

FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

Film Comment

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FESTIVALS/SUNDANCE: The Sweet Smell of Success

Wherefore art thou, indie?

by Amy Taubin



Dark Matter (pictured at top), an elegant debut feature by the distinguished opera director Chen Shi-zheng was the strongest of the fiction films I saw. It too was based on a horrific true story, this one about a Chinese science Ph.D. candidate who ran amok on the University of Iowa campus. Rising Chinese cinema star Liu Ye is moving and convincing as the young physicist whose mind is on fire and who becomes undone when a jealous thesis advisor destroys his project and potential career. Let's just say that, at Sundance, the narrative of mediocre authority figures ostracizing brilliant loners who don't know how to play the game had resonance beyond the world of advanced physics.