LONDON KOREAN FILM FESTIVAL 2018

DOCUMENTARY FORTNIGHT 11–19 AUGUST 2018

ANOTHER WORLD WE ARE MAKING

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The London Korean Film Festival 2018 presents a very special series of screenings and events showcasing exemplary pieces of independent documentary filmmaking from Korea. Based around themes of social justice and political resistance, this unique documentary programme will see acclaimed directors Kim Dong Won and Song Yun-hyeok present their films across two weekends, joined by noted critic Nam In Young for a selection of panel discussions and in-depth conversations.

11 AUG SAT — BIRKBECK CINEMA

11:30am	*A Slice Room* (Song Yun-hyeok, 2015) + Conversation with Song Yun-hyeok and Nam In Young	p.28
1:30pm	Korean lunch provided	
2:30pm	*The Sanggyedong Olympics* (Kim Dong Won, 1988) + *The 6 Day Struggle at the Myeongdong Cathedral* (Kim Dong Won, 1997) + Conversation with Kim Dong Won and Nam In Young	p.5 p.6
5pm-6pm	Drinks Reception	

12 AUG SUN — BIRKBECK CINEMA

1:30pm	*Repatriation* (Kim Dong Won, 2003) + Conversation with Kim Dong Won and Chris Berry	p.7
4:45pm	Roundtable (Keynes Library) Participants: Nam In Young, Kim Dong Won and Song Yun-hyeok Moderator: Chris Berry	p.34
6:15pm-7:15pm	Drinks Reception	

18 AUG SAT — KCC THEATRE

3pm	*Soseongri* (Park Bae-il, 2017) + Introduction	p.31

19 AUG SUN — KCC THEATRE

3pm	*Jung Il-woo, My Friend* (Kim Dong Won, 2017) + Introduction	p.8

The 6 Day Struggle at the Myeongdong Cathedral (Kim Dong Won, 1997)

A Slice Room (Song Yun-hyeok, 2015)

Since first beginning our research for the London Korean Film Festival documentary strand back in 2015, we were struck by the impressive volume of politically-driven documentaries produced in South Korea each year. These are works dealing with current and urgent social issues, prioritising the concerns of the subjects, using filmmaking as an extension of political activism. Many of these films reflect and engage with the rapid social change and political upheaval that has taken place throughout the past few decades in South Korea, as well as the nation's long-standing tradition of activism and protest. Out of this rich culture of documentary filmmaking, we sought to highlight works that present a faithful recording of the course of events, explored through the empathetic relationship between the filmmaker and the subjects. There is no one way to consider this type of documentary filmmaking, but we have paid particular attention to the ways in which filmmakers have fostered their own personal and unique approach.

The culture of independent documentary filmmaking is understood amongst Korean film historians to have first emerged in the late 1980s, starting with a few film collectives whose aims were to document and stand against social injustice. Amongst these was a documentary production collective known as P.U.R.N. Productions, founded in 1991 by filmmaker Kim Dong Won. Kim went on to become a major figure in the Korean independent documentary scene after he made *The Sanggyedong Olympics* in 1988. What was so powerful about this film, and what inspired his fellow documentary filmmakers, was the intimacy of Kim's relationship with his subjects, as well as his approach to recording them. This is perhaps best captured through his own words: "[Our films] are products of the times. I don't think that *The Sanggyedong Olympics* is a movie I made. I made it because I was there. If I hadn't done it, someone else would have. I don't think that a documentary is a creation of a person (filmmaker). It is a co-creation with the times" (excerpt from interview with Han Dong-hyeok [2017, DMZ Docs Magazine]). Since *The Sanggyedong Olympics*, Kim has produced about twenty films together with P.U.R.N. Productions, each following the same principle of 'co-creation with the times.'

We are delighted to present a small selection of Kim's works from the past four decades: *The Sanggyedong Olympics* (1988), *The Six Day Fight in Myeongdong Cathedral* (1997), *Repatriation* (2006) and *Jung Il-woo, My Friend* (2017). Alongside this we are showing recent titles by two young filmmakers: *A Slice Room* (2015, Song Yun-hyeok) and *Soseongri* (2017, Park Bae-il). Both filmmakers have been active participants in documentary film collectives: *Ozi Film* ('remote area film') and *Docu-in* ('documentary person'). Ozi Film state "we document the people who are marginalised by our society; we want to unearth the overlooked stories that are all around us, and to highlight their value." Docu-in define their work as "an attempt to create audiovisual media for truth and hope. Docu-in express their solidarity with social movements by developing and co-creating films alongside other civil organisations, with the ultimate aim being that through their films the voices of the people will be heard more widely."

Our aim with this programme is to present exemplary pieces of independent documentary filmmaking from Korea, and provide the unique opportunity for UK audiences to gain insight into the vision of these documentary collectives, the articulation of their work and the process of their filmmaking.

Hyun Jin Cho (Film Curator, KCCUK) with Matthew Barrington (Manager & Programmer, BIMI) & Ricardo Matos Cabo (Independent Film Programmer)

FOCUS ON KIM DONG WON

Kim Dong Won is a documentary filmmaker based in South Korea. Born in 1955 in Seoul, Kim went on to study at Sogang University, majoring in Mass Communications. In 1991, Kim founded the documentary film collective P.U.R.N. Productions and has since produced and directed over thirty titles. Through the medium of documentary, Kim has focused both on exploring the lives of marginalised people and shedding light on previously-overlooked moments in history. Best known for his documentary films *Repatriation* (2004) and *63 Years On* (2008), Kim has won numerous awards for his filmmaking including the Freedom of Expression Award at the 2004 Sundance International Film Festival and the Special Jury Prize at the 2004 Busan Film Critics Awards. Kim currently works as both an assistant director and documentary filmmaker.

Filmography:

Jung Il-woo, My Friend (2017)
63 Years On (2008)
If You Were Me (2006)
Jongno, Winter (2005)
Repatriation (2003)
Tekken Family (2001)
One Man (2001)
Another World We Are Making: Haengdang-dong People 2 (1999)
The 6 Day Struggle at the Myeongdong Cathedral (1997)
We'll Be One (1995)
Haengdang-dong People (1994)
In the Forest of Media (1993)
God Saw That It Was Good (1991)
Standing on the Edge of Death (1990)
Mom and Dad, You Can Do It! (1989)
The Sanggyedong Olympics (1988)
James' May (1986)

SAT 11 AUGUST, 2:30PM
BIRKBECK CINEMA

THE SANGGYEDONG OLYMPICS
상계동 올림픽

DIRECTOR, CINEMATOGRAPHER, EDITING:
KIM DONG WON
1988 / 27 MIN / U-MATIC ON DVD / COLOUR / ENG SUBS
PRINT SOURCE: CINEMA DAL
CONTACT: CINEMADAL@CINEMADAL.COM

1988 was the year of the Seoul Olympics, the very first high-profile international event to ever be held in South Korea. Under the auspices of preparing for the games, the government planned and pursued 'redevelopment' projects in 50 selected areas of the capital. Sanggyedong, a neighbourhood located on the Northeastern outskirts of Seoul, and home to more than 1,500 families, was one such area. In 1986 forced demolition began on a plot where 160 families still resided. The community resisted, urging they be given the time to find alternative housing prior to demolition; in the process numbers of people were harassed, arrested, and four local residents were killed. Following their eviction from Sanggyedong, they continued to suffer at the hands of the government due to their failure to follow 'legitimate procedure' by attempting to rebuild their homes elsewhere; their actions did not fit in with the image of South Korea the government wanted to project to the outside world. In *The Sanggyedong Olympics*, the camera records the treatment handed down to the people of Sanggyedong, and their continuing strife after being displaced to Myeongdong and Bucheon. The film gives us a glimpse of the courage of these individuals, and their unwillingness to give up their struggle against the systematic oppression they faced, simply for wanting to rebuild their homes and re-establish their community.

The film is credited as "Produced by the Sanggyedong Community," and narrated from the point of view of the community by one of the residents themselves. In little under 30 minutes, it offers a powerful account of the residents' three-year-long struggle. Kim Dong Won initially planned to stay for just one day when he first went to the site in 1985, after being asked by those from the neighbourhood to come and record their fight; he instead ended up living amongst them as part of the community for over three years. As such, the film demonstrates how the process of documentary filmmaking can become an integral part of the lives of both the subject and filmmaker, and how filmmaking as a process has the power to change the lives of those involved.

