

The background features a large, semi-circular fan shape. Inside the fan, there is a faint, light-colored map of China, showing its geographical outline and some internal regional divisions. The fan's ribs are visible, creating a radial pattern. The overall color scheme is light and muted, with a pale yellowish-green background.

***Flight of the Red Balloon and
the Poetics of Urban Flows***

Wenchi Lin 09/22/2016

I. Hou Hsiao-hsien

* About Hou Hsiao-hsien

- * starting as scriptwriter and director of comedies in the 70s
- * beginning to make films seriously in the 80s with *Boys from Fengguei* (1983) and a dozen more films about Taiwan's society and history.
- * Famous films include: *City of Sadness* (1989), *Flowers of Shanghai* (1998), *The Assassin* (2015)

* About Hou's Early Style:

- * Set in rural Taiwan of the past
- * long takes and stationed camera
- * non-professional actors
- * non-dramatic narrative





III. Four layers of meanings in Hou's Poetics

- * Narrative of **individual initiation**
- * Narrative of Taiwan
family/society/history/nation
- * Narrative of **life/existence**
- * (Self-reflexive) Narrative of film art

VI. Hou's new poetics after *The Puppetmaster* (1993)

* Subject Matter:

- * Shift from rural space to urban space
- * Juxtaposition of different times or temporalities
- * Interest in **Cultural flows (replacing landscapes with culture-scapes)**
- * Emphasis on human connection rather than social oppositions

* Form:

- * Complex use of sound
- * Creative cinematography
- * Greater sense of **self-reflexivity**
- * **Intertextuality** as key narrative strategy

François Margolin et Kristina Larsen présentent



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JULIETTE BINOCHÉ SIMON ITEANU

le voyage du
**BALLON
ROUGE**

UN FILM DE HOU HSIAO HSIEN

HIPPOLYTE GRARDOT FANG SONG LOUISE MARGOLIN

Produit et coproduit par Hippolyte Gardot et Louise Margolin. Réalisé par Hou Hsiao Hsien. Scénario et dialogues de Hou Hsiao Hsien et François Margolin. Musique de Jean-Yves Escoffier. Montage de Louise Margolin. Costumes de Louise Margolin. Décor de Louise Margolin. Photographie de Hou Hsiao Hsien. Son de Hou Hsiao Hsien. Montage son de Louise Margolin. Effets spéciaux de Louise Margolin. Titres de Louise Margolin. Distribution en France par BNCI. Distribution internationale par BNCI. © 2007 BNCI. Tous droits réservés.



What is the film about?

V. Subject Matters of *Red Balloon*

- * About *The Red Balloon* (1956; by by Albert Lamorisse)
- * About Suzanne, Simon, and Song Fang
- * About cultural differences and connection (East/West)
- * About life (fast/slow, heavy/light)
- * About art (Museum d'Orsay, puppetry and film, and song)



What are the film's
distinctive formal features?

VI. Cinematography of *Red Balloon*

* Pan shots

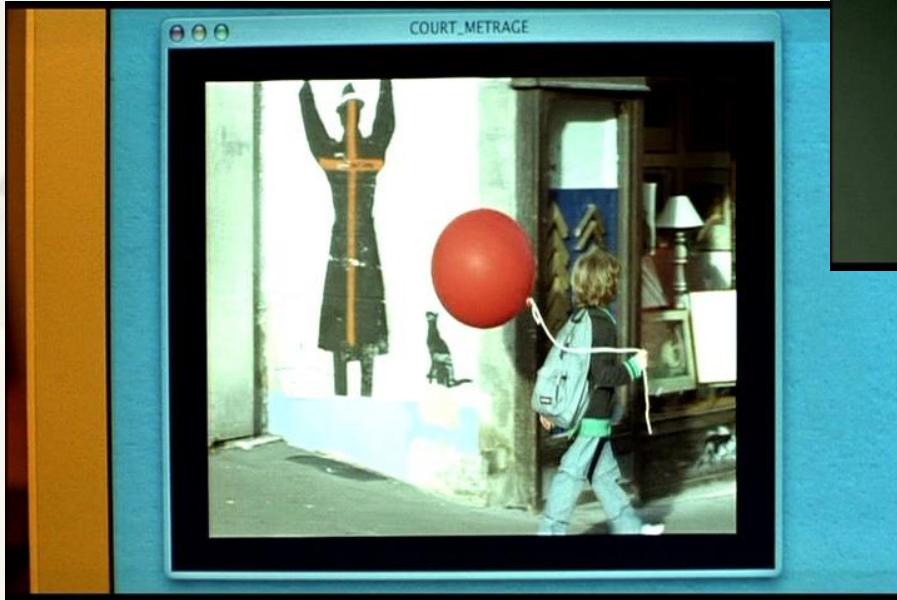
- * Resembling the balloon's movement
- * Adopting the balloon's viewpoint
- * Panning as link and passage (or memory)
- * Providing a stronger sense of connection

