

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

Voleine Amilcar, ITVS	415-356-8383 x 244	voleine_amilcar@itvs.org
Mary Lugo	770-623-8190	lugo@negia.net
Cara White	843-881-1480	cara.white@mac.com

For downloadable images visit: itvs.org/pressroom/photos

For more information about the program, visit the companion website: pbs.org/globalvoices/circusschool

AS THE EYES OF THE WORLD TURN TO CHINA AND THE UPCOMING SUMMER OLYMPICS, “CIRCUS SCHOOL” OFFERS RARE LOOK INTO CHINA’S MOST PRESTIGIOUS ACROBATIC SCHOOL

*Film to Premiere on Global Voices Series on PBS WORLD Channel
Sunday, March 30, at 10:00 PM*

(San Francisco, CA)—The history of Chinese acrobatics dates back centuries. An art form that focuses on challenging physical limitations, many Chinese view acrobatics as the quintessential expression of China’s strength and power as a nation. At the Shanghai Circus School, students ranging in age from six to 15 must complete a grueling seven-year program before working as professionals; **CIRCUS SCHOOL**, a Chinese film directed by Ke Dingding and Guo Jing, reveals the harsh life of the school’s students. Through exhaustion, injury and broken bones, the students strive for seamless and precise performances in an unwavering quest to be the best. As the world’s eyes turn to China’s hosting of the upcoming Olympic Games, **CIRCUS SCHOOL** will have its U.S. premiere on Sunday, March 30, 2008, at 10:00 PM on *Global Voices*, a new series produced by ITVS International airing on the PBS WORLD digital channel (check local listings).

Few places in the world offer a more demanding program of acrobatics training than the Shanghai Circus School. To ensure its own survival as well as a bright future for the students, the Shanghai Circus School places strong emphasis on the students winning competitions, both at home and abroad. **CIRCUS SCHOOL** provides an inside look at the intense daily regime of several students and teachers at this lauded institution as they prepare for a national competition. We meet Xu Lu, a tiny 10-year-old girl who, despite being injured, is tossed through the air countless times a day as she struggles to nail her routine despite her pain. Thirteen-year-old Cai Yong, coping with a growing weight problem, goes through an unimaginably difficult training as he learns to perform a single-handed handstand. His teacher urges him to practice self-control and warns him that his failure will ruin not only his life, but also the lives of his teachers and parents.

CIRCUS SCHOOL is a rare glimpse into one of China’s most revered institutions. Images of the students’ punishing exercises, contrasted with the seamless beauty and precision of their performances, casts a new light on one of China’s most ancient traditions.

-More-

Filmmaker Background

Guo Jing was born in Shanghai, China. She graduated from the journalism Department of Fudan University and has been working as a director and editor. **Ke Dingding** was also born in Shanghai. He graduated from the electronic engineering department of the Institute of Chengdu Radio Engineering. He has been working as photographer and director since 1995. **CIRCUS SCHOOL** won the Scam International Award in the Cinema du Reel film festival (2007). The pair's previous documentary, *Fruitful Summer* won the Joris Ivens prize in the Cinema du Reel film festival (2004), the Doclisboa / Adobe award for the best first documentary film screened at Doclisboa 2004, and was screened at 15th Black Movie Festival (2005).

About *Global Voices*

Global Voices is a new series produced by ITVS International to air on the PBS WORLD digital channel beginning Sunday, March 30, 2008, at 10:00 PM (check local listings). The first original series to launch on PBS WORLD, the 26-week series will bring to a national audience internationally themed documentaries made by U.S.-based and international filmmakers. *Global Voices* will feature the U.S. premieres of five documentaries funded by ITVS International as well as encore broadcasts of other acclaimed ITVS programs. Encore presentations include the Academy Award nominee **DAUGHTER FROM DANANG**, the Emmy Award winner **A LION'S TRAIL** and the Independent Spirit Award Winner and Emmy Nominee **LOST BOYS OF SUDAN**. In addition to the PBS WORLD broadcast, the content of the series will later be available via online distribution platforms, such as Joost, You Tube, BitTorrent and Vuze. For more information about *Global Voices*, visit www.pbs.org/globalvoices.

About ITVS International

ITVS International is a division of Independent Television Service that promotes an international exchange of documentary films made by independent producers, bringing international voices to U.S. audiences and American stories to audiences' abroad. Through a unique public-private partnership called the Global Perspectives Project, ITVS International administers the International Media Development Fund (IMDF) and *True Stories: Life in the USA*. The IMDF funds international producers and supports the American broadcast of their programs. The series *True Stories: Life in the USA* promotes selected American independent films to audiences around the world. ITVS created the Global Perspectives Project in 2005 with support from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the U.S. Department of State. For more information, visit www.itvs.org/international.

About PBS WORLD

PBS WORLD is a new channel featuring documentary, public affairs and news programming from public television's award-winning signature series and acclaimed independent filmmakers. Produced and distributed by PBS, WGBH Boston and Thirteen/WNET New York, in association with American Public Television and the National Educational Telecommunications Association, PBS WORLD launched on 55 stations across the country, representing 24 licensees and reaching more than 27 percent of U.S. households. In most markets, PBS WORLD programming will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. More information about PBS WORLD is available at pbs.org.

###