Hyun Jin Cho

SAT 11 AUGUST, 2:30PM
BIRKBECK CINEMA

THE 6 DAY STRUGGLE AT THE MYEONGDONG CATHEDRAL
명성, 그 6일의 기록

DIRECTOR: KIM DONG WON
CINEMATOGRAPHER: KIM DONG WON, LEE SANGYEOP
1997 / 74 MIN / DIGI BETA ON DVD / COLOUR / ENG SUBS
PRINT SOURCE: CINEMA DAL
CONTACT: CINEMADAL@CINEMADAL.COM

From the evening of the 10th to the afternoon of 15th June 1987, hundreds of student protesters and ordinary citizens found themselves having to take refuge from riot police; what followed was a sit-in protest at Seoul's Myeongdong Cathedral. Located in the main shopping district in the centre of the city, Myeongdong Cathedral is the seat of the Archbishop of Seoul, and a key symbol of Roman Catholicism in Korea. That evening marked the beginning of the *June Democracy Movement*, which broke out across the country over the course of the next 19 days. In the preceding months, a number of incidents began to build animosity between the Korean people and the government, most notably the case of student protester Park Jong-chul's torture and subsequent death. However, it was President Chun Doo-hwan's announcement of Roh Tae-woo as the next presidential candidate, largely perceived as handing Roh the presidency and obstructing the path to democracy, that finally triggered large-scale protests. The Myeongdong Cathedral sit-in protest ended on the 15th of June, after the participants, including the Seoul Student Federation and the Myeongdong Cathedral authorities, voted narrowly to end their protest. Despite this, the protest is considered to be a significant event in the struggle for democracy, as it provided inspiration for Korea's mass-organised civil rights movements that followed.

This film, made between 1996 and 1997, is an attempt to reflect on and make collective sense of the course of events that took place across those six days in Myeongdong Cathedral. It weaves its narrative through a mixture of film footage and newsreel, along with interviews with protestors looking back on the events more than a decade later. Film footage and eye witness accounts reveal the development of the protest, the hopes and fears of the protesters, as well as the political background to the event. Above all, the film focuses on the sudden dispersal of this very symbolic protest in Myeongdong, a protest which captured attention not only in Korea, but across the world.

Hyun Jin Cho

SUN 12 AUGUST, 1:30PM
BIRKBECK CINEMA

REPATRIATION
송환

DIRECTOR, EDITING: KIM DONG WON
CINEMATOGRAPHY: KIM DONG WON, KIM TAE-IL, BYEON YEONGJU, MUN JEONG-HYUN, CHANG YEONGGIL, GONG EUNJU, JEONG CHANGYEONG
2003 / 148 MIN / DV 6MM ON MOV / COLOUR / ENG SUBS
PRINT SOURCE: CINEMA DAL
CONTACT: CINEMADAL@CINEMADAL.COM

In the Spring of 1992, filmmaker Kim Dong Won met Cho Chang-son and Kim Seak-hyoung, two long-term North Korean political prisoners, recently released from the jail where they had spent thirty years accused of espionage. Known as the 'unconverted,' many of those captured refused to renounce their patriotism and communist loyalties, and were thus subjected to dehumanising conditions, and sometimes torture. Upon release, a number were refused the right to return to their country of origin. Instead, these individuals were generally looked down upon by South Korean society, forced to face a strong and prevailing anti-communist sentiment. They were offered almost no help from the government to integrate and lived in extreme poverty; some of the only support they did receive came in the form of solidarity networks that helped them transition into society. Kim Dong Won, who was himself involved in these activist movements, befriended Cho and Kim, as well as a number of other North Korean political prisoners, filming them across more than a decade. The film is a strong and often moving account of the trials these men faced after release, as they try to reconstruct what little is left of their lives. It reveals also the personal conflicts and doubts that arose when political tensions between the north and south eased up towards the end of the 1990s, bringing hope for reunification and the chance to return home. While holding close to his principle of filmmaking as community building, Kim Dong Won adds a personal and self-reflective tone, as he narrates in the first person his own experience with these men, sharing with us his own doubts and prejudices, hopes, and his reflections on both ideology and solidarity. Regarded as one of the most important documentaries ever made in South Korea, *Repatriation* is a timely film about the consequences of the conflict between these two divided nations.

Ricardo Matos Cabo

SUN 19 AUGUST, 3PM
KCC THEATRE

JUNG IL-WOO, MY FRIEND
내 친구 정일우

DIRECTOR, EDITING: KIM DONG WON
2017 / 85MIN / HD MOV / COLOUR / ENG SUBS
PRINT SOURCE: CINEMA DAL
CONTACT: CINEMADAL@CINEMADAL.COM

Kim Dong Won's most recent film to date is a heartfelt tribute to Father Jung Il-woo, a North-American Jesuit priest who dedicated his life to political activism and charity work amongst the poor urban and peasant communities in South Korea. The film follows the path of this man from his arrival in Korea in the 1950s, through to a life committed to South Korea's poorest people and to fighting against political injustice. This biographical portrait is also a film about the communities Father Jung Il-woo worked with, and the strong ties of friendship and solidarity that developed between them. Amassing interviews and personal testimonies, together with a wealth of photographs amassed from the protagonist's life, the film paints an engaging portrait of this individual, while alluding more generally to the social struggles South Korea has faced over the last decades. The film reflects too on the lasting influence Father Jung had on Kim Dong Won's own life and work, and how notions of empathy and friendship are essential in overcoming the hardships faced by these communities each and every day of their lives.

Ricardo Matos Cabo

FIFTEEN YEARS OF COMMITTED DOCUMENTARIES IN KOREA:

FROM *THE SANGGYEDONG OLYMPICS*

TO *REPATRIATION*

Nam In Young

This text was originally published in Documentary Box #25 (ed. Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival) as a part of a series of articles addressing the interrelation between documentary and reality in reference to documentarists, their subjects, audiences and outlets (television, distribution companies, film festivals) from various cultural and ethical vantage points.

"The important thing is not film itself but what is provoked by film."
- Fernando Solanas[1]

Many researchers and filmmakers exploring the relationship between social movements and film have focused on documentary film. Documentary and the democratization of society—and the larger question of how documentary affects the process of social change—have given rise to many debates, but clear answers have yet to be provided from either the academy or the documentarists themselves. Jane Gaines asks what the grounds are for arguing that documentary films actually produce social change. She points out that the legacy of Griersonian documentaries such as *Drifters* (dir. John Grierson, 1929) and *Housing Problems* (dirs. Edgar Anstey and Arthur Elton, 1935), known as pioneers of committed documentary, was inherited by the modern television documentary whose "balanced" point of view is in essence no point of view at all, and that Grierson's works were never shown in the context of the social struggle.[2] Brian Winston points out that considering the extremely limited number of people who saw Grierson's documentaries, they could hardly have had any influence, much less have created social change.[3]

The myth of documentary's legitimacy as an agent of social change has to do with the notion that documentary is a particular type of film that allows for strong argument on social reality. The idea that documentary has such power is based on the special relationship between the documented images and the reality they recreate. Because documentary records actual history and living people through the camera, it is considered to have an ontological relationship with reality. This indexicality of documentary plays an important role in the truth argument. Bill Nichols points out that just as the realism of fiction film is based on the suspension of disbelief of the reality it constructs, the realism of documentary is based on the reliability of the reality it deals with. We in the audience feel that the world represented by documentary is part of the historical world that we share and live in. Due to the abilities of video cameras and audio equipment to faithfully record objects, we see people and things that we also see in the world outside of the film. This quality alone provides a foundation for belief.[4] This characteristic of documentary images is also what creates the difference in spectatorship. The fact that the reality recreated by documentary begins on the same plane as the world the spectators live in interferes with their engagement with the film as pure imagination or entertainment and makes them relate the story to the knowledge of the world they belong to. The commentators and interviewees often engage in direct conversation

with the audience, thus confirming the spectators' position. This convention of documentary has contributed to the myth that documentary allows for expression of strong arguments and initiates changes in the audience's behavior and perception of reality.

Even if documentary's influence in bringing about social change remains an unproven myth, I still find documentaries charged with the directors' questions about social reality and their desire for social change very interesting. To name just a few, the works of Dziga Vertov, non-Western documentaries that can be categorized as "Third Cinema," and documentaries that express marginalized voices in Western society inevitably work with and struggle against the "truth." By questioning the "truth," documentary has made us reflect on the language of existing documentaries and opened up the space to construct alternative constructions of truth. In this regard, the positivist questioning of whether or not documentary has influence on social change should be altered. The proposition that documentaries can change the world easily leads into the trap of believing that one can "enlighten" the audience. It also makes one accept without question certain documentaries' practice of separating the filmmaker and the filmed; the filmmaker is subject as invisible controller while the person or group filmed are objects of spectacle. Thus the audience members become consumers of the objects and at the same time become objects themselves who are to be enlightened by the filmmaker. Thomas Waugh proposes defining committed documentary not as documentaries that change the world but as documentaries produced with the progressive desire to change the world. Such desire has shifted the power relations stemming from the separation of the filmmaker and the filmed, and has become the driving force behind the exploration of mutual and horizontal communication methods.

