

LONDON KOREAN FILM FESTIVAL

2017

**26 OCTOBER –
19 NOVEMBER**

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Welcome to the 12th edition of the London Korean Film Festival. This year we are a week earlier than usual, opening on 26 October and running up to 8 November in London, and then touring to 5 cities around the UK until 19 November.

Our programme features 60 titles produced between 1964 and 2017, with several UK and international premieres. Once again, we celebrate the diversity of Korean cinema through nine distinct strands, including the most talked-about contemporary hits, hidden gems from the independent filmmaking scene, works that highlight women's voices, rediscovered classic films, bold documentaries whose influence reaches beyond the screen, as well as the Mise-en-scène Short Film Festival's awarded films, family-friendly animations, and artists' moving image works.

Following on from the warmly received special focus on women's cinema last year, we are presenting a special programme on Korean noir. *Korean Noir, Illuminating the Dark Side of Society* presents key films whose 'noirness' has generated critical debate. The programme hopes to offer an overview of how Korean film noir from different periods has adopted and/or paid homage to the canon of film noir whilst at the same time reflecting the particular conventions of Korean culture and its cinema. In addition to showcasing 13 films, including two classic masterpieces, *Black Hair* by Lee Man-hee and *The Last Witness* by Lee Doo-yong, we are also organising a forum with prominent noir scholars and filmmakers.

This year's opening and closing films are both highly acclaimed dramas which offer interesting perspectives on the romantic relationships at the centre of their stories. The prolific director Hong Sangsoo's 21st feature *The Day After* will open the festival, with a live Q&A with Kim Hyungkoo, cinematographer of the film, and a long time collaborator with Hong Sangsoo and several other auteur filmmakers. The festival will close with Kim Dae-hwan's 2nd feature *The First Lap*, with the director on hand to discuss his gentle portrayal of an ordinary couple trying to find their way in the face of familial tension.

This year we are pleased to share with you a programme that showcases more shorts, documentaries, experimental and independent films than ever before, a reflection of the recent resurgence of Korean film culture, and the desire for different points of view to make themselves heard.

We would like to thank all our sponsors, partners, advisors and programme collaborators. The festival would not be possible without their generous support and critical insight.

We hope this year's LKFF will be an occasion for many of you to not only watch films but also learn about the history of Korean cinema.

Hoseong Yong
Director, Korean Cultural Centre UK

INTRODUCTION

Korea has been in the news more than ever in 2017, thanks to a Presidential impeachment, a change in government and a seeming breakdown in the always difficult relationship with North Korea. Happily, Korean cinema has kept pace with this higher news profile. In the year that Bong Joon-ho's *Okja* became the most widely seen Korean film ever made, thanks to the international home-streaming service which financed it, plenty of other Korean movies were prominent on the festival circuit and in distribution around the world. Compare Korea with its larger and much more populous neighbours to the east and west, and it's obvious how remarkable this achievement is. It redefines the whole notion of punching above your weight.

And now the London Korean Film Festival is back to help you access those parts of Korean cinema that other festivals in the capital can't or won't reach. Based on your responses from the past ten years, we have a good idea what you want from us: interesting guests but no resources wasted on meaningless competitions or phoney red-carpet glamour; serious attention to the key niche areas in Korean cinema, from rediscovered classics to indie surprises; a particular focus on films by and about women; and a hand-picked choice of the best that Korean cinema has had to offer in 2017. And you seem to have no problem either with our occasional pauses for informal chats over drinks and Korean snacks – usually in the Korean Cultural Centre on Northumberland Avenue, just off Trafalgar Square. Your numbers seem to swell each year, so LKFF must be on the right track.

Our old friend Hong Sangsoo premiered no less than three films this year, and we're opening with the best of them. *The Day After* plays some of his characteristic tricks with time, but it's the most devastating of all his accounts of male weakness and female strength. And we close with Kim Dae-hwan's outstanding second film *The First Lap*; those who recall his debut *End of Winter* won't be surprised to hear that he gets inside the complicated dynamics of a family with more acuity than ever. In between, explore the remarkable intensity of the Korean film noir tradition, dip into our selections from the programmes of the main festivals in Korea – and (I would say this, wouldn't I?) please don't neglect the Indie strand, which this year celebrates Korea's sparkiest and funniest film essayist, Jung Yoon-suk. Are your pulses racing yet?

Tony Rayns
Chief Festival Advisor

FESTIVAL ADVISORS

TONY RAYNS

One of the world's leading experts on Asian cinema, Tony Rayns is a film critic, commentator, festival programmer and screenwriter. He coordinated the Vancouver International Film Festival's Asian Competition between 1988 and 2006 and has been awarded the Foreign Ministry of Japan's Commendation for services to Japanese cinema.

DR. ANTON BITEL

Anton Bitel is a part-time Classicist and freelance film critic, specialising in genre, cult and the cinema of East Asia. He regularly writes for *Sight & Sound* and *Little White Lies* as well as being a member of the Online Film Critics Society and the London Film Critics' Circle.

DR. SOPHIE MAYER

Sophie Mayer is the author of *Political Animals: The New Feminist Cinema* (IB Tauris, 2015) and *The Cinema of Sally Potter: A Politics of Love* (Wallflower, 2009), and a regular contributor to *Sight & Sound*, *The F-Word*, and *Literal*. She works with queer feminist film curation collective Club des Femmes and with Raising Films, a campaign and community for parents and carers working in the UK film and television industries.

DR. MARK MORRIS

Mark Morris is a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. His main teaching and research interests include Korean cinema, Japanese cinema, modern Japanese fiction, and the social and cultural history of Japan's minorities. He is also a frequent contributor to Korean film events in London, Cambridge and elsewhere.

SIMON WARD

Simon Ward has been programming and distributing films for more than twenty years at organisations including London's Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), The BFI London Film Festival and Tate Modern. He is a co-founder of the Independent Cinema Office (ICO), owns an independent cinema, and writes on film occasionally for publishers including Routledge Press. He also co-organised the ICO's Hong Sangsoo complete touring retrospective in 2010.

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KOREAN FILM NIGHTS

RETURNING SPRING 2018

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 rare insight into a broad spectrum of Korean cinema, both past and present.

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

For details please visit: koreanfilm.co.uk @theLKFF

CALENDAR

THU 26 OCT

18:30 Opening Gala: The Day After (+Q&A)

FRI 27 OCT

18:30 Warriors of the Dawn (+Intro) **2**

21:30 The Outlaws (aka Crime City) (+Q&A) **2**

SAT 28 OCT

12:00 Lost in the Moonlight **7**

18:00 Masterclass with Kim Hyungkoo + Dead End **1**

18:30 Merry Christmas Mr. Mo (+Intro) **3**

20:45 Come, Together **2**

SUN 29 OCT

14:00 Video Works by Lim Minouk (+Intro) **9**

15:00 Goodbye My Hero (+Intro) **6**

18:30 A Confession Expecting a Rejection (+Intro) **3**

20:45 New World **1**

MON 30 OCT

14:00 Candle Wave Feminists (+Q&A) **4**

Event: Filming Feminism in Action **4**

18:30 My Turn+Mild Fever+Night Working **4**

19:00 The Rules of the Game **1**

TUE 31 OCT

18:15 In Between Seasons (+Intro) **2**

18:30 Two Doors (+Q&A) **6**

19:00 A Bittersweet Life **1**

WED 1 NOV

18:30 The Remnants (+Q&A) **6**

19:30 People in the Slum (+Q&A) **5**

THU 2 NOV

14:00 In Conversation with Lee Hyuk-sang (Pinks) **6**

*Check the venue at the time of booking

18:30 Jamsil (+Q&A) **4**

19:30 Whale Hunting (+Q&A) **5**

FRI 3 NOV

17:15 Masterclass with Lee Doo-yong **1**

18:30 The Merciless **1**

20:00 The Dream (+Q&A) **5**

20:50 Die Bad (+Intro) **1**

SAT 4 NOV

12:00 Franky and Friends: A Tree of Life **7**

14:00 The Last Witness (+Q&A) **1**

14:00 Video Works by Koo Donghee (+Intro) **9**

17:30 Kilimanjaro (+Q&A) **1**

19:30 Non Fiction Diary (+Q&A)

+ The White House In My Country **3**

+ Hochiminh

+ The Home Of Stars

20:30 Nowhere to Hide (+Intro) **1**

SUN 5 NOV

12:00 Black Hair (+Intro) **1**

14:00 A Dream of Iron (+Intro) **6**

14:30 Forum on Korean Noir **1**

15:00 Coin Locker Girl **1**

18:30 Mise-en-scène Shorts 1 **8**

Mise-en-scène Shorts 2

19:30 Bamseom Pirates Seoul Inferno (+Q&A) **3**

MON 6 NOV

18:30 Master **2**

21:10 Green Fish (+Intro) **1**

TUE 7 NOV

14:00 In Conversation with Kim Dae-hwan

18:30 A Dirty Carnival **1**

21:10 The Mimic **2**

WED 8 NOV

18:30 Closing Gala: The First Lap (+Q&A)

FRI 10 NOV

18:30 Nottingham: The Merciless **1**

SAT 11 NOV

13:30 Manchester: The First Lap

18:00 Manchester: Coin Locker Girl **1**

18:30 Nottingham: In Between Seasons **2**

SUN 12 NOV

20:20 Manchester: The Merciless **1**

MON 13 NOV

20:15 Sheffield: New World **1**

TUE 14 NOV

17:30 Sheffield: The Last Witness (+Intro) **1**

WED 15 NOV

20:30 Sheffield: The Mimic **2**

THU 16 NOV

20:40 Glasgow: The Day After

FRI 17 NOV

18:00 Glasgow: Coin Locker Girl **1**

18:20 Belfast: Die Bad **1**

SAT 18 NOV

15:00 Glasgow: New World **1**

18:20 Belfast: New World **1**

SUN 19 NOV

18:20 Belfast: The Merciless **1**

- 1** Special Focus: Korean Noir
- 2** Cinema Now
- 3** Indie Firepower
- 4** Women's Voices
- 5** Classics Revisited
- 6** Documentary
- 7** Animation
- 8** Mise-en-scène Shorts
- 9** Artist Video

- Picturehouse Central
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- British Museum
- KCCUK
- Phoenix Cinema
- LUX
- Birkbeck Cinema
- SOAS University of London
- Kingston University
- Touring Programme

OPENING GALA

THE DAY AFTER

그 후

THU 26 OCT 18:30
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Q&A with the Cinematographer Kim Hyungkoo

THU 16 NOV 20:40
GLASGOW FILM THEATRE, GLASGOW

DIRECTOR: HONG SANGSOO
WRITER: HONG SANGSOO
PRODUCER: HONG SANGSOO
CAST: KWON HAEHYO, KIM MINHEE, KIM SAEBYUK
PRODUCTION COMPANY: JEONWONSA
INTERNATIONAL SALES: FINECUT
DRAMA / 2017 / 92 MIN / CERT. 18 / DCP / B&W

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

Hong Sangsoo's latest bulletin from the sex wars is not very droll but it's as emotionally powerful as anything he's done. *The Day After* (the Korean title Geu-hu is borrowed from Natsume Soseki's novel Sorekara, which means "After That") centres on a rather cowardly man and the three women whose lives he disrupts. The unhappily-married Bongwan (played by Kwon Haehyo) runs a small publishing house and has been having an affair with a young female employee. His wife finds out about it on the very day that he's hiring Areum (Kim Minhee, now a constant presence in Hong's films) as his new employee. This being a film by Hong, we can't be certain what happened when or whether some scenes are or aren't Bongwan's fantasies. What is clear in this shimmering, monochrome movie is that a weak, middle-aged man comes up against a strong-willed and determinedly positive young woman who simply won't let herself be bruised by the encounter. Terrific! (TR)



AN INTERVIEW WITH HONG SANGSOO



Hong Sangsoo can't be with us in London this year, for the very good reason that he's shooting a new film. Don't worry, we'll have at least one other interesting guest here for opening night. But since Hong can't make it himself, we thought it would be a good idea to ask him a few questions about *The Day After*. This was our exchange.

TONY RAYNS How do you decide which films to shoot in colour and which in monochrome?

HONG SANGSOO I don't know, maybe it's the mood I think the film will have? Or the season and locations, the winter in Seoul? Or my own emotional attitude at the time? When something feels right to me, I usually avoid analysing it. Even if I did, I doubt I'd know for sure.

TR The film's Korean title refers to Natsume Soseki's novel *Sorekara* ("After That"), which seems to be Bongwan's parting gift to Areum. What's the connection (if any!) between Soseki's book and your film?

HS The morning of the day we shot that parting scene, I wrote in the script that Bongwan gives Areum a copy of Soseki's novel *Kokoro* ("Heart"). We went to the location, a publishing company office, where I was pretty sure that we could lay hands on a copy. Anyhow, they had lots of books in stock there. When I asked the actual owner to find a copy of *Kokoro* for me, he looked for it but came back to say he couldn't find it, though he knew he'd had a copy. He offered me instead a copy of another novel by Soseki, *Geu-hu* ("After That"). At that moment I realised I'd found the title for the film. As it happens, I started reading *Geu-hu* a few years ago, but I stopped after just a few pages. It made me feel dark and uneasy.

TR I think this is the first time you've contributed the music to one of your own films ...

HS Actually, it's not. There are two pieces of mine in *Right Now Wrong Then*: the short one and the title music. That title music is basically a new arrangement of an old Korean song, but I wrote the second part of it myself. In *On the Beach at Night Alone*, I wrote the song which Kim Minhee sings in front of the café. And in *Claire's Camera*, the song which Kim Minhee sings on the sidewalk by the beach with Isabelle Huppert. I didn't credit myself with any of those musical contributions, simply because I didn't feel like doing so at the time.

TR So what happened this time?

HS I like to edit my films as I go along, and I was editing some scenes from *The Day After* three or four days into the shoot. I wanted to add some music to the scenes I'd assembled. There's a small electronic piano in our production office, so I came up with that piece just to see what the scenes would look like with some music. Later on the people around me said they liked the music. So I decided to keep it for the film.

TR The women in your films are almost always smarter than the men, both emotionally and intellectually. Is that just the way you see it? Or are you deliberately subverting Korean 'patriarchal assumptions' about women?

HS My women characters are smarter? Perhaps they are, perhaps they're not. I should stress that whatever meaning is produced in any film of mine, it's very rarely based on any 'clear understanding' or 'explicable view' that I may have!



The Day After

CLOSING GALA

THE FIRST LAP

초행

WED 8 NOV 18:30
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Q&A with the Director Kim Dae-hwan

SAT 11 NOV 13:30
HOME, MANCHESTER

DIRECTOR: KIM DAE-HWAN
WRITER: KIM DAE-HWAN
PRODUCER: JANG WOO-JIN
CAST: CHO HYUN-CHUL, KIM SAEBYUK
PRODUCTION COMPANY: BOMNAE FILMS
INTERNATIONAL SALES: M-LINE DISTRIBUTION
DRAMA / 2017 / 101 MIN / CERT. 12A / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
END OF WINTER (2014)

Kim Dae-hwan's film explores generational conflict within a contemporary love story in thrilling forensic detail. Twenty-somethings Su-hyeon (Cho Hyun-chul) and Ji-young (Kim Saebyuk) live together in financial and emotional insecurity. They seem somehow stuck in life. When Ji-young tells Su-hyeon that she may be pregnant, pressure mounts on them either to commit or to split up.

The couple embark on a pair of road trips to their respective parents' homes. Ji-young's middle-class parents are frustrated by their only daughter's seeming inability to follow a conventional family life. Su-hyeon's barely existent relationship with his alcoholic father and embittered mother is even more strained. Their parents live in opposition to each other, love at best a distant memory. Is this the future facing Su-hyeon and Ji-young?

Framed against the recent President Park impeachment protests, Kim's film asks a whole new generation to question the present and embrace change. Have Su-hyeon and Ji-young got the strength and love to find a third way together? (SW)



AN INTERVIEW WITH KIM DAE-HWAN



SIMON WARD Korean cinema has produced a large number of glossy commercial genre films over the last two decades. *The First Lap* clearly stands apart from these and was a Jeonju International Film Festival commission. How do you see the role of Jeonju, and indeed festivals like the LKFF, within independent cinema?

KIM DAE-HWAN In fact, I like independent movies because they are light. Mobility and autonomy are the main attractions of an independent film. That's why I look for an overall scenario rather than a precise plan, and I come across unexpected scenes. It's a thrilling situation. And living in an age when you can make films alone, independent filmmaking allows you to try various approaches. It takes courage to try. The Jeonju International Film Festival gave me courage. The same goes for other film festivals. The role of the film festival is to instil courage in the directors who want to try different approaches.

SW Can you remember your very first idea which gave birth to *The First Lap*?

KD I had been with my girlfriend for about nine years. At some point, the subject of marriage came up, but we found it difficult to know how to proceed. For many friends of my age, marriage has come to them like a great wall, and it was the same for me. I wondered why and I wanted to find the answer through the movie. Marriage in Korea is not only a promise between two people, but also a meeting between two families. I naturally wanted to show the reality of Korean family life through these two examples, and I wanted to follow Su-hyeon and Ji-young while climbing a high mountain range, going west and east.

SW You draw a clear parallel between Su-hyeon and Ji-young's need for personal change and the recent political protest movement around ex-President Park. Why did you choose to politicize this seemingly domestic love story?

KD I have never participated in any demonstrations nor spoken out loud. The same goes for my friends. But in last year's political situation, I could not stand alone; I participated in the protest and voiced my opinions loudly. It was a great experience. Sharing one voice with a lot of people was an exhilarating feeling that I couldn't explain in words. Although the scenario already existed, making the movie provoked me to question myself to find the answer, so I gave up the scenario, asked the actors questions, and directed the process of finding the answer. At that time, the situation in Korea was similar to the one in the movie, and I wonder if Su-hyeon, who was not normally interested in politics, would naturally follow the atmosphere at that time.

SW Men in *The First Lap* seem consistently weak and destructive, while women demonstrate strength through refusing to accept the status quo. What was your process for creating the characters in *The First Lap*?

KD I do not know what the usual way to portray a character is, but when I created the characters, it was important for them to be real people. I tried not to match the character to the story, but to match the story to the character. I created each story through the space, the setting, and the current situation and history of the characters. The film made it appropriate for the situation.

SW If this was the first lap, what might the second lap contain for Su-hyeon and Ji-young?

KD I don't think there will be much difference in the second lap. I guess they will grow closer to each other a little more.

*The director's responses above were translated by Bricent.



The First Lap

SPECIAL FOCUS:

KOREAN NOIR, ILLUMINATING THE DARK SIDE OF SOCIETY

CITIES OF DREADFUL NIGHT – SOME CONSIDERATIONS OF KOREAN NOIR

Film noir is an elusive and protean genre - so much so, that there's some debate over whether it can even be considered a genre (after all, there are noir westerns and noir costume dramas). Should it perhaps rather be defined as a 'style', a 'mode', a 'look', a 'cycle', a 'state of mind'? Does 'film noir' just refer to those American films produced during the classic period, between about 1940 and 1958, and shot in black-and-white - or can the net be cast far wider? For the purists, the description 'Korean noir' might be dismissed as a contradiction in terms. But these days, most critics would probably agree that noir doesn't respect national or temporal boundaries; that authentically noir films, as well as films drawing on noir-esque elements, can be made anywhere and at any time. That being so, the Korean film industry is as qualified to make film noir as any other.

Even during the heyday of Hollywood noir, other countries were dabbling in the same shadowy pool. In Britain, Carol Reed directed *Odd Man Out* (1947) and *The Third Man* (1949). In the first of these James Mason plays an IRA gunman, wounded after an attempted bank raid and hunted through the nocturnal streets of Belfast. The second offered Orson Welles his finest role outside his own films as unrepentant black-marketeer Harry Lime, with the encroaching urban darkness provided by the war-shattered and four-power-occupied city of Vienna. Both share a key noir theme: the man on the run.

As does another British film that boasts what must surely qualify as the archetypal noir title, *Night and the City* (1950). Directed by the American-born expat Jules Dassin, himself on the run from the Hollywood anti-Communist blacklist, it stars Richard Widmark as a small-time grifter hoping to make it big as a wrestling promoter on the fringes of the London underworld. Inevitably his plans collapse and he too finds himself hunted through the foggy, bombed-out streets of the British capital. "Perhaps no noir city is quite so hellish, so imbued with the stench of mortality," wrote Paul Arthur in the booklet to the film's Criterion release, "as the London depicted in *Night and the City*." Dassin moved on to Paris, where he directed another noir classic, *Rififi* (1955). Pervaded by Gauloise smoke and an air of existential gloom, it's an ultra-French heist movie that, like the template of all heist movies, John Huston's *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950), explores a further common theme of noir, that of loyalty and betrayal.

Before Dassin took it over, *Rififi* was to be directed by another leading practitioner of Gallic noir, Jean-Pierre Melville. In his crime movies - *Bob le Flambeur* (1956), *Le Doulos* (1963), *Le deuxième souffle* (1966), *Le Samurái* (1967) - he brought a dark stylised poise to the mythology of the gangster film, and more than one Korean noir owes him a debt. Sun-woo (Lee Byung-hun), the protagonist of Kim Jee-woon's *A Bittersweet Life* (2005), exhibits, at least in the early part of the film, an ultra-cool demeanour that recalls Alain Delon

in the title role of *Le Samouraï*; and as its English-language title hints, Kim's period noir, *The Age of Shadows* (2016), more than once glances back to Melville's Resistance drama *The Army of Shadows* (1969), with Japanese-occupied Korea substituting for German-occupied France.

Italian film, too, was getting in on the act. Francesco Rosi's *Salvatore Giuliano* (1962), about a real-life Sicilian bandit, recalls the cycle of reality-based crime movies Hollywood was making in the late 40s: Henry Hathaway's *Call Northside 777* (1948) or Dassin's *The Naked City* (1948); and his *Hands over the City* (1963) dealt with the kind of urban corruption that fuels many Korean noirs. In Japan, elements of noir were creeping into the modern-day films of Akira Kurosawa: *The Bad Sleep Well* (1960) and *High and Low* (1963). With his yakuza drama *Pale Flower* (1964), Masahiro Shinoda followed suit.

How to define noir? Not easy, given a cinematic phenomenon so protean and evasive. Paul Schrader's often been quoted: "It is not defined... by conventions of setting and conflict, but rather by the most subtle qualities of tone and mood." (Notes on Film Noir, 1971) 'Most subtle' might be questioned; even in its Hollywood heyday, noir could easily spill over into excess. Consider, to search no further, the grand guignol contortions of Stuart Heisler's *Among the Living* (1941), or the grotesqueries of Lee Wilder's *The Pretender* (1947). But compared with what was to follow, of course, these now look mild.

Certainly by the time we reach 21st-century Korean noir, 'restraint' is hardly the word one would use. Extreme violence, often dwelt on with relish, seems to be de rigueur. Prolonged scenes of torture are frequent, often depicted in graphic detail. Extensive combat sequences involving multiple assailants wielding guns, knives, cutlasses, axes, clubs and baseball bats, invariably accompanied by copious bloodshed, are extended beyond all plausibility, as in the full twenty minutes of non-stop martial-arts mayhem that comes as the grand finale of Ryoo Seung-wan's aptly-titled *The City of Violence* (2007). Blatant and endemic corruption, whether official, industrial, commercial or all three, is almost a given element. The evily-grinning Mayor Park (Hwang Jung-min) in Kim Sung-soo's *Asura: The City of Madness* (2016), openly revelling in his venality, could give many a Bond villain a run for his money.

