

The poster features a background with several color blocks: a light pink top section, a cream middle section, a light green bottom-left section, a black bottom-right section, and a teal bottom section. The text is centered in the cream section.

LONDON KOREAN **FILM FESTIVAL 2018**

1-25 NOVEMBER



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

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It is my pleasure to introduce to you the 13th instalment of the London Korean Film Festival, our annual celebration of Korean Film in all its forms.

Since 2006, the Korean Cultural Centre UK has presented the festival with two simple goals, namely to be the most inclusive festival of national cinema anywhere and to always improve on where we left off. As part of this goal for greater inclusivity, in 2016 the main direction of the festival was tweaked to allow a broader, more diverse range of Korean films to be shown. With special themes exploring different subjects, the popular strands covering everything from box office hits to Korean classics, as well as monthly teaser screenings, the festival has continued to find new audiences for Korean cinema. This year the festival once again works with critics, academics and visiting programmers on each strand of the festival and has partnered with several university film departments as well.

At the time of writing, this year's festival will screen upwards of 55 films, with a special focus entitled 'A Slice of Everyday Life'. This will include the opening and closing films, *Microhabitat* by Jeon Go-woon, and *The Return* by Malene Choi. 'A Slice of Everyday Life' explores valuable snapshots of the sometimes-ignored lives of ordinary Koreans, often fragile individuals on the edge of society. One will also see director Lee Myung-se's films in the Contemporary Classics strand and Park Kiyong's films in the Indie Firepower strand. A further 7 films will be screened including Hong Sangsoo's latest *Hotel by the River* and Kim Dae-woong's *Love+Sling* in the Cinema Now strand, along with many more great films throughout the festival.

The Korean film industry is filled with many talented individuals, whose work I am sure adds to the rich plethora of films that are screened in UK cinemas, each one contributing to the diversity of the UK's film industry. I am confident that our festival brings the people of Korea and the UK closer together by shining a light on our shared experiences and daily lives. That is after all why we have produced this festival for the last 13 years.

The festival simply wouldn't be possible without you, our audience, our sponsors, partners, advisers, and programme collaborators. So to you all I say, please enjoy the festival and I look forward to seeing you at a screening this autumn.

Hoseong Yong
Director, Korean Cultural Centre UK

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KOREAN FILM NIGHTS

RETURNING SPRING 2019

Join us next year when the Korean Cultural Centre UK's year-round programme of specially curated film screenings returns. Comprised of distinct seasons centred on a specific theme, these exciting events offer a rare insight into a broad spectrum of Korean cinema, both past and present.

Korean Film Nights are free to attend and include special presentations, premieres, guest speakers and more.

For details, please visit: [@theLKFF](http://koreanfilm.co.uk)

CALENDAR

1 NOV

18:30 Microhabitat (+Q&A)

2 NOV

18:30 The Running Actress **1**

20:45 Seven Years of Night (+Q&A) **2**

3 NOV

12:00 Kids Club: The Shower **6**

13:00 The Land of Seonghye **1**

13:00 Treeless Mountain **1**

16:00 Special Focus Forum **1**

18:30 Little Forest **2**

18:45 The Poet and the Boy (+Q&A) **1**

4 NOV

13:00 Christmas in August **1**

14:00 Video Works by Kim Kyung-mook **8**

14:00 Breathless (+Q&A) **1**

17:20 Back From the Beat + Even No Shadow **3**

18:30 The Bacchus Lady **1**

19:45 The Princess and the Matchmaker **2**

5 NOV

14:00 For Vagina's Sake (+Q&A) **4**

16:00 Roundtable Discussion **4**

18:30 Women's Shorts **4**

20:45 Mothers **1**

6 NOV

18:30 Mise-en-scène Shorts 1 **7**

18:30 Hit the Night (+Q&A) **4**

21:00 The Witness **2**

7 NOV

11:30 In Conversation with Jeong Ga-young **4**

18:30 Grown Up **4**

20:45 Mise-en-scène Shorts 2 **7**

8 NOV

18:30 The Power of Kangwon Province **1**

21:00 Hotel by the River **2**

9 NOV

18:20 Bleak Night **1**

20:00 My Love, My Bride (+Q&A) **5**

20:50 Heart Blackened **2**

10 NOV

12:00 Kids Club: Pororo, Dinosaur Island Adventure **6**

14:00 Jealousy is My Middle Name **1**

15:00 Motel Cactus **3**

16:30 This Charming Girl **1**

18:40 Grain in Ear **1**

20:00 First Love (+Q&A) **5**

21:00 Love+Sling **2**

11 NOV

12:00 Camel(s) (+Q&A) **3**

14:00 Video Works by Kwon Hayoun (+Q&A) **8**

14:30 In Conversation with Park Kiyong **3**

16:00 The Journals of Musan (+Q&A) **1**

19:00 Possible Faces **1**

20:00 Their Last Love Affair +
Can't Live Without You (+Q&A) **5**

12 NOV

18:30 Old Love **3**

20:45 Adulthood **3**

13 NOV

18:30 Alive (+Q&A) **1**

14 NOV

19:00 The Return (+Q&A)

16 NOV

18:00 Glasgow Microhabitat

18:00 Edinburgh Little Forest **2**

18:30 Belfast Microhabitat

17 NOV

18:30 Belfast Little Forest **2**

18 NOV

15:45 Edinburgh Microhabitat

17:00 Belfast The Return

19 NOV

18:15 Sheffield Little Forest **2**

21 NOV

20:45 Edinburgh The Poet and the Boy **1**

22 NOV

18:15 Sheffield The Running Actress **1**

24 NOV

13:20 Manchester Microhabitat

15:30 Glasgow The Poet and the Boy **1**

18:30 Nottingham The Return

25 NOV

15:50 Manchester Little Forest **2**

18:15 Sheffield The Return

18:30 Nottingham Little Forest **2**

- 1** Special Focus: A Slice of Everyday Lives
- 2** Cinema Now
- 3** Indie Firepower
- 4** Women's Voices
- 5** Contemporary Classics
- 6** Animation
- 7** Mise-en-scène Shorts
- 8** Artist Video

- British Museum
- Close-Up Film Centre
- Institute of Contemporary Arts
- Kingston University
- Korean Cultural Centre UK
- LUX
- Phoenix Cinema
- Picturehouse Central
- Regent Street Cinema
- Rio Cinema
- Touring Programme

OPENING GALA

MICROHABITAT

소공녀

Miso (Lee Som), like many thirty-somethings, finds herself unprepared for the harsh economic realities of adulthood. Working as a housekeeper with low wages and zero job security, she struggles to pay the exorbitant rent on her cramped apartment. Miso's spirited youth playing in a band seems a distant memory. The only modest pleasures she has left are smoking and drinking. When she can't even afford these, Miso chooses to give up her home rather than her whisky. What might at first seem a callow choice becomes symbolic of her courageous stand for human dignity. Embarking on an odyssey through Seoul, Miso looks up her old bandmates in search of help. Writer-director Jeon has given us a potent heroine for our time in her graceful, wildly inventive debut feature tackling serious themes with style and humour. A truly original voice joins the front ranks of South Korean cinema. (SW)

THU 1 NOV 18:30
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Q&A with Director Jeon Go-woon

FRI 16 NOV 18:00
GLASGOW FILM THEATRE, GLASGOW

FRI 16 NOV 18:30
QUEEN'S FILM THEATRE, BELFAST

SUN 18 NOV 15:45
FILMHOUSE, EDINBURGH

SAT 24 NOV 13:20
HOME, MANCHESTER

DIRECTOR: JEON GO-WOON
WRITER: JEON GO-WOON
PRODUCER: KIM SOON-MO
CAST: LEE SOM, AHN JAE-HONG
PRODUCTION COMPANY: GWANGHWAMUN CINEMA,
MOTTO PRODUCTION
INTERNATIONAL SALES: M-LINE DISTRIBUTION
COMEDY, DRAMA / 2017 / 104 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
BAD SCENE (SHORT, 2012)
TOO BITTER TO LOVE (SHORT, 2009)



AN INTERVIEW WITH JEON GO-WOON



Before Jeon Go-woon helps us open the festival with her stylish and witty debut feature, we caught up to discuss independent filmmaking, materialism and the aspiration of having a home of her own. This interview took place by email.

SIMON WARD What was your inspiration for *Microhabitat*?

JEON GO-WOON I was inspired by the nonsensical structure of the scorching city of Seoul, where no matter how hard you try, you cannot find a 'habitat' to live in.

SW Is Miso an optimistic or a pessimistic character?

JGW I think that depends on the individual perspective of the viewer. I see Miso as a brave person who knows how to prioritise her own needs, whilst also valuing those around her. It is up to the audience to decide how they view this individual, someone who does not subscribe to a society where diversity and individuality are looked down upon – I hope my film will be one to provoke discussion regarding these issues.

SW As the title of your film suggests, place or 'home' is very important in your film. What does it mean for Miso and also for you?

JGW Home is an important place, where all living creatures can feel protected and find rest. Food, clothing, and shelter are the basic conditions for life, but there are many people who do not have access to these necessities and, due to this overwhelming insecurity, lose sight of their most basic values and principles, something that is deeply saddening. I, too, am just

an ordinary person, and thus the thing I want the most is a home of my own, without having to worry about paying the rent each month.

SW A major theme of the film is the struggle between idealism and pragmatism. Why do you think Miso, unlike her old friends, has managed to hold on to her idealism?

JGW As I said earlier, Miso is a person who knows what she likes and is someone who lives according to her own standards, without being bound by what other people think. It appears that those around her consider Miso an idealist, who is living the kind of life they could never choose for themselves.

SW You are the co-founder of an independent filmmaking co-operative. Is this an example of idealism or pragmatism?

JGW It may be considered an example of both idealism and pragmatism, but the main thing is that we have fun, and find both strength and happiness in working together. I did not start off with any grand aspirations, and it just happened that along the way I ended up shooting four of my own films. We've been really fortunate to be able to work together and see each other grow and develop. Maybe this attitude itself is indeed reflected in Miso's character.

SW Looking at this year's festival programme, *Microhabitat* seems to be at the vanguard of a wave of films emerging from Korean independent cinema both directed by women and critiquing materialism. Why do you think this is happening now?

JGW I would imagine it could be because everyone's habitat is unstable.

SW What excites you most about filmmaking?

JGW The thing that excites me the most is developing ideas with my coworkers, and from this working with the actors to form the character into something tangible and three-dimensional.

SW How do you think Miso will be living ten years from now?

JGW This film is about Seoul as it is in the present, almost like an interim report of my life as a woman. I have never thought about Miso's future, and in fact I don't think it's necessary. Personally, I think she'll stay healthy, and so continue as she has been, smoking a lot of cigarettes and drinking a lot of whisky.

CLOSING GALA

THE RETURN 회귀

WED 14 NOV 19:00
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Q&A with Lead Actress Karoline Sofie Lee

SUN 18 NOV 17:00
QUEENS FILM THEATRE, BELFAST

SAT 24 NOV 18:30
BROADWAY CINEMA, NOTTINGHAM

SUN 25 NOV 18:15
SHOWROOM CINEMA, SHEFFIELD

DIRECTOR: MALENE CHOI
WRITER: SISSEL DALSGAARD THOMSEN
PRODUCER: JULIE FRIIS WALENCIAK, JULIE RIX BOMHOLT,
KATJA ADOMEIT
CAST: KAROLINE SOFIE LEE, THOMAS HWAN, SEONG IN-JA
PRODUCTION COMPANY: WALENCIAK FILMS IVS, ADOMEIT FILM
INTERNATIONAL SALES: PLUTO FILM DISTRIBUTION
NETWORK GMBH
HYBRID, DRAMA / 2018 / 84 MIN / CERT. 12 / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
NATURE (ART FILM, 2015)
WOOD (ART FILM, 2014)
DYRET (SHORT, 2012)
VOICE OVER VOICE (DOCUMENTARY, 2008)
INSHALLAH (DOCUMENTARY, 2005)
ESSAY (SHORT DOC, 2000)

Karoline (Karoline Sofie Lee) visits South Korea for the first time since her adoption by a Danish family as a baby. Whilst staying in a guesthouse in Seoul, she meets other adoptees from Europe and the US who are there with a similar quest - to search for their birth families. Despite their different upbringings, what they seem to have in common is that they are each seeking to better grasp their 'origin', or at least allow themselves time to contemplate the issue of their identity.

This film is a hybrid, blurring fact and fiction with both scripted and documentary elements. It draws from the director Malene Choi's own experience as an adoptee and features two lead actors who are adoptees themselves. The power of the film lies in the fact that many of Karoline's encounters and interactions in the guesthouse are captured for real. We are allowed to follow the emotional journey of the characters up-close, witnessing their everyday reality interspersed with carefully dramatised situations. (HJC)



AN INTERVIEW WITH MALENE CHOI



The Return, Malene Choi's fascinating and remarkably original film about Korean adoptees will bring the London Korean Film Festival 2018 to a close. An adoptee herself, raised in Denmark, we discussed the formulation of the film, its unique style and her decision to use non-actors. This interview took place by email.

HYUN JIN CHO How did the idea for this film come about and did things change as you developed it?

MALENE CHOI It was after I had graduated from film school in 2007 that I first began to be interested in finding out more about my origin. I attended a conference for adoptees in Seoul where I listened to Peter Selman - a British researcher specialising in adoption - talking about transnational adoption, and how he believed that this form of adoption almost resembles human trafficking. This shocked me and led me to my many travels to South Korea to meet other adoptees from all over the world. During these many prolonged travels, I stayed at Koroot, a guest house for adoptees only, and both in the living room and around the dining table I experienced the intimate and confidential space that existed in the company of like-minded people. It was a space where people could express their emotions and share their experiences about being double-cultural, and the missing pieces in their story and identity which they now understood for the first time. The other residents were often on the edge of a breakdown, suffering from insomnia, confused and sorrowful, but we looked out for each other and just talking to each other had a healing and perspectival impact.

I really wanted to portray this guesthouse Koroot, but it was very difficult to shoot a documentary film because people would fly in and out, and only stay there for a summer vacation - they might come back, but usually a year or two later. So I could not find a narrative - there weren't any beginnings and endings, only something in the middle that seemed to vanish and never end. Then my producer suggested me to do a hybrid film,

so we could be sure that we could plan the shooting and cast the main characters back in Denmark.

HJC The film has a 'naturalistic' feel, and many of the scenes seem to have improvised and/or documentary elements. And yet, I noticed you worked with scriptwriter Sissel Dalsgaard Thomsen. Could you tell me about the process of writing this film?

MC That leads me to my collaboration with Sissel Dalsgaard Thomsen, who is a scriptwriter and normally she writes horror movies and animation short fiction. I had now been working on the film for several years, researching and shooting by myself, unable to order the scenes into a multiplot structure. She then started to interview me for eight four-hour sessions, so that she could get enough information out of me in to find a more simple storyline with just two protagonists, who I could later cast in Denmark and start rehearsing with. Then we wrote a treatment and not a script, because we knew that the best scenes would occur spontaneously with other adoptees that were currently living at Koroot while we were shooting. So the form that we wrote the film in was both so loose that we could open it up for me using my documentary methods, and so tight that we could location scout, cast characters in Korea, control the story and shoot the film in just fifteen days.

HJC The editing mixes abrupt cuts, jump cuts and long takes; along with the abstract electronic sound design, this lends an elusive, disorientating quality to the film. What was your intention with regards to how the film was edited?

MC I wanted to give the audience a sense of losing ground, not being able to decode this new culture and world that they now have entered. That the first trip back (to Korea) is far more disturbing than it might have been described elsewhere. The music underlines that the main characters are in an odd world that they somehow both know and don't know anything about. It is a place they only have only been able to imagine and dream about - their idea of the kind of place Korea is, is a bit askew.

They are coming to an odd place where you can't really find out what is happening because you are unable to understand the language and the culture. That was my intention, to edit the film in a unconventional and rough way, to make the film so edgy you could cut yourself on it.

HJC The two protagonists of the film are Karoline, who had never acted before, and Thomas, who is a professional actor. Could you tell us about how you came to work with them and how their different levels of experience affected how you directed the film?

MC I could control Thomas and ask him to do something or say his line during shooting of a scene, so he would direct Karoline to respond naturally in a situation that I had set up for them, which worked well. Karoline would also use her own language and improvise with what felt best for her in a scene. So I could get the best out of the mixture between a nonprofessional actress and a professional actor, control and authenticity. In all it was good for the film to have a blended cast with different experiences, as it allowed the acting to be shaped into a naturalistic style.

SPECIAL FOCUS:

A SLICE OF EVERYDAY LIFE

INTRODUCTION

This year through our special focus we are celebrating the everyday. We have chosen sixteen films that employ a range of different approaches, different filmic styles and subjects, themes and issues. However, all share a common desire: to make visible through cinema the ordinarily invisible world of the everyday. The films take the time to explore the idea that the things that are most important to us might, in fact, be invisible because of their apparent simplicity or ordinariness.

Across the programme, these films show us a number of different people and their lives: university lecturers, postal workers, street kimchi sellers, car park attendants, sex workers, poets, loan sharks, convenience store clerks, manual labourers, pregnant teenagers, even a famous actress. Together, they comprise an almost infinite number of everyday, each life playing out in its own particular social context and filmic moment.

To accomplish this examination and recreation of the ordinary, the filmmakers in this programme utilise a variety of cinematic techniques and styles. Some of these techniques, such as the emphasis on forthright portrayals of real-life locations and the frequent use of non-professional actors, are familiar to us from realist film movements such as mid-twentieth century Italian neorealism or British kitchen-sink dramas. Others - those that show an interest in exploring the formal concerns of film as a medium, with the use of long-takes, close-ups, panning, and montage - may display the influence of modernist cinema, in particular the French New Wave. There are also noticeable elements of postmodernism in the way that many of the films seek to subvert traditional narrative structures and character tropes.

The Everyday and Film

[W]e need to think about what is happening around us, within us, each and everyday. We live on familiar terms with the people in our own family, our own milieu, our own class. This constant impression of *familiarity* makes us think that we know them, that their outlines are defined for us, and that they see themselves as having those same outlines. We define them... and we judge them... But the familiar is not necessarily known. (*Critique of Everyday Life*, p14-15)

French sociologist Henri Lefebvre believed that interrogating the familiar was fundamental to our attempt to recognise the meaning of everyday life. In his writing, Lefebvre reveals decisions and events which, day to day, we know very little about and do not actively participate in, yet which have profound effects on our lives. He considers the impact of consumerism, language and mass

media on everyday life using a variety of critical approaches including Marxism and Structuralism.

By insisting that the familiar must become an object of scrutiny, Lefebvre hoped that taken-for-granted social norms would be revealed as structural apparatuses that inform our understanding of ourselves and regulate our behaviour. Filmmakers who place a similar value on the seemingly banal call our attention to the structures that impose themselves on our social world and allow us to begin to see our life as it truly is, albeit magnified a little through the lens of cinema.

Film's potential to achieve this goal of articulating everydayness is powerfully enunciated by Siegfried Kracauer in his book *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*.

The small random moments which concern things common to you and me and the rest of mankind can indeed be said to constitute the dimension of everyday life, this matrix of all other modes of reality. It is a very substantial dimension. If you disregard for a moment articulate beliefs, ideological objectives, special undertakings, and the like, there still remain the sorrows, satisfactions, discords, and feasts, wants, and pursuits, which mark the ordinary business of living. Products of habit and microscopic interaction, they form a resilient texture which changes slowly and survives wars, epidemics, earthquakes, and revolutions. Films tend to explore this texture of everyday life whose composition varies according to place, people, and time. So they help us not only to appreciate our given material environment but to extend it, in all directions. (p304)

So, everydayness, according to Kracauer, is not a contingent feature of some films: the everyday is featured in all films. He values the texture of everyday living as the basic human need, and film is the medium that helps us to appreciate this quality.

Italian neorealist cinema is most notably rooted in such a quality, whereby filmmakers attempted to contend with the economic and moral conditions of everyday life in post-war Italy. This has influenced a number of film movements across the globe. These movements share an interest in the importance of exploring the urgent issues of the everyday, informed by social oppression, injustice and poverty.

The Everyday in Korean Cinema

The terms 'the everyday' and 'the aesthetics of everydayness' began to be appear in Korean film criticism during the late 1990s to describe the films of Hong Sangsoo. However, this does not mean that Hong was the first Korean filmmaker to take an interest in the everyday. In the 1980s directors Lee Changho and Bae Changho (whose works were shown at LKFF in 2016 and 2017) made a series of films that examined the hardship many people faced under Chun Doo-hwan's military government (1980 - 1988). Jang Sun-soo, Park Kwang-su and Lee Myung-se (who is featured in this year's Contemporary Classics strand), all directors associated with the Korean New Wave, gave

continuity to this approach with the films they made during the end of the 1980s, as resistance to Chun's government gained momentum, and throughout the following decade, as the country embarked on a new era of democracy.

These filmmakers sought to offer realistic portrayals of the difficult lives of ordinary Koreans during the regime and its aftermath. That everydayness wasn't initially part of the critical vocabulary used to describe these films is perhaps due to the fact that these directors focused on specific social problems, such as lack of personal freedoms or state-sanctioned violence. Unlike the works of Hong Sangsoo, their films were a critical commentary on the way in which contemporary Korean society was organised, and were made at least in part in an attempt to counter direct oppression. In this sense, the individual lives of their characters were largely determined by a broader social context, rather than being understood in the more subjective and personal terms we see in Hong's films. Further, in an unstable political situation, it may seem callous to use terms like everyday to signify the mundane, banal or repetitive.

By the late 1990s, the political situation in Korea had changed radically. Hong and his contemporaries have found themselves depicting a very different world through their films, one in which the direct oppression of the past is replaced with the uneasy sense that injustice and persecution is now largely hidden from view, but still somehow a ghostly presence in the everyday. This is the global malaise of late capitalism, in which the concerns of Lefebvre - social isolation, rampant consumerism, lack of communication, vanity - have become familiar aspects of everyday life, weaving their way into the texture of our everyday reality.

Critical interest in the aesthetics of everyday also centred on the way in which Hong Sangsoo, Park Chan-ok and others utilised particular narrative techniques in their works. The 1990s was a time when Korean conglomerates started to invest in film production and many Korean films produced during this period aspired to adopt a Hollywood film grammar. In contrast to many Korean films that were made during this era, some of the works presented in the programme had a more distinctive narrative strategy as well as a consistent and uncompromising formal approach; they show everyday life's banality taken at face value, and resist the temptation of illusionistic drama.