* Layered shots (**glass montage**) for urban realism and symbolism

- * Simon (and Louise) playing pin balls
- * Song Fung and Simon in the café
- * Suzanne in the car

* Shots of reflection

- * Suzanne's reflections as the balloon's visit
- * Reflection on the painting of "Le Ball" highlighting the connection of times in culture



















VII. Sound in *Red Balloon*

* Voice

- * Contrast of Suzanne's dramatic voice-over and Ah Zhong's poetic voice-over
- * Contrast of Suzanne's high pitch fast speed and Song Fung's low and slow voice

* Piano (mainly Li Guo-yuan's theme piece)

- * Slow temporality (vs. urban fast temporality)
- * Passage to personal/inner world
- * Link to memories
- * Sonic representation of the flight of the balloon
- * (The tuning as) Metonymy of Suzanne's (out-of-tune) life

* Song (Camille's "Tchin Tchin")

- * Expression of the film's message
- * Cultural translation (from a Taiwanese song)
- * Reversed *mise en abyme* (French jazz-styled song version of Hou's film; juxtaposition of multi-temporalities)
- * Exhilarated "flight" of the balloon (as birds)

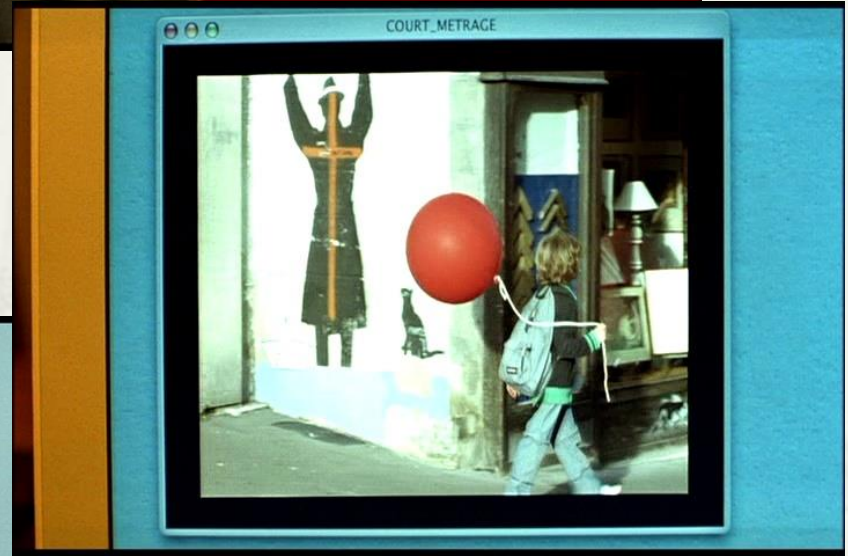
VIII. Self-reflexivity in *Red Balloon* (1)

* Song Fung's filmmaking

- * Making "Red Balloon"
- * The camera and shooting scenes
- * Green balloon/Red balloon (digital processing)

* Many versions of "Red Balloon"

- * "Red Balloon": the French short film by Albert Lamorisse (1956)
- * The street painting in Paris
- * "Red Balloon" the Chinese DV film by Song Fung (in the making)
- * Song Fang and Louise with Simon
- * "Chin Chin": the French song
- * "Der Ball/Le Ballon": the Swiss painting by Felix Vallotton (1899)
- * "Chin Chin": the French song (adaptation of the Taiwanese song "Forgotten Times")
- * *Flight of the Red Balloon*: the film by the Taiwanese director (2007)





