

100 Years of Korean Cinema – abstracts

Natália Fábics

Doctoral Candidate, Film Studies Department, ELTE University

Lecturer, Media Institute, Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design (MOME)

The Role of International Film Festivals in South Korean Cinema's Worldwide Success

South Korean cinema has, in the last few decades, become one of the greatest success stories of the global film industry: whether it's art house cinema, genre or mainstream films, it has conquered the cinema screens, the streaming platforms, the televisions around the world. Along with a wide range of cultural products, ranging from teenage pop bands and TV-series, through beauty and fashion, to cuisine, Korean culture has become widely popular in Western culture as well. While acknowledging that it is a multi-layered and very complex phenomenon, the paper examines one part of the story, how participation and success at the leading international film festivals of East Asia and Europe helped the process, while the development of the Busan International Film Festival into a leading force on the Asian cinema market is also discussed.

Chi-Yun Shin

Principal Lecturer in Film Studies

Sheffield Hallam University

Trajectories of Feminist Film History: Seoul International Women's Film Festival

Seoul International Women's Film Festival (SIWFF) has established itself as one of the largest and most dynamic women's film festivals in the world, yet the festival has been rather overlooked in the burgeoning field of film festival studies. In fact, there isn't even an English-language report on the festival, while other prominent Korean film festivals such as Busan and Jeonju have been regularly reported in film magazines and journals. The absence of English-language literature on SIWFF is perhaps inevitable for a non-European festival within the already specialised and niche women's film festival circuit. Beyond simply raising the profile of the festival, however, the project aims to illuminate how the festival has functioned as a network and an alternative exhibition space for women filmmakers on local,

regional and global levels, as well as providing a public forum for feminist theories and activism over its history since 1997. Focusing on SIWFF as a distinctively feminist cultural event and public (counter)sphere, it examines the festival's film programming, which includes feminist film classics, new currents and retrospectives, and its strategies of competitions and awards, as well as its special conferences and events that involve policy makers, film industry personnel, academics and audiences.

Gábor Sebő

Korea Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow

School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures, The University of Edinburgh

Different Interpretations of Chunhyang-jeon Movie Adaptations on Both Sides of the Korean Peninsula

Shin Sang-ok (1926–2006) is one of the most prolific figures in Korean realist cinema who has also made significant impact on North Korean cinematic trajectory between 1983 and 1986 with his novel visual elements and unorthodox shooting approaches.

The paper examines how his techniques brought unusual components into the North Korean film adaptation about the most famous Korean classic folklore story, Chunhyang-jeon, The Tale of Chunhyang (The Fragrance of Spring). Shin Sang-ok's liberally and daringly revised version coupled with Westernized musical soundtrack in North Korea, entitled Love, Love, My Love (Sarang, Sarang, Nae Sarang, 1984), depicts sharp contrasts with the former North Korean cinematic variation of the classic story, The Tale of Chunhyang (Chunhyang-jeon, 1980), directed by Yu Won-jun and Yun Ryong-gyu, respectively portrayed in "Juche realist" North Korean film style.

Shin Sang-ok's cinematic style was most pronounced in the use of new camera techniques, but primarily in the depiction of romance and eroticism, which seemed incongruous to North Korea's film aesthetics but also served the demands of the North Korean regime. By adding such elements, Shin could create North Korean entertainment cinema by the mid-1980s as his films departed from the strict official guidelines of North Korean ideology. In addition, the paper discusses Shin's film success on the same story shot in South Korea, entitled Seong Chunhyang (1961).

The aim of the paper is to demonstrate how the story is interpreted differently by the two Koreas, still considering both sides as one nation, by highlighting dichotomies between collectivism and individualism, noting also that both interpretations emerge from the same ancient Korean national identity.

Barbara Wall

Assistant professor

Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen

Questioning Ethical Possibility: Thigh Slicing as Ritual for the Initiation of Compassion and Filial Piety in Kim Ki-duk's Pietà (2012)

Filial piety forms the core of human relations in Confucian morality. One form of filial piety is “filial cannibalism”, a term for incidents in which children offer their own flesh to their parents out of filial piety. One method of filial cannibalism during the Joseon dynasty in Korea (1392-1910) was thigh slicing. This motif appears in Kim Ki-duk's film *Pietà*, in which the male protagonist Gangdo slices his thigh and offers his flesh to Miseon, a woman pretending to be his mother. While many studies on *Pietà* examine the Christian references and decode the film's title as a reference to compassion, this study suggests there is also value in examining Confucian references. The act of cannibalism in the film can be understood as initiation of compassion and filial piety, although it is still clear that the relation between Gangdo and Miseon is based on betrayal and revenge. Arguably, filial piety– the very core of Confucian morality– can be understood as representative of Confucianism itself, similar to the way that compassion is one of the central concepts of Christianity. The film's disturbing usage of both concepts seems to reveal what Steve Choe calls the “possibility of ethical impossibility”.

Teréz Vincze

Assistant professor

Department of Film Studies, ELTE University

Modernist art cinema and Korean auteurs – The case of Hong Sang-soo

In his seminal book about the history of film style (*Screening Modernism. European Art Cinema 1950–1980*, 2007) András Bálint Kovács states that the interrelation of cinematic self-reflexivity and the birth of the auteur concept in film theory is one of the defining features of (European) modernist art cinema. Following on this observation in my book (*Author in the Mirror: Auteurism and Self-Reflexivity in Cinema*, 2013) I argued that the state

and definition of authorship and the phenomenon of self-reflexivity have a special relationship throughout the entire film history, and pointed out that a new and idiosyncratic intertwining of auteurism and self-reflexivity has emerged as a phenomenon in contemporary cinema during the last decades.

Since the 1990s theoretical discussions of the auteur's role in art focused attention on repositioning this figure as a historically and culturally determined function and creating a new non-universal concept of authorial subjectivity. My current research project — that builds on this concept of situated authorial subjectivity -and the idea of the author as a figure that connects his text to its historical, geographical, political and cultural context – concentrates on East-Asian (especially Korean and Taiwanese) auteurs and the presence of self-reflexivity in their oeuvre in order to understand more the concept of global art cinema and auteurship itself.

In my presentation I will demonstrate the Korean leg of the research through the analysis of the accelerated self-reflexivity present in the works of Korean director Hong Sang-soo, especially in and after his 2014 movie, *Hill of Freedom*.