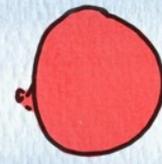
"I start my depression when I was close to 4 years old. My parents were prosecuted and they'd been taken away by the Chinese authority. My younger sister who was 12 years old then took care of me [in my] daily life. She even had hard time to take care herself. I felt tremendous fear: hopeless, helpless, and paralyzed."

Now 50, Zenglo has lived exactly half his life as Chinese and half as American. Unable to shed his sense of hyper-vigilance and feelings of abandonment, he experiences two decades of severe depression and recurring suicidal thoughts. In pursuit of self-understanding, Zenglo becomes an organizational psychologist. He simultaneously explores a second path, crossing continents and studying wide-ranging religious traditions in search of a faith that might offer him a sense of security and release from suffering.

Told in Zenglo's own words, with exquisitely crafted hand-drawn and stop-motion animation, *Fear* considers the consequences of deep fear that outlives its utility during one life phase, and morphs into a dangerous entity of its own. Zenglo speaks with grace and humor from the midst of his journey, sharing his learned wisdom, small victories and ordinary joys.

Fear is a stand-alone short film and a part of the feature-length animated documentary *Bipolar Girl Rules the World and Other Stories*. This animated documentary feature and trans-media community engagement campaign target the stigma and shame surrounding mental illness.

BIOS & CREDITS



DAWN DREYER – DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

For the past two decades, Dawn Dreyer has worked as a writer, mixed-media documentary maker, teacher, and advocate, embracing the challenges and joys of sustained collaboration as essential to her creative practice. In 2005, Dawn produced the radio story, *The Three Furies: Poverty, Addiction, and Mental Illness*, about the women she met while teaching writing at a residential treatment center in Durham, North Carolina. In the piece, heard by thousands of listeners on WUNC and stations across the country, she spoke openly about her own experiences with mental illness.

She is currently producing and directing the feature length animated documentary *Bipolar Girl Rules the World and Other Stories*. *Fear* is both a stand-alone short film and one of the stories that make up this feature. The film was presented as a work-in-progress at the Cucalorus Film Festival (2013) and Alice Fest (2013, 2015). Dawn also includes selections from the film in her performance documentary, *Listen/Speak*, which she has presented at conferences on mental illness, universities, and art therapy programs (2014-16).

Since 2000, Dawn has been deeply involved with the Durham documentary community, supporting and promoting the work of both professional and emerging artists. Dawn coordinated public events and directed the Certificate in Documentary Arts program at the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, home of the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival (2000-07). She served as the founding chair of the Southern Documentary Fund's board (2002-07). Dawn left Duke to accept a nine-month arts residency at Pendle Hill, near Philadelphia. When she returned to Durham, she founded Cracked Window Studios. Dawn consults on a variety of projects, most notably as assistant producer on the Emmy-nominated documentary *Private Violence* (Sundance 2014/HBO).

ANDREA LOVE – DIRECTOR/ANIMATOR

Andrea Love is a freelance animator and artist living in Port Townsend, Washington, where she is well known for her folksy animations about farming and woodworking. Local demand for her unique brand of storytelling has propelled what was initially a side hustle into a full-time business. Originally from Durham, North Carolina, Love graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Hampshire College in 2010, concentrating in film studies and sustainable agriculture. Her passion for both film and visual arts led her down the road of animation, where she discovered a particular passion for animated documentaries. With a steadfast commitment to traditional hand crafts, Love fuses numerous self-taught techniques including frame-by-frame stop-motion and hand-drawn animation. Her work has been screened in a diverse range of venues from local fundraisers to the North Carolina Museum of Art. See more of Andrea's work at andreaanimates.com.