Likewise, questions about the indexicality of film and documentary realism—often criticized as being naive or in the worst cases as being ideological trickery—should also be couched differently. When a marginalized group desires social change, how can their conviction and commitment be strengthened using the medium of realist documentary? Alexandra Juhasz suggests that realism has a much more multiple and pluralistic political effect than it was given credit for in past decades. The form of realism can be altered according to how the film is financed, how the equipment is used, and sometimes how the film colludes with power or capital. For example, "realistic" images of women talking about their experiences in relation to the discourse that examines the relationship among new opinions, new subjectivities, the flexible political potential of individuals, collective identity and collective action can become a strategy for reconstructing women's identities.[5]

The important point in making such documentaries is the relationship between the subject, or filmmaker, and the object of the film. The subject is not a hidden power that controls images behind the camera but a partner engaged in horizontal dialogue with people who want to make their existence visible

and make their voices heard through the documentary's images. In this kind of production process, the hierarchy between the subject and object collapses, and it becomes impossible to distinguish between the two. Rather than remaining in a subject-object relationship, they become subjects and partners in creating meaning through documentary images.

Kim Dong Won's two works—*The Sanggyedong Olympics* (1988) and *Repatriation* (2003)—provide interesting examples in exploring the above-mentioned issues. These two works are probably the best known Korean independent documentaries both at home and abroad. *The Sanggyedong Olympics* deals with the urban poor's struggle against the government's campaign to evacuate them and clean up Seoul for the 1988 Olympic games. The film went on to become the touchstone of Korean independent documentary. *Repatriation*, which came fifteen years later, is the story of former North Korean spies who were sent to South Korea on espionage missions but were captured and imprisoned for most of their lives for refusing to denounce their communist ideals despite temptation and threats from the South Korean government. Again, these works mark a shift in Korean independent documentary. Both films deal with the theme of community identity, but their perspectives in viewing that issue are different. In this paper I will point out the shifts represented by these two works in the past fifteen years of Korean Independent documentary films and explore the meaning of documentary subjectivity.

THE SANGGYEDONG OLYMPICS AS A COMMITTED DOCUMENTARY

It would be safe to say that the documentary genre was "born" in the Korean film scene in the late 1980s. Never before had documentaries made such a sudden and massive appearance and captured such avid interest. Documentary elements are not limited to just works that are categorized as documentaries. They can be found for example in such fiction films as *A Blue Bird* (Seoul Film Collective, 1985), in which the actual peasants reenact their lives in front of the camera, and *The Night Before Strike* (dir. Jang Dong-hong/Jangsankotmae, 1989), which was filmed at an office with workers who were actually on strike. There are many cases of short fiction films making use of documentary footage, for example the theatrically released feature film *Aje-aje Bara-aje* (dir. Im Kwon-taek, 1989), which used newsreel footages of student demonstrations in telling the story of a young monk. So why documentaries? In particular, why did so many documentary images concentrate on sites of social conflict such as workers' strikes or demonstrations?

Many scholars have pointed out that realism is the first tool that oppressed groups rely on in their struggle against hostile stereotypes or lies. This is because realistic reproductions are effective in showing politically important but hidden issues. As Jane Gaines points out, "Leftist media workers cannot af-

ford to undertake an abstract analysis or make an educational statement about representation if it is politically imperative that they make a representational reference to a 'brutal actuality' in order to counteract its ideological version."[6] This helps us understand the nature of documentaries in Korean society, at least in the 1980s.

It could be said that 1980s Korean society was an era when "cruel reality" was keenly felt by the people. It was an era when social crisis rose to the surface in earnest. The Park Chung-hee government came into power in 1960 through a coup d'état that trampled on all democratic procedures. Park's long dictatorial reign gave birth to political and economic subordination to foreign powers, the divestment of all democratic rights by military authoritarianism, the expansion of monopolistic capital, and the worsening of oppressive labor management relations. Whenever circumstances threatened to weaken his power base, Park resorted to oppressive physical control and exercised all-out legal and political control over the freedom of expression and the press. As a result, social movements, which usually worked underground, simultaneously exploded onto the surface. With the Gwangju Uprising in 1980, the social movement became a mass movement, and with the June Uprising and Great Workers' Struggle in 1987, it became a people's movement embraced by not only intellectuals and students but also workers, peasants, the urban poor and others. The space was created for mass struggles, and workers' strikes and protests spread nationwide. From the late 1980s, such mass struggles became the core indicator of the direction of Korean society's present and future.

The statement that Korean independent documentary was "born" in the 1980s holds true not because there were no documentaries before that but because of the inseparable links between Korean independent documentary and the above-mentioned historical backdrop. The emergence of mass space and mass organizations gave rise to the need for methods of mass communication and sparked an interest in the mass appeal of visual media. Beginning with the Seoul Film Collective in 1982, several small film collectives were born in the late 1980s, including *Film Production Hankyoreh*, *Labor News Production*, and *Jangsankotmae*. The way these groups worked and existed marked a new trend in the landscape of Korean film. The majority of their members were not part of the existing film industry but university students or graduates who had grown up under the influence of the culture movement that had spread based on resistant nationalism and community culture theories. Community culture theory put forward community as a healthy lifestyle alternative to corrupt capitalist culture, and film collectives were the result of applying such theory to creative organizations. They considered their filmic activity to be a part of social movements. Mass social struggles paved the way for filmmakers in such film collectives to construct alternative community images. From 1987 onwards, when mass struggles went into full swing, works produced by the film activists concentrated on "documenting" the reality of the struggle.

The central events in such works were mass rallies and demonstrations. Large-scale protests and rallies became indexes in gauging the people's discontent with state power and structural contradictions and their desire to change those power relations. Documentaries were warmly welcomed not so much for the rational appeal of the films themselves but because of their close ties with the times when the people's desire for social reform was at its peak.

It is important to note that films produced and distributed for education or propaganda purposes in social movements became the starting point of Korean independent documentary. Such activities became the established method of video activism, and even now numerous independent documentaries are being produced and distributed as part of this video activism. Rather than concentrating on the artistic aspects of filmmaking, video activism strives to horizontally disperse the power wielded by the media in the area of information sharing. Thus, the key issue is how communities of social others who have been marginalized by media power can organize the media for themselves.[7] Korean activist video can be divided into different types depending on how the filmmaker and communities of social others relate. First there are films where the filmmaker or production team collaborates with the community in the entire process including planning, production (filming and editing) and distribution. Examples would be *Battle Line* (Documentary Film & Video Makers Group, 1991) co-produced with the Hyundai Heavy Industries trade union, and *One Step at a Time* (dir. Tae Jun-jik/Labor News Production, 1999), co-produced with the Chunggu-seongshim Hospital trade union. *One Step at a Time* documents the unethical attempts of the hospital management in hiring gangsters to break up the hospital workers' strike. Footage filmed by the workers themselves plays a pivotal role in the documentary. The second case consists of films produced by social groups or local communities themselves after they learn production skills and techniques from independent documentary filmmakers. Examples are works shown on independent internet broadcasting station *Workers' Voices*, the *Labor Film Festival*, *Citizen Film* and *Video Festival* and so on. The third case is where the filmmaker is commissioned by a social movement group or civic group and plans and produces a work together with that group. After the film is completed, the group becomes the main vehicle for distributing the film. Works included in this third case are *People in a Flood of Media* (co-produced by P.U.R.N. Productions and Christian Academy, 1995), *Haengdan-dong People* (1994) and its sequel *Another World We Are Making: Haengdang-dong People 2* (co-produced by P.U.R.N. Productions and the Catholic Association for the Urban Poor, 2000), *Shoot the Sun by Lyric* (co-produced by Seoul Visual Collective and Coalition of Cultural Diversity in Moving Images, 1999), and *Always Dream of Tomorrow* (produced by Korean Women Workers Association, 2001). The fourth case is where the filmmaker becomes a member of the community and makes the film while living with the community. For example, the filmmaker of *I Am Happy* (dir. Ryu Mi-rye,

2000) became a member of the community she filmed by working as a teacher for mentally disabled adults going through occupational rehabilitation. As for *The Old Miner's Song* (dir. Lee Mee-young, An Se-jeong, and Yoo Hong-gu, 1999), which deals with the closure of the mines in Sabuk, and *Maehyangri in USA* (dir. Go-an Won-seok, 2001) which portrays the controversies surrounding the US Army's bombing training range in Korea, the filmmaker didn't play specific roles as members of the community but lived on a long-term basis with the local residents. In such cases, the production process is more important than the resulting product. The participation, interaction and sharing of meaning through visual media helps each person involved reconstruct the meaning of community and heighten his or her sense of self.

Sanggyedong Olympics, which Kim Dong Won made while living with the residents who were fighting to keep their homes, can be regarded as the prototype of Korean activist video. The film is is part three of the *Demolition of Sanggyedong* series, part one of which was a newsreel-style video of the three-day demolition of Sanggyedong slum area in October 1986. Part two shows the process of forced evacuation and the violence of the thugs hired by the developers to suppress residents' resistance. Part three (*Sanggyedong Olympics*) is a synthesis of films used in parts one and two as well as new footage, and it has a longer running time. It follows the lives of the residents who were driven out to the outskirts of Seoul but who remained united as a community in their struggle against forced evacuation.