Films in the Programme

We are presenting films made between 1998 and 2018 as part of our special focus 'A Slice of Everyday Life'. Hong Sangsoo's *The Power of Kangwon Province* (1998) and Park Chan-ok's *Jealousy Is My Middle Name* (2002) both employ a rigorous formal approach to their portrayal of everyday life. Both films have tangled plots, and protagonists whose personalities fluctuate depending on who they are with, and where they are in their lives. All this plays out in mundane, recognisable settings - humdrum offices, cheap hotels and late-night bars - with dialogue that does not strive for clarity, but rather reveals the absurdity inherent in our everyday interactions.

If Hong and Park present an ironic view of humanity in their films, *Christmas in August* (Hur Jin-ho, 1998) offers a more sympathetic approach in its portrayal of an almost love story. The director pays great attention to the tiny details of the

terminally-ill Jungwon's daily routine. Each scene is composed of a minimal number of shots, which allows space for the relationship between Jungwon and Darim to develop, and skilfully avoids lapsing into melodrama.

For large periods of *This Charming Girl* (Lee Yoon-ki, 2004), nothing much appears to be happening, yet the camera steadfastly follows Junghye, a postal worker going about her daily routine of work and domestic tasks. The persistence of the camera is such that the viewer begins to pay particular attention to the details of Junghye's gestures - the way she picks up hair from the floor whilst watching TV, or, after being stood up by her date, eats her carefully prepared dinner in silence. The director, Lee Yunki, believed that using a hand-held camera would allow him to work with the slow-paced script and to pick up on the way in which these seemingly subtle actions bear the weight of Junghye's unstable emotions.

Bleak Night (Yoon Sung-hyun, 2010) situates the tragic death of a schoolboy within the daily routine of three friends as they travel to and from school, fight with each other, and engage in petty crimes. In one sense, they are ordinary boys, yet the hand-held shots of their habitual interactions and unrefined conversations provide a sense of intimacy, allowing us to see the dynamic and complex set of relationships which exist in their apparently mundane lives.

Zhang Lu's *Grain in Ear* (2005) is an altogether more sombre affair, and this is reflected in the desolate spaces in which the film takes place. Soonhui is an ethnic Korean woman in China, selling kimchi on the street and living in an unfurnished house next to an almost deserted train station. We see from a distance, in a series of wide shots, how Soonhui's precarious daily existence evolves in this erratic urban landscape. Only in the final scene do we get close to Soonhui, and even then we are trailing her from behind as she disappears enigmatically into the distance.

Repetition and routine are central facets of our everyday lives. *Treeless Mountain* (Kim So Yong, 2008) follows the story of two young children who are passed between relatives after their mother leaves them in search of their father. Jin and Bin are full of curiosity for the everyday world, and with each new familial situation they encounter, they find ways to adjust and continue with their microadventures. Their story unfolds as a series of recurring episodes, each with its own moments of drama and comedy, beginning again without ever reaching a conclusion.

Breathless (Yang Ik-june, 2008) centres on the life of Sang-hoon (played by the director himself), a loan shark mired in a world that is both ruthlessly competitive and extremely violent. He is forced to choose between morality and survival, and his only respite from his hellish routine is in the brief moments he spends visiting his young nephew or hanging out with a young woman he befriends. The magnetic spontaneity of Sang-hoon's everyday reality is brought to screen through the raw, naturalistic script combined with visceral camerawork and skillful acting.

Similarly focused on those on the margins of contemporary Korean society, Park Jungbum's *The Journals of Musan* (2010) tells the story of the life of a North Korean refugee. The film's protagonist, Sung-chul, based on a friend

of the director, seemingly has no room to manoeuvre, yet ultimately retains his integrity even in the most humiliating of circumstances. Park has spoken about the responsibility he felt in subverting the stereotype of North Koreans in the South, and his desire to do justice to the everyday struggles of Sung-chul without creating a simple caricature.

Park's latest film, *Alive* (2014), takes us to rural Kangwon Province in the middle of a bitterly cold winter. The director himself appears as the protagonist who suffers unending hardships from which he is seemingly unable to escape, despite the hours of back-breaking labour he endures. The narrative of the film may seem dramatic in contrast with other films in the programme, yet Park believes that his depiction offers a realistic account of the day-to-day existence of those who live without a safety net. Jungchul finds himself working relentlessly to resolve situations that are beyond his control, leaving him exhausted but not without hope.

The Bacchus Lady (E J-yong, 2015) is a film that is committed to capturing the specificities of aging, and how people cope with the final stages of life. Some feel a sense of humiliation, some loneliness, others confront impotence, and some may find tranquility. Soyoung is an elderly woman who makes a living as a sex worker. Through the small episodes of her life, such as when she approaches elderly men in parks, or feeds a stray cat in the middle of the night, or when treating her housemates to dinner, the film portrays her as a person full of grace and self-assurance. Like Park Jungbum's works (*Alive*, *The Journals of Musan*), *The Bacchus Lady* is not a political film in the conventional sense, instead the political impact comes from the fact that these directors are making films about people whom society prefers not to see.

The Land of Seonghye (Jung Hyung-suk, 2018) exposes the unevenness of South Korea's prosperity through the precarious life of a young woman who repeatedly finds herself at the mercy of those more powerful than her. Despite this, we never feel pity for Songhye, rather we relate to her struggle to maintain agency in the face of cruel circumstances. In its acute observation of the power structures at play in the everyday life of working-class Koreans, *The Land of Seonghye* offers a striking critique of the realities of life without ever becoming a mere sociological treatise.

The programme does not merely focus on films which confront issues of labour and class/social hierarchy. A number of different concerns such as family conflict, relationships, and self-fulfilment are featured here too. *Mothers* (2017), Lee Dong-eun's second feature, shows how ordinary people deal with the consequential weight of the decisions they make. The six 'mothers' each face different issues in relation to their children, and all find different ways to deal with their particular situations. Hyojin is forced to take responsibility for a grown-up child from her late husband's previous marriage, quietly building a trusting relationship over time. Although the characters in this film might not be struggling each day just to survive, their lives challenge expectations about motherhood and family in Korean society, and as a result they too become marginalised.

Possible Faces (2017) is Lee Ganghyun's first fictional work, having previously worked in documentary film. For Lee, however, the distinction between fiction

and documentary is not important, and he simply refers to this as his third feature. We follow each of the four protagonists as they undergo moments of significant change in their lives, driven by their desire for self-fulfilment. There is a sense that despite the positive outlook of the characters, something is missing in their lives and this comes through in the disjointed and noticeably awkward dialogue. Even after two hours the audience feels that we are no closer to finding the missing pieces.

The Poet and the Boy (Kim Yang-hee, 2017) is on one level a story about the development of an emotional bond between a poet and a boy who works at a doughnut shop. But the film is also about the poet's relationship with his strong-willed but deeply caring wife, as well as his desire to find his true place in the world. Though the film employs a more conventional approach than many others in the programme, it still manages to capture certain moments of intense emotion that remind us of the triumphs and tragedies of our everyday lives.

Acting is not perhaps what we think of as an ordinary profession, but *The Running Actress* (Moon Sori, 2017) shows us there can be a mundane side to fame. The film was directed by Moon Sori, one of Korea's most well-known actors, who also plays herself. Moon has stated that actors often live with a fantasy about themselves and so she wanted to learn about her real self by making a film about her life. In a sense this film reveals the invisible reality of her life, and it is through making the film that she gains sufficient distance and perspective. We learn that Moon's everyday life is full of ordinary desires for personal and professional success, and we come to realise how relatable even the life of a famous actor might be to our own.

What all of these films have in common is how the characters are brought to life and perceived, not as a vehicle for the plot but as an object of interest in themselves. The daily experiences of the people who populate these works and how they connect to each other within the wider framework of Korean society are carefully composed and then slowly revealed across the programme. What we are left with at the end of many of these films is not necessarily the fulfilment of a story, or, at least in some cases, a deep understanding of the characters. Rather we come away with a strong impression of the texture of contemporary life in Korea, full of absurdity, anxiety, exhaustion, but also humour, optimism and even brief moments of peace.

Hyun Jin Cho
Film Curator, KCCUK



THE POWER OF KANGWON PROVINCE 강원도의 힘

THU 8 NOV 18:30
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Introduction by Simon Ward

DIRECTOR: HONG SANGSOO
WRITER: HONG SANGSOO
PRODUCER: HONG SANGSOO
CAST: BAIK JONG-HAK, OH YOON-HONG, KIM YU-SEOK
PRODUCTION COMPANY: MIRACIN KOREA
RIGHTS HOLDER: MIRACIN KOREA
DRAMA / 1998 / 108 MIN / CERT. 18 / 35MM / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
THE DAY AFTER (2017)
ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT ALONE (2017)
YOURSELF AND YOURS (2016)
RIGHT NOW, WRONG THEN (2015)

Hong's second feature is a foreshadowed his ongoing characteristically complex, allusive and minimalist exploration of the perceptive gap between men and women. Jisook (Oh Yoon-hong), on a brief holiday in Kangwon with her girlfriends, has a fling with a married cop. Focus then shifts to a seemingly unconnected married professor Sangkwon (Baik Jong-hak), also visiting Kangwon with a friend. Gradually we realise the pair have a shared history, which haunts both of them for different reasons. As Sangkwon moves through Jisook's Kangwon, the film acts as a kind of palimpsest, gradually revealing the power these two ex-lovers continue to have over each other's lives. A masterful, moving and audaciously structured exploration of subjectivity, memory, and how men and women are perhaps at their most similar in their mutual inability to understand each other. (SW)



CHRISTMAS IN AUGUST 8월의 크리스마스

SUN 4 NOV 13:00
PHOENIX CINEMA

Introduction by Kate Taylor

DIRECTOR: HUR JIN-HO
WRITER: HUR JIN-HO
PRODUCER: JO MIN-WHAN
CAST: HAN SUK-KYU, SHIM EUN-HA
PRODUCTION COMPANY: UNO FILM
INTERNATIONAL SALES: M-LINE DISTRIBUTION
ROMANCE, DRAMA / 1998 / 97 MIN / CERT. 15 / 35MM / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
TWO LIGHTS: RELUMINO (2017)
THE LAST PRINCESS (2016)
DANGEROUS LIAISONS (2012)
A GOOD RAIN KNOWS (2009)
HAPPINESS (2007)
APRIL SNOW (2005)
MY NEW BOYFRIEND (2004)
ONE FINE SPRING DAY (2001)

Jung-won (Han Suk-kyu) lives with his widowed father and runs the small photo studio which he inherited. His daily routine consists of mundane tasks such as taking funeral headshot photos and developing photos of parking violations for traffic wardens. Darim (Shim Eun-ha) becomes a regular customer of the studio, and the two slowly realise the special connection they have for each other. What Jung-won fails to tell her is that he is terminally ill.

This film is Hur Jin-ho's directorial debut, after having worked as assistant director for Park Kwang-soo on *To The Starry Island* (1993), and *A Single Spark* (1995). Hur was inspired to make the film when he saw the funeral picture of the late folk singer Kim Kwang-suk - his bravery in smiling in the face of death. Without resorting to the standard techniques of melodrama, Hur develops a compelling portrait of love, memory and death, shining a light on the poetry of seemingly mundane lives. (HJC)



JEALOUSY IS MY MIDDLE NAME

질투는 나의 힘

SAT 10 NOV 14:00
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Introduction by Helen de Witt

DIRECTOR: PARK CHAN-OK
WRITER: PARK CHAN-OK
PRODUCER: KIM GWANG-SU
CAST: BAE JONG-OK, PARK HAE-IL, MOON SUNG-KEUN
PRODUCTION COMPANY: GENERATION BLUE FILMS
INTERNATIONAL SALES: MK PICTURES
DRAMA / 2002 / 125 MIN / CERT. 15 / 35MM / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
PAJU (2009)
WARM SWAMP (SHORT, 2003)
COMMON FACTS (SHORT, 1999)
HEAVY (SHORT, 1998)
TO BE (ITDA) (SHORT, 1996)
CAT WOMAN & MAN (SHORT, 1995)

South Korean filmmaker Park Chan-ok assembles some of the finest domestic names working today for her award-winning first feature *Jealousy Is My Middle Name*. Her debut follows Lee Won-sang (Park Hae-il), a heartbroken graduate student who finds himself writing for the married editor who recently wooed his girlfriend. It's a confusing time for Lee - the kind of man who sings slow karaoke songs and brings you an orange when you're hungover - and he soon finds himself strangely bonded to his editor (played by legendary actor Moon Sung-keun) instead of resenting him. However, when his new crush, chain-smoking photographer Park Seong-yeon (Bae Jong-ok) falls for the same editor, Lee is faced with the predicament of losing another key person in his life. Mentored by Hong Sangsoo, Park has echoed the auteur's take on character drama with this subtle, soulful emotional study, anchored by an excellent cast. (BW)



THIS CHARMING GIRL

여자, 정혜

SAT 10 NOV 16:30
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Introduction by Sonali Joshi

DIRECTOR: LEE YOON-KI
WRITER: LEE YOON-KI
PRODUCER: YUN IL-JOONG
CAST: KIM JI-SOO, HWANG JUNG-MIN
PRODUCTION COMPANY: LJ FILM
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CJ E&M
DRAMA / 2004 / 99 MIN / CERT. 15 / 35MM / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
ONEDAY (2016)
A MAN AND A WOMAN (2015)
COME RAIN, COME SHINE (2011)
MY DEAR ENEMY (2008)
AD LIB NIGHT (2006)
LOVE TALK (2005)

What really goes on beneath the surface in other people's lives? 20-something Jeong-hae (Kim Ji-soo) has an ordinary job in the local post office and is well liked among the staff, but also remains something of an outsider. Typically quiet and efficient, perhaps the social ideal of graceful femininity, Jeong-hae's days are filled with empty loneliness, performing the same monotonous tasks day in day out and spending evenings alone watching shopping TV. The decision to rescue a wounded kitten profoundly alters her sense of connection and even prompts her into pursuing a shy writer whose manuscripts she often mails, but her isolation shields a traumatic past that may prove difficult to escape. Lee's debut feature is a masterful examination of hidden lives masked by a veneer of conventionality, and of the various ways we each live privately, unknown even to those close to us. (HS)



GRAIN IN EAR

망종

SAT 10 NOV 18:40
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Introduction by Gerda Wielander

DIRECTOR: ZHANG LU
WRITER: ZHANG LU
PRODUCER: CHOI DOO YOUNG
CAST: LIU LIANJI, JIN BO, ZHU GUANGXUAN, WANG TONGHUI
PRODUCTION COMPANY: DOO ENTERTAINMENT, SHU FILM WORKSHOP
RIGHTS HOLDER: DOO ENTERTAINMENT
DRAMA / 2005 / 109 MIN / CERT. 18 / 35MM / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
ODE TO THE GOOSE (2017)
A QUIET DREAM (2016)
LOVE AND... (2015)
GYEONG-JU (2013)
SCENERY (2013)
DOOMAN RIVER (2009)
IRI (2008)
DESERT DREAM, HYAZGAR (2007)
CHONGQING (2007)
TANG POETRY (2004)

The summer heat shimmers over the plains of Northeast China when the grain is in ear, as the locals put it. Korean minority woman Cui's husband is in jail. She survives by illegally selling kimchi from a flatbed tricycle, while the sex workers in the flat next door keep an eye on her little son, Chang-ho. A sympathetic Chinese cop offers to help her get a licence, and a male customer befriends her when they discover they are both from the Korean minority. But relying on the kindness of strangers is always a risky business.

Korean Chinese director Zhang Lu's remarkable second feature pioneered the making of independent films in China about minority people by minority directors. Sleekly minimal, his perfectly controlled visual design makes you feel Cui's restraint as she suffers in silence. But when betrayal pushes her beyond the limit, it suddenly shifts gears and the release is like a summer thunderstorm. (CB)



TREELESS MOUNTAIN

나무없는 산

SAT 3 NOV 13:00
PHOENIX CINEMA

Introduction by Janet McCabe

DIRECTOR: KIM SO YONG
WRITER: KIM SO YONG
PRODUCER: BRADLEY RUST GRAY, BEN HOWE, LARS KNUDSEN,
JAY VAN HOY, KIM SO YONG
CAST: KIM HEE YEON, KIM SONG HEE, LEE SOO AH
PRODUCTION COMPANY: PARTS AND LABOR, SOANDBRAD FILM
UK DISTRIBUTOR: THUNDERBIRD RELEASING
DRAMA / 2008 / 89 MIN / CERT. U / 35MM / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
FOR ELLEN (2012)
IN BETWEEN DAYS (2006)

A pair of sisters learn to cope with the sudden absence of their mother, when she leaves them in the country with “Big Aunt” so she can go looking for their long absent dad. Following her Canada-set debut *In Between Days* (2006), Kim So Yong returns to her native Korea for another autobiographically inspired tale - though this time one of childhood’s end. Kim’s film offers a potent, unsentimental examination of impoverished childhood in which the girls wander around in too small shoes with only one outfit and a pair of pyjamas each, eventually resorting to grilling grasshoppers just to survive. Yet for all of its everyday sadness, *Treeless Mountain* is a sympathetic look at life on the margins of a prosperous society, in which a little girl faces adult treachery with a stoic maturity and finally resolves to find her own place independent of a perhaps uncaring world. (HS)



BREATHLESS

똥파리

SUN 4 NOV 14:00
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Q&A with Director Yang Ik-june

DIRECTOR: YANG IK-JUNE
WRITER: YANG IK-JUNE
PRODUCER: JANG SEON-JIN
CAST: YANG IK-JUNE, KIM KKOT-BI, LEE HWAN
PRODUCTION COMPANY: MOLE FILM
INTERNATIONAL SALES: SHOWBOX CORP.
DRAMA / 2008 / 130 MIN / CERT. 18 / 35MM / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
LALALA (SHORT, 2017)
SHIBATA AND NAGAO (SHORT, 2012)
A TIME TO LOVE (2011)
SPEECHLESS (SHORT, 2007)
JUST LEAVE ME ALONE (SHORT, 2006)
ALWAYS BEHIND YOU (SHORT, 2005)

One of the most startling and uncompromising debut features of this century, *Breathless* follows Sang-hoon (Yang Ik-june), a foul mouthed and belligerent loan shark who strikes up an unlikely friendship with a school girl, Yeon-hee (Kim Kkot-bi). Raging at anyone that gets in reach of his fists, Sang-hoon’s actions are often unforgivable, but are rooted in, though not excused by, a traumatic upbringing. With a deeply troubled home life of her own Yeon-hee is undaunted by his ferocity, and after standing up to his vile temper the two begin to connect.

Directed, written by and starring Yang Ik-june, it was a multi-award winner on the festival circuit and catapulted his talent into the spotlight with a character that seems so unrecognisable now to the tubby and sensitive poet he played in this year’s *The Poet and the Boy* (also playing in the ‘Special Focus’ strand). A decade has passed since it first played at the London Korean Film Festival, and with enough grim realism in two hours to rival a whole Shane Meadows box set, *Breathless* still has audiences gasping. (MF)



BLEAK NIGHT

파수꾼

FRI 9 NOV 18:20
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Introduction by Simon Ward

DIRECTOR: YOON SUNG-HYUN
WRITER: YOON SUNG-HYUN
PRODUCER: KIM SEUNG JUNE
CAST: LEE JE-HOON, SEO JUN-YOUNG, PARK JUNG-MIN
PRODUCTION COMPANY: KAFA FILMS
UK DISTRIBUTOR: THIRD WINDOW FILMS
DRAMA / 2010 / 116 MIN / CERT. 15 / HD CAM / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
BANANA SHAKE (SHORT, 2010)
DRINK AND CONFESS (SHORT, 2009)
BOYS (SHORT, 2008)
DAYTRIP (SHORT, 2008)
LOVE (SHORT, 2003)

While *Bleak Night* is framed around a mystery narrative, as a father searches for answers into his son's suicide, its emotional heft comes from the fine performances of the young cast, all of whose star would continue to ascend, following this impressively gritty debut release from director Yoon Sung-hyun.

Cutting backwards in time, the film follows three high-school boys as their relationships incrementally sour when minor slights escalate into major rifts. The problems start when charismatic Ji-tae (Lee Je-hoon) and introspective 'Becky' fall out after each of them inadvertently wounds the other's pride. As the scheming Ji-tae's anger turns to cruel bullying, the self-assured Dong-yoon (Seo Jun-young) gets involved, earning his former buddy's ire in equal measure.

Expertly capturing the slowly mounting tensions and violent consequences that result when stubborn male pride gets in the way of emotional understanding, the film posits a bleak future for young men similarly trapped in silence. (COK)



THE JOURNALS OF MUSAN

무산일기

SUN 11 NOV 16:00
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Q&A with Director Park Jungbum

DIRECTOR: PARK JUNGBUM
WRITER: PARK JUNGBUM
PRODUCER: PARK JUNGBUM
CAST: PARK JUNGBUM, JIN YONGUK, KANG EUNJIN
PRODUCTION COMPANY: SECONDWIND FILM
INTERNATIONAL SALES: FINECUT
DRAMA / 2010 / 127 MIN / CERT. 15 / HD CAM / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
125 JEON SEUNG-CHUL (SHORT, 2008)
TEMPLEMENTARY (SHORT, 2000)

Seong-chul rents a room with his friend Kyung-chul. Both are defectors from North Korea. While Kyung-chul is full of ambition and money-making schemes, honest Seong-chul struggles to hold down any job, even at the karaoke bar where the girl he has an eye on in church works. Befriending a stray dog – the metaphor is all too clear – life begins to look up when he hits rock bottom. After confessing his whole story at a prayer meeting, the girl from church takes pity on him. But how long will his luck last?

What's worse than living in North Korea? Living in South Korea as a defector, suggests Park Jungbum's eye-opening debut. Park not only directs but also stars as Seong-chul, his own real-life friend who died a few years after making it to Seoul. Relentless and Bressonian, this extraordinary film lifted the lid on a reality that few South Koreans knew about before. (CB)



ALIVE 산다

TUE 13 NOV 18:30
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Q&A with Director Park Jungbum
Followed by Drinks with Director

DIRECTOR: PARK JUNGBUM
WRITER: PARK JUNGBUM
PRODUCER: PARK JUNGBUM, KIM YOUNGJIN,
JANG BYUNGWON, LEE SANGYONG, PARK HONGSIK
CAST: PARK JUNGBUM, LEE SEUNGYEON, PARK MYUNGHOOON
PRODUCTION COMPANY: SECONDWIND FILM
INTERNATIONAL SALES: FINECUT
DRAMA / 2014 / 175 MIN / CERT. 18 / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
125 JEON SEUNG-CHUL (SHORT, 2008)
TEMPLEMENTARY (SHORT, 2000)

Jungchul labours to survive. He works at a construction site but his co-worker steals his salary; he cuts trees in a forest to sell to a factory; he makes fermented soybean paste on a production line; he butchers a chicken for his boss's party. However hard Jungchul strives to make ends meet for himself and his family - his severely depressed sister and her daughter - he cannot seem to escape from a series of calamities. "Why can I never have anything?" he screams in despair.

