



**KOREAN  
FILM** No.26  
Cannes edition  
2008

Observatory

**LEE Byung-hun**

A New World Star

On Location for ZHANG Lu's <Iri>

# Korean Films at Cannes

Supplement **Korean Film Guide 2008**

# KOREAN FILMS at Cannes 2008



## Out of Competition

### The Good, The Bad, The Weird

좋은놈, 나쁜놈, 이상한놈  
Joeun Nom, Napun Nom, E-sanghan Nom

Directed by KIM Jee-woon  
2008, 35mm, 2.35:1, Color, Dolby SRD  
Cast SONG Kang-ho  
LEE Byung-hun  
JUNG Woo-sung  
Production Barunson Film Division  
International Sales CJ Entertainment Inc.

## Midnight Screenings

### The Chaser

추격자 | Chu-gyuck-ja

Directed by NA Hong-jin  
2008, 123min, 35mm, 11193ft, 2.35:1, Color, Dolby DTS  
Cast KIM Yoon-suk  
HA Jung-woo  
SEO Young-hee  
Production Bidangil Pictures  
International Sales FINE CUT Co., Ltd.



## Un Certain Regard

### TOKYO!

도쿄! | Tokyo!

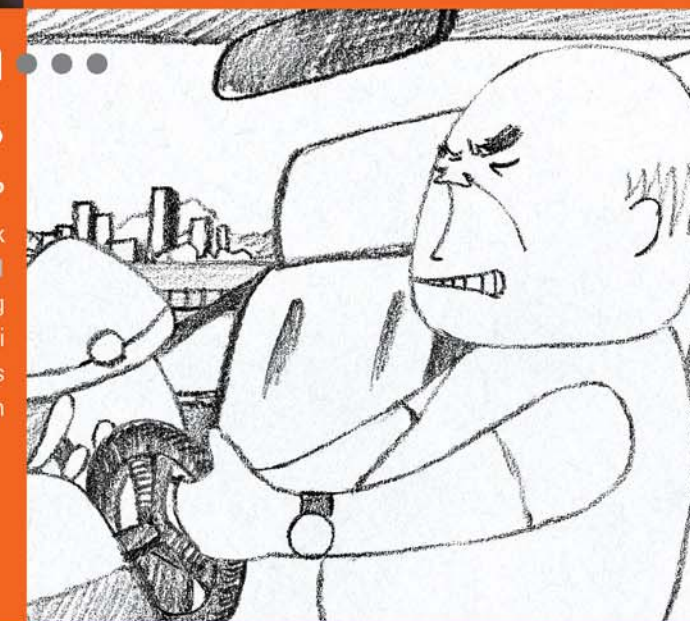
Directed by BONG Joon-ho, Leos CARAX, Michel GONDRY  
2008, 110min, 35mm, 1.85:1, Color, Dolby SRD  
Cast Interior Design\_FUJITANI Ayako, KASE Ryo, ITO Ayumi  
Merde\_Denis LAVANT, Jean-Francois BALMER  
Shaking Tokyo\_KAGAWA Teruyuki, AOI You  
Production SPONGE ENT. Inc.  
Bitters End, Inc.  
COMME DES CINEMAS  
International Sales Wild Bunch

## Cinefondation

### STOP

스탑 | STOP

Directed by PARK Jae-ok  
2008, 5min, 35mm, B&W, Dolby 5.1  
Cast KWAK Youn-sang  
SIN Heon-ji  
Production Korean Academy of Film Arts  
International Sales Contact Production

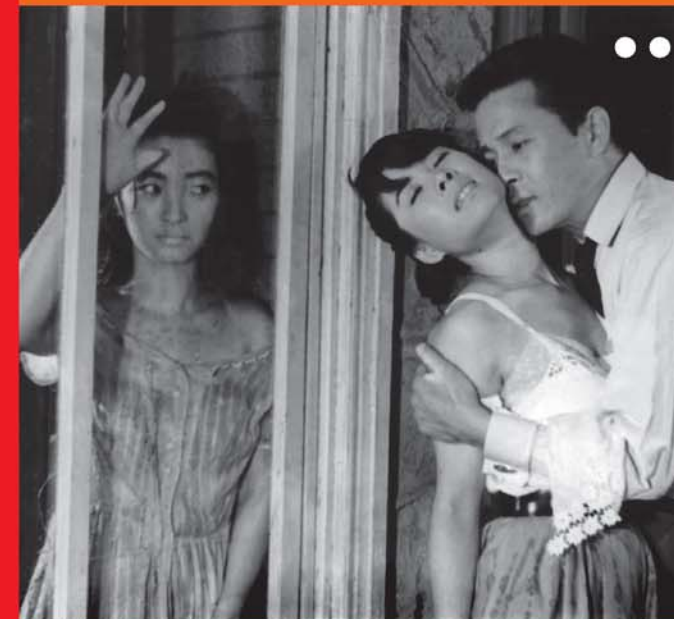


## Classics: New or Restored Prints

### The Housemaid

하녀 | Hanyeo

Directed by KIM Ki-young  
1960, 108min, 35mm, 1.66:1, B&W  
Cast KIM Jin-kyu  
JU Jeung-ryu  
LEE Eun-sim  
UM Aing-ran  
Production Korean Munye Films Co. Ltd.  
Print Source Korean Film Archive



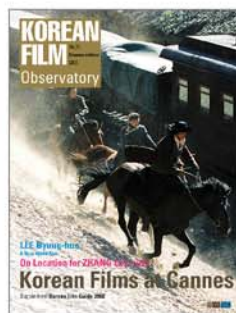


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# KOREAN FILM NEWS

## LEGAL BATTLE OVER <THE PRESIDENT'S LAST BANG> RESOLVED

The three-year legal battle surrounding IM Sang-soo's <The President's Last Bang> has finally come to an end. The Seoul High Court recently ordered the defendant, the producers of the film, to insert an explanatory title stating that the film was entirely fictional for any future screenings. Three years ago, former president PARK Chung-hee's son PARK Ji-man filed a libel case against the producers, claiming that <The President's Last Bang> defamed the character of the deceased president. He sought to suspend the opening of the film and sued for damages. At the time, the court made the decision to require the producers to cut three scenes from the film—including the one from a documentary about the funeral of the former president PARK—prior to its opening. The decision outraged everyone inside and outside of the film industry as an infringement on freedom of expression. In 2006, the film's production company, MK Pictures, received the decision to restore the film to its original state, but the plaintiff appealed. According to the recent judgment, MK Pictures must issue an official statement apologizing to the family of the deceased president, and plaintiff PARK Ji-man must return the prepayment of KRW 100,000,000, which he was awarded after the first decision.

## <THE CHASER> DRAWS 5 MILLION MOVIEGOERS

A thriller about a dreadful day for a former detective chasing a serial killer, <The Chaser> is soon to break the 5million-moviegoer mark. Since its opening on February 14th, 2008 <The Chaser> has topped the box office charts for over a month, having drawn nearly 4.92 million moviegoers by April 6th, 2008. Loosely based on the story of YU Yeong-cheol(a notorious serial killer with more than 20 victims) <The Chaser> held the unusual honor of attracting higher audiences to the cinema from its second week. The fast-paced directorial style of newcomer NA Hong-jin, the grave personalities of two

veteran actors(KIM Yoon-suk, (<Tazza: The High Rollers> and <The Happy Life>), and Ha Jung-woo, (<Breath>, <Time>, and <Never Forever>)) certainly played their part in the film's box office success. However, all this does not necessarily suggest that Korean films are finally meeting a resuscitating spring breeze after a long cold winter freeze. By April of this year, 20 Korean films had opened at the box office, but <The Chaser> and <Forever the Moment> are the only ones to have sold more than two million tickets. An insider at a distribution company says, "Korean films scheduled to open in the first half have been pushed back to the summer or the second half, the busy seasons for the film industry." He added, "It is



<The President's Last Bang>

difficult to change the preferences of moviegoers toward Korean films on the basis of one film <The Chaser>.”

#### MINOR POSTER TROUBLE FOR <VANTAGE POINT>

<Vantage Point> starring Dennis Quaid had some problems with its advertising copy immediately before its opening in Korean theaters, with the posters placed at theaters having to be replaced. This was a result of some formal complaints about the copy that read “The president has been shot!”

“It has the potential to cause problems,” the authorities claimed, and they requested a correction. Located in Jong-no, Seoul, Multiplex Dansungsa had to remove the ad of <Vantage Point> from the outer wall of the building in accordance with the instructions from the police office on February 17th, 2008. The film’s distributor, Buena Vista Sony Pictures Releasing, commented, “We understand that the police authorities did not officially make a request, but the measures were taken by individual police offices.” The publicist of the distributor added, “We do not want the film to cause any controversy not relating to filmmaking.” Accordingly, the producers of <Vantage Point>

released newly created posters on February 21th. An insider at a theater argued, “The copy had nothing to do with the film’s contents, and it did not have any marketing problems, either.” He added, “The film was advertised in a perfectly acceptable manner, and the police overreacted with the new president’s inauguration ceremony a few days later.”

#### <TURNING POINT OF THE YOUNGSTERS > NAMED THE OLDEST EXISTING KOREAN FILM

Directed by AN Jong-hwa, <Turning Point of The Youngsters> has been named the oldest existing Korean film. Also having worked as an actor during the period under the rule of Japanese Imperialism, AN directed <Turning Point of The Youngsters > in 1934, two years earlier than <Sweet Dream>-until now considered the oldest print in Korea. Since no other silent films have been discovered and restored in Korea, the domestic motion picture world is more interested now in <Turning Point of The Youngsters > than ever. Until they brought the film about a brother and sister who move to Seoul, back to life, the Korean Film Archive faced significant obstacles. An insider at the Korean Film Archive said, “When we

looked at the film for the first time, we could not even check if it was a Korean film or not. Each of the cans, containing nine roles in total, had titles of <Three Friends >(1928), <Rainbow> (1936), and <Arirang>(1926).” Despite the special restoration process completed in Japan, only seven rolls were restored to life. The Korean Film Archive plans to play <Turning Point of The Youngsters> as the opening show for the public at the opening of the film festival on May 9th, 2008. KIM Tae-yong of <Family Ties> (2006) will direct the opening show with a film interpreter and background music.

#### WHO WILL BE THE NEXT COMMISSIONERS OF KOFIC?

Eyes are now fixed on organizing the fourth-term commissioners of the Korean Film Council (KOFIC). Having worked tirelessly to secure cultural diversity in Korea and open up a number of overseas markets, the third-term KOFIC commissioners will complete their three-year terms on May 27th. In the past, the government elected KOFIC commissioners from among candidates recommended by organizations in the film industry. The commissioner, recommendation committee-consisting of the third-term KOFIC commissioners and well-known figures from both inside and outside the film industry, will this time choose candidates for the fourth-term KOFIC commissioners. The final appointing powers will still belong to the government, but film industry insiders have expressed concerns that the appointment of the new commissioners will done in line with “political interests.” KOFIC Chairperson LEE Hyeon-seung said, “There are pros and cons, but the revised recommendation method makes it far easier to appoint those who are actually helpful to the development of Korean film.” By the end of April 2008, the commissioner recommendation committee is expected to announce a shortlist of candidates. LEE added, “So far, the Korean Film Council has supported Korean films industry, but



<Turning Point of The Youngsters>



<D-war>

the fourth-term KOFIC commissioners must lead the Korean film industry.” Will the KOFIC, with a whole new lineup of commissioners be able to revitalize the Korean film industry, which suffers from reduced profitability, investments, and production numbers? We are curious about what colors the fourth-term KOFIC commissioners will sport.

#### MOMA NYC SHOWCASES KIM KI-DUK FILMS

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMa) screened KIM Ki-duk films from April 23 until May 8 to New York City audiences. Fourteen films of the maverick filmmaker was on display, making it the first complete retrospective of KIM’s repertoire in the U.S. and some of the films will have their U.S. premiere at MoMa.

MoMa describes KIM’s body of work as “sensuous, sensational imagery and wild and haunting narratives” and praises his “sweeping camera movements and long, richly composed shots”.

Among KIM’s best known films in the U.S. are “the libidinous <The Isle> (2000), the Buddhist-inflected <Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter and Spring> (2003) and an elliptical treatise on invisibility, <3-Iron>(2004).”

The retrospective is organized by MoMa’s Department of Film Senior Curator Laurence Kardish, and HAHN

Dong-sin of Open Work, New York. The showcase is made possible through numerous parties, including the Korean Film Council (KOFIC). MoMa previously organized retrospectives of IM Kwon-taek and other Korean directors.

KIM Ki-duk is an internationally celebrated and awarded independent filmmaker whose films are invited by the major international film festivals. In Korea, the controversial director met criticism for creating an exotic image of Korea for a foreign audience.

The American film website Killer Film’s ‘Top 10 most difficult films to watch (but still insanely awesome)’ list includes KIM’s <The Isle (Seom)>. Killer Film explains that it’s “one of the strangest love stories ever made” and jokes that there is no need to worry about a Hollywood remake of <The Isle>. KIM is in the company of directors like Gus van Sant and Takeshi Miike, and films like <The Blair Witch Project> and <Hard Candy>.

#### SHIM HYUNG-RAE’S NEXT PROJECT FUNDED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Following <D-War>, SHIM Hyung-rae’s <The Last Godfather> has been chosen as the first film to be covered by the cultural export insurance program. Cultural export insurance is a product created by the Korea Export

Insurance Corporation (KEIC) to help smooth out exports from Korea. Covered by the cultural export insurance, <The Last Godfather> will be “compensated for up to 70% of the total production costs” even if the film fails to generate profits in theaters abroad and additional copyright markets. Directed by and starring SHIM Hyung-rae, <The Last Godfather> is a comedy about an Italian-American godfather who introduces his illegitimate son Younggu to his mafia, designating him as his successor. The film has caused controversy among Korean internet-users. One criticism of the KEIC was that they were using public funds on a project without a script or verification. On the other hand, others took a cautious attitude, arguing that overreactions were not necessary. Another internet-users pointed out that “they merely exchanged a MOU (which is not a formal contract).” The arguments do not apply to the disputes that emerged over <D-War> last year, and the industry hopes the cultural export insurance program will continuously operate to provide meaningful projects with benefits. Producers without their own capital have no choice but to rely on the cultural export insurance, which also functions as something of a supplementary investment device.

LEE Yeong-jin/ Cine 21



<The Chaser>

# KOFIC NEWS

## KOFIC's International Support Programs 2008

The Korean Film Council (KOFIC) will focus its International Support Programs 2008 on the revitalization of international co-production to boost the global production capabilities of Korean films, as well as the systematization of information sources and networks for expanding advances into markets abroad, programs for supporting global production manpower, and overseas exchanges and publicity.

### PRODUCTION SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR INTERNATIONAL CO-PRODUCTIONS

KOFIC's International Co-productions program supports up to 2 films per year. Each selected film receives KRW 400 million(\$400,000) in order to contribute and promote the diversity of Korean films by vitalizing international co-productions, diversifying sources of production funding and finding alternative overseas distribution and

export routes. In order to apply, the film's net production budget must be less than KRW 2billion(\$2 million). The film should be meant for a cinematic release. Also, the production should involve at least 2 countries, including a Korean producer. The application period for this year was conducted from March 31 to April 4, 2008. Past funding recipients are <Tale of Cinema> by director HONG Sang-soo, which entered the official competition of the 58th Cannes International Film Festival; <With a Girl of Black Soil> by director Jun Soo-il, invited to the Horizon section at the 64th Venice International Film Festival; and <Don't Look Back> by director KIM Yeong-nam, invited to the International Competition section at the 59th Locarno international Film Festival.

For further information, contact [tbone2@kofic.or.kr](mailto:tbone2@kofic.or.kr).

### ONLINE PROJECT MARKET FOR INT'L CO-PRODUCTIONS

In addition to the support provided for international co-productions, KOFIC is preparing for the launch of an online co-production project market. The planned market is aimed to connect co-production projects planned by Korean producers and production companies with foreign companies. To attain this goal, the Council plans to select more than 20 projects a year, register them on the website of the online project market, and offer the service of connecting Korean and foreign producers and production companies. At the same time, the Council is investigating holding a project showcase event, possibly including pitching, speed matching forum, the selection of projects of excellence, and the provision of prize monies.

For further information, contact [myear@kofic.or.kr](mailto:myear@kofic.or.kr).

### KOFIC P&A FUND FOR KOREAN FILMS ABROAD

KOFIC P&A Fund for Korean Films Abroad is a program where KOFIC supports expenses required for theatrical distribution, in order to expand opportunities for foreign audiences to enjoy Korean films in theaters. Films eligible for support include feature-length dramas, documentaries or animations that were made in Korea, or co-produced with Korea as the main producing country. Any companies owning rights to a film's theatrical distribution in eligible foreign countries are qualified to apply for the program. Online applications may be submitted at <http://pna.kofic.or.kr> from March 31, 2008 and the selection rounds for P&A fund will be made 4 times this year.

For the specific schedule, see the below table. The support amount covers up to 50% of the theatrical release expenses in accordance with



Best Project Award of FDL 2007.

the number of opening theaters and the scale of the marketing, with the maximum amount per film capped at KRW 100 million. Moreover, the subsidy should be fully used for the P&A expenses relating to release prints, promotion fees, PR agency fees, previews, promotion tours (director, actors, etc.), printed promotional materials, etc. The recipients will be needed to report on the distribution results: the number of screens and admissions, box office revenues and the execution of expenses in accordance with the regulations set forth by KOFIC.

For further information, contact [myear@kofic.or.kr](mailto:myear@kofic.or.kr).

### FILMMAKERS DEVELOPMENT LAB (FDL) 2008

Marking its third year in existence,

KOFIC Filmmakers' Development Lab (FDL) is aimed to match emerging filmmakers from Korea and the Korean diaspora, with mentors drawn from the film industries of Korea and the United States. The aim of the program is to enable these filmmakers to complete their fiction feature projects through script development, knowledgeable advice from an industry professional, and exposure to the international film community. This year's edition will take place on June 23rd for five days in Jeju Island, Korea. Five projects will be selected and matched with one-on-one mentoring and development by leading producers from both Korea and USA, then are presented during the pitching sessions at Independent Film Project (IFP) in New York City and Pusan Promotion Plan (PPP) at Pusan Int'l Film Festival (PIFF). The best project of five will be awarded with 40,000 USD for development and production. 15,000 USD will be paid to the director



<Tale of Cinema>



<With a Girl of Black Soil>



<Don't Look Back>

Annual Schedule 2008 for P&A Fund

	Application Deadline	Results Announced	Release to Take Place
1st round	April 30th	June 5th	After June 30th
2nd round	June 30th	July 31st	After August 31st
3rd round	August 31st	September 30th	After October 31st
4th round	October 31st	November 30th	After December 31st

and the remaining 25,000 USD will be paid after the work has begun production. In 2007, "Model American" was selected as the FDL Best Project Award.

For further information contact [dmbwang@kofic.or.kr](mailto:dmbwang@kofic.or.kr).

### BUSINESS R&D CAMPUS

With the increase in international co-productions and exchanges, KOFIC has established a stage on which to foster the global production capabilities in the film industry. Held in China and Japan in 2006 and 2007, the Business R&D Campus is to be carried out in accordance with local characteristics in a total of three regions, with the United States to be added to the site list.

In 2006, the Campus with China had Korean film professionals visit Beijing and carry out educational and exchange activities regarding the Chinese film industry. In 2007, industry professionals from China visited Korea during the PIFF and conducted a forum on the prospects of China's TV channels and Internet markets. For 2008, Korean film professionals will visit China once again to continue on with exchanges and networking among professionals between the two countries. At the Campus with Japan in 2007, over 30

leading film producers and investors from Korea and Japan met in Tokyo to discuss the current state of Korean-Japanese co-production and necessary reforms to strengthen the network between the two. In 2008, producers from both countries with co-productions and/or with previous experience will gather in Jeju Island, Korea for in-depth discussions on co-production between two countries.

As for the Campus with USA, to be the first of its kind, KOFIC will invite a influential Korean-American producers working in Hollywood for lectures and discussions, as they share their thoughts on the current state of the US film industry and the potential of Korean films and co-productions in the US market with local Korean producers with experience in co-production or with plans on the way.