The Sanggyedong community was made up of 200 tenants as well as priests, nuns and university students who lived with them. The group fought for over a year. Kim became a member of the community while running an after-school study program for children. The process the filmmaker went through as he became a full-fledged member of the community can be seen in how the narration changes through the demolition of Sanggyedong series. The most obvious change can be found in who did the narration and from whose point of view it was done. For part one, Kim wrote the narration script and read it himself. He wrote it in the third person, from an observer's point of view. For part two, the narration was written in the first person and read by one of the residents. And for part three, Kim wrote the narration and had it reviewed by the residents. It was written in the first person but was read by a resident instead of Kim. Kim explained that by part two, he had become too close to the residents to write the narration script in the third person, but he still didn't have the confidence to write it himself in the first person as a member of the community. By the time he was making part three however, he had become confident enough to write the narration in the first person. The changes in the narration show how the filmmaker relates to the filmed and how this relationship evolves. In part one, the filmmaker is positioned outside the community he is filming. The line separating the filmmaker and the filmed is also clear. In part two, the two collaborate in making the film. But little time had passed between the making of

parts one and two, and so in part two, the filmmaker and the filmed did not go beyond dividing up the work to take on mutually non-interfering roles. In the process, however, the residents begin to shift from being filmed objects separate from the filmmaker to being the subjects in charge of production. In part three, the filmmaker is no longer positioned outside the community; Kim, with camera in hand, has become a Sanggyedong resident himself. Sometimes he gets a fellow resident to do the filming. Their collective voice gains legitimacy through this experience of mutual permeation between the filmmaker and the filmed.

The frequent images of children in *The Sanggyedong Olympics* are typical proof that the camera has become part and parcel of the community. The children often become aware of the presence of the camera and look directly into the lens as an expression of intimacy, or walk towards the camera as if approaching a close family member. To the children, the gaze of the camera is not some unfamiliar, fascinating or formidable contact with an outsider but a welcome encounter with their study group teacher, the guy next door, or their friend's mom. Thus the separation or boundary between the camera and the filmed collapses. The credits at the end of the documentary do not list the names of the production team but merely state: "Produced by the residents of Sanggyedong fighting against evacuation." More importantly, the production of this documentary had a direct influence on the residents' struggle.

I first witnessed how ladies scuffling with the riot police would suddenly turn timid when the police started taking photos. Then when I started filming the police, it was the police's turn to lose morale. That's how I experienced for myself why they say the camera is a symbol of power.[8]

At night, when I showed the residents what I had filmed of their struggle during the day, the response was positive. It seemed the residents were encouraged to deepen their insights by seeing themselves featured on film. When the police and gangsters turned up to force them out, the residents' morale slipped. But when the camera started rolling, they would pick up the courage to move forward. It seemed that filming and being filmed gave them a sense of pride.[9]

The unique method of voice-over narration highlights even more clearly the characteristic of community-made documentary. In his critique of Joris Ivens's *The Spanish Earth* (1937), which is regarded as the pioneering work of committed documentary, Thomas Waugh discusses the narration done by the author Ernest Hemingway. What most shocked the audience at that time was the personification evident in the narration. The low, rough, and candid voice running through the film adds an aura of personal intervention. The narrator's voice was in sharp contrast to the famous and much-imitated narration in *The March of Time* series (1935), in which a professional radio performer read the narration in a so-called "voice of God" that was oily smooth and ringing with authority. Rather than remaining just an anonymous voice, the

narrator in *The Spanish Earth* becomes a vivid character and a subjective observer and participant in the events happening on the screen.[10] The television documentaries that were the mainstream in Korea in the 1980s also used omnipotent and authoritarian narration read in a professional radio performer's smooth voice. Political documentaries in particular adopted a male narrator—a practice that can be seen as a reliance on patriarchal authority. In contrast, the narration in *The Sanggyedong Olympics* is read by a woman whose voice is coarse, unpracticed, and far from authoritarian.[11] Her voice sometimes rings with shame at having to live in makeshift tents at Myungdong Cathedral "like homeless beggars" after being evacuated from Sanggyedong, and sometimes trembles with outrage at the city authorities who refuse to let the residents to build new homes on the hard-gained land in Bucheon.

The narration in *The Sanggyedong Olympics* is read by a female resident of Sanggyedong. Her voice-over narration expresses anger at the Olympic rhetoric. She says, "The Olympic Games is touted as the glorious triumph of the Korean people, a festival of humankind, but to the residents of the over two hundred poor neighborhoods including Sanggyedong, which are being threatened with evacuation, the Olympics is something we wish didn't even exist." The subject word "we" used in the narration constructs the narrator not as an individual but as a collective subject. She is a witness of the collective experience of the residents' community and the spokesperson of their opinions. This constructed subjectivity functions as a sort of filter in relaying to the audience the contradictions in social reality. Throughout the story, we perceive the recreated reality through the subjects' voice and gaze. Constructing the narration through a collective speaker in the first person can be found in other independent documentaries made in the same period as *The Sanggyedong Olympics*, such as *Battle Line* (Documentary Film & Video Makers Group, 1991) and *For Our Song That Will Echo through Oakpo Bay* (Documentary Film & Video Makers Group, 1991). By adopting narrations read by a collective voice in the first person, these works share the common intention of transforming groups forced by power relations in society and in image reproduction to become "others" into active subjects of the social movement.[12]

However, one unique aspect of *The Sanggyedong Olympics* cannot be found in other documentaries of the time which were made for the purposes of education or propaganda. The people's fervent desire for democracy, which gushed out like water released from a dam, was thwarted through the brutal suppression of the Gwangju Uprising in May 1980, and this tragic experience triggered a renewed awakening within the movement. New emphasis was placed on a "sense of purpose" in organizing and leading the people's aspirations for democracy, and thus there was a strong tendency to emphasize the initiative and leadership of the people or working class. Marxism was introduced when needed to serve this "purposeful" social revolution, and the trend was accompanied by a departure from a previous era driven by humanist

and nationalist paradigms. This sense of purpose is the salient characteristic of the majority of documentaries produced in the late 1980s. The obsessive need to show the optimistic prospects of the movement resulted in a purpose-driven narrative that concludes the story with the symbolic victory of the people or working class and a romanticized schema that turns the people from victim into hero. In contrast, *The Sanggyedong Olympics* veers away from this romantic hero schema. Although it regards the people as subjects of the social movement and follows the structure of conflict between the community and the enemy outside the community, the narrative is a series of struggle after struggle with no end in sight. The film opts for an open-ended conclusion in that although the Sanggyedong residents move to their newfound home, they still find themselves locked in a tense face-off with the authorities who want to block their settlement. The significance constructed in this portrayal of the community is not ideological legitimacy but ethical legitimacy. The ethics here call on the audience to show concern for people deprived of the minimum rights to guarantee their livelihoods. It is for the same reason that the film shows not just the residents fighting off hired thugs but also their everyday lives sharing food and looking after their children. The struggle is just part and parcel of their lives, and the value that is emphasized through their lives is the sense of sharing and affection born of the shared experience of the community, which of course the producer has embraced as his own. Such values can never be bought with capital and power. To this day, more than fifteen years since it was produced, *The Sanggyedong Olympics* continues to be a source of discussion and inspiration for documentary producers and audiences. More than anything else, this is because *The Sanggyedong Olympics* faithfully fulfills the classic proposition posed to committed documentaries: "Show us life."

FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER THE BIRTH OF COMMITTED DOCUMENTARY: REPATRIATION

After making *The Sanggyedong Olympics*, Kim went on to live in other neighborhoods where residents were forced to evacuate their homes, and made *Haengdan-dong People* (1994) and its sequel *Another World We Are Making: Haengdang-dong People 2* (2000). These two works also deal with the theme of community identity; the description of an alternative economic system that the residents experiment with introduces the audience to a community life of economic and cultural sharing that could serve as an alternative to the capitalistic values of proprietary and competition. In 1991, Kim founded P.U.R.N. Productions Production, a collective dedicated to the making of documentaries. Together with Kim Tae-il and Oh Jung-hoon, Kim began to focus on the issue of former North Korean spies who had to endure long-term imprisonment for political reasons. *Repatriation*, which was released in 2003, is an indication of Kim's enduring interest in prisoners of conscience as well as a deepening

of his questions about communal identity and human life that began with *The Sanggyedong Olympics*.