Following *The Journals of Musan* (also showing at this year's festival), Park Jungbum returns with his second feature, in which he again plays the protagonist. Mostly composed of long takes, this film intends to "portray being alive", to borrow Park's words. The many spectacular locations in the film are the fruits of Park's endeavour to find perfect spots in rural Kangwon province to provide a fitting background against which his characters' exasperated physicality and exhausting struggles play out. (HJC)



THE BACCHUS LADY 죽여주는 여자

SUN 4 NOV 18:30
RIO CINEMA

Introduction by Selina Robertson

DIRECTOR: E J-YONG
WRITER: E J-YONG
PRODUCER: SUH DONG-HYUN
CAST: YOUN YUH-JUNG, CHON MOO-SONG, YOON KYE-SANG
PRODUCTION COMPANY: KOREAN ACADEMY OF FILM ARTS
INTERNATIONAL SALES: M-LINE DISTRIBUTION
DRAMA / 2015 / 110 MIN / CERT. 18 / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
MY BRILLIANT LIFE (2014)
BEHIND THE CAMERA (2012)
THE ACTRESSES (2009)
DASEPO NAUGHTY GIRLS (2006)
UNTOLD SCANDAL (2003)
ASAKO IN RUBY SHOES (2000)
AN AFFAIR (1998)

A film about a 65-year-old prostitute who unofficially adopts a young boy to raise with her misfit neighbours, *The Bacchus Lady* (E J-yong, 2016) is a bittersweet drama that celebrates the ordinary in extraordinary circumstances.

Veteran actress Youn Yuh-jung is mesmerising as So-young, an escort working exclusively with elderly clients and using her profits to put her son through university in America. When her path collides with Min-ho (Choi Hyun-jun), whose parents are in the violent throes of a paternity battle, she takes him under her wing and bossily enrolls the help of her neighbours to help care for him while she works.

As Min-ho adjusts to his colourful new home life, So-young's relationships with her clients move into risky new territory, forcing her to make difficult moral choices while confronting her own painful past. The third collaboration between E J-yong and Youn Yuh-jung, *The Bacchus Lady* is a strong-hearted film about inner strength and the many ways of coping in adversity. (BW)



MOTHERS

당신의 부탁

MON 5 NOV 20:45
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Introduction by Tony Rayns

DIRECTOR: LEE DONG-EUN
WRITER: LEE DONG-EUN
PRODUCER: SHIM JAE-MYUNG
CAST: LIM SOO-JUNG, YOON CHAN-YOUNG, LEE SANG-HEE
PRODUCTION COMPANY: MYUNG FILMS
INTERNATIONAL SALES: FINECUT
DRAMA / 2017 / 107 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
IN BETWEEN SEASONS (2016)
PLAN 17 FROM OUTER SPACE (SHORT, 2002)

Last year's *In Between Seasons* was no fluke: Lee Dong-eun's second feature gets to grips with the complexities of the parent-child bond even more searchingly, and to even more moving effect. We're in Cheongju, a medium-sized town where Hyojin runs a small primary school which isn't doing too well. For reasons we don't need to go into here, she's more or less forced to become the guardian of a 'difficult' teenage boy, the son (by another mother) of her late ex-husband. The boy, Jongwook, is emotionally inarticulate in the way that male teens often are and he treats Hyojin as a virtual stranger; without telling her, he goes looking for the birth-mother who abandoned him. And then his friend Joomi carelessly gets herself pregnant and starts planning to have the baby and give it up for adoption. The film's intricate plotting dovetails the ambivalent feelings which govern these lives and asks: is parenting purely biological, or something more? (TR)



THE POET AND THE BOY

시인의 사랑

SAT 3 NOV 18:45
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Q&A with Director Kim Yang-hee and Actor Yang Ik-june Followed by Drink with Director and Actor

WED 21 NOV 20:45
FILMHOUSE, EDINBURGH

SAT 24 NOV 15:30
GLASGOW FILM THEATRE, GLASGOW

DIRECTOR: KIM YANG-HEE
WRITER: KIM YANG-HEE
PRODUCER: AN YOUNG-JIN
CAST: YANG IK-JUNE, JEON HYE-JIN, JUNG GA-RAM
PRODUCTION COMPANY: JIN PICTURES, MIIN PICTURES
INTERNATIONAL SALES: FINECUT
DRAMA / 2017 / 110 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
HEARING AID (SHORT, 2013)
ONE DAY TO BE PASSING BY (SHORT, 2007)

We're on Jeju Island, though we see nothing of its tourism industry. But in spirit we're closer to Venice – the Venice of Thomas Mann's novella *Death in Venice*, where a middle-aged writer is suddenly, inexplicably struck by the beauty of a young man and finds his whole life upended because of it. The Jeju writer is Hyeon Taekji (Yang Ik-june), a second-rate poet mired in defeatism with a strong-willed wife who's determined to get pregnant before it's too late. The boy is Seyun, a dropout from high school who is the main carer for his ailing father and works daytimes selling sugary American donuts. Hyeon worries that he might be gay, but his wife is scornful and resentful... Kim Yang-hee's astonishing debut feature moves from delicious comedy to a transfixing, precisely measured map of the human heart. Yang Ik-june is indelible as Hyeon, a role light years from the gangster he played in his own debut feature *Breathless* (2010). (TR)



POSSIBLE FACES

얼굴들

SUN 11 NOV 19:00
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Introduction by Beth Webb

DIRECTOR: LEE KANGHYUN
WRITER: LEE KANGHYUN
PRODUCER: OH YOUNGLIM, PARK JEONGHYE
CAST: KIM SAEBYEOK, PARK JONGHWAN, YUN JONGSEOK
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CINEMADAL
DRAMA / 2017 / 132 MIN / CERT. 12 / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
THE COLOR OF PAIN (2011)
THE DESCRIPTION OF BANKRUPTCY (2006)

Lee Kanghyun presents a nuanced, delightfully ordinary portrait of a young couple's separation in *Possible Faces* (2017). Winner of the Citizen Critics' Award at Busan International Film Festival, the film follows the now parallel lives of Kisun (Park Jonghwan) and Hyejin (Kim Saebyeok), two aimless souls who have parted ways after three years of living together.

Hyejin leaves her job and begins work on remodelling her mother's restaurant, eating alone in cafes and pottering around her apartment. Kisun treads water as a high school administrator until he strikes up a friendship with Jinsoo (Yun Jongseok), a student who plays on the school's soccer team, that evolves into something deeper.

Favouring small details in the everyday over high impact drama to drive his narrative, Lee allows his characters to intertwine subtly, complementing each other's stories and presenting a gentle reflection of significant connections in a solitary city. (BW)



THE RUNNING ACTRESS

여배우는 오늘도

FRI 2 NOV 18:30
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Introduction by Mark Morris

THU 22 NOV 18:15
SHOWROOM CINEMA, SHEFFIELD

DIRECTOR: MOON SORI
WRITER: MOON SORI
PRODUCER: JENNA KU
CAST: MOON SORI, SUNG BYOUNG-SOOK, YOON SANG-HWA
PRODUCTION COMPANY: YEONDU PICTURES
INTERNATIONAL SALES: METAPLAY
DRAMA, COMEDY / 2017 / 71 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
THE BEST DIRECTOR (SHORT, 2015)
THE RUNNING ACTRESS (SHORT, 2014)

Art imitates life in this brazenly honest and delicately diaristic tale of revered actress Moon Sori. Moon, famous for her award-winning roles in *The Handmaiden* (2016) and *Oasis* (2002), plays herself in an impressive directorial debut, laying herself bare as she invites us to laugh, cry and witness the roles she plays behind the big screen and under the make-up: a wife, mother, friend, daughter and her own worst critic.

Over three acts - or three connected shorts - there's catharsis in Moon's comedic approach to her unfolding life. With gracefully paced strokes, she paints a vulnerable picture of the anxieties of women maturing under the spotlight. Offering sensitive insight into the neurosis of a successful actress and how she juggles life behind closed doors, *The Running Actress* is a portrait of the pressures and burdens of fame in an industry that values youth and beauty. (CA)



THE LAND OF SEONGHYE 성혜의 나라

SAT 3 NOV 13:00
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Introduction by Jang Byungwon

DIRECTOR: JUNG HYUNG-SUK
WRITER: JUNG HYUNG-SUK
PRODUCER: CHLOE KIM
CAST: SONG JI-IN, KANG DOO
INTERNATIONAL SALES: DAT FACTORY
DRAMA / 2018 / 117 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / B&W

FILMOGRAPHY
THE NIGHT VIEW OF THE OCEAN IN YEOSU (2016)

Shot in luminous black and white, this is a deeply affecting contemporary portrait of a society, a city and, above all, a woman, all struggling to cope with rapid economic change. Seonghye (Song Ji-in) is an educated young woman whose life appears inexplicably in freefall. Unfolding with a forensic eye for social detail, we gradually discover why Seonghye finds herself marginalised from the plastic yet comfortable corporate world she once inhabited. Physically and mentally exhausted, working two minimum wage jobs, everything is falling apart for Seonghye. Change does come but at considerable cost. When one character says “it’s all about money, money, money – the shit of money”, it’s hard to argue. And yet there is something even darker lurking in the heart of this tough, gorgeous and nuanced work which deservedly won the Grand Prize at this year’s Jeonju Festival’s Korean Competition strand. Riveting. (SW)

BFI
Film
Forever

Early Korean Cinema

Lost films from the
Japanese Colonial Period

February 2019
BFI Southbank

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Image: *Tuition*



Korean Cultural Centre

Korean Film Archive
한국영상자료원

SPECIAL FOCUS FORUM: A SLICE OF EVERYDAY LIFE

PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL
SAT 3 NOV 16:00–18:00

In a time when cinema has become more and more of a vehicle for escapism, why do we still return to the stories of everyday lives? What is it about the work of Ken Loach, Yasujiro Ozu and Hong Sangsoo that continues to strike a chord with audiences around the world?

This year's panel discussion, moderated by journalist and film curator Danny Leigh, is dedicated to the festival's special focus strand, 'A Slice of Everyday Life', which celebrates films that pay attention to the familiar yet poetic stories of ordinary people, capturing the intimate and subtle drama of our day-to-day existence.

The forum will be an opportunity to hear from Korean and UK film industry professionals, programmers and filmmakers alike, adding further context to the screenings included in the strand and shining a light on the idea of 'everydayness' on screen.

PART ONE. MICROHABITATS: CONTEXTUALISING EVERYDAYNESS ON FILM

Elements of 'everydayness' can be found across all genres of film, from romance to sci-fi to action packed war epics, but not all films can be considered honest depictions of day-to-day life. Beginning with an overview of the tradition of social realist filmmaking, 'kitchen sink' dramas, working class representation and social issues, Danny Leigh and Jang Byungwon (Programmer, Jeonju International Film Festival) will take turns presenting, looking at both the British and Korean film industry, respectively, to give a better understanding of the everyday on film. The presenters will end part one with a conversation, giving time to exchange their perspectives and ideas, and to answer questions that have arisen throughout the course of the event.

PARTICIPANTS:

DANNY LEIGH is a writer and film curator. As a journalist, he writes regularly on film for The Guardian and Financial Times, and has written and presented across BBC television and radio. He is currently Senior Curator at the BFI National Archive.

JANG BYUNGWON received a doctorate in film theory from Chung Ang University. He worked as a chief editor of weekly film magazine FILM 2.0. and as a curator for the Im Kwon Taek Film Museum. He has been a programmer at Jeonju International Film Festival since 2013, and teaches film theory, film history, and film policy.

PART TWO. POSSIBLE FACES PLACES: FILMMAKERS ON THE EVERYDAY AND REALISM

The presenters will be joined on stage by three filmmakers whose work closely reflects the themes of our special focus. We will hear from emerging Korean director, Kim Yang-hee, whose transfixing work, *The Poet and the Boy* (2017), is included in this year's 'A Slice of Everyday Life' strand, along with its star, Yang Ik-june, who directed the startling and uncompromising *Breathless* (2008), also featured in the strand. Presenting from the point of view of a UK filmmaker, Colin O'Toole, whose Manchester folk tale *Cowboy Dave* (2017) won the BAFTA Award for Best Short Film.

Together, they will walk us through their inspirations and give an insight into their own film backgrounds, outlining 'everyday' characteristics that are culturally specific to UK and Korean cinema, whilst showing how each country's social and economic structures have influenced the social realism genre.

The discussion will be moderated by Danny Leigh.

PARTICIPANTS:

KIM YANG-HEE graduated from Korea National University of Arts majoring in filmmaking. Her first feature *The Poet And The Boy* received the Audience Award and Grand Prize at Feature Film Pitching section of Jeonju Project Market in 2016.

YANG IK-JUNE became a star director in one fell swoop with his debut feature *Breathless*, winning awards at the International Film Festival Rotterdam and Deauville Asian Film Festival. Yang has built his acting and directing career by making numerous short films and features including *The Poet and the Boy*.

COLIN O'TOOLE is a BAFTA award winning writer / director for his short film *Cowboy Dave*. His debut feature film, *DUFFY*, is set within the gambling world of Northern Ireland in 1992 and is currently in development with the BFI and Mint Pictures.

CINEMA NOW

PROGRAMMER'S NOTES

Cinema Now offers a curated overview of new releases at this year's Korean box office. Beyond this currency (and filmmaking quality), it is difficult to say what unifies my choices for this strand at 2018's London Korean Film Festival, given that one of the key selection criteria has been variety itself, and an insistence on avoiding repetition. For example, in a year when several excellent features were set during the Joseon Dynasty, only one period film could be included in the programme; and so, with its winning mix of romance, court intrigue and proto-feminism, Hong Chang-pyo's *The Princess and the Matchmaker* (2018) only just beat out Cho Geun-hyun's *Heung-boo: The Revolutionist* (2018), about a writer of political allegories while itself allegorising the authoritarianism, censorship and corruption of the Park presidency, and also Moon Hyun-sung's *The King's Case Note* (2017), a royal rollicking ur-detective adventure offering a fantasy model of the ideal leader. Similarly Kim Dae-woong's contemporary oedipal dramedy *Love+Sling* (2018) pushed out Choi Sung-hyun's *Keys to the Heart* (2018) - both, loosely speaking, wrestling pictures.

The special focus of this year's London Korean Film Festival is 'A Slice of Everyday Life', and this theme crosses over into two of the Cinema Now selections. *Hotel by the River* (2018), from long-time LKFF favourite Hong

Sangsoo, offers a poet's off-season swansong pitched somewhere between the sublime and the worldly; and Yim Soon-rye's *Little Forest* (2018) follows a student's return to her rural home village for a year-long, largely food-based recovery from the insipid stresses of urban living.

Translocated to Korea from Daisuke Igarashi's manga, *Little Forest* was one of several new Korean releases this year adapted from non-Korean sources, alongside Lee Hae-young's *Believer* (2018) (reimagining Johnnie To's *Drug War*, 2012) and Lee Chang-dong's *Burning* (2018) (based on Haruki Murakami's short story). Similarly Jung Ji-woo's *Heart Blackened* (2017) relocates the courtroom twists of Fei Xing's *Silent Witness* (2013) to the world of a chaebol CEO (played by Choi Min-sik). It is one of three very different thrillers in the programme, the other two being Choo Chang-min's masterful slow revenger *Seven Years Of Night* (2018), whose characters struggle to stem an overflow of toxic masculinity, and Cho Kyu-jang's *The Witness* (2018) - also briefly featuring a flood, perhaps the strand's only repetition - in which a hammer-happy serial killer is aided and abetted by a middle-class neighbourhood's selfishness.

Anton Bitel
Festival Programmer and Film Critic

KOREAN CINEMA ON THE MOVE

Last October, a young woman found herself drifting from couch to couch when a new tax upturned her daily budget. This spring, a young man ran his lungs ragged with the sun each morning in search of an elusive greenhouse. In September, another young woman sought to sweat out her life's uncertainty during her nightly runs. These three characters appear in Jeon Go-woon's *Microhabitat* (2017), Lee Chang-dong's *Burning* (2018) and Han Ka-ram's *Our Body* (2018), which bowed at the Busan, Cannes and Toronto International Film Festivals, respectively, over the course of the past year.

This trio of works, along with a great many other Korean films from the past 12 months, notably have two things in common. They all focus on young characters struggling to find direction in their lives and on a society that pressures its citizens to prioritize material gain. Not only are directors descending on these pertinent themes en masse, Korean audiences too have flocked to multiplexes in search of stories that reflect their own lives on screen, rather than distract them with spectacle. Aside from the stunning success of Kim Yong-hwa's two-part fantasy epic *Along with the Gods* (2017-18), pricey tentpoles have for the most part struggled on the charts throughout 2018, while more modestly budgeted, youth-oriented fare, such as found footage horror Jung Bum-shik's *Gonjiam: Haunted Asylum* (2018), Yim Soon-rye's healing drama *Little Forest* (2018) and Lee Seok-keun's romantic comedy *On Your Wedding Day* (2018), have met with surprising mainstream success.

Though its 60,000 admissions paled in comparison with the mainstream titles mentioned above, *Microhabitat* (2018) was one of Korea's best attended indie titles, not to mention among its most celebrated beyond Korea's borders. From debut director Jeon, a member of the Gwanghwamun Cinema collective, the film showcases a unique protagonist, played by Lee Som, in a richly realised narrative teeming with clever cinematic quirks. It's no surprise that this colorful story of roaming youth has already picked up prizes from four festivals.

Eight years after his masterwork *Poetry* (2010), Lee Chang-dong finally returned with *Burning*, an adaptation of a short story by Haruki Murakami that became the top scoring film ever recorded on the Cannes Jury Grid (conducted annually by film trade magazine Screen Daily). Lee has explored youth before, but whereas the closing sequences of 1999's *Peppermint Candy* took on a historical dimension, by focusing on the present condition of Korean youth, *Burning* has proven to be the most of-the-moment and incendiary work in the cineaste's already unimpeachable filmography.

A 31-year-old who has yet to join the workforce makes for a compelling lead in Han Ka-ram's debut *Our Body* (2018), a new feature production of the Korean Academy of Film Arts (KAFA). Moon Choi, who broke out as a lead

of Lee Joon-ik's Colonial Era trial drama *Anarchist from Colony* (2017), bottles up years of social anxiety under a placid exterior as this young woman who takes up running after noticing a beautiful young jogger in her neighbourhood.

Continuing with the theme of running was *The Running Actress* (2017), a collection of three shorts that served as the directorial debut of legendary thespian Moon Sori. Playing herself, a middle-aged actress fretting over fading looks and dwindling acting offers with self-deprecation and knowing wit, Moon also vents her frustrations when she alights from her van and sprints down a country road, screaming her anxieties away as she tries to escape her troubles.

Moon also featured in *Little Forest* (2017), in which Kim Tae-ri, star of Park Chan-wook's *The Handmaiden* (2016), plays a young woman who leaves her life in the city and returns to her mother's now empty home in the countryside. There she grows and prepares her own wholesome food and reconnects with old friends in a simple tale that struck a chord with young viewers across the country, for whom it was a welcome respite to the busy academic or work schedules that rob them of any time to themselves.

One constant that remained in 2018 was the prolific pace of arthouse auteur Hong Sangsoo, who debuted two new black and white dramas, both featuring Hong regular Kim Minhee. Screening in Berlin was the playful *Grass* (2018), a snapshot of a young woman eavesdropping on others' conversations in a cafe. In August, the laconic *Hotel by the River* (2018) premiered at the Locarno International Film Festival. Ki Joobong, playing an ageing poet who asks his sons to join him in the countryside, earned the Best Actor prize at the Swiss fest for his wistful portrayal of a man not quite sure how to embrace his twilight.

Ki also triumphed with a special appearance as the late North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in Yoon Jong-bin's richly plotted espionage yarn *The Spy Gone North* (2018). First screened as part of the midnight lineup of the Cannes Film Festival, this true life tale of a South Korean agent posing as a businessman to North Korean officials in the 1990s, featured uncanny similarities with current geopolitical events in Far East Asia. Genre master Kim Jee-woon also toyed with Korean reunification in his ambitious Japanese anime adaptation *Illang: The Wolf Brigade* (2018). Yet despite featuring the summer's most spectacular set pieces and being picked up for global distribution by Netflix, the sci-fi action noir was short-lived on the charts as it met with the same fate as many of this year's expensive productions.

Of course, no year in Korean cinema would be complete without the presence of a new batch of tightly-wound thrillers and the last 12 months in no way disappointed. Choi Min-sik lent his intensity to Jung Ji-woo's slick high society murder trial yarn *Heart Blackened* (2017), a remake of the Chinese court thriller *Silent Witness* (2013), while Lee Sung-min embodied the Korean everyman in the apartment block serial killer thriller *The Witness* (2018) by Cho Kyu-jang, a clever social spin on the bystander effect. Meanwhile, stars assembled for big-budget action-thrillers such as Choo Chang-min's *Seven Years of Night* (2018), a moodily lensed adaptation of the sensationally popular Korean revenge novel of the same with Ryoo Seung-ryong and Jang Dong-gun, and the Johnnie To smash *Drug War* (2012) received a high octane Korean update in the form of Lee Hae-young's

Believer (2018), featuring Cho Jin-woong, Ryu Jun Yeol and a slew of other high profile names.

Yet while these bellwethers remain a popular and essential cornerstone of the industry, the driving force of the Korean film market in 2018 was undoubtedly the youth audience. Looking at all the young characters who have appeared on screen chasing after elusive goals, and considering the unexpected failure or success stories that have played out on the charts, perhaps the Korean film industry as a whole is in the process of dusting off and lacing up its running shoes as it seeks to renew itself and catch up with the hearts and minds of today's new legions of local cinemagoers.