For further information, contact [beedong21@kofic.or.kr](mailto:beedong21@kofic.or.kr)(China), [favre04@kofic.or.kr](mailto:favre04@kofic.or.kr)(Japan) and [dmbwang@kofic.or.kr](mailto:dmbwang@kofic.or.kr)(USA).

### SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR HUB-LIBRARIES FOR KOREAN FILM STUDIES

Since 2007, KOFIC has carried out the Support Program for Hub-Libraries for Korean Film Studies with leading

foreign universities in order not only to help overseas researchers approach Korean films more easily, but also to introduce Korean films to students. The program enables the selected libraries to function as hubs for Korean films all over the world, providing the selected libraries with various publications and videos for the study of Korean films. The 2007 beneficiaries of this project were the University of Chicago, UCLA, Columbia University, and Indiana University in the United States, the University of Sydney in Australia and Free University Berlin in Germany.

For further information, contact [sant0804@kofic.or.kr](mailto:sant0804@kofic.or.kr).

### ASIAN FILM PROFESSIONALS TRAINING PROGRAM

The Asian Film Professionals Training Program, featuring young professionals from China, India, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, etc. is designed to expand exchanges between Korea and other countries, in the areas of film industry and policy. It has been held since 2006. For between three and six months, the participants attend Korean language classes and visit Korean film industry organizations, including KOFIC and various film festivals. The 2008 participants will begin training in July. KOFIC expects that the program will actively support young Asian professionals interested in the Korean film industry and its policies.

For further information, contact [beedong21@kofic.or.kr](mailto:beedong21@kofic.or.kr).



The Participants of 2007.

### KOFIC'S LA OFFICE AND OVERSEAS REPRESENTATIVES

KOFIC opened the Office in Los Angeles, its first overseas organization, in June last year in order to solve the shortage of information and networking possibilities facing Korean producers when they try to advance into the US market. Since its opening, the office has been carrying out activities supporting co-production projects between Korea and the United States and networking between domestic filmmakers and the US film community and the media. In particular, the office plays the role of helping the Korean film industry break into the US market in ways not done by other organizations. These include taking the initiative in pushing ahead with projects such as the FDL. In the meantime, KOFIC has representatives residing in France, China, and Japan working to engage foreign markets with the Korean film industry, all for the development of Korean films. In the future, KOFIC plans to play the role of actively helping Korean films advance into overseas markets by expanding its overseas office posture and placement of resident reporters.

For further information, contact KOFIC LA Office: [symoon@kofic.or.kr](mailto:symoon@kofic.or.kr); French Representative: [seosb@kofic.or.kr](mailto:seosb@kofic.or.kr); China Representative: [yipd9394@kofic.or.kr](mailto:yipd9394@kofic.or.kr) and Japan Representative: [jahyeb@kofic.or.kr](mailto:jahyeb@kofic.or.kr).



Business R&D Campus, Japan.



### PUBLISHING THE KOREAN FILM DIRECTORS SERIES

The Korean Film Directors series is one of KOFIC's projects to furnish an international audience with insight and analysis into the works of Korea's most representative film directors. The series aims to expand upon the existing body of knowledge on Korean film, educate the general public on the history of Korean film and Korean film directors, and draw attention to the significance of works that represent Korean film. Critics who share their insight in the series are leaders in their respective specialties. Each volume includes critical commentary on films, an

extensive interview with the director, and a comprehensive filmography for reference. This year publication of the books about directors YU Hyun-mok, IM Sang-soo, LIM Soon-rye and Four Rookie Directors(new young directors in mid-2000's) have been completed following books on director IM Kwon-taek, KIM Ki-young, LEE Chang-dong, PARK Chan-wook and HONG Sang-soo. KOFIC is also presently planning to publish even more books about directors BONG Joon-ho, KIM Jee-woon and RYOO Seung-wan. The series will be distributed and sold through Seoul Selection ([www.seoulselection.com](http://www.seoulselection.com)), a publisher specializing in Korean culture.

For further information, contact [sant0804@kofic.or.kr](mailto:sant0804@kofic.or.kr).



Business R&D Campus, China.

# Imagine, and you will see!

## The recent Status of CG in Korean Films



(D-war)

KIM Yoo-jin, a war story about the 'Shingijeon,' a weapon developed during the Joseon Dynasty. CG is also well expressed in <A Man Who was Superman>, a human drama from director CHUNG Yoon-chul, and <Forever the Moment>, a sports drama from director LIM Soon-rye.

### UNSEEN CG

Taking pains to rise again after a series of setbacks at the box office, Korean films are focusing their capabilities on "era reproduction" through "unseen CG." A case in point is <Modern Boy>, an historic piece set against the background of Seoul in the 1930s. It is expected to be released this coming April. <Modern Boy> recreates Seoul of the 1930s, daring to imagine how it might have looked like in the period. The story deals with the love affair between LEE Hae-myung(PARK Hae-il), s senior official of the Japanese Government-General in Korea and a follower of love for love's own sake, and CHO Nan-sil(KIM Hye-soo), a dancer at an underground club during the Japanese colonial years. The film explores the culture of the time, reproducing the major settings, i.e. the building of the Japanese Government-General of Korea, the old Seoul Station, the streets around the Jong-ro Department Store and the Hwashin Department Store, the Dongdaemun Area, etc. The old Seoul Station is displayed on the screen by the company, Inside Visual, which was exclusively responsible for CG in <Taeguk-gi>. PARK Min-yong said, "We created the four sides of the old Seoul Station in 3D, on the basis of source photographs over a two-day period,

with the blue matt on the facade of the station attached." The result not only reflects the technology of CG, but also a very clever production process and vision. The street trees around the old Seoul Station, the automobiles, and the buildings at the time were added using imagination and historical evidence.

### CG OF SYNTHESIS AND REVISION

<The Good, The Bad, The Weird>, which is looks to be the best Korean film of the summer, is almost like a definitive edition of "invisible CG." With the Manchurian fields in the background, spectacular fight scenes were shot, depicting the fatal encounters of the "good guy(JUNG Woo-sung)," a criminal with a prize on his head; the "bad guy(LEE Byung-hun)", a professional assassin; and the "weird guy(SONG Kang-ho)", a train robber. The CG work reveals shots similar to those of the <Indiana Jones> series, with the background CG making the era somewhat undefined, as was accomplished in the <Star Wars> series. However, the point was to display the "CG of synthesis and revision" to depict horses running at 60-70km an hour, and motorcycles speeding across the plains during exciting action scenes. The CG used in <The Good, The Bad, The Weird>, undertaken by CG company, EON, which also worked on <Antarctic Journal> and <The Host>, realizes a world that uses real background scenes in China synthesized with images photographed in the setting of Korea. The bloody fight scenes inside and outside the trains running across Manchuria, the stage of the three heroes' encounters, maximizes the image of a spectacular action film. They were produced by synthesizing the Chinese background scenes and the train images photographed in the setting. There were no characters or buildings created using only CG, but considerable time was spent using CG to enhance the basic picture of the "Manchurian Western." The CG of <The Good, The Bad, The Weird> lays the groundwork for not only reproducing an era, but also building the whole look of the film work. <The Divine Weapon>,



(The Restless)

which spent ten billion won on production costs recreating the era of 1448, during the Joseon era, also shows how well cinema can "reproduce an era," using the "power of imagination." The story deals with the invention of the "Singijeon," a weapon invented during the Joseon dynasty period, the conflict with Ming in China, which tried to thwart it, and the painful efforts and love of those who fought to protect the weapon. CG played such a significant role in the work that director KIM Yoo-jin has no hesitation in saying that it involved more CG than he'd ever used, except for <The Host>. The production team created the world's first missile, which was invented 300 years earlier than the airplane, and worked hard to ensure that it "worked" during a particularly impressive scene later on in the film. The scene shows the pure destructive power of "such a shocking and modern weapon," that one can almost not believe it was made 500 years ago. The spectacular fight involving many thousands of troops was also impressive. CG was used in "many folds" and in a "refined way," in order to express the scene in which the Shingijeon flies like a modern missile, really bringing the ancient weapon to life.

### CG CONNECTED TO EVERYDAY LIFE

The CG of Korean films of late helps filmmakers confidently portray genres and eras on the one hand, and helps great detail become realized on the other. Audiences should pay particular attention to the use of CG in <A Man Who was Superman>, a new human drama by director CHUNG Yoon-chul, (of <Skeletons in the Closet> and <MARATHON> fame). CG was applied

to scenes showing the delusions of a man who believed he was superman, but most unlike the cutting edge technology used in <Superman Returns>. The fantasy vividly portrayed the hosts emitting gases that would lead to global warming, a hero fearing the appearance of a cannibal shark, a super whale swimming in the sea nearby an ordinary apartment complex, and the garden in the air emerging as the secret garden of a superman. The fantasy in everyday life, rather than cutting edge technology or material superiority, is fully realized by the CG used in <A Man Who was Superman>, and created by the Meta Five company, (which also created the zebra running alongside Cho-won in <Marathon>). Not only does such CG contribute to the feeling of completion of a film, but it also stimulates a certain childish innocence. The CG used in Korean films in 2008 reveals important changes. This year's CG is distinguished from the CG that creates imaginary spaces and completely new backgrounds, such as in <Natural City> and <2009 Lost Memories>, as well as <The Restless>. It is no exaggeration to say that those techniques were a great deal more laborious and difficult. The 2008 brand of CG is applied to ordinary dramas, historic dramas, melodramas, and comedies as well as horror and action films, and is connected to eras and everyday lives. We may interpret these movements as efforts to enhance the basic sense of completion of an entire production, rather than merely a certain part of it, using the most conceptual CG within the scope of the production budget. Such an attempt is a kind of challenge in these critical economic circumstances.

KIM Hye-seon/ FILM 2.0



(A Man Who was Superman)

Computer graphics technology has enabled us to make new creatures and create marvelous box office earnings in Hollywood in 2007, as seen in the digital work of <Spider-Man>, the robots of <Transformers>, the digital combat scenes of <300>, and the 3-D mythological world of <Beowulf>. With

its summit reached in 2007, CG has also taken significant strides in the Korean film industry over the past two years, best illustrated by the mutated host of Han River in <The Host>, the CG actors used for dangerous action scenes in <The Restless>, a fantasy martial arts film, the monster serpent appearing, according to a pseudo-Hollywood strategy, in the <D-War> and the creation of old Gwangju in <May 18> to remind us of that tragic May in 1980. In 2008, Korean films are embarking on some new challenges for CG. In this so-called "CG of era reproduction," around 10 billion won has been spent by the industry on CG, most notably in <The Good, The Bad, The Weird> from director KIM Jee-woon, <Modern Boy> from director JUNG Ji-woo, against the backdrop of Seoul in the 1930s, and <The Divine Weapon> from director

# A Korean Film Time Machine!

## The Korean Film Museum opens



Trophies from Berlin Film Festival.

According to the dictionary definition, a museum is "a place where objects of archeological, artistic, or historical interest, and other academic materials are displayed for people for the purposes of education or research." The Korean Film Museum, set to be opened by the Korean Film Archive on May 9th will be best described by this

definition, with the additional details of 'film related' or 'generally Korean film related' added.

First of all, we should take a minute to give a brief overview of what the Korean Film Museum includes. The museum is roughly divided into a display area and a learn from experience area. The display area is composed of: permanent exhibitions-'Korean Film Time Machine' and 'Actress Biographies'; and special exhibitions-'Space of Historical Dramas- Space of Imagination'. The learn from experience area will have an 'Animation Zone', 'Film Technology Zone' and everybody's favorite, the 'Silent Picture Theater', all of which are designed with children and young students in mind.

### LET'S GO TO THE ORIGINS

The 'Korean Film Time Machine' is a section where visitors can learn about the very early events in Korean film history, from 1903 to the present. This section is designed to cover four different periods. The 1st period,



<Untold Scandal>

(1903-1945), features from the first kino drama, <Fight for Justice>, the first films made in Korea, <The Tale of Jang-Hwa and Hong-Ryeon>, <Ariang>, and NA Woon-gyu's productions, the first sound picture in Korea, <Chunhyang-Jeon>, the era of sound pictures, four decades of the new film system, and ends with the Joseon Motion Picture Corporation. The 2nd period, (1945-1972), is defined by its coverage of the post-liberation period to the 1950s, the great war film era, to the Golden Age of Korean motion picture in the 1960s it highlights the different Korean film genres, writers, and Shin Film.

The 3rd period, (1972-1986), begins with the censorship issue and government-run films, the 1980s Youth Culture & the Image Era. It also features the work of directors LEE Jang-ho & BAE Chang-ho. The 4th period, (1987-present), is composed of Korean New Wave, Film Campaign, Renaissance of Korean Film, and the Recent Films components. Equipped with 80 monitors, the museum will accommodate a variety of films and associated material, allowing visitors to travel through the intriguing times in our film history, such as when the first Korean film was made, and when



The Script of KIM Soo-young.



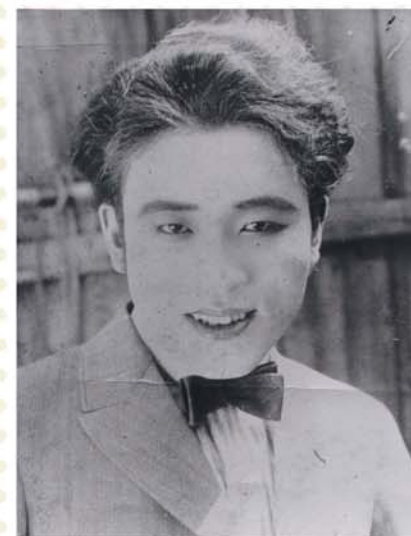
Parvo Camera.

Korean film was in its prime. The 'Actress Biographies' section will keep records of 12 leading actresses in Korean film history, including MUN Ye-bong of the Japanese colonization period and JEON Do-youn from the post-renaissance era of Korean film, hoping to depict the social and cultural history of each period.

'Space of Historical Dramas- Space of Imagination', to be built as a replica of the room of Madam Jo in <Untold Scandal> will show visitors how the combination of historical facts and the imagination of fine arts and prop masters can form a complete background of the historical drama featured in a film.

### EXPERIENCE THE SILENT PICTURE THEATER

The 'Film Technology Zone' and the 'Animation Zone' are designed to help young students better understand the technology involved in film production.



Legendary Korean Director, NA Woon-gyu.

They show the way film is shot and projected at 24 frames per second and made to be perceived as images to the human eyes, the process whereby 35mm film is projected onto a screen with a movie projector, how films are restored, the production process used in <Secret Sunshine>. There is also an animator's room where an animation film is made for demonstration, and there is also a learn-from-experience program that allows users to make their own animation film.

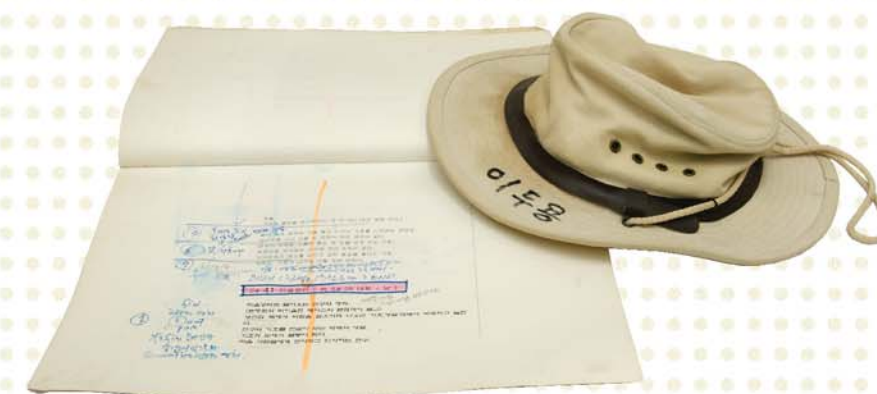
Most popular of all at the Korean Film Museum, the 'Silent Picture Theater', will be built as a replica of Wongak Temple, one of the major theaters in Korea in the 1930s. The theater will allow people to enjoy the displays of motion pictures on the screen, and also give them a chance to participate in a multiple theater experience. Silent films will be screened, using the reconstructed voices of live narrators.

These moving images and materials on display will give young students some knowledge in the audio & visual world of Korean motion pictures, hoping they enjoy films more vividly after experiencing the educational programs of the museum. Other features include: 'Let's Make Optical Toys', an exhibition to allow children to make optical toys, which were in fashion at the end of the 19th century, as a pre-film exercise to learn about the technology of filmmaking, 'Play Live Narrator', where the player can improvise and narrate lines associated with scenes from silent films, 'Film Watching & Discussion Club', in which a group of participants can watch

classic Korean films and have discussions, and 'Creating Media Time', a feature for children to create media so they can learn more about it. All these youth programs and the children's film academy will be introduced in the Korean Film Museum.

OH Sung-ji / Korean Film Archive

The Korean Film Museum is located at 1602, DMC, Sangam-dong, Mapo-gu, Seoul, 120-270, Korea. Its opening hours are 10:00 to 19:00 from Tuesday to Saturday (except 10:00 to 21:00 on Wednesday / Closed on Sundays). For further details, please visit the website of the Korean Film Archive at [www.koreafilm.or.kr/museum](http://www.koreafilm.or.kr/museum)



The Props of Director LEE Doo-yong.



# Feature-length Ani set to take off!

## Ready for Revival after Overcoming its Slump



<Audition>

After overcoming a well-publicized slump, the animation industry has begun to become revitalized. This year alone, two films are ready to be released with a hope of new leap forward. Having been straddled with trials & errors and lost for directions, is the Korean full-length animation industry ready for revival? Including the participation of major film production companies and investment from public organizations, efforts are underway to popularize full-length animation films. Recognizing recent changes in the industry, we're going to introduce four animation films awaiting their release: <Dream of a Precious Day>, <Audition>, <Princess Bari>, and <Outback>.

Korean feature-length animation films, which used to be relatively active

in production at the turn of the new millennium, have been sluggish for some time. Not only has the number of films released been small, but their profitability, in terms of cinema ticket sales, was considered almost impossible. Although animation films in Japan and the US have been gaining in popularity at rates no less than among live-action films, Korean animations failed to sell in excess of a million tickets. Due to their low demand in the marketplace, full-length animations were not popular among the investment and distribution sectors.

In an extreme case, one film has been in the 'production stage' for eight years after, while another has already been completed but awaits release, unable to secure a distribution

company deal. 3D animation <Egg Cola>, by Independence, (which did the CG for <Wonderful Days>), produced in 2002, is now, in reality, out of the production stage. Ffango Entertoyment's <Lucky Seoul>, which attracted a great deal of attention when Sidus FNH was chosen to produce it, has now basically been canceled. JOE Beom-jin, who directed <Aachi & Ssipak>, has not made plans for his next project.

Fortunately, however, some government organizations began taking an interest in animation. Apart from the 'Legend Creation Project' of the Gyeonggi Digital Contents Agency, quite recently the Seoul Animation Center and EBS announced that they were going to launch a one-billion-won joint project



<Wolf Daddy>



<Shark Bait>



<Audition>

called 'Ani Frontier 2008' in the first half of this year in an effort to help create success stories in the domestic animation industry. Including <The Hen is Out in The Yard: Leafy Sprout>, there were quite a few projects that have already been completed or that are under production.

### <AUDITION>, COMPLETED WITH JAPANESE CREWS

<The Hen is Out in The Yard: Leafy Sprout>, to be produced by MK Pictures, is noteworthy enough when it comes to the fact that the film is the first full-length animation from the traditionally live-action film company, and the biggest producer of the year on the back of its hit film earlier this year, <Forever the Moment>. Centering on a hen that leaves her chicken farm to find a new life, <The Hen is Out in The Yard: Leafy Sprout> is based on a best-selling children's book of the same name by author HWANG Sun-mee. It will be co-produced by MK Pictures and animation company Odoltogi. Targeting release in December, the script and character development work is now complete.