Repatriation was shown to the world in 2003 through a special screening at the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival. In Korea, it received a warm response as the closing film of the 2003 Seoul Independent Documentary Festival. At the beginning of the next year, it received the "Freedom of Expression" award at the Sundance Film Festival, and was then invited to various film festivals and seminars around the world including the Amsterdam International Documentary Film Festival, Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, and the Robert Flaherty Film Seminar. In Korea, it received funding from the Korean Film Council to be released through the art film cinema network Art Plus at eight cinemas around the country. It was the first time for an independent documentary film such as this to receive a nationwide theatrical release. The cinema distribution was jointly managed with Indistory, a distributor specializing in independent films. Along with the nationwide theatrical release, P.U.R.N. Productions also adopted the traditional distribution method for independent documentaries in Korea. It contacted local social groups and schools to organize screening events, and P.U.R.N. Productions members personally visited groups or schools to deliver the videotape for screening. The screenings were often followed by a discussion with the audience on the themes of the film.

In a region still divided and caught up in the political and military tension between the two Koreas, with the South Korean mentality yet to be free from the stranglehold of anti-communist ideology, the interest garnered by a documentary dealing with former North Korean spies is quite a phenomenon. *Repatriation* was released in 2003, but its production actually began in the early 1990s. Kim became a neighbor with a couple of old men who had just been released after serving long sentences for working as North Korean spies in South Korea. Kim edited the film footage he had compiled and kept while maintaining close ties with these old men for more than ten years and pieced together his memories of those years to produce *Repatriation*. There were no concrete plans from the beginning to produce a documentary; Kim was just a neighbor meeting up with other neighbors, and most of the filming was done during personal gatherings. In this sense, *Repatriation* can be seen as an extended home movie. The voice-over narration in the first person bares Kim's inner thoughts including his prejudices, uncertainties and affection for the old men, lending a diary-like feel to the documentary. *Repatriation* is an important case study of how a personal essay combines with public discourse and goes on to generate a political influence that moves beyond that public discourse.

The Sanggyedong Olympics is also a political essay based on a home movie of sorts, but the filmmaker does not reveal himself as a real-life individual within the images he recreates. The subject "we" in the narration emphasizes the collective homogeneity within the community locked in confrontation with

an outside enemy. On the other hand, in *Repatriation*, the filmmaker appears not as part of a community but as an individual. Through an autobiographical account, the filmmaker discovers an individual self that is in ideological or empirical conflict with the "self" constructed by the collective consciousness. Unlike in conventional documentaries, which disguise subjectivity as the ideology of objectivity or project the self onto the other, in works such as *Repatriation*, it is impossible to separate the subject and object in the documentary—the self is just another "other." The personal character of *Repatriation* becomes an important political weapon in challenging the stranglehold of anti-communist ideology.

The intrusion of the personal is not unique to *Repatriation*; it is a phenomenon that has gradually spread among Korean independent documentaries since the 1990s. In order to understand this phenomenon, we need to look into the changes experienced by Korean documentary in the context of social changes that happened since the 1990s. The first civilian government came into power in 1993, local autonomy began in 1995, and an autonomous civil society emerged together with the "new social movements." In the process, the tense relationship between citizens and state power also relaxed considerably. The super-oppressive nature of state power in the 1980s led the subjects of resistance to embrace as truth an epic heroism that rationalized the sacrifice of the individual for the good of the community and a Marxist ideology that emphasized the historical inevitability of social movement. But the shift in social power, together with the collapse of socialist systems in Eastern Europe, paved the way for discourses that cast doubts on the "revolutionary truth" that used to generate such powerful moral unity in the social movement of the 1980s.

Film collectives also began to break away from the practice of equating documentary with educational or propaganda films to regard documentary as a proper film genre. The emergence of groups specializing in documentary such as P.U.R.N. Productions, led by Kim Dong Won, and Vista, which produced the Murmuring series (1995-1999) under the initiative of Byun Youngjoo, are symptoms of this shift. The changes also became evident in production methods. In the case of Seoul Visual Collective and Vista, the previous method of involving all members in the entire production process was replaced by division of labor with different members specializing in planning, directing and filming in order to enhance the films' quality. P.U.R.N. Productions tried out a lone man production system in which each member took charge of the entire production process by her or himself. The wide range of film festivals that were founded since the late 1990s opened up channels for the reception of independent documentaries merging with art films or auteur cinema as meaningful acts of individual expression. In addition, the spread and popularization of digital technology provided the opportunity for individuals to free themselves from the constraints of professionalism to engage in diverse experiments with format. The new social movements focused on the various

oppressive mechanisms that affect everyday life, while recognizing individual differences among subjects rather than uniting all the subjects into a single identity, and shifting the paradigm of knowledge to the question of how these subjects make contact with one another.

Another new trend that emerged on the terrain of independent documentary since the late 1990s is on the same track as the changes described above. This new trend is characterized by the emergence of the so-called personal documentary and a new perspective on the subjectivity that conventional documentary used to avoid. In Korea, personal documentary includes two slightly different discourses. Films that adopt an autobiographical format to give new interpretation to the meaning of what was traditionally regarded as personal, and films that do not disguise the subjective nature of documentary but reveal the filmmaker's epistemological limitations in the text are both considered personal documentary. Documentaries similar to the Murmuring series and *Three-Legged Crow* (dir. Oh Jung-hoon/P.U.R.N. Productions, 1997), where the filmmaker appears on film as a voice or in person, did exist before the 1990s, but in such documentaries the filmmakers' presence was either a remnant of the production process that they couldn't help but leave on film as they made their observations, or a modifier used to describe the object. In contrast, the filmmakers' presence in personal documentary is neither a flaw indicative of the incompleteness of the filming process nor a descriptive modifier but a strategic choice made in order to construct meaning.

A strategy like this works in a variety of ways. First, there are films that question the very epistemological basis of documentary's representation through an examination of format. In such documentaries, the production process itself becomes a pivotal theme. Representative examples would be *Kaleidoscope* (dir. Kim Lee-jin, 2001), *Leave Us, Alone* (dir. Park Ki-bok, 1999) and *Making Sun-Dried Red Peppers* (dir. Jang Hee-sun, 1999). These filmmakers ignore the traditional positioning of independent documentary as the initiator of solemn and earnest discourse and instead introduce humor and satire into their works. In addition, documentaries such as *Patriot Game* (dirs. Lee Kyeong-soon and Choi-ha Dong-ha, 2001), *Fuckumentary* (dir. Choi Jin-sung, 2001) and *The World Cup of Their Own* (dir. Choi Jin-sung, 2002) borrow narrative styles from other genres such as fiction films, music videos, animations and commercials to create an ironic effect with humor and satire. Through such ironical mechanisms, the filmmaker weakens the rhetorical authority of documentaries based on explanations and observations, while making political comments such as a deconstruction of the ideology of nationalism. Second, this choice works as a strategy to reconstruct autobiographical works as political within a personal sphere. Examples would be *Gina Kim's Video Diary* (dir. Kim Gina, 2002), which portrays the filmmaker's own body as a sphere that has internalized social oppression, *My Father* (dir. Kim Hee-chul, 2002), which interprets the filmmaker's relationship with his family as colonialism

and patriarchal power at work, and *Family Project—House of a Father* (dir. Cho Yun-kyung, 2002). Abnormal characters and conditions such as anorexia, a father obsessed with militarism, and a father who has run away from home ironically make one explore the boundaries of so-called normal culture and knowledge. The third case is where the filmmaker's voice or person is inserted into the text not as a ubiquitous self that hides any specific political position but as an individual who vacillates within the forces at play in the social construction of meaning. Such traits are evident in *Patriot Game as well as Rip it Up* (dir. Lee Mario, 2001), *I Wanted to Be a Documentarist* (dir. Lee Eun-a, 2002) and *The King and His Sculptor* (dir. Whang Cheol-min, 2002). In *Repatriation*, the filmmaker Kim Dong Won reveals his ideological limitations in understanding the long-term prisoners, and then goes on show his interactions with these men beyond this ideological terrain, which then leads him to doubt the authenticity of knowledge that had been controlling his consciousness.