Pierce Conran
Film Critic, Journalist and Producer



HEART BLACKENED

침묵

FRI 9 NOV 20:50
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Introduction by Anton Bitel

DIRECTOR: JUNG JI-WOO
WRITER: JUNG JI-WOO
PRODUCER: SYD LIM
CAST: CHOI MIN-SIK, PARK SHIN HYE, RYU JUN YEOL
PRODUCTION COMPANY: YONG FILM
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CJ E&M
CRIME, DRAMA / 2016 / 125 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
FOURTH PLACE (2016)
EUNGYO (2012)
MODERN BOY (2008)
IF YOU WERE ME (2006)
BLOSSOM AGAIN (2005)
HAPPY END (1999)

Writer/director Jung Ji-woo translocates Fei Xing's courtroom drama *Silent Witness* (2013) to Seoul's elite. After celebrated singer Park Yu-na (Lee Hanee) is killed, her fiancé, the older, super-rich CEO Yim Tae-san (Choi Min-sik), hires lawyer and family friend Choi Hee-jung (Park Shin Hye) to clear his daughter Mi-ra (Lee Soo-kyung) of murder, even though there is evidence that seems to place the spoilt party girl - who had no love for her future stepmother - drunk and aggressive at the scene. "Money is everything," declares Chairman Yim, who believes that he can pay his way out of any problem - but *Heart Blackened* establishes a twisty dialectic between money and love, upending our expectations of its characters. Here the legal system is exposed to be an institution - not unlike cinema itself - of smoke and mirrors, where the right budget can manipulate anyone. (AB)



LOVE+SLING

레슬러

SAT 10 NOV 21:00
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Introduction by Anton Bitel

DIRECTOR: KIM DAE-WOONG
WRITER: KIM DAE-WOONG
PRODUCER: LEE AN-NA
CAST: YOO HAI-JIN, KIM MIN-JAE, LEE SEONG-KYUNG
PRODUCTION COMPANY: ANNAPURNA FILMS
INTERNATIONAL SALES: LOTTE ENTERTAINMENT
SPORTS COMEDY / 2017 / 110 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
RENT AND DEPOSIT (SHORT, 2009)

"Free yourself!" shouts widowed father and ex-wrestler Gui-bo (Yoo Hai-jin, 1987: *When The Day Comes*, 2018; *The Unfair*, 2015) to his 19-year-old son Seong-woong (Kim Min-jae, *The Great Seducer*, 2018; *Hit The Top*, 2017) during a wrestling bout. Thick as thieves, father and son need to free themselves from one another's emotional grip. Complications, and a solution, will come when Seong-woong, about to declare his love to his best friend and neighbour Ga-young (Lee Seong-kyung), realises that in fact she has long been infatuated not with him, but more improbably with his much older father instead - something which forces both men to grow up, face some home truths and learn to live their own lives. Writer/director Kim Dae-woong's feature debut is at first a breezily funny, charmingly performed love triangle, before slowly letting more oedipal emotions loose. (AB)



LITTLE FOREST

리틀 포레스트

SAT 3 NOV 18:30
RIO CINEMA

Introduction by Jinhee Choi

FRI 16 NOV 18:00
FILMHOUSE, EDINBURGH

SAT 17 NOV 18:30
QUEEN'S FILM THEATRE, BELFAST

MON 19 NOV 18:15
SHOWROOM CINEMA, SHEFFIELD

SUN 25 NOV 15:50
HOME, MANCHESTER

SUN 25 NOV 18:30
BROADWAY CINEMA, NOTTINGHAM

DIRECTOR: YIM SOON-RYE
WRITER: HWANG SUNG-GOO
PRODUCER: JENNA KU
CAST: KIM TAE-RI, RYU JUN YEOL, MOON SORI
PRODUCTION COMPANY: WATERMELON PICTURES
INTERNATIONAL SALES: M-LINE DISTRIBUTION
DRAMA / 2017 / 103 MIN / CERT. U / DCP / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
THE WHISTLEBLOWER (2014)
ROLLING HOME WITH A BULL (2010)
WAIKIKI BROTHERS (2001)

"I'm hungry," says dissatisfied student Hye-won (Kim Tae-ri), explaining why she has returned to her rural village. Arriving mid-winter, she has come for only a few days - but will stay on for a year, rediscovering the patience and preparation necessitated by the rhythms of the seasons. Adapted from Daisuke Igarashi's 2002 manga series, Yim Soon-rye's film is mostly content to observe Hye-won slowly restoring both herself - and the viewer - with a gentle routine of good food and friendship. Along the way, she reestablishes her relationship with her absent mother (Moon Sori) and with mother nature, while reaping the rewards of her own replanted *joie de vivre*. With its heavy focus on cooking and eating, *Little Forest* will have you feeling hungry too. (AB)



SEVEN YEARS OF NIGHT

7년의 밤

FRI 2 NOV 20:45
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Q&A with Author Jeong Yu-jeong

DIRECTOR: CHOO CHANG-MIN
WRITER: CHOO CHANG-MIN, LEE YONG-YEON, KIM YOU-PYUNG
PRODUCER: AN EUN-MI
CAST: RYU SEUNG-RYONG, JANG DONG-GUN, SONG SAE-BYUK
PRODUCTION COMPANY: POLLUX BARUNSON
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CJ E&M
THRILLER / 2018 / 123 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
MASQUERADE (2012)
LATE BLOSSOM (2010)
LOST IN LOVE (2006)
MAPADO: ISLAND OF FORTUNES (2005)
THE END OF APRIL (2000)

Seven Years of Night is an intense, noirish mystery thriller set, like *In Dreams* (Neil Jordan, 1999), *Jindabyne* (Ray Lawrence, 2006) and *Lost River* (Ryan Gosling, 2014), around a small town and a dam with a ghost town sunk beneath its waters. After a drunken Hyun-soo (Ryu Seung-ryong) accidentally hits a young girl with his car, her monstrous father Young-je (Jang Dong-gun) seeks a vengeance that will involve Hyun-soo's son (Go Kyung-pyo). Directed and co-adapted by Choo Chang-min (*Masquerade*, 2012) from a novel by Jeong Yu-jeong, this highly accomplished tale of two (or three) errant fathers deftly confounds chronology to weave together an intricate narrative mosaic of guilt, revenge and legacy. It dives deep into the dark waters of patriarchy before opening its floodgates. Elegantly shot and confidently told, it exposes different generations struggling to resurface from suffocatingly toxic masculinity. (AB)



THE PRINCESS AND THE MATCHMAKER

궁합

SUN 4 NOV 19:45
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Introduction by Anton Bitel

DIRECTOR: HONG CHANG-PYO
WRITER: LEE SO-MI
PRODUCER: PETER ZHU, BANG MI-JEONG
CAST: SHIM EUN-KYUNG, LEE SEUNG-GI
PRODUCTION COMPANY: JUPITER FILM
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CJ E&M
PERIOD, ROMANCE, COMEDY / 2018 / 110 MIN / CERT. 12 / DCP / COLOUR

Hong Chang-pyo's colourful Joseon-era romantic court intrigue is the second in a loose projected trilogy from Jupiter Films concerned with Korea's traditions of fortune-telling, following Han Jae-rim's *The Face Reader* (2013). In 1753, a time of drought, the King is advised to restore celestial balance by marrying off his daughter, Princess Songhwa (Shim Eun-kyung). The independent-minded Songhwa is herself desperate to escape the confines of the royal palace for an advance peek at her would-be suitors - but she finds her perfect match in a wise, honourable astrologist (Lee Seung-gi) tasked with testing her compatibility with the four candidates. Full of imposture and masquerade, *The Princess and the Matchmaker* tells the story of a woman whose name may have been struck from the annals, but whose comic adventures mark her as ahead of her times: a feminist *avant la lettre*, partnered with a male ally. (AB)



THE WITNESS

목격자

TUE 6 NOV 21:00
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Introduction by Anton Bitel

DIRECTOR: CHO KYU-JANG
WRITER: CHO KYU-JANG
PRODUCER: OH JEONG-HYUN
CAST: LEE SUNG-MIN, KIM SANG-HO, JIN KYUNG
PRODUCTION COMPANY: AD406 PICTURES
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CONTENTS PANDA
THRILLER / 2017 / 111 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
MOOD OF THE DAY (2016)
A CAMEL DOESN'T LEAVE DESERT (2009)

Returning drunk to his newly purchased Gwacheon apartment late at night, middle-aged Han Sang-hoon (Lee Sung-min) witnesses a baseball-capped man (Kwak Si-yang) battering a woman to death in the street below. Dogged police detective Jang Jae-yeob (Kim Sang-ho) is on the case, and needs someone who can identify the wily perpetrator - but Sang-hoon keeps quiet about what he has seen, terrified of exposing his wife Soo-jin (Jin Kyung) or young daughter Eun-ji (Park Bom) to reprisals from the murderer. As other witnesses are viciously attacked, Sang-hoon will learn that selfishness brings deadly consequences. In a country where civilisation is never far from the wilds, Cho Kyu-jang's (serial) killer thriller uses cat-and-mouse tropes to hammer home its dispiriting picture of bourgeois, educated Koreans more concerned with the prices of private property than with the values of social responsibility. (AB)



HOTEL BY THE RIVER

강변호텔

THU 8 NOV 21:00
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Introduction by Simon Ward

DIRECTOR: HONG SANGSOO
WRITER: HONG SANGSOO
PRODUCER: HONG SANGSOO
CAST: KI JOOBONG, KIM MINHEE, SONG SEONMI, KWON HAEHYO, YU JUNSANG
PRODUCTION COMPANY: JEONWONSA FILM
INTERNATIONAL SALES: FINECUT
DRAMA / 2018 / 96 MIN / CERT. 18 / DCP / B&W

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
THE DAY AFTER (2017)
ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT ALONE (2017)
YOURSELF AND YOURS (2016)
RIGHT NOW, WRONG THEN (2015)

Is Hong Sangsoo thinking about death? This wintery comedy-drama conjures together five characters – all in search of outcomes. A famous poet is staying in a riverside hotel, for free, and summons his two semi-estranged adult sons (they rarely see each other either) to discuss his death. He thinks he'll die soon, though there's no evidence to support it. Meanwhile Sanghee checks in for a few days, on the rebound from a failed relationship; she and her friend Yeonju are both fans of the poet's writing and are thrilled to find him there. Between the enthusiasm of the women and the awkward embarrassments of the men, Hong weaves a conundrum to die for. Ki Joobong as the poet (Best Actor, Locarno 2018; and star of last year's *Merry Christmas Mr Mo*) heads a perfect cast of Hong Sangsoo regulars – including his muse Kim Minhee and the ever-charming Yu Junsang. (TR)

INDIE FIREPOWER

PROGRAMMER'S NOTES

These are strange days for independent filmmakers in Korea. Last year's change in government from a right-wing administration obsessed with silencing and punishing its critics to a left-liberal administration which is trying to right past wrongs has left some indie directors uncertain how best to move forward. This is clearly not the time for agit-prop or righteous indignation, but there are still plenty of social issues to be addressed – so the left is still searching for new positions and new ways to engage audiences. Meanwhile the graduates from Korea's many film courses are negotiating other questions. The mainstream film industry is more powerful than ever and is overwhelmingly focused on entertainment and escapism. Should newly trained directors bend to the industry's will or try to find ways to make more personal work within the system? Such decisions can be life-changing, so they really do matter.

This year we're screening the three fiction features made across twenty years by Park Kiyong, who faced exactly the same questions in the late 1990s. Park graduated from the Korean Academy of Film Arts in the late 1980s (it was then Korea's only film school) and did numerous odd jobs in the industry before making the non-mainstream *Motel Cactus* for the company Uno in 1997. The film attracted a lot of attention at home and abroad, but everything he's made since has been done independently, including a suite of documentaries, an experimental short and two more fiction features, *Camel(s)* in 2002 and *Old Love* in 2017. The documentary subjects have ranged from the effects of a major earthquake in New Zealand to the lives of Korean-Chinese in both Korea and China, but his fictions are quite homogenous: they

all deal with short-term sexual relationships, albeit in rather different ways. Park has combined his filmmaking with extended periods of teaching: he was in charge of his own alma mater KAFA for five years, and is currently training directors-to-be at Dankook University in Seoul. In other words, he's face-to-face with a new generation which has to make the same choice he made himself nearly twenty years ago, between adapting to the film industry's requirements and taking an independent route.

Park Kiyong will be our guest in London this year, and we're looking forward to hearing his insights into the joys and sorrows of independence in today's Korean film culture.

We're also screening films by two younger indie directors, one fresh out of KAFA, the other moving into features after making two impressive social-issue short films. The KAFA graduate, Kim Inseon, builds on her several prize-winning shorts with the low-budget *Adulthood* (2017), supported by KAFA's "Advanced Program"; it's the smartest calling-card for the industry in some years. Meanwhile Choi Changhwan tackles the Korean version of the "zero hours contract" syndrome, looking at the exploitation of immigrant workers in his short *Even No Shadow* (2011) and at the casual employment traps awaiting young Koreans without college degrees in his debut feature *Back From the Beat* (2018). Where this excellent work will lead these talented newcomers is the question that we started with.

Tony Rayns
Festival Programmer and Film Critic

AN INTERVIEW WITH PARK KIYONG



Park Kiyong (b. 1961) is a singular figure in Korean film culture: a KAFA graduate who went on to combine a filmmaking career with a key role in film teaching at KAFA itself and at Dankook University. Ahead of his visit to LKFF, we asked him a few questions:

TONY RAYNS You make both fiction films and documentaries. Are the two closely related for you?

PARK KIYONG For me, fiction and documentaries are the same. If I come up with a story I want to make, I go for fiction. And if I find some interesting place (I am mostly attracted by places), I make a documentary.

I realised recently that whether I go with fiction or documentary, I always end up making an essay film. I have no idea how I got into this habit but, more and more, I feel I don't want to restrict myself in any way. I just let the brushstroke lead me.

TR Your three fiction features all deal with short-term sexual relationships. Any special reason why you chose to focus on this topic?

PKY I am drawn to dealing with short-term relationships because they can condense the story and reveal characters in an interesting and economical way. Since I make low budget films, I am very much concerned with how to tell a story without spending big money.

Beyond that all my characters long for on-going relationships, but they don't succeed in achieving them. I believe maintaining a long-term relationship, which we all wish to have, is almost impossible in this complicated modern society for all kinds of reasons.

TR Ever since *Motel Cactus* in 1997, you've chosen to work independently. What are the main pluses and minuses of going independent?

PKY Even from the beginning, I felt uncomfortable working in the film industry. This is because (as an old friend wisely pointed out a long time ago) I am a control freak, and I want to control things myself rather than being controlled by somebody else.

The good side of working independently is that nobody tells you what you can or can't do, and the bad side is that you are always short of everything.

TR The fiction films look quite different from each other, and presumably not only because different cinematographers shot them. Can you say something about the changing visual strategies?

PKY I try to find the right style for each film. For me, style or form is as important as the story, maybe more important. I often start a film with a style in mind and try to find a suitable story for it.

Since I make low budget films, I can't always do whatever I think is the best for the film. I often have to find alternative ways of doing things within the prevailing conditions, which are normally very limited. This can also define the style.

TR Has the way you work with actors changed from film to film?

PKY It really depends on who I get for the film. Since *Camel(s)*, improvisation has become my main directing tactic and I try to develop it in my own way, but, so far, I've not been so lucky in finding the right actors for this approach to filmmaking. I am not that happy with the results.

TR Do you fully script your fiction films before you shoot? Do you storyboard them?

PKY I have written a full script for all my fiction films except *Camel(s)*, but the script is only a guide map for further developments. Some actors coped well with this way of filmmaking, but some hated it even though they had agreed in the first place. No doubt this is because I am as fickle as a cat's eye, always changing my plan and throwing them into confusion.

I do storyboard in detail, but when we're on the location to shoot I tend to change everything, reacting to whatever we find there at that time. I do think about how the material will be edited, but more often I go wherever my fancy takes me and don't give a toss about what will happen when I come to edit. Then I repent later.

TR Has your teaching work in KAFA and Dankook had any bearing on your filmmaking?

PKY Certainly. I couldn't make a single film for 10 years while at KAFA because I was too busy with the school work. At Dankook I have more free time to spare, but I can only make films during the breaks, winter and summer. In a way, that determines what kind of films I can make.



MOTEL CACTUS

모텔 선인장

SAT 10 NOV 15:00
KOREAN CULTURAL CENTRE UK

Introduction by Tony Rayns

DIRECTOR: PARK KIYONG
WRITER: PARK KIYONG, BONG JOON-HO
CAST: LEE MI-YEON, JIN HEE-GYEONG, JUNG WOO-SUNG,
PARK SHIN-YANG
PRODUCTION COMPANY: UNO FILM
RIGHTS HOLDER: KOREA IMAGE INVESTMENT DEVELOPMENT
ROMANCE / 1997 / 90 MIN / CERT. 18 / DVD / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
PICTURE OF HELL (2016)
YANJI (2015)
50_FIFTIES (2014)
GARIBONG (2013)
MOVING (2011)

Four intimate encounters take place in Room 407 of Motel Cactus, a 'love hotel' in Gangnam, the southern part of Seoul. The redecoration of the room tells us that time passes between these episodes: the same woman appears in the first and third parts, the same man in the third and fourth. Park builds a rather downbeat view of what passes between women and men – not just the bodily fluids, also the assumptions, expectations and needs – but the long-take aesthetic and expressionist/impressionist imagery make it easy to engage and sympathise with some of these characters. The many famous names on the credits include cinematographer Chris Doyle, co-writer and assistant director Bong Joon-ho, assistant director Jang Joon-hwan, and stars-to-be Jung Woo-sung and Lee Mi-yeon. If you're curious why a 'love hotel' would be named 'Cactus', well, that's a question that also strikes at least one of its customers. (TR)



CAMEL(S)

낙타(들)

SUN 11 NOV 12:00
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Q&A with Director Park Kiyong

DIRECTOR: PARK KIYONG
WRITER: PARK KIYONG
PRODUCER: KOH CHOONG-KIL
CAST: LEE DAE-YON, PARK MYUNG-SHIN
PRODUCTION COMPANY: FINE COMMUNICATIONS
RIGHTS HOLDER: PARK KIYONG
DRAMA / 2001 / 91 MIN / CERT. 18 / 35MM / B&W

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
PICTURE OF HELL (2016)
YANJI (2015)
50_FIFTIES (2014)
GARIBONG (2013)
MOVING (2011)

Park's first indie feature is essentially a two-hander. A man in a borrowed SUV picks up a woman outside Seoul's domestic airport and drives her to a small enclave of restaurants, nightclubs and motels on the west coast. Both are middle-aged and married to other people, and know little about each other's lives. After a seafood dinner and a visit to a karaoke lounge, they go to bed together for the first (and maybe last) time. The film offers cool, delicately nuanced observation of these two averagely careworn individuals as they try to escape the routine which has ground them down. Park asked his superb actors Lee Dae-yeon and Park Myung-shin to improvise within parameters they discussed in advance; he likens the method to that of a jazz ensemble and says he tried not to follow convention. Why camels? They can survive well in adverse conditions and, it's said, their eyes are always moist. (TR)



OLD LOVE 재회

MON 12 NOV 18:30
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Q&A with Director Park Kiyong

DIRECTOR: PARK KIYONG
WRITER: PARK KIYONG
PRODUCER: PARK KIYONG
CAST: YOO JUNGGAH, KIM TAEHOON, KIM MOONHEE
PRODUCTION COMPANY: B FILMS PRODUCTION
INTERNATIONAL SALES: GOOD MOVE MEDIA
ROMANCE / 2017 / 89 MIN / CERT. 18 / DCP / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
PICTURE OF HELL (2016)
YANJI (2015)
50_FIFTIES (2014)
GARIBONG (2013)
MOVING (2011)

After 15 years of running film schools and making documentaries, Park Kiyong returns to fiction with a movie that you could take as an ironic commentary on *Motel Cactus* and *Camel(s)*. Jungsoo and Yoonhee dated when they were students, thirty-some years ago. They meet by chance at Incheon Airport as sadder and wiser adult smokers and agree to see each other again during the coming Lunar New Year holiday. There's a lot of catching-up to do: between them they have the full range of grown-up problems, from a parent with Alzheimer's to a bankrupt company and a terminally ill business partner. Both now find themselves alone in life, and one of them would like to turn the clock back... Made as a joint venture between Tokyo University of the Arts and Dankook University's Graduate School, this is Park's most sophisticated, touching and reflective film. It's set in the winter of 2017, during the campaign to impeach President Park-Geunhye. (TR)



BACK FROM THE BEAT 내가 사는 세상

SUN 4 NOV 17:20
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Introduction by Tony Rayns

DIRECTOR: CHOI CHANGHWAN
WRITER: CHOI CHANGHWAN
PRODUCER: KWON HYUNJUN
CAST: KWAK MINKYU, KIM SEE-EUN, PARK JIHONG
INTERNATIONAL SALES: INDIESTORY INC.
DRAMA / 2018 / 67 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / B&W

Kwak Min-kyu works afternoons as a food-delivery courier and works evenings playing the turntables in his friend Ji-hong's bar Commune, where he's known as 'DJ Mingoos'. His girlfriend Si-eun works (too hard) in a private art school and sticks with him because she loves his music. Both of them have their troubles at work and money is always short, but they truck along okay... until the day Min-kyu stumbles into a conversation about employment rights and finds himself complaining about shortfalls in his wages.

