



Name in English: Arthur Dong

Name in Chinese: 曾奕田

Name in Pinyin: Zēng Yitián

Gender: Male

Birth Year: 1954

Birth Place: San Francisco, California

Current location: Los Angeles, California

Filmmaker and Gay Rights Activist

Profession: Documentary Filmmaker

Education: Bachelor of Arts, Film, San Francisco State University, summa cum laude, 1982; Directing Fellow, American Film Institute Center for Advanced Film and Television Studies, 1984

Awards: 2008, Historymaker Award, Chinese American Museum; 2008, OCA Pioneer Award, Organization of Chinese Americans; 2007, Alumnus of the Year, San Francisco State University; 2007, Best Documentary, Golden Horse Awards; 2004, Paul Monette Award, Monette Horwitz Trust; 1998, GLAAD Media Award, Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation; 1997, OUT 100 Award, Out Magazine; 1997, Asian American Media Award, Asian CineVision; 1997, GLAAD Media Award, Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation; 1997, Asian Media Award, Asian American International Film Festival; 1997, Certificate of Merit, San Francisco International Film Festival; 1997, Golden Space Needle Award, Seattle International Film Festival; 1997, Best Director & Filmmaker's Trophy, Sundance Film Festival; 1994, Special Jury Recognition, Sundance Film Festival; 1994, Teddy Award, Berlin International Film Festival; 1994, Peabody Award, Henry W. Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Georgia

Contributions:

Arthur Dong is an openly gay, award-winning, Chinese American filmmaker and documentarian known for exploring social issues affecting Asian Americans or the lesbian and gay community. He started making his first film at 15 on his bedroom floor in San Francisco's Chinatown. "Public," a five-minute film about a child's reaction to violence and oppressive societal norms was shot in Super 8 and won the first prize in the California High School Film Festival. Encouraged by one of the festival judges he entered the film program at San Francisco State University but dropped out and spent the next six years wandering around doing work as a banker, social worker, accountant, artist, and musician.

In the late 1970s he visited China with a video camera. On the long flight back to the US as he mentally edited his films he realized that he really loved filmmaking and decided to return to university studies. For his senior project, Dong chose to film his mother in "Sewing Woman" tracing her life from an arranged marriage in China to a San Francisco garment factory. Dong's sister, Lorraine wrote the script. "Sewing Woman" was

nominated for an Oscar for short documentary in 1983. Instead of signing with a distributor Dong opened up his own company, DeepFocus Productions. Among his notable films exploring Chinese American history was *Forbidden City, U.S.A.* (1989) that looked at Chinese American nightclubs in 1940s San Francisco and *Hollywood Chinese* (2007), a visual and cultural history of the Chinese in American feature films from the days of stereotyped yellowface white actors to the eras of Bruce Lee, Nancy Kwan, B.D. Wong, Justin Lin, David Henry Hwang, and Amy Tan.

For the first PBS documentary series about gays and lesbians, “The Question of Equality” he directed the 1995 premiere documentary “Out Rage '69” which explored New York City’s Stonewall Riot, that marked the start of the modern gay rights movement. Other of his films that explored homosexuality included, “Family Fundamentals” (2002), a look at America’s culture wars as experienced by three conservative Christian families with gay children, “Licensed to Kill” (1997), a study of murderers who killed gay men which won the Best Director and Filmmakers Trophy at the Sundance Film Festival, and “Coming Out Under Fire” (1994), an examination of the World War II origins of the military’s policies governing gay and lesbian service members that won a Peabody Award and an Emmy nomination.

Arthur Dong served as a governor of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and is currently on the Documentary Branch Executive Committee. He also represents the Academy on the National Film Preservation Board. He is now an advisory board member for “The Fair Use Project of the Center for Internet & Society” at Stanford Law School.

External Links:

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0232472/>

http://www.sfsu.edu/~sfsomag/archive/spring_08/pictures.html

http://www.nichibeitimes.com/articles/stories.php?subaction=showfull&id=1208474301&archive=&start_from=&ucat=3&