Michael Renov points out that the participant-observer method of cultural ethnography documentary fails to break away from the dichotomy of self vs. other and subject vs. object that had long been used as a tool of self-defense and conquest by the West. Based on this critique, Renov introduces "domestic ethnography," which adopts a unique method that works across the boundary between "self" and "the other." Domestic ethnography is literally a documentation of the filmmaker's family or people with whom the filmmaker shares close ties as a result of longstanding everyday interactions. In domestic ethnography, the filmmaker is closely related to the object through community or blood ties, which makes the documentation a complicated process of creating implications regarding "the other." This kind of co-implication is a determining characteristic of domestic ethnography. Co-implication refers to the complexities and mutual permeation between the identities of the subjects/objects. Domestic ethnography can be seen as a kind of supplement to autobiography. It is a vehicle of self-reflection, functioning as a means to construct self-knowledge by relying on other members of the family or community.[13]

In *Repatriation*, Kim Dong Won regularly meets two old men named Kim Seok-hyung and Cho Chang-son, former North Korean spies who spent half of their lives behind bars in South Korea. In the early seventies during Park Chung-hee's rule, while these men were still in prison, the government ordered them to publicly denounce their communist beliefs in order to prove the superiority of the South Korean regime. But these two men remained "unconverted," refusing to give up their beliefs in the face of physical torture and pacification. The film spans the ten years beginning in 1992, when Kim meets the two men fresh out of prison, and ending in 2002, when Kim's attempt at a reunion with the two men after they are repatriated to North Korea is aborted just before fruition. In the space of those ten years, a civilian government took over state power from military dictatorship, unconverted communist prisoners were released in phases, the thawing of North-South relations reached its peak

with the inter-Korean summit talk, former North Korean spies were repatriated, North Korea went through a food crisis, and the US continued its blockade policy vis-a-vis Pyongyang. Such historic events in inter-Korean relations overlap with the changes in the personal relationship that Kim has with the neighboring Cho Chang-son.

The film begins with Kim looking back on the first time he met the two men in 1992. A priest wanted to bring the two men—who were living in a free sanitorium—to Kim's neighborhood and asked Kim to be the driver. Kim took his camera along out of habit. In the scene showing their first encounter, Kim is sitting between the two men holding a microphone. Through his voice-over narration, Kim recalls that his position was an eyesore but that he was afraid to move lest it made things awkward for everyone. Comments on the production process and shots of Kim himself holding his camera appear frequently throughout the film. Kim's comments are mostly about things he couldn't catch by his camera or cut out during the editing process for one reason or other, rather than the things he is showing us. Kim explains that he couldn't bring himself to switch on the camera because he was afraid of breaking the mood or because he thought it would be "impolite" to disturb the men's recollection of the long years of suffering as political criminals. Such comments are reminiscent of the professional ethics which put respect for life before the documentarist's desire to capture reality. Furthermore, such scenes indicate the tension between Kim the filmmaker and those standing before the camera. This tension heightens the awareness of how victimized the men feel living with the social stigma forced on them by anti-communist ideology, and of how the mainstream media has functioned as an active ideological tool in persecuting them. The film also makes frequent use of archival footage from newsreels, dramas, television debates, publicity films on government policies, news articles and so on to show how the mass media has portrayed North Korean spies. Kim compares the images recreated by the mainstream media with his own feelings when he meets the men. This becomes a process for Kim to examine and revise his own knowledge. Reviewing ideologically constructed "truths" through archival footage is in a way a healing process, as the audience realizes that the "truth" they know is actually constructed and that their own ideological identity is not free from such doctrines.

Kim's interactions with the old men—who are portrayed by the mainstream media as a threat to society and a hostile force capable of creating a national crisis—are personal and all too human, causing Kim to reexamine his own ideological identity. In particular, Cho Chang-son, who lives in the neighborhood, becomes an intimate family friend and is accepted as a member of the local community where the local residents' movement was active. But that does not mean that Kim's relationship with them makes for a homogeneous identity like in *The Sanggyedong Olympics*. Despite more than ten years of friendship, the tension engendered by ideological, cultural and emotional differences remains. *Repatriation* shows that such differences cannot be obstacles in how human beings relate to one another. A woman member of the support group for long-term prisoners of conscience says in the film, "It's difficult to cross the line in a relationship. But so what if we can't cross that line? We can still become close." And Kim himself realizes that "ideology is just one part of human reason, and reason is just one part of many human qualities." Forcing someone to give up her or his differences is nothing more than the ambition to conquer. Like the way the men were coerced to denounce their communist ideals under Park's regime, conquest has to be accompanied by violence. The men say that they were able to endure such cruel coercion and hold on to their beliefs because giving in to violence would be like giving up their character and dignity as human beings.

Repatriation shows how national division and a blind hatred of communism left deep wounds in individual lives and identities. At the same time, it presents us with the philosophical foundation for the reunification movement. Rather than resolving ideological and cultural differences, we should search for ways to form relationships while acknowledging and respecting each other. Like the video letter that helped connect Kim, who couldn't go to Pyongyang, and Cho, who couldn't come back to Seoul, we can hope that documentary will continue to help the many "others" with their many differences stay connected and overcome the obstacles created by authority.

—Translated by Cho Eung-joo

Original Text: http://www.yidff.jp/docbox/25/box25-3-e.html#name1

Notes:

1. Fernando Solanas, “Cinema as a Gun,” *Cineaste* Vol. 3, No. 2 (Fall 1969), p. 20.
2. Jane Gaines, “Political Mimesis,” *Collecting Visible Evidence*, eds. Jane Gaines and Michael Renov (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 85.
3. Brian Winston, *Claiming the Real: Documentary Film Revisited* (London: BFI, 1995), pp. 61-62.
4. Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), pp. 1-4.
5. Alexandra Juhasz, “They Said We Were Trying to Show Reality—All I Want to Show Is My Video: The Politics of Realist Feminist Documentary,” *Collecting Visible Evidence*, eds. Jane Gaines and Michael Renov (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), pp. 216-239.
6. Jane Gaines, “Women and Representation: Can We Enjoy Alternate Pleasure?,” *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism*, ed. Patricia Erns (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 83.
7. Kim Sang-hui describes the nature and purpose of the alternative media movement as follows: “First, the movement recognizes the interactive and cross-directional nature of the media and redefines and utilizes its social and human role, thereby actively making use of it as an important medium in social progress and democratization. Second, the movement criticizes mainstream media’s elitism, commercialism, unilateral communication of information and the uniformity and simplicity of its contents. Third, the movement actively takes advantage of new technology that has democratic potential. Fourth, the movement induces the receivers’ or citizens’ voluntary approach and participation, thereby creating media networks that are not only national but also local.” Research Center for Progressive Media Movement, *History of the Film Movement: From Entertainment to a Weapon for Liberation*, ed. Prism (Seoul: Seoul Publication Media, 2002) explores the historical experience of various localities around the world from the alternative media movement’s perspective.
8. Kim Dong Won, “Filming Reality and Directing Hope,” Interview with Ahn Jung-sook. *The Hankyoreh*, (22 June 1996)
9. Kim Dong Won, interview by the author, January 2003.
10. Thomas Waugh, “Joris Ivens’s The Spanish Earth: Committed Documentary and the Popular Front,” *Show Us Life: Toward a History and Aesthetics of the Committed Documentary*, ed. Thomas Waugh (Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1984), p. 124. Waugh points out the personification at play not only in the sound but also in the construction of images in *The Spanish Earth*.
11. Julianne Burton points out in her discussion of Latin American documentary that Manuel Octavio Gomez’s *A Battle Story* (1962) uses the subjectivity of the narration to break away from the authoritarian model. The narration is read by an omnipotent and anonymous male voice, but its tone is poetic and emotionally rousing, and talks about the people using the second person “you” or first person “we.” The narration overlaps with the sounds on the screen such as the workers’ song. Burton’s evaluation of such variations is that transforming God’s voice into the voice of the people’s spokesperson is an attempt to democratize the authoritarian form of speech. Julianne Burton, “Democratizing Documentary: Modes of Address in the Latin American Cinema, 1958-72,” *The Social Documentary in Latin America*, ed. Julianne Burton (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990), p. 55.
12. Positioning the individual as part of a community and emphasizing communal solidarity was the cultural characteristic of the resistance movement in Korea in the 1980s. Kim Dong-chun defines the democratic and revolutionary movement of the eighties as “a struggle to occupy the historical summit between those who wanted to bring back the memory of the Gwangju Uprising and those who wanted to erase it.” That is, the people who led the social revolution in the 1980s tried to “transform the shame of having survived the Gwangju Uprising into hatred of the dictator.” In various rallies and teach-ins, the rhetoric “Remember Gwangju” appeared without fail. “By endlessly reminding themselves of the Gwangju Uprising, they wanted to confirm again and again who the enemy was. This memory was endlessly reproduced for future communities. It also had a strong influence on people who were not actively involved in the movement, thus forming a common sense of shame and responsibility that bound an entire generation. This common sentiment shared by a whole generation was the first public ethic and collective morality to be formed since national liberation. What these people were mouthing were radical and revolutionary slogans, but what characterized their actual behavior was out-and-out anti-individualism and communalism values.” Kim Dong-chun, “The Growth of Democratic Revolution Movement in the 1980s and its Nature,” *The June Democratic Uprising and the Following Ten Years in Korean Society*, ed. Korean Academy Association (Dangdae, 1997), p. 99.
13. Michael Renov, “Domestic Ethnography and the Construction of the Other Self,” *Collecting Visible Evidence*, eds. Jane M. Gaines and Michael Renov (University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 141.