Big mistake! Choi Changhwan has form in this area: he worries that Korean laws are being circumvented and that people at the bottom of the ladder are suffering. But he frames these concerns as down-to-earth drama (no hectoring militancy here), and films his story in elegant widescreen compositions which anchor the likeable characters in their environments. Nice beats, too! (TR)

+ EVEN NO SHADOW 그림자도 없다

DIRECTOR: CHOI CHANGHWAN
CAST: NGUYEN DNC THU, CHOI CHANGHWAN
INTERNATIONAL SALES: INDIESTORY INC.
DRAMA / 2011 / 36 MIN / TBC / DCP / COLOUR

Centred on immigrant workers from Vietnam and Sri Lanka, Choi's heroic short goes deep into Korea's 'black economy', where exploitation and injustice are rife and racist outbursts are just one too many shots of soju away. The storyline shuttles from Incheon to Daegu, where the social-activist priest Jang does his best to help the immigrants with their claims for compensation, severance pay and employment rights. Fine, eye-opening stuff, rather well acted by the non-pro cast – which includes Choi himself. (TR)



ADULTHOOD

어른도감

MON 12 NOV 20:45
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Introduction by Tony Rayns

DIRECTOR: KIM IN-SEON
 WRITER: KIM IN-SEON
 PRODUCER: JE JEONG-JU
 CAST: UM TAE-GOO, LEE JAE-IN, SEO JEONG-YEON
 PRODUCTION COMPANY: KOREAN ACADEMY OF FILM ARTS
 INTERNATIONAL SALES: M-LINE DISTRIBUTION
 DRAMA, COMEDY / 2017 / 92 MIN / CERT. 12 / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
 WEDNESDAY PRAYER GROUP (SHORT, 2016)
 A FAMILIAR TASTE (SHORT, 2014)
 ALLERGY (SHORT, 2013)
 STEPHANIE (SHORT, 2012)

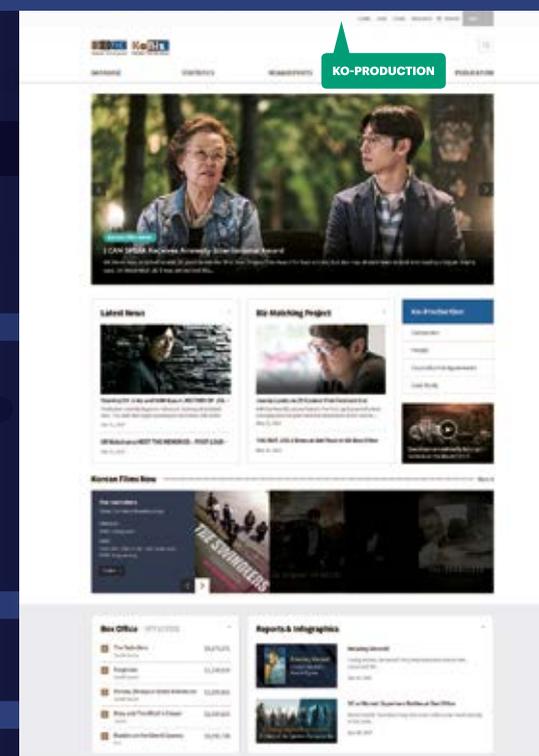
Kim In-seon has won prizes for her short films, and this debut feature gets so many things right that her future seems assured. Coming home from her father's funeral, 14-year-old Kyung-un finds her life invaded by her feckless uncle Jae-min, a gigolo who preys on lonely, middle-aged women. No sooner has he manoeuvred himself into position as her legal guardian (her mother walked out when she was an infant) than he's made off with her father's life-insurance pay-out. Kyung-un goes on the warpath for restitution, but is inexorably drawn into Jae-min's plan to scam Jum-hee, the unmarried owner of a pharmacy. The plot turns on a girl in high-school being more 'adult' than a grown man (Jae-min has never quite shaken his glory days as a member of a boy band), but it hinges on the fact that all three protagonists are deeply lonely, and trying to fill gaps in their lives. Kim In-seon's aim is true. (TR)

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WOMEN'S VOICES

INTRODUCTION

This year's Seoul International Women's Film Festival (SIWFF) (31st May–7th June) was the largest to-date, seeing the addition of a new section, the Korean Feature Competition. The festival marked the occasion by celebrating the past and looking to the future. First launched in April 1997, SIWFF opened with Korea's first female director Park Nam-ok's *The Widow* (1955). SIWFF was Korea's second international film festival, following the launch of the Busan International Film Festival in October 1996, at a time when even the concept of a 'film festival' was unfamiliar in Korea. The original tagline "See the World Through Women's Eyes!" is still used today to represent the festival's identity. This phrase indicates not only that the films depict the lives of women from a feminist point of view, but also presents the possibility that the marginalised - whose stories and vision have been ignored or distorted - can have their voices heard. Therefore, we do not consider our work to be part of film as a whole, as it is currently conceptualised. Rather, our presentation of the female gaze is something that goes beyond this—as such the SIWFF has played a unique role in expanding and diversifying the world of cinema. This was accomplished by revealing stories and visions that have been hidden, or made entirely invisible, by the restrictions placed on the film industry in the past.

Marking its 20th edition this year, the SIWFF held an international conference under the theme "The Strategies and Policies toward Gender Equality in Film Industry". During the conference, Lizzie Francke—Senior Production and Development Executive of the British Film Institute (BFI) Film Fund—remarked that diversity should be considered one of the crucial factors in evaluating the 'quality' of a film. Indeed, diversity is closely connected with aesthetic discoveries and a new level of quality. Diversity of perspective and subject can change the way people see things, and can lead to a greater variety in camera angles and composition. Exposure to the perspectives of marginalised communities can open narrow minds and make us question our existing 'universal' values, as well as the position of lauded male directors. With the aim of championing diversity, the SIWFF has always tried to discover and introduce films, presenting novel topics and aesthetics, exemplified by our choice of *Faces Places*—directed by Agnès Varda and JR—as the opening for this year's festival.

Meanwhile, 2018 is also a milestone year for Korea's feminist movement. It has been a year where youth-centred campaigns relating to the 'my body, my choice' movement created waves in society. Large-scale demonstrations are being held against industries that are sexually-abusive, targeting illegal pornography websites that use pictures taken without permission in both public and private spaces - and women's groups, as well as women in general, are actively campaigning to demand the revision of the abortion law, which currently permits extremely limited rights for abortion. There is also the so-called 'corset-free' movement, mainly among girls younger than 20, who protest against the social

pressure requiring them not only to be smart, but also to be both sexy and beautiful at the same time. Also, the #MeToo movement, launched in 2017, shows no sign of abating, inspiring art which reflect its related issues and discussions.

Such creations have included the groundbreaking films featured in this year's festival, the type of movies that had been hitherto unseen in Korean cinema. Six of these will be introduced at the London Korean Film Festival, including three short films: *Testimony* (2018), *Playground* (2017) and *A Blind Alley* (2017). These shorts are the response of female directors to the #MeToo movement, each depicting a different case of sexual abuse, taking place in a different location, and explored through different genres. Interestingly, these titles all try to document communication and solidarity among women. A full-length film made with production support from the SIWFF, *For Vagina's Sake* (2018), is a documentary with a light-hearted approach to discussing menstruation, which has long been a universal taboo, and tackling the liberation of women's bodies from the patriarchal structure. *Hit the Night* (2017) is about sex, drinking, parties and talking. When watching it, audiences are likely to be reminded of director Hong Sangsoo's works. However, *Hit the Night* takes a completely different tone, with a young female protagonist inquisitively asking a man about his private life and pestering him for sex on the pretext of making an arthouse film. This movie is a refreshing approach to the sexuality, desire, wit, and humour of young women, while at the same time a radical challenge to cinematic tradition. In contrast, *Grown Up* (2018) is a documentary that deals with the welfare system, family values, and issues surrounding the disabled in Korean society, as seen through the eyes of women. It keeps its distance from sentiments of pity and shallow humanism, instead presenting a balanced and mature perspective through its honest presentation of the personality of Hyejeong, a disabled woman, and the difficulties faced by her older sister, the film's director Hyejeong. All these films represent Korean society's most pressing current issues, while also creating something new and exciting on an aesthetic level. We hope that through these works you are able to enjoy the diversity of Korean cinema to its fullest.

Cho Hye-young
Programmer, Seoul International Women's Film Festival

PROGRAMMER'S NOTES

This year's edition of the Women's Voices strand is an exciting, taboo-breaking cinematic journey through issues that are gradually gaining momentum in terms of recognition and cultural awareness. The programme feels incredibly relevant in the wake of the #MeToo movement that has given a huge number of women the confidence to articulate and call out the daily sexism and sexual harassment they face. We're living in a time when the American president is a person who advocates 'pussy-grabbing'; a time when sexual consent still needs explaining; and where certain film actresses continue to distance themselves from the word 'feminist', as if equal rights is a dirty concept. But we're also living in a time where women are making work that illuminates the different ways in which boundaries are persistently crossed with their bodies, such as Momo Pixel's video game *Hair Nah* (2017) that highlights the experience of being a black woman and having white people endlessly uninvitedly touching her hair, or Jenny Lu's *The Receptionist* (2018) which addresses the Western fetishization of Asian women, or Kiran Gandhi's free-bleeding marathon run – boldly raising awareness for feminist body-positivity.

Featuring highlights from Seoul's International Women's Film Festival, the programme winds through a rollercoaster of uncomfortable topics and courageous women making empowered and empowering actions. It's astonishing that periods are still so cloaked in shame. A line that plays on my mind from Kim Bo-ram's *For Vagina's Sake* (2017) is a student's online comment in response to a photograph of a blood-stained seat on public transport – "couldn't she hold it in?" For *Vagina's Sake* is a warm, fun documentary that addresses the myths and silence surrounding menstruation, the need for information sharing, and for the laws devised by men to be dismantled – such as the tampon tax that treats menstruation like a lifestyle choice.

Agency and choice are a strong themes that emerge through both the short and feature films. In the documentary *Grown Up* (2018), director Jang Hyejeong shares her experiences in making the decision to live with her sister Hyejeong, who has a developmental disability. The film observes her figuring out how they can live their lives independently, yet together.

In *Hit the Night* (2017), the typical role of predatory male is reversed as director Jeong Ga-young attempts to seduce the object of her affection under the thinly-veiled guise of screenwriting research. Jeong defies any cultural norms or niceties by diving in straight away with questions about his masturbation habits, and continues to push boundaries all night.

The short films feature a diversity of experience with elements that connect and recur. *Testimony* (2018) explores the enabling of rape culture in institutions and workplaces; *A Blind Alley* (2018) is a tender exploration of sexuality and the trauma of assault, while *Playground* (2017) is a gripping thriller that navigates patterns of inappropriate behaviour and the echoes of trauma.

While the films are refreshingly candid and necessary, they are also often playful. The best impact that film can achieve is to start conversations, and hopefully that's exactly what this programme will do.

Sophie Brown
Festival Programmer and Film Critic



FOR VAGINA'S SAKE 피의 연대기

MON 5 NOV 14:00
BRITISH MUSEUM

Q&A with Director Kim Bo-ram

DIRECTOR: KIM BO-RAM
WRITER: KIM BO-RAM
PRODUCER: OH HEE-JUNG
CAST: KIM BO-RAM, OH HEE-JUNG
PRODUCTION COMPANY: KEAM PRODUCTION
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CAT&DOCS
DOCUMENTARY / 2017 / 84 MIN / CERT. 12 / DCP / COLOUR

Periods have been a source of shame and embarrassment for too long. Inspired by a conversation with her Dutch friend, and the famous Instagram banning of artist Rupi Kaur's photograph of a woman with a bloodstain, filmmaker Kim Bo-ram goes on a worldwide adventure in pursuit of personal experiences, and exploring the silence and historical fears surrounding menstruation.

With bursts of vibrant animation, the film bounces through the evolution of menstrual products, and the growth of information sharing thanks to the internet. Kim observes the international campaigns to make sanitary products freely available in schools, and to ensure that girls have access to them so they don't miss out on their education by having to stay at home. *For Vagina's Sake* is a playful, funny and vital piece of documentary filmmaking, that shows how the world needs to stop being so awkward and ridiculous about a natural process, period. (SB)



HIT THE NIGHT 밤치기

TUE 6 NOV 18:30
INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

Q&A with Director Jeong Ga-young

DIRECTOR: JEONG GA-YOUNG
WRITER: JEONG GA-YOUNG
PRODUCER: YEON DONG-EUN, KIM JOUNG-MIN
CAST: JEONG GA-YOUNG, PARK JONG-HWAN, HYUNG SEUL-WOO
PRODUCTION COMPANY: LEZHIN E&M
INTERNATIONAL SALES: M-LINE DISTRIBUTION
ROMANCE / 2017 / 85 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
A THOUGHT IN THE THEATRE (SHORT, 2017)
LOVE JO. RIGHT NOW (SHORT, 2017)
BITCH ON THE BEACH (2016)
WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME? K K (SHORT, 2015)
THE FUTURE OF TONGUE (SHORT, 2014)

A young woman questions a man over drinks as research for her screenplay; "Consider me a friend," she implores. Director and lead star Jeong Ga-young clearly has ulterior motives as she presses Jin-hyeok to shares his deepest, most intimate sexual habits. With different motivations and expectations, the pair enter a sort of intellectual battle, in a fascinating exploration of attraction and connection and that intangible thing that sparks infatuation. Fuelling the night with gin, Ga-young hunts down her object of desire with unabashed abandon, her underhand methods flipping the typical roles of heteronormative male tactics. With hints of Richard Linklater's *Before* trilogy (1995-2013), they talk all evening, and the conversation meanders from sex and desire, to personality type and childhood memories. A self-reflexive thread about cinephiles and the filmmaking process adds a postmodern flourish to *Hit the Night*, with its startlingly frank confessions and twists and turns that keep you guessing until the end. (SB)



GROWN UP 어른이 되면

WED 7 NOV 18:30
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Introduction by Ania Ostrowska

DIRECTOR: JANG HYEYEONG
WRITER: JANG HYEYEONG
PRODUCER: JANG HYEYEONG
CAST: JANG HYEYEONG, JANG HYEJEONG
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CINEMADAL
DOCUMENTARY / 2018 / 98 MIN / CERT. 12 / DCP / COLOUR

Since being sent to a home for people with disabilities at the age of 13, Hyejeong has spent more than half of her life away from her family. Reflecting on the lack of agency Hyejeong has had over the decisions made in her life, her older sister Hyeyeong decides to bring her back to Seoul and make a film as they adjust to their new life together. Encountering bureaucratic obstacles and trying out schools for her, Hyeyeong discovers she has a lot to learn about Hyejeong's needs, as well as her own. As Hyejeong knocks back coffee like there's no tomorrow, the sisters bond over music, and Hyeyeong considers the pressures and expectations put on carers, and the importance of having a supportive community.

Occasionally turning the camera on the sisters' friends, *Grown Up* is a tender and intimate film that is not afraid to show vulnerability and explore the mistakes made along the way. (SB)

MON 5 NOV 18:30
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Introduction by Corrina Antrobus



A BLIND ALLEY 골목길

DIRECTOR: OH SUYEON
WRITER: OH SUYEON
PRODUCER: KIM JAEHEE
CAST: OH WOORI, LEE HAEUN
PRODUCTION COMPANY: SSFILM
INTERNATIONAL SALES: SSUT
DRAMA / 2017 / 27 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

Moonyoung and Eunjae are the best of friends, so Eunjae is bewildered when Moonyoung's behaviour suddenly changes due to an incident she refuses to speak about. When Moonyoung tentatively shares hints of her sexuality with Eunjae, their intense bond is put to the test. (SB)



PLAYGROUND 모래 놀이

DIRECTOR: CHOI CHO-AH
WRITER: CHOI CHO-AH
PRODUCER: PARK UN-AH
CAST: KIM SI-EUN, YOON HAE-BIN
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CENTRAL PARK FILMS
DRAMA / 2017 / 29 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

Si-eun is the new teacher at a nursery school. She is immediately alarmed by the aggressively tactile behaviour of one of the little boys towards another girl in the class. Si-eun's self-control is destabilised by the echoes of a personal trauma. (SB)



TESTIMONY 증언

DIRECTOR: WOO GYENG-HEE
WRITER: WOO GYENG-HEE
PRODUCER: KIM YE-EON
CAST: MUN HYE-IN, HAN HAE-IN
INTERNATIONAL SALES: RAINYDAYS PICTURES
DRAMA / 2018 / 29 MIN / CERT. 18 / DCP / COLOUR

When Hye-in returns to her former workplace she finds herself back in a den of toxic masculine energy - a place where women can be prodded and mocked. Assistant manager Jungeun reveals she's been sexually harassed and reaches out to Hye-in for help. (SB)

EVENT: EXPLORING FEMALE BODY POLITICS ON SCREEN

MON 5 NOV 16:00
BRITISH MUSEUM

**ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION WITH
KIMBO-RAM, JEONG GA-YOUNG,
MANIA AKBARI AND CHAIRED BY
JEMMA DESAI**

The discussion follows the screening of *For Vagina's Sake*, and connects with the rest of the "Women's Voices" programme where we observe ideas and fears around female bodies and sexuality beyond the constraints of the heterosexual male gaze. This roundtable discussion will reflect on how a woman's body is explored on film, with regards to behaviours and biological realities that are often muted or denied.

Filmmaker Kim Bo-ram will be joined by her colleagues Jeong Ga-young (*Hit the Night*, 2017), Mania Akbari (*From Tehran to London*, 2012) and Jemma Desai, programmer for the BFI London Film Festival and British Council Film, on demystifying female bodies and exploring the responsibilities of visual media representation.

The conversation will consider how contemporary Korean films like *For Vagina's Sake* (2017) and similar UK productions are dismantling the shame and silence around a woman's body, the natural cycles and aiding the female emancipation at large.

Seoul International Women's Film Festival celebrates the 13th edition of London Korean Film Festival

For Vagina's Sake

by KIM Bo-ram

Hit the Night

by JEONG Ga-young

Grown Up

by JANG Hyeyeong

A Blind Alley

by OH Suyeon

Playground

by CHOI Cho-ah

Testimony

by Woo Gyeng-hee

SIWFF

CONTEMPORARY CLASSICS:

LEE MYUNG-SE & THE 1990s

CINEMA ON THE VERGE

Back in the bad old days of the 1970s, during an era of heightened autocratic rule, poet Lee Song-bu wrote a moving allegory likening the longed-for arrival of democracy to the coming of spring.

You come though I am not expecting you,
And you come when I have lost all expectation. . . .
At last you come, ambling along, ambling along.
When I see you I am so dazzled
I am unable to stand up to welcome you.
(Spring 1974)

The citizens' movement for democracy which finally brought an end to the long years of dictatorship had peaked in huge demonstrations during summer 1987. Jang Joon-hwan's epic 1987: *When the Day Comes* (2017) is a recent romanticised but still powerful attempt to relive the fears and exhilaration of the volatile 1980s.

But even after 1987, democracy took its sweet time arriving. A number of concessions were wrung out of the military junta in power since the beginning of the decade, including the direct election of the president and a new constitution. Yet South Korea seemed in that first 'real' election of December 1987, when squabbling among the civilian opposition of Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung split the vote, merely to have swapped one general, Chun Doo-hwan, for his former crony Roh Tae-woo: Roh became president with little more than one third of the votes. In the next election Roh's forces teamed up with Kim Young-sam to defeat the most democratic of candidates, the long-suffering Kim Dae-jung. Kim himself was finally elected president just in time to be faced with the IMF Crisis of 1997. His presidency inevitably betrayed hopes for a more progressive society as South Korea was forced into the global web of neo-liberal socio-economics. It has been stuck there ever since.

Filmmakers had been a significant part of the democratic struggle on the artistic front. Park Kwang-su was one of the directors associated since the late 1980s with a Korean New Wave of socially committed artists. His 1990 film *Black Republic* showed the gritty underside of the economy, and was a critical if not financial success. That year another member of this generation, Chung Ji-young, dared to make a Korean War film, *Nambugun*, sympathetic to the doomed communist guerrillas. No one had tackled that topic since the 1950s.

However, whether such filmmakers would still be around to embrace the ambling pace of change seemed far from certain as the decade rolled on. Korean cinema seemed to some people to be on the verge of disappearing. For instance, Chun Doo-hwan's regime had reduced restrictions on film production,

but it also gave into US pressure and opened the marketplace to direct distribution of US films. So in 1990, when Lee Myung-se made *My Love*, *My Bride* and *Park Black Republic*, these were two of more than 100 films made that year. But all these Korean films had to compete with over 300 imported films, mainly from Hollywood but also Hong Kong. During the 1960s Park Chung-hee's protectionist policies had kept the number of imports closer to 30. As imports increased, domestic production slumped: by the end of the decade fewer than 50 Korean films were being made each year. It is no surprise that the box office percentage for local films registered the avalanche of imports. In this same 1990, only about 20% of admissions were for Korean films. By 1993, the percentage fell to some 15%. When that year the veteran Im Kwon-taek's powerfully nostalgic *Sopyonje* became the first million-admission Korean feature, it meant that one lone film accounted for a significant percentage of the entire domestic box office.

One other New Wave director, Jang Sun-woo, captured the bleak mood of the film world at mid-decade in a documentary he made with Tony Rayns: *Cinema on the Road* (1995). Watching Jang's interviews with his fellow film professionals now, it's sad to see so many fine directors, including Jang himself, who would barely survive beyond the 1990s as active film-makers. No one in those confusing times could have predicted that Korean cinema would be on the verge of huge domestic and international success from 2000.

Cinema did have some victories. Despite the 1945 Liberation, Korean film had remained one of the most thoroughly censored forms of entertainment outside the communist bloc. In 1996 a newly-democratised Constitutional Court ruled against the old form of pre-release censorship—seventy years since a Japanese colonial government first instituted systematic censoring. The rating system eventually established in 2006 is still in force, but far more flexible than anything which preceded it. The Busan Film Festival began in 1996, new venues for foreign and indie film were appearing along with the first serious journals devoted to cinema. And then was the decade-long struggle to maintain a screen quota system, keeping Korean films on exhibition a fixed number of days per year. The eventual take-off of Korean cinema made the whole business seem more symbolic than practical.

Television was an increasingly serious rival to cinema. And, of course, South Korea was producing a lot of very good television sets. The 1990s was as well a golden age for the new mini-series format. TV dramas such as *The Eyes of Dawn* (1992) and *Sandglass* (1995) set a standard that has rarely been matched by later productions. If the competition from TV wasn't bad enough, the top electronics firms were rapidly improving video technology and lowering prices of video recorders. A luxury in the mid-1980s, a VCR was found in most homes by the mid-90s. In order to feed all those VCRs, video rental shops became a regular feature throughout cities and towns (in later years, placing your characters in a video shop was one way a director could conjure up a 90s ambience). Significantly, in order to feed all those shops, video producers turned to cinema for material.

Chaebol conglomerates like Samsung and Daewoo tiptoed into the film business by buying up video rights. For example, the producer of Lee Myung-se's fourth film *The Affliction of Man* (1994) helped fund the film via the Daewoo

video branch. Daewoo fully funded Lee's next film, *Their Last Love Affair* (1996), through subsidiary Cine2000. Samsung became a major source of investment and for a time kept innovative cinema afloat. Certainly not altruism, nor even the need to supply video shops, created this unexpected safety net for film. Cable TV was launched in 1995 and both Samsung and Daewoo had cable channels ready. For an electronics giant like Samsung the dream was: sell consumers the TVs and then charge them to use your channel and watch your films. Then turn films into videos which other consumers can buy and watch on your VCRs. Ka-ching. The IMF Crisis put an end to these expansive plans. Daewoo's collapse dramatically signalled the retreat of the overly-enterprising *chaebol* from the scene.