Worth considering, then: how did we get here from there? Following the classic period of Hollywood noir – generally reckoned to end with Orson Welles's *Touch of Evil* (1958) – the style seemed to drop out of fashion for a decade or so. But then there started to appear films that attracted the tag 'neo-noir': Alan Pakula's *Klute* (1971), Don Siegel's *Charley Varrick* (1973), Peter Yates's *The Friends of Eddie Coyle* (1973), Roman Polanski's *Chinatown* (1974), Robert Altman's *Thieves Like Us* (1974), Arthur Penn's *Night Moves* (1975), John Cassavetes's *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie* (1976) and a good many more. By the time the Coen brothers were ready to make their debut with *Blood Simple* (1984), neo-noir could even be treated satirically.

By then, of course, the heavy hand of puritanical censorship represented by the combined forces of the Hays Code and the Catholic Legion of Decency was long gone, having died an unlamented death in the late 60s. Profane language and explicit scenes of sexuality and violence – often occurring simultaneously – that

would have been unthinkable to the filmmakers of the classic noir era, and could scarcely even be hinted at, were now fully available for cinematic exploitation.

So by the time the new century dawned, noir was expanding in so many ways and in so many countries that the term seemed almost in danger of bursting its critical boundaries and dissolving completely. In an article on 'Twenty-First Century Noir' in *Sight & Sound* of February 2013 Nick James noted that "the suspicion lingered that only the vestiges of noir remained". But on examination, he confesses that "I couldn't have been more wrong... The noir legacy now seems central to the pleasure of this era of cinema." Examining a dozen films in detail – and glancing at a good many more – James found in them "extraordinarily hybrid forms bursting with fresh angles on old themes. In that sense few, if any, of my examples are pure, but then few films in the original canon contain all that noir allows."

His wide-ranging selection included Christopher Nolan's *Memento* (2000), Jane Campion's *In the Cut* (2003), David Cronenberg's *A History of Violence* (2005), Guillaume Canet's *Tell No One* (2006), Nuri Bilge Ceylan's *Three Monkeys* (2008) and Nicolas Winding Refn's *Drive* (2011) – the latter with a side-glance at the Danish director's Copenhagen-set *Pusher* trilogy (1996-2005). Nothing, alas, from Korea, even by way of parenthesis, although the Korean film industry, which around 2000 had started to move into its boom years, had already by then produced at least a couple of dozen films that could have slotted into his thesis.

So by way of making amends, let's consider some of the outstanding examples of Korean noir over the past decade or so, the recurrent elements in them – and how they fit into the overall trajectory of present-day, and indeed classic, noir.

"Fate or some mysterious force can put the finger on you or me for no good reason at all." The line, grim and deterministic, famously comes from the voice-over narration to *Detour* (1945). Edgar G. Ulmer's pared-down, Poverty Row noir. It finds its echo in several classics of Korean noir, such as *A Bittersweet Life*, in which one treacherous character observes, "People don't matter for shit. Nobody can see what's coming next." This is a key element of the noir world: the sheer lethal instability of urban existence. Urban, because the shadowy, rainwashed streets of the city are where noir almost always lives, whether it's New York, Chicago, LA, London, Paris or Seoul.

Certain themes, though, seem to recur with greater frequency in Korean noir films than in those from other countries, perhaps reflecting specific conventions and pressures particular to aspects of Korean society. One, briefly mentioned earlier, is the theme of loyalty and betrayal. Often the protagonist in a Korean noir will be a subordinate member of a hierarchy (a criminal hierarchy as likely as not) whose downfall will occur when he or she fails to exhibit total loyalty to the boss. Sun-woo (Lee Byung-hun), mentioned earlier as the protagonist of Kim Jee-woon's *A Bittersweet Life*, offers a case in point. Hotel manager and enforcer for the hotel's crime-lord owner, Boss Kang (Kim Young-cheol), who initially treats him like a son, he allows one brief humane impulse to divert him from Kang's strict orders. Retribution follows almost at once: he's humiliated, beaten up, tortured and finally buried alive. He fights back, of course – protagonists in Korean noir are generally as near-indestructible as Rasputin – and the film climaxes with an extended shoot-out in the hotel's plush bar.

There are parallels here with one of the finest of classic noirs, Jacques Tourneur's *Out of the Past* (1947), where Burt Lancaster's Jeff Bailey, sent by racketeer Whit Sterling (Kirk Douglas) to track down Sterling's mistress (Jane Greer), who's absconded to Mexico with funds, instead falls in love with her. In response Sterling plots Bailey's downfall, but merely by framing him for murder, not through any elaborate ordeals like those to which Sun-woo is subjected. A similar plot, given an all-female slant, fuels Han Jun-hee's *Coin Locker Girl* (2015), with Kim Ko-eun as Il-young, a street orphan raised by her adoptive mother (played by Kim Hye-soo), a Fagin-like Incheon gang boss, to do her dirty work. Like Sun-woo, Il-young succumbs to a moment of pity for one of her designated victims, which runs her into serious trouble with 'Mom'.

A more complex variant of this plot-structure underlies *Asura: The City of Madness* (the title is a reference to Sanskrit mythology: the 'asura' were demigods, often malevolent, who contended for power with the more beneficent 'deva'). Han Do-kyung (played by Jung Woo-sung) is a rogue cop in the pay of the corrupt Mayor Park. But when he kills a fellow officer he comes to the attention of Chief Prosecutor Kim Cha-in who's out to get the mayor and demands Han's help. Han's loyalties are now pulled two ways and just to complicate matters, his former protégé and 'brother', Moon Sun-mo, has now gone over completely to the mayor and represents a threat to Han. The pattern of crossed loyalties links back to James Toback's *Fingers* (1978), remade in 2005 by Jacques Audiard as *The Beat That My Heart Skipped*, and still further to the gangland entanglements of Russell Rouse's *New York Confidential* (1955).

Yet more frequent than the theme of betrayed loyalty in Korean cinema (though often intertwined with it) is that of revenge – most famously in Park Chan-wook's 'Vengeance Trilogy' – *Sympathy for Mr Vengeance* (2002), *Oldboy* (2003) and *Lady Vengeance* (2005). *Oldboy* has become probably the most widely-known example of Korean noir to date, having won the Jury Prize at Cannes and been accorded the dubious accolade of being re-made twice: as Sanjay Gupta's *Zinda* (2006), a vastly inferior copy, and as a slightly better facsimile by Spike Lee (*Oldboy*, 2013). Once again, "fate or some mysterious force" plays a major role in events. The protagonist, Oh Dae-su (Choi Min-sik), wakes from a drunken night on the town to find himself imprisoned, for no apparent reason, in what looks like a one-star hotel room. He stays locked up for the next fifteen years before being equally mysteriously released and told he has five days to work out why he was incarcerated. Park's technical control is impressive – not least in a virtuoso 2½-minute unbroken take set in a narrow corridor in which Dae-su, armed only with a claw-hammer, single-handedly defeats a couple dozen thugs – despite being stabbed in the back midway through the combat.

In its richness of mood and texture, much of *Oldboy* is deepest noir. Vengeance, as in the other two entries in Park's trilogy – and as in much Jacobean drama, which Korean noir often harks back to in spirit – is the key theme, but we're some way into the film before it starts becoming clear just who's avenging themselves, and why. It also suggests – as again do the other films in the trilogy – that vengeance often backfires on the avenger, destroying him or indeed her. This certainly applies to *Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance* where a child-kidnapping goes disastrously wrong, resulting in the death, by various unpleasant methods, of the child, the kidnapers and eventually of the child's revenge-seeking father. The heroine of *Lady Vengeance*, Lee Geum-ja (Lee Yeong-ae), does finally

survive, but only at the cost of considerable physical and psychological damage ("She couldn't find the redemption she so desired," the voice-over tells us). Interestingly, to compare two mid-60s British child-kidnapping movies, Bryan Forbes's *Seance on a Wet Afternoon* (1964) and Otto Preminger's *Bunny Lake Is Missing* (1965) – both, as might be expected are much quieter and less gaudy in their style, but similarly lead to downfall and disaster for the kidnapers.

Another recurrent feature in Korean noir is the positioning of the protagonist as a social outsider. This too it shares with many classic noirs – the independent private eye, whether it's Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) or Philip Marlowe in *Farewell, My Lovely* (1944) or *The Big Sleep* (1945), is the archetypal loner going down the 'mean streets' – as indeed is the maverick cop as in, for example, Fritz Lang's *The Big Heat* (1953). A maverick cop – his outsider status underlined by his not having attended the police academy like his more straight-line colleagues, so he's passed over for promotion – is the hero of Ryoo Seung-wan's *The Unjust* (2010), called in to solve the case of a serial killer who targets schoolgirls. In Na Hong-jin's *The Chaser* (2008) Eom Jung-ho (Kim Yun-seok) is even more of an outsider – an ex-cop turned pimp. Still, he's the only one to nail a sadistic killer of prostitutes, while the regular cops are depicted as bumbling incompetents. Of all the films we've considered so far, *The Chaser* best fits the visual style of classic noir, largely taking place in sinister shadowy alleyways while pitting an outsider against the establishment.

The protagonist of Na's follow-up film, *The Yellow Sea* (2010) is still more of an outsider – a cab-driver from the Chinese province of Yanbian, where a lot of ethnic Koreans live. This diasporic community, known as Joseonjok, are it seems generally despised by homeland Koreans. Hopelessly in debt thanks to his gambling addiction (mahjong rather than poker or roulette), Gu-nam (Ha Jung-woo, who played the killer in *The Chaser*) accepts a substantial sum from a local gang boss to come to Seoul and murder a man he's never met. Inevitably, lethal complications ensue.

As I've aimed to show through these few examples, Korean noir has over the past dozen or so years established clear characteristics and conventions of its own within the international noir (or neo-noir) world. The screening of Jung Byung-gil's *The Villainess* (2017) as a teaser to this year's London Korean Film Festival, and of Byun Sung-hyun's *The Merciless* (2017) in addition to several more noir titles in the Festival proper, shows that the cycle is far from exhausted.

Philip Kemp
Film Critic

KOREAN NOIR, OUT OF THE PAST

It may seem ludicrous to claim a connection between Jean-Pierre Melville and Korean noir, but it is nonetheless true. John Woo, who was greatly influenced by Melville in his youth, and who later took his place as the leading director of Hong Kong cinema during its boom years, famously said, "Melville is God for me. *Le Samouraï* is one of the foreign films which has had the most influence on Hong Kong cinema, especially that of the younger generation." Similarly, any Korean film director who came of age in the late 1980s might be expected to say, "John Woo is God for me. *The Killer* (1989) is one of the foreign films which has had the most influence on Korean cinema, especially that of the younger generation."

Of course, the above words about John Woo are a product of the imagination. Still, it's a fact that in the 1980s, the influence of Hong Kong crime or action movies on Korean cinema, especially on the film culture of young people, was profound. Allegedly it was in Korea that the phrase 'Hong Kong noir' was first coined. Young people idealised Chow Yun-Fat, Leslie Cheung, Andy Lau and Maggie Cheung. *The Killer* was the masterpiece of its day, and John Woo was a god of cinema to Korea's youth. The key point is that the Korean press, in trying to describe the influence of Hong Kong action cinema, came up with none other than the word 'noir'. And so, the variations produced as John Woo's Hong Kong noir evolved into Korean noir were as wide in scope as those that emerged in the prior evolution of Melville's French noir into John Woo's Hong Kong noir. What was the character of those variations? It is not our purpose here to reveal the elements of such variation. But the above explanation was needed to account for the fact that the term Korean noir was taken up in the mid-1990s, and is now being used in earnest by Korean film critics. In particular it was Jang Hyun-soo's *The Rules of the Game* (1994) that was one of the first works to be referred to as Korean noir. It's even true that Jang Hyun-soo prepared to shoot a Korean remake of *The Killer*, though the project ultimately fell through.

At its core, Korean noir has a fundamental connection to the genre of male melodrama. Consider *The Rules of the Game*. The young third-rate gangster Yong-dae (Park Joong-hoon) leads a lowly life in the city. He also has a friend, who is just as down-and-out as the protagonist. They dream of success, but can't pull themselves out of their miserable existence. A desperate opportunity comes their way, but turns out only to be a path to ruin. Their fate is one of failure and defeat. For years thereafter, the shot of Yong-dae's pitiful gaze as he dies in a phone booth, shot through the head, stood as a defining image of Korean noir. A violent, male-centred homosocial desire or nostalgic utopia, joined with the mood and tone of noir and tragic fate – the most deliberate and earnest attempt to realise such a film was *The Rules of the Game*.

At around the same time, another path for Korean noir was opened. In this case, there was no connection to the generational experience of Hong Kong noir.

Instead, at that time a single director's penetrating vision of humanity and his era came into contact with the genre. Lee Chang-dong made his directorial debut with *Green Fish* (1997). It may be hard to believe that the director of *Secret Sunshine* (2007) and *Poetry* (2010) debuted with a film noir, nonetheless *Green Fish*'s protagonist Mak-dong (Han Suk-kyu) is an archetype of Korean noir, and the film itself is also draped in noir's dark shadow.

Mak-dong too is a third-rate gangster. However, when the film was released, it was universally described as a social drama constructed from the personal and societal vision of Lee Chang-dong – and yet it was the director himself who contradicted this view, insisting that the work's secret DNA was its deep connection to noir. Unlike, however, the cinematic noir of *The Rules of the Game*, which takes its mood from the homosocial action films of Hong Kong, *Green Fish* is social noir, taking its mood from a sense of reflection on humanity and society. This meant that in *Green Fish* alone there was a place for that typical figure of film noir, the femme fatale.

How does the main character Mak-dong end up on the path to his presaged destruction? It is the femme fatale who leads him to ruin. Mak-dong is brought to the brink of death because he falls in love with Mi-ae (Shim Hye-jin), the Boss's lover. Mak-dong's boss Bae Tae-gon (Moon Sung-keun) initially emerges as a father figure, but when he turns into an antagonist, Mak-dong's fate is sealed. What's more, if there is something that manipulates both Mak-dong and Bae Tae-gon at the same time, it is the boiling desire of this black city. In the old debate of how to define a noir – that is, whether it should be considered a genre, a motif, a cycle, a style, a trend, a tone, a mood, or a phenomenon – there are several important factors that are always mentioned, and the city is one of them. Noir was born in the city, and the characters of noir have generally succumbed to the desires of the city. Mak-dong's fate too falls into this pattern. At the same time, *Green Fish* proceeds by naturally assembling the structure of male melodrama. Above all, the nostalgic character of Mak-dong is imbued from the start with an intrinsic purity and weakness. This stands in contrast to Yong-dae from *The Rules of the Game*. Mak-dong's innocence and weakness heighten the pathos that we feel while witnessing his loss, thus boosting the value of the film as a male melodrama.

Now, a flashback into the more distant past. Let's return to the 1960s and 1980s, and recall two films: Lee Man-hee's *Black Hair* (1964) and Lee Doo-yong's *The Last Witness* (1980). At the time of their release, they were not described as noir films, because the methodology for such a description did not yet exist in Korean cinema. In the mid-1990s, as research into Korean film history gathered pace and became more systematic, interest in director Lee Man-hee spread, and the critical standing of *Black Hair* improved. In the case of *The Last Witness*, heavy censorship at the time of its release meant that it was left as a scarred work, but the recent restoration of its print has led to a new appreciation of its achievement. And in the process, we have gained the opportunity to speak of these works as examples of noir.

More than anything, it is the existential motifs of Lee Man-hee's *Black Hair* that allow us to identify it as noir. Lee's film world is imbued with violence and darkness in many ways, and features lonely characters who experience alienation. Therefore the spaces in his films are often wet, and his characters

are empty to a pathological degree. This is true of *Black Hair* as well. Could there be any connection to the "wet emptiness" of the city described by Raymond Chandler in *The Big Sleep*? At any rate, the characters in *Black Hair* are constantly faced with existential decisions and hard choices. And it is these choices that ultimately push them towards a tragic fatalism. So it is at the moment of death for the gang boss played by Jang Dong-hwi in *Black Hair*. In the famously closed space and time of Lee's film, his characters spin the wheels of tragedy.

The Last Witness, released 16 years after *Black Hair*, is a different case. It's not even certain whether one should consider it a noir movie. Those who recognize the noir genre may choose to exclude it. However the psychological and historical state of the characters is noteworthy. With the help of the lawyer Kim Jung-yeop, private detective Oh (Hah Myung-joong) investigates the case of Yang Dal-soo, and the more he learns the more he falls into a huge and unknowable labyrinth. It is none other than a path to misfortune. He does his best to deal with major incidents and vague information, but he is inevitably nothing more than a defensive and passive investigator. As in all noir films, the course of events overwhelms the wisdom of the characters. The tragic events that took place during the Korean War are central to the *The Last Witness*. That history is plagued by a strong neurosis, and the story develops in precisely this atmosphere, shot through by conflicting ideologies and grim violence. And simultaneously, our protagonist suffers from a neurosis that springs from his crippling incapacity and powerlessness. Does *The Last Witness* have a narrative to solve? It is not so. The neurotic history goes on, and the helplessness of our hero also continues on. In this way, the film's final scene is exceedingly odd, and yet also sympathetic. Why does Detective Oh suddenly dash into the reeds and commit suicide by shooting himself in the throat? It's true that he had to go to prison, but was this the only way? Such questions, based on a common-sense reading of narrative, are not unreasonable. However it is clear that the protagonist's choice to destroy himself is his final response to the great neurosis given to him by history.

Now, let us jump over the 1990s and go on a bit further to the early and mid-2000s. This is an era in which massive change was taking place in the Korean film industry. It is also a time when active practitioners of genre began to gain ascendancy. As is well known, Park Chan-wook, Kim Jee-woon and Bong Joon-ho are the leading examples of this trend. Noir was no longer simply a term to be expressed. Noir films evolved in clear and diverse ways according to the will and desires of their creators. Although Park Chan-wook did not expressly tackle the noir genre, he showed a sustained affinity and interest in the hard-boiled film, which stands as one of noir's predecessors. And thus he made *Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance* (2002).

Bong Joon-ho has referred to *Memories of Murder* (2003) as a 'rural thriller'. But despite his use of the term thriller, the detective at the centre of the film, Park Doo-man (Song Kang-ho) seems to be cut from the same cloth as the countless ill-fated icons of noir. This noir tendency in Bong Joon-ho returns in an eerie way in *Mother* (2009). The key element hidden within *Mother's* narrative form is 'misrecognition'. Minefields of misrecognition have been planted throughout the film. The troubles of Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon* and Walter in *Double Indemnity* play out under a structure of misrecognition with

which their reasoning cannot cope. Of course, the one who lays out this structure of deception is a woman, who catches the detective or investigator in her web. But why shouldn't this dynamic be re-imagined as that between a mother and her son? The film *Mother* is structured as a detective drama in which a mother tries to save her son, but it lies atop a structure of misrecognition which is the relationship between son and mother. Like a detective who ventures forth to save the beautiful woman who he doesn't know is deceiving him, the mother sets off to save her son without knowing what lies inside of him. Someone once asked, "How can one who is not deceived make an error?" *Mother* shows us how the subject's trouble begins.

In this era, the director who set out consciously to engage most with noir was Kim Jee-woon, with *A Bittersweet Life* (2005). At the time this film was released in Korea, I was able to interview the director, and I asked him, "What for you is the meaning of noir?" I can summarize his answer as follows:

"I do not know much about Hollywood film noir of the 1930s and 1940s. The films that I thought of as noir include French noir films starring Alain Delon, or the revisionist noir of recent times such as *Reservoir Dogs*, *LA Confidential*, and *Collateral*. These are the films I watched and was influenced by. The theme that captivated me the most were those characters whose souls became wrapped in darkness. I found a certain innocence in these figures who accepted the fact that they will not succeed as the reality of their destiny. Suffering or defeated, they remain pure in form. I like those characters, and most of the characters who appear in my film can be described as such. I even think that the characters from my previous films are all noir figures."

His statement about "figures who accepted the fact that they will not succeed as the reality of their destiny" is notable. Meanwhile, he focused on the use of diverse visual motifs in *A Bittersweet Life*, which can be considered as a neo-noir.

Compared to Park Chan-wook, Bong Joon-ho and Kim Jee-woon, Oh Seung-uk and Yoo Ha achieved a low level of fame, but from the standpoint of their self-conscious approach to noir they were equals. In particular, Oh Seung-uk directed a unique noir film, *Kilimanjaro* (2000), early on in his career. The film tells the story of a corrupt former detective (Park Shin-yang) who goes to the village where his dead twin brother lived, and becomes caught up in various incidents. It presents a protagonist plagued by a destiny of suffering and distress, from the unique standpoint of his identity as a twin. It also expressed the apex of the 2000s-era male melodrama embodied by the fallen man. To this day *Kilimanjaro* has a cult following and it will be remembered as one of the most unique films of Korean noir. In contrast, Yoo Ha's *A Dirty Carnival* (2006) is somewhat loosely constructed, though there are elements that recall Lee Chang-dong's *Green Fish*. Both directors started their careers as socially conscious writers, Lee Chang-dong as a novelist and Yoo Ha as a poet. In particular, *A Dirty Carnival* captures the rivalry between organised gangs involved in Korea's development policies behind the scenes, coupled with the story of one man's corruption and subsequent fall.

In the following decade of the 2010s, it seems there have been few noir films worthy of mention. But among these, *New World* (2013) was a signal flare.

Having been followed by *Coin Locker Girl* (2015), *Asura: The City of Madness* (2016) and *The Merciless* (2017), there is now the sense of a revival in Korean noir. *New World* gives the impression of a commitment to continue the development of the Korean noir of the 1990s. The film's appropriation of Hong Kong noir (especially the *Infernal Affairs* series) is notable. At the time of its release, no one could have predicted the revival of noir leading up to the present day. Therefore at the time when I reviewed *New World*, I wrote the following: "The first Korean noir to appear in a very long time, the film aims for mainstream commercial success but does not attempt to hide its bold fascination for this specialty genre." I thought it would be only a passing case. But soon thereafter, *Coin Locker Girl* was released. This film displayed the conceptual flair to substitute the figure of a man caught up in violence and melodrama for a woman. Following this, director Oh Seung-uk made his long-awaited return with the melodrama *The Shameless*, which leans obliquely on the noir genre. Then director Kim Sung-soo, master of the 1990s action film, revealed *Asura: The City of Madness*, in which a group of guys race headlong into death's embrace. Next, *The Merciless* was released. It was the first movie in a long time to re-introduce the 'male two-player', which produced a large fandom. The male-centred social melodrama of the 1990s, when Korean noir was in its boom period, was remoulded in the 2010s into a tale of honour, goodness and betrayal. Watching *The Merciless*, I get the impression that it is a bit slick compared to the Korean noir films of the 1990s. This is likely because the Korean noir of the present is built not so much on the personal tastes of the director, but on a certain kind of strategic commercial planning. But the difficult-to-define qualities of noir are unlikely to die out easily – they will be replayed here and there, or revisited. Like a memory that sneaks up on you from the past.

