

MARKETING

From pariah to darling? Fan Bingbing returns to spotlight at 2023 Oscars

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Does Fan Bingbing's appearance at Hollywood's biggest event signal a reprieve for other stars who have fallen afoul of China's tax authorities? Image courtesy of Tony Ward Couture

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Five years after she was embroiled in a tax evasion [scandal](#), Fan Bingbing is waltzing back into the spotlight.

On March 12, the Chinese actress graced the Champagne-colored carpet at the 2023 Oscars bedecked in a Charleston-style dress by Tony Ward Couture marking her first appearance at the Academy Awards in a decade.

Ms. Fan has kept a relatively low profile since October 2018, when she was punished for using so-called "[yin-yang](#)" movie contracts to report lower earnings to tax authorities.

The *X-Men* star and her companies were fined \$129 million 884 million RMB for tax evasion, of which Ms. Fan was responsible for paying \$70 million.

Following the incident, she disappeared from social media, only to break her silence in 2019 to wish fans a happy Lunar New Year on Instagram and [Facebook](#).

The Jing Take: Ms. Fan's case marked the beginning of a tax fraud crackdown on celebrities in China, which would later engulf actress [Zheng Shuang](#), actor [Deng Lun](#) and the country's top live-streaming host [Viya](#).

To clean up the country's Internet culture, [Chinese regulators in 2022 banned companies from hiring celebrities](#) found to have "lapsed morals" or to have engaged in illegal behavior, in addition to banning those celebrities from endorsing products.

For celebrities caught up in the crackdown, a return to stardom at least, abroad may not be impossible.

Last month, 41-year-old Ms. Fan was also spotted at the Berlin Film Festival supporting her movie, *The Green Night*.

When asked about the challenges of working on the film at the press conference, [Ms. Fan stated](#): "I haven't acted for five years. In those five years I've done a lot, but I still always wanted to find the right screenplay for my next step forward."

Besides starring in 2021's *The Green Night* alongside Dev Patel, she was also featured in 2022's spy thriller film *The 355*, albeit via a green screen and body double.

Additionally, she rebooted her beauty label **Fan Beauty Secret** in 2021 by re-registering its accounts on social media, **appeared at recent fashion week shows**, and even fronted the autumn 2022 cover of *Schn! Magazine China*.

Though the actress is pushing ahead with new projects, the public has not completely forgotten her past.

When an advertising campaign featuring Ms. Fan was released in 2019, many non-fans complained that her economic punishment was too light and that she had shunned her basic responsibilities as a citizen, **reported Global Times**.

When promotional materials for *The 355* were circulated the following year, one of the **most-liked comments** on Weibo read, "The irony of putting such an actor in front of the national flag."

But for the most part, Chinese netizens raved about her presence at the Oscars, arguably Hollywood's biggest event.

Not only did they praise her beauty and fashion sense, but they applauded her ability to overcome challenges and move forward with courage.

The reactions from Chinese fans signal both an acceptance of her past and an excitement for her future appearances.

"It is undeniable that she made a mistake, but she was also punished," wrote Weibo user @df3 in a post. "Money, time, reputation were all the price of her mistake. People cannot be completely denied just because of one mistake."

Fashion KOL @ added, "Standing there, her face is a glory to China. She is a natural star that cannot be replaced!"

As Ms. Fan herself said at the Berlin event: "Acting is something I'll probably be doing for my whole life I'm going to stick at it."

As such, it is likely that the world will be seeing more of Fan Bingbing and that more luxury brands and couture designers will be wanting a piece of the action.

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