In addition, director JANG Hyeong-yoon, who won the Hiroshima award in the competition section of the Hiroshima Animation Festival with his short film "Wolf Daddy", is now preparing to debut his full-length animation for Generation Blue Film. He is also developing two projects for Cross Film, a subsidiary company of Yellow Entertainment, production company responsible for <Yobi, the Five Tailed Fox>. Awaiting completion after several years' of difficulties and delays, <Audition>, based on cartoonist CHON Kye-young's cartoon of the

same name, and <Dream of a Precious Day>, a lyrical animated film set in the 1970s, are two promising films currently undergoing their final touches, and set for release later this year.

Being adapted from CHON's best selling cartoon, <Audition> was directed by MIN Kyung-jo, with over two decades of experience in the Korean animation industry, (with past films including <Hairy Wizard>). Japanese Gisimari, Hiroshi Matsuzono, and Konojiro were hired to work on the storyboard and fine arts components. The film tells a dynamic story of an heiress of a major music company, the Songs Song Group, who, in an effort to inherit property, attempted to discover four music boy wonders.

<Dream of a Precious Day>, the first full-length film from animation production company Mediation with Pencil, was set to be co-directed by AHN Jae-hoon & HAN Hye-jin, who are also married to each other. Their animation, <One Day of Hitchcock>, a parody of Alfred Hitchcock, was entered into the competition section of the Montecatini Short Film Festival.

### FULL 3D ANIMATION ATTEMPTS

<Princess Bari>, from director SEONG Baek-yeob, and <Outback>, from director LEE Kyeong-ho are presently under full-swing in production and set for release in 2009. <Princess Bari> is the 2nd feature-length film from SEONG Baek-yeob, who won the Best Animated Film Award at the Annecy International Animated Film Festival in 2004 for his project, <Oseam>. The film is a fantasy adventure animation, motivated by the shamanism myth story, 'Baridegi (deserted child)'. It tells the story of a 15-year-old girl who goes to heaven to get life-saving water for her ailing father.

Having explored the ocean world via a Korea-Japan joint 3D animation production, <Shark Bait (a.k.a The Reef)>, director LEE Kyeong-ho changed the background this time to the Australian desert for his new film, <Outback>. It is a full 3d animation once again co-produced by DigiArt Production and Wonder World LLC, who also co-produced <Shark Bait (a.k.a The Reef)>. It is an adventure film featuring personified animal characters.

JUNG Mi-rae/ Film 2.0



<Oseam>

# Spotlight on the striking Achievement of Genre Experiments!

Korean films invited to Cannes including  
<The Good, The Bad, The Weird> <The Chaser>

The festival of films, the Cannes festival once again raises its curtain. This year, Korean genre films of a new aesthetic achievement were invited to this 61st event. Films invited last year to the competition section, LEE Chang-dong's <Secret Sunshine> and KIM Ki-duk's <Breath>, displayed what Korea's auteuristic films are really about. This year, films like <The Good, The Bad, The Weird> invited to the Out of Competition section and <The Chaser> which is to be screened for Midnight Screenings, will vividly reveal the level Korean genre films have reached so far. As for <The Housemaid> by director KIM Ki-young to be shown at the Classic section, it is another masterpiece marking the height of thrillers in Korean film history. On the other hand, director BONG Joon-ho who swept the world's movie scene with <The Host> is preparing to disclose his new sensuality with <Tokyo!> invited to the Un Certain Regard section. <Tokyo!> is an omnibus film co-directed by Michel GONDRY and Leos CARAX, and in the <Shaking Tokyo> segment, BONG pictures the lonely inner side of human beings through the scenery of a mega-city named Tokyo.

The young directors of Korea are pushing into aesthetic territory never reached before through experiments in genres. Their creative ambition is what makes Korean films richer. <The Chaser> directed by NA Hong-jin was appraised in Korea this year as a 'discovery of Korean films'. NA debuted with this film but unlike a novice directing a feature film for the first time he handled the traditions of thrillers very well, receiving favorable responses that the film skillfully showed the barren inner side of our society. <The Chaser> was a great success in Korea. Director KIM Jee-woon who has continued on with genre experiments has turned his eyes to action genre this time. Shifting the arena of experiment from comedy <The Foul King>, horror <A Tale of Two Sisters> to noir <A Bittersweet Life>, he has been reinterpreting the rules of genres in his own way. Expectations are high as to how he will revive the so-called 'Manchurian Western', which was popular with Korean viewers back in the 1960s and 70s, in <The Good, The Bad, The Weird>. Also the film is catching the attention of many since Korea's top actors, LEE Byung-hun, SONG Kang-ho and JUNG Woo-sung will be starring in it.

Meanwhile <The Housemaid> invited to the Classic section is an interesting piece in the sense that it shows the climax of imagination on genre in Korean film history. It is one of the most important works done by director KIM Ki-young, an eccentric figure in Korean film history, someone with an extraordinary imagination. <The Housemaid> to be showed during this event was digitally restored by the Korean Film Archive with sponsorship from the World Cinema Foundation lead by Martin Scorsese. Lastly, short animation <STOP> has also made it to the Cannes, for the Cinefondation section.

Editor





# Three Villains in *The* Manchurian Wilderness

KIM Jee-woon's  
**<The Good, The Bad, The Weird>**  
in Out of Competition

"I want to shoot a western with Manchuria as background." When director KIM Jee-woon slipped these words around the time <A Bittersweet Life> was released, nobody took him seriously. This is 21st century after all, and western in Korea? Most people just thought his words as a joke. <The Good, The Bad, The Weird>, an 'oriental western' by KIM began just like that, as if it was a joke.

Actually, his intentions weren't so unrealistic since in the context of Korean film history, his work is a succession of the 'Manchurian western', a sub-genre that actually existed in 1960s through 70s. At the time when genre films were in full bloom, many Korean directors

made 'western variations' with Manchuria of 1930s as the background. This was a period when the imperial expansionism was at its height, when Japan occupied much of Asia including Korea and China. Manchuria was a piece of land where all the paradox produced in the process was concentrated. It was made into an advance base for ruling China and thus this area once close to a waste land grew in fast speed. Therefore, Manchuria was a new world not only for Manchurians who were oppressed economically,

politically and socially, but also for all those outsiders from peripheral countries looking for a new chance. The lives of Chinese, Korean, Russian and Japanese who dwelled in Manchuria must have been quite similar to those of Americans who pioneered the West in search of gold and new life. Korean 'Manchurian western' of the 60~70s deals with

themes such as vain desires, friendship, justice, betrayal of men within the frames of western genre. Especially, there were many who fled to Manchuria because they fought for independence from Japan, a large number of 'Manchurian western' films showed patriotic and ethnic traits.

*"Those moments in westerns are cliches that familiar, like dry-wind in the deserts, guns firing away in a split second. But they always fascinate me every time."*

## Everyone's a Villain

Director KIM explains the reason he was attracted to the westerns like this. "Movies I like to watch and make always start with thrilling movie-like moments. Those moments in westerns are cliches that familiar, like dry-wind blowing in the deserts, a lone gunman, guns firing away in a split second. But they always fascinate me every time." He

became interested in the western from quite a while ago. He already showed his desires on western genre even before he shot <A Bittersweet Life> and showed hints of it through the scene in later half of <A Bittersweet Life> where Seon-u(LEE Byung-hun) makes contacts with illegal firearms agent at an abandoned old harbor.

KIM has wishes to "experience various genres without restrictions on any certain kind" has so far made genre films such as comedy <The Quiet Family>, <The Foul King>, horror <A Tale of Two Sisters> and noir <A Bittersweet Life>, and had directed <Creatures of Heaven>, an SF film which is part of omnibus <Report on Human Extinction>. He has "decided what the genre will be first then think about the story" and it was the same for <The Good, The Bad, The Weird>. He was inspired from CHO Nam-ryong's photos of China's barren lands, as well as from his own trip to Manchuria and encouraged by director LEE Man-hee's <Break up The Chain>(1971), a film evaluated as one of Korea's best 'Manchurian western'. Perhaps <Break up The Chain> has emotionally influenced <The Good, The Bad, The Weird> quite a bit. The main characters in the film don't care about any great causes and instead only seek their own interest through all means, being real villains. They chase and are chased to find the Buddha statue where the list of activists fighting for independence is hidden.

Three heroes of <The Good, The Bad, The Weird> are also similar to the villains of <Break up The Chain>. These are men who live for honor, or for just plain survival instead of independence or great cause: Tae-gu(SONG Kang-ho) is a train robber who survives under any circumstances like weeds in the field, Do-won(JUNG Woo-sung) is a reward seeker who will do anything for money, and lastly Chang-yi(LEE Byung-hun) the head of bandits always wants to be the best at everything. They get involved in a chase where they cheat and fight over a map supposedly containing the secret. <The Good, The Bad, The Weird> is "an action movie that's exciting and fun, an entertainment film," as director KIM had numerous times stressed already. Yet by setting up meaningful historical background and contrasting characters, the film has more meaning than just as an entertainment movie. According to KIM Jee-woon, this film is about "three men who would will physically run to the end of the earth while their hearts reside back at home", and "strong will to live through their desperate moves seeking dreams and ideals whether that may be getting rich quick or desire to be the best." In the end, through those characters who lived fiercely running their horses through the Manchurian field in 1930s, <The Good, The Bad, The Weird> may have wanted to show the basic spirit that can't be restored anymore today.



# Attractive Thriller with a Cynical Message

NA Hong-jin's <The Chaser>  
in Midnight Screenings

<The Chaser> is a thriller packed with events that all take place over one night. While it has been faithful to the thriller genre, it doesn't stop there, going further to offer an unexpected surprise. It also depicts the hostile atmosphere of our lives and our desperate race for survival, with a telling criticism of the corrupted public systems in society. The director's intrepid spirit along with the top performances of the actors enhances the effect of an already powerful scenario. Its viewers will find without difficulty that the journey of the film to the current state was not at all smooth, given the visual setting in which most scenes were shot at night. Here is the story told by the film's director, NA Hong-jin. It is a story of the birth of a new talent in the Korean film.

Like some films recently achieving great success, <The Chaser> is unfolding with great speed. As if it didn't need any moments of thought, it keeps running away. These types of films tend to have fewer scenes- they have their own rhythm, which can be ruined entirely the moment they stop. What's interesting about <The Chaser> is that, as implied in its title, based on the motives derived from the literal meaning of the 'Chase', it chose to gradually engrave specific impressions on the viewers mind. When the film ends, the face of the lead character, UHM Jung-ho(KIM Yoon-suk), appears in a desperate chase, while the poker-face of serial killer JI Yong-min(HA Jung-woo), acts as a contrast.

For a music video type film composed of about 2,500 cuts, such an enormous afterimage is enough. Although the film owns something to arbitrary interpretation, there are many contemporary faces that don't seem to care. Without knowing what to do, both UHM Jung-ho and his subordinate Oh-jot frantically run through the residential streets of Seoul with little space for even parking. They are trying to rescue an individual deserted by the public authorities. In one of these scenes, where Jung-ho gives a bunch of keys to Oh-jot and asks him to find the houses that match the keys, the camera focuses on those houses compactly lined from the top of the neighborhood hill. This is when the film makes its audience feel lost in society's indifference and outnumbered by a series of unknown enemies. This scene might be the visualization of the sense of the setbacks that contemporaries like us desperately try to suppress.

As contemporaries, we are undergoing a political era where

*It depicts our lives  
and our desperate race for survival,  
with a telling criticism  
of the corrupted society.*

the law of causation no longer works. Unable to pursue rational reasoning and discussion, individuals are getting involved in their own methods to dispel their discouraged desire and dissatisfaction. Feigning ignorance, <The Chaser> shows us some indirect answers to this situation, and at the same time, it describes a certain picture of life to which we can actually gain full access. While watching the sweating cop-turned-pimp struggling in the residential area in a metropolitan city at night time in the fight against the ruthless criminal for whom murder is a hobby, the viewers are left feeling anger and sorrow. A great number of obstacles positioned in the film often look quite perilously close to solutions, as suggested by the genre. Police, from high ranking to minor officers, are all unbelievably stupid, and the serial killer is likely to be found to be sexually impotent. Incompetent authorities and criminal gangs are common enemies of those living in contemporary Korea. But we don't realize we could all be part of those incompetent and malevolent enemies.

## A Genre beyond Genre Films

<The Chaser> obediently follows the genre, at the same time, goes beyond genre. Scenes like the showdown between the bad guy and the less bad guy, or the contrast between

incapable public power and individual heroism are nothing new in other films. While <The Chaser> has many moments of déjà vu, it reaches a substantially ethical point by stimulating the protective instincts of animals, which are similar to a father's anger toward the person who made his child cry.

Meanwhile, it is important to note that <The Chaser> also tries to deduce some type of humanity from murderer, JI Young-min. He is definitely the worst ever criminal, still revealing his pathos. In the last duel scene of the film, with its extreme visual intensity, what's left to them is both men's animal-like physicality. Though their bodies are in tatters, they continue to fight to death. As the film lets two men brutally damage each other's bodies, the typical pleasure of the genre known as 'action' is destroyed, and the film enters a different path altogether, with close-ups of both actors. In the pitch-black darkness, their broken and distorted faces, which are revealed intermittently, can be degraded as the agony of death that is not able to be rescued by any moral justification. It's not still clear what film NA Hong-jin will choose to make after his successful debut, but it's quite marvelous for a young director to extract these unknown features from actors. As <The Chaser> is an adventure influential enough to rekindle the appetite of creation for Korean films, it is worthy of a great deal of respect.

KIM Young-jin/ Film critic



“I was attacked with a lucky bomb”

## Interview with Director NA Hong-jin



It is well known that the filming period was very difficult.

It was literally like a battlefield. As you see, 90% of the entire film took place at night. It was shot in the summer, with shorter nights, so shooting ended within five hours. Can you imagine how difficult it is to shoot a film on the residential streets of Seoul, trying to set the lighting? However, I didn't want to give up the minimum screen density and texture. One week into the filming, the neighborhood was thrown into uproar. They protested against the filming. But I had my own principles. So, I

ignored all that interference.

**The emotions of the actors were well assigned.**

That's what I am grateful to them for. For every single scene, I spent a lot of time talking to them, to remind them of the previous and the following scene. Too much talking made me sick and tired. Let's remember the scene when UHM Jung-ho is having a conversation with a pastor in the church. That was shot on the first shooting day. When we were working with the 1st rough cut, I was relieved to see that scene. I felt we were making a good film. This is because it was at the middle of the film and its emotional expression was well targeted by the actors.

**A Film of Characters, A Film of Actors**

**KIM Yoon-suk performed quite well in the film. His control over natural fluctuations in emotion was marvelous. While his emotions seem to have been hugely compressed, his performance flowed quite naturally.**

He was incredibly perseverant. Even during 40 hours of non-stop filming, he stayed awake without removing his makeup or falling asleep for a single moment. Once I saw



*“The film is composed of 2,500 scenes, so if the emotions of the actors did not work closely together, everything would be ruined. It wasn't possible to do this film only using actors' techniques.”*

him remain awake and alert, with a bloodstained and haggard face, nobody complained of any difficulties. Who wouldn't become watchful when the oldest in the field was going on without showing any discomfort at all?

**HA Jung-woo, who played the murderer JI Young-min, also performed well.**

From the director's point of view, I felt excited watching the non-verbal conversations between actors. In that sense, KIM Yoon-suk and HA Jung-woo were extremely sensitive. Both were well prepared before appearing for filming, and even constantly checked things with me. But when shooting started, despite all that pre-planning, there was lots of ad-libbing. Equally surprisingly, the other actor corresponded with a quick wit. There were times I thought of as quite



miraculous.

**Revising the Script 30 times**

The film doesn't bother to give any detailed information about each character. Instead it outlines the general feature of the people through the running fight, which uncovers their beastly feelings and primitive instincts. This generates substantial persuasion power. Actors' spirits are in full bloom, and the direction and shooting followed at a remarkable speed.

The film is composed of 2,500 scenes, so if the emotions of the actors do not work closely together, everything will be ruined. It wasn't possible to do this film only using actors' techniques. I also found it difficult to arouse emotions with technique. Instead, emotions need to result from what the characters do in the story. It's not easy to put all this into words. As an actor, HA Jung-woo is quite special, as he knows about the field of filming as much as a director does. He fully understands how lighting is set up, the size of the screen, and the types of lenses used. Within that scope, he got to each point with enormous focus. With the young actor's strong moves, KIM Yoon-suk returned with his own power. The clash of two powers was huge in scale, requiring the director to submit to quite a demanding job to determine if their energy was allocated effectively for each scene. I felt like I was flying during the shoot.

**The eccentric energy generally enables the film to escape the range of a typical genre film. This becomes the very power of the film itself. It is said the script was changed 30 times. What was the most difficult thing about the film?**

Many parts of the story underwent several modifications, but, in the end, it was finished with a similar frame as originally intended. For limited events to fit into one day, it is important to describe the feelings of each character very compactly.

**The lead female character, KIM Mi-jin, was put at risk from the beginning and UHM Joong-ho began his own lonely fight to rescue her. Halfway through the film, her own daughter appears to become a primary axis supporting the flow of the plot. It was like you made a bet with the audience. Yet, the atypical ending was differentiated from the smoothness of most Hollywood films. This may reflect the self-consciousness of the director. It directly asks us how we feel when we see how dreadful the world really is. Do you think it risks stereotype accusations nevertheless, given the recent trend toward strong endings in Korean films?**

I didn't want to give the impression that I was ridiculing the viewers when it came to the safety of KIM Mi-jin and her daughter. It was part of the role of the plot and, like what I said earlier; the more important thing is to describe the feelings of the characters, and their irregularities. I think I got the best performances for as long as I could.

KIM Young-jin/ Film Critic



## The Loneliness of a Metropolis

BONG Joon-ho's <Shaking Tokyo>  
in Un Certain Regard

What attracted director BONG Joon-ho when watching <Sway> was not the haggard sideburns or the well-built body of ODAGIRI Joe, but KAGAWA Teruyuki himself, who played the unsophisticated elder brother of Joe. When director BONG met Miwa NISHIKAWA, who directed <Sway>, at a film festival, he told her of his intention to work with KAGAWA. When he was writing the scenario of <Shaking Tokyo>, BONG knew from the beginning he would develop the role of Hikikomori as a character in the film. Having lived a reclusive life, confining himself at his house in Tokyo for 10 years, the man in his early 30's, (KAGAWA Teruyuki), is, in Japanese terms, Hikikomori (an individual who lives an extremely isolated life away from the outside world and confines themselves to indoors). Living on a monthly allowance given by his father to buy meals is all his life has. Eating pizza for lunch and gimbab for supper, he indulges in the Internet, video games, cartoon books, and TV, all of which represent his only window to the outside world.