Jung Han Sok
 Film Critic
 (Translated by Darcy Paquet)



BLACK HAIR 검은 머리

SUN 5 NOV 12:00
 REGENT STREET CINEMA

Introduction by Huh Moonyung

DIRECTOR: LEE MAN-HEE
 WRITER: LEE MAN-HEE, HAN WU-JEONG
 PRODUCER: AHN TAE-SHIK
 CAST: MOON JUNG-SUK, JANG DONG-HWI
 PRODUCTION COMPANY: HANGUK FILM
 RIGHTS ENQUIRY: KOREAN FILM ARCHIVE
 ACTION, CRIME / 1964 / 105 MIN / CERT. 18 / DCP / B&W

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
HOMEBOUND (1976)
HOLIDAY (1968)
THE MARINES WHO NEVER RETURNED (1963)

Yeon-shil is the loyal mistress of gang boss Dong-il. In trying to hide her shame – the fact that she had been raped by a violent drug addict – she only compounds her plight. One of Dong-il's men shows him a compromising photo of her being again attacked by the man who was blackmailing her. Her punishment is to have a broken bottle slashed across her face. Disfigured and abandoned, Yeon-shil lives with her assailant and sells herself on the streets. A swirl of black hair pulled across her once lovely face struggles to mask the emblem of a shame she never deserved.

A world where it is always night-time, grim men roam dark underpasses and tunnels with violence in mind, and a gang boss broods in a grimy basement storeroom; the Seoul of Lee Man-hee's noir masterpiece seems partly realistic yet, despite its melodramatic touches, a weirdly abstract subterranean nightmare. (MM)

* This work has been approved for use in accordance with Article 50 of the Korean Copyright Act (Court approval, 5 September 2017)



THE LAST WITNESS

최후의 증인

SAT 4 NOV 14:00
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Q&A with the Director Lee Doo-yong

TUE 14 NOV 17:30
SHOWROOM CINEMA, SHEFFIELD

Introduction by Dr. Kate E Taylor-Jones

DIRECTOR: LEE DOO-YONG
WRITER: YOON SAM-YOOK
PRODUCER: KIM HWA-SIK
CAST: HAH MYUNG-JOONG, JUNG YOON-HEE, CHOI BOOL-AM
PRODUCTION COMPANY: SEGYEONG FILM
RIGHTS ENQUIRY: KOREAN FILM ARCHIVE
CRIME, DRAMA / 1980 / 158 MIN / CERT. 18 / DCP / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
MULBERRY (1986)
THE HUT (1980)
RETURNED A SINGLE-LEGGED MAN (1974)

Detective Oh Byeong-ho goes searching for the murderer of Yang Dal-su. Someone has bludgeoned small-time brewer Yang to death by a quiet riverside: no witnesses, no apparent motive. As lone-wolf Oh wanders about the winter landscape of South Jeolla Province and Seoul, he finds himself caught in a story of treachery, rape and murder. It all goes back to Yang's role as leader of an anti-Communist militia that hunted down a desperate band of northern guerrillas in the final days of the Korean War.

Based on a crime novel by Kim Seong-jong, the film tries to pack nearly all of the book into its extended running time. Dramatic camera angles and off-kilter framing added to the rapid cutting style generate considerable energy. This style also creates a kind of perceptual anxiety which seems to reflect the growing emotional turmoil of our guide into the labyrinth, detective Oh. (MM)

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DEAD END

비명도시

SAT 28 OCT 18:00
BIRKBECK CINEMA

Masterclass with the Cinematographer
Kim Hyungkoo (see p.112 for more details)

DIRECTOR: KIM SUNG-SOO
WRITER: KIM SUNG-SOO
PRODUCER: YEO KYUN-DONG
CAST: KIM GI-HO, LEE DU-IL, AN EUN-MI
PRODUCTION COMPANY: SHINCINE COMMUNICATIONS
RIGHTS HOLDER: SANAI PICTURES
DRAMA / 1993 / 19 MIN / CERT. 18 / 35MM / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
ASURA: THE CITY OF MADNESS (2016)
MUSA (2001)
BEAT (1997)

This mostly dimly lit short captures Kim Sung-soo's masterful grasp of lighting that is predominantly set in a labyrinth of dark alleys. Do-cheol (Kim Gi-ho) who has been caring for his sick wife witnesses a murder in a neighbouring alley through a hospital window. He is seen by the killer and a chase ensues taking him through a maze of back streets, but the disorientating experience ultimately puts him back in the place where the first crime was committed, only this time he is no longer just a witness. With touches of wit and dark humour, one is never sure what lies around the corner. The film's brisk pace keeps the adrenaline pumping for the nineteen-minute duration sharing much in common with Park Hong-min's feature *Alone*, also set in Seoul's urban jungle. (JB)



THE RULES OF THE GAME

게임의 법칙

MON 30 OCT 19:00
KOREAN CULTURAL CENTRE UK

DIRECTOR: JANG HYUN-SOO
 WRITER: JANG HYUN-SOO, KANG JE-KYU
 PRODUCER: JO CHANG-HAK
 CAST: PARK JOONG-HOON, LEE GYOUNG-YOUNG,
 OH YEON-SOO
 PRODUCTION COMPANY: SEYANG FILM
 RIGHTS HOLDER: JANG HYUN-SOO
 ACTION, DRAMA / 1994 / 109 MIN / CERT. 18 / DVD / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
TWISTED DADDY (2013)
RAY-BAN (2000)
WALKING ALL THE WAY TO HEAVEN (1992)

From its big-synth opening chords you know you're in for a bit of an early 90s treat, whether it's the conman with a Filofax or sleazy shots of fishnet tights. In this world of boxy suits and hair scrunchies, a small-town thug travels to Seoul with the intention of joining the most violent and feared of the mobster gangs. As he struts the streets winding everyone up with absurd braggadocio, there is violence but it reads as stagey and camp, and indeed the main pleasure of this film is its absurdity and period charm – especially when you realise that the reference points are 1930s Hollywood meshed with 1980s TV. Lead actor Park Joong-hoon is something of a national treasure in South Korea and has been tipped for a starring role in the forthcoming season of local TV hit *Bad Guys*. (RC)



GREEN FISH

초록물고기

MON 6 NOV 21:10
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Introduction by Roger Clarke

DIRECTOR: LEE CHANG-DONG
 WRITER: LEE CHANG-DONG, OH SEUNG-UK
 PRODUCER: DONG BANG-WOO
 CAST: HAN SUK-KYU, SHIM HYE-JIN
 PRODUCTION COMPANY: EAST FILM
 INTERNATIONAL SALES: CJ E&M
 ACTION, DRAMA / 1997 / 114 MIN / CERT. 18 / 35MM / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
POETRY (2010)
SECRET SUNSHINE (2007)
OASIS (2002)

In 1997, Lee Chang-dong wrote and directed *Green Fish*. At the time, it was simply the debut film of an established novelist, but we now know that it also heralded the arrival of a very significant film-maker. Han Suk-kyu is 26 year-old Mak-dong, a young man discharged from the military, who, rootless and unsure, becomes involved in the grubby life of a Seoul gangster. The nearest thing the director ever did to a genre film, Lee's rare and sophisticated sensibility is already in evidence, as is his ability to find a striking image, deploy a fluid use of camera, and, most of all, get the best performances possible out of his actors. There are many who regard Lee as South Korea's greatest living director, and since this is a relatively rare screening in the UK, you should run, not walk, to see it. (RC)



NOWHERE TO HIDE

인정사정 볼 것 없다

SAT 4 NOV 20:30
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Introduction by Dr. Kate E Taylor-Jones

DIRECTOR: LEE MYUNG-SE
WRITER: LEE MYUNG-SE
PRODUCER: CHUNG TAE-WON
CAST: PARK JOONG-HOON, AHN SUNG-KI, JANG DONG-GUN
PRODUCTION COMPANY: TAEWON ENTERTAINMENT
RIGHTS HOLDER: TAEWON ENTERTAINMENT
ACTION, DRAMA / 1999 / 112 MIN / CERT. 12A / 35MM / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
M (2007)
MY LOVE, MY BRIDE (1990)
GAGMAN (1989)

A detective investigates the murder of a drug boss in this highly stylised violent actioner that saw director Lee Myung-Se, in America at least, marketed as Seoul's answer to Hong Kong's John Woo. It has been cited as an influence on *The Matrix*. This is the period in South Korean cinema where directors were gleefully using every trick in the technical playbook – and what the film lacks in narrative cohesion it more than makes up for in extravagant style. After this genre masterwork Lee spent four years in America unsuccessfully trying to put together an English-language debut. It never happened, and his career never quite recovered. Taking place over 72 days often in the pouring rain, this is a police procedural with an all-too familiar cop duo, taking a prime Western slab of noir and slathering it with gochujang. (RC)



KILIMANJARO

킬리만자로

SAT 4 NOV 17:30
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Q&A with the Director Oh Seung-uk

DIRECTOR: OH SEUNG-UK
WRITER: OH SEUNG-UK, BAE YEONG-HWAN, HUR JIN-HO
PRODUCER: TCHA SUNG-JAI
CAST: PARK SHIN-YANG, AHN SUNG-KI
PRODUCTION COMPANY: UNO FILM
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CJ E&M
CRIME, DRAMA / 2000 / 108 MIN / CERT. 18 / 35MM / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
THE SHAMELESS (2015)

Released in 2000 when many renowned Korean directors such as Park Chan-wook and Ryoo Seung-wan began to make their mark, Oh Seung-uk's *Kilimanjaro* remains a little-seen but highly accomplished feature debut, made fourteen years before his second and most recent film *The Shameless*. Set in the seaside town of Jumunjin on Korea's East coast, it stars Park Shin-yang both as the detective Hae-shik, and as his identical twin brother, the gangster Hae-chul. Suspended for not properly investigating the killing of Hae-chul's wife and child, Hae-shik returns to his hometown with the ashes of his brother. There, mistaken for the late Hae-chul, he is sought after by a local gang. Also starring veteran actor Ahn Sung-ki, Oh's noir feature is an engrossing tale about the perpetual nature of violence. (JB)



DIE BAD

죽거나 혹은 나쁘거나

FRI 3 NOV 20:50
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Introduction by Dr. Victor Fan

FRI 17 NOV 18:20
QUEEN'S FILM THEATRE, BELFAST

DIRECTOR: RYOO SEUNG-WAN
WRITER: RYOO SEUNG-WAN
PRODUCER: KIM SUN-GUK, SEUNG HEUNG-CHAN
CAST: RYOO SEUNG-WAN, PARK SUNG-BIN, RYOO SEUNG-BUM
PRODUCTION COMPANY: CNP ENTERTAINMENT
RIGHTS HOLDER: DREAMSTUDIO
ACTION, DRAMA / 2000 / 96 MIN / CERT. 18 / 35MM / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
THE BATTLESHIP ISLAND (2016)
VETERAN (2015)
THE BERLIN FILE (2012)

Action-maestro Ryoo Seung-wan launched onto the Korean cinema scene in 2000 with this sensational debut that was made on a budget of just 65 million won (£45,000) over a period of three years as four short films that were then woven together. In these four different parts, the film follows how the lives of two young men – Suk-whan (played by Ryoo) and Sung-bin (Park Sung-bin) - change when Sung-bin accidentally kills another student in a brawl in a billiard room. Sung-bin spends seven years in jail, and is then sucked into the criminal underworld, while Suk-whan becomes a cop. Bristling with energy and full of Ryoo's kinetic flare, *Die Bad* is a gritty but immensely gripping film about the challenges faced by youth and the deadly spiral many find themselves in. (JB)



A BITTERSWEET LIFE

달콤한 인생

TUE 31 OCT 19:00
KOREAN CULTURAL CENTRE UK

DIRECTOR: KIM JEE-WOON
WRITER: KIM JEE-WOON
PRODUCER: OH JUNG-WAN, LEE EUGENE
CAST: LEE BYUNG-HUN, KIM YOUNG-CHEOL, SHIN MIN-A
PRODUCTION COMPANY: BOM FILM PRODUCTIONS
INTERNATIONAL SALES: FINECUT
UK DISTRIBUTOR: PALISADES TARTAN
ACTION, DRAMA / 2005 / 120 MIN / CERT. 18 / BLU-RAY / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
THE AGE OF SHADOWS (2016)
THE LAST STAND (2013)
I SAW THE DEVIL (2010)

"You can do 100 things right, but one mistake can destroy everything."

These words of gangster kingpin Kang (Kim Young-cheol) to his obedient enforcer Kim Sun-woo (Lee Byung-hun) are imaginatively played out in Kim Jee-woon's follow-up to *A Tale of Two Sisters* (2003). Part aesthete, part thug, Sun-woo likes to drink bitter espresso, but sweetens it with a sugar cube. When he uncharacteristically falls in love with his boss' young girlfriend (Shin Min-a), his immaculately measured life comes apart at the seams, and a self emerges that is driven more by emotions. Ensuing scenes of messy rebirth and ultra-violent destruction serve to dramatise Sun-woo's inner conflict as much as internecine gangland struggles. This makes *A Bittersweet Life* a genre film that is as cerebral, psychological, even spiritual as it is viscerally thrilling, with untold depths reflected in the brilliant sheen of its surfaces. (AB)



A DIRTY CARNIVAL

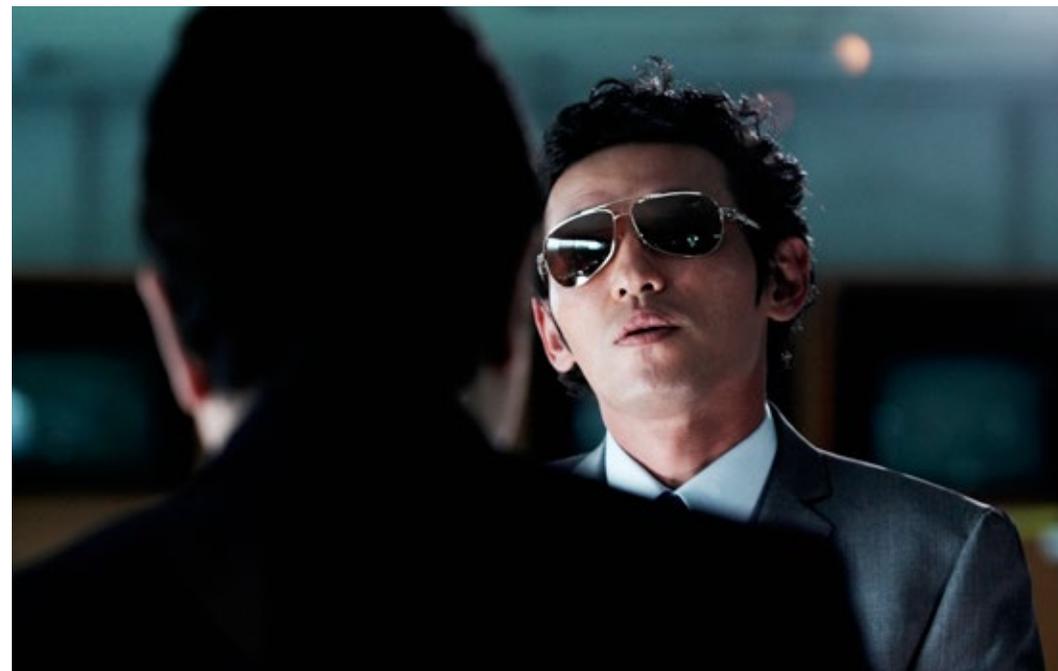
비열한 거리

TUE 7 NOV 18:30
REGENT STREET CINEMA

DIRECTOR: YOO HA
WRITER: YOO HA
PRODUCER: KIM JOO-SUNG
CAST: ZO IN-SUNG, LEE BO-YOUNG, NAM KOONG-MIN
PRODUCTION COMPANY: SIDUS FNH
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CJ E&M
ACTION, CRIME / 2006 / 141 MIN / CERT. 18 / 35MM / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
GANGNAM BLUES (2015)
ONCE UPON A TIME IN HIGH SCHOOL (2004)
MARRIAGE IS A CRAZY THING (2002)

A fictional South Korean filmmaker taps the illicit life of a childhood friend for a successful gangster movie, and faces the consequences. The story of a low-level debt-collector who, faced with lack of funds and a sick mother, opportunistically murders his way up the greasy pole, the lead is played by Zo In-sung, one of Korea's leading actors, who brings real conviction to the role. Both domestically fraught and epically blazing in equal measure, it covers ground from land-development corruption to the protagonist's fragile courtship of a girl who works in a bookshop and hates his gangster lifestyle. Running long at 141 minutes, this is ultimately the story of a desperate man trying and failing to understand himself. Like the karaoke that dots the narrative, he is always singing someone else's song. (RC)



NEW WORLD

신세계

SUN 29 OCT 20:45
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

MON 13 NOV 20:15
SHOWROOM CINEMA, SHEFFIELD

SAT 18 NOV 15:00
GLASGOW FILM THEATRE, GLASGOW

SAT 18 NOV 18:20
QUEEN'S FILM THEATRE, BELFAST

DIRECTOR: PARK HOON-JUNG
WRITER: PARK HOON-JUNG
PRODUCER: KIM WOO-TAEK
CAST: LEE JUNG-JAE, CHOI MIN-SIK, HWANG JUNG-MIN
PRODUCTION COMPANY: SANAI PICTURES
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CONTENTS PANDA
UK DISTRIBUTOR: EUREKA ENTERTAINMENT
CRIME, DRAMA / 2013 / 135 MIN / CERT. 18 / DCP / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
V.I.P. (2017)
THE TIGER: AN OLD HUNTER'S TALE (2015)
THE SHOWDOWN (2011)

The second directorial feature from Park Hoon-jung, the screenwriter behind *The Unjust* and *I Saw the Devil*, *New World* is a noirish gangster epic in which undercover cops and shady policemen plot from the shadows to gain control of Korea's biggest crime syndicate, Goldmoon, when its CEO is killed in a suspicious car accident. With a succession crisis mounting, police chief Kang (Choi Min-sik) launches "Operation New World" in which he hopes to manoeuvre his long-term undercover agent, Lee Ja-sung (Lee Jung-jae), into the top spot by taking out the two main factions led by flashy gangster Jung Chang (Hwang Jung-min) and the unscrupulous Lee Joong-gu (Park Sung-woong). In this world of habitual double crossing and confused identities, no one can be trusted and the only certainty is betrayal. (HS)



COIN LOCKER GIRL

차이나타운

SUN 5 NOV 15:00
PHOENIX CINEMA

SAT 11 NOV 18:00
HOME, MANCHESTER

FRI 17 NOV 18:00
GLASGOW FILM THEATRE, GLASGOW

DIRECTOR: HAN JUN-HEE
WRITER: HAN JUN-HEE
PRODUCER: SIMON LEE
CAST: KIM HYE-SOO, KIM KO-EUN
PRODUCTION COMPANY: POLLUX PICTURES
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CJ E&M
CRIME, DRAMA / 2015 / 110 MIN / CERT. 18 / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
UNDERSTANDING MOVIES (SHORT, 2013)
TO BITE A CIGARETTE (SHORT, 2005)

In this Incheon-based, supersaturated female crime melodrama from first time director Han Jun-Hee, veteran South Korean star Kim Hye-soo plays the psychotic crime-boss known as 'Mom' whose unsavoury trade includes organ-trafficking and loan-sharking. Former street kid Kim Ko-eun plays the tomboy protégée Il-young who suddenly turns soft and can't bring herself to kill a trainee chef as commanded – much to Mom's cold fury. With its violent and melancholic disposition, as well as the twists and turns of its themes of stolen childhood, traded bodies and soul-destroying vengeance *Coin Locker Girl* eschews Hollywood redemption themes for a determinedly unresolved conclusion. By the end we've been on quite the ride, which begins and more or less concludes in the station transit locker where Il-young was first found as an abandoned baby. (RC)



THE MERCILESS

불한당: 나쁜 놈들의 세상

FRI 3 NOV 18:30
REGENT STREET CINEMA

FRI 10 NOV 18:30
BROADWAY CINEMA, NOTTINGHAM

SUN 12 NOV 20:20
HOME, MANCHESTER

SUN 19 NOV 18:20
QUEEN'S FILM THEATRE, BELFAST

DIRECTOR: BYUN SUNG-HYUN
WRITER: BYUN SUNG-HYUN, KIM MIN-SOO
PRODUCER: MIKY LEE, JEONG TAE-SUNG
CAST: SUL KYUNG-GU, YIM SI-WAN
PRODUCTION COMPANY: CJ E&M, POLLUX BARUNSON
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CJ E&M
UK DISTRIBUTOR: STUDIOCANAL
ACTION, CRIME / 2017 / 120 MIN / CERT. 18 / DCP / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
MY PS PARTNER (2012)
THE BEAT GOES ON (2010)

Opening with a conversation about food followed by sudden, murderous violence, and fracturing its chronology into separate timelines, this latest feature from Byun Sung-hyun owes a certain debt to Quentin Tarantino, but is also a moody neo-noir, all existential musings, rain-swept treachery and savagery just out of shot.

Whether inside prison or out, ruthless gangster Jae-ho (Sul Kyung-gu) and his new young protégé Hyun-su (Yim Si-wan) struggle to trust each other in a world of endless double-dealing and betrayal. "The events that unfold in your life usually come from behind," Jae-ho tells Hyun-su, "never from the front." These words certainly capture something of this character's constant guardedness – but they also slyly help convey the homoerotic subtext of a film that ends up being as much tragic love story as twisty thriller. (AB)

FORUM

SUN 5 NOV 14:30
REGENT STREET CINEMA

PANEL ONE: TALKING NOIR

PRESENTERS:

Eddie Muller is Founder and President of The Film Noir Foundation whose work is dedicated to research, preserve and promote film noir. Muller's books include *Dark City: The Lost World of Film Noir* (1998), *Dark City Dames: The Wicked Women of Film Noir* (2001), and *The Art of Noir: Posters and Graphics from the Classic Film Noir Era* (2004).

Huh Moonyung, currently Programme Director of the Busan Cinema Center, has been a journalist for *Joong-ang Monthly* and journalist and the editor-in-chief (2002-2003) for one of the most important film magazines in Korea, *Cine 21* and programmer in Korean cinema for Busan International Film Festival. He has published two collections of essays and reviews, *Secular Film, Secular Criticism* (2010) and *Invisible Cinema* (2014).

MODERATOR:

Ehsan Khoshbakht is a curator, critic and filmmaker who has curated for various cinemathèques internationally and is a member of the programming committee for Il Cinema Ritrovato festival in Bologna. His books, published in Persian, include *Celluloid Architecture, The Art of Movie Posters* and *Westerns*.

The first panel brings together two exciting guests. We will begin with Eddie Muller, the 'Czar of Noir', who will first sketch out the history and key elements of film noir; Muller will also discuss the origin of noir-ish conventions in Hollywood films of the 1940s, and how they have subsequently appeared in films produced in different cultural settings around the world.

Next up, renowned film critic and programmer Huh Moonyung will present a number of key Korean films whose 'noirness' has generated critical debate; Huh will illustrate how he understands the term 'Korean noir' as a distinct type of film which pays homage to the canon of 'film noir' whilst at the same time remaining within the particular conventions of Korean cinema.

Following on from these introductions, curator, critic and filmmaker Ehsan Khoshbakht will moderate the discussion, interrogating the relationship between film noir and 'Korean noir'.