SAT 11 AUGUST, 11:30AM
BIRKBECK CINEMA

A SLICE ROOM 사람이 산다

DIRECTOR, CINEMATOGRAPHY, EDITING:
SONG YUN-HYEOK
PRODUCER: PARK JONG-PIL
2015 / 69 MIN / HD MOV / COLOUR / ENG SUBS
PRINT SOURCE: SONG YUN-HYEOK

Behind the image of prosperity of contemporary South Korea lies a stark social reality, pushing the poorest in society to the streets and shanty towns, forced to suffer poor living conditions with little access to welfare benefits. These residential areas, known as *jjokbangchon* ('villages of slice' or 'cubicle rooms') are home to thousands of people, many of them elderly men and women, struggling with illness and extreme poverty. Drawing on his experience as a social worker and activist, Song Yun-hyeok made *A Slice Room* to advocate for the rights of these individuals, using his camera to dress a portrait of the current shortcomings of the South Korean welfare system. He focuses on the lives of a few he befriended while temporarily living in the neighborhood, as they try to find ways out of their situation. He films a newly wed couple, Il-soo and Sun-hee, follows a man, Nam-sung, struggling to obtain his welfare payments, and talks to another man, Chan-hyun, battling with depression. Throughout the film, the residents express their frustration at the perceived lack of support and assistance from the government. *A Slice Room* is a strong portrayal of these communities and the threats they face, and is a work committed to bringing some awareness and change to the lives of these individuals. It evidences too the tireless work carried out by social organisations as they endeavour to help those in the midst of trials and difficulties.

Matthew Barrington, Ricardo Matos Cabo

Filmography:
A Slice Room (2015)
Family and Disability (Short, 2012)

INTERVIEW WITH SONG YUN-HYEOK

Hyun Jin Cho: What led to the creation of the Docu-in collective? Can you give an overview of its key principles and aspirations? We have noticed that on Docu-in's website you point to documentary filmmakers such as Francois Niney and Sheila Curran Bernard* as reference points for your own work. Is their thinking and practice important for Docu-in?

Song Yun-hyeok: Docu-in began in 1998 as an association of individuals who, having produced documentaries for television, wanted to pursue more independent and progressive film production. We use the medium of film to inform the public and give a voice to minority groups - a voice that would otherwise have remained unheard. We do this by forming close relationships with social movement and civil society organisations. One could say Docu-in's films' main focus is human beings and the stories they tell. We are therefore interested in the written works and ideas of Sheila Curran Bernard, particularly with regards to the early stages of our film production process. In addition to this, at Docu-in we have recently started to think about making other films, not just the ones that come out of social movements. For example, we are drawing inspiration from the writings of François Niney for a documentary on art. We cannot say that the two theorists play a direct role in Docu-in's production; however, what I can say is that they provide a very useful reference point for the matters Docu-in is predominantly concerned with.

HJC: Docu-in was founded in 1998, and you yourself have been a part of the collective for the past 10 years. How has Docu-in changed over that time?

SYH: When I first started, Docu-in was a loose association of writers. Members would work on their own individual projects and keep a very basic workspace supported by their membership fees. We came to realise, however, that for a variety of reasons, but mainly due to lack of resources, many people starting out on their film projects had difficulty achieving or maintaining a level of activity that would make continuing the workspace viable.

In relation to the production process, we introduced a collaborative system so that members could be more involved in

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*Sheila Curran Bernard is a North-American filmmaker and the author of works includivng "Documentary Storytelling: Creative Nonfiction on Screen" (Taylor & Francis, 2011), a guide to story and structure in nonfiction filmmaking, and "Archival Storytelling: A Filmmaker's Guide to Finding, Using, and Licensing Third-Party Visuals and Music" (Taylor & Francis, 2012).

François Niney is a French philosopher, film critic and documentarist and author of "L'épreuve du réel à l'écran : Essai sur le principe de réalité documentaire" (De Boeck, 2002).

the collective work or on a given project. We therefore decided to offer a minimal activity subscription that would achieve some level of involvement.

At present, we are registered as an organisation affiliated with community projects and have created a 'sponsorship-membership' structure. Through close relationships with active public groups in Korean society, we are thinking of ways to connect directly with progressive social change.

HJC: How can one join Docu-in? What is the organisational structure of the membership, and how is the collective run?

SYH: Docu-in is an association that aims to produce films as tools for social change (we do have a reputation for being provocative), rather than films made for the purpose of art. What this also means is that a member of Docu-in will primarily identify themselves as an activist, rather than merely as 'a director that makes films.' In fact, after I joined Docu-in in 2009, most of the members recruited were individuals who had previously been known as activists in social movement organisations, whilst at the same time having a love for film.

Docu-in activists propose creating those works which they feel personally convicted about; production is then carried out through a process of mutual decision-making. Since 2017, in order for the continuation of our project to stay viable, all earnings generated from members' video productions have been reinvested into Docu-in, and an arrangement has existed whereby activity expenses are distributed equally amongst members.

SAT 18 AUGUST, 3PM
KCC THEATRE

SOSEONGRI
소성리

DIRECTOR, CINEMATOGRAPHY, EDITING: PARK BAE-IL
PRODUCER: JOO HYEONSUK
2017 / 87MIN / HD MOV / COLOUR / ENG SUBS
PRINT SOURCE: CINEMA DAL
CONTACT: CINEMADAL@CINEMADAL.COM

Soseongri is the story of a community of senior citizens whose way of life is threatened after the decision is made to place the US THAAD anti-missile system in their village. In recent years, everyday life in Soseongri, a village located in the North Gyeongsang Province, has been severely affected by the gradual departure of its young people. The traditional and labour-intensive farm work is thus largely undertaken by those senior citizens who remain in this rural community. Park Bae-il captures the pace and daily routine of the villagers, highlighting the toil of the ageing community on the farm. Footage of the process of planting, peeling and packing produce is interspersed with interviews sharing personal stories and memories, meshing the past and present into the landscape.

The quiet rhythm of rural life in Soseongri is thrown into disarray with the onset of conflict between the South Korean police and the elderly community. The film documents both the resistance against THAAD, and the swift and aggressive manner in which the state shut down these demonstrations. Since 2010, Park Bae-il has, both individually and through his work with film collective Ozi Film, built a diverse body of work documenting workers' struggles, the fight for women's rights and for those living with disabilities throughout South Korea.

Matthew Barrington

Filmography:
After Breaking the Silence (2016)
Miryang Arirang - Legend of Miryang 2 (2015)
Legend of Miryang 1 (2013)
GangJeong Interview Project (2012)
Sea of Butterfly (2011)
Byeon Hwa (2011)
Cruel Season (2010)

INTERVIEW WITH PARK BAE-IL

Matthew Barrington: We understand that you, along with director Moon Chang-Hyeon, first founded *Ozi Film*, a collective for documentary filmmaking, 7-8 years ago, and have since been running activities within the local community. How was this community formed and what kind of activities are run by this organisation?

Park Bae-il: *Ozi Film* was founded in 2011 by director Moon Chang-Hyeon and myself. From 2007 onwards, I produced media and documentaries based on scenes of struggle, whilst Moon was building up experience after graduating from university in February 2010, by both volunteering and working for film festivals. Up until 2010, we were focused on media-based activity, rather than documentaries. However, I wanted to be able to communicate with people by capturing the scenes of struggle I had come across, so I had the idea to form Ozi Film as a means to achieve this. Coincidentally, at the same time Moon was becoming more interested in filmmaking, rather than working for film festivals. Since the circumstances and timing were just right, we formed *Ozi Film* and have been running it together ever since.

MB: What do you consider to be the benefits of producing documentary films and running activities as part of a collective?

PBI: The very principle of Ozi Film is based on the idea of a single community, and so we are always interested in reflecting on the role and need for such a community. The fact that we continue to struggle throughout our daily lives, whilst continuing to ask ourselves what it means to work collaboratively and understanding the power of solidarity, is connected to the very reason why we make documentary films. The efforts we make to bring together our works, lives and activities is one advantage of creating documentaries within the community.

MB: What kind of ties does Ozi Film have with Korea's other creative documentary organisations, and are there any values, directions, and production methods that are unique to Ozi Film?

PBI: It appears that during the last 10 years, documentary collectives operating in Korea have been active within their own particular areas of interest and fighting their individual battles for survival. There were times when directors of independent film and media activists had to band together to continue their work, addressing issues surrounding the Four Rivers [Restoration Project], the Yongsan Tragedy, the Sewol Ferry Disaster, amongst others. Many of these were alliances and groupings between individuals — associations between creative organisations were rare. Furthermore, for creative organisations the last 10 years have been different to the years prior - there has been an increased tendency to produce work and run activities alone. Although we had no particular ties to these organisations, the mere presence of groups such as *P.U.R.N. Productions* and *Seoul Visual Collective*, amongst others, has been of great encouragement to us over the last decade.

