

Netflix Buys Chinese film “Us and Them”

Netflix has acquired the worldwide streaming rights to Chinese romance blockbuster “Us and Them”, the directorial debut of Taiwanese singer-actress Rene Liu Ruo-ying. Its symbolic significance transcends its literal importance. Media giants may just be the answer to Chinese films securing a place in the global market as they encounter marketing challenges in the overseas.

“Us and Them” faced disputes over distribution and screening when it was premiered. The romantic drama subsequently grossed RMB 1.3 billion as of this day. Netflix is said to have acquired multi-territory rights outside Mainland China to “Us and Them” with USD 4 million. This acquisition has offered new insights to the future of Chinese language films. That is to say, Netflix as a global streaming platform, aims for film quality. Another move of significance is when Netflix announced its removal from the Chinese market at the opening of the Cannes Film Festival, at the same time, the pick-up of “Us and Them”. The unconventional plan sparked speculations on a strategic arrangement.

After years of failed attempt to tap into the Chinese market, Netflix was on the verge of abandoning hope amidst China’s harsh censorship regulations. Last year, the company negotiated collaboration initiatives with Chinese video content leaders. It signed a licensing deal with popular online video streaming platform iQIYI, purchased overseas rights to a number of Youku online drama series, and reached partnership deals with Tencent Video.

As for films, there was no word from Netflix after it had acquired the rights to iQiyi’s remake of US TV action drama “Chosen”. Acquiring “Us and Them”, the billion-dollar-grossing romance film, is a ground-breaking step of major significance to Netflix and Chinese cinema.