FORUM

SUN 5 NOV 16:00
REGENT STREET CINEMA

PANEL TWO: REPRESENTING KOREAN NOIR

PARTICIPANTS:

Lee Doo-yong's selected filmography
Arirang (2002)
Mulberry (1986)
Spinning the Tales of Cruelty Towards Women (1983)
The Hut (1980)
The Last Witness (1980)
Returned a Single-legged Man (1974)
Manchurian Tiger (1974)
The Lost Wedding Veil (1970)

Oh Seung-uk's selected filmography
The Shameless (2015)
My Love, Korean Cinema (2008)
Rikidozan: A Hero Extraordinary (screenplay, 2004)
H (screenplay, 2002)
Kilimanjaro (2000)
The Uprising (screenplay, 1999)
Christmas in August (screenplay, 1998)
Green Fish (screenplay, 1997)

MODERATOR

Huh Moonyung (see panel one for his biography)

In the second panel we will hear more from two Korean film directors whose work was included in the special noir programme this year: Lee Doo-yong and Oh Seung-uk. Since beginning his career in the early 1970s, Lee has directed over 60 films in a wide array of genres and was the subject of a special retrospective at last year's Busan International Film Festival. *The Last Witness* (1980), recently restored by the Korean Film Archive and showing in our programme this year is an acute work of social realism, and has also received critical acclaim for its masterful treatment of crime / noir genre conventions. Lee will talk us through his understanding of how Korea's complex history relates to Korean noir film-making.

Oh is a well-known scriptwriter, film critic, and director. The two films directed by Oh, *Kilimanjaro* (2000) and *The Shameless* (2015), as well as his screenplay *Green Fish* (1997), make use of familiar noir archetypes and find their protagonists lonely and vulnerable in the face of the harsh reality of Korean society. We look forward to deepening our knowledge of Korean noir through sharing a conversation with two directors who have lived through different eras of Korean cinema.

The discussion will be moderated by film critic Huh Moonyung.

CINEMA NOW

MATURING KOREAN FILM INDUSTRY SEDUCES GLOBAL MARKETS

Film lovers from around the world often look to Korea for the next new thing. But after two decades of tailoring genres to their unique specifications, Korean filmmakers have slowly begun to move away from outright experimentation as the industry settles into a new era marked by confidence and sophistication. With studios also looking to profit from beyond Korea's borders, more gambles have been taken on big-budget productions capable of competing on the world stage.

Beyond committed fans, global markets seem to be responding well, as Korean blockbusters have become an increasingly regular presence in the world's multiplexes, not to mention widely available online. Korea's rich arthouse scene also continues to excel on the festival circuit and through specialist distribution channels.

Most remarkable in recent memory was Yeon Sang-ho's zombie blockbuster *Train to Busan*, which blazed a circuit around the world after its Cannes Film Festival bow in May last year. This included over 11 million viewers at home, and broke several records across Asia, such as highest grossing Asian film of all time in Hong Kong. The UK also got in on the action, giving the film a robust £100,000 theatrical run.

A few other films found their way into UK theaters over the past year, including Park Chan-wook's *The Handmaiden*, Na Hong-jin's *The Wailing*, Kim Jee-woon's *The Age of Shadows* and Kim Seong-hun's *The Tunnel*. The first of these proved an enormous success, grossing in excess of £1 million.

Outside of theaters but no less visible was Bong Joon-ho, who debuted his sixth film *Okja* on Netflix. Few people were afforded a chance to see the big-budget global fantasy on the silver screen, but director Bong made sure that the UK, which notoriously missed out on his sci-fi opus *Snowpiercer* a few years ago, was one of only three markets to give the film a day-and-date theatrical release (the others were Korea and the United States). Speaking of Netflix, the online distributor also landed its first Netflix Originals from Korea last year, when it picked up both the nuclear disaster drama *Pandora* and the sci-fi thriller *Lucid Dream*.

Looking at the films themselves we see how Korean production companies are still experimenting with genres, but the tonal swings have become more subtle and the fragmentary plots have become seamlessly blended into popular narratives capable of wooing vast swaths of the viewing public.

A case in point is Cho Ui-seok's *Master*, the slick new financial action-thriller that dominated the end of year period as it put the brakes on the new *Star Wars* entry *Rogue One*. In it we find three of today's biggest stars (Lee Byung-hun,

Gang Dong-won and Kim Woo-bin) in a tale of high finance crime. Familiar elements of the heist, investigative and action thriller serve to elevate the tale above a cops-and-robbers story while colourful global locations enhance the film's visual sheen.

Meanwhile, the popular Joseon era drama was given a spring in its step with Chung Yoon-chul's *Warriors of the Dawn*. Filmed almost entirely in outdoor locations, this guerrilla skirmish road movie moved with purpose and solemnity as it followed the shifting dynamics of characters braving the elements, enemies and each other.

This summer, K-horror also came screaming back with *The Mimic*, from *Hide and Seek* director Huh Jung. Combining a slick and scary haunted house tale with a strong dramatic backbone and the unfathomable mystery of shamanism, the chills played on the familiar to unnerving effect.

One of the titles released during this year's Chuseok holiday, *The Outlaws* (aka *Crime City*) is a new Korean thriller exploring a section of Korean society that is often hidden from view – Chinese-Korean immigrants, namely within the Daerim neighbourhood of central Seoul. From debut director Kang Yun-sung, the film combines the grit of a low-rent nook of Korea's capital with the colourful decors of its denizens. Known as the Joseonjok, these immigrants may be half-Korean, but they are often held at arm's length from the country's mainstream and Kang's lens pores through this little seen facet of society in a violent yet at times comic tale of local detectives and foreign hoods.

On the indie end of the spectrum, we're also seeing a sophistication not just in the themes tackled by arthouse filmmakers but also the approach used to highlight what they see as the ills of society. For his drama *In Between Seasons*, one of the standouts from last year's Busan International Film Festival, director Lee Dong-eun provided a subtle take on the prejudices experienced by the queer community in modern Korean society, even allowing a note of hope to enter his realistic narrative. Veteran social realist Shin Dong-il returned with *Come, Together*, exploring Seoul's pressure cooker environment from three different perspectives.

UK viewers can look forward to more Korean films this year, including Jung Byung-gil's *The Villainess*, LKFF 2017's final teaser screening, which was given a glossy blu-ray treatment by Arrow Films. With several ambitious blockbusters on the way, each with their own impressive visual effects and streamlined genre elements, UK distributors may be spoilt for choice to thrill audiences in the future as Korea's film industry continues to mature.

Pierce Conran
Film Critic, Journalist and Producer



WARRIORS OF THE DAWN

대립군

FRI 27 OCT 18:30
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Introduction by Dr. Anton Bitel

DIRECTOR: CHUNG YOON-CHUL
WRITER: SHIN DOYEONG
PRODUCER: WON DONG-YEON, KIM HO-SUNG
CAST: LEE JUNG-JAE, YEO JIN-GU, KIM MU-YEOL
PRODUCTION COMPANY: REALIES PICTURES, 20TH CENTURY
FOX INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTIONS
INTERNATIONAL SALES: M-LINE DISTRIBUTION
DRAMA, HISTORICAL / 2017 / 130 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COL-
OUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
A MAN WHO WAS SUPERMAN (2008)
SHIM'S FAMILY (2007)
MARATHON (2005)

The Warriors of the Dawn are a band of mercenaries who assist the young Prince Gwanghae, who was forced to defend the Joseon Kingdom against Japanese invaders during the Imjin War in 1592, when his father, the king, fled north to save his own skin. An uneasy relationship between Lee Jung-jae's gruff mercenary leader and Yeo Jin-gu's prince builds into one of mutual respect as they fight side by side on the battlefield.

Taking place during the same era as *Roaring Currents*, *Warriors of the Dawn* switches out the court politics and costume drama stuffiness of other recent period titles in favour of action filmed on location in the fields, forests, hills and rivers of Korea. From *Marathon* director Chung Yoon-chul, the film is the latest Korean production by 20th Century Fox International Productions, who were also responsible for last year's hit *The Wailing*. (PC)



THE OUTLAWS (AKA CRIME CITY) 범죄도시

FRI 27 OCT 21:30
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Q&A with the Director Kang Yun-sung

DIRECTOR: KANG YUN-SUNG
WRITER: KANG YUN-SUNG
PRODUCER: KIM HONG-BAEK, BILLY ACUMEN
CAST: DON LEE, YOON KYE-SANG, CHO CHA-YUN
PRODUCTION COMPANY: HONG FILM, BA ENTERTAINMENT
INTERNATIONAL SALES: M-LINE DISTRIBUTION
ACTION / 2017 / 121 MIN / CERT. 18 / DCP / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
LAST CONCERT (2007)

Based on the 2004 Chinese-Korean gangster mop-up operation in Seoul's Garibong neighbourhood during which 32 gang members were arrested, Kang Yun-sung's work of fiction sees Don Lee using his fists like he did in the gargantuan box office hit *Train to Busan*. This time, the star is not up against zombies but ruthless Chinese-Korean gangsters when new thug on the block Jang Chen (Yoon Kye-sang) wants to seize control of the local area with the help of his two sadistic sidekicks. Don Lee plays a hard-boiled cop called Ma Suk-do who is determined, together with his team, to bring peace to the area, which means hunting down Jang and his gang. Full of humour, this crime action-thriller is certainly violent but it never takes itself too seriously, with Ma providing much of the film's entertaining spectacle. (JB)



COME, TOGETHER 컴, 투게더

SAT 28 OCT 20:45
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

DIRECTOR: SHIN DONG-IL
WRITER: HAN JI-SU, SHIN DONG-IL
PRODUCER: SHIN DONG-IL
CAST: IM HYEONG-GOOK, LEE HEE-EUN, CHAE BIN
PRODUCTION COMPANY: BIASHIN PICTURES
INTERNATIONAL SALES: FINESTORY
DRAMA / 2017 / 122 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
BANDHOBI (2009)
MY FRIEND & HIS WIFE (2008)
HOST & GUEST (2005)

Korea's highly competitive nature goes under the microscope in Shin Dong-il's heated new drama about a harried family of three. Following 18 years of loyalty, the patriarch of the family is suddenly fired from his desk job, while his credit card saleswoman wife winds up in hot water when she cuts corners to entice customers. Both parents are desperate for their daughter to get into Korea University, but when she ends up on the waiting list, pressure mounts as the deadline looms.

As the family's status rank threatens to collapse, each character reacts in explosive ways, unsure how to navigate a path that veers away from the status quo. Continuing his exploration of characters struggling to toe the line of Korean society, Shin crafts another tense microcosm of modern Seoul with realistic and well-cast characters in *Come, Together*, which debuted at the Busan International Film Festival last year. (PC)



IN BETWEEN SEASONS

환절기

TUE 31 OCT 18:00
INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

Introduction by Tony Rayns

SAT 11 NOV 18:30
BROADWAY CINEMA, NOTTINGHAM

DIRECTOR: LEE DONG-EUN
 WRITER: LEE DONG-EUN
 PRODUCER: KIM JIYOUNG
 CAST: BAE JONG-OK, LEE WON-GUN, JI YUN-HO
 PRODUCTION COMPANY: MYUNG FILMS LAB
 INTERNATIONAL SALES: FINECUT
 DRAMA / 2016 / 115 MIN / CERT. 12A / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
MOTHERS (2017)

Lee Dong-eun's exceptionally moving debut was developed and produced in the Myung Films Lab, an industry initiative to support new directors. Lee (an economics major) wrote it as a graphic novel before turning it into a film. A woman separated from her husband is bringing up her high-school-pupil son Soo-hyun alone. She thinks she knows and understands him, but she's wrong: Soo-hyun is gay, and it's only when he's seriously injured in a car accident that she finds out who he really is. She takes out her confusion and anger on Soo-hyun's close friend Yong-joon (Lee Won-gun, seen in Kim Ki-duk's *The Net*), but the young man deals with the situation more calmly and with greater wisdom than she does. Brought to vivid emotional life by an excellent cast, the film confronts Korean homophobia and depicts a mother-son relationship with searing clarity. (TR)



MASTER

마스터

MON 6 NOV 18:30
REGENT STREET CINEMA

DIRECTOR: CHO UI-SEOK
 WRITER: CHO UI-SEOK, KIM HYEONDEOK
 PRODUCER: LEE EUGENE
 CAST: LEE BYUNG-HUN, GANG DONG-WON, KIM WOO-BIN
 PRODUCTION COMPANY: ZIP CINEMA
 INTERNATIONAL SALES: CJ E&M
 ACTION, CRIME / 2016 / 143 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
COLD EYES (2013)
THE WORLD OF SILENCE (2006)
MAKE IT BIG (2002)

Lee Byung-hun plays the charismatic orchestrator of an elaborate ponzi scheme whose livelihood is threatened when Gang Dong-won's ambitious investigator goes after him. The financial crimes unit attempts to turn the conman's right hand man (Kim Woo-bin) in the organisation but as they close in, cronyism and evasive manoeuvres keep him out of handcuffs. Just as capture seems imminent, the conman scampers away with his loot to the Philippines. An explosive chase ensues far outside the investigator's jurisdiction where a crook's political connections and the investigator's rulebook must be traded in for good old guns, brawn and street smarts.

Cold Eyes director Cho Ui-seok explores financial anxieties and political corruption in the first half of this taut, star-studded thriller before switching to vibrant action when the production moves to the colourful, sun-drenched slums of Manila for its back half. (PC)



THE MIMIC

장산범

TUE 7 NOV 21:10
REGENT STREET CINEMA

WED 15 NOV 20:30
SHOWROOM CINEMA, SHEFFIELD

DIRECTOR: HUH JUNG
WRITER: HUH JUNG
PRODUCER: KIM MI-HEE
CAST: YUM JUNG-AH, PARK HYUK-KWON
PRODUCTION COMPANY: STUDIO DREAM CAPTURE
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CONTENTS PANDA
UK DISTRIBUTOR: ARROW FILMS
MYSTERY, THRILLER / 2017 / 100 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
HIDE AND SEEK (2013)

After opening 2013's London Korean Film Festival with his feature debut *Hide and Seek*, writer/director Huh Jung is back with K-horror *The Mimic*. Hee-yeon (Yum Jung-ah) moves to the foot of Mount Jang, Busan with her husband, daughter and dementia suffering mother-in-law, but is still haunted by the disappearance of her son five years earlier. When a mysterious girl appears, Hee-yeon is drawn to a local legend of a monstrous tiger (the film's Korean title, *Jangsanbeom*, means 'the tiger of Mt. Jang') that lures people into its cave by imitating the voices of their loved ones. Taking his cues equally from the popular Korean folktale 'The Sun and the Moon', and Hideo Nakata's J-horror *Dark Water* (2002), Huh's chiller is a melancholic study of maternity and loss, while using echoes, mirrors and recurring scenes to reveal cinema itself as the medium of mimicry. (AB)



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It's All About
K-CINEMA!

INDIE FIREPOWER

PROGRAMMER'S NOTES

It's going to be such a pleasure to welcome Jung Yoon-suk to London for the first time. Please forgive me a moment of personal reminiscence: I first came across a couple of Jung's film-school shorts (I think it was in 2007) while I was slogging through a massive pile of screeners to make selections for a Korean indie event in Tokyo, and my dull, dispiriting day was suddenly transformed. Until you've spent hours on end watching average or sub-average student work, you won't know what a thrill it is to stumble upon a real filmmaker. Jung's films were funny, different in form and tone from everything else in the pile and full of energising film-language experiments, and I absolutely loved them. A few years later his sardonic collage of modern Korean history *The Home of Stars* was another delight, and his subsequent features *Non Fiction Diary* and *Bamseom Pirates – Seoul Inferno* have kicked new life into Korea's indie scene.

Some directors make indie films because they want to use them as 'calling cards' for work in the commercial film industry, while others work independently because their films won't fit any mainstream frame: if their films weren't indie productions, they wouldn't exist at all. Jung is, of course, a committed independent. His exceptional films won't be screened in Korea's multiplexes any time soon. If you haven't yet discovered him for yourself, this is the moment!

Don't think that we're against proto-mainstream features, though. Lim Dae-hyung's *Merry Christmas Mr. Mo*, which premiered in the Busan film festival's New Current section last year, is accomplished in a much more conventional way. It's an unusual tragic-comedy, shot in steely monochrome, centred on the relationship between an ageing father and his semi-estranged son, and it gives the role of a lifetime to veteran character actor Gi Ju-bong. Park Jeong-hoon's *A Confession Expecting a Rejection*, on the other hand, comes to us out of the blue: it was the best of the titles submitted for LKFF when I looked through another pile of indie features at KOFIC in the summer. This is also a committedly indie film, but much less assertively so than Jung Yoon-suk's work. Both daring and witty, it presents itself as one single protracted take, and uses dialogues between on-screen and off-screen characters to consider a range of issues, from failed relationships to dodgy film courses.

Tony Rayns
Chief Festival Advisor

AN INTERVIEW WITH JUNG YOON-SUK



You couldn't call Jung Yoon-suk a 'new' star of the Korean independent filmmaking scene, but there's no doubt that the success of *Bamseom Pirates Seoul Inferno* has given his profile a big boost. We thought we'd anticipate his first visit to London by giving him a little space to introduce himself. His answers to our questions:

TONY RAYNS Your films explore the interface between pop culture and political/social history. What was your route into this area?

JUNG YOON-SUK I stumbled into it! A lot of people said things like that after *Bamseom Pirates Seoul Inferno*. It made me look back over the films I've made so far and come to the conclusion: "Yes, that's the kind of film I make."

TR You've made both gallery installations and essay documentaries. Are there continuities across your work or do you always want to do something different?

IY Well, since my university major was Contemporary Art and I've worked as an artist since graduating, I'm always working on pieces for galleries and museums. The theme of the work generally dictates what medium I choose, which may well explain my inconsistencies! I never set out to innovate, but I'm always interested in exploring areas that I don't yet know. When I made *Non Fiction Diary*, I was wondering what would happen if someone who can't understand murder made a film about murderers. And when I made *Bamseom Pirates Seoul Inferno*, I wanted to do a cool music movie which relied more on noise than lyrics. Every time I start a movie, I need to acknowledge my own limitations and work to overcome them. It's a process I enjoy. My taste is somewhat perverse.

TR You went to a film school, but your approach to film language is markedly different from most school-trained filmmakers. Can you sketch the influences which shaped your approach?

IY Well, I guess I just try to somehow make the movie make sense. The truth seems to be that I don't really know what the movie is while I'm making it. Whenever anyone asks about the structure of my film, I use a pearl necklace analogy. A narrative movie is strung together like a pearl necklace. In modern art, it often seems that you're dropping pearls on the floor and enjoying the random patterns they make. My movies feel to me like they're somewhere between those two extremes.

What my two features have in common is a desire to represent the system that prevails in the country, but from the point of view of an individual. I've been worrying about the idea for my next movie, and I've come to realise that what interests me is the way people define themselves in relation to ideology. So it all comes down to how I define myself. I was a kind of 'archivist' when I made *Non Fiction Diary*, and a kind of 'translator' when I made *Bamseom Pirates Seoul Inferno*. It seems that my role as a director depends on the shape and structure of the film as a whole, and that I need to have that clear before I can start production.

The distinction between 'fiction' and 'non fiction' isn't important to me, but it so happens that I've been preoccupied with factual subjects in the last decade. Calling my films 'documentary' or 'essay' or 'art' seems meaningless to me. I think that what I do is related to conceptual art, playing around with widely observed conventions. I understand when my films irritate or anger people who can't define them, but I don't know why they get upset. Resisting definitions is what makes the film attractive!

*The director's responses above were translated by Bricent.



Bamseom Pirates Seoul Inferno



NON FICTION DIARY

논픽션 다이어리

SAT 4 NOV 19:30
CLOSE-UP FILM CENTRE

Q&A with the Director Jung Yoon-suk

DIRECTOR: JUNG YOON-SUK
PRODUCER: JUNG YOON-SUK
CAST: KO BYUNG-CHUN, O HU-GEUN, JUNG HYUNG-BOK
PRODUCTION COMPANY: 1+1=FILM
INTERNATIONAL SALES: M-LINE DISTRIBUTION
ESSAY DOCUMENTARY / 2013 / 93 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR, B&W

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
DUSTS (SHORT, 2011)
BURNING MIRAGE (SHORT, 2009)
VIDEO KILLED THE RADIO STAR (SHORT, 2006)

Rather like Bong Joon-ho's *Memories of Murder*, Jung Yoon-suk's brilliant essay-doc uses real-life crimes from the not-so-distant past as the touchstone for a broader interrogation of the Korean body politic. The so-called Jijon Gang were young men in Yeonggwang, a rural backwater with Confucian roots, who killed five people in 1994 – just after Korea's transition from military to civilian government. They claimed to hate the new consumerism and the rich, but none of their victims were in fact affluent. The case was complicated and contradictory. Exploring the gang's nihilism and misogyny, Jung re-examines other disasters of the period – the collapse of the Seongsu Bridge over the Han River and the collapse of the Sampoong Department Store, both claiming many lives – to ask provocative questions about negligence and culpability, 'freedom' and social control, murder and the death penalty. Jung's editing and film language are thrillingly dynamic. (TR)



THE WHITE HOUSE IN MY COUNTRY

우리나라에도 백악관

DIRECTOR: JUNG YOON-SUK
WRITER: JUNG YOON-SUK
PRODUCER: JUNG YOON-SUK
DOCUMENTARY / 2006 / 20 MIN / CERT. 15 / DIGI BETA / COLOUR

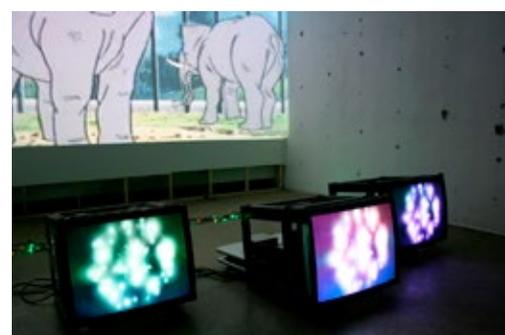
The American presence in South Korea dates from the Korean War, but why do so many businesses – especially bars and nightclubs – still have names like 'White House' and 'Washington'? Studying at the Korea National University of Arts, Jung took his camera out onto the streets to find out. (TR)



HOCHIMINH 호치민

DIRECTOR: JUNG YOON-SUK
WRITER: JUNG YOON-SUK
PRODUCER: JUNG YOON-SUK
ANIMATION / 2007 / 5 MIN / CERT. 15 / DV / COLOUR

Once again made at Korea National University of Arts, *Hochiminh* is less a celebration of Vietnam's revolutionary leader than a tribute to the gravel-voiced veteran rocker Han Daeu. Some of the dynamic visual strategies here look forward to ideas that Jung would take further in *Bamseom Pirates Seoul Inferno*. Eat your heart out, MTV! (TR)



THE HOME OF STARS 별들의 고향

DIRECTOR: JUNG YOON-SUK
WRITER: JUNG YOON-SUK
PRODUCER: JUNG YOON-SUK
COLLAGE / 2010 / 13 MIN / CERT. 15 / HD CAM / COLOUR

Jung created this knockout collage as an installation in the former Kimusa (Korean CIA) building in Seoul, and this is the film version. It explores the modern history of Korea, from politics to pop culture, from war to uneasy peace, with such intensity and wit that it'll leave you gasping. (TR)



BAMSEOM PIRATES SEOUL INFERNO

밤섬해적단 서울불바다

SUN 5 NOV 19:30
CLOSE-UP FILM CENTRE

Q&A with the Director Jung Yoon-suk

DIRECTOR: JUNG YOON-SUK
PRODUCER: JO SONA
CAST: KWON YONG-MAN, JANG SUNG-GUN, PARK JUNG-GEUN
PRODUCTION COMPANY: OPOT PICTURES
INTERNATIONAL SALES: M-LINE DISTRIBUTION
ESSAY DOCUMENTARY / 2017 / 120 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
DUSTS (SHORT, 2011)
BURNING MIRAGE (SHORT, 2009)
VIDEO KILLED THE RADIO STAR (SHORT, 2006)