My Love, My Bride (1990)



First Love (1993)



Their Last Love Affair (1996)

My Love, My Bride / First Love / Their Last Love Affair

Twenty-five years ago Tony Rayns invited a group of top Korean directors to London's Institute for Contemporary Art. At a time when few UK audiences had seen a single Korean film, he had already scouted the landscape of South Korea's cinema and selected titles from the period that have since become contemporary classics. Included in the five directors were the maestro Im Kwon-taek, New Wave directors Park Kwang-su and Jang Sun-woo, and the more commercially minded Kim Ui-seok. Also present was Lee Myung-se. Rayns' assessment of him really hasn't been bettered:

Lee Myung-se's films are exceptional and distinctive, and not only by Korean standards. Of the 'new wave' directors he is perhaps the one least obviously marked... by the political struggles of the 1980s, but his films bespeak an even stronger impatience with the mainstream movie-making tradition... Lee's work is committedly cosmopolitan in its refusal to limit itself to Korean terms of reference. It is also committedly innovative (*Seoul Stirring: 5 Korean Directors*. ICA 1994, p. 19).

By the time he made his first feature, the knock-about *Gagman* (1989), Lee had a decade of experience behind him. Most important was his work as assistant director to the most popular director of the 1980s, Bae Chang-ho. Bae himself took on the comic role of a movie-mad barber for his AD's debut effort. Last year's LKFF mini-retrospective of Bae's films concluded with a film Lee had co-scripted, the haunting *Dream* (1990).

1990 was also the year Lee Myung-se began a loosely-framed project intertwining innovative form -- experimentation with visual style -- and the seasons of love/romance/lust as narrative content. The first entry in what he has termed a 'love trilogy', *My Love, My Bride* carries forward some of the comic energy of *Gagman* into the travails of a young married couple. He, Yeong-min, is an aspiring writer-poet; she, Mi-yeong, tries to settle for life as housewife. The visual style -- animated inserts, thought bubbles -- is a tribute to Lee's passion for *manhwa* comics; the popular music soundtrack also keeps any melo-theatrics in the realm of youth culture. One other film screened at the ICA, Kim Ui-seok's *Marriage Story* (1992), is credited in standard histories of Korean film as launching the 'battle of the sexes' rom-com which, alongside comic cops & gangster films, was a major genre during the decade. Rayns was right to insist that the credit really goes to Lee's gentle comedy. That said, solely as regards narrative content, *Marriage Story* seems more progressive: the wife has a career of sorts, the couple are very frank about love making, and she is clearly ill-at-ease with both her legally subaltern status within the couple and her husband's cruder sexual demands.

Lee's next film about love, *First Love* (1993), features a very young Kim Hye-soo. Recently Kim's career has been having a revival. She has become that rarest of actors, a middle-aged woman offered starring roles. Here she embodies the naivete of a young woman almost determined to fall in love with the worst possible candidate, a self-centred older man with the aura of an artiste. Yeong-shin's story, her frustration and disillusionment, are buoyed up by some of Lee's most original, sleight-of-hand staging. The fantasy visit that Yeong-shin's imagination pays to her would-be lover, or a room where solid objects lift into the air -- the sheer joy and exuberance Lee Myung-se creates for the screen makes *First Love* hard to classify but easy to celebrate. Unfortunately, what now seems a rare classic passed almost unnoticed by Korean film-goers.

His next film, *The Affliction of Man* (1994), is a slapstick take on the office life of that fairly new category of human, the Korean salaryman. Lee's comic attack on consumer capitalism proved more popular than his earlier films about love. It continued a vein of social satire about office work that began in the 1960s and had been wickedly amplified by Jang Sun-woo's biting, brilliant *The Age of Success* (1988).

Their Last Love Affair (1996) has an original title which translates more literally as 'dangerous/deadly love'. In terms of box office numbers, this last of the trilogy about love was more successful with audiences than all Lee's previous films combined. No doubt this was due to its less challenging, more realistic style and the racy premise of an adulterous love affair. The success was also owed to the presence of Kang Soo-youn. She had won the best actress award at Venice a decade earlier for her role in Im Kwon-taek's *The Surrogate* (1986). Kang starred in some of the most interesting, and daring, New Wave films of the decade, and here she gives a typically powerful performance.

The philandering poet-professor played by Kim kap-soo is called Yeong-min. Could this be the same would-be poet Yeong-min we first meet in *My Love, My Bride*? Is this where young marriage, first love and all that end up?

Lee Myung-se's next two films, *Nowhere to Hide* (1999) and *Duellist* (2005), would be both commercial and critical successes. They have been reviewed and written about often, screened at earlier editions of the LKFF and available on DVD for some time. For this year's festival we have selected the three films of his 1990s love trilogy partly to give some idea about where the artistry of these later films began, but mainly because they are well worth seeing in their own right. They were made when Korean filmmakers had to cope with the difficult contexts sketched above. Nowadays it isn't easy to get to see any of the three, even in South Korea.

As our interview with Lee Myung-se shows, the director likes to weave together questions about the nature of film with questions about love. As he also says, "People might find my films confusing, and perhaps that's because I insist that film communicates without explanation. I think of my films as transmitting meaning directly, from *heart to heart*." This year's LKFF offers you a chance to open up your own heart to the complex magic of Lee Myung-se's early films.

Mark Morris
Festival Programmer and Film Academic

OBSESSION AND ILLUSION: AN INTERVIEW WITH LEE MYUNG-SE



In anticipation of his visit to the 2018 London Korean Film Festival, we met with director Lee Myung-se for a wide-ranging interview on his films and career. We spoke in his office in Seoul, and posed questions about a variety of topics, which he answered with candor and passion.

DANIEL MARTIN / MARK MORRIS We want to begin by asking you about the audience of your films. Who are you trying to reach? How widely do you hope your films will be seen?

LEE MYUNG-SE My films are for anyone and everyone. I make movies for normal members of the public, not just cinephiles. I believe that film is destined to be public art, so it should be made for the public. That said, people often say my films can be difficult to understand. One thing that's changed, though, is that the audience is more generous. These days, people blame themselves if they can't understand my films; when I first started making films, they'd blame me!

DM/MM What are your influences and inspirations?

LMS I feel like my generation rarely watched films. When I was growing up, the Korean films I saw were not very good. In the 1970s, we were experiencing an era of military dictatorship, which had a drastically negative effect on the import of good foreign films. At that time, I could only find two books about film: one about filmmaking, the other about film theory.

So the majority of my creative inspiration came from *manhwa* (Korean comic books). I still sometimes go to *manhwa* cafés to read comics. Those places are typically full of children, and I was often the only adult reading comics. You'd expect that I'd have spent all my time at the cinema, but anyone who knew me would know they could find me in a *manhwa* café.

It was only after I made *Nowhere to Hide* that I started going to the cinema more often. When I first moved to New York, I spent an entire week watching films at the Film Forum in Manhattan. That cinema, the Film Forum, became a kind of film school for me. I encountered all kinds of films; classic cinema was new to me. Many people say art is based on a level of imitation, but I really didn't have enough base exposure in film to copy from other directors. One of my most surprising encounters with film was seeing Charlie Chaplin's work. His films are just like mine! Did we share the same inspiration? I think Chaplin had an instinctive understanding of film, like me.

Many people I admire have talked to me a lot about their cinema-going experiences, which I think encouraged me to see more films. I used to feel a pang of regret that I'd missed out on so many great films for so long, but now I realise my experience shaped my entire outlook and creativity, so maybe it's for the best.

DM/MM How would you describe your creative process?

LMS In every project I work on, I always begin by asking myself "What is film?" I'm still asking myself this question. For me, film is a form of dreaming. These days, I really feel like cinema is best described in terms of Buddhist philosophy – the Illusion of Maya – in which God makes humans believe something that isn't true. For me, film is exactly this: a phantom, an illusion, but one with real meaning, one which we believe in. Cinema is not just an abstract image, it's a reflection of the world.

People might find my films confusing, and perhaps that's because I insist that film communicates without explanation. I think of my films as transmitting meaning directly, from *heart to heart*. Let me put it like this: if I can explain love with words, it's not real love. True love is a feeling beyond verbal articulation. My films are expressions of pure emotion that often defy simple explanation.

I feel like film used to be more creative. Directors like Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and Martin Scorsese – to name just a few – did truly original work. Films today are too formulaic. Older filmmakers were real storytellers. Their work was like a novel or a piece of music. Since I became more immersed in cinema, I've been clear that the five directors I consider the greatest are Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Yasujiro Ozu, Federico Fellini, and Jacques Tati.

DM/MM Your films seem frequently to have a dream-like quality. Where does this theatrical imagery come from?

LMS I love theatre sets and stage props. Film sets, too, are amazing to behold. I know it's fake, but it has a magical quality. When I was young, I often went to see *changgeuk* (traditional Korean opera) with my mother. I was fascinated by the various elements and tried to understand how the show all came together. I've had that same sense of awe many times. When I first experienced radio, it was a marvel. How did it work? What was inside? Of course, I know how it works, technologically, but it still inspires curiosity.

I love that line from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." It's like we're all on stage, looking up to the sky in search of a director. Maybe it's God? I feel not just that I became a filmmaker to express that idea, but that I was born to express that idea.

DM/MM Can you talk a bit about your relationship with actors? You're known for drawing remarkable performances from those who work with you.

LMS I think about acting a lot. My friend and frequent collaborator Ahn Sung-ki [who starred in Lee's films *Gagman*, *My Love, My Bride*, *Bitter and Sweet*, *Nowhere to Hide*, and *Duelist*] says that I treat him like a marionette, and he hates it!

I know that there are many different theories about acting, different schools of acting and different methods. For audiences, the actor is the most crucial element of the film. The actor is the conduit for all communication, so I've thought a lot about how to work best with my actors. That said, it's still difficult for many actors to understand what I want to achieve. Most actors have studied it as a craft, and they want to understand the process intellectually. I just want them to feel it, on a purely emotional level. It should be like making love – just do it, don't overthink it!

I recently made a short film, *Can't Live Without You*, and cast Kim Seoljin, a professional dancer, rather than a trained actor, in one of the two key roles. I worked very well with him. He instinctively understood exactly what I wanted. This all related to how I see the function of cinema: film should be for pure pleasure, not over-intellectualised.

DM/MM What would you tell an audience in London watching some of your earlier films for the first time?

LMS Just watch it. When I watch films, I prefer not to know anything, if possible. These days, you can't avoid information about films before you see them. But my greatest wish, always, is that people will simply watch my films with as few preconceptions as possible.

A few years ago, during a retrospective of my films at the Jeonju Film Festival in South Korea, an amazing thing happened: people responded to my film *Their Last Love Affair* as a comedy. I never thought of it in those terms, but the audience laughed like it was a slapstick comedy. I love that kind of unexpected response.

I'm always eager to know what people think about my films. If audiences can give an honest response having seen the film with no preconceptions, collecting those opinions can be helpful for when I make my next film. So, Londoners: please talk about my films!

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MY LOVE, MY BRIDE 나의 사랑, 나의 신부

FRI 9 NOV 20:00
CLOSE-UP FILM CENTRE

Q&A with Director Lee Myung-se
Followed by Drinks with Director

DIRECTOR: LEE MYUNG-SE
WRITER: LEE MYUNG-SE
CAST: PARK JOONG-HOON, CHOI JIN-SIL, CHOI CHONG-WON
PRODUCTION COMPANY: SAMHO FILMLIM
RIGHTS HOLDER: LEE MYUNG-SE
DRAMA, COMEDY / 1990 / 111 MIN / CERT. 15 / 35MM / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
M (2007)
THE DUELIST (2005)
NOWHERE TO HIDE (1999)
AFFLICTION OF MAN (1994)
GAGMAN (1988)

Would-be poet Yeong-min is ready to pop the question to college sweetheart Mi-yeong just at the moment when she is convinced Yeong-min is ready to break things off. They meet, argue, she storms off. The story of this young couple will be shaped by a series of comical mishaps and misunderstandings that run the gamut from the mysteries of the condom, a bride who locks her groom outside the honeymoon suite, to stubborn male jealousy that puts the whole love story in peril.

The director keeps melodrama at bay through the humor of his script and an emphasis on visual style and experimentation. Animation, thought bubbles, sets that revel in their staginess, even the clumsy specs foisted on lead actors Park Joong-hoon and Choi Jin-sil: all contribute to an emerging Lee Myung-se aesthetic. (MM)



FIRST LOVE 첫사랑

SAT 10 NOV 20:00
CLOSE-UP FILM CENTRE

Q&A with Director Lee Myung-se

DIRECTOR: LEE MYUNG-SE
WRITER: LEE MYUNG-SE, YANG SEON-HUI
PRODUCER: PARK HYU-SUNG
CAST: KIM HYE-SOO, CHOI CHONG-WON, CHO MIN-KI
PRODUCTION COMPANY: SAMHO FILMLIM
RIGHTS HOLDER: LEE MYUNG-SE
DRAMA, ROMANCE / 1993 / 108 MIN / CERT. 12 / 35MM / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
M (2007)
THE DUELIST (2005)
NOWHERE TO HIDE (1999)
AFFLICTION OF MAN (1994)
GAGMAN (1988)

Yeong-shin is an innocent young woman from a nice family living in a pleasant if fairly poor neighbourhood in a town somewhere far from the big city. When her am-dram club decides to invite a writer from Seoul to come direct their production of *Our Town*, Yeong-shin, despite an inauspicious first encounter with a grubby, hard-drinking Chang-wook, manages to fall head over heels.

The film plays with our melodramatic reflexes, involving us in a sentimental education made all the more bittersweet through the nuanced acting of Kim Hye-soo. Rather than offering melo-realism, however, the film revels in the sheer beauty of its sets, subtle lighting, fantasy scenes – Yeong-shin's ghostly visit to Chang-wook is both funny and heart-warming. *Our Town* has been termed a form of meta-theatre. Maybe we could consider Lee Myung-se's aesthetic a kind of meta-cinema. (MM)



THEIR LAST LOVE AFFAIR

지독한 사랑

SUN 11 NOV 20:00
CLOSE-UP FILM CENTRE

Q&A with Director Lee Myung-se

DIRECTOR: LEE MYUNG-SE
WRITER: LEE MYUNG-SE
CAST: KANG SOO-YOUN, KIM KAP-SOO, KIM HAK-CHEOL
PRODUCTION COMPANY: CINE2000
RIGHTS HOLDER: CINE2000
ROMANCE / 1996 / 106 MIN / CERT. 18 / 35MM / COLOUR

Poet-professor Yeong-min meets Yeong-hee, a journalist who has reviewed a collection of his poems. They click: literary criticism is far from their minds as they dash off to a hotel room for some fairly acrobatic lovemaking. He becomes obsessed with Yeong-hee; she makes an effort to resist, but not for long. Yeong-min, pretending to need time away from family for the sake of research, sets the two of them up in a beachside shack where domestic routine vies with passion. How long can this world apart contain them?

The film playfully wrong-foots us at the outset. We begin in what looks like a noir crime caper, only to drop into the first encounter of the two main characters. Much later, even amid the passion and increasing tension in scenes at the beach house, the story maintains its balance of humour and visual beauty. (MM)

CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT YOU

그대 없이는 못 살아

DIRECTOR: LEE MYUNG-SE
CAST: YOO IN-YOUNG, KIM SEOLJIN
RIGHTS HOLDER: LEE MYUNG-SE
MYSTERY, ROMANCE, ACTION / 2017 / 17 MIN / CERT. 18 / DCP / COLOUR

A young woman comes dragging a huge suitcase along a train platform. A young man offers to help her up the stairway. What follows becomes a mysterious dance of shadows. (MM)



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ANIMATION



THE SHOWER

소나기

SAT 3 NOV 12:00
PHOENIX CINEMA

Introduction by Joe Ursell

DIRECTOR: AHN JAE-HOON, HAN HYE-JIN
PRODUCER: LEE SANG-WOOK, PARK JI-HYEON
CAST: SHIN EUN-SOO, NOH KANG-MIN
PRODUCTION COMPANY: MEDITATION WITH A PENCIL, EBS
INTERNATIONAL SALES: MIROVISION INC.
ANIMATION / 2016 / 48 MIN / CERT U. / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
THE ROAD CALLED LIFE (2014)
GREEN DAYS (2011)
INNOCENT JOY (SHORT, 2000)
ONE DAY OF HITCHCOCK (SHORT, 1988)

This sensitive, painterly evocation of two children's life experiences will introduce new viewers to an iconic Korean short story by Hwang Sun-won. Originally published in the 1950s, Hwang's story depicts a country boy's curiosity about a girl from Seoul, who plays alone by a stream. The animated version, directed by Ahn Jae-hoon and Han Hye-jin, fondly shows the endless moments of childhood. The youngsters' emotions run far deeper than the inarticulate words they have to express them.

The children are often framed as small figures embedded in shining country backdrops, part of the cycle of nature. There's a recurring visual motif of a line of stepping stones across a wide stream, representing a life challenge for the boy who's so fascinated by the new girl. Fans of Japanese animation may see parallels with some of anime's most delicate works.
(AO)



PORORO, DINOSAUR ISLAND ADVENTURE

뽀로로 극장판 공룡섬 대모험

SAT 10 NOV 12:00
PHOENIX CINEMA

Introduction by Joe Ursell

DIRECTOR: KIM HYUNHO, YUN JEWAN
WRITER: KIM CHANGWON
PRODUCER: KIM HYUNHO, WOO JEE-HEE, NAM HYUN
CAST: LEE SUN, LEE MI-JA, HAM SU-JUNG
PRODUCTION COMPANY: OCON STUDIOS
INTERNATIONAL SALES: OCON STUDIOS
ANIMATION / 2017 / 78 MIN / CERT U. / MOV / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
PORORO, THE SNOW FAIRY VILLAGE ADVENTURE (2014)
PORORO TO THE COOKIE CASTLE (2004)

This cheery computer cartoon features Pororo the penguin, who is beloved in Korea. His TV adventures have entertained kids since 2003. He's also a symbol of diplomacy - the early Pororo TV episodes were co-produced between North and South Korea.

Pororo and his animal pals have been exported to more than 100 countries, but don't worry if you've not met them before, as it's easy as pie to pick up this penguin. In this feature-length adventure, Pororo and co travel from their snowy home to a tropical island to save its gentle dinosaurs from a greedy blue-skinned alien and his army of incompetent robots. Expect madcap chases and battles, some echoes of sci-fi blockbusters (*Wall-E*, *The Phantom Menace*) and the obligatory *Jurassic Park* joke. (AO)

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Purcell Room, Southbank Centre

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TUESDAY 20 NOVEMBER
Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre

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MISE-EN-SCÈNE SHORTS

INTRODUCTION

Mise-en-scène Short Film Festival, with its special focus *Beyond the Barrier of Genres*, is the only festival in Korea to categorise short films by genre. The works submitted to this year's competition were divided into five genre-specific categories. While encouraging audiences to watch these short films from within the genre tradition, the festival also supports genre-crossing works that explore fresh and ingenious ideas. Held in June of this year, the 17th Mise-en-scène festival witnessed a record number of 1,189 submissions, 58 of which were selected for screening following a rigorous assessment process by the judging panel. For this year's London Korean Film Festival, we would like to introduce six of these short films, including the winners of the Grand Prize and the Jury's Special Award for Best Actor. With an ever more diverse list of high-quality, genre-traversing titles, we hope that you will enjoy the unique spirit and intense energy of these award-winning shorts.

TUE 6 NOV 18:30
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Introduction by Simon Young



THE MONOLOGUE

자유연기

Despite her love for her new baby, Ji-yeon struggles to deal with the halt of her acting career, a negligent and insensitive husband, and interfering neighbours. A visit from a now-successful actress friend only increases Ji-yeon's sense of isolation; so when she gets an offer for an audition, she'll do anything to make it happen. This award-winning short is a poignant and intimate portrait of a woman's struggle to hold onto her identity in the face of parental responsibility. (SRL)

DIRECTOR: KIM DO-YOUNG
WRITER: KIM DO-YOUNG
PRODUCER: HWANG PHIL-WON
CAST: KANG MAL-GEUM, LEE JAE-IN, KWON JI-SOOK
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CENTRAL PARK FILMS
DRAMA / 2018 / 29 MIN / CERT U. / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
NOTHING (SHORT, 2014)
THE VISITOR (SHORT, 2012)



MORNING OF THE DEAD

시체들의 아침

Sungjae must sell off his large DVD collection. A young student eagerly comes to his house to examine the goods, but she only wants one very special DVD: a limited edition of George A. Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*, leading to a comic battle of wills between the two cinephiles. Through this chance encounter, Sungjae comes to rediscover his love of movies, and begins to wonder who truly deserves such a collection. (SRL)

DIRECTOR: LEE SEUNG-JU
 WRITER: LEE SEUNG-JU
 CAST: KANG GIL-WOO, PARK SEO-YUN, JANG JUN-WHEE
 INTERNATIONAL SALES: INDIESTORY
 DRAMA / 2018 / 29 MIN / CERT. U / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
NIGHT SHIFT (SHORT, 2016)
SLEEPLESS NIGHT WITH BAMBOO WIFE (SHORT, 2014)
MIDNIGHT DELIVERY (SHORT, 2013)



SHADOWER

친구

Sang-gyu and Min-sun are best friends and avid gamers, but when one day a trip to the game store sees them accosted by bullies, their friendship is brought into question. While Sang-gyu is beaten and robbed of his money, Min-sun is left alone after a simple mention of his older brother. Min-sun's new-found influence from his familial connections leave Sang-gyu behind, and forced to find a protector of his own... (SRL)

DIRECTOR: KWAK KI-BONG
 WRITER: KWAK KI-BONG
 PRODUCER: KIM WAN
 CAST: HWANG YOUNG-GOOK, KIM JUN-HYUNG
 INTERNATIONAL SALES: RAINYDAYS PICTURES
 DRAMA / 2018 / 20 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
BAD LAND (SHORT, 2014)
NEW KIDS IN TOWN (2012)

WED 7 NOV 20:45
 PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Introduction by Simon Young



TAIL

꼬리

Jong-hak works for the South Korean National Intelligence Service, where he is in charge of interviewing North Korean defectors hoping to resettle in the South. While on the surface taking pride in helping these individuals, Jong-hak is himself a spy sent from the North, whose instructions are to report intelligence on those he interviews back to the North Korean government. When one day his well-used wrist-watch comes into disrepair, the cracks in this double-existence also begin to show themselves... (SRL)

DIRECTOR: KIM HU-JUNG
 WRITER: KIM HU-JUNG
 PRODUCER: YOON SU-HWAN
 CAST: LEE WON-JONG, KIM JONG-GU
 INTERNATIONAL SALES: CENTRAL PARK FILMS
 DRAMA / 2018 / 28 MIN / CERT. U / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
CHAIRMAN (SHORT, 2013)



HYSTERIA

히스테리아

Following a mental breakdown and a hospital admittance, Hye-ju is collected by her family. While her brother wants to return to childish games, and her parents try to act as if nothing is wrong, Hye-ju cannot hide her frustration. Tension builds in everything that is unspoken: the truth behind the facade of the 'happy' nuclear family, and the true cause of Hye-ju's breakdown, lead to a harsh words, and even harsher actions, that will come to have devastating consequences. (SRL)

DIRECTOR: JANG MAN-MIN
 WRITER: JANG MAN-MIN
 PRODUCER: CHOI YI-SEUL
 CAST: SONG HEE-JUN, LIM HYUNG-KOOK, CHANG HA-RAN
 INTERNATIONAL SALES: KOFIC
 DRAMA / 2018 / 26 MIN / CERT. 18 / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
MERRY-GO-ROUND (SHORT, 2018)
HUIGWANGI (SHORT, 2015)



PASSING OVER THE HILL 그 언덕을 지나는 시간

Jung-sook is an elderly woman who learns how to read and write through the poetry collection of her late son. She sets out to find the location of a hill referred to in one of her son's poems, venturing into Seoul and tracing its path like the lines on the page. In experiencing the poem as it was written, she hopes to find some lost traces of her son; instead, she finds it through a young woman whose own love of poetry evokes a different kind of memorial connection. (SRL)

DIRECTOR: BANG SUNG-JUN
WRITER: BANG SUNG-JUN
PRODUCER: KIM TAE-EUN
CAST: BYUN CHUNG-HEE, LEE JI-SOO, BANG TAE-WON
INTERNATIONAL SALES: FILM DABIN
DRAMA / 2018 / 24 MIN / CERT. U / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
ABOUT MAGNOLIA (SHORT, 2016)

mise
scène
미장센



장르의 상상력展

제17회 미장센 단편영화제



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ARTIST VIDEO

PROGRAMMER'S NOTES

The London Korean Film Festival's Artist Video strand – programmed and presented in partnership with LUX – brings the work of Korean artists working with the moving image to the UK.