His life is suddenly transformed. He becomes preoccupied by the unusual manner and behavior of the pizza delivery girl(AOI You). He can only judge her inner thoughts from the image she presents. She has buttons drawn on her entire body. Buttons of headaches, hysteria, and loneliness, etc. are these symbols of internalized vending machines and a passive personality? The matchmaker for these two is the jokingly cute TAKENAKA Naoto, who plays the owner of the

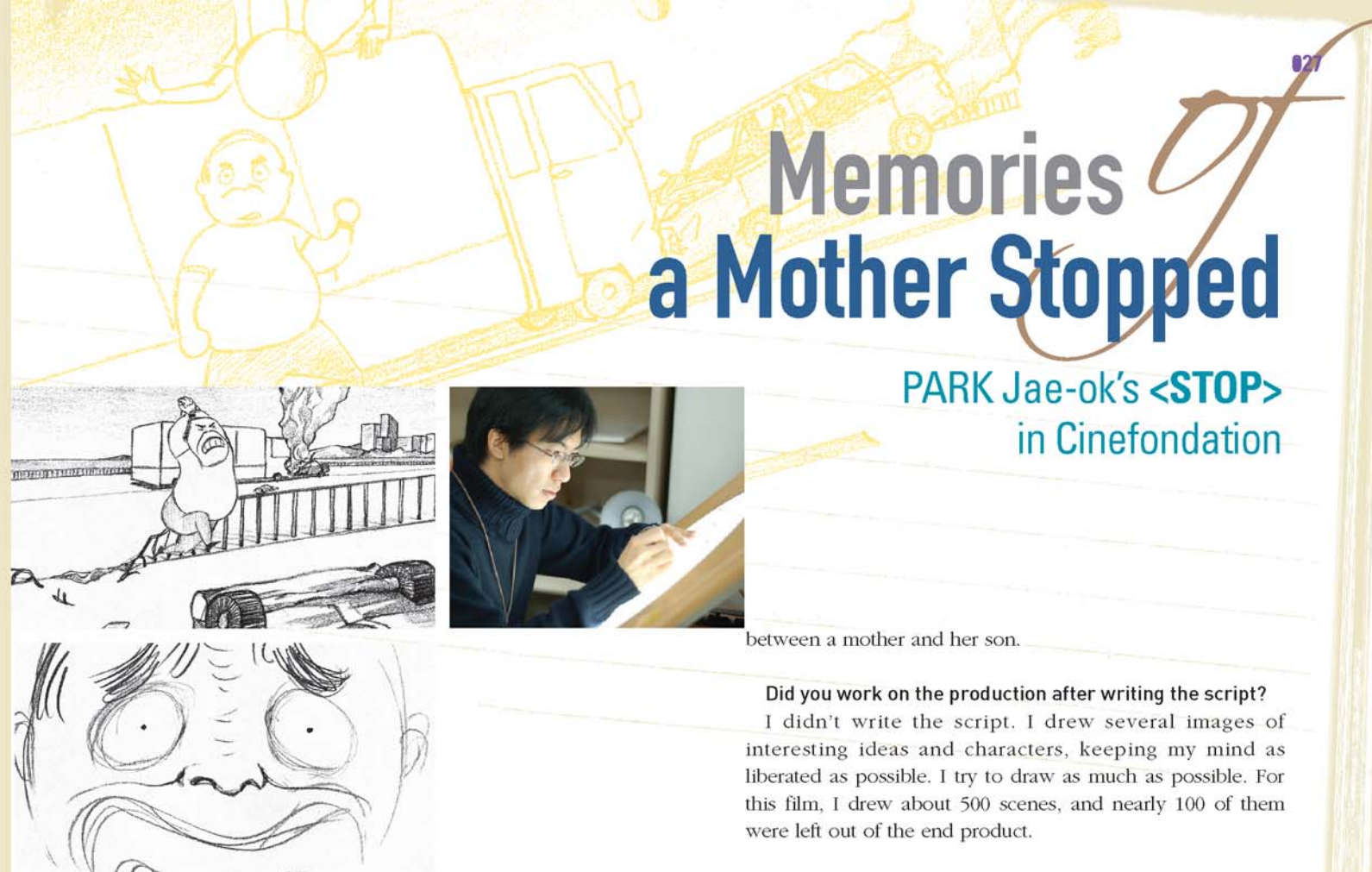
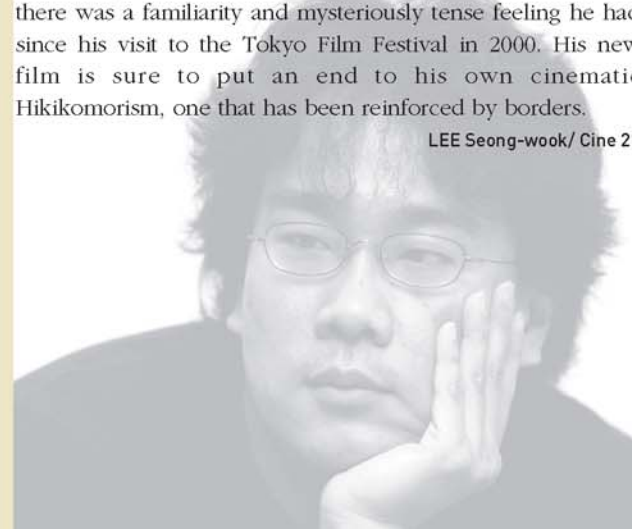
pizza house. None of these three characters are named in the film, a decision which may have derived from the Korean director's view of Tokyo. It is worth waiting to see how the director, who had reorganized the image of 21st century Seoul as the Han River and the Monster, (in The Host), will depict Tokyo.

"As you can see, Tokyo is a huge city with high density population and tiny houses. Ironically, people in Japan try not to touch or be touched by each other. Even on crowded subways, they make an effort not to bump into someone passing by, and it's quite common to see many Japanese restaurants serving a single diner, and to see customers eating alone. Therefore, they all look lonely to me. Hikikomori is the extreme case. "I've been developing my imagination into different ways: what kind of an event could turn out to be the most dramatic to a Hikikomori; what if he or she falls in love with someone; or what would be the most unlikely thing to happen to a Hikikomori."

Motivated by his love, the Hikikomori in the film finally decides to walk out into the sun-filled streets. But what he finds in the street is the ghost town of Tokyo. Most Japanese have become Hikikomori. Suddenly, the city is struck by a dreadful earthquake. Can the man in <Shaking Tokyo> successfully take the woman who's trying to hide inside her house out into the outside world?

The film is the first overseas work by director BONG. After <Memories of Murder>, he was constantly offered feature-length film deals in Japan, one or two of which were quite tempting for him. Yet, he feared a lack of understanding of the Japanese system and the atmosphere on set, so he declined. Now, he has accepted a challenge and has greatly impressed. He was encouraged by the peculiar situation the project allowed: it suited his interest in omnibus work, there was less pressure due to its short length(30 minutes), and there was a familiarity and mysteriously tense feeling he had since his visit to the Tokyo Film Festival in 2000. His new film is sure to put an end to his own cinematic Hikikomorism, one that has been reinforced by borders.

LEE Seong-wook/ Cine 21



## Memories of a Mother Stopped

PARK Jae-ok's <STOP>  
in Cinefondation

between a mother and her son.

**Did you work on the production after writing the script?**

I didn't write the script. I drew several images of interesting ideas and characters, keeping my mind as liberated as possible. I try to draw as much as possible. For this film, I drew about 500 scenes, and nearly 100 of them were left out of the end product.

**Where were the mother and son headed?**

I didn't specify that at first. I simply thought about a regular salesperson giving his mother a lift to a hospital on a weekday. Since my drawings are cartoon-like, I tried not to make the subject matter too heavy.

**You majored in design at college. How did you end up making an animation?**

I've wanted to make an animation since I was in middle high school. By the time I got into college, I chose to study design because I didn't know some colleges offered animation courses, and design seemed as close as it got to animation.

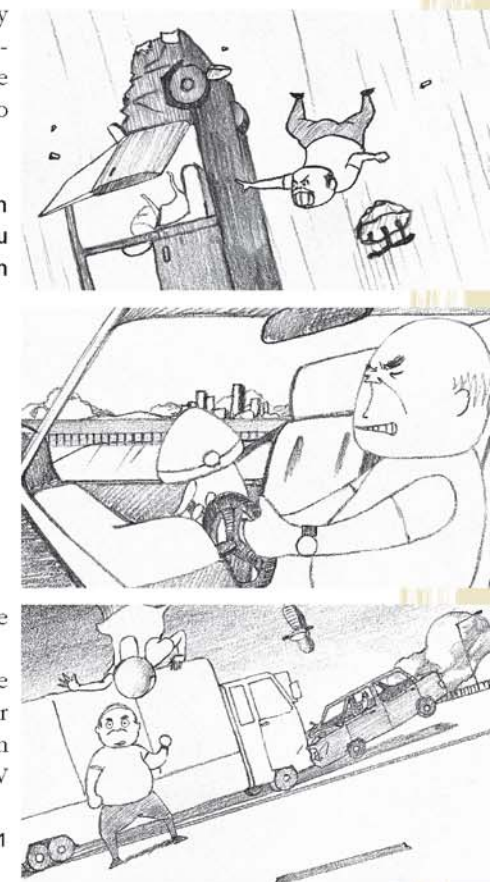
I wanted to make animation films after watching the films from Studio Ghibli on TV when I was young.

JUNG Jae-hyeok/ Cine 21

A son is scolding his mother because she keeps opening and closing a window of his car. The mother and son are headed somewhere in a car. Bickering between the scolding son and the unyielding mother continues. Then it stops. Having made a sharp turn to avoid the truck charging at them, the son's car stops immediately before falling off a cliff. A piece of glass from his watch, shattered by the accident, blocks the hand on his watch. Everything but him has stopped in motion. The son desperately holds onto the hand on his watch to save his mother. Animated in pencil-drawn sketches with deep shades, <STOP> starts from an idea as simple as the clean-cut drawing technique, and comes to a neat conclusion. In the film, only two to three scenes are required to describe how the son recalls the memories of his mother and gathers feelings for her, and the refined images tell the story without any superfluous. PARK creates a particularly exquisite scene where the mother hangs upside down from the cliff, overlapping it with the memories of the mother as watched by the son from a piggyback ride on her back when he was young. The film is about a mother-and-son relationship that becomes dreary, but never gets weighed down by the heavy subject matter, maintaining instead a rather delightful rhythm.

**How did you come up with your film idea?**

I started out with a setup where time stops. In fact, this setup has been done in many other films and animations, which helped me to work out how to unfold the story. While working on the storyline, I came up with the relationship





〈The Housemaid〉

# A Monster Korean Film History

〈The Housemaid(Ha-nyo)〉  
and Director KIM Ki-young in Classic :  
New or Restored Prints

A woman soaked in the violent rain is peeking into a room through the window. Looking inside the pitch-black house, her flash-like eyes are like a nightmare piercing a midnight sleep. Depicting the collapse and catastrophic end of one middle-class family, caused by infidelity, murder, and twisted desire, KIM Ki-young's <The Housemaid (Ha-nyo)>(1960), set around a two-story house, is considered as featuring the most grotesque female character ever depicted in Korean film industry. <The Housemaid (Ha-nyo)> was invited by the Cannes Film Festival 2008, having been restored by the Korean Film Archive under the sponsorship of the World Cinema Foundation and supervised by renowned film director Martin Scorsese. Having recommending <The Housemaid (Ha-nyo)> as one of the three films to be reconstructed in 2008, Scorsese describes it as an, "intensely, even passionately claustrophobic film, yet, in one of the great accidents of film history, it is known only to the most devoted film lovers in the west". As the famous director said, the claustrophobia that engulfs the two-story house enhances the mysterious atmosphere of the film. Well-known for his outspoken and inflammatory comments, including "When human instinct is anatomized, black blood comes out", director KIM Ki-young has long been established as an eccentric filmmaker, responsible for some of film's most peculiar offerings. His movies dealt with sexually &

economically impotent men and predatory femme fatales, refusing typical categorizations adopted in Korean films, and belonging to a genre of the director's own world, with a distinct contrast between vegetable and animal. Most typically completed through this prism, <The Housemaid (Ha-nyo)> will be screened for 'rediscovery' by modern audiences.

### Martin SCORSESE Restores <The Housemaid>

Erratic describes the career of KIM Ki-young. In the 1960s he enjoyed popularity after the commercial success of <The Housemaid(Ha-nyo)>. In the 1970s to 80s his career went into decline as an independent film director, with a lack of funding under the government's censorship and repression efforts. In 1997, thousands of young film lovers 'rediscovered' his work at a retrospective at the Pusan International Film Festival. There have also been rumors. One has it that the director of over 200 pounds(about 90 kgs) indulged in filming with a tiny continuity hidden in his hand, allowing no one else to look at. Another had him enjoying grilled meat only for himself with the door locked to keep his crew away, during an era when producing films was considered a luxury. Another held that 50 rats were raised at a filming location in preparation for shooting

<Insect Woman (Chungnyeo)>. However, even more erratic than all those unlikely rumors surrounding him was his work. Taking place in a two-story house, where modern and pre-modern times collide, the grotesque chamber-drama/historic drama included sexual scenes of an unprecedented nature: sexual activities conducted on confectionery machines and other unusual scenes; characters heavily influenced by the plain expression of a complex and twisted desire. All of these elements served as unrealistic, but attractive, components of his 1960 hit, when realism dominated the Korean film industry.

KIM Ki-young was active in the drama clubs of Seoul National University soon after the country's liberation from Japan. After the Korean War, he made propaganda films for the United States Information Service, when his film career had begun. It was at university drama clubs where he met his wife-to-be and long-term soul mate, KIM Yu-bong. She went on to become a dentist before turning to acting and

producing. After his debut film, <The Box of Death>, his second feature film, <Yongsan Province>, proved to be a true 'KIM Ki-young style' film, and was later considered his actual debut film. Based on a North Korean myth, the film is a tragedy about a young man and woman who love each other but are forced to give up their love because of the

*His movies dealt with sexually & economically impotent men and predatory femme fatales, refusing typical categorizations adopted in Korean films, and belonging to a genre of the director's own world.*

tyranny of the noble village man. The final scene is the film's most impressive. When the palanquin, carrying the woman who is going to be married to the government official, passes by the grave of the man she really loved-who committed suicide-it stops. By the time the bride-to-be comes out of the palanquin and is about to bow to the grave, the mother of the deceased man stabs her to death. The mother

is then also killed. At that moment, the son's grave opens, and the bloodstained young woman goes inside to meet her dead lover and have sex with him. They both then rise from the ground and go up to the heaven. Unfortunately, copies including this final scene have been lost, so we have no

choice but to rely on the director's explanation. After a period in which he was involved in a number of neo-realist projects, the director's <The Housemaid (Ha-nyo)> in 1960 was the first true reflection of his style and favored subject matter.

### Housemaids Revolt!

Describing the crisis and fear of a man who witnesses the collapse of his family after a housemaid joined the middle-class household, <The Housemaid (Ha-nyo)> ignited KIM's interest in making a trilogy around a similar repetitive theme. More than ten years apart, <Woman of Fire>(1971) and <Hwa-nyuh of '82>(1982) were both made under this theme. <Insect Woman(Chungnyeo)> and <Carnivorous Animal(Yugsigdongmul)> also had similar subjects. During its screening over more than 40 days, it became the most successful film of its time, attracting over 250 thousand audience members. It explores the fears of a changing society and the women's role in it in the fast industrialization process of Korea. In the film, the maid appears to be unaffected by the male-dominating rule applied within the family. Also, the fear toward the untamed maid is revealed when she catches rats with her bare hands on her first day. Unlike the family's children, who learned from their father how to kill rats with rat poison, she simply uses her bare hands. The scene of her laughing while holding a large rat in her hands acts as a prelude to the forthcoming events, where she, 'the untamed', would destroy 'the tamed'.

The film often depicts the housemaid spying on the inside of the house from outside the window- expressing her sense of alienation from the family, as well as a fear toward the maid herself, who stands waiting for her chance to invade the household. One of the most memorable moments in the movie might be when during the night of the rainstorm, when a factory girl who receives piano lessons, confesses her love of the father. This is seen from outside by the housemaid. After the factory girl is gone, the maid opens the door and enters the room to seduce him, with her rain-soaked hair flowing behind her. This scene warns the audience of the dread to follow, and is well supported by excellent gloomy lighting effects. Her primitive sex appeal offers the husband an impulsive and temporary break from his long-standing customs. For her, the beginning of a sexual relationship with the head of the family is a first step toward assuming the wife's position in the home and control of the husband and his family. The housemaid's desire to take over the wife's role is symbolized by a flight of stairs. Her desire to climb up in social status ultimately failed. She faced her death in the middle of the staircase, neither up nor down. The mise-en-scene and disharmony of the two-story house, divided into two floors by the staircase, helps produce maximum suspense and fear for audiences. The story of a woman from the lower class destroying a middle-class family frightened audiences of the time. During the rapid industrialization process Korea underwent in the 1960s, the mass flow of

people moving from the country into urban areas included many young women from the countryside who formed as a new workforce of maids, kitchen maids, and factory workers. <The Housemaid(Ha-nyo)> captured society's feelings of insecurity the middle-class had toward the new labor force.



<Insect Woman>



<Insect Woman>

The movie begins and ends with the husband reading articles from a newspaper. He narrates for us, warning that 'this sort of thing could happen to anyone'. The last scene embodies the social atmosphere of that time: ironically reminding the audience of the fact that the origin of fear is the individual family itself. The 'housemaid' appears on the surface to be the source bringing destruction and evil to the family. But this last scene tells the audience that the cause of

the destruction already lies in the existing family system, ruled by the father. The housemaid merely identifies and reveals the problems. It could be the wife who poses a more fearful threat than the maid, as a predatory femme fatale. In an effort not to lose her financial status, the wife tries to cover up incidents and even gives up her husband to the

himself to the status of a young child. The husband becomes a baby in diapers sucking a dummy, the mistress becomes increasingly insane, and the wife's only interest remains money. The mistress and the husband end up killing each other during a row, but his family has already been fallen, with no family values capable of restoration.

### Return of the Legend

When it comes to director KIM Ki-young, viewers will automatically think of the series of his films, represented by <The Housemaid(Ha-nyo)>. All feature 'monstrous' predatory femme fatales who destroy an incapable man as the head of a family, and his entire family at the same time. Although KIM has made a variety of films, including melodramas, horror, and war movies, all of his work is characterized by his extraordinary imagination and, some might say, bad taste. Even the literary pictures he produced based on novels differentiated themselves from other similar types in terms of the atmosphere or imagination. Adopted from the novels of LEE Kwang-soo and LEE Cheong-joon, respectively, <Soil>(1978) and <I-eoh Island>(1977) were typical KIM Ki-young films, with a great distance between them and the original literature. A very special actress named LEE Hwa-si was born with <I-eoh Island>. Its final scene, in which a woman played by LEE is having a sex with a dead man-his penis erected with the help of a shaman-is shocking by even today's standards. Since his debut, the director has made 32 films in his career, all as an independent artist. He gets involved in everything, from directing, producing, screenwriting, lighting, down to fine arts and props.

Long forgotten in Korean film history, the director regained his fame with a retrospective held at the Pusan International Film Festival in 1997. His film, <Killer Butterfly> was screened during the festival, and he made some outrageous comments to the fairly enthusiastic young audiences. "What's all this business about making movies for money?" he asked, "To be a filmmaker, marry a wife with good moneymaking skill. Like me" After his comeback to the industry, KIM worked on a film entitled <Diabolical Woman>, a 1990s version of <The Housemaid(Ha-nyo)>. Sadly, he and his wife were killed in a fire on February, 1998. Even his death was movie-like for director KIM Ki-young. His final script for <Diabolical Woman> remained unfinished. However, in 2008, exactly one decade after his death, his biggest and most important film <The Housemaid (Ha-nyo)> is to be restored and screened at Cannes. In June, all of his 23 restorable movies will be screened. Some of his films are also slated for release on DVD, including <Inset Woman(Chungnyeo)>. Reborn with digital technology, <The Housemaid(Ha-nyo)>, was the beginning of the return of the infamous KIM Ki-young.

MO Eun-young / Film Critic



<Woman of Fire>



Director KIM Ki-young.

maid. To take or not to be taken, both women become monsters. Such a combination of sexually & economically incompetent men and monstrous women has since been exploited time and again by KIM. By the time <Insect Woman(Chungnyeo)> was remade as <Carnivorous Animal (Yugsigdongmul)>(1984), the economically incapable man becomes sexually impotent, but starts an extramarital affair with a prostitute to overcome his problems, degrading





<Disturbance in Her Barroom>



<Go Go 70s>



<The Good, The Bad, The Weird>



<Modern Boy>

# Count on the Autumn Harvest!

New films from KANG Woo-suk and KIM Jee-woon to be released in the latter half

The slump in the Korean film industry in 2008 has been deeper and harsher than expected. Although <Forever the Moment> by LIM Soon-rye in January and <The Chaser> from NA Hong-jin in February achieved good responses, attracting more than four million audience members, in terms of the general situation in the industry there has lacked a great or promising hit.