The Bamseom Pirates (named after an island in the Han River) were a post-punk bass and drums duo active for a while in the early 2010s. Most of their performances, some involving non-musical instruments, were at student demos and benefits, and *Seoul Inferno* was their only album, still available as a free download. Jung's essay-doc starts out as a very funny chronicle of what they got up to and the noises they made, but then turns its attention to the attempted prosecution of the band's 'manager' Park Jung-geun under the National Security Law: he was accused, absurdly, of 'promoting' North Korea. Anyone looking for a sardonic portrait of Korean politics under two recent right-wing presidents need look no further than this. Likewise anyone interested in the student movement's evolution from Marxist militancy to anarchic humour. Voted a top favourite in Rotterdam Film Festival's audience poll this year! (TR)



MERRY CHRISTMAS MR. MO

메리 크리스마스 미스터 모

SAT 28 OCT 18:30
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Introduction by Tony Rayns

DIRECTOR: LIM DAE-HYUNG
WRITER: LIM DAE-HYUNG
PRODUCER: PARK DOO-HEE
CAST: GI JU-BONG, OH JUNG-HWAN, GO WON-HEE
PRODUCTION COMPANY: FILM RUN
INTERNATIONAL SALES: INDIESTORY
DRAMA / 2016 / 101 MIN / CERT. 12A / DCP / B&W

FILMOGRAPHY
THE WORLD OF IF (SHORT, 2014)
LEMON TREE (SHORT, 2012)

Lim Dae-hyung's tragi-comic debut feature stars veteran character actor Gi Ju-bong (lately seen in Hong Sangsoo's *Right Now Wrong Then*) as a taciturn, lonely widower with a secret or two. Mo Geum-san's provincial life seems orderly and governed by routine: undemanding days in his small barber-shop, daily visits to the local swimming pool for his fitness, a drink and a snack on the way home and nights spent wrestling with a pillow that's too lumpy. Mr. Mo's first secret is that he's semi-estranged from his son, a student in Seoul; some bad news from a doctor however makes him want to reconnect. His second secret is that beneath his placid and slightly dour exterior, a Chaplin-esque slapstick comedian is struggling to get out. Lim tells Mr. Mo's story across five chapters, using images which seem classically restrained but at the same time startlingly precise. (TR)



A CONFESSION EXPECTING A REJECTION

거절을 기대하는 고백

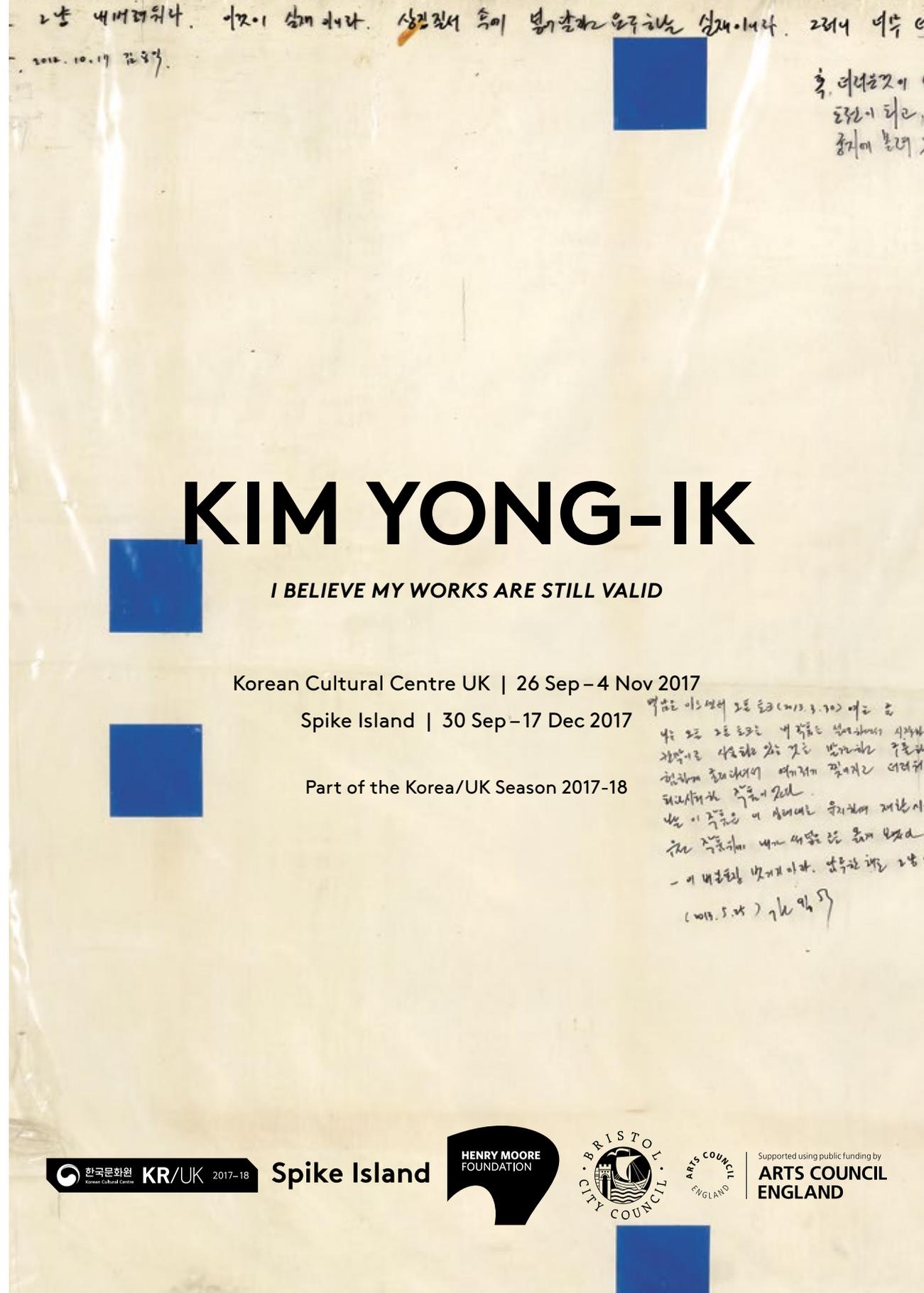
SUN 29 OCT 18:30
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Introduction by Tony Rayns

DIRECTOR: PARK JEONG-HOON
WRITER: PARK JEONG-HOON
PRODUCER: PARK JEONG-HOON
CAST: KIM DONG-WON, KIM HYUN-JIN, KIM PAN-KYUM
RIGHTS HOLDER: PARK JEONG-HOON
DRAMA / 2017 / 112 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
DECEMBER (2012)

The title tips you off that this isn't a film for everyone, but we should nevertheless start by stressing that Park Jeong-hoon's film (his second feature, after 2012's *December*) presents itself as one single, uninterrupted take. The camera is set up in a small, plain studio. Young men and women enter, sit, respond to off-screen questions from the crew, and leave. Or rather, that's what's supposed to happen. But it turns out that one female subject has a prior, broken relationship with a member of the crew – which brings submerged tensions to the surface. So what we have here is an emotional drama in inverted commas, spiked with some satirical thoughts about representing 'reality' on a screen, filmed by a director who might have seen too many Andy Warhol films. It's a genuinely engrossing experience for any viewer with a taste for committed minimalism. (TR)



KIM YONG-IK

I BELIEVE MY WORKS ARE STILL VALID

Korean Cultural Centre UK | 26 Sep - 4 Nov 2017

Spike Island | 30 Sep - 17 Dec 2017

Part of the Korea/UK Season 2017-18



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WOMEN'S VOICES

PROGRAMMER'S NOTES

Korean cinema in 2017 is not very different from the trends of recent years. This is especially true from a gender perspective. Based on movies released in theatres in Korea, male directors still dominate, while female directors remain in the 4-5 percentage range. Most of the films on the screen are called 'bromance' noir movies, in which the main character roles are filled by men.

It may sound strange then, but as a programmer at the Seoul International Women's Film Festival (SIWFF), I do not see the future of Korean movies as gloomy for women. The recent wave of feminism among young women in Korea meant that criticism of gender discrimination has become more present both on and off the screen.

Young women have begun to counter the mainstream film industry's apparent indifference and have used Twitter to respond through actions such as voluntarily planning a movie showing by hiring a movie theatre to support women's films, independently publishing feminist film magazines through crowdfunding like 'Second Film Magazine', 'Movie, Feminism', and forming or joining groups like 'Shooting Femi' to build a network of feminist creativity. This has all happened over the course of a year or two.

The impact of the new wave of feminist ideology is evident in the work in this programme. Let's look at three short pieces first. *Mild Fever*, which won the Best Short Film Award at the International Women's Film Festival in Seoul, completely overturns the existing paradigms of sexual violence which

many Korean commercial films have been instrumentalising. *Mild Fever* also provides insight into the life of women as survivors, which causes ripples within society. *My Turn* exposes the terrible working conditions of nurses, the majority of whom are women. The ultra-intense work environment even controls women's bodies to the degree where nurses' pregnancies are regulated, and forces them into an oppressive cycle of struggle. Finally, the film *Night Working* is a lonely and heart-warming tale which sincerely portrays young women living as immigrants in the global economy and naturally highlights the dream of Asian women's solidarity.

The documentary *Candle Wave Feminists* records the dynamism of the youth feminist movement mentioned above. *Jamsil* is a feature film that depicts the intimate relationship between two young women, and the meeting of their past and present. The film asks 'What is maturity from a woman's perspective, and how can it be achieved?'

This programme is the first collaboration between the Seoul International Women's Film Festival and the London Korean Film Festival. Through these films, I hope audiences will enjoy the diversity of Korean films and the dynamism of young women filmmakers.

Cho Hye-young
Programmer of Seoul International
Women's Film Festival
(Translated by Britcent)

FEMINISM IS EVERYWHERE!

Outside the Sinchon Megabox, banners flutter: for *Spoor*, the Seoul International Women's Film Festival 2017 opener, by Polish director Agnieszka Holland; for Andrea Arnold's road trip *American Honey*; for Sally Potter's British political satire *The Party*. Under the banners there's a different – and complementary – story. Feminism is everywhere, but it's also right here, right now: the festival agora outside the Megabox is filled with busy stalls offering information about feminist groups. Feminist slogans and celebrations fill the space, not just on the tables, but on the walls, where festival audiences have put up Post-its calling for a revolution.

It's rare to experience an international film festival so in sync with its moment, and with the city around it. As with an event called Occupy the Agora inviting women to tell their stories in the plaza, the feminist energy spilled out into the streets – because it put that energy, which had driven the Candlelight Revolution, onscreen. Just months after the resignation of Park Geun-hye, the verdict on the huge popular protests that led to her removal was already on offer in Kangyu Garam's illuminating documentary *Candle Wave Feminists*, a look behind the activist scenes at the new wave of 'young-young-feminists' – who also made their presence felt as filmmakers, and as avid audience members for international classics such as Lizzie Borden's 1983 revolutionary science fiction *Born in Flames*.

That Borden faced questions about how to organise for self-defence, like the Women's Liberation Army in her film, is doubly telling: of a heightened sense of gendered violence in public spaces; and of the search for cinematic stories that link contemporary experiences to feminist history. Transgenerational, as well as transnational, conversations were a highlight of films such as Network of Asian Women's Film Festivals award winner *Small Talk*, made by Taiwanese filmmaker Huang Hui-chen with her mother and daughter.

And it's that sense of close ties being at the root of feminist politics that binds together the shorts programme from this year's SIWFF, and likewise underlies the strange, magical feature *Jamsil* (Lee Wanmin), which moves from past to present as two women's lives collide, bringing up adolescent memories. Inviting this collection of films, the London Korean Film Festival brings not just the best of SIWFF's terrific programming, but also the fissile, fertile atmosphere of that agora, the public space created by a festival at the political and cultural cutting edge.

Dr. Sophie Mayer
Festival Advisor



CANDLE WAVE FEMINISTS 시국페미

MON 30 OCT 14:00
BRITISH MUSEUM

Q&A with the Director Kangyu Garam
(see p.70 for more details)

DIRECTOR: KANGYU GARAM
PRODUCER: KIM IL-RHAN
CAST: SHIN HWAYONG, SIM MISEUP, WOO JIANN
PRODUCTION COMPANY: THE OMNIBUS DOCUMENTARY
PROJECT TEAM BY THE PEOPLES ACTION FOR IMMEDIATE
RESIGNATION OF PRESIDENT PARK GEUN-HYE
INTERNATIONAL SALES: KANGYU GARAM
DOCUMENTARY / 2017 / 40 MIN / CERT. U / DCP / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
ITAEWON (2016)
MY FATHER'S HOUSE (2011)

This is one of the short films made as a part of an omnibus activist project called 'Square' that called for the resignation of President Park Geun-hye. A number of feminist organizations actively participated in the candlelight protests in Gwanghwamun Square. This film focuses on interviews to articulate how feminists have experienced and understood a series of incidents including the Sewol Ferry Disaster and the Gangnam Murder Case under Park's administration. It reflects women's history written from a feminist perspective that does not forget to include the feminists during the rallies as "citizens" who dared to subvert society and history. (SIWFF)

MON 30 OCT 18:30
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL



MY TURN 내 차례

DIRECTOR: KIM NA-KYUNG
CAST: JOO GA-YOUNG, KIM HANNAH, JEONG HEE-JEONG
DRAMA / 2017 / 15 MIN / CERT. 12A / DCP / COLOUR

The film's SIWFF Audience Award rewarded its smart dramatic approach to hot topics in the Korean media such as the 'pregnancy order system', and abortion access. When Hyun-jung gets pregnant out of turn, tensions at her workplace flare. Focusing on Hyun-jung's difficult decision, director Kim Na-kyung shows neither heroes nor villains, but women working things out together. (SM)



MILD FEVER 미열

DIRECTOR: PARK SUN-JOO
CAST: JEON SEOK-HO, HAN WOO-YEON
DRAMA / 2017 / 36 MIN / CERT. 12A / DCP / COLOUR

The winner of the Asian Short Film and Video Competition Grand Prize at SIWFF. Eun-ju, a writer with a young child, finds her day-to-day life and relationships overshadowed by the return of a violent incident from her past. The film offers an everyday grace set against a tone of unease, as Eun-ju and her family respond unpredictably to the shattering news. (SM)



NIGHT WORKING 야간근무

DIRECTOR: KIM JUNGEUN
CAST: SRENG VUCHNY, KIM YAE-EUN, GIL HAEYEON
DRAMA / 2017 / 28 MIN / CERT. 12A / DCP / COLOUR

A dreamy study of Lyn, a young Cambodian worker in Korea and her friendship with Yeonhee, her co-worker at a small factory as they navigate their boss' insidious harassment and face Yeonhee's decision to move to Australia. Framed by Lyn's letters to her mother, the film offers an intimate depiction of female-female relationships and of immigrant and working-class Korea. (SM)



JAMSIL 누에치던 방

THU 2 NOV 18:30
REGENT STREET CINEMA

Q&A with the Director Lee Wanmin
and the Actress Kim Saebyuk

DIRECTOR: LEE WANMIN
WRITER: LEE WANMIN
PRODUCER: YOON NAKYONG
CAST: LEE SANGHEE, HONG SEUNGYI, KIM SAEBYUK
PRODUCTION COMPANY: WINDWELLERS FILMS, ZZAMM FILMS
INTERNATIONAL SALES: WINDWELLERS FILMS
DRAMA / 2016 / 130 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
MOCK OR DIE (SHORT, 2010)
SANG (SHORT, 2009)
MENSREA (SHORT, 2008)

Thirty-something Mihee (Lee Sanghee) repeatedly fails the bar exam, is dumped by her long-term boyfriend, and moves into a tiny, rundown flat which only adds to her feelings of loneliness and failure. One day she arrives at the house of forty-something Sungsook (Hong Seungyi) and claims that the two were once best friends in high school in spite of the obvious ten-year age gap between them. Having never set eyes on Mihee before, Sungsook invites her into the home she shares with live-in boyfriend and teenage sweetheart Ikju (Im Hyeong-gook) and behaves as if she and Mihee really were long lost friends. Elliptical and defying explanation, Lee Wanmin's debut is a dreamlike tribute to the depth and immediacy of female friendship both past and present. (HS)

EVENT: FILMING FEMINISM IN ACTION

MON 30 OCT 14:00
BRITISH MUSEUM

PART 1

CANDLE WAVE FEMINISTS
(KANGYU GARAM, 2017)
+ DIRECTOR Q&A CHAIRED BY
DR. SOPHIE MAYER

“Proud feminists save the nation!” That’s the claim that closes Kangyu Garam’s *Candle Wave Feminists*, part of an omnibus film project titled ‘Square’, which called for the resignation of President Park Geun-hye. The film’s closing image shows the huge crowds taking part in the protests in Gwanghamun Square – having introduced us to the many feminist activists among them. From the Ewha Womans University students who kickstarted the protests by revealing Choi Soon-Sil’s influence, to the coalition of activist groups that challenged the male-dominated left that took over, *Candle Wave Feminists* is an inspiring document from an accomplished filmmaker, showing that the feminist activism at the centre of the new politics goes beyond *pussyhats* to lasting political change.

PART 2

FEMINISM HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE: GRASSROOTS DOCUMENTARY-MAKERS IN CONVERSATION

Kangyu Garam in conversation with Ifama and Treasa O’Brien, chaired by Ania Ostrowska

Kangyu Garam will be joined by Ifama, filmmaker and head of video at *gal-dem* magazine (gal-dem.com), and Treasa O’Brien, filmmaker, artist, activist and founder of Stinging Hornet Films (vimeo.com/stinginghornet), who will show clips from their current work, leading into a discussion of strategies for documenting and sharing contemporary feminist communities, activism and protests.

Seoul International Women's Film Festival congratulates the opening of the 12th London Korean Film Festival

Candle Wave Feminists

by Kangyu Garam

Mild Fever

by Park Sun-joo

My Turn

by Kim Na-kyung

Night Working

by Kim Jungeun

SIWFF

CLASSICS
REVISITED:
**BAE CHANG-HO
RETROSPECTIVE**

**BAE CHANG-HO
AND THE 1980S**



Bae Chang-ho and the 1980s

No single South Korean director is more identified with a given decade than Bae Chang-ho with the 1980s. He began the decade as assistant director to the great Lee Jang-ho, the focus of our 'classics' retrospective at LKFF 2016; he ended it as the most popular film artist of the era, more successful even than his mentor. Key to his career were his own huge resources of determination and passion for cinema, but also the contributions of other people. Lee Jang-ho was one: he had no qualms about sharing the talents of his close friend and top screenwriter, Choi In-ho, or the acting skills of his most famous star, Ahn Sung-ki. Through the years of the decade, the troika of Bae/Choi/Ahn attached to any film project usually guaranteed financial and critical success.

Cinema kid

Bae Chang-ho's cinephilia is something of a legend. Thanks to a movie-fan mother, Bae was taken along to cinemas all over Seoul while growing up. He claims to have seen Fellini's *La Strada* when he was just 5-years old – an interesting claim from the film-maker who would direct and star in a film called *The Road* (2004) at the age of fifty. While studying business/management at Yeonsei University, he dabbled in acting and shot his first amateur footage. The tale goes that around this time, Bae charged into the offices of a film production company, threw himself down on his knees and swore that given the chance to direct, he would make three hits the first year. The bewildered but kindly head of production introduced him to famous novelist and screenwriter Choi In-ho, who in turn had Bae meet his future mentor Lee Jang-ho. Yielding

to reality for once, Bae took a proper job, a plum position with the burgeoning Hyundai conglomerate yet when he heard that director Lee had a film project starting up, Bae resigned his position as Hyundai branch manager in Nairobi and dashed back to the Seoul neighbourhood of Chungmuro, home to many production companies and the all-important bars and cafes where the film world gathered, plotted, celebrated and commiserated.

Minjung

Films from South Korea's 1980s do not look quite so distant from us as those from, say, the 1960s. Synchronised sound recording was only gradually being introduced, replacing old techniques such as dubbing for dialogue. Colour and wide-screen formats, however, were taken for granted, and styles of cinematography and editing were relatively advanced. Yet to an eye accustomed to the slick, ultra-cool polish of contemporary Korean film with all its post-production computerised wizardry, to say nothing of its intensely marketised stars, the world that Bae Chang-ho and other directors put on screen may look rather rough, a bit too down-to-earth, even crude. It can be hard, however, to separate style from theme and content.



People in the Slum (1982)

Working with Lee Jang-ho as assistant director on his come-back hit *A Fine, Windy Day* (1980), and then his next film *Children of Darkness* (1981), Bae met Lee Dong-cheol. He had lived in the slums of Seoul, even working as a tout in a red-light district in Seoul, before becoming a writer. He was closely linked with the rising 'People's Movement'. This was a loosely articulated but deeply committed aggregation of students, intellectuals, artists and workers who – in the name of the people, the *minjung*, the real Korea of workers, farmers and progressive thinkers – campaigned, protested and agitated against hard-line authoritarian governments, greedy corporations, and their neo-colonial coziness with US money and power. One of Lee Dong-cheol's collections of vignettes, focused on life at the bottom of society, which would provide Bae Chang-ho with the elements of a story that became his first film, *People in the Slum* (1982).

The film is very much in the spirit of his mentor's previous two films and in that of the *minjung* moment. The rough-look of the film, like that of the films by Lee Jang-ho or other memorable ones made at the time such as Lee Won-se's *A Ball Shot by a Dwarf* (1981), is in purposeful harmony with the tough lives still lived by many ordinary Korean people. When critic Lee Yong-cheol recently declared that 'the 1980s was the last era in which Korean popular films lay close to people's lives', he had in mind precisely this conjuncture between cinema content and cinematic style, mediated by the spirit of the *minjung* movement.

Government censors got the message. It was still the case that a film script had to be submitted for review before shooting, then the finished film would be subjected to a second review. The censors were not much interested in films about poor Koreans and what their stories might suggest about the country's social health or economic success even after years of at times gruelling forced modernisation. They made many demands for changes to the script. Following certain hints from the censors, and after discussing the problem with his producer, Bae decided to tone down the social criticism in his script and blend the tale of his three main characters into more of a melodrama.



Whale Hunting (1984)

Melodrama

Almost by default, Bae Chang-ho elaborated a form of storytelling that could explore the experiences of ordinary Koreans – including the poor, the outsiders, the misfits – but presented in the shape of the master genre of Korean cinema, melodrama. Or rather than genre, melodrama might best be thought of as our own experience of certain forms of narrative and intense emotional identification with key character(s). A woman, sometimes a man, is suffering through no real fault of their own. People judge them to be bad, foolish, weak, etc., but we the audience know more: we have seen how this woman/man has been deceived, deeply traumatised, or perhaps left with no choice but to break some law or social taboo. We direct our concern, even anger at the tormentors and are frustrated to tears by our own helplessness before the continued suffering and helplessness of the good, essentially innocent protagonist. We can only hang in there, trusting that the story will lead to some final justice, or at least peace and resolution after the travails of our hard-put-upon fictional friend.

Some of this pattern works for the tale of 'black glove' Myeong-suk in *People in the Slum*, but also helps shape the narrative fate of the two men in her life. It is just as significant for Bae's very different third film *The Flower at the Equator* (1983): the story of Seon-yeong, the outwardly cool and stylishly kept woman who will only find her peace in suicide. In *Whale Hunting* (1984) we know that hapless drop-out Byeong-tae is basically a decent, if goofy, young man, that the ever-resourceful beggar Min-wu seems to carry the burden of a troubled past (perhaps an academic career destroyed by the regime?), and that young Chun-ja is certainly no prostitute. The pleasure of traveling down the roads with them is to experience how the two men manage against the odds and pursuing villains to resolve Chun-ja's suffering and symbolically to transcend their own. Bae showed he could make well-crafted, almost weepy melodramas in a range of films such as *Warm It Was That Winter* (1984), *Our Joyful Young Days* (1987) and *Stairways of Heaven* (1991).

