

As people from all walks of life criss-cross a Beijing intersection in *From Tomorrow on, I Will*, we momentarily lose sight of Li, a night guard whose solitary life we follow. The restless city of Beijing, his home, is on hyperdrive day and night in its endless pursuit of progress. In his book *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (Verso, 2013), Jonathan Crary discusses the round-the-clock activity into which capitalism leads us, examining an abandoned plan conceived in the 1990s by a Russian/European space consortium to launch parabolic reflectors into space in order to illuminate night on earth. An endeavour like that might not be so far-fetched in Beijing, where a LED billboard once replaced sunlight when smog darkened the daytime sky.

Often shown asleep or standing still, Li is swimming upstream in a city where rest has become an act of defiance. Co-director Ivan Marković, who previously shot Dane Komljen's *All the Cities of the North* and Angela Schanelec's *I Was at Home, But*, frames Li mostly alone within four walls, sheltered from the energy that floods the city and always out of sync with his surroundings. Li shares a bed with his roommate in a damp-looking underground house, one of many residences in the city now declared illegal, but they rarely see one another as Li works nightshifts. Beijing itself seems to be unsure at what point in time it exists, suspended between present and future. The city is shown full of half-built scaffolding and covered with billboards depicting 3D renderings of imagined destinies.

'Yesterday returns once more,' Li sings alone in his bed. For him and his city, *déjà vu* is a daily routine. Patrolling his office building, Li encounters an old man carelessly asleep against a window; later, he unintentionally mirrors this moment when he rests his head against a similar windowpane. The unfinished sentence that is the English title of the film is the opening line from the last poem that Chinese poet Hai Zi wrote before his suicide; the closing line of the same poem lends its name to the film's Chinese title. Time spirals forward, but if you stand still, you might catch a glimpse of yourself passing by.

*Julian Ross is a curator, researcher and writer.*