In addition to the general activity of the industry, a number of films scheduled to be screened earlier this year are now delayed to the 2nd half of the year, which has worsened the Korean film 'drought'. Director JUNG Ji-woo's <Modern Boy>, with an original target for an April release, KIM Dai-seung's <Lover> & MIN Kyu-dong's <Antique> scheduled for a May release, and KIM Yoo-jin's <The Divine Weapon> for a June release have all been delayed and now set for release for later in the year. Sidus FNH also has decided to reschedule the release dates for all its films, including director YEO Kyun-dong's <Disturbance in Her Barroom>, KWON Hyung-jin's <Truck>, and YANG Jong-hyun's <Kill Me>, all of which were originally slated for a first-half release. The production companies explained the delays by suggesting the themes were better suited for autumn or winter release dates or that they needed more time to complete post-production. However, according to analysts in Chungmuro, those production and distribution companies seemed to have changed their release dates in order not to be affected by a spring season struck heavily by a sales slump or a summer of potential rivals in Hollywood blockbusters and the more anxiously awaited domestic films, like KANG Woo-suk's <Public Enemy Returns> and KIM Jee-woon's <The Good, The Bad, The Weird>.



〈Sunny〉

### A Vietnam War Story from LEE Joon-ik

The current hardships facing the Korean film industry pertain more to slowness in investments and productions than in ticket sales. As of April 2008, no more than ten films were in production. Even those films with completed investments, full casts, and ready for shooting do not number many. In Chungmuro, more than 100 films were shot in both 2006 and 2007, but this year there have been less than 60. The reason for less films being made is that investors are focusing their investments. Major Korean film investment companies, like CJ, Showbox, and Lotte, made the decision to invest in a small numbers of films. Sidus FNH, a subsidiary of Korea's biggest telecommunication company, KT, and the film division of SK Telecom, Korea's largest mobile telecommunications operator, are also exhibiting less enthusiasm in investment. Only if, say, both <Public Enemy Returns>, released in June, and <The Good, The Bad, The Weird>, released in the summer, enjoy box office success, will investors' concerns be over, albeit temporarily.

Only positive audience responses to these films will be enough to help the industry recover some lost pride and encourage a greater rate of release in the second half of the year. One of the frontrunners in the current slate is <Sunny>, from director LEE Joon-ik. The director attracted more than 12 million viewers for his previous film, <The King and the Clown>, and he is going to present a strong-willed woman in <Sunny>. The character decides to travel to another country in the hope of meeting her beloved. The leading character in the film is Soon-yi (Su Ae), who just married a man called Sang-gil (EUM Tae-woong). Soon-yi is enjoying her newly married life, when she is told Sang-gil has been enlisted to fight in the Vietnam War. While her husband is off fighting, she comes across an audition for a band to travel to Vietnam and perform for the soldiers. Not without difficulties, she joins the band, led by Jung-man (JUNG Jin-young), and she finds herself traveling around the battlefields witnessing the horrors of war, finally meeting her husband. Known for his determinedly male-dominating approach in previous films like <Once Upon a Time in a Battlefield>, <The King and the

Clown>, <Radio Star>, and <The Happy Life>, director LEE Joon-ik seeks here to explore the tragedy involved in war from a woman's point of view. Having recently finished production at a cost of 7 billion won, (about 7 million USD), in Thailand, the film is scheduled to be released in the latter half of this year's summer.

Returning to form last year with <Love Now>, director CHONG Yunsu is expected to garner a great deal of attention with his next project, <My Wife Got Married>. Based on the best selling novel of the same name, the film is a romantic comedy raising the issues of the system known as 'marriage'. The leading characters in the story are Ina (SON Ye-jin), a beautiful woman and expert in the kitchen and the bedroom, and, oddly, with an excellent knowledge of soccer, and Deok-hoon (KIM Joo-hyuck), a man who loves & admires Ina to the point of obsession. Fundamentally freewheeling, Ina insists "I can't stick to monogamy". She begs Deok-hoon not to restrict her. Deok-hoon is desperate to hold onto Ina. They get married only for Ina to tell him she is in love with another man-and worse, wants to marry him. Deok-hoon then faces the unlikely situation of 'a married life with one woman and two men'. When asked about his new film, one that challenges the monogamy system framed by our modern society, director CHONG Yunsu responded, "It doesn't mean that we should sympathize with Deok-hoon for his sadness, nor admire Ina, who breaks all of society's conventions in search of her happiness. It would be satisfactory enough if the audience enjoyed the film and if it made them think there could be this kind of love."

### Beyond <200 Pounds Beauty>

Having described the wild nature of the male world through his films, <Spirit of Jeet Keun Do- Once Upon a Time in High School> and <A Dirty Carnival>, director YOO Ha has now come up with another attention-gathering film, <Two Flowers Shop>. <Two Flowers Shop> is set during the Goryeo Dynasty of the late 13th century and the early 14th century. At that time, the Goryeo Dynasty was virtually ruled by the Yuan Dynasty of China. Its king, (JOO Jin-mo), tries to discontinue Yuan rule and establish an independent state. He forms palace guards, called "Kun Ryung Guards", which are composed of 36 handsome young men, led by military leader Hong-rim (ZO In-sung). The story then enters the dangerous territory of love and betrayal when the queen (SONG Ji-hyo) of the Yuan Dynasty interferes. In addition, a confrontation between the Yuan Dynasty, as it tries to wrest control of Goryeo, and the latter, which is seeking independence. As the film has gained notoriety for its depiction of sex scenes, there are more reasons to await it anxiously. The film not only has vivid shots of sex between men & women, much like <Lust, Caution>, but also homosexual love scenes between the king and Hong-rim which are expected to intrigue the many female fans of ZO In-sung. The title 'Two Flowers Shop' originated from a song from the era that described the sexual relationships between men and women at the time. It was banned during the Joseon Dynasty, when Confucianism dominated.

<Jump Broadly>, from KIM Yong-hwa of <200 Pounds Beauty> fame is another film with good prospects. Dubbed the 'Korean version of <Cool Runnings>', the film is a comedy based on the true story of Korea's national ski jumpers. It centers on the county of Muju in Korea, 1996. During its bid to host the Winter Olympics, Muju was host to IOC judges who wondered how Korea could host an Olympic Games without a ski jumper. In response, the bidding team hastily formed a ski jump team, comprised of fairly inexperienced jumpers. A children's ski instructor was put in charge as coach for the team composed of: a young man who intended to gain exemption from military service by winning a medal in the Olympics; an overseas Korean-born adoptee who was visiting Korea in search of his natural mother; a touter sick and tired of enticing female customers; and a man who remained under his father's control despite his age. <Jump Broadly> is a story of a group of people gathered together with varying-and often conflicting-goals, who were eventually to form a coherent team of athletes. KIM Yong-hwa dubbed the



〈Sunny〉

Director LEE Joon-ik attracted more than 12 million viewers for <The King and the Clown>, and he is going to present a strong-willed woman in <Sunny>.



〈My Wife Got Married〉

*YEO Kyun-dong comes back with his first historical drama, <Disturbance in Her Barroom>, a comic action film focusing on the gangster culture of the Joseon Dynasty in the 18C.*

film the 3rd part of his human drama trilogy, after <Oh! Brothers> and <200 Pounds Beauty>. The 'losers' depicted in his films always achieve their dreams in their own way, overcoming various prejudices and obstacles. Director KIM Yong-hwa, having watched a number of ski jumping competitions as research, is planning to shoot all the scenes domestically and transform the background into Europe using computer graphics. "I felt thrilled when the actors and actresses who used to exist only with possibilities began to emerge through my films" he said. He also revealed that he would cast only one star actor to play the overseas adoptee, with the remaining roles awarded to winners of public auditions. <Jump Broadly> will not only tell a story about young men who make their dreams come true in a difficult country for ski jumpers, but also presents an opportunity for would-be actors to appear in a feature film.

**A Comic Action Film set in the 18th Century**

Having made <Memento Mori> with director KIM Tae-yong and having released <All for Love>, director MIN Kyu-dong's <Antique> is adapted from the Japanese manga of the same title. The film's main background is a cake shop named 'Antique'. Located in a quiet residential area, the shop sells high quality cakes served on antique tableware worth quite a few million won. It is run by its eccentric owner Jin-hyuk(JOO Ji-hoon) and his high school friend and genius patissier, Sun-woo(KIM Jae-wook). The problem is that Sun-woo, who is gay, is in love with Jin-hyuk. Also, Gi-beom(YU A-in) joins the shop as an assistant chef after becoming fascinated by a cake that Sun-woo baked. Further complicating the narrative, Jin-hyuk's bodyguard, Soo-young(CHOI Ji-ho) also works at the shop as a waiter. This film is worth watching because the four men are all in unique situations that don't appear to match their appearance. First of all, the humble-looking Jin-hyuk is, in reality, from a rich family. Popular among the gay community and nicknamed a 'devilish gay', Sun-woo has 'seriously traveled' through a host of different men. Meanwhile, the effeminate Gi-bum was once the youngest ever champion Oriental boxer. Big & rough Soo-young has always been looked after by Jin-hyuk, despite being a bodyguard. <Antique Bakery> depicts four attractive men struggling to determine their identities, and it nicely tells a story of food and cooking.

After his disastrous flirtation with the HD film <Silk Shoes> in 2005, director YEO Kyun-dong comes back with his first historical drama, <Disturbance in Her Barroom>, a comic action film focusing on the gangster culture of the Joseon Dynasty in the 18th century. Unlike previous historical films and TV dramas that center on secret feuds and conspiracies surrounding the palace, this new film depicts gangsters who once dominated the backstreets of the dynasty era. One of its leading characters is Cheon-doong(LEE Jung-jae), a hoodlum from a small village. Having always been second to none as a fighter, he meets and instantly falls in love with Seol-ji(KIM Ok-vin), a high-class gisaeng at Myeongwolhyang, a luxurious bar. One day, Cheon-doong is involved in a fight by accident, beating up the head of the Yangjoo gang. He then faces a crisis, however, when the palace decides to crack down on gang activities at Myeongwolhyang. Cheon-doong, going to the bar just to meet Seol-ji, inadvertently angers the top-ranking gangster of the area, Man-deuk(KIM Suk-hoon).

A fight ensues. Based on an actual fight that occurred at one gisaeng house in 1724, the film portrays the world of gangsters who, ironically, behave in a manner similar to the way they behave contemporaneously. The film also sheds light on the virtue of innocence at the time. According to director YEO Kyun-dong, "Even in that time, there were gangsters like today. There were arrests, and there were fights over territory on the market streets." He also mentioned that the film would not simply reconstruct some events of the Joseon Dynasty. Let's hope the true talents of director YEO Kyun-dong, who worked in the production team for <Black Republic>, directed by PARK Kwang-su, and wrote the script for <Berlin Report>, are finally recognized.



<Lost & Found>



<Disturbance in Her Barroom>



<Dajjimawa Lee>



<Antique>

**Vampire Action by SONG Kang-ho**

<I'm Happy>, from director YOON Jong-chan of <Sorum> and <Blue Swallow> fame, is another upcoming project being anxiously awaited. <I'm Happy> tells the story of a romance between a man(HYUN Bin) suffering from mental illness after having lived with a mother with dementia and a brother addicted to gambling, and a nurse(LEE Bo-young), who nurses him at a psychiatric ward. Known for his previous short film, <An Elegy of Revenge>, director YOON Jong-seok made his feature film debut in the crime action thriller, <Marine Boy>, a story about a man(KIM Gang-woo) delivering drugs for gangs, and the mysterious woman(PARK Si-yeon) who accompanies him. 'Marine Boy' refers to the leader who swims in the sea to deliver drugs. The film will also see CHO Jae-hyun of <Bad Guy> and <Beyond the Years> appear on film.

Director KIM Yoo-jin's blockbuster epic film <The Divine Weapon>, RYOO Seung-wan's action film <Dajjimawa Lee>, CHOI Ho's <Go Go 70s> about a 70's band, KIM Dai-seung's <Lover>, featuring a love story of the aged, RYU Jang-ha's <Hello Schoolgirl>, based on popular cartoonist Kang Pool's cartoons, LEE Sang-woo's <The Bridge at Nogunri>, about the Korean War, and CHUNG Jung-hwa's romantic comedy <Lost & Found> are all under production and set for release in the 2nd half of the year.

Some new projects from some world-renowned film directors are also in the production stage. Filming for <Thirst> from director PARK Chan-wook has begun, with an exiting cast of SONG Kang-ho and SHIN Ha-kyun, KIM Ok-vin, and KIM Hae-sook. <Thirst> tells the story of a vampire pastor, Sang-hyun(SONG Kang-ho), his friend(SHIN Ha-kyun from <The Devil's Game> and <Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance>), and his friend's wife(KIM Ok-vin from <Dasepo Naughty Girls>). His friend's wife is abused by her mother-in-law(KIM Hae-sook), to which her husband turns a blind eye. Her loneliness and agony turns her to infidelity. <Mother>, from director BONG Joon-ho, has finished casting and will be ready for shooting this fall. The role of the mother who struggles to clear her son's name from a murder case is played by one of Korea's leading middle-aged actresses, KIM Hye-ja. WON Bin, known for his role in <Tae-guk-gi>, plays her wrongfully accused son. A few years ago, when director BONG Joon-ho thought of the film, he had KIM Hye-ja as the mother in mind. In addition to these new films, after completing <Night and Day>, director HONG Sangsoo is writing the script for his new film, and the great master of Korean film, IM Kwon-taek is also known to be working on a film that is said to differ markedly from his previous work.

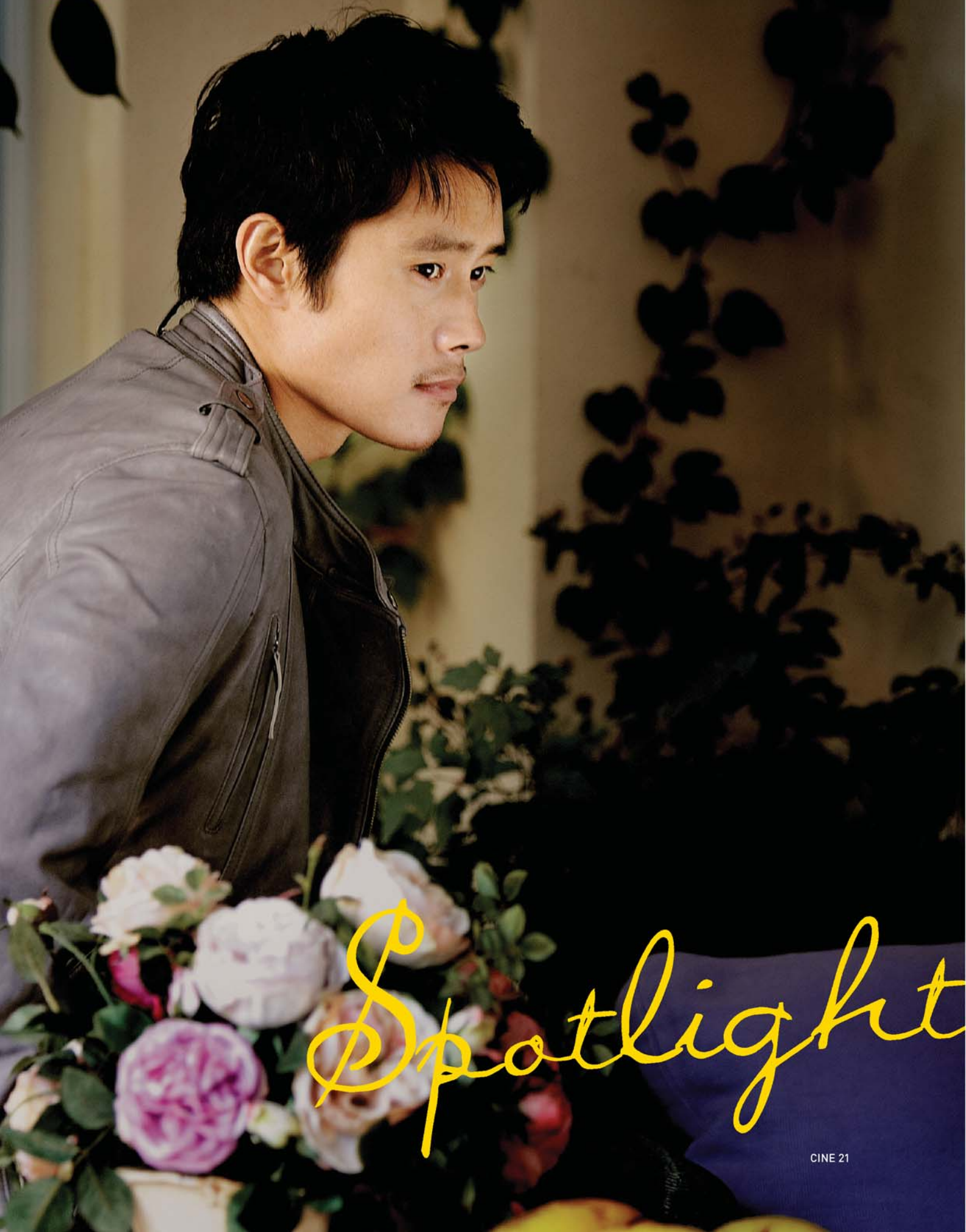
MOON Seok/ Cine 21



<Lover>



<Go Go 70s>



## Between Reason and Sensibility, Between Beauty and Evil

*LEE Byung-hun, starring in <The Good, The Bad, The Weird>  
<I Come with the Rain> and <G. I. JOE>*

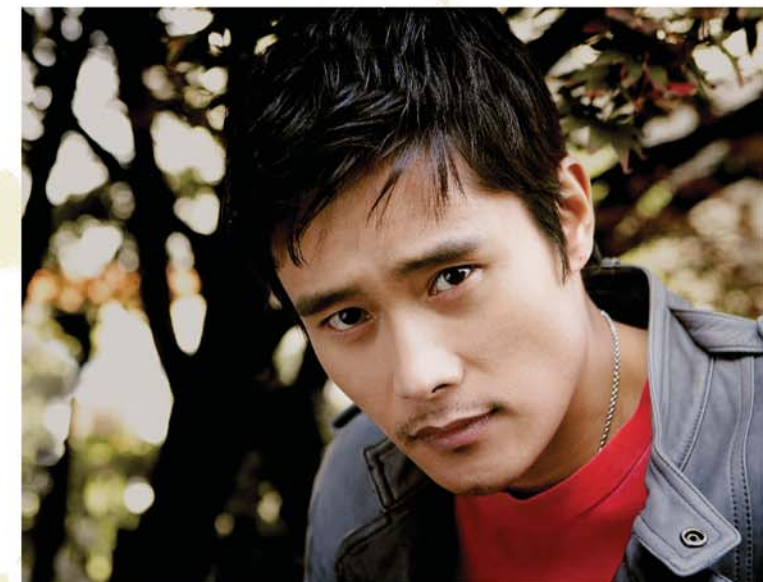
LEE Byung-hun is currently one of the busiest people in the Korean film industry. 2007 was particularly hectic for him, and this year looks to be just as busy. In 2006, he took some time off after the release of <Once in a Summer>, before beginning work on director KIM Jee-woon's <The Good, The Bad, The Weird> in early 2007, <Hero> with Takuya KIMURA, followed by a promotional tour in Japan in early Summer, and an upcoming role in the Hollywood Blockbuster <G. I. Joe>. As soon as he finished work on the 10 month-long <The Good, The Bad, The Weird>, he flew immediately to the United States. On January 23, he picked up his bags and headed for Incheon International Airport. In the United States, he plans to undertake training for his role in <G. I. Joe> and discuss several other global projects, which cannot be made public at the moment. The 'Korean Wave' star is fast becoming a world star.

**Why did you take the role of Chang-i in <The Good, The Bad, The Weird>? Isn't it your first villain role? Were you concerned about being portrayed as a villain?**

One day, I thought I had been too careful. Why was I so careful in my choice of roles even though I was still young? I should have been learning by trial and error. So, I thought it's not too late to change. I wanted to open myself up wide. The character Chang-i in <The Good, The Bad, The Weird> was the first villain I have played in my 17 years as an actor. However, it is interesting that, coincidentally, SOO Dong-po in <I Come with the Rain> is also a villain and Storm Shadow in <G. I. Joe> is also a villain, at least superficially.