Alienation

To the extent that Bae Chang-ho continued his film-making in tandem with friend – and very successful fiction writer/screenwriter – Choi In-ho, it was natural that Choi's themes would lead him into a range of stories beyond any *minjung* aesthetic. Choi provided both original story and script for their first collaboration, *The Flower at the Equator* mentioned above.

Choi was one of the first writers to give voice to the sense of alienation experienced by a generation of people inhabiting the newly risen tower blocks which from the 1970s began to punctuate the skyline of many cities. Beautiful Seon-yeong moves into the nice big apartment her married lover has found as a love-nest; but across the way, in another tower and another box, a desperately introverted man watches her life through a telescope, before becoming a dedicated stalker. The creepy story is still creepy as film. Of course, the cinematic image imparts a visual reality to the woman, here played by popular star Jang Mi-hee, which takes it more in the direction of the kind of eroticism – or exploitation, depending on your point of view – that an easing of censorship strictures made all too commonplace in South Korean cinema of the 1980s.

The best-known collaboration of the Bae/Choi/Ahn troika was *Deep Blue Night* (1985). Ahn Sung-ki plays Ho-min. He has left a pregnant wife behind and made it to the US, looking to find his chunk of the American dream. There he seduces a rich Korean woman, who he leaves for dead in Death Valley (where else?). Later he meets Jane, a beautiful Korean divorcee who takes part in a false marriage scam. Ho-min and Jane enter into another kind of deadly relationship. The film is far removed from the sad lyrical tone of Choi's original story. There was nothing erotic about his tale of two screwed-up Korean men driving an old banger down the highways, bitter at the very thought of the Korea they had escaped yet missing it keenly. The erotic trumps the melancholy in a film where a female character takes centre stage and in which the camera is very attentive to the body of Jang Mi-hee.

There is an aspect of simple realism in depicting Koreans overseas. This was a decade in which the gradual lifting of travel restrictions allowed many Koreans to go for the first time to wherever they could afford. They now had the freedom to discover that the world out there, in reality, might indeed not seem



Deep Blue Night (1985)

welcoming. That did not stop some 320,000 Korean people from emigrating to the US in the 1980s and securing their green cards in ways less dramatic than the one tried by the doomed Ho-min. Other film-makers would follow Choi and Bae's lead in spinning stories about Koreans' experience of the US. Jang Gil-su's *America, America* (1988) took the two-guys-and-one-girl road movie genre down new highways, while the same director's *Western Avenue* (1993) told the saga of a striving shop-keeper family caught up in the LA riots of 1992.

One other form of alienation tackled by the troika was physical disability. In *Hello God* (1987), Ahn Sung-ki took on the role of a young man whose life has been stunted by multiple sclerosis. He sets off on his own, determined to visit the ancient capital of Gyeongju. On the way he hooks up with a flamboyantly seedy failed poet, a man who harbours a traumatic past, and a young unmarried woman whose pregnancy makes her fear returning to her parents' home. Two mismatched guys plus one large young woman make for a nicely offbeat road movie. Viewers may nowadays find Ahn's portrayal of an MS-affected man a bit unsettling. But it isn't so different from the highly-praised role that Moon So-ri contributed to Lee Chang-dong's contemporary classic *Oasis* (2002).

Historical drama

Choi In-ho produced the scenario for Bae Chang-ho's first historical film, *Hwang Jin-i* (1986). The real Hwang Jin-i is known only through a handful of extant poems and musical scores, so Choi and Bae could let their imaginations fill in the blanks. Once again Jang Mi-hee brought her star status to a Bae film, this time for the role of a famous sixteenth-century courtesan/*gisaeng*. The cinematographer was one of the greatest in film history, Jeong Il-seong. Jeong would shoot some of the most visually stunning films of the decade, beginning with Im Kwon-taek's masterpiece *Mandara* (1981).

Historical drama and the erotic were no strangers in this era. Lee Jang-ho's *Eoh Wu-dong* (1985), screened at last year's LKFF, is only one striking example of a mix that proved very profitable. It has been claimed that in fact the lack of overtly sexual scenes in Bae's film disappointed some viewers at the time.

What audiences saw was instead a slow-paced exercise in visual style: Jang Mi-hee's beauty, as much in her *hanbok* as her body, perfectly framed by Jeong in lingering poses indoors or Jang filmed in long takes through a long lens as she wanders fields or shorelines. Where the year before with the same star, Bae's *Deep Blue Night* (1985) had earned a record Seoul box office of 500,000 tickets sold, this graceful historical tale sold barely one-fifth the tickets.



The Dream (1990)

So it wasn't until 1990 that Bae returned to Korea's past for his material. He wrote the scenario for *The Dream* along with aspiring assistant director Lee Myung-se. Lee had been his AD since *Whale Hunting* days. There was a long tradition of dream narratives in Korea and a famous modern short fiction by Lee Kwang-su to draw upon. There had also been two film versions of the short story made before by the most formidable film-maker of the recent past, Shin Sang-ok. Bae and Lee Myung-se shifted the emphasis of their version of *The Dream* to aspects which Shin had skipped over or prettified in his gorgeous, big-budget epic of 1967 (a rare early Korean entry at the Venice Film Festival). Yet once again audiences reacted negatively to the hit-maker of the 1980s in his guise of film artist. It was for Bae a disappointing end to an extraordinary decade.



Gagman (1988)

The other side of the camera

Back in his university days, Bae Chang-ho had considered trying for an acting career, before risking everything on the chance to direct. Bae showed the same sort of generosity towards his talented assistant Lee Myung-se that Lee Jang-ho had once shown to Bae. He contributed to the scenario for Lee's own debut film, the offbeat comedy-crime caper-road movie *Gagman* (1988) – a kind of homage to Scorsese's *King of Comedy*. Not only that, Bae took one of the three main roles, playing Do-seok, a movie-mad barber. It is great fun to see him all but stealing scenes from his friend and long-time collaborator Ahn Sung-ki. His finest acting so far came in a late work, the small-scale elegiac film *The Road* (2004). Bae's portrayal of itinerant blacksmith Tae-seok and of his hard life roaming the impoverished countryside in the decades after the Korean War seems far removed from contemporary South Korea and from its newly confident film industry; as though long-suffering Tae-seok wanted to take him, and us with him, back to a simpler, more innocent homeland of melodrama. Maybe back further, to that spirit of the *minjung*.

Dr. Mark Morris
Festival Advisor



The Road (2004)



PEOPLE IN THE SLUM 꼬방동네 사람들

WED 1 NOV 19:30
CLOSE-UP FILM CENTRE

Q&A with the Director Bae Chang-ho

DIRECTOR: BAE CHANG-HO
WRITER: BAE CHANG-HO
PRODUCER: KIM WON-DU
CAST: KIM BO-YEON, AHN SUNG-KI, KIM HEE-RA
PRODUCTION COMPANY: HYUNJIN
RIGHTS HOLDER: KOREA CINEMA
DRAMA / 1982 / 108 MIN / CERT. 18 / DCP / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
ROAD (2004)
HWANG JIN-I (1986)
DEEP BLUE NIGHT (1985)

A shantytown miles south of Seoul has collected poor people and misfits from all over the country into its twisting alleyways and scruffy landscape. Myeong-suk, a fading beauty among the tough women there, is known as 'black glove': she wears that glove on a hand badly burnt in saving her baby boy from a horrible injury. Myeong-suk tries to raise her son, keep one step ahead of her dodgy husband and run a small grocery shop. But her ex-husband is out of jail, again, and drives his nice green taxi cab right back into her already complicated life.

For his debut film Bae planted a love triangle inside a Korean neo-realist setting where poverty pokes sharp elbows into the basic decency of ordinary people. The film's success launched him into a career as the most popular director of the 1980s. (MM)



WHALE HUNTING 고래사냥

THU 2 NOV 19:30
CLOSE-UP FILM CENTRE

Q&A with the Director Bae Chang-ho

DIRECTOR: BAE CHANG-HO
WRITER: CHOI IN-HO
PRODUCER: KANG DAE-JIN
CAST: AHN SUNG-KI, KIM SOO-CHUL, LEE MI-SOOK
PRODUCTION COMPANY: SAMYOUNG FILM
RIGHTS HOLDER: HWANG KI SUNG FILMS
DRAMA / 1984 / 112 MIN / CERT. 12A / 35MM / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
ROAD (2004)
HWANG JIN-I (1986)
DEEP BLUE NIGHT (1985)

Byeong-tae can't do anything right. Physically weak, disastrous as a student, scorned several times over by the girl he fancies, he almost ends up in jail. To his rescue comes the 'professional beggar' Min-wu. The older man, a walking monument to scruffy resourcefulness, drags him off to a brothel where the innocent Chun-ja holds out against her fate. The two men smuggle her away from a brutal boss, and off they travel, by hook and often by crook, through the wintry landscape. They vow to return Chun-ja to her mother down south, but the boss and his henchmen are in pursuit.

The best loved of all South Korean road movies. Two-guys, usually misfits, and a girl, often a prostitute, wander a snowy landscape: the formula was invented in the mid 1970s in Lee Man-hee's *The Road to Sampo*. Bae would use it again but never more movingly. (MM)



THE DREAM

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FRI 3 NOV 20:00
CLOSE-UP FILM CENTRE

Q&A with the Director Bae Chang-ho

DIRECTOR: BAE CHANG-HO
WRITER: LEE MYUNG-SE, BAE CHANG-HO
PRODUCER: LEE TAE-WON
CAST: AHN SUNG-KI, HWANG CINE
PRODUCTION COMPANY: TAEHUNG PICTURES
INTERNATIONAL SALES: TAEHUNG PICTURES
DRAMA, HISTORICAL / 1990 / 93 MIN / CERT. 18 / 35MM / COL-
OUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
ROAD (2004)
HWANG JIN-I (1986)
DEEP BLUE NIGHT (1985)

Once upon a time back in the era of the Shilla Dynasty when Buddhism was the religion of peasants and kings, there lived a young monk named Jo-shin. Of all of the temples in all of the kingdom, Dal-lae had to walk into his. Ten years of studying and training melt from him at the sight of the beautiful young woman. Jo-shin manages to have his way with her, then this unlikely couple flee the temple, proper society and Dal-lae's enraged fiancé. Passion cools, and their lives are soon full of hardships they never imagined.

A modern story by Lee Kwang-su provided a literary original. The outlines of the tale go back to earlier narratives as old as the Shilla era itself, in particular the tale of 'Jo-shin's Dream'. Tales and film all grow from a tradition of dream-vision narratives in both Korean and Chinese literature. Bae's second period film, after the stunning *Hwang Jin-i* (1986). (MM)

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DOCUMENTARY

PROGRAMMER'S NOTES

Contemporary Korean documentary filmmaking has proved a vital tool for documenting social change, marginalised voices, political upheaval and the continuing struggle for better working conditions. In what is now our third year in programming the documentary strand at the London Korean Film Festival we have continued to look at how documentary film can be a tool to offer socio-political commentary, political awareness, and community building.

For the 2017 edition of the documentary programme we have maintained a very contemporary focus, selecting films which are reactions to recent events and offer an insight into the structural inequality in contemporary South Korea. This year we are making a short focus on the activist film work of the feminist collective Pinks founded in 2003, whose films, dealing with issues such as LGBT rights or workers' rights, marry documentary filmmaking with activism. The three films we have chosen from the ever-growing catalogue of films by Pinks are *Goodbye My Hero* (2016), *Two Doors* (2012) and its sequel, *The Remnants* (2016), examples of politically engaged filmmaking.

Goodbye My Hero (2016) by Han Younghee shines a light on the struggles for workers' rights through the eyes of a teenager. The film is unique for taking the perspective of the 14-year-old Hyeon-wu whose diary entries narrate the documentary. The film looks at his struggle to understand the circumstances that have led his father to be fired from his position at SsangYong Motors and the subsequent years spent being unemployed. This documentary is also about the consequences that sustained activism and unemployment bring to the personal lives of those involved.

Two Doors (2012) and *The Remnants* (2016) form a powerful diptych focusing on the fallout from a demonstration in 2009 against the redevelopment of the central-Seoul neighbourhood of Yongsan which left 5 people dead and 3 protesters imprisoned. Using interviews, press and CCTV footage as well as audio recordings to investigate exactly what caused the deaths, *Two Doors* (2012) by Kim Il-rhan and Hong Ji-you feels almost like a legal document and is a compelling piece of evidence against state-sponsored violence. *The Remnants* by Kim Il-rhan and Lee Hyuk-sang revisits the same events, focusing on five victims of this tragedy telling their own truth about what happened in Yongsan.

The final film in our programme is the long overdue premiere of *A Dream of Iron* (2014), a work which demands to be seen on the big screen due to the majestic way in which the film's director, the multi-media artist Kelvin Kyung Kun Park depicts the scale of South Korea's industrial machines and the processes involved in constructing huge ships. *A Dream of Iron* (2014) is an industrial film symphony, which is concerned with documenting the scale of Korea's 1960's industrialisation and interrogating the personal and social effects of their race to modernity.

Matthew Barrington and
Ricardo Matos Cabo
Essay Film Festival programmers

AN INTERVIEW WITH LEE HYUK-SANG FROM PINKS



Pinks is a feminist collective founded in 2003 whose stated aims are to highlight social inequality and suppression of human rights, and to foster the struggle for the equality of sexual minorities. Alongside their activist work, they intervene using film to bring to light the experiences of marginalised communities. Their presence in each stage of the film-making process serves to demonstrate that the creation of a space where a film can be shown and discussed effectively is just as important as the creation of the film itself. They produce, direct, exhibit and distribute the films with their own funding. Alongside their work with documentary film, the collective is actively involved in protests against anti-discrimination laws in grassroots campaigns to improve social and cultural rights throughout South Korea. Pinks seeks solidarity between a variety of activist groups as they attempt to use their ever-growing international platform as producer and distributor of film to give voice to the LGBT community, workers and victims of state violence.

By selecting the films within the documentary strand of this year's LKFF, we seek to use the focus the festival provides on Korea to showcase Pinks' films and their work as an activist collective documenting some of the issues currently affecting the country. We hope to open a conversation on the practicalities of what it is to work as a filmic collective in the digital age, as well as the role that activism can play in exposing human rights violations, creating cross-cultural conversations, and fostering solidarity. To initiate this discussion, we spoke to Pinks member Lee Hyuk-sang, the creative director of *Two Doors* and co-director of *The Remnants*, about the history of the collective, their works, and their place within Korean society.

MATTHEW BARRINGTON, RICARDO MATOS CABO Pinks was founded in 2003 with the intention of broadening social awareness and visibility of sexual minorities through activism and filmmaking. Your films also deal with the struggle for workers' rights and other complex political issues, such as the abuse of power by the state. Going back to the beginning of your work, can you tell us in retrospect what were the main goals of the collective and what has changed in your practice in the fourteen years of the collective's existence?

LEE HYUK-SANG Looking back to 2003 when we first began, our goal wasn't really to unveil sexual minorities and widen social awareness. Our most important footing was feminism. That's why our first site after starting Pinks was a town with a large military base and our first work *Mamasang: Remember Me This Way*, featuring a sex worker as the main character, became an important starting point for our work as feminist activists. But feminism isn't simply a documentary topic. It's a philosophy of life. Since then, Pinks' documentaries branched out into various subjects 'based on the feminist gaze'. The topics may have changed but as a working method, our feminist attitude has not. The very same social issues would not have produced this kind of sensation without the feminist gaze which we have applied to them. Capturing every piece of work delicately through a unique gaze was our highest priority. In this respect, it is more appropriate to say that the style of our practice has diversified through our encounters with a variety of subjects, rather than changed entirely.

MB, RMC What for you were the major shifts in politics in South Korea in the last decade and how does political change relate to your own work and the way you think about filmmaking? How do you see the future of the collective?

LH As media activists over the last decade, our resistance and will to intervene in the Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye governments led to the change of topic shown in *Two Doors*, *Goodbye My Hero*, and *The Remnants*. Social issues have always existed and the events we have witnessed in the last decade are probably not exceptional. However, it is true that the intensity of the changes has been especially fierce, when compared to the previous decade, and this can be very stressful at times. Recently, director Kim Il-rhan was diagnosed with stomach cancer and had a gastrectomy. It was a difficult process but we half-joked that 10 years of stress is what caused the cancer.

The recent change in government hasn't brought about an end to our stress either. President Moon Jae-in said that he was 'against homosexuality' on a TV debate during his candidacy. So, for us, will the next decade bring us safety? Probably not. New challenges are constantly arising.

MB, RMC You use film as a tool for social and political change and intervention. From your experience what do you think is the role of film in activist work? How do you promote change and give visibility to the causes you fight for?

LH For people like us, who are trying to make media-activist documentaries, the most important thing is to create a historical record of the events, to give the issues the visibility they deserve, to create debate, and to influence public opinion. Although our work has not led to social upheaval, one of the most important goals of our activities is at least to motivate political change.



Once we have succeeded in motivating such change and in engendering a greater awareness of our society's problems, the spirit for an actual revolution will be possible through solidarity and union with other circles outside film.

MB, RMC You self-fund, produce, make and distribute your films. But the work of the collective is not simply reduced to filmmaking, it's grounded in communitarian principles of collaboration, as well as political discussion and public discourse. How do you structure these different dimensions of your work? Is there a set of principles you try to commit to as a collective? Or does each film create its own form and particular situation?

LH In order to credit every piece of work as a 'Pinks production', the understanding and agreement of all members, from the planning stage onwards, is very important. The intent of the main project director is respected as much as possible but all the members of Pinks must agree in order for a project to begin. The most important element in this process is whether the feminist gaze can be applied throughout the project. After gaining approval for a project, we hold regular meetings to report on the status of the production. We also monitor the progress together midway and debate endlessly on the structure until the final edit is made.

All our work prior to 2015, which we call Season 1, was produced based on the principles outlined above, where all the members collaborated to contribute their own expertise from pre-production to post-production. However, during that process, we each ended up enhancing our own expertise. A member who was a good director had more directing roles, members who were good at filming and editing were only given those roles. The most important quality for a member of Pinks is the ability to manage the whole production process directly, but because of the way we were allocating work we each failed to enhance our general capabilities.

So, from *Goodbye My Hero* and *The Remnants*, we changed the collaboration system so that the main director now manages the whole production process. This has allowed each director to gain experience and enhance their understanding of the whole production process. Furthermore, the new system allowed us to collaborate actively with professional filmmakers outside of the collective. In other words, our works embody both the principles of Pinks as a group, as well as each project's own special circumstances.

MB, RMC With *Two Doors* there is an attempt to re-present the build-up to the fire in a manner which exposes the official version given by the police. Can you provide an overview of the impact the film had on the fallout of the investigation and subsequent court case?

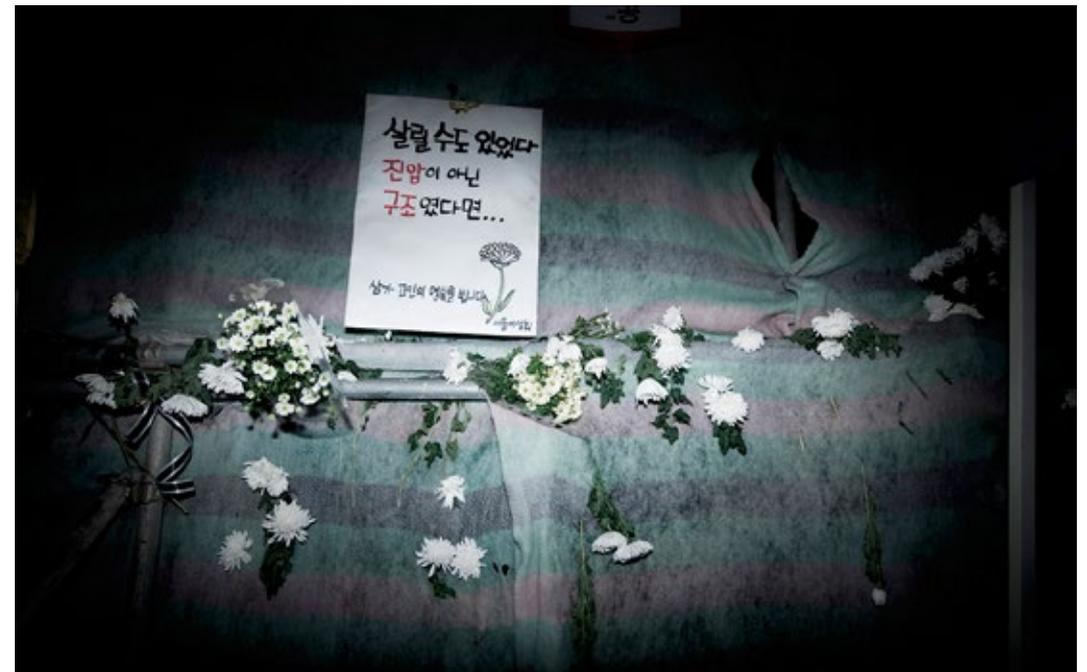
LH There was no impact on the investigation and subsequent trial because the investigation and trial ended before *Two Doors* was completed. We were satisfied that we were able to shape public opinion in such a way that led to the early release of the evicted residents who had been imprisoned as result of the trial. The trial itself was carefully planned to support the status quo, and it had already been completed before we began *Two Doors*, the film had clear intentions from the outset: to find cracks in the investigation and trial process, to raise questions, and to make the audience a jury. So, the intention behind *Two Doors* was to influence public opinion in order to reopen the investigation into the Yongsan Disaster. Eventually, the film was seen by almost 78,000 people but we were unable to sufficiently impact upon the political sphere. Thus, we decided to make the sequel *The Remnants*.

MB, RMC In *The Remnants* the focus is much more on how the protesters have dealt with the consequences of the fire. Can you expand on the thinking behind going back to the Yongsan tragedy and what you hoped to achieve with this second film?



LH At the time we were producing *Two Doors*, all the evicted residents who had resisted until the end were in prison. This made interviewing them impossible. So even though they were the real victims of the disaster, it was not feasible to make them the protagonists of the film. In the end, we followed the progress of the trial and analysed the data in order to restructure the documentary into a trial film that looks into the disaster through the eyes of the SWAT team. During that process, we, of course, started to wonder about the situation inside the tower at the time of the disaster. What actually took place in that tower? The only people with answers to that question were the evicted residents and the SWAT policemen. Of course, it was not possible to approach the SWAT team. The only people who could tell us the truth about that day, for now, were the evicted residents. But they all had different memories. The trauma had disrupted all their memories. And rather than remembering the truth, they were each weighed down by unbearable emotions: hatred, contempt, resentment, guilt, distrust. The emotions of our protagonists during the interview process were as painfully tragic as the burning of the tower itself. So, in the end, we felt that it was more important to piece together the fragments of their shattered emotions, rather than try to fit the pieces of memory together. That is our documentary, *The Remnants*.

*The director's responses above were translated by Bricent.