Ozi Film was not a community formed overnight, neither did it appear out of the blue, nor was it based on novel values. It was established with the intention of building on the activities of P.U.R.N. Productions and Seoul Visual Collective, in a way fitting for the current time and place. In order for Korean society to continue moving in the right direction, we consider the role film must fulfil, and although we are subject to violence at the hands of the state, we have been active in working towards our goal of protecting the people, fighting for 'my rights and our rights.' To somebody else, this may seem like the values of a bygone era, but preserving scenes of struggle and assembling the voices of the people through our documentary activities is still relevant. No, in fact, it may be the most fundamental aspect of our work. Standing by these individuals at the scene, using my experience and integrating this into the filmmaking, which will later be presented to the audience - this is what Ozi Film tirelessly works to achieve.

MB: How do you reconcile the conflicts that sometimes arise when combining activism and filmmaking?

PBI: For me, even [up] until the making of *Miryang Arirang: Legend of Miryang 2* (2015) there were issues of conflict that existed between activism and filmmaking. For example, I was clear in my aims of going to Miryang to make a film, but when I saw myself making a newsflash video and gathering material for a legal testimony, I faced a moment of doubt, and thought to myself, "What am I doing right now?" Nevertheless, the fundamental meaning in creating a documentary is the safeguarding of the scene, so I came to the conclusion that in my [line of] work, issues surrounding activism and film have to co-exist. From then on, I didn't experience any conflicts between activism and filmmaking. If the current times call for activism, I just need to incorporate that into my filmmaking. If not, I just need to approach it from an entirely film-based perspective. The two issues don't contradict with one another. For me, art-related activities that are not centred on activism carry little meaning.

MB: When a camera actually enters the scene of struggle, what influence do you think it has on the reactions of the protestors and the police?

PBI: The presence of the camera, recording the moment and the solidarity of their protest, serving as their eyes and representing their point of view, raises the power of their voices. It seems that they feel a sense of security from simply the presence of the camera documenting the scene. As I am aware of this sense of security they feel, I will continue to protect them by carrying my camera and staying by their side, whether [the footage] gets used in the film or not.

When the police, who deploy countless surveillance cameras to survey the protestors, realise there's a camera from the opposite side, they start to act more cautiously. You might say that the police consider the camera's documentation of the scene as essentially collecting evidence from them. The oppression suffered at the hands of the police when a camera is there is completely different to when there isn't one.

12 AUG SUN, 4:45PM
BIRKBECK CINEMA

ROUNDTABLE ON INDEPENDENT DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING IN KOREA

'As I watched these [films], I realised that the subjects of the documentary were also its primary audience, and that they alternated being documentary subjects and audience during the production process. This gives the documentary a direct role in the formation and maintenance of the community and the movement…'

Chris Berry
(excerpt from 'The documentary production process as a counter-public: notes on an inter-Asian mode and the example of Kim Dong Won')

This roundtable offers an opportunity to learn about the history and particular characteristics of the Korean independent documentary scene, from the late 1980s to the present day. Nam In Young (Dept. of Film Studies, Dongseo University) will walk us through the journeys undertaken by a number of filmmaking collectives, within the context of the sociopolitical history of South Korea.

We will also hear from directors Kim Dong Won and Song Yun-hyeok, who have been both filmmakers and activists throughout their lives, working with collectives to produce documentary films highlighting the resistance and activism movement in Korea.

This roundtable discussion will be moderated by Professor Chris Berry (Dept. of Film Studies, King's College London).

BIOGRAPHIES

Park Bae-il
Park Bae-il works with the independent film group Ozi Film, and is a documentary filmmaker currently based in South Korea. After directing his first short *Just Their Christmas* in 2007, Park has gone on to create a small yet powerful body of work dedicated to documenting the plight of marginalised communities in South Korea. His work serves as a way to highlight social injustice and state violence, capturing protest and dissent in a multitude of ways. Park's films have been shown at a number of international festivals as well as at the prestigious Busan International Film Festival and the DMZ International Documentary Film Festival.

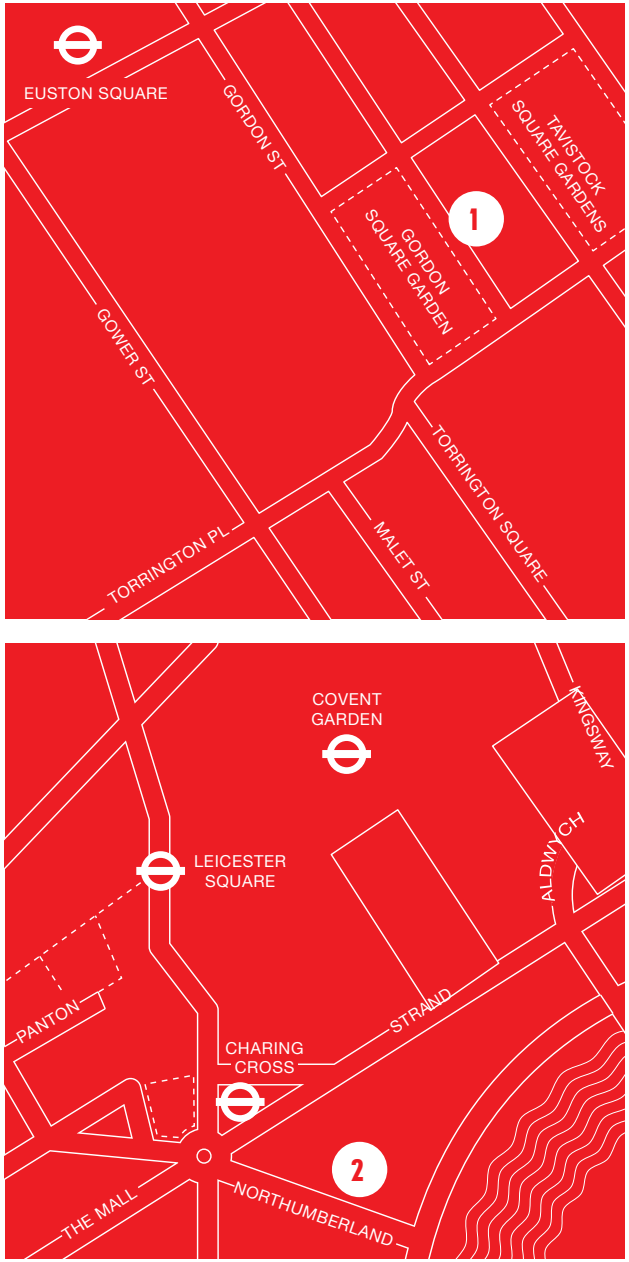
Kim Dong Won
(See p. 4)

Song Yun-hyeok
Song Yun-hyeok is a documentary filmmaker based in South Korea. Since 2010, Song has been a member of the independent documentary group Docu-in. Alongside his studies, Song worked for an organization supporting the homeless, encouraging them to use filmmaking tools to document their lives. Through this experience, and those gained working on other outreach programmes, Song first became interested in engaging with film as an extension of his social work. Song completed his first feature film, *A Slice Room*, in 2015. The film won numerous awards and critical acclaim upon its release.

Nam In Young
Nam In Young earned an M.A. at New York University and a PhD at Chung-Ang University in Seoul. Since 2004, she has been teaching Korean film history and documentary film practice at Dongseo University. She is presently the director of the Im Kwon-taek Film Archive and Research Center at Dongseo University, and has also been working for Seoul International Women's Film Festival as Executive Committee member since 1997. The title of her PhD thesis was "A Study on the Modes of Representation in Korean Independent Documentary Films" and she has co-authored several books on Korean cinema, including *Korean Documentary Film Today* (2016).

Chris Berry
Prof Chris Berry is Professor of Film Studies at King's College London, and his academic research is grounded in work on Asian cinema. His essay "The Documentary Production Process as a Counter-Public: Notes on an Inter-Asian Mode and the Example of Kim Dong Won" was published in Inter-Asia Cultural Studies in 2010. Other publications include: (co-edited with Luke Robinson) *Chinese Film Festivals: Sites of Translation* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), (co-edited with Lisa Rofel and Lu Xinyu) *The Chinese Independent Documentary Film Movement: For the Public Record* (Hong Kong University Press, 2010), and (with Nicola Liscutin and Jonathan Mackintosh) *Cultural Studies and Cultural Industries in Northeast Asia: What a Difference a Region Makes* (Hong Kong University Press, 2009).

VENUES



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The London Korean Film Festival (LKFF) is the UK's leading showcase of Korean cinema, and with over 60 titles on offer annually, national press coverage and an ever-increasing audience, it is one of the largest festivals dedicated to a national cinema in the world. For over 10 years the festival has introduced premiere screenings of major blockbusters to UK cinema screens while also incorporating the most engaging Indie hits, Classic Retrospectives, Animation, Shorts and more within its diverse programme.

The LKFF will return on November 1st 2018. Follow us online at koreanfilm.co.uk for upcoming announcements on this year's programme.

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