**What was it like playing your first villain?**

It was exciting. Acting requires both reason and sensibility, but I personally think it is right to be emotionally immersed in your acting. However, it seemed that <The Good, The Bad, The Weird> required actors not only vivid and natural acting, but also somewhat excessive and stylish acting. To be stylish, I had to follow the director's requests exactly. For example, I had to examine the directions accurately and roll up my sleeves. This means I have to use my reason. At first, I felt my emotional acting was limited whenever I had to consider so many things, from the movement of my hands to when to nod. However, by acting like that, I found something interesting. When I looked at my work, I noticed some expressions and feelings that I had never imagined. I find myself looking really evil. Anyway, working on this



CINE 21

movie was great fun.

### The First Villain Role

**How did you come to work on <Hero>, with Takuya Kimura?**

I know Takuya KIMURA's manager Iijima. I have talked with him occasionally since we met a long time ago, and one day he suggested I join <Hero> in a cameo performance. I felt sorry for him because I refused a number of requests, such as appearing in <SMAP x SMAP>, and I thought it wasn't such a bad idea to participate in this movie. I asked them to make some extra scenes for me, because I wanted to do more.

**How did you come to be in director Anh Hung Tran's <I Come with the Rain>?**

I decided to work on the movie before I came across <The Good, The Bad, The Weird>. It might have been 2006. Director Anh Hung Tran and producer Fernando Sulichin visited Korea and I met them. At the meeting, Anh Hung Tran told me he liked LEE Moon-yeol's <The Son of Man>, and wanted to make a movie version of the novel. He asked if I would be in it. I was interested because I was strongly



<The Good, The Bad, The Weird>

impressed by the novel when I was a freshman at university. After some time, I got to read the script, and it was quite profound. I expected this because the director makes art movies, but at first I was even embarrassed at its extreme profoundness (laughing).

**What made director Anh Hung Tran cast you?**

He said he saw <A Bittersweet Life> and thought my expressions were nice. He said it is rare to find such detailed expressions and emotions from Asian actors. Or, maybe he gave me the role of Hong Kong gang boss because I played the role of the No. 2 gang member in <A Bittersweet Life> (laughing).

**What kind of story is <I Come with the Rain>?**

It is very complicated, and the production team asked me not to reveal too much in detail, so I will just tell you the story in brief. The main character, performed by Joshua Daniel Hartnett, is a private detective who was sacked from the police force for some reason. One day, a Chinese man asks him to find his missing son, so he goes to Hong Kong. He is accompanied by a Hong Kong detective, played by YEO Moon-rak, and this detective has a criminal in mind that he really wants to capture. This criminal is SOO Dong-po, who I play in the movie. SOO Dong-po is a merciless boss of a Hong Kong gang. But he has a weak point; he lives with a woman named Lily. She is as precious to him as his life. One day she disappears and SOO Dong-po begin to look for her. He meets Shi Tao, played by Takuya Kimura.

He has a mysterious supernatural power and is also the missing son that is being pursued by Joshua Daniel Hartnett.

**I think the shooting field had a different atmosphere as the movie was shot overseas and led by an art film director.**

It was very different. What was impressive to me was that the shooting schedule, even after a month, and the actors' schedules, were all kept so precisely. Sometimes, even when it was raining, shooting continued. The most difficult scene was the love scene with Lily. Lily was played by Tran Nu Yen-Khe, the heroine of <The Scent of Green Papaya> and <Cyclo>, the wife of director Anh Hung Tran. I was embarrassed when the director said "more a bit more..." (laughing).

**Appearing in <G. I. Joe>**

**Now let's talk about <G. I. Joe>. How did you come to accept the role?**

Charles is an overseas part manager of BH Entertainment. He has been discussing several projects with my American agent, Endeavor, for a few years. I was recommended <G. I. Joe> last year, and I thought the work was attractive. I looked at the treatment and was impressed. As a matter of fact, the negative factor was that it was already 60% made. What bothered me at the time was that the movie would be made for all viewers, regardless of age and gender. However, as I

have said before, I thought it would be better to regret doing it after trying, rather than regret not trying, and my acquaintances advised me to do it. Director PARK Chan-wook also told me that it seemed right for me.

**Can you tell me about the 'Storm Shadow' that you will perform?**

Storm Shadow was trained as a ninja by a father-like master when he was young, alongside a western kid called Snake Eyes. They are good friends and competitors. One day, the master is killed and Storm Shadow disappears. 'Snake Eyes' thinks the killer is Storm Shadow. From that time, they become fatal rivals.

**On the net, there was a lot of noise about LEE Byung-hun playing a Japanese ninja.**

It was agreed that Storm Shadow would be a Korean character. That was a condition when I was cast. Western people don't think about nationality when they see Asians. Also, as the Japanese market is huge, there are a lot of Japanese characters in the film. Anyway, in my position, I asked them that the character would be Korean, and they accepted.

**You are going to participate in several overseas projects at the same time. Won't this be difficult, or are you prepared?**

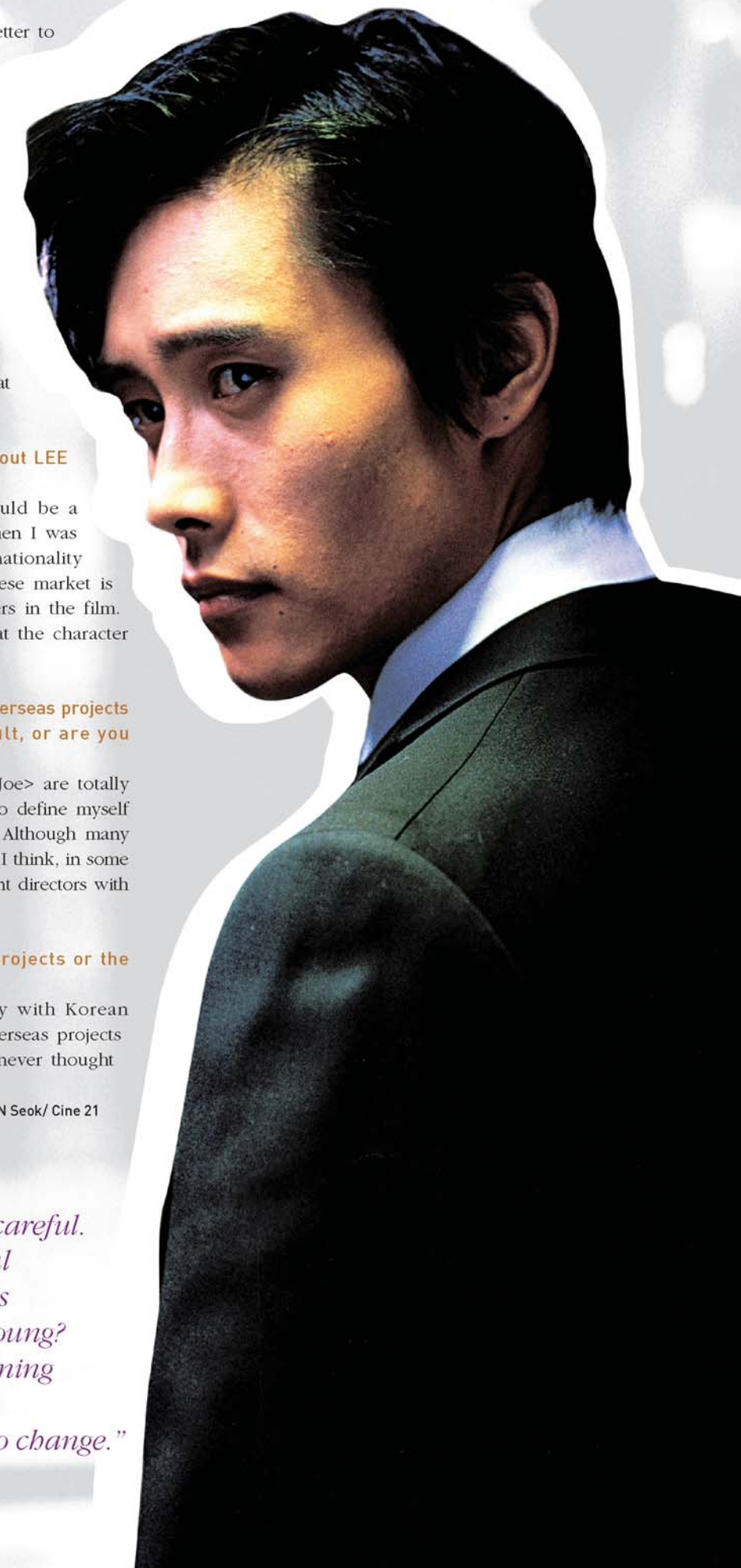
The Anh Hung Tran movie and <G. I. Joe> are totally different. I thought this was a good time to define myself again by participating in different projects. Although many people worry about my being in <G. I. Joe>, I think, in some ways, it will be helpful to work with different directors with different ideas and styles.

**Do you intend to focus on overseas projects or the Hollywood film industry going forward?**

Never. I will continue to work mainly with Korean directors, and join Hollywood or other overseas projects when there are opportunities. But I have never thought about settling down there.

MOON Seok/ Cine 21

*"I thought I had been too careful. Why was I so careful in my choice of roles even though I was still young? I should have been learning by trial and error. So, I thought it's not too late to change."*



# “Opportunities will come when no one is looking for them”

**Jaime SHIM, CEO of MK Pictures**

At the 2004 Athens Olympics, the final match between the women's handball teams of Korea and Denmark was considered by many to be one of the greatest games ever played. The competition was extended due to incorrect refereeing decisions, two overtime periods, and even a penalty throw showdown, turning into a literally bloody fight. The media around the world chose that day's match-with the Korean team winning the silver medal-as one of the best at the Athens Olympics. Domestically, it was referred to as 'co-winning', and many said it was, 'a silver medal worth a gold metal'.

Jaime SHIM, the president of MK Pictures watched the competition by herself. To those, including SHIM, who watched the match, the indomitable story was that a women's handball match, a largely unpopular sport and played in the worst possible way, attracted attention all over the world-surely, this would make a good film. SHIM decided to make this story into an actual film. Having once worked as a crew member on the filming of <Waikiki Brothers>, and combining epic drama with sports in <Y.M.C.A. Baseball Team>, she found possibilities in the story. Joined by NAH Hyeon, who wrote the screenplay of <May 18>, SHIM wanted a dramatic script that revealed the power of married middle-aged woman. She appointed director LIM Soon-rye, of <Waikiki Brothers> fame, to make the film. It was rumored that she was quite stubborn during the shoot, and it was indeed shot on a tight budget.



*“A good sports film isn't easy to make. However, regardless of whether it is a sports film or not, there are certainly many more opportunities when someone chooses a subject no one else does.”*

However, now she has earned the respect of those in Chungmuro as a heroine able to overcome a crisis and protect her identity.

**There might be individual scientific forecasts for box office sales and efforts made to reach the target above break-even point for each company. MK Pictures must have the relevant know-how.**

The project focus of <Forever The Moment> was as a human drama, but the fact it was based on the true story of the 2004 Athens Olympics was thought to have been publicly more appealing. Unlike other unsuccessful sport films of a one-man hero or male-dominated storylines, I believe the hardworking lifestyle of married women of a social minority would attract more attention. But the story needed to be much more popular, so our focus was on the script. For marketing, we aimed to position the film as a women's story or as a human drama. Luckily, the media welcomed the subject, making our marketing efforts relatively hassle-free.

**Although <Forever The Moment> is a human drama, it also opens up the possibilities of the sports film genre.**

A good sports film isn't easy to make. However, regardless of whether it is a sports film or not, there are certainly many more opportunities when someone chooses a subject no one else does. <The Host>, <The King and the Clown>, and <MARATHON>, featuring an autistic young man,

and <The Way Home>, with a grandmother-aged character are good examples. Of course, one bad example is <The Fox Family>, which we believed was a new idea but failed miserably (she laughs). So, we learned that we needed to laborious and desperately work to do something new, something that no one had tried before.

**Recently, some production companies have begun releasing unusual films, such as Movicals or Korean blockbuster films, like <The Host 2>. What does MK Pictures plan in terms of trying something new?**

In the near future what we're going to devote our time to is a feature-length animation film, <Hen is Out in The Yard>. It could be a first full-length animation film made by a traditional production company. We will work on this project with Odoltogi, which specializes in animation. We'll try our best to ignite the full-length animation market in Korea.

## Identity as a Female Producer

**Compared to others working for production companies in Chungmuro, you seem to watch quite a number of films.**

No, not that many (she laughs). I just love films and that's why I work in film. As a moviegoer, I enjoy watching films, and hope to learn lessons from all the films I watch.

## Which films from last year inspired you?

Those guiding me to new possibilities of filmmaking and those that made me realize what fascinates the younger generations, such as <Transformers> and <The Bourne Ultimatum>. What I personally liked were <Die Hard 4.0> and <Rocky Balboa>. <Once> made me reflect on the essential filmmaking attitude, apart from benchmarking perspectives. These days, moviegoers don't just watch films; they also enjoy cultural content of TV dramas and games. Therefore, films with new traces tend to have enormous success. For instance, the thriller genre, which used to be an unpopular genre in Korea, found unexpected success. Unlikely films like <Le Grand Chef> and <Forever The Moment> became popular, all of which told me that now is an era of fast-changing trends.

**There must be more films your company plans to release after <Forever The Moment>.**

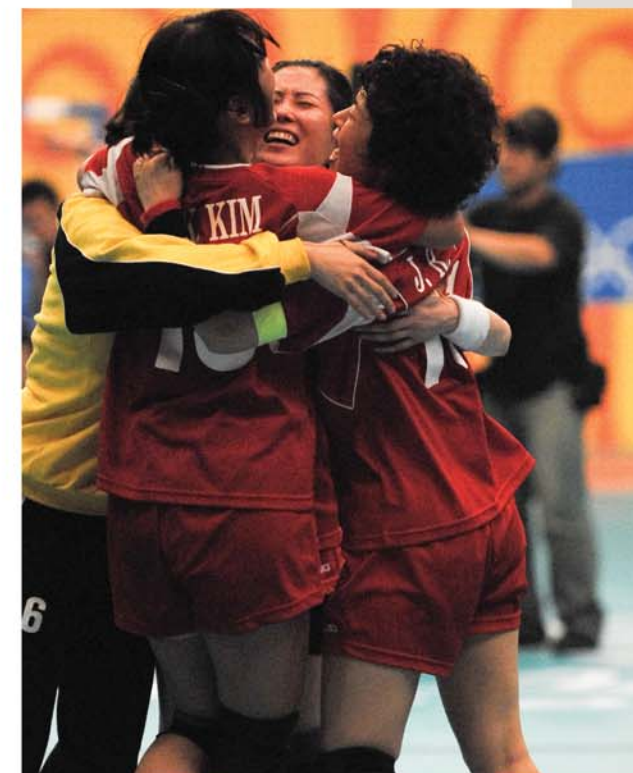
We have three. <Once Upon a Time in Seoul> and <The Bridge at Nogunri>, which were finished last year, and <Girl Scout>, which was produced jointly with BK Pictures. <Hen is Out in The Yard> is now in pre-production, and we're planning to make <When Romance Meets Destiny 2>, with KIM Hyun-seok, who directed <When Romance Meets Destiny> and <Scout>. We also have plans to make a new film with the director of <Driving with my Wife's Lover>, KIM Tae-sik, and another plan to make a new film, <Paju>, with PARK Chan-ok, director of <Jealousy is My Middle Name>. The script is great.

**Although you can't say that <Forever The Moment> has totally changed producer Jaime SHIM's whole film career,**

**it seemed to have given you a valuable chance to look back over past planning & production techniques.**

That film absorbed my identity as a female producer and my own idea of what a good film is. Moreover, it achieved favorable results, so what more can I hope for? An ajumma (a middle-aged married woman), producer just met an ajumma director and an excellent actresses, and talked about what she wanted to do with them. Achieving good box office results was an added bonus.

KIM Hye-sun/ Film 2.0



<Forever the Moment>

# “As Far as SFX are Concerned, We are the Best in Asia”

YI Chi-yun, Production Management  
Co-Producer of John Woo's <Red Cliff>



Producer YI Chi-yun, who is participating as an SFX producer in <Red Cliff>, a large project from Director John Woo, stepped into the Korean film world on the production of <Ginko Bed> in 1996, after finishing a master course in film direction at the Beijing Film School. After that, he worked as a producer for <Anarchists> (2000) and <Blue Swallow> (2004), and then played a leading role in the

Chinese business area of MK Pictures, pushing ahead with the establishment of a joint venture company, “Beijing Eastern & MK Cinema Co., Ltd.,” intended to distribute MK Pictures' productions in China. He also helped to establish a “multiplex Cinema” between the China Poly Group Corporation and Beijing Eastern & MK Cinema. In 2007, he worked as a producer on the Korean side of <Assembly> by Director Xiaogang Feng. He is currently expanding international co-productions based on the success of <Assembly>, and the joining of the production of <Red Cliff>.

## What motivated you to join the production of <Red Cliff>?

In the beginning of January, 2007, Terence Chang and Xiaofeng Hu, filmmaker and producer, respectively, of <Red Cliff>, visited Shenyang, the shooting location of <Assembly>, and asked me about whether the Korean team could join in <Red Cliff>. His request baffled me, as I was told that the US team would participate in special effects. According to the PD, he learned that the Korean team was joining the filming of <Assembly> in China, where he was searching for an alternative in Asia since a number of



<Red Cliff>



<Red Cliff>

*“John Woo emphasized realistic effects. He wanted to complete the screen by using effects. This agreed with the express will of our team.”*

problems made it impossible for both to cooperate with each other. He told me that he put forth an offer, actively recommended by Director Xiaogang Feng and the crew of <Assembly>.

## Could you please explain in more detail what part you will be in charge of in the production of <Red Cliff>?

The Korean team will engage in four fields, namely DEMOLITION with special effects, MAGE with special cosmetics, HANIL Engineering with special equipment, and SFX production management. All special effects, special cosmetics, and special equipment are used during the shoot. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to think that the Korean team will join in the process of filming.

## What did Director John Woo ask for regarding the special effects for <Red Cliff>?

John Woo emphasized realistic effects before the start of shooting. He told us that he wanted to complete the screen not by depending on CG, but by using effects to the maximum. This agreed with the express will of our team. As fire is the hero of <Red Cliff>, he particularly stressed the expression of fire. For example, in fire scenes, he argued that it was necessary to disguise the scene, using film techniques properly according to the circumstances, in order to make the fire appear to swallow a person or a ship, or to soar to the sky like a whirlwind.

## An Active Interpretation of Work on the Movie

You said that the crew of <Assembly> had recommended the production team of <Red Cliff> as the Korean special effects team. What do you think made the <Assembly> crew so highly recommend the Korean team to the production

## team of <Red Cliff>?

Korean crews participate in filming not as service providers, but as co-producers. They take an active attitude toward the production, diligently analyzing the script and how the film, in terms of essence and position, will be shot. They help decide in which direction to produce a movie. It seems that this attitude earns them favorable evaluations from overseas. In addition, the reality is that China, producing much more work than Korea, lags behind a little in terms of the technology required to enhance film production. Such a situation seems to make Korean crews preferred by overseas producers on location in China, or Chinese producers planning to produce large projects. They are geographically easy to access and they excel in areas of technology.

## In this regard, what do you think are the unique characteristics of the Korean team that are highly appreciated abroad?

Hollywood experiences accidents at times in special effects. As a result, legal measures have been taken to ensure safety. Special effects depend substantially on safe CG (visual effects and VFX). There are a number of restrictions in the development of spot effects, namely special effects. However, in Asia, including in South Korea, there are not many works to which CG technologies are effectively applied, so they are used quite often. It seems special effects have seen a high degree of change and development since <Swiri>, and are now in extensive use. With special effects crews working on production, technologies have been accumulated, reaching the current technical levels they are at. Currently, the Chinese seem to recognize to some degree that Hong Kong and South Korea are ranked the highest in terms of action and special effects, respectively.

## How is <John Rabe> being produced at the moment? Could you let us know what you are planning to do in the future?

The German production <John Rabe>, produced in China, was wrapped on February 5 this year, and the follow-up post-production is now being done in Germany. At the present time, a Korean special effects team, Future Vision, and a martial arts team led by SHIM Jae-won are taking part in a large-scale TV series, <My Commander and My Regiment>, which is being produced in Wennan Province in China.