TWO DOORS 두 개의 문

TUE 31 OCT 18:30
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Q&A with the Creative Director Lee Hyuk-sang

DIRECTOR: KIM IL-RHAN, HONG JI-YOU
PRODUCER: PINKS
CAST: KWON YEONGGUK, KIM HYEONGTAE, RYOO JUHYEONG
PRODUCTION COMPANY: PINKS
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CINEMA DAL
DOCUMENTARY / 2012 / 101 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
MIRACLE ON JONGNO STREET (2010)
THE TIME OF OUR LIVES (2009)
3XFTM (2008)

Following the 'Yongsan Tragedy' when a sit-in rally in central Seoul was organised to resist a forced eviction resulted in the deaths of five protesters and one police officer, three people involved in the demonstration were arrested and deemed responsible for the lives lost. This documentary is an investigation into what took place and questions the actions of the police who took part in the suppression of the demonstration as well as the role of the government. *Two Doors* benefits from the high visibility of the incident which resulted in hours of footage taken from CCTV, and the recordings from both the press and onlookers being made available to the filmmakers. Access to such resources ensures that audiences are able to see and hear the actions and strategies used by the Korean police to forcibly evict the residents from the building they had been occupying. (MB, RMC)



THE REMNANTS

공동정범

WED 1 NOV 18:30
PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

Q&A with the Director Lee Hyuk-sang

DIRECTOR: KIM IL-RHAN, LEE HYUK-SANG
PRODUCER: KIM IL-RHAN, LEE HYUK-SANG
CAST: KIM JU-HWAN, KIM CHANG-SU, LEE CHUNG-YEON
PRODUCTION COMPANY: PINKS
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CINEMA DAL
DOCUMENTARY / 2016 / 116 MIN / CERT. 15 / DCP / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
MIRACLE ON JONGNO STREET (2010)
THE TIME OF OUR LIVES (2009)
3XFTM (2008)

Two Doors investigated the events that took place in Yongsan, amassing documents to question the use of force against the people involved in the occupation of a watchtower as a protest against the redevelopment of a local neighbourhood in central Seoul. This follow-up film turns to the personal stories of five people involved in the demonstrations who were accused of legal violations. Where the first film seeks to provide material evidence against the use of violence by state police, *The Remnants* focuses instead on the personal accounts of what happened. Seven years after, these people try to make sense of the events, the reasons why they fought, sharing their accounts of how the situation escalated into violence. (MB, RMC)



GOODBYE MY HERO

안녕 히어로

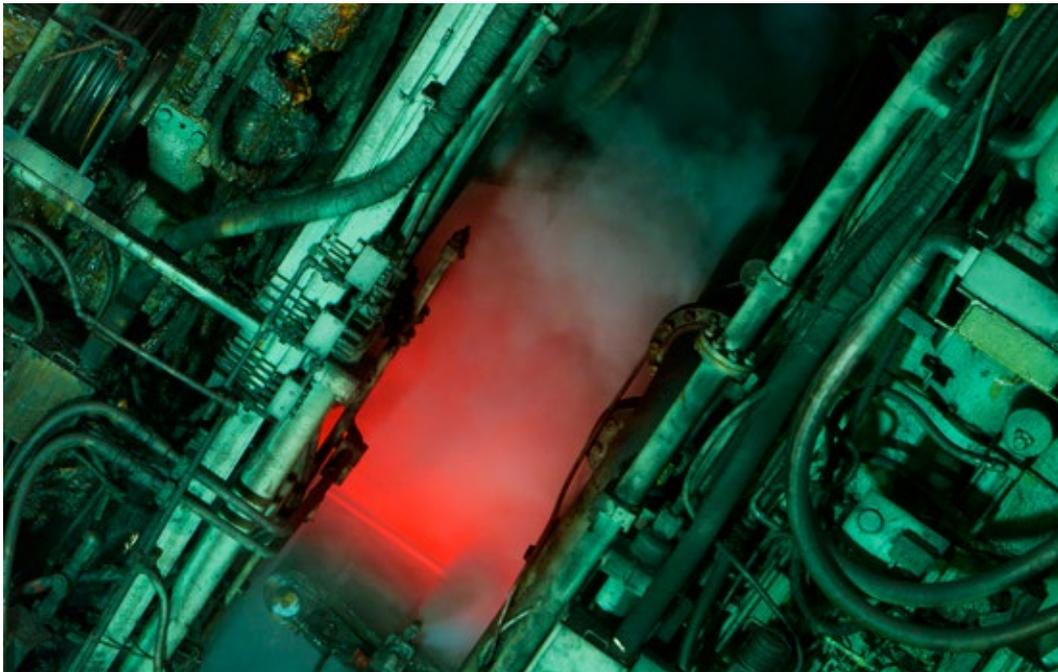
SUN 29 OCT 15:00
KOREAN CULTURAL CENTRE UK

Introduction by Matthew Barrington
and Ricardo Matos Cabo

DIRECTOR: HAN YOUNGHEE
PRODUCER: CHANG BYOUNG-GWON, HONG JI-YOU
CAST: KIM HYEON-WU, KIM JEONG-WUN, CHO CHANG-HEE
PRODUCTION COMPANY: PINKS
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CINEMA DAL
DOCUMENTARY / 2016 / 109 MIN / CERT. 12A / MOV / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
MIRACLE ON JONGNO STREET (2010)
THE TIME OF OUR LIVES (2009)
3XFTM (2008)

The 14-year-old Hyeon-wu is at the centre of this documentary which addresses labour relations and workers' rights. *Goodbye My Hero's* focus is on the effect of the ongoing union battles for better conditions within Korean factories on the family unit and specifically the family's eldest son, Hyeon-wu. The patriarch of the family has been laid off due to his participation in protesting job losses from SsangYong Motors, and while the film documents his struggle through interviews and archive footage, it is narrated through intimate video interviews and diary excerpts by Hyeon-wu, as the teenager attempts to navigate the everyday issues related to growing up and fitting in at school with the uncertainty and social stigma of his father's fight to be reinstated. (MB, RMC)



A DREAM OF IRON

철의 꿈

SUN 5 NOV 14:00
INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

Introduction by Matthew Barrington

DIRECTOR: KELVIN KYUNG KUN PARK
WRITER: KELVIN KYUNG KUN PARK
PRODUCER: KIM KYUNGMI
PRODUCTION COMPANY: BÖC FEATURES, KYUNG PICTURES
INTERNATIONAL SALES: BÖC FEATURES
DOCUMENTARY / 2014 / 100 MIN / CERT. U / BLU-RAY /
COLOUR, B&W

An elegiac film essay documenting and interrogating the financial and emotional investment in the steel industry in 1960's South Korea. Kelvin Kyung Kun Park weaves together archive footage with slow moving pans and static camera shots to contrast the utopian optimism of the push to rebuild the nation's industry after the destruction of the Korean War with the subsequent failure to reach the goal of modernity. Hyundai is one of the companies which has played the largest role in the industrialisation of South Korea and the name of the company comes from the Korean word for "modernity". The ramifications of both the desire for and failure of Korean modernisation are at the heart of the film, which uses this idea to branch off into a wide and at times idiosyncratic quest for the sublime, incorporating ancient whales and mystic rituals. (MB, RMC)

PINKS : SOLIDARITY FOR SEXUALLY MINOR CULTURES & HUMAN RIGHTS



PINKS is a feminist collective that aims to practice resistance against social inequality and the suppression of human rights, particularly amongst sexual minorities. Alongside our activist work, we make documentary films to bring together socially marginalised groups, to foster solidarity and to document protest.

If you would like to know more about **PINKS** and donate to our cause, please visit our website.

www.pinks.or.kr
ypinks@gmail.com
[@ypinks](https://www.instagram.com/ypinks)

Coming Soon:
Play On, 2017



ANIMATION



LOST IN THE MOONLIGHT 달빛궁궐

SAT 28 OCT 12:00
PHOENIX CINEMA

DIRECTOR: KIM HYUN-JOO
WRITER: KIM HYUN-JOO
PRODUCER: KIM SUNG-CHEOL
CAST: KIM SEO-YOUNG, LEE HA-NEE, KWON YUL
PRODUCTION COMPANY: STUDIO HOLHORY
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CONTENTS PANDA
ANIMATION / 2016 / 80 MIN / CERT. U / DCP / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
A PILLOW BABY (SHORT, 2013)
AN UMBRELLA AND A MUDFISH (SHORT, 2013)
WHITE SEAL (TV, 2007)

Thirteen-year-old Hyunjuli has been cast in the very uninspiring role of a tree in a traditional children's musical about to be staged at Changdeok Palace. A shy and dreamy girl, she nevertheless dreams of the spotlight and feels ridiculous standing at the back of the chorus. Hyunjuli finally gets to take centre stage during the dress rehearsal, when she's sucked into a fantasy world after picking up a tag dropped by a run-away Rat God who was also looking to escape relative obscurity. Finding herself trapped in the Moonlight Palace, Hyunjuli must uncover the conspiracy led by the mysterious Lady Blossom and find a way to get home again whilst also helping her new friend Mr. Squirrel to do the same in this beautifully animated fantasy adventure from first-time director Kim Hyun-joo. (HS)



FRANKY AND FRIENDS: A TREE OF LIFE

극장판 프랭키와 친구들:
생명의 나무

SAT 4 NOV 12:00
PHOENIX CINEMA

DIRECTOR: PARK JUNG-OH
WRITER: PARK JUNG-OH
PRODUCER: PARK JEONG-WI
CAST: AN YEONGMI, LEE SO-EUN, KIM MIN-JUNG
PRODUCTION COMPANY: LIQUID BRAIN STUDIO
INTERNATIONAL SALES: LIQUID BRAIN STUDIO
ANIMATION / 2016 / 72 MIN / CERT. U / MOV / COLOUR

Franky and Friends are back for another exciting adventure in the Fairytale Kingdom! Teaching kids the perils of wastefulness, this big screen version of the popular TV cartoon follows Franky and Friends on an adventure to save the Tree of Life after he and the two buddies he lives with, Kwon and Pong, create havoc by asking for more food than they can eat. Trying to ensure they get more of Doo's delicious cooking, they've been secretly burying the leftovers in the forest but get a shock when strange mushrooms start growing outside causing the local insects to increase to giant size and eat all the food in sight. Franky might be about to starve if he can't defeat the evil witch who wants to harness the Tree of Life for her own ends! Charming, family-friendly fun. (HS)

Korean
sounds

East Meets West 5: Dance

Members from the National Orchestra of Korea & Philharmonia Chamber Players

Wednesday, 13 December 2017, 7:30pm
Kings Place, Hall One

Tickets from £9.50 online | kingsplace.co.uk
For more information visit | london.korean-culture.org



Dance and music have been inseparable from the very beginning, their origins being in ancient rituals. Members of the **National Orchestra of Korea** will perform traditional 'Sinawi' and 'Daepoongryu' as well as contemporary pieces written by Sung Kook Kim and Ji Hye Choi. The **Philharmonia Chamber Players** then take to the stage. Antonin Dvořák's interest in dance music came from his Czech background – traditional Bohemian folk dances were part of his heritage. His much-loved string quintet No. 2 Op. 77 is put alongside Astor Piazzolla's *Libertango*.

MISE-EN-SCÈNE SHORTS

SUN 5 NOV 18:30
REGENT STREET CINEMA

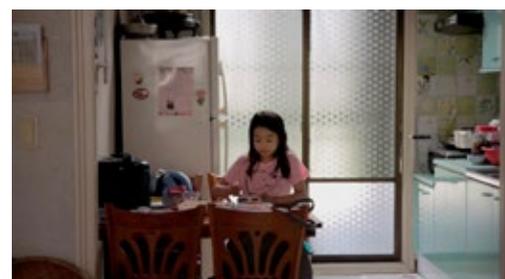


DIRECTOR: HAN KA-RAM
WRITER: HAN KA-RAM
PRODUCER: YU YOUNG-SIK
CAST: LEE JAE-IN, JANG JUN-WHEE
INTERNATIONAL SALES: KOREAN FILM COUNCIL
DRAMA / 2017 / 24 MIN / CERT. 15 / BLU-RAY / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
AS SPRING COMES (SHORT, 2014)

TOMBSTONE REFUGEE 장례난민

Living is expensive, but death isn't much cheaper. Da-bin's dad couldn't afford to look after her mother properly, let alone to pay to have her cremated in a proper manner. He therefore decides to take matters into his own hands, and takes Da-bin and her younger sister Han-sol along for the ride. Attempts at 'alternative' burials, dining and dashing, and their father's ineptitude make for a tiresome day, and all end badly. But this leads the girls to some pretty big philosophical questions, and memories come flooding back. Da-bin and Han-sol must teach each other, and themselves, how to say good-bye. (SR)



DIRECTOR: KIM HYUN-JUNG
WRITER: KIM HYUN-JUNG
PRODUCER: OH SEONG-HO
CAST: KIM MIN-SEO, PARK JI-HOO, LEE MI-JUNG
RIGHTS HOLDER: KIM HYUN-JUNG
DRAMA, ROMANCE / 2017 / 33 MIN / CERT. 12A / BLU-RAY / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
EUNHA VIDEO (SHORT, 2015)

HOME WITHOUT ME 나만 없는 집

Se-young seems a typical young girl - smart, sweet, a bit precocious - and craves the love and attention of her older sister, Sun-young. But their mother works long and late hours, their father is all but absent, and Sun-young is now a teenager and doesn't want to be burdened with her sister's care. More than anything Sae-young wants to be a Girl Scout, like her older sister. In her desperation to escape from lonely nights alone and to find some familial love and friendship, Sae-young might have to sneak behind her sister's back to make her dreams come true. (SR)



THIRSTY 악당출현

Blackie is just trying to do his job. It's not much of a job, delivering food to mostly ungrateful people, but it's something, and he can skim a little off the top now and then. But then he runs into his old classmate, Sung-yong; Sung-yong might be a criminal, but he drives a fancy car and seems to be happy. Does it matter that he drives his car to secluded locations in the middle of the night with strange baggage? Blackie just needs to know how to make a little more money, and show Sung-yong what it really takes to survive. (SR)

DIRECTOR: YOU SU-MIN
WRITER: YOU SU-MIN
PRODUCER: YOU SU-MIN, KIM MIN-SUNG
CAST: OH HEE-JUN, LEE HAE-WOON, OH DONG-MIN
INTERNATIONAL SALES: KOREAN FILM COUNCIL
ACTION, DRAMA / 2017 / 29 MIN / CERT. 15 / BLU-RAY / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
SILVER BELL (SHORT, 2014)

SUN 5 NOV 20:30
REGENT STREET CINEMA



BETWEEN YOU AND ME 감독님 연출하지 마세요

Movie audiences see the glamour and spectacle of a film. But from the other side, it can be frustrating and time-consuming, with anger and egos clashing over the smallest things. Min-gyeong is trying to film the simplest of scenes, sitting in a car and eating kimbap. But arguments with the director over costume and script, lack of pay, no lunch break, and a very complicated sandwich wrap make the scene almost impossible. But who is the director, and who is the actress? Identities and roles shift in an on-set power struggle and the need to film the perfect take. (SR)

DIRECTOR: LEE DAE-YOUNG
WRITER: LEE DAE-YOUNG
PRODUCER: LEE DAE-YOUNG
CAST: LIM SUN-WOO, MOON HYE-IN, LEE SEUNG-WON
RIGHTS HOLDER: LEE DAE-YOUNG
COMEDY / 2017 / 14 MIN / CERT. 12A / BLU-RAY / COLOUR

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY
RUNNING BOY (SHORT, 2015)
THE LUNCH DATE (SHORT, 2014)
INSIDE STORY (SHORT, 2011)



LONDON / NEW YORK / AMSTERDAM

To cut a long story short / we make film trailers

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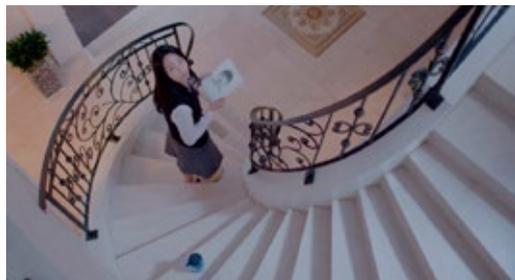


DIVE 잠몰

Woo-jin loves water. He is alone and at peace when he swims, either in competition, or alone at night in the school swimming pool, some of the few moments he gets to himself. He is expected to take care of his brother who is disabled: dinner, bathing, changing diapers. Woo-jin loves his brother, but does everything for him, and even then, his father asks him to do more. But suddenly, Woo-jin has the opportunity to break free of these constraints, to fulfill a dream and escape from the tyranny of his father and the monotony of looking after his brother. But how far will his guilt let him go? (SR)

DIRECTOR: LEE SEUNG-HWAN
WRITER: LEE SEUNG-HWAN
PRODUCER: SIN GI-CHUN
CAST: YANG JI-IL, KWON KI-HA, KIM JONG-TAE
INTERNATIONAL SALES: INDIESTORY
HORROR, FANTASY / 2017 / 24 MIN / CERT. 15 / BLU-RAY / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
DOOR (SHORT, 2015)



THE INSECT WOMAN 혐오돌기

Hui-eun has two obsessions: becoming class president, and former classmate So-hyun. It seems that Hui-eun has a problem with bullying her fellow classmates, and is trying to mend her ways. She'll even go so far as to pay So-hyun to stand by her as she makes her campaign speech. But Hui-eun is also forming a fascination with insects: the ants that crawl on the ground, those strange, tiny creatures that eschew pretensions and strive to achieve their goal at any cost. As Hui-eun's obsessions with the ants grow, so does her desire to emulate them - perhaps a bit too much. (SR)

DIRECTOR: KIM HYUN
WRITER: KIM HYUN
PRODUCER: LEE WOO-SUK
CAST: LIM YE-EUN, KIM DO-YUN, MOON WOO-BIN
INTERNATIONAL SALES: CENTRAL PARK FILMS
HORROR, FANTASY / 2017 / 20 MIN / CERT. 15 / BLU-RAY / COLOUR

FILMOGRAPHY
EXAMINATION HELL OF RAICHU (SHORT, 2016)
KEYBOARD WARRIOR (SHORT, 2013)



2 NIGHTS 3 DAYS 2박3일

Ji-eun loves her boyfriend Min-gyu, and can't wait to meet up with him for their anniversary. Unfortunately, he has little interest in any kind of celebration, and leaves Jin-eun at his apartment with his useless brother, angry father, and sleeping grandmother. Ji-eun waits for him, and then refuses to leave the apartment. Inextricably entwined with his family, whose inner turmoil boils to the surface, the young girl finds herself caught between sadness and anger, trying to reconcile her attachment to Min-gyu with his dismissive attitude, and her own desire for a little bit of love and happiness, which might manifest in unusual ways. (SR)

DIRECTOR: CHO EUN-JI
WRITER: CHO EUN-JI
PRODUCER: LEE CHI-BUM
CAST: JEONG SOO-JI, SONG JI-HYUK, YU CHANG-SUK
PRODUCTION COMPANY: BROTHER PICTURES
INTERNATIONAL SALES: FILM DABIN
DRAMA, ROMANCE / 2016 / 29 MIN / CERT. 12A / BLU-RAY / COLOUR



ARTIST VIDEO

The London Korean Film Festival's Artist Video strand brings the work of Korean artists working with the moving image to the UK. In Korea, like in the UK and other countries, a shift from the gallery towards the cinema in recent years has offered artists the possibility to present their work in film settings such as film festivals. It has also allowed audiences to look comparatively at the work made by experimental filmmakers (historically and today) and contemporary visual artists. Artists' engagement with film (and video) as a medium and with the cinema as a social and cultural context has infused filmmaking with a new creative energy, which is celebrated in this strand.

This year's Artist Video strand proposes two 'Artist in Focus' programmes with two prominent Korean artists working with the moving image: Lim Minouk and Koo Donghee. Both work across a variety of mediums – including installation, performance, sculpture – the moving image allowing them to synthesise them all. Drawing their inspiration

from political activist cinema from the 1970s (Lim) and contemporary television and Internet culture (Koo), their work is representative of the diversity and richness of contemporary Korean artists' moving image.

The strand is once again presented in partnership with LUX – the UK agency for artists' moving image. LUX is the principal institution in the UK supporting and showcasing film and video by artists and it will become a festival venue for the first time. During the week between the two Artist in Focus screenings, which will both take place at LUX, an exhibition with videos by Koo and Lim will not only accompany and expand on the festival screenings, but also further contextualize their work with documentation and other materials (Wednesday 1 November - Friday 3 November 2017).

Maria Palacios Cruz
Deputy Director, LUX Artists'
Moving Image



Lim Minouk. *The Weight of Hands*, 2010. Copyright Lim Minouk.

6 VIDEO WORKS (2005-2012) BY LIM MINOUK

SUN 29 OCT 14:00
LUX

Introduction by Maria Palacios Cruz

NEW TOWN GHOST

2005, SD, 11 MIN

WRONG QUESTION

2006, HD, 10 MIN 6 SEC

PORTABLE KEEPER

2009, HD, 12 MIN 35 SEC

THE WEIGHT OF HANDS

2010, HD, 13 MIN 50 SEC

THE POSSIBILITY OF THE HALF

2012, HD, 13 MIN 20 SEC

S.O.S - ADOPTIVE DISSENSUS

2009, HD, 46 MIN 13 SEC

*Shown in loop at LUX between 1 & 3 Nov

Working across a range of mediums, including performance, video, sculpture, installation and community-engaged public art, Lim Minouk explores the human and societal costs of modernisation, denouncing situations of displacement and alienation caused by South Korea's economic growth and rapid urbanisation since the 1960s. As she writes, "In my installations, performances, and videos, I aim to give the disappearing present a proper send-off while also constructing a memory of it with the hope of seeing it again in the future. These works are different from the traditional format of a documentary in that they include the intervention of staged actions. So my sense of time does not follow the common sequence of past-present-future, but rather of past-future-present."

This programme showcases most of Lim's video-work, which she has described as 'performance documentary theatre' and which echoes agitprop cinema and theatre from the 1960s and 1970s. Political and poetical, her videos document disappearing places and people. They powerfully side with those neglected and displaced, giving a personal and subjective voice to an

alternative public consciousness. In *New Town Ghost* (2005), a young female poetry slam performer and a drummer traverse Seoul's Yeongdeungpo district in a pickup truck just as the neighbourhood is being demolished to make way for a new high-end development. *The Weight of Hands* (2010), commissioned by FACT and the Liverpool Biennial, follows a special tour bus that takes its passengers on a pilgrimage, visiting places where human presence is prohibited. In *Wrong Question* (2006), a double screen work which questions the distance between sound and image, a disillusioned taxi driver describes the sacrifices of his generation. In *Portable Keeper* (2009), musician Kwon Byungjun executes performances carrying a sculpture on his shoulder, wandering between old towns' closed-down and forgotten areas. *The Possibility of the Half* (2012), also a double screen work – the separation between the screens not unlike the separation of the two Koreas – was inspired by images of North and South Koreans crying over the deaths of their respective leaders, which Lim dissects in all their theatricality and irony. (MPC)

Lim Minouk, born 1968 in Daejeon, South Korea, lives and works in Seoul, South Korea. Recent solo exhibitions and projects include *Lighthouse Keeper-The Times of Joy and Sorrow*, Setouchi Triennale, Ogi Island, Japan (2016); *Minouk Lim/The Promise of If*, PLATEAU Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea; *United Paradox/Minouk Lim*, PORTIKUS, Frankfurt, Germany; *From X to A*, Community-Performativity Project, Asia Culture Complex, Gwangju, Korea (2015).



Lim Minouk. *Wrong Question*, 2006. Copyright Lim Minouk.