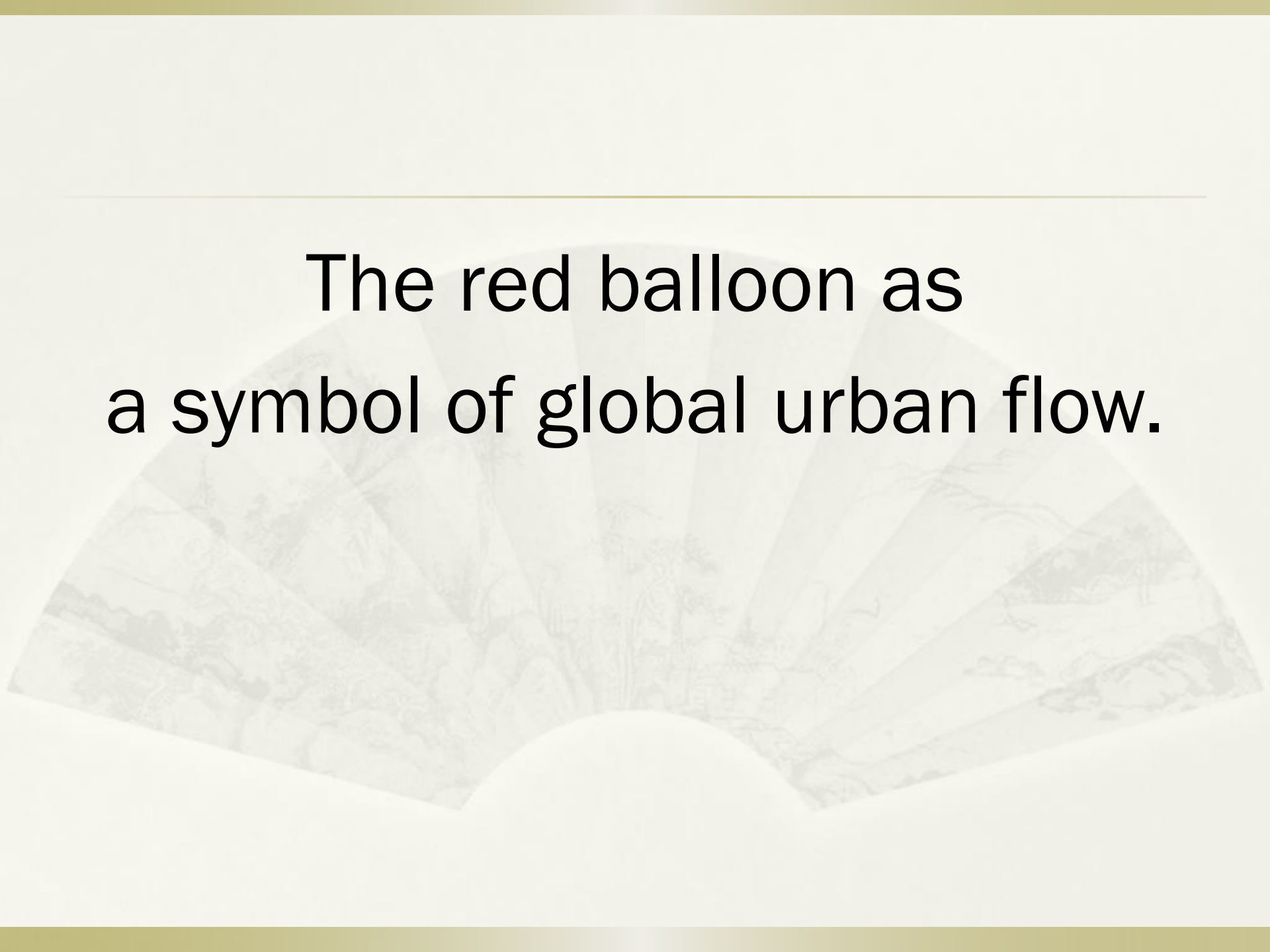
VIII. Self-reflexivity in *Red Balloon* (2)

* Puppetry

- * Suzanne's puppetry
- * The puppetry sculpture on the pillar in the park
- * Taiwanese glove puppetry
- * Suzanne's father's puppetry
- * Movies (Song Fung's DV film, the balloon in Hou's film, and Hou's film)
- * The moving bridge
- * Memories
- * Baby Sitting/motherhood
- * Teaching
- * Life in the city



The red balloon as
a symbol of global urban flow.



IX. Other meanings of the red balloon

- * **of childhood:** a toy, a companion (Song Fung, Louise), bright color, unbound,
- * **of memory:** nostalgia of the good old time, Tsai Chin's song "Times Forgotten, "Thin Thin"
- * **of history:** the past that is no more but lingers, a French film, Chinese Culture , family history
- * **of city:** a perspective from the sky, lifted (space), from outside (culture)

- * **of temporality:** progression of time (change), continuity of time (the past that lingers in the air), multi-temporalities (birds and airplanes, balloons) ,
- * **of life:** a reflection on urban life style through contrast (movement), the migratory nature of modern life (translation), the (lost) lightness and tranquility of being (existence; red balloon vs. red traffic/car lights and signs of restriction)
- * **of art:** an old film, a painting, a DV film, art and technology of movie making, a form of puppetry, the translation of art/culture
- * **Of culture:** translation, visits, symbol of happiness