# Lou Ye's 'An Unfinished Film': A Poignant Reflection on China's COVID Crisis



**An Unfinished Film by Lou Ye: A Layered Exploration of China's COVID Crisis**

Chinese filmmaker Lou Ye's latest work, "An Unfinished Film," premiered at the Cannes Film Festival on May 16, 2024. The film intricately weaves various genres and styles to depict the impact of China's COVID-19 crisis.

Set primarily in a production studio near Wuhan, Lou's narrative begins in 2019 when a film director unearths unfinished footage from a decade-old project. The story, portraying the unrequited love of a gay man, was initially abandoned due to pressure to alter its content. Inspired by the rediscovery, the director resolves to complete the film, incorporating a new storyline reflecting ten years later.

As the cast and crew embark on this renewed project, the COVID-19 pandemic strikes, interrupting their progress. The production's forced halt under lockdown adds profound layers to the film, transforming it from a sophisticated comedy to a zombie apocalypse-like scenario. Ultimately, it evolves into a deeply personal and collective documentary of national trauma.

Using split screens and real smartphone footage from Wuhan, Lou captures the lived experiences of the pandemic. A notable scene includes the lead actor's emotional video call with his wife, highlighting the intensified emotional communication induced by their separation and fear of the virus.

"An Unfinished Film" stands out for its profound narrative, mirroring the unfinished nature of lives amid the pandemic, and commemorates the collective trauma experienced globally.

**Key Facts:**- **Director:** Lou Ye - **Premiere:** May 16, 2024, Cannes Film Festival - **Setting:** Near Wuhan, China, pre- and during COVID-19 pandemic - **Genre:** Docu-realist film exploring themes of unfinished projects and collective trauma.