LEE Yu-ran

# People



## YU IN-CHON NEW MINISTER FOR CULTURE, SPORTS, AND TOURISM



Actor YU In-chon has been appointed the Minister for Culture, Sports, and Tourism. An established actor and professor of drama, YU has been a long-term associate of President LEE Myeong-bak, who took office in February. When the president was the Mayor of Seoul, YU worked as the founding CEO of the Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture, gathering experience in culture administration. He then became the Vice-Chairperson of the Presidential Inaugural Committee and a standing advisory committee member of the Subcommittee for Society, Education, and Culture. He feels that, as Koreans, "we need to develop our culture as what is seen and heard. We need to see culture in terms of industry through a culture-creation industry and through network development."

## THE TOP FIGURES IN THE KOREAN FILM INDUSTRY: IM KWON-TAEK AND SONG KANG-HO

Director IM Kwon-taek and actor SONG Kang-ho were selected as the top figures in the Korean film industry. According to the results of the online poll on the best person in the Korean film industry, completed by 1,207 fans and industry insiders and conducted by the Korean Film Archive from 5th to 14th February, the two ranked top in the actor and director sections, respectively. In the meantime, director BONG Joon-ho took second place, missing out by only three votes, while AHN Sung-ki was voted the second best actor—two votes shy of first place. The 30 industry identities nominated in this poll are scheduled to form hand prints for the Hall of Fame at the Korean Film Museum, set to open on 9th of May.



## JEON SOO-IL WINS AN OVERSEAS FILM AWARD

Director JEON Soo-il's <With a Girl of Black Soil> won the cinematography award and the audience award at the Las Palmas International Film Awards, which ended on 8th of March. The film also got a special mention of Le Regard d'Or from the Swiss Fribourg International Film Festival, the FIPRESCI Prize, and the Don Quixote Award from the FICC.



Director Jeon was completing post-production on his next film, <Himalaya, Where the Wind Dwells>, when he rushed off to attend the Las Palmas Awards to accept his trophy in person.

## JEON DO-YOUN WINS BEST ACTRESS AWARD FROM THE ASIAN FILM AWARDS

JEON Do-youn gained the honor of becoming Korea's third winner of the best actress award from an international film festival for her work in the film, <Secret Sunshine>. In the 2nd Asian Film Awards held at the Hong Kong Convention Center on 17th of March, she won the best actress award from the other nominees including KIM Yoon-jin of <7 Days> and Tang Wei of <Lust, Caution>. On that day, the film <Secret Sunshine> won the three main trophies of Best Film, Best Director, and Best Actress among the 12 official competition sections.



## CHOI MIN-SIK PERFORMS IN A NEW FILM AFTER 3 YEARS



CHOI Min-sik, from <Old Boy> and <Crying Fist>, performed in JEON Soo-il's, <Himalaya, Where the Wind Dwells>. The film tells the story of CHOI, a home-alone father who is about to lose his job. He goes to a village in the Himalayas to deliver the ashes of a Nepalese worker killed in a factory accident. In this film, CHOI Min-sik plays CHOI, a man having a hard time feeling a sense of belonging in Korean society, yet also treated as a stranger in Nepal. The actors in this film, shot completely in Nepal, are all local Nepalese except CHOI Min-sik. CHOI Min-sik, who has not been seen for some time, said he chose not a work for box office hit but on a film with a story that touched his heart. His absence from the screen has been a result of being busy with theater and due to the screen quota movement. This film represents an impressive comeback.

## SO JI-SUB IN A POPULAR JAPANESE MANGA ADAPTATION

SO Ji-sub accepted a role in the Japanese film Gegege no Kitaro2. He will play the villain ? a spirit haunting Asia - opposite of the hero portrayed by Wentz Eiji, a popular Japanese singer. According to the Japanese producers, the spirit's dark side required charisma and talent which SO possesses. Gegege no Kitaro2 is the sequel of last year's Japanese blockbuster, an adaptation of a popular manga by Shigeru Mizuki which has also a hit television series spin-off. The film is scheduled for a release in July. SO might still be relatively unknown outside Asia, but he enjoys great popularity in Korea and Japan because of his hit television dramas I'm Sorry, I Love You, co-starring LIM Soo-jung, and Something Happened in Bali.





# Small Films look for New Markets

## New Filmmaking with Downsized Budgets

<Humming> <Happy Together> <Viva! Love>. All of these Korean films are budgeted at about KRW 1 billion, and are expected to be released in March or April. Apart from these, there are many cases of 'small films' being made in Korea, with scaled-down budget levels. This new trend of producing small budget films has emerged from the current financial

hardship in the Korean film market. This is not totally unexpected. Similar cases were seen in the 2nd half of 2007, when independent films with low budgets, such as <The Sex Film>, (KRW 300 million), <Milky Way Liberation Front>, (KRW 100 million), <Who's That Knocking at My Door?>, (KRW 35 million.), and many more were released.

The recent emergence of smaller films is also part of the trend toward greater diversity in the industry. However, this new trend has differentiated itself by breaking the old image of 'low budget' films, often regarded as art films or independent films only, with the development of accompanying aggressive strategies to achieve box office success.

The sudden reduction in investment levels in Chungmuro over the past one to two years has created a rise in the number of films produced at a cost of KRW 2 to 3 billion since last year. It is true that the phenomenon of small production costs was, in reality, a welcome relief for the industry, and a rational response to the shrinking film market. But a lack of variety and appropriate budget levels undoubtedly caused a quality deterioration among Korean films. LEE Hyung-seung, the CEO of IB Pictures, producer of <Viva! Love>, said that "due to the recent sluggishness of the Korean film market and the breakage of the budgetary boundary of KRW 2 to 3 billion, more thought has been given to the break-even point of Korean films." With production costs lowered to KRW 2 billion, films of around KRW 1 billion are gaining more popularity, and also, those treating unusual subjects and themes are being put to the test in terms of their competitiveness."

### Small Films put to the Test

Unlike January and February this year, when 19 films were released, March and April has seen only 9 films slated for release. 5 of those 9 films, <Humming>, <Happy Together>, <Viva! Love> <Farewell>, and <One Day On the Road> were all made with



<Humming>



<Chongging>

less than KRW 1 billion. Considering the seasonally low demand levels, with blockbuster films awaiting the peak season, and discounting the documentary films made with minimal budgets, including <Farewell> and <One Day On the Road>, the three low-budget films of <Humming>, <Happy Together> and <Viva! Love> are set to be released at intervals of one to two weeks apart.

<Humming> is a new film from PARK Dae-young, director of <Love Wind Love Song> and <Just Do It> and is a melodrama about a man who loses his long-time girlfriend in an accident only to be awarded with the unlikely chance to meet her only once again, coming to realize the meaning of true love. Chosen as a project for HD film production support by the Korean Film Council, (hereinafter referred to as KOFIC), in 2006, the film's net production budget was only KRW 700 million. KIM Young-sim, an executive of the production company, The Dream Picture, claimed that, "while working on the scenario of <Humming> which was quite suitable as an HD film, we decided to apply for the KOFIC competition. As the initial KRW 500 million fund wasn't enough for us, we asked for an additional KRW 200 million."

<Happy Together> is a story about the love lives of a mother and daughter, both of whom discuss with

each other, as friends, intimate details of their lives. The daughter even purchased a dildo for her divorced mother! The film was a winner of a director's debut project award, called the 'Film director's dream' organized by Showbox, Mediaplex in 2006 in an effort to support a film of a budget around the KRW 400 million mark. According to KIM Tae-hee, the director of the film <Happy Together>, a film with a final budget around 700 million, "when we were working on the scenario, we thought it might not be made into a film with a Chungmuro budget, due to its unpopular and rather taboo subject. Based on the original script, the film couldn't have been made on even KRW 700 million, but we modified the script according to the previously established budget, which had been achieved through the competition."

<Viva! Love>, directed by OH Joun-kyun- well known for independent films including <A Vital Activity>(is a romance film about a middle-aged woman who falls in love with her daughter's boyfriend. Chosen as an HD film production support program project by the KOFIC in 2006 along with <Humming>, <Viva! Love> was completed at a net cost of KRW 700 million: KRW 500 million from the support fund and KRW 200 million

from the Korean film diversity fund raised by the KTB network.

Although their release dates are not yet fixed, there are a number of other films awaiting release or currently in production. What is worth noticing is that not only independent film production companies and new filmmakers, but also major prominent film production companies, are aggressively joining the movement toward 'making small films'. Having suffered from consecutively unsuccessful results from their KRW 2 billion films, including <Femme Fatale>, <Miss Gold Digger>, etc, Sidus FNH is known to be currently preparing about 7 low-budget films of budget levels around KRW 500 million each. Moho Film, which produced <Sympathy for Lady Vengeance> and <I'm a Cyborg but that's OK> is producing <Crush and Blush> about a woman experiencing hot flushes and directed by LEE Kyung-mi, on a budget of KRW 1 billion. Dorothy Film which enjoyed enormous popularity with its film, <Epitaph> is now working with a low budget film <Girl's Generation> which explores the innocent love of boys and girls. ShowEast is co-producing with Dongnyuk Film a film called <Himalaya: Where the Wind Dwells> with a budget of KRW 1 billion. JEON Soo-il is the director.

Those film companies which have already made a commercial success



<Happy Together>



《Himalaya: Where the Wind Dwells》

from small-scale films are not being spared in the current movements. Generation Blue Film of <No Regret> fame is currently producing <Escape> for no more than KRW 1 billion and <Me, Gye-hee> both new films from LEESONG Hee-il, whereas Film Line of <Driving with My Wife's Lover> fame is preparing director KIM Tai-sik's new film <Damning Vacation> and <Bad Guy Sleeps Better> from director KWON Young-chul, at budgets of KRW 1.5 billion and KRW 1 billion, respectively. In addition, Sponge Ent. is currently producing director KIM Ki-duk's <Dream> shot on a KRW 1 billion budget, and Zhang Lu's <Chongqing> and <Iri> for combined net costs of KRW 700 million. Regardless of the scales of the production companies, all these cases suggest that small films are being tested as alternative solutions to the

current status of the market.

### Injecting Fun into Low-Budget Films

Regarded as a breakthrough for the slump in the Korean film market and one example of increasing diversity in Korean films, low-budget films don't appear to be being fairly treated. This is partially due to the fact that most of them, despite their budget levels, are focused on marketability factors, and are not genuinely low-budget art films. "Unlike other melodramas, <Humming> features an unusual theme. However, due to its story-one that can gain everyone's sympathy-it is not greatly different in nature from most commercial films (Executive producer, KIM Young-sim)." "In consideration of its completeness in general as a drama and the nature of its presentation, dealing with a comical

subject <Viva! Love> is likely to prove commercially successful(David CHO, CEO of Sponge Ent., the distribution company)."

The optimism over their likely commercial success derived from genre. The prevailing general consensus was that many low-budget films dealt with only ideological stories that looked deep into the complicated inner worlds of persons, or tended to focus strongly on social problems. However, a recent change in small films gives priority to the fun to be had in genres. A fantasy type melodrama <Humming>, <Happy Together>, featuring a mother and daughter's story- of obvious appeal to female audiences, and <Viva! Love>, an unconventional romantic comedy depicting a middle-aged housewife's love with a man 21 years her junior, are all excellent examples of this.

Some projects were secured of

funding by genre alone. MBC Production is working with KRW 1.5 billion on <Female Killer> from director GOH Soo-kyung. It is a comedy thriller about a mother and her two daughters who long for the death of their father. KIM Hwa-jin, producer from MBC Production, mentioned that "all genres can be produced using low budgets. Because they don't require costly computer graphics, the romance, thriller, and comedy genres are all suitable for production on low budgets."

Sidus FNH's decision to invest KRW 500 million in young directors producing genre films, rather than indulging in auteur films or so-called 'film award' films, is a good example of the growing connections between genre and small films. Even without focusing on genre, a number of projects are being created that deal with subjects that are intriguing audiences. As director OH of <Viva! Love> said, "small films have merits in that they have stories that are full of daring elements and ideas in order to make up for the lack of funding." Smaller films tend to be associated with new subjects, interesting story lines, and genre sensations. <Supernatural Couple> (produced by Cross Film at a net cost

of KRW 100 million), from new director KIM Hyung-joo, is about a person with supernatural powers. <How to Live on Earth>(produced by Indiastory & CR Film at a net cost of KRW 120 million) is a new film from director AHN Seul-ki, known for his previous films, <Five is Too Many> and <My Song Is...>. It has already begun to attract enormous attention with its unusual story of a married alien and earthling couple.

Instead of deeply thoughtful or experimental subjects that had been common among low-budget films, the new tendency is to work with fun story elements to appeal to wider the audience. "Unusual subjects and daring plots, fixed inside drama structures, won't appeal to the market. When a drama is reinforced from the start but also comes up with new subjects, low-budget films will be likely to succeed commercially," according to executive KIM Young-shim. These views are supported by the success of films such as <The Unforgiven> and <No Regret>.

Director OH Joum-kyun argues that "the intriguing way Hollywood comes up with stories is worthy of respect. Just because they are made in Hollywood, we shouldn't ignore films as depicting stereotyped and

predictable stories. Low-budget films need to adopt Hollywood genres to become more appealing to the public."

### Evidence of Market Rationalization

Along with the changes in small films themselves, many star actors and actresses are turning to films of a smaller scale. Joe Odagiri & LEE Na-young in <Dream>, CHOI Min-sik in <Himalaya: Where the Wind Dwells>, YOON Jin-seo & EUM Tae-woong in <Iri>, JIN Goo in <Supernatural Couple>, KONG Hyo-jin & LEE Jong-hyuk in <Crush and Blush> are all good examples of this increasing trend.

Just one or two years ago, actors from the commercial film arena willing to appear in low-budget films were mostly young and unknown, with supporting roles only. The recent inundation of leading actors into these small films seems somewhat surprising. Considering that some blockbuster actors declared they are willing to work in smaller films regardless of the remuneration if they were good quality projects, it is safe to assume these statements are beginning to prove legitimate. CHOI Min-sik, who once said "I selected my next film based on



《Crush and Blush》



《Viva! Love》

its sympathizing scenario,” and LEE Na-young, who mentioned, “the peculiar and interesting subject of the script led me to join the film” suggest the quality levels in terms of subjects that were once the domain of the commercial film market have begun to flow over into low-budget films.

Despite the relative inability to engage in extensive marketing, the participation of these star actors is becoming a strong publicity factor. Sources in the marketing team of The Dream Picture explained that the casting power of its star actors was significant, suggesting “when TV dramas featuring the film’s leading actor and actress respectively gain popularity after the film’s shooting, more attention is brought to the film itself and film previews attract a tremendous response from viewers.”

Furthermore, similar stories can be said of crewmembers who join the rush to smaller moves: music director BANG Joon-suk of <Viva! Love>, music director KIM Hyung-suk of <Himalaya: Where the Wind Dwells>, and costume director CHO Sang-kyung of <Crush and Blush> are perfect examples. In most cases, they agreed to work for fees far less than their usual. According to CEO, LEE Hyung-seung, “Tired of the trends in existing commercial films and the habitual methods of production, they are trying to quench their thirst for something new via small films.”

There are different views regarding the reasons behind star actors and crew looking into smaller films: one is the almost frozen production environment. As an employee of a Korean film production company suggests, “since the number of films produced is dramatically reduced, actors and crew have been left with less choice. That’s why they tend to accept smaller fees—they are just adapting to a changing marketplace.”

CEO of Sponge Ent., David CHO, added that “we don’t need to question their intention. In Japan, films are distinctively divided into two categories: blockbusters of KRW 10 billion and small films of 1 to KRW 1.5 billion. As KRW 2 – 3 billion films began reaching their limits in Korea,

the Korean market has seemed to naturally follow Japan’s,” adding that “as a result, based on production scale, fee policies for actors has become more flexible. In the past, when fees were allotted, the money wouldn’t budge. However, these days, for KRW 700 million films, actors are unlikely to be able to attract fees of over KRW 50 million.”

### Don’t Underestimate Low-Budget Films

With the advent of an environment with less production cost risks, it is time for lower cost films, in other words ‘low-budget commercial films,’ to expand their screen numbers. Sponge Ent. is planning to play <Viva! Love> at around 50 screens, while director KIM Ki-duk’s <Dream> is known to be planning an even wider scale of release. <Humming> will play at a whopping 174 screens. Even considering the fact that it is to be distributed by one of the big three distributors, Lotte Entertainment, such a large screen release is unprecedented for a film of a net production cost of KRW 700 million. As printing alone is said to have cost more than KRW 200 million, its distribution scale compared to production costs is, indeed, adventurous.

Naturally, films are not always happy to be called ‘Low-budget.’ From the very beginning, appropriate production costs have been set out to meet their storylines, and the distribution scale of a film is based on the break-even point. Low-budget films risk being considered as low budget, and therefore low quality, by audiences. KRW 1 billion films worry that less-than-favorable responses to large production house films of KRW 2 to 3 billion budgets might adversely affect them.

Even when an audience’s favorable response is secured, it doesn’t come entirely without problems. Those working for small films often joke by saying “we worry when a film is good, and we worry when a film isn’t good.” This reflects a deep concern regarding the shrinking investment market. This can be interpreted as a situation of when small films gain in popularity,

people might envision a distorted environment where investments converge around smaller budget films, at the expense of bigger productions. One production company employee warned, “low-budget films have shorter shooting & investment retrieving periods, so they find raising money easier. Meanwhile, when the market response is proving good, investments in middle sized budget films-of the 2 to 3 billion range-may begin to freeze.”

It is true that smaller films are currently creating new opportunities. This situation is supported by small film productions undertaken by major production companies, and the competition created by large distributors. Based on rationalized production techniques and the prevailing market size, lower-budget films may yet prove to be the answer to the Korean film industry’s woes.

HUH Nam-woong/ Film 2.0

# Peeking into ZHANG Lu's Universe

## On the Set of ZHANG Lu's Latest Film <Iri>



films begin from this accident. ZHANG has never lived in Iksan, and the city has nothing to do with his father, grandfather, or any other ancestors. In other words, ZHANG is interested purely in the Iri explosion accident, not the city of Iksan itself.

As ZHANG explains, "That's right. 'I don't know this city well, but it is important to me. Living in China makes you feel as if something is always about to explode, or that you are running toward a bomb.' I feel like you are being trapped and dragged along a ride that you cannot get off. When I come to Korea, I feel the devastation of the explosion, and ask questions about how to live after it. To describe how I feel about moving back and forth between China and Korea, I would say it feels like traveling through the periods before and after time, back and forth. These two films were made at the same time because of their similar timeframe, not because of their locations."

### Actor's Name = Character's Name

In the beginning, ZHANG wanted to shoot half of the original <Iri> in China and the rest in Iksan. The shooting began in Chongqing. During the Chinese shoot, they ended up with enough footage for a full film. At first, ZHANG called what he had <Iri: Chongqing>. ZHANG elaborated, "I rewrote <Iri: Iksan> in a week after I finished shooting <Iri: Chongqing> and returned to my motel. Because the first half of the film became a full film on its own, I needed to change some scenes to create another full film out of the second half."

*"I don't know this city well, but it is important to me. Living in China makes you feel as if something is always about to explode, or that you are running toward a bomb."*

Having been invited for competition to the International Berlin Film Festival in 2007 with <Desert Dream>, director ZHANG Lu chose <Iri> as his next project. Initially, they intended to shoot half of <Iri> in China and the other half in Korea, but the film has now been divided into two separate films after the shoot in China produced more footage than planned. Therefore, the story based in Chongqing, China is entitled <Chongqing>, and that based

in a small local town of Korea, Iri, <Iri>. Film critic CHUNG Sung-ill visited the location of <Iri>.

