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LEFTOVER WOMEN PREMIERES ON INDEPENDENT LENS MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2020 ON PBS AND PBS.ORG

Documentary Follows the Struggle of Young Women in China Facing Societal and Familial Pressure to Marry



(San Francisco, CA) — China's former one-child policy has resulted in a severe demographic imbalance, a country that today has 30 million more men than women. Facing pressure from a government that approaches this ratio as a threat to social stability, and receiving scrutiny from parents who believe that only marriage will create lifelong security for their daughters, unmarried young women in China grapple with these realities, their own goals, and being labeled with the derogatory term that gives the film its name: "sheng nu" or **Leftover Women**.

With the personal stories of three women, award-winning filmmakers Shosh Shlam and Hilla Medalia provide intimate access to experiences with dating and family, and incorporate themes of sexism and societal change, into the documentary premiering on *Independent Lens* Monday, February 10, 2020, 10:00-11:00 PM ET ([check local listings](#)) on PBS, PBS.org and the PBS Video App.

Leftover Women explores one facet of a social reality addressed in-depth by *Independent Lens* programming this season: the ramifications of the former one-child policy. The acclaimed documentary *One Child Nation*, airing in March, outlines the history and propaganda behind the massive gender imbalance that so-called "leftover women" grapple with today.

In China, as single women search for "Mr. Right," they struggle to stay true to their personal and professional ambitions amid pressure from their families, friends, and a government that launched a state-sponsored campaign to stigmatize unwed women. *Leftover Women* follows three successful women — Qiu Hua Mei, a lawyer; Xu Min, who works in public radio; and Gai Qi, an assistant college professor — who, despite thriving careers, are labeled "leftover women" or educated, professional women in their mid-20s and '30s who are not married.

Xu Min's parents spend their weekends at "marriage markets" looking for viable candidates. The eldest of the three women, Gai Qi challenges traditional views of relationships and marriage, and faces disapproval from a partner's parents because of her age. Meanwhile, lawyer Qiu Hua Mei was the first in her village to get an education, yet her family sees her as a failure, and her pursuit of a partner seems futile after a crushing interview with a dating counselor suggests



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she lower her standards. Their individual challenges expose fault lines within families, and touch on virtually universal truths about realities and attitudes faced by women worldwide.

The documentary premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival and received awards from the Philadelphia Film Festival, EBS International Documentary Festival Seoul and DocAviv. *Leftover Women* explores long-standing societal ideas around women, marriage, and family that reflect traditions and expectations not only in China, but also around the world.

Visit the [Leftover Women](#) page on *Independent Lens* for more information about the film, and follow the hashtag #LeftoverWomenFilmPBS for discussion on Twitter.

About the Filmmakers

Shosh Shlam

Shosh Shlam's *Last Journey into Silence* (2003) won Best Documentary at the Lublin Film Festival. Her next film, *Be Fruitful and Multiply* (2005), broadcast on Channel 2 in Israel, ZDF and other European TV channels. *Good Garbage* (2008) won Best Documentary at the Shanghai Film Festival in China, FICA Film Festival in Brazil, while *Web Junkie* won Best Documentary Honorable Mention at the Jerusalem Film Festival and Best Documentary in TRT Turkey. It premiered at Sundance Film Festival (2014) and was theatrically released in NY, LA, and Toronto, while airing on BBC, ARTE, PBS and on many other networks. Shosh holds an MA in Comparative Literature from Bar Ilan University. She also graduated from the Theatre Department at Tel Aviv University, and studied at New York's School of Visual Arts.

Hilla Medalia

Hilla Medalia is a Peabody Award-winning filmmaker and producer who has also received four Emmy® nominations. Her projects have garnered critical acclaim and screened internationally in theaters and on television including HBO, MTV, BBC and ARTE. Her range of titles include *To Die in Jerusalem* (2007; HBO), *After the Storm* (2009; MTV), *Numbered* (2012; ARTE), *Dancing in Jaffa* (2013; Tribeca, IFC Sundance selects), *Web Junkie* (2014; Sundance Film Festival, POV, BBC), *The Go-Go Boys* (2014; Cannes Film Festival), *Censored Voices* (2015; Sundance Film Festival and Berlinale), *Muhi - Generally Temporary* (2017; San Francisco Film Festival, Hot Docs), *The Oslo Diaries* (2018; Sundance, HBO), *Transkids* (2019; yesDocu) and *Leftover Women* (2019; Tribeca, ARTE). Hilla is a member of the American Academy of Film and Television. Hilla holds an M.A. from Southern Illinois University.

CREDITS

Directed by
Produced by
Executive Producers

Shosh Shlam and Hilla Medalia
Hilla Medalia and Shosh Shlam
Vesna Cudic
Mati Kochavi
Maya Kochavi
Adi Kochavi
Yona Wiesenthal
Guy Lavie



About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS Monday nights at 10:00 PM. The acclaimed series, with Lois Vossen as executive producer, features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by ITVS, the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding from PBS, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more visit pbs.org/independentlens. Join the conversation: facebook.com/independentlens and on Twitter [@IndependentLens](https://twitter.com/IndependentLens).

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