This year's strand showcases the work of two Korean artists working with the moving image in very distinct ways: Kim Kyung-mook and Kwon Hayoun. Whereas Kim's personal, and often autobiographical, filmmaking oscillates between narrative and documentary modes – he has directed a number of acclaimed features including *Stateless Things* (2011) and *Futureless Things* (2014) – Kwon's celebrated short films combine CGI animation with a documentary approach, blurring the lines between fact and fiction, the real and the virtual.

Maria Palacios Cruz
Deputy Director, LUX Artists'
Moving Image



Grace Period

KIM KYUNG-MOOK

SUN 4 NOV 14:00
LUX

Introduction by Helen de Witt

ME AND DOLL-PLAYING

나와 인형놀이

2004, M4V, 20 MIN

GRACE PERIOD

유예기간

CO-DIRECTED BY CAROLINE KEY
2015, MP4, 62 MIN

Kim Kyung-mook is one of Korea's most multifaceted moving image artists - his rich and diverse output includes feature-length narrative films, documentaries, experimental films of various lengths and moving image installations. In his work, Kim explores the precarious living conditions of marginalized groups of people, from homosexuals, transsexuals, sex workers and North Korean defectors to disenfranchised youth, giving a voice to those who are not often heard, and revealing the ambiguity that lies between appearance and disappearance, visibility and invisibility, presence and absence in South Korean society. One of Korea's leading LGBT filmmakers, Kim Kyung-mook is an autodidact who dropped out of school at sixteen and made his first film aged nineteen.

This programme brings together his most recent work, the documentary *Grace Period* (co-directed with Caroline Key) with his breakthrough debut *Me and Doll-Playing*, a highly autobiographical short film that plays with the conventions of confessional video, experimental queer cinema and coming of age documentary drama. As Kim explains: "I liked to play with a doll when I was young. I put on

make-up at my Mom's dressing table... I didn't know where I should be located, between soccer and playing with my doll, or pants and a skirt, which were all divided by certain rules. I was confused about my sexuality... I had gone to the hospital to ask who I was, but I only got an answer that I never understood. Now I ask myself to confront a camera."

Although in the intervening decade, Kim has moved onto a more conventional form of narrative filmmaking, the documentary *Grace Period* represents a return to the formal experimentation of his early videos. Like all his work, it's a bold and politically engaged film that documents the activities of female sex workers in the Yeongdeungpo red-light district in Seoul as they face pressure from the police and the threat of permanent closure following the opening of a shopping complex in the area. A call to resistance and solidarity, *Grace Period* shows the women as they organize with other sex workers from brothels across Korea, demanding decriminalization and declaring their rights as workers. (MPC)



Me and Doll-playing



Grace Period

AN INTERVIEW WITH KIM KYUNG-MOOK



We caught up with the activist-artist, Kim Kyung-mook, about being an outsider, his early inspirations and why filmmaking is an essential tool for giving people a voice. This interview took place by email.

RICARDO MATOS CABO Your very early work reflects your personal experiences growing up as a young gay teenager in South Korea in the early 2000s. The films are autobiographical inasmuch as they are about your identity, about the isolation and displacement you felt, raising questions of gender and sexuality. They are also overtly political, courageous, sometimes playful, and often provocative. Looking back, are you able to tell us something about your choice of film as your medium of expression and to comment on these early works?

KIM KYUNG-MOOK I learned about films not through formal education in film school but through watching videos at home, and going to cinematheques, galleries, and film festivals; for me film is art - the art of an individual artist - similar to the artistic visions of the Nouvelle Vague. Therefore, it was only natural that my own personal issues formed the starting point for my career. Aside from my identity as a gay man, I felt like an outsider in many ways, and acknowledged early on that I was rendered 'invisible' in Korean society. When I was young I lived in the rather conservative city of Busan, which made it difficult for me to meet any like-minded people. So it was literature, films, and other art forms that consoled me and helped me to understand who I was. During my teens, I was influenced by independent queer movies from the west, including American underground queer cinema, led primarily by Kenneth Anger and Jack Smith in the 1950s and '60s, as well as from new queer cinema in the 1990s following the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Unfortunately, when I was producing *Me and Doll-playing* in 2003, queer film as a genre was almost completely absent in Korea. As far as I remember, only one director had come out of the closet and one queer feature film had been released. That was how neglected the genre was in Korean society.

In my early works *Me and Doll-playing* and *Faceless Things* (2005), the provocative images and sounds I used represent my honest response to the violence, hypocrisy, and deception I experienced in society at the time. I was only nineteen and incapable of embellishing my emotions with sophisticated metaphors. It was inevitable that I would express in such a raw and crude fashion the sense of isolation, frustration, and anger I felt living in this homophobic society. In particular, *Me and Doll-playing* remains to me a very significant work in that it allowed me to express my feelings towards society for the first time.

RMC In your feature films you moved from the realm of the personal to a more broad understanding of cinema - and I am using your own words - as "a way to articulate social violence." The films are about your experiences, but also give visibility to the stories of silenced people you met and lived with: transgender people, sex workers, migrant workers and refugees. Can you say a bit more how those themes and people emerged in your work and what you were trying to achieve with these films?

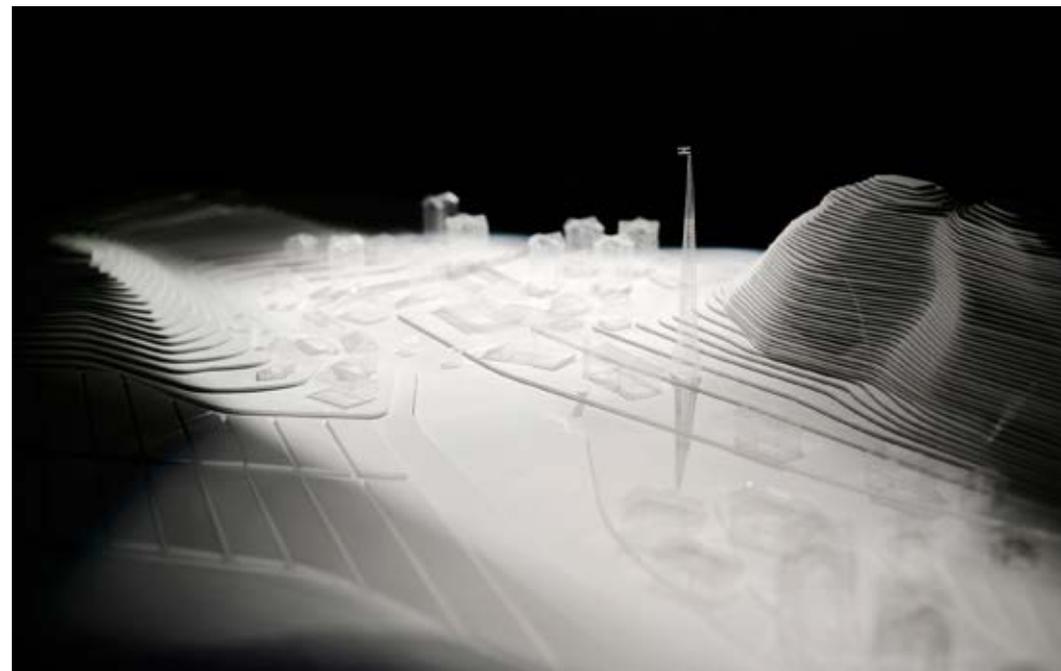
KKM The characters of the films I made in my twenties were all inspired by the people I was close to. They were my roommates, friends, lovers, and companions. When conceiving new projects, what was important to me were firstly, 'questions,' and secondly, 'emotions'. These 'questions' and 'emotions' were impressed on my mind after meeting each of them. It was through making films about these people that I attempted to find the answers to these questions and understand the emotions I had experienced. I find it impossible to make a film about a subject or theme that I cannot understand or relate to. I had to see and feel part of myself in those people, and through such individuals and the films that feature them, I was able to better understand and accept both who I was and the world around me.

RMC You often play with genres and formats, borrowing from the aesthetics of amateur video filmmaking (handheld filming, hidden cameras, low quality image), sometimes juxtaposing different type of images, such as video textures, switching between analogue and digital filmmaking. You defy expectations and deliberately queer the genres you work with, from amateur film to pornography, from pop comedies to realist drama. These shifts and tensions seem to be a constant in your work and a way of critique - can you share your thoughts about this?

KKM While the movies I grew up watching were all shot on film, when I actually started making one myself, the transition from analogue to digital within the film industry was already under way. Given the type of medium one uses is a crucial element in delivering a film's form and content, deciding how to make best use of digital media to create a film was important to me. *Me and Doll-playing* was made in the style of a documentary using a handheld camera; *Faceless Things* was constructed by borrowing the aesthetics of pornography through hidden cameras; and in *A Cheonggyecheon Dog*, the characteristics of digital media—immateriality, variability, and the multi-layered aspect—are used to incorporate different genre-specific elements in each scene within the film. The three films all reflected the post-digital changes in the industry, allowing me to explore the potential of digital film. When it comes to *SEX/LESS* (2009), the external performance and internal fantasies of the on-screen character were actualised through exploiting the differences between digital and film formats, placing the movie somewhere between the pre- and post-digital eras. By the time I made *Stateless Things* (2011), digital cinema was no longer something new, which naturally led me to think more about cinematic languages rather than exploring the characteristics of digital media.

RMC *Grace Period* weaves the personal stories of a group of women sex workers in Seoul with images of their collective efforts to make their resistance visible as they fight in the streets for their rights, against the tough laws against prostitution, their expulsion from the neighbourhood of Yeongdeungpo and the crackdown from the police. It is your first long documentary, directed in collaboration with Caroline Key. What were your main concerns when you were making the film and working with the women you interviewed, and what were the main challenges and rewards of working within a more documentary and activist framework?

KKM *Grace Period* has a special place in my heart because it was the first documentary I made since taking up an activist identity. Before that, I had kept a critical distance from activist documentary filmmaking that was deeply rooted in Korean cinema. It was the mid- to late 80s when the independent documentary movement began in Korea, but it was the 1990s when it really started to become more active. At the time Koreans were fighting for democracy and release from dictatorship, meaning that, aside from a portion of the younger population, there was not enough room to cultivate cultural diversity. Against this backdrop, independent movies, especially independent documentaries, were used simply as a medium through which to achieve democracy. Although this might have been a proper response to the societal needs of the time, I was quite critical about activist documentaries that focused on social agendas rather than artistic potential. For me it was no different to the propaganda of the public TV networks. The films I made were also closely linked to social agendas, but still I considered film to be a language of art where one explores new possibilities through images and sound. However, as I encountered the struggles of female sex workers in 2011, I came to accept activist documentary as a tool to give these individuals a voice. By meeting them face-to-face to listen to their stories, and by showing these individuals fighting for their rights without support from any progressive political groups, I wanted to make their voices heard amongst the public. It was a decision I could make due to the fact that I could relate to them at a deeper level. Due to various circumstances, it took quite a time before the film was completed, even though filming itself was finished in 2012. Then, after the premiere of the film, I was sent to prison for refusing to serve in the military, so I didn't have the opportunity to present the film to a wider audience as I had originally planned. It was really unfortunate that *Grace Period* failed to be completed at the right time, and thus was unable to serve as a medium that made the struggle of sex workers known to people. It was the case of an activist documentary that was unable to play its intended role in society.



Model Village

KWON HAYOUN

SUN 11 NOV 14:00
LUX

Q&A with Artist Kwon Hayoun

LACK OF EVIDENCE

2011, MP4, 9 MIN

PAN MUN JOM

2013, MP4, 4 MIN

MODEL VILLAGE

2014, MOV, 9 MIN

489 YEARS

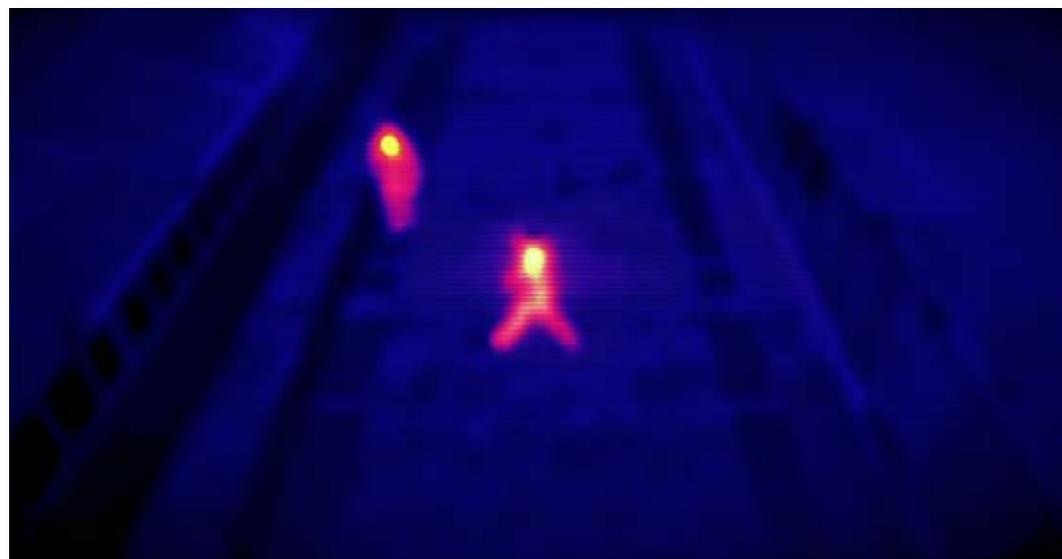
2016, MP4, 11 MIN

Kwon Hayoun is a visual artist whose innovative animation work is concerned with the construction of historical and individual memory and their ambivalent relationship to reality and fiction. Grounded in personal stories, her short films bring together CGI animation, documentary filmmaking and political art. As she writes, “by working with animation, I am able to play with fiction and fantasy within a forbidden area and my artistic work is an extension of hypothetical possibility. I am able to go beyond the limit of my reality. By the particularity of animation which is distinguished from reality, I use the animation as a means to overcome my political situation.”

In her most recent body of work (including three of the films in this screening programme), Kwon has focused on the reality of a border – the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), a strip of land that is 248 km long, approximately 4 km wide and serves as a buffer zone between North and South Korea - with animation allowing her to produce work in and about a forbidden area. *Model Village* (2014) envisages an impossible visit to Kijong-dong, a propaganda village from

the 1950s, situated in the DMZ. *Pan Mun Jom* (2013) goes further in questioning the fictional dimension of the DMZ by reducing to colour spots soldiers facing each other from both sides of the border. In *489 Years* (2016), the best known work in the series (it received an award at the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen), Kwon gains access to the DMZ via the testimony of a former soldier, Kim. He talks about a place where people are forbidden, and where nature has totally regained its hold. A testimony is also at the heart of *Lack of Evidence* (2011) - its protagonist is a political refugee from Nigeria whose asylum application was refused because he could not produce any proof. Kwon is interested in the reconstruction of memory and the fictional dimension of testimony. "It is about credibility," she says, "a testimony to an experience when we cannot provide evidence, is evidence itself, according to its credibility."

Kwon Hayoun graduated from Le Fresnoy – Studio national des arts contemporains in 2011 and lives and works in France and in Korea. Her work has recently screened at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, the 2016 San Sebastian Film Festival and Ars Electronica 2018. In 2015 she was awarded the Prize of the Friends of Palais de Tokyo. (MPC)



Pan Mun Jom

TEASER SCREENINGS 2018 REVIEW



Simon Ward presents *A Tiger in Winter*

Our popular series of Teaser Screenings continued this year, offering a monthly taste of Korean cinema as we built up to autumn's main festival. These teaser selections provided audiences in London and Cambridge with an early chance to see some of the biggest box office hits and celebrated indie offerings very soon after their release, and with many of the titles receiving European and UK Premieres, our audiences were truly kept up-to-date with the major movements at the Korean box-office. We kicked our Teasers off in April with *Be With You* (2018), featuring the picture-perfect duo of So Ji-sub and Korea's own 'queen of melodrama' Son Ye-jin in the heart-warming returns to her family on the day that the rainy season breaks. Darker thrills were in store for May as director Won Shin-yun's *Memoir of a Murderer* (2017) saw acting heavyweight Sul Kyung-gu (*The Merciless*) turn in a multi-faceted performance as a ruthless serial killer fallen prey to foes every bit as vicious as his younger self: old age and Alzheimer's.

1987: When the Day Comes (2017) was the powerful June entry. With its impressive ensemble cast and polemic real-life story, director Jang Joon-hwan's portrayal of the events that led to Korea's historic June

Democratic Uprising, was as much a hit with our London audiences as it was back at home; the film stormed the box-office to become the first major hit of 2018, and has been gathering accolades and awards at international film festivals ever since. Acclaimed auteur Hong Sangsoo returned in July, selling out the historic Regent Street Cinema, with *Claire's Camera*. A unique entry in his canon, the film moved the drama to the backstreets and beaches of Cannes Film Festival and starred iconic French actress Isabelle Huppert, alongside *The Handmaiden's* (2016) Kim Minhee. Asian Cinema Expert (and friend of the director) Tony Rayns was on hand to provide a humorous and insightful introduction to the film.

Found-footage roller-coaster ride *Gonjiam: Haunted Asylum* (Jung Bum-shik, 2018) became the surprise smash-hit of Korean cinema this year and the country's second most successful horror movie of all time. Set and filmed in the real-life locale of the notorious Gonjiam Psychiatric hospital, the film provided summer scares as our August Teaser. Finally, Lee Kwang-kuk's third feature, *A Tiger in Winter* (2018), closed the curtain on the Teaser Screenings for 2018 while ushering in the festival with the Programme Launch for the 13th edition of the London Korean Film Festival. Audiences enjoyed a drinks reception before the festival line-up was announced, with programmer Simon Ward then introducing the Teaser Screening finale.

Christopher O'Keeffe
Press & Digital Marketing,
London Korean Film Festival

DOCUMENTARY FORTNIGHT 2018

REVIEW

PROGRAMME:

A SLICE ROOM (SONG YUN-HYEOK, 2015)

THE SANGGYEDONG OLYMPICS (KIM DONG WON, 1988)

THE 6 DAY STRUGGLE AT MYEONGDONG CATHEDRAL

(KIM DONG WON, 1997)

REPATRIATION (KIM DONG WON, 2003)

ROUNDTABLE WITH NAM IN YOUNG, KIM DONG WON AND SONG

YUN-HYEOK

SOSEONGRI (PARK BAE-IL, 2017)

JUNG IL-WOO, MY FRIEND (KIM DONG WON, 2017)

This year's edition of the LKFF documentary strand was focused on activist and community filmmaking in South Korea. Under the banner title 'Another World we are Making', borrowed from one of Kim Dong Won's documentaries, the exhibited films dealt with current and urgent social issues, made by collectives that use filmmaking as an extension of their political activism.

The first day of the programme opened with the screening of *A Slice Room*. The film is a portrait of a group of people living in poverty, in small "cubicle" or "slice" rooms, as they strive for better living conditions whilst trying to navigate the complex welfare system. The film is the result of director Song Yun-hyeok's own work as a social worker and it was developed over time, made in close proximity with the people he filmed. During the conversation following the screening, the filmmaker stressed how the current situation of poverty in South Korea is largely a consequence of the social changes that occurred in Korean society after the IMF crisis of the late 1990s, which left many people with their lives torn apart, unable to reintegrate into society.

The afternoon saw the first of three screenings dedicated to the pioneering work of director Kim Dong Won, with two of his best-known video works, *The Sanggyedong Olympics* (1988) and *The 6 Day Struggle at the*

Myeongdong Cathedral (1997). As it is often mentioned by the director, they were not made as films per se, but as documentation and propaganda intended to expose the situation people were living in and going through, with the purpose of helping the community, advancing their fight and raising awareness. Shot with early video cameras, roughly edited and produced, they were meant to be copied and circulated as widely as possible through militant networks, circumventing state censorship. These video-works responded to pressing situations and were made, using the filmmaker's expression, "with the times", as the events unfolded, with a sense of urgency.



