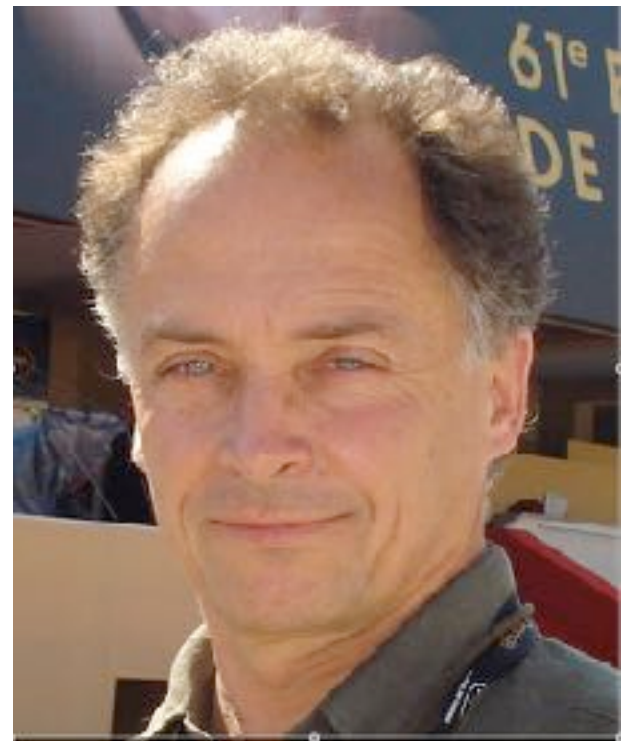


**Demystifying ethnographic filmmaking between the
UK and China:**
in the case of Phil Agland's *Beyond the Clouds* (1994)

Dr George Guo
Channel 4 Then and Now 23-4 September 2022



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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sHtdc5qOXLU&t=1478s>

International documentary filmmakers and the PRC before Agland

- Chris Marker - *Sunday in Peking* (1956)
- Joris Ivens - *How Yukong Moved the Mountains* (1972-1974)
- Michelangelo Antonioni - *Chung Kuo, Cina* (1972)
- Masashi Sada - *Yangtze* (1981)
- Carma Hinton - *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* (1995)



Agland's approach to representing modern China

- The individual and his or her relationship with the people in their lives
- The story of an old town surrounded by a new town



China's documentary filmmaking in the 1990s

- Journalistic vs novelistic documentary
- The influence of Frederick Wiseman and 'Direct Cinema'
- The debate over the 'human spirit' on the eve of China's rapid marketisation



Agland's novelistic filming in *Beyond the Clouds*

- Cluster of stories with Dr Tang's surgery at the centre
- Reduced presence of the camera
- Below the eyeline close-up shots
- Reduced amount of subtitles
- The influence of David Lean and 'optical unconscious' (Walter Benjamin)





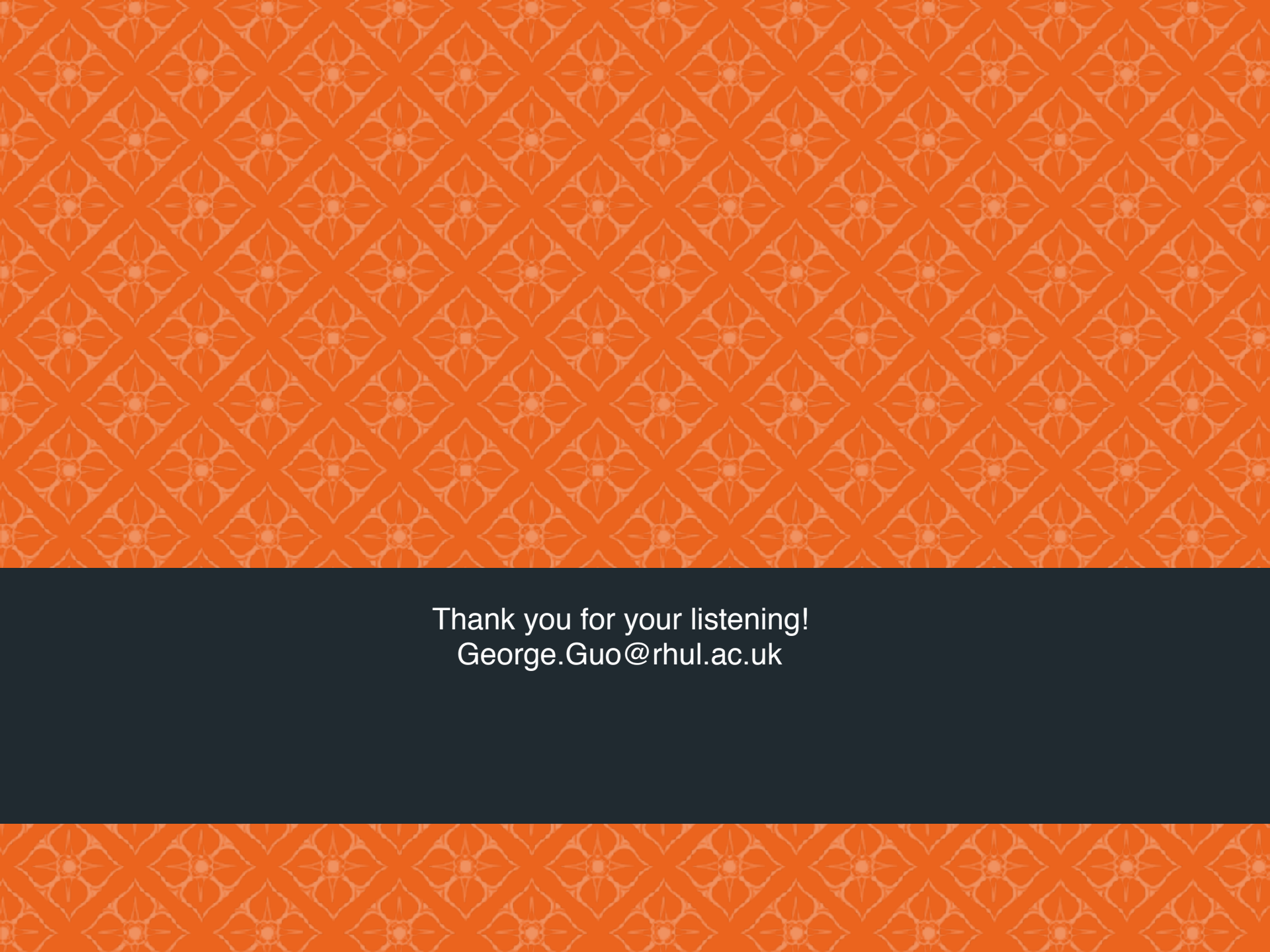


5 Part Series for CCTV9 and Channel 4 (2016)

China: Between Clouds and Dreams

A stunning new documentary series from multiple BAFTA-winning filmmaker, Phil Agland shot on 4K for Chinese Central Television. Filmed over three years with unique access to the private side of China, this series of five extraordinarily intimate films follows the lives of everyday people. Unfolding through compelling stories of real-life human drama interweaving with ecology and natural history. Capturing China's relationship with nature and the environment, as China grapples with the reality of global warming and ecological collapse in its pursuit of an ambitious new future.



The background of the slide is a repeating orange geometric pattern. The pattern consists of interlocking diamond shapes, each containing a smaller, stylized floral or star-like motif. The overall effect is a dense, textured grid.

Thank you for your listening!
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