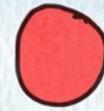
MUSIC: Eric Andrew Kuhn

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: Jasmine Woodyard Bowles

CONSULTING PRODUCER: Bebe Smith, MSW, LCSW

ASSISTANT STORY EDITOR: Jenny Morgan

FROM THE FILMMAKERS



DAWN DREYER

I met the star of *Fear*, Dr. Zenglo Chen, in a therapy group. In one session, he bounded up out of his chair and declared, "Dawn, you are my sister!" This kind of outburst was unusual, both for Zenglo and the group. I didn't (yet) feel a similar sense of kinship with Zenglo, but I was pleased and curious. We decided to meet for coffee.

Zenglo knew I was working on a documentary exploring the experience of living with mental illness, including my own. We'd discussed the idea of interviewing him for the film. A few minutes into our conversation, he started talking about his childhood in Beijing, China, during the Cultural Revolution. After a couple of sentences, I told him to stop. He could tell me the rest of the story when I had my recording equipment. A few days later, that's where we began our conversation:

"I start my depression when I was close to 4 years old. My parents were prosecuted and they'd been taken away by the Chinese authority...."

I immediately knew I had a film and where it would begin.

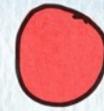
Many of my creative decisions in my documentary projects (including *Fear*) are driven by how much I love voices. I love variations in cadence and pronunciation, the little stumbles of "ums" and "like y'knows," the places where language fractures and falls apart and then begins to rebuild itself. I mourn the breakdown between how we talk and where we're from, the layers of specificity washed away on the airwaves of newscaster homogenization, bolstered by the too common belief that speaking with an accent or using non-standard English somehow relates to intelligence.

I am a very wordy girl. Learning to listen without interrupting has meant resisting every bit of socialization I've received since I could talk. I learned to hunt for gaps in conversation like baby animals learn to hunt for food. To not respond during interviews with even an acknowledging "mm hmmm" nearly killed me at first, until I experienced the pain of one too many perfect edits ruined by my empathetic mumbblings.

I relish the challenge of letting silence hang, unfettered by my insights or follow up questions. I've learned to silently count to ten or touch the tip of my tongue to the roof of my mouth as I wait for the power of silence to take hold. It's worth it to experience what can happen on the other side of silence in an interview: the subtle shift in tone when someone strays from the same story they've told hundreds of times. Both the storyteller and I feel a palpable curiosity about what might come next.

I also learned early on that the parts of people's stories that felt wobbly and imperfect - where the narrative wasn't yet honed or polished - are the places to return to, gently, during the course of the interview. And that the telling of these stories forged an intimacy between storyteller and interviewer that was not to be taken for granted. Sometimes it feels as if the storyteller has been waiting a lifetime for someone to stop and listen to their particular story.

FROM THE FILMMAKERS



The key to this dynamic lies not in any validation that I, as documentary maker, confer upon the subject. It's the profoundly simple act of listening. Its power reverberates twice over as the storyteller feels what it is to be deeply heard. That said, I'm aware of my capacity for harm. There is the power I wield as the one behind the camera or microphone, and in front of my screen as an editor. Or, for example, my white privilege when people of color are the subjects of my work. Still, I persist in moving forward because I believe close listening holds the potential to be a sacred exchange, both for the storyteller and listener.

ANDREA LOVE

My involvement with *Fear* began in 2014, when Dawn Dreyer reached out to me with Zenglo Chen's story and her vision for *Bipolar Girl Rules the World and Other Stories*. I was both intrigued by the opportunity to tell such a powerful story, and intimidated by the responsibility of representing experiences that were so different from my own. Luckily, Dawn has tremendous faith in my art, and I decided that if Zenglo could find the courage to share his story, so could I. I am so thankful that I did, because I could not have anticipated how rewarding this process would be.

I am always drawn to things that are handmade. Thus, I like to use recognizable materials (like wood, clay, and wool) and not be afraid to show imperfections. I aim for a sweet spot, which for me looks like artful sleight of hand with a rough polish. While animation is often used to exaggerate movement and suspend reality, it can conversely be used to draw attention inward, to our more human qualities. The animation in *Fear* goes in both of these directions. There are hand-drawn abstract concepts and dream-like sequences, woven in with more realistic stop-motion that pays homage to the traditional documentary form. I animated *Fear* over 5 months, with the intention to approach the content with respect, do my research, take my time, and enjoy the process. I am very privileged to have had the opportunity to put my stamp on Zenglo's story.



