

French Co-Production 'Wolf Totem' Casts Chinese Stars in Lead Roles

Feng Shaofeng and Shawn Dou Xiao board Jean-Jacques Annaud's adaptation of the award-winning Cultural Revolution novel.

HONG KONG – Jean-Jacques Annaud's *Wolf Totem* will feature Chinese stars Feng Shaofeng and Shawn Dou Xiao in its leading roles.

The announcement from Edko Films, which will be shopping the project at Cannes, confirms speculation of Feng's involvement in the project, after the *Tai Chi O* and *Painted Skin: Resurrection* star revealed to the Chinese press two months ago plans to collaborate with a French filmmaker this year.



In an adaptation of an award-winning, semi-autobiographical novel by mainland Chinese writer Jiang Rong, Feng is expected to play a student being sent down to work in the Inner Mongolian steppes during China's Cultural Revolution, and whose new

way of life is thrown into chaos as an apparatchik orders the killing of all wolves living in the area.

Dou sprung to fame in Zhang Yimou's 2010 film *Under the Hawthorn Tree*, in which he plays a land prospector who falls in love with a high-school student arriving to work in a village during the Cultural Revolution.

Annaud first became involved with *Wolf Totem* in 2009, when he inked a deal with Beijing Forbidden City Pictures'



CEO Zhang Qiang, who has since moved on to become vice president of China Film Group and is also a backer of the project. Bill Kong, Edko Films' CEO, joined the project in 2010.

Wolf Totem secured official co-production status last month with a signed deal at the Beijing Film Market. The \$38 million project is slated to begin shooting this month and is expected to wrap by the end of the year, with plans for a 2014 release. Edko is handling U.S., Latin American and Asian rights for the film, with Wild Bunch attending to European territories.

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