Koo Donghee. *Tragedy Competition*, 2003. Copyright Koo Donghee.

5 VIDEO WORKS (2003-2016) BY KOO DONGHEE

SAT 4 NOV 14:00
LUX

Introduction by Maria Palacios Cruz

TRAGEDY COMPETITION

2003, HD, 15 MIN 45 SEC

THE KING FISH

2008, HD, 34 MIN 20 SEC

UNDER THE VEIN; I SPELL ON YOU

2012, HD, 15 MIN 27 SEC

CROSSXPOLLINATION

2016, HD, 24 MIN

WHAT'S NOT THERE

2012, HD, 22 MIN 18 SEC

*Shown in loop at LUX between 1 & 3 Nov

This programme surveys more than a decade of moving image works by South Korean artist Koo Donghee, from her first video *Tragedy Competition* (2003) to her most recent *CrossXpollination* (2016). Highly staged, her videos portray the banality of life interrupted by accidental situations. Whilst early works such as *Tragedy Competition* and *The King Fish* (2008) (as well as *Overloaded Echo* screened at Tate Modern in 2015 in the context of *Embeddedness: Artist Films and Videos from Korea 1960s to Now*), draw their inspiration – both formally and from the point of view of their narrative construction - from television competition shows, and their cruelty. Koo's most recent videos *Under the Vein; I spell on you* (2012) and *CrossXpollination* are more poetic and mysterious, almost like sensuous puzzles from which Koo has removed any explanatory element. Attempting to externalise internal impressions, Koo uses objects, spaces, animals – often aquatic – and actors, who are having to respond in real time to unrehearsed situations.

As art critic Gwak Yeong Bin has noted in his essay 'Collector Koo Donghee' (in the EXiS 2014 programme catalogue), Koo's work is

driven by a discerning sense of time, which is no longer 'absolute' but can be accelerated and decelerated at will. For Koo, time seems to be in ruins, affected by a prior catastrophe. The result is a form of melancholy which is neither sadness nor mourning: 'post-melancholy'. (MPC)

Koo Donghee was born in 1974 in Seoul, Korea. She received a B.F.A in Sculpture from Hongik University in Seoul, Korea and an M.F.A. in sculpture from Yale University in Connecticut, USA. She has had solo exhibitions at Atelier Hermes (2008, Seoul, Korea), and Akademie Schloss Solitude (2005, Stuttgart, Germany). Her work has also been included in numerous group exhibitions at Centre Pompidou (2011, Paris, France), Plateau (2011, Seoul, Korea), Artsonje Center (2010, Seoul, Korea), Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art (2010, Ansan, Korea), Anne & Gordon Samstag Museum of Art (2010, Adelaide, Australia), Marugame Genichiro-Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art (2009, Kagawa, Japan), Nam June Paik Art Center (2009, Yongin, Korea), The 7th Gwangju Biennale (2008, Gwangju, Korea) and the Peres Project (2007, Berlin, Germany). She was shortlisted for the Korea Artists Prize in 2014.



Koo Donghee. *CrossXpollination*, 2016. Copyright Koo Donghee.



MASTERCLASS WITH CINEMATOGRAPHER KIM HYUNGKOO

SAT 28 OCT 18:00
BIRKBECK CINEMA

SPEAKER:

Kim Hyungkoo's selected filmography
On the Beach at Night Alone (2016)
Revivre (2014)
The Day He Arrives (2011)
The Host (2006)
Tale of Cinema (2005)
Memories of Murder (2003)
One Fine Spring Day (2001)
Peppermint Candy (1999)
Beat (1997)

MODERATOR:

Harriet Cox has been a member of the London Film School since 2000, and is currently Head of the Cinematography department. Her most recent engagements include: Women in Cinematography panel at Cinefest (Bristol, 2015) and the BSC EXPO panel Creativity through discipline in digital film making (London, 2016).

Renowned cinematographer Kim Hyungkoo will speak about his experience of working in the Korean film industry for the past 25 years. Kim studied at the American Film Institute and went on to work with some of the most critically acclaimed auteurs from Korea, including Bong Joon-ho, Hong Sangsoo and Lee Chang-dong. This event will also include a screening of Kim Sung-soo's *Dead End* (1993) in its rarely seen original print. Kim's versatility behind the camera has enabled him to work on projects which employ different visual styles and directorial approaches, from the hyperactive *Beat*, to the naturalistic *On the Beach at Night Alone*.

This session will be moderated by Harriet Cox, Head of Cinematography at the London Film School.



MASTERCLASS WITH DIRECTOR LEE DOO-YONG

FRI 3 NOV 17:15
SOAS UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

SPEAKER:

Lee Doo-yong's selected filmography (see p. 43)

MODERATOR:

Mark Morris (see p. 3 for his biography)

Throughout his career, Lee Doo-yong's films have married artistic achievement with commercial success. He began with the key genre of 1960s 'Golden Age' of Korean cinema, melodrama, but soon moved onto taekwondo thrillers inspired by Hong Kong action cinema. Lee also contributed to the creation of new styles of historical drama, including the pastoral erotic genre, while later turning his hand to gritty 1980s versions of melodrama.

The Last Witness (1980), which we are screening at this year's festival, may be his most powerful film. But others, such as the historical tragedy *Spinning the Tales of Cruelty Towards Women* (1983) or the witty and sexy *Mulberry* (1985), are just as highly regarded today. Our masterclass with Lee Doo-yong will be an opportunity to revisit some of the many highlights of his remarkable life and work.



IN CONVERSATION WITH DIRECTOR LEE HYUK-SANG FROM PINKS

THU 2 NOV 14:00

TBC * Please check our website at the time of booking

PARTICIPANTS:

Lee Hyuk-sang garnered attention after receiving the Mecenat Award from the Busan International Film Festival and the Independent Filmmaker's Award from the Association of Korean Independent Film & Video for his debut film *Miracle on Jongno Street* (2010). In 2011, he served as creative director on the documentary *Two Doors* (2012) before co-directing its sequel, *The Remnants* (2016).

Melissa Butcher is a Reader in Social and Cultural Geography, Birkbeck, University of London. Her research examines the intersections between globalisation and contested urban space, youth and gender. Melissa was Principal Investigator in the European-Asian collaboration, **SINGLE: Entanglements of Urban Space, Cultural Encounters and Gendered Identities**, examining gender and public space in Delhi. She also works in London, exploring the impact of urban change particularly on young people (www.hackneyashome.co.uk).

Pinks is a collective of activists and filmmakers, tackling important subjects such as LGBTQ rights, workers' struggles, and state violence against citizens. On the occasion of our screening of three of their most recent works (*Two Doors*, *The Remnants* and *Goodbye My Hero*), we are pleased to welcome Lee Hyuk-sang from Pinks to London for a conversation with Dr. Melissa Butcher.

Dr. Butcher's research focuses on global mobility and local transformation in urban spaces, most recently utilising participatory video to explore how young people experience a sense of home and belonging in the London Borough of Hackney.

Lee and Dr Butcher will focus on the social and political issues facing both Korea and the UK, and discuss how filmmaking can be practiced as a form of activism, beyond the function of documenting and reporting events.

This conversation is part of **CREAM SCREENS**, and will be introduced by Dr May Ingawani, Director of the **CREAM** Doctoral Programme.

* **CREAM SCREENS** is a series of screenings and conversations featuring the best of contemporary global film and artists' moving image, and yet to be discovered pioneers of cinema's global histories, hosted by the Centre for Research and Education in Arts and Media, University of Westminster.



IN CONVERSATION WITH DIRECTOR KIM DAE-HWAN

TUE 7 NOV 14:00
KINGSTON UNIVERSITY

SPEAKER:

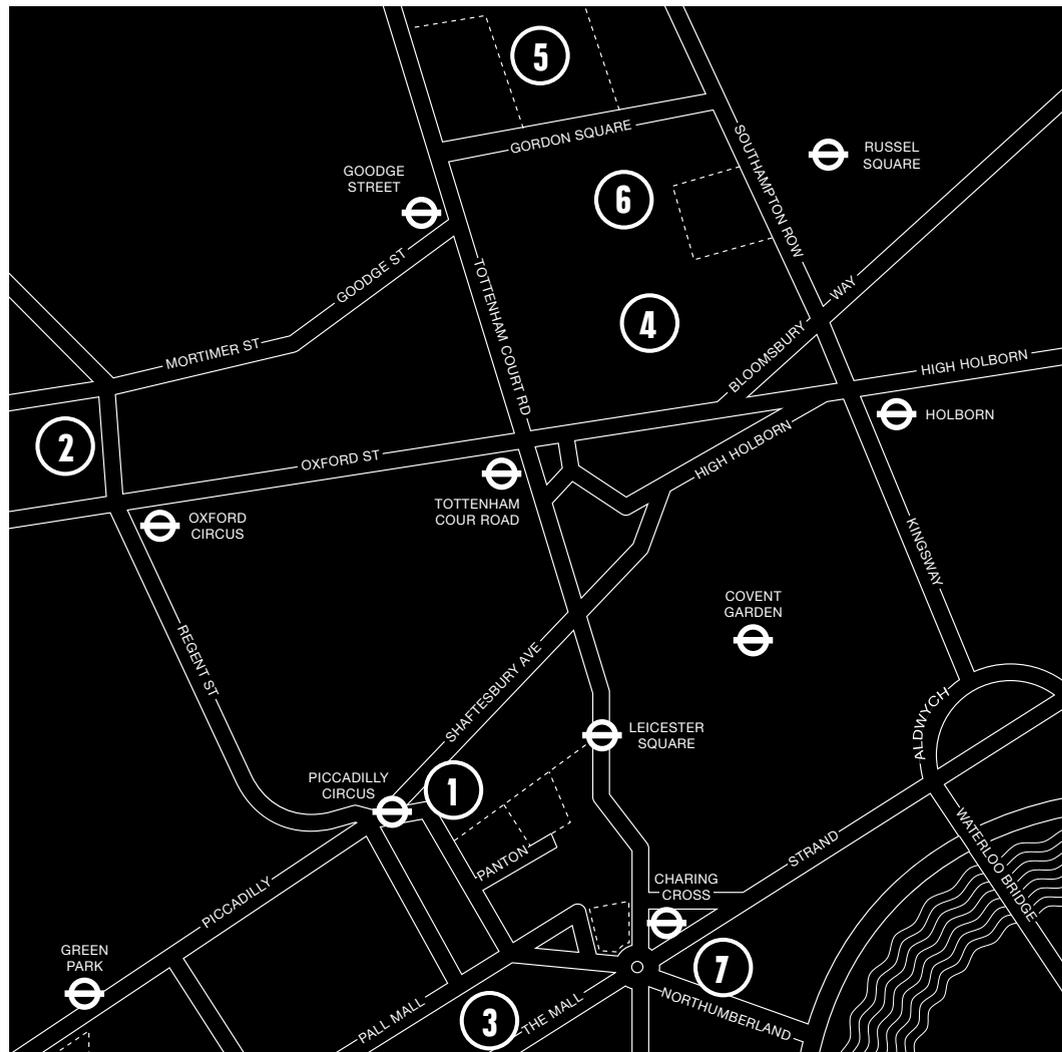
Kim Dae-hwan's filmography
Picnic (short, 2010)
Interview (short, 2011)
End of Winter (2014)
The First Lap (2017)

MODERATOR:

Simon Ward (see p. 3 for his biography)

Our Closing Gala film *The First Lap* is Kim Dae-hwan's gentle portrayal of an ordinary couple trying to find their way in the face of familial tension, and it led to him winning the Best Emerging Director award at the Locarno International Film Festival this year. Kim made another acute portrayal of a typical Korean family with his first feature, *End of Winter*, which had its world premiere at the Busan International Film Festival in 2014.

Simon Ward, who has been a longstanding advocate of independent cinema from around the world, both through his previous work at the ICO, and in his current role with Vision Box Cinema, will lead the conversation with director Kim, providing practical insight into the journey of *The First Lap*, from inception through to post-production.



1. PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL

20–24 Shaftesbury Avenue, W1D 7DH

2. REGENT STREET CINEMA

309 Regent Street, W1B 2UW

3. INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

The Mall, SW1Y 5AH

4. BRITISH MUSEUM

Great Russell Street, WC1B 3DG

5. BIRKBECK CINEMA

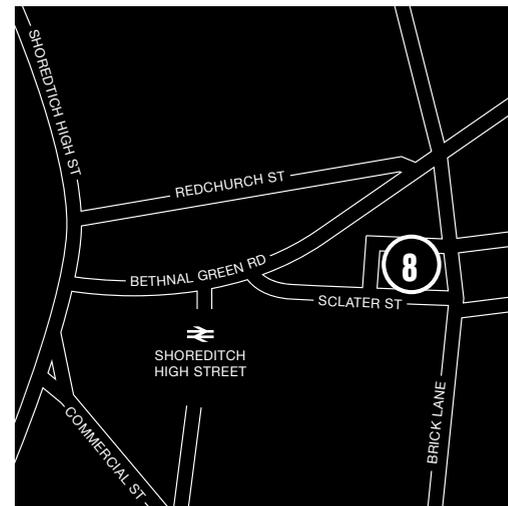
43 Gordon Square, WC1H 0PD

6. SOAS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

10 Thornhaugh Street, WC1H 0XG

7. KOREAN CULTURAL CENTRE UK

1-3 Strand, WC2N 5BW

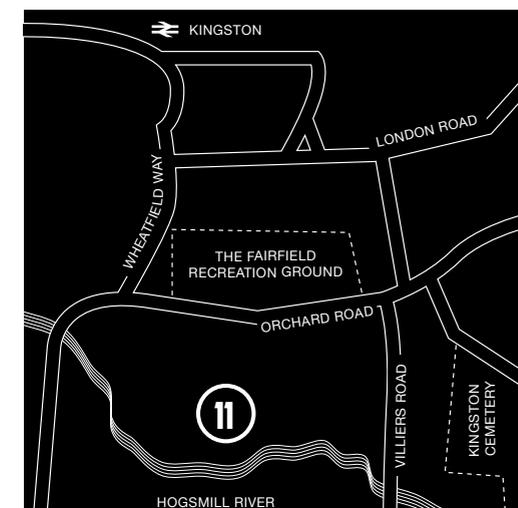
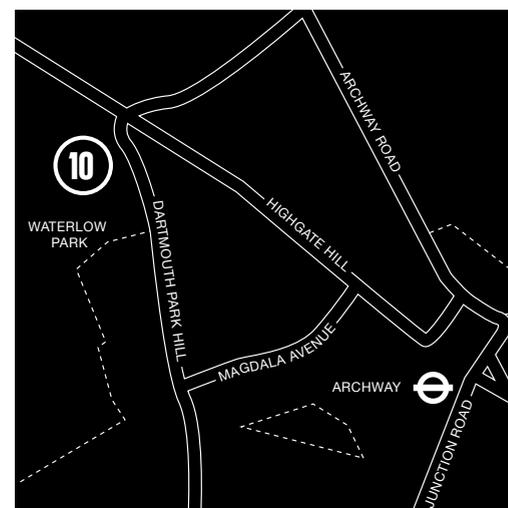
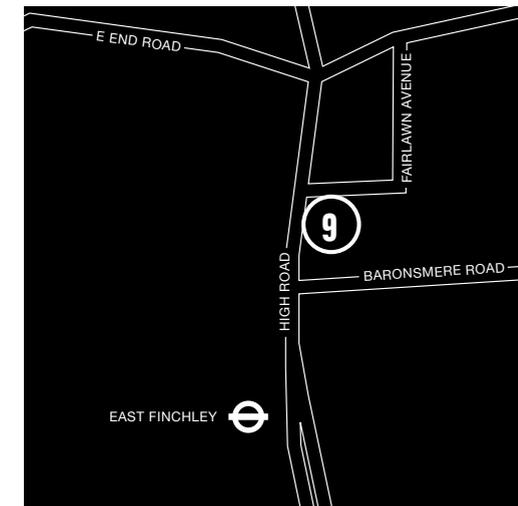


8. CLOSE-UP FILM CENTRE

97 Sclater Street, E1 6HR

9. PHOENIX CINEMA

52 High Road, N2 9PJ



10. LUX

Waterlow Park Centre, Dartmouth Park Hill, N19 5JF

11. KINGSTON UNIVERSITY

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

TOURING PROGRAMME

After our London Closing on 8 November, we will be touring to five major cities across the UK: Manchester, Sheffield, Nottingham, Belfast and Glasgow. Presenting a selection of films from both our Korean Noir and Contemporary Hits strands we aim to introduce Korean cinema to new audiences around the UK.

12. SHOWROOM CINEMA SHEFFIELD

15 Paternoster Row
S1 2BX

13. HOME MANCHESTER

2 Tony Wilson Place, First St
M15 4FN

14. BROADWAY CINEMA NOTTINGHAM

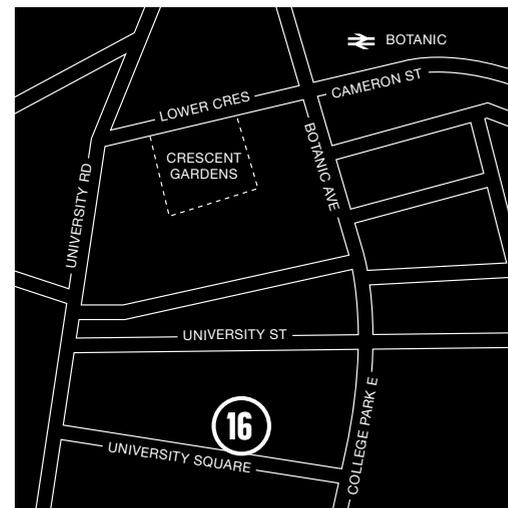
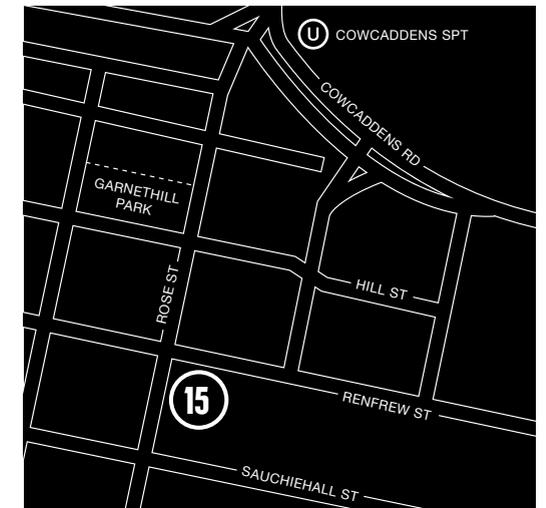
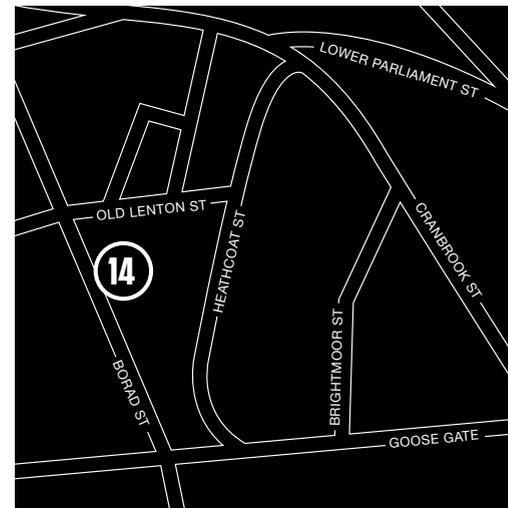
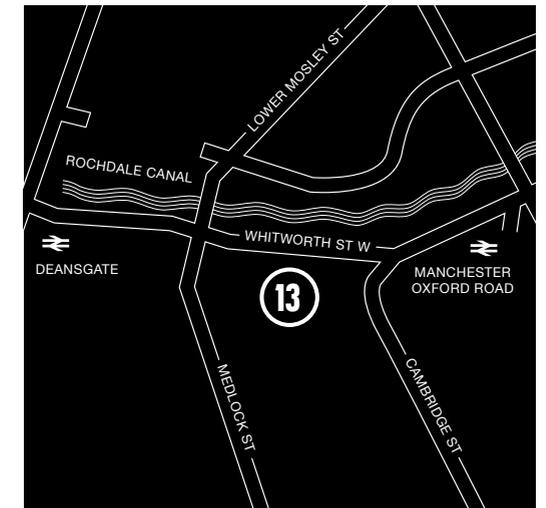
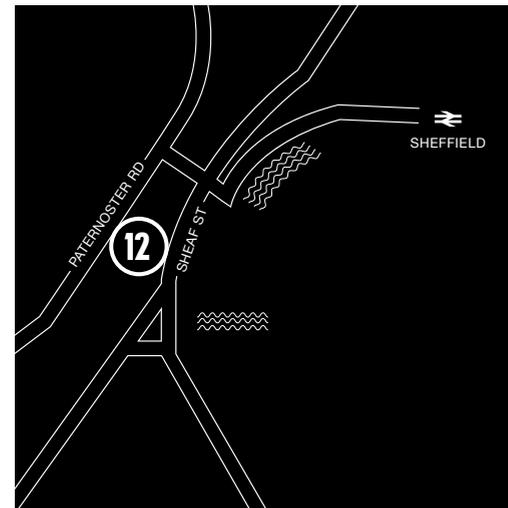
14-18 Broad St
NG1 3AL

15. GLASGOW FILM THEATRE GLASGOW

12 Rose St
G3 6RB

16. QUEEN'S FILM THEATRE BELFAST

20 University Square
BT7 1PA



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CREDITS

Director, Korean Cultural Centre UK: Hoseong Yong
 Festival Producer: Hyun Jin Cho
 Festival Coordinator: Hookeong Lee
 Programmers: Matthew Barrington, Hye-young Cho (SIWFF), Hyun Jin Cho, Ricardo Matos Cabo, Sophie Mayer, Mark Morris, Maria Palacios Cruz, Tony Rayns
 Programme Coordinator: Hyunyoung Choi
 Festival Assistant: Claire Im, Fina Kim, Sodam Oh, Ye Rin Chung
 Film Traffic Coordinator: Eunsol Lee
 Guest Coordinator: Areum Baek
 Offline Marketing & Events Coordinator: Oli Gots
 Digital Marketing Coordinator: Christopher O'Keeffe
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 Festival Documentation Coordinator: Joohyun Song
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 Festival Accounting Coordinator: Eunkyoo Lee
 Publicist: Elizabeth Benjamin

Brochure Text: Matthew Barrington, Jason Bechervaise, Anton Bitel, Hyun Jin Cho, Roger Clarke, Pierce Conran, Han Sok Jung, Philip Kemp, Hookeong Lee, Ricardo Matos Cabos, Sophie Mayer, Mark Morris, Maria Palacios Cruz, Tony Rayns, Shelagh Rowan-Legg, Hayley Scanlon, Simon Ward

Brochure Editors: Anton Bitel, Hyun Jin Cho, Hookeong Lee, Paul Wadey

Festival Official Trailer: Intermission
 Graphic Design: Julia (julia.uk.com)
 Videography: Saunghui Yoo, Hiten Media
 Photography: Kii Studios

Festival Advisors
 Tony Rayns
 Dr. Anton Bitel
 Dr. Sophie Mayer
 Dr. Mark Morris
 Simon Ward

Thanks to all of our volunteers: Sara Adelfio, Claudia Balters, Charlotte Cullen, Ildi Nagy, Richard Duffy, Melissa Hyman, Ruby James, Seohyun Jeon, Nuri Koh, Donata Miller, Beatrice Okoro, Morayo Sodipo, Emily Steele, Jhenelle White

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