DAWN DREYER
PHOTO CREDIT: JUSTIN CLARK



ANDREA LOVE
PHOTO CREDIT: NICHOLAS JOHNSON

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



FEAR'S MISSION

- reduce personal shame and isolation, inspire connection, and strengthen community for people who live with mental illness and their loved ones
- confront and dismantle cultural stigma
- educate and inform professionals (teachers, youth workers, law enforcement) and policy makers whose actions and decisions impact people with mental illness
- promote empathy and understanding around mental illness in the wider culture
- create an absorbing experience of unforgettable voices and visual artistry for all audiences

I BELIEVE STORIES SAVE LIVES.

DAWN DREYER

Fear is our story, Zenglo's and mine.

Stories create opportunities for individual and collective transformation. Stories push back hard against discrimination and replace ideology with empathy. One individual's willingness to be vulnerable can open up a whole world for countless people who are otherwise convinced they are completely alone in their desperation and fear. Zenglo's story will have this kind of impact.

I have lived with depression and either ADD or hypomania (depending on which psychiatrist you ask) for over two decades. Looking back, I can't draw a line between the suffering caused by my symptoms and my shame, and the attendant isolation. The powerful cultural stigma and outright discrimination against people who live with mental illness continues to create barriers to treatment both in terms of access and options. The stigma may become as damaging as the illness itself.

It is not always safe for those of us with mental illness to tell our stories. The stigma keeps many of us silent. Yet telling my story and listening to the stories of others sustains me. The connections I've made through this work make it much harder for me to disappear, even when I think I want to. I'm incredibly grateful to Zenglo for his willingness to speak with such vulnerability and for his trust in me, as a friend and as a filmmaker. I feel fortunate to be able to do this work.

Fear is my debut as a film director/producer. Making a film appealed to me not only because of my excitement about experimenting with the tools of a new medium and the seductive and expansive power of visual narratives, but because I knew I could find a larger audience for a film. It wasn't about vanity but about impact. I've been strategizing our community engagement plan since before we started production.

My goal with this work is to leverage the power of visual storytelling to create a communal experience for audiences that offers multiple chances for connection. The world premiere of *Fear* at the Tribeca Film Festival feels like we're definitely heading in that direction in a powerful way.

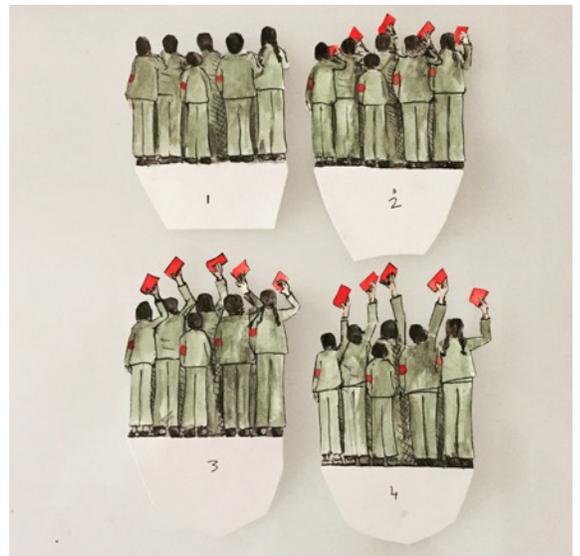
FILM STILLS

photo/art credit: Andrea Love



FILM STILLS

photo/art credit: Andrea Love



TRAILER



1 MINUTE TRAILER

<https://vimeo.com/159029394>

SOCIAL MEDIA

WEB
feardoc.com

INSTAGRAM
[@feardoc](https://www.instagram.com/feardoc)

FACEBOOK
[facebook.com/cwstudios](https://www.facebook.com/cwstudios)

TWITTER:
[@docufemme](https://twitter.com/docufemme)



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