The film that ZHANG Lu was preparing to produce after <Desert Dream> was <Duman River>, which centered on a North Korean defector. However, this film did not go well, and ZHANG was introduced to the script of <Iri>. The script, not written by ZHANG, was about the Iri explosion accident. The Iri explosion accident—which became the stage on which this film was set—occurred when a freight car loaded with 40 tons of dynamite exploded inside the Iri station on November 11th, 1977. 1,343 people were injured and 59 killed. Iri's population at the time was a mere 130,000. In the accident, 7,866 homes were ruined, and 35 school buildings collapsed. Many of those who were severely or only slightly injured at the time are still suffering from aftereffects and a fear of explosions. ZHANG's two



The storyline of <Iri: Iksan> goes like this. The film starts with a scene of the 30th remembrance anniversary event to remember the Iri explosion. (The following outline may differ from the final version of the film because I wrote it after I read the script. ZHANG told me that the storyline changed "very much.") Jin-seo(YOON Jin-seo) who came to see the show is somewhat mentally challenged, possibly connected to her being born on the day when the explosion occurred at the Iri station. She lives with her brother and a taxi driver, Tae-woong(EUM Tae-woong), next to a clubhouse for the elderly and under a Chinese language academy on the second floor. Jin-seo makes a living cleaning the academy, and receives undue attention from many of the local men. Today, Tae-woong takes Jin-seo to the obstetrician again. A loner, Tae-woong drives a taxi during the day, and works on his giant miniature of the

Iksan city alone at night. One day, Jin-seo comes home after being raped by a group of men when delivering coffee to the Vietnam War veterans' meeting at the request of a coffee shop lady. Tae-woong believes that everything has to end now. He takes Jin-seo to the beach.

ZHANG said that he changed names of the characters to Jin-seo and Tae-woong after casting YOON Jin-seo and EUM Tae-woong. YOON confessed that she had never watched any of ZHANG's films until she received this script. She said that she made up her mind just after reading the script. YOON said, "Jin-seo in the film was born an angel. An angel that arrived with the Iri explosion. I wanted to give all of myself to her. I have had no trouble working with ZHANG on the set. I simply blend into the set. Being here as a participant in the film, not as an actor, this is what I like." While YOON has a certain type of conviction,

EUM said that he wanted to follow his faith. He added, "Tae-woong is crushed in life. Not only is Jin-seo quite odd, but Tae-woong is also holding onto the pain of the past. A family is the thing that you cannot get rid of, even if you want to. He has to live with his sister in his arms through his whole life, although he even tries to kill her. The key to playing such a character is not to set the tone. ZHANG asked me to play Tae-woong as comfortably as possible."

### Concise Script

I was at a loss when I got the script of <Iri: Iksan> because the final copy contained only 26 A4 pages. The font was normal size. The number of scenes was not small, either. The total number of scenes was 122. Nevertheless, each scene was written quite concisely.

When I went to the set, ZHANG Lu showed me a two-story building that



he had found to shoot <Iri: Iksan>, as if it was his treasure. He explained, "As soon as I found this place, I was suddenly able to unravel the storyline of my script. And I thought to myself, 'It's going to be OK... and then he sighed.'" It was a two-story building that looked almost to be on the verge of falling down. It was standing on a hill across a long bridge traversing the backstreets of Iksan station. Surrounded by apartments, this building stood like a ghost. As if pushed in a corner, the building draped in darkness of time was overlooking a train passing under the hill. Right then, a Honam KTX train quickly took off on one of the numerous railways under the hill. It seemed strangely unrealistic. The apartments surrounding the building were built after the Iri explosion. These apartments, already 30 years old, have almost been entirely used up. ZHANG said, "This film is made not by a director, but by the space."

ZHANG began shooting in step with the 30th anniversary show. <Iri: Iksan> was shot in a total of 12 sessions within 12 days. In fact, the schedule was quite murderous. However, ZHANG completed the shoot as planned. He explained, "I shot <Iri: Chongqing> in 9 sessions within 10 days. <Iri: Iksan> took a little more because my Korean is not fluent and I don't know Korea well. So, I thought I needed some more time." The shooting of the film began on Wednesday, December 12th, 2007 and ended on Sunday, December 23rd, 2007. Without a single day of rest, everyone got together at 6 o'clock in the morning, and the end of the day was slated for 11 o'clock at night. When I visited the set, the shooting was at the 4th and 5th stages. The staff on the set was basic. There were a total of 25 people, including the director, actors, assistants, crew, and the documentary production personnel. ZHANG was quietly looking at them. Looking at them? It really felt like that. He was lonesome, walking around the set like he was looking at everyone else as if they were fighting in a battle. He was giving directions on whether the preparations were correct or not. He was actually digesting the scenes at an almost surprising speed, although

he seemed to handle everything quite leisurely when I looked at him. Literally, it was flowing like turning the pages of a book. At the 4th shooting session, ZHANG shot 9 scenes on one day in three different locations. "If I don't process the shoot like this, I cannot finish the film in 12 sessions. Above all, I had to keep my promise that I would finish the shoot in 12 sessions within 12 days," the director said.

### Deciding Not to Shoot in Order

ZHANG Lu's shooting technique of not filming in order was most different from what I imagined. I "naturally" thought that he would direct the film in order, since his films followed the line of the internal rhythms created by events, rather than exposing events. I believe that we must pay attention to actions in ZHANG's films. However, as the actions are the summits of a restructured cone, you may often miss all the commotion relating to the actions in your heart whenever you follow the wrong path. I wanted to see ZHANG's preparations on the set. He kept repeating, "I do a lot of emotional preparation." Nonetheless, his set was prepared completely functionally. In addition, the emotional preparation of the actors was economical and intense, almost like they could possibly be expected to emotionally prepare for the next scene after shooting the one they were shooting. Scenes from the beginning, middle, and end of the film, set at the same location were shot "in bulk" within a few days. Consequently, it became almost impossible for the actors to actually follow the internal rhythms of the film. None of the crew could take part. The director was the only one who could make such judgments. At this time, the camera crew was having difficulties just like the actors, because ZHANG's films demand an invisible internal flow, despite being very functionally produced. A director relying on a lot of emotional preparation, and a camera crew being emotionally ready to shoot for his views, are completely different issues. KIM Seong-tai, who shot <Desert Dream>, took charge of the

cameras.

The strangest thing about ZHANG's set is that he never looks at the real set as it's being shot. He always looked at it through a monitor. The monitor was not only far away, but also in the completely opposite direction from the set where the actors were positioned. ZHANG had his back turned against the set where the actors were shot. Rather than shooting a scene, he was watching the set through the monitor as if he was watching a film. I felt the urge to call that "looking-at directing." ZHANG explained, "Because I have to complete my film in a short period of time, it is important to be accurate on the monitor. Ultimately, everything has to click since films are eventually watched. Certainly, it would be better to look at the set as well as into the monitor if I had the time. Nevertheless, I keep wanting to touch many things and see many things if I look beyond the monitor. I may become greedy, get distracted, and lose consistency when I don't have enough time. As the monitor is small, I only need to see what I want to see."

*P.S. It was a new year. ZHANG Lu came back to Seoul for editing. He made three decisions. First, these two films will open independently of each other. ZHANG said that he might have to tie the two films together a few times on the set. However, each film now has its own destiny. Second, ZHANG finalized the titles of the two films. The one called <Iri: Chongqing> or <A Song of Four Thousand Women> is now entitled <Chongqing>, the Chinese pronunciation of the film's main location. The one called <Iri: Iksan> is simply called <Iri>. Third, as a result, these two films may play in theaters at the same time or possibly separately.*

CHUNG Sung-ill/ Film Critic

# The Power of the 15C Rocket Cannon

On the set of Action Blockbuster <The Divine Weapon>



*The film examines the relationship between the Ming Dynasty and the Joseon Dynasty, the people who invested in the shin-ki-jeon and tried to protect it, and the love and conflict that arose among them.*

"It might be miraculous if a director in their 20s makes a good film, but what is so wonderful when a director in their 50s makes a good film? As novelists or poets create better work as they grow older, filmmakers also get better," said director KIM Yoo-jin upon his previous film <Wild Card>'s release. Now, in 2008, he is about to turn 60. As his filmography, including legal dramas, historical dramas, action melodramas, and family films, does not appear to be consistent, one might think that he lacks self-awareness as an artist. However, it occurred to me that what he meant by saying that he makes good films was simply that he makes good films, nothing more. The thing I was curious about with this film was that it looks like a shooting location where the director's place was removed. In addition, this KRW 8.8 billion project is the largest ever of KIM's films, and it is one of the most anticipated for 2008, along with <The Good, The Bad, The Weird> and <Modern Boy>.

## The First Visit on Oct. 17th, 2007 in Yangju

By October 17th, 2007 in the theme park <Daejangeum> in Yangju-si, Gyeonggi-Province, the crew of <The Divine Weapon>, who had started their journey in Weonju, Gangwon Province, shot 81 shots. On this day, they shot a part of the 91st scene, where Seol-ju (JUNG Jae-young) and his merchant group fought for the recovery of firearm registrations at the Taepyeongwan Inn.

Director KIM Yoo-jin, who brought an old news article to mind when he finished his previous film <Wild Card>, and writer LEE Man-hee, who helped KIM on films like <The Promise> and <Wild Card>, tried to make a film able to express national pride, as well as provide basic entertainment. "The film includes the story of the relationship between the Ming Dynasty and the Joseon Dynasty, people who invested in the shin-ki-jeon and tried to protect it, and the love and conflict that arose among them." The main character of the film is Seol-ju, the leader of a peddler group. He, with no interest in politics since his father, who studied gunpowder, was killed after being falsely accused of a treason plot, one day meets a woman named Hongri (HAN Eun-jung) through Chang Gang, the chief of the royal military guard (HUH Joon-ho). Hongri was a daughter of Haesan, a governmental official, who was killed during the attack by Ming Dynasty warriors. The outline of this film is that Seol-ju, who didn't want to become involved in the nation's hardships, comes to participate in the development of the shin-ki-jeon during wartime because of his love for Hong-ri.

KIM allowed his young crew to freely express their opinions on the set. KIM Yoo-jin, known for his democratic production techniques, asked even more of his crew during the making of <The Divine Weapon>. "I don't control the filmmaking by myself. Many parts of filmmaking, such as fine arts and action, cannot be controlled only by direction. I need to ask many things of different experts. By the way, I often get headaches because of JUNG Doo-hong. I want to shoot fast, but he takes all day to set up. Maybe he won't want to make another film again (he laughs)", said KIM. Despite this jest, KIM seems to trust JUNG Doo-hong quite a lot, even to the extent of sympathy. "The JUNG Doo-hong team is very good at falling from a horse. In fact, many stunt teams place limitations on what they'll do, but Jung's team do everything: they fall from horses, they go over a wall, and they get stabbed with knives. I feel sorry for them sometimes!"

## 2nd Visit on Oct. 24th, 2007 in Yongin

On October 24th, 2007 in Yongin Folk Village, "We have almost completed the shin-ki-jeon", was a line from the script that became a buzzword among the crew during the filming of the 85th shots. On that day, the 125th scene, the last scene of <The Divine Weapon>, was being shot. The scene begins with the story of Seolju risking his life for the country. It ends up as a love story between Seolju and Hongri. The main point of the day's shooting is to leave the impression that he proposes to her by preparing fireworks for Hongri, and they live happily ever after. According to the script, they often argue and speak ill of each other, playing a real tug-of-war. It seems that their love story does not differ greatly from the story between GONG Sang-du and CHAE Hui-ju in KIM's previous film <The Promises>, or that between BANG Je-su and GANG Nana in <Wild Card>. However, they then realize that they have fallen in love with each other. However, according to HUH Joon-ho, who played Chang Gang, the chief of the royal military guard, director KIM's melodrama style is not completely traditional. "There is a scene where Seolju saves Hongri, who is in jail. As a matter of fact, the lines in the scene are quite comy. But when I saw the scene, I was moved to tears. I told him the scene was shot very well and he said, 'I have become a person who watches love. I am not of an age when I can love through my own body. And I am too old to start a new love. I think at my age I have to plan to spend the rest of my life with my wife. Now I only watch love and enjoy it.' I was surprised that the foul-tongued old fellow was so sensitive (laughing)."

The most important feature of the direction of director KIM Yoo-jin is common sense. It is important that all the details, right down to the size of the shots, the editing, and the story do not deviate from the common sense of movie-goers. The testimony of the actors that the director orders them to speak their lines fast is also in line with this. "These days, actors try too much to look nice, and, accordingly, they lose



their voice and viewers can become bored. So I order them to speak fast. If a film consists of a thousand cuts, you can save a thousand seconds by removing one second per cut, and a thousand seconds is as much as 17 minutes. If you find you have to remove 17 minutes from the film, you will have a headache (laughing)."

### 3rd Visit on Nov. 28th, 2007 in Andong

November 28th, 2007 in Andong, Gyeongbuk Province: the 121st scene is being shot. In this scene, seventeen shin-ki-jeons show their magnificent power. While the shin-ki-jeons spit fire, three thousand Ming soldiers fall, and the Minister of Ming- who tried to return to his country with Hongri- is left alone in a battlefield full of dead bodies. The sight of the dead bodies on the sand is mysteriously spectacular. At first, I thought they were dummies because they didn't move at all. They were extras, among some dummies.

When the crew were preparing for the shoot by setting fire to some dummies, extras asked to lie next to the dummies because it was so cold. It was frightening to see an extra warming his hands at a burning dead body.

In the Andong shooting field, the drama scene team and the CG scene team were shooting separately. They plan to make a hundred actual soldiers look like three thousand soldiers, using a huge blue mat set on one side of the sand. When I heard that the mat was larger than the one used by the <The Lord of the Rings> team, I thought <The Divine Weapon> might become a huge challenge for KIM Yoo-jin. However, what he emphasizes is the drama. The imagery is realistic, but not glamorous. He has always been too worried about money to spend too much on big scenery. "As you know, I am weak at such things. For a nice picture, money and time are indispensable. As usual, I tried to do something, but when I heard that it would cost too much money, I focused on the drama. I try

not to go beyond the budget, on behalf of those who trusted me with their investments."

By December 12th, 2007, a total of 119 shots were complete. Currently in April 2008, they have finished editing and are now reviewing the details of post-production. "It is true that box office hits success is important. But I want this film to be excellent in terms of quality," said KIM. As we expect, what he really worries about is removing his place as a director. It is important to focus on the story, to reveal the actors, not the director, and to think from the common sense point of view of the viewers. These ideas of director KIM may prove the secret through which he can survive the competition of commercial films for a long time. <The Divine Weapon>, made using the director's 22 years of experience, is scheduled to be released in August.

GANG Byeong-jin/ Cine 21

“You can expect to see a good film”



### Interview with Director KIM Yoo-jin

**What was the reaction of people who saw the edited version of <The Divine Weapon>?**

They said it was nice. But to my eyes there is still something missing. In particular, a fire burnt lots of things, so they were not able to be used. We had around 40 shields, but many of them were burnt, and only 10 shields remained. It would have taken 20 days to make them again, so we couldn't wait. Anyway, people say the film is not that bad (laughing).

**Those who were told about the story of <The Divine Weapon> say it reminds them of director KANG Woo-suk's <Hanbando>. I think your film will be said to have a strong sense of nationalism.**

It is natural such comments will come forth. The film was designed that way from the start. Basically, the film was planned to remind us of the excellence of our own people. However, I didn't mean to earn any money by using petty nationalism. There are many ways for us to engage in self-praise. We don't have to indulge in nationalism. Americans even make films where their president pilots a fighter and does other nonsensical things. We have many things to be actually proud of. If you can feel catharsis after watching a film, that is a film's greatest gift to the audience.

**This is your third film with writer LEE Man-hee. Is there any other special reason you maintain the partnership, other than the fact that he is a genuine storyteller?**

When I discuss things with him, I feel we express things from a similar angle. We go to a similar direction when we tell stories. However, he says we are really different (laughing). We have different hobbies and we look different. Nevertheless, every time we talk about the core of a story, we mysteriously seem to be on the same track.



## A MOTHER'S SENSATIONAL LOVE

### OH Joum-kyun's <Viva! Love>

A 41-year-old housewife accidentally falls in love with, and becomes pregnant to, her daughter's ex-fiancé—a man 21 years her junior. Running a karaoke and lodging house business with her rather idle husband, Mr. Ha (KEY Joo-bong), WOO Bong-soon (KIM Hae-sook), sees her daughter, Jeong-yoon (KIM Hye-na), one day involved intimately with a tenant, Goo-sang (KIM Yeong-min), in her karaoke room. This places Bong-soon under great anxiety, and Jeong-yoon runs away from home. Bong-soon carries the very drunk Gu-sang home. He is heartbroken by his girlfriend's departure. Bong-soon

starts to have pity on him, and begins to flutter. She eventually makes love to Gu-sang, becomes pregnant, and has rumors spreading quickly around the neighborhood.

<Viva! Love> is the first commercial film from OH Jeoum-kyun, who is well known for his previous work <A Vital Activity>. Well-versed in exploring the physical desire of ordinary people in his short films, including <Red and Yellow Leaves> and <A Vital Activity>, OH completely transforms these themes in this gentle comedy feature-length debut.

It might appear on first glance rather sensational to tell a story of a mother who falls in love with her daughter's ex-boyfriend, the man who might well have been her son-in-law, and who is 21 years her junior. It might seem even more sensational that she becomes pregnant to him. However, director OH expresses this newly-found love of Bong-soon as tactless and simple, yet honest. Shown cooking meals, washing clothes, cleaning the house, and

making a living for her family, Bong-soon lives a trivial daily life. With her unceremonious hair and the saggy skin on her face, Bong-soon cuts an unattractive figure in her worn-out jeans and is a far cry from typical ideas of beauty, women, and love. But in regaining her zest and youthfulness in the story, the audience can share the simple pleasure of watching a woman enjoy a change from her ordinary, uninspiring life.

<Viva! Love> shows the reactions of a middle-aged woman's family to her unexpected pregnancy. Instead of explicit descriptions of the one-night stand between Bong-soon and Gu-sang, the director chose an indirect way to present this, focusing on her husband and daughter, who watch the love develop between their wife and mother. The unlikely situation and the nonsensical family story are expressed quite realistically by actors KIM Hae-sook and KEY Joo-bong, who play the central wife and husband. KIM Hae-sook deserves particular praise for her work in this delightful film.

SONG Soon-jin/ Film 2.0



## A REQUEM FOR THE SLAIN ANIMALS

### HWANG Yoon's Docu <One Day on the Road>

<One Day on the Road> is not just a documentary about wild animals that are killed on the road. While it does give us damning imagery and statistics of tragic animal deaths, <One Day on the Road> is more than that. It is actually the finale of the 'Trilogy of Wild Animals' by documentary filmmaker, HWANG Yoon. The 1st installment, <Farewell>(2001), told the story of wild animals locked up in a zoo. The 2nd edition, <Silent Forest>(2004), told us about endangered animals that have lost their habitat due to indiscreet deforestation. The final installment, <One Day on the Road>, deals with road kill—animals killed by passing motor vehicles on the road.

In 2004, director HWANG Yoon went on a research tour to learn about road kill with three researchers, CHOI Tae-young, CHOI Cheon-gwon, and CHOI Dong-gi. They wore safety vests as their only safety equipment. Her three-year

study found that about 1,000 animals were killed on 120km of road near Mt. Jirisan. A two-day tour of Korea's highways, spanning 3,000km, witnessed a whopping 1,000 animals killed. If this finding stretches to the more than 100,000km of roads in Korea, the numbers of animals killed is enormous.

But <One Day on the Road> is not just a documentary about wild animals killed on the road. Instead, HWANG Yoon focuses on the stories and emotions of the animals, almost perfectly anthropomorphized by the director. Next to the body of a pregnant Manchurian elk killed by a vehicle, its fetus springs out from the mother, and stumbles along the road. Another scene depicts a snake temporarily awoken from its hibernation and killed while it basked on the road for heat. These scenes express great sadness. Rather than providing narration, common in documentaries, the film employs



subtitles that create imaginary dialogues between animals, in an effort to describe their feelings directly.

<One Day on the Road> asks some thoughtful questions, showing us the relationship between animals and the human beings that readily exploit nature. Can man and beast coexist in an environment where mass production and consumption have become the norm? The question is worth a moment's reflection.

HUH Nam-woong/ Film 2.0





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