Kim Dong Won

The following day we screened Kim Dong Won's best-known film, *Repatriation* (2003). The film marked a departure from his previous work - instead of responding to a single moment or event, the film accompanies a group of North Korean men for a period of ten years following their release from prison. Kim also introduced a new element to his filmmaking, a self-reflexive voice-over commentary that exposes his thoughts, doubts and feelings regarding the subjects of the film and the making of the film itself.

Repatriation was followed by a round-table discussion which offered an opportunity to learn more about the history and development of Korean independent and activist documentary from the late 1980s to the present day. The discussion began with a short presentation by scholar Dr. Nam In Young, who took the films of Kim Dong Won as a founding paradigm to revisit some of the principles and manifestos established by the first militant film collectives in South Korea such as the Seoul Film Collective or PURN Productions. In her presentation Nam demonstrated some of the key shifts over that period, which led to an increase in personal and subjective modes of documentary, and a new generation of filmmakers whose work blurs and pushes the boundaries of the documentary form. Kim then described the work and ethos behind PURN Productions, and director Song followed up by explaining about the aims and working principles behind community filmmaking collective Docu-In.



Dr. Nam In Young

The last weekend of the programme included two more films: *Soseongri* (2017) by Park Bae-Il, and the last film to date by Kim Dong Won, *Jung-il Woo, My Friend* (2017).

The first film continues Park's interest in working with rural populations affected by the changing conditions brought about by capitalism and military industry. The film focuses on a small village community made up mostly of elderly women who come together to resist the installation of US defense missiles in their village. Like the previous work by the filmmaker, the film engages with present struggles and slowly reveals their

antecedents, as shared through the memories of elderly residents.

Director Kim, who was not in London to present the screening, kindly agreed to record a video introduction to his last film. *Jung-il Woo, My Friend*, started as a tribute to the North-American Jesuit priest, who Kim Dong Won considered a mentor and companion. The film revisits early footage recorded throughout the years, as well as testimonies of people who knew Father Jung-il Woo personally and whose lives were positively impacted by his actions. In his short introduction, the director mentioned how the influence of this charismatic figure affected his own faith and political stance, leading to a broader and more humanist understanding of poverty and solidarity.

As a whole, the fortnight provided an opportunity to bring established and emerging voices in Korean documentary into discussion with local audiences and each other.

Ricardo Matos Cabo
Independent Film Programmer
&
Matthew Barrington
Manager & Programmer, BIMl



IN CONVERSATION: JEONG GA-YOUNG

WED 7 NOV 11:30-13:00
KINGSTON UNIVERSITY

Jeong Ga-young's filmography:

- A Thought in the Theatre* (Short, 2017)
- Love Jo. Right Now* (Short, 2017)
- Bitch on the Beach* (2016)
- What's Wrong with Me? K K* (Short, 2015)
- The Future of Tongue* (Short, 2014)

MODERATOR:

Lucy Parker
Filmmaker and Academic

A fresh new voice in contemporary Korean indie cinema, Jeong Ga-young has already found her place in the ranks of festival and critically acclaimed auteurs, albeit only beginning to compile a body of work dedicated to openly exploring female sexuality on screen.

Jeong dropped out from the Korean National University of Arts School of Film in 2012, and has been working independently since, directing a few shorts before her debut feature film *Bitch on the Beach* (2016), immediately compared to the likes of Hong Sangsoo, for the project's study of female-male relationships, black-and-white aesthetic and focus on dialogue.

Screening at this year's London Korean Film Festival "Women's Voices" programme strand is her second feature, *Hit the Night* (2017), which sees Jeong once again adopting the lead role in front of the camera, as well as behind. With *Hit the Night* we embark on a journey of reversing gender roles in seduction and frank conversations about attraction, desire and sex, offering subversive wit and humour.

During this extended conversation session, Jeong will walk us through her methods of research and preparation for a project, what it is like to wear the acting and directing hats simultaneously, and her road to radically challenging the traditional female representation on screen.



IN CONVERSATION: PARK KIYONG

SUN 11 NOV 14:30-15:30
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Park Kiyong's selected filmography:

- Noli Timere: The Official Film of the Pyeongchang 2018 Paralympic Winter Games* (2018)
- Tears of Mokpo* (2018)
- Old Love* (2017)
- Picture Of Hell* (2016)
- Yanji* (2015)
- 50_Fifties* (2014)
- Garibong* (2013)
- Moving* (2011)
- Camel(s)* (2001)
- Digital Search* (2001)
- Motel Cactus* (1997)

MODERATOR:

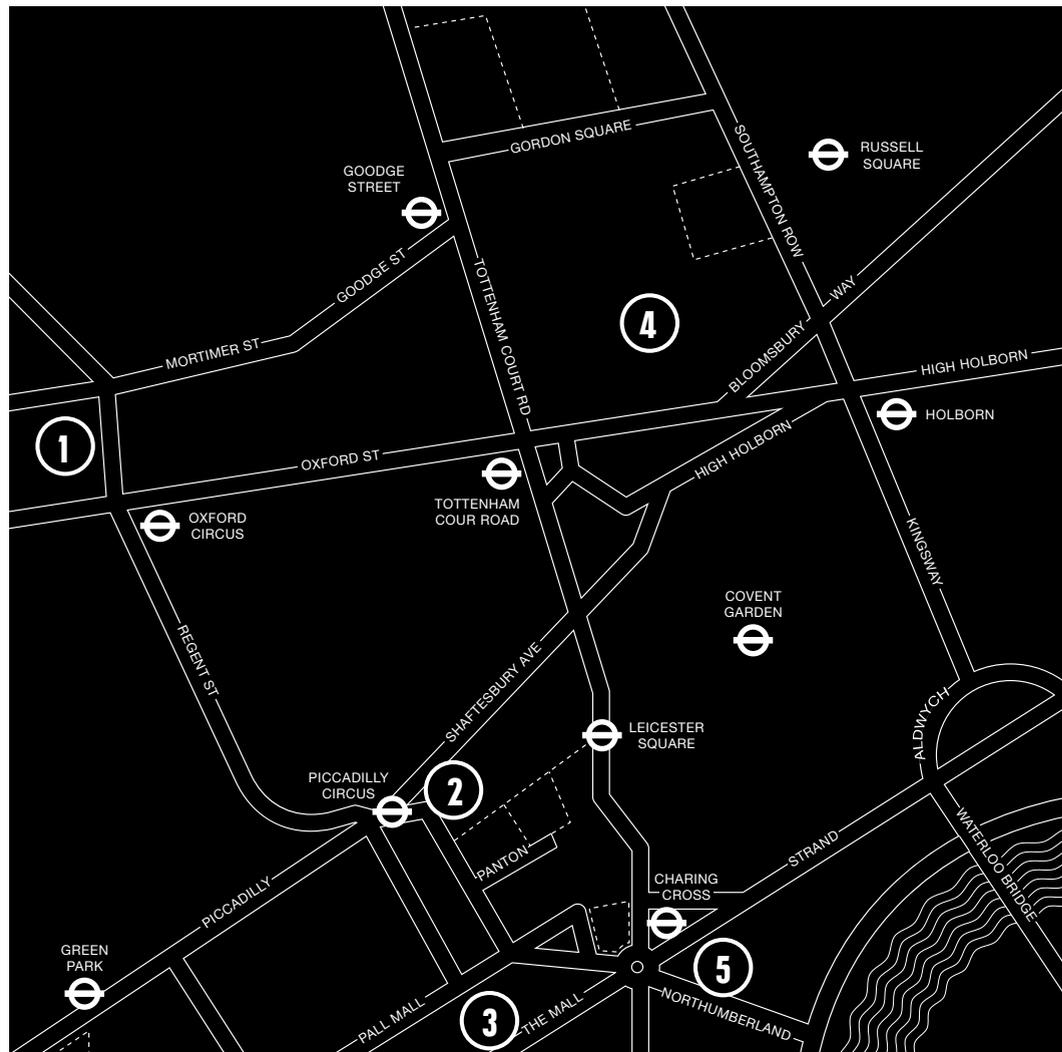
Tony Rayns
Festival Programmer and Film Critic

Park Kiyong's career began soon after graduating from the Korean Academy of Film Arts (KAFA) in 1987. His major break as a director came in 1997 with *Motel Cactus*, which was invited to screen at the 2nd Busan International Film Festival, followed by the 2002 indie *Camel(s)*, which received international recognition.

As Head of KAFA, Park developed the 'Feature film & Animation Production' programme - that helped turn the institution into a world-class film school - as well as producing many feature length graduation projects, such as the critical success *Bleak Night* (Yoon Sung-hyun, 2010). Park also served as the director of Cinema Digital Seoul (CinDi), before joining the faculty at Dankook University Graduate School of Cinematic Content since its opening in 2012.

A remarkable documentarian, Park's first essay film *Moving* (2011), was about a Korean immigrant couple struggling to survive after the Christchurch earthquake, he followed this with *Garibong* (2013) and *Yanji* (2015), which deal with diaspora, and a film on the 2018 Paralympics is in the works. More recently, Park marked a return to narrative fiction with *Old Love* (2017) and *Tears of Mokpo* (2018).

This extended conversation will give further insight to the mind behind three titles featured in the 'Indie Firepower' strand: *Motel Cactus*, *Camel(s)* and *Old Love*.



1. REGENT STREET CINEMA

309 Regent Street, W1B 2UW

2. PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

20-24 Shaftesbury Avenue, W1D 7DH

3. INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

The Mall, SW1Y5AH

4. THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Great Russell Street, WC1B 3DH

5. KOREAN CULTURAL CENTRE UK

1-3 Strand, WC2N 5BW

6. CLOSE-UP FILM CENTRE

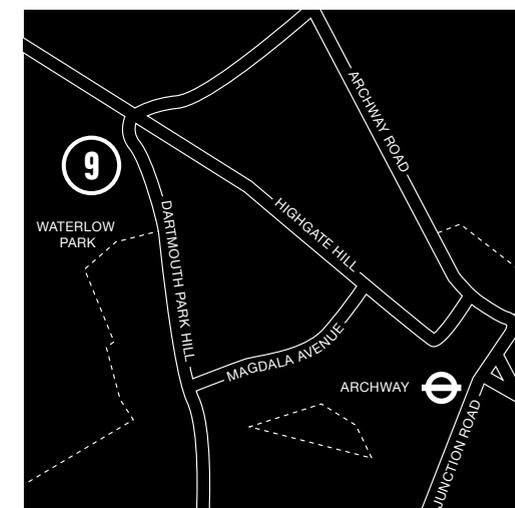
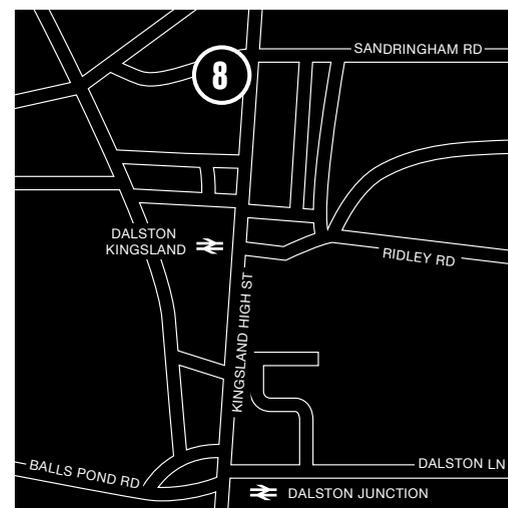
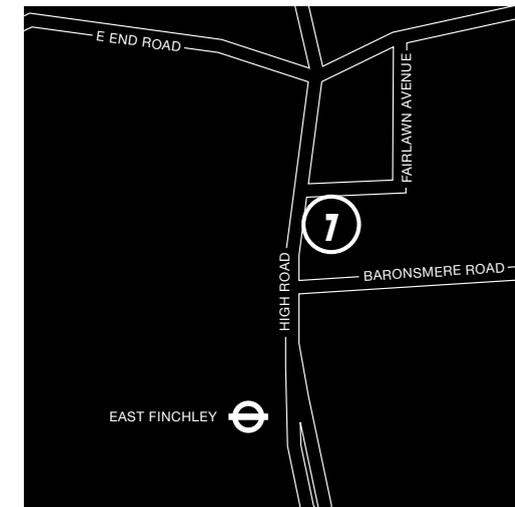
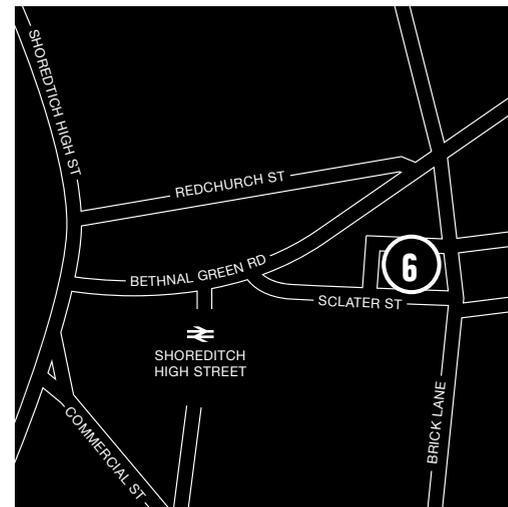
97 Sclater Street, E1 6HR

7. PHOENIX CINEMA

52 High Road, N2 9PJ

8. RIO CINEMA

107 Kingsland High St, E8 2PB

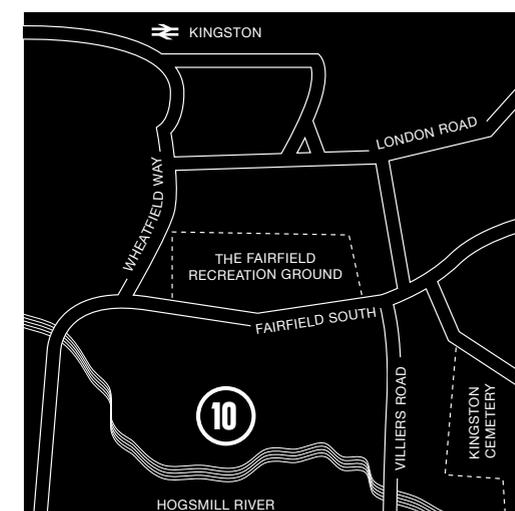


9. LUX

Waterlow Park Centre, Dartmouth Park Hill, N19 5JF

10. KINGSTON UNIVERSITY

Kingston School of Art, Knights Park, Kingston KT1 2QJ



TOURING PROGRAMME

After our Closing Gala on 14 November, we will be touring through six major cities across the UK: Belfast, Edinburgh, Sheffield, Manchester, Nottingham and Glasgow. Presenting a collection of carefully selected films from our Special Focus and Cinema Now strands we aim to introduce Korean Cinema to new audiences around the UK.

11. EDINBURGH FILMHOUSE EDINBURGH

88 Lothian Road
EH3 9BZ

12. GLASGOW FILM THEATRE GLASGOW

12 Rose St
G3 6RB

13. QUEEN'S FILM THEATRE BELFAST

20 University Square
BT7 1PA

14. HOME MANCHESTER

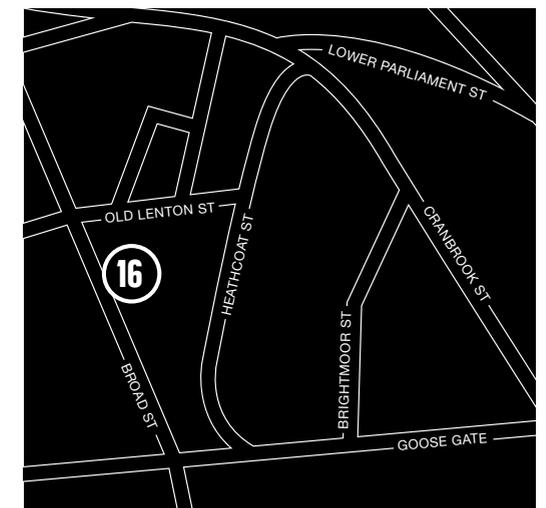
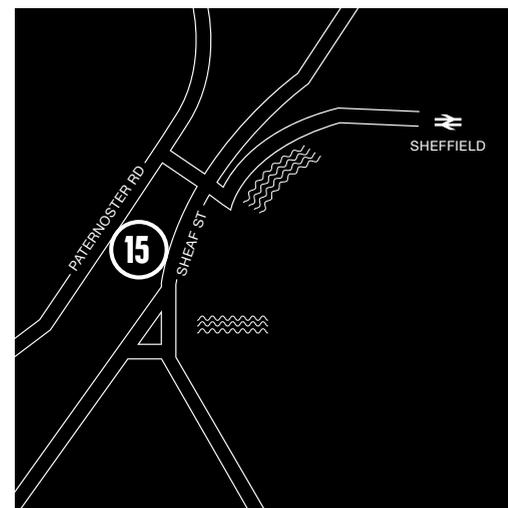
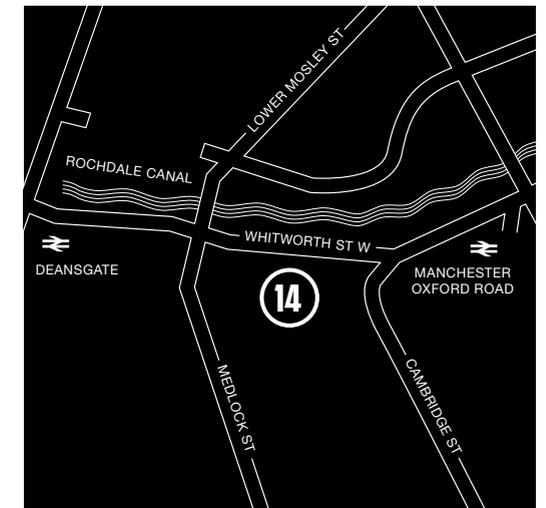
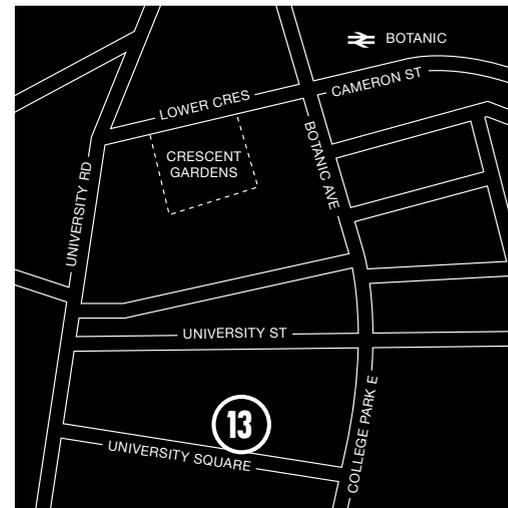
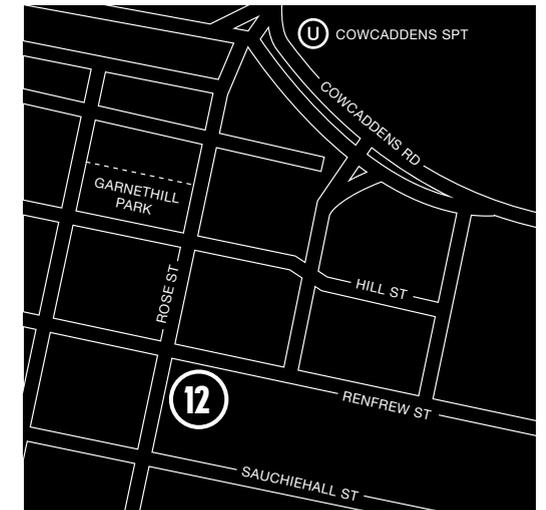
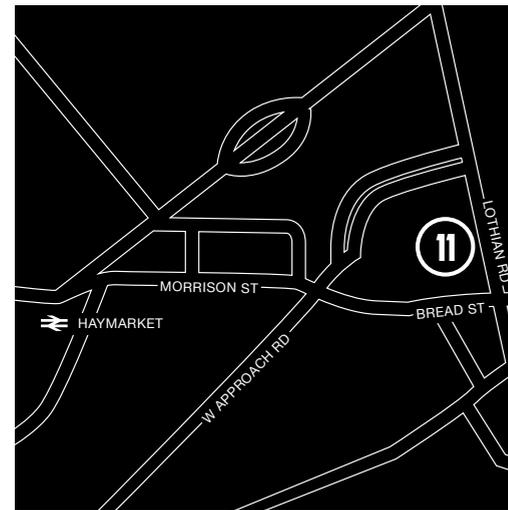
2 Tony Wilson Place, First St
M15 4FN

15. SHOWROOM CINEMA SHEFFIELD

15 Paternoster Row
S1 2BX

16. BROADWAY CINEMA NOTTINGHAM

14-18 Broad St
NG1 3AL



THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

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PROGRAMME PARTNERS:



CREDITS

Korean Cultural Centre UK Director: Hoseong Yong
 Festival Producer: Hyun Jin Cho
 Programmers: Anton Bitel, Sophie Brown, Hyun Jin Cho, Mark Morris, Maria Palacios Cruz, Tony Rayns, Simon Ward
 Festival Manager: Hyunyoung Kim
 Festival Coordinator: Clare Richards
 Programme Assistant: Sodam Oh
 Press & Online Marketing Coordinator: Christopher O'Keeffe
 Offline Marketing Coordinator: Michael Fowler
 Events & Volunteers Coordinator: Oli Gots
 Guest Coordinator: Yujin Choi
 Accounting Managers: Soojin Kwon, Byunghyun Roh
 PR: Witchfinder

Brochure Text: Corrina Antrobus, Matthew Barrington, Chris Berry, Anton Bitel, Sophie Brown, Hyun Jin Cho, Pierce Conran, Michael Fowler, Ricardo Matos Cabos, Daniel Martin, Mark Morris, Christopher O'Keeffe, Andrew Osmond, Maria Palacios Cruz, Tony Rayns, Shelagh Rowan-Legg, Hayley Scanlon, Simon Ward, Beth Webb

Brochure Editors: Anton Bitel, Hyun Jin Cho, Michael Fowler, Clare Richards, Paul Wadey

Festival Official Trailer: Intermission
 Graphic Design: Julia (julia.studio)
 Videography: Richard Duffy
 Photography: Kii Studios

Thanks to all of our volunteers: Effrosyni R. Apostolide, Ji Huan Chang, Hannah Cline, Charlotte Cullen, Harry Heath, Suha Hwang, Ruby James, Seohyun Jeon, Nicky Kim, Yoojin Kim, Nuri Koh, Juho Lee, Sujeong Park, Young Sun Park, Joana Rossi Cardenas, Lianna Weidle

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Korean Cultural Centre