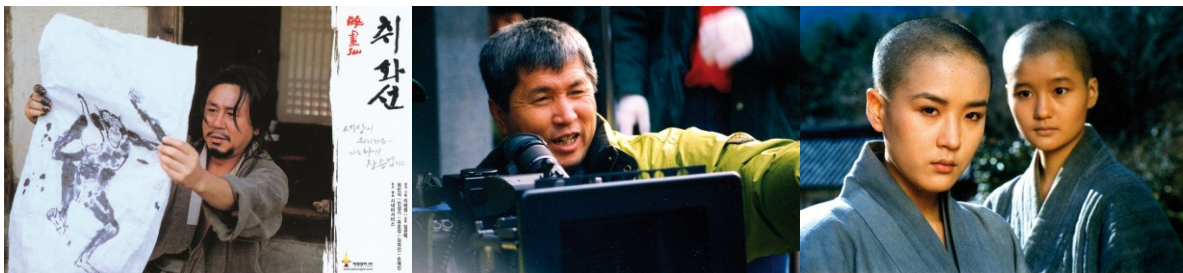


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Im Kwon-Taek season at BFI Southbank

*Includes Im Kwon Taek in Conversation
on Thursday 25 October*



During October and November **BFI Southbank** will host **Im Kwon-Taek: Run Far, Fly High**, a season of films dedicated to the visionary Korean director. In a rare visit to the UK, the highlight of the season will be **Im Kwon-Taek in Conversation** on **Thursday 25 October**. A major director who found his own distinctive 'voice' by learning on the job, Im Kwon-Taek has directed over a hundred films over the course of his illustrious career. During the season audiences will be able to see such films as Im's first undoubted masterpiece **Mandala** (1981), the Venice prize-winning (Best Actress) **Surrogate Woman** (1986), and the critically heralded **Drunk on Women and Poetry** (2002), which won Im the Best Director prize at the Cannes Film Festival.

South Korea had one of the most highly regulated (and censored) films industries in the non-communist world until it moved from military to civilian government in 1993. Despite this throughout the 1980s Im managed to find ways to tackle pressing political and social issues such as the fall-out from the civil war, contradictions in modern Buddhism and the subordination of women. The season will give audiences a chance to acquaint themselves with films from this period of Im's career including **Pursuit of Death (aka Mismatched Nose)** (1980), **Mandala** (1981), **Gilsoddeum** (1985), **Surrogate Woman** (1986) and **Come, Come, Come Upward** (1989).

More recently Im has often focused on Korea's vanishing cultural traditions such as the art of pansori. **Seopyeonje** (1993) tells the story of a pansori singer trying to make a living in the modern world while trying to find the women he loves whom he has lost contact with. Serenely beautiful and elegiac, **Seopyeonje** was Im's greatest success both at home and abroad. **The Taebaek Mountains** followed in 1994 – this epic drama looks at the months in 1948-9 when communists set up local government in two towns and the state (aided by the US army) set out to crush

them. Little is known about the life of painter Ohwon (real name: Jang Seung-Ub, 1843-97), but in **Drunk on Women and Poetry** (2002) Im imagines him as a working class vagabond who revels in a series of doomed romances and drunken acts. Starring the magnificent Choi Min-Ski (*Oldboy*, 2003) **Drunk on Women and Poetry** would win Im Kwon-Taek the Best Director award at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival. This season will give those already familiar with Im's work a chance to revisit some of his most notable films, while those unfamiliar with his work will discover that this Korean veteran should be acknowledged as one of cinema's great masters.

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Further Im Kwon-taek films will screen at the **Institute of Contemporary Arts**, The Mall, London SW1Y 5AH.

For tickets call 020 7930 3647

www.ica.org.uk

Events and Screenings taking place in the season:

Im Kwon-Taek in Conversation

Im Kwon-Taek is one of the last of his kind: a director of genre movies in a studio system who gradually found his artistic voice, made beautiful and deeply resonant films – and went on to win Best Director prize in Cannes. Joined on stage by his sometime assistant Kim Hong-Joon, he will provide insights into Korean culture, the rise of Korean cinema and, of course, the art of cinema itself.

Joint ticket available with Mandala (25 Oct only) £13.80, concs £10.30 (Members pay £1.50 less)

Thu 25 Oct 18:30 NFT1

Pursuit of Death aka Mismatched Nose / Jjak-ko

South Korea 1980. With Kim Hee-Ra, Choi Yoon-Suk, Bang Hee. 103min. EST

Two old adversaries meet by chance in a rehab centre (a workhouse-prison, really) and realise that the conflict which has dominated their lives since the Korean War has run out of road. Both men are in ruins. One is a former cop, the other a former communist guerrilla; the flashbacks to their sad backstories show Im's skill in anchoring the currents of modern Korean history in wrenching emotional drama.

Mon 22 Oct 18:30 NFT3

Sat 27 Oct 20:45 NFT2

Surrogate Woman / Ssibaji

South Korea 1986. With Kang Soo-Yeon, Lee Goo-Soon, Yoon Yang-Ha. 94min. EST

A prize-winner in Venice (Best Actress), this is Im's all-out assault on the cruelties of Korea's patriarchal tradition. In the late 19th century, the prosperous Shin family lacks a male heir – and so the husband is tricked into accepting a low-born girl as his second 'wife'.

By the time that the surrogate is pregnant, she has forgotten that she is in the house only as a servant... The darkest of melodramas.

Tue 23 Oct 20:30 NFT3

Sun 28 Oct 20:40 NFT2

Gilsoddeum

South Korea 1985. With Kim Ji-Mee, Shin Sung-Il, Han So-Ryeong. 105min. EST

In 1983, KBS (Korea's BBC) launched a campaign to reunite families torn apart in the Korean War three decades earlier. Im integrates footage from the campaign into the story of Hwayoung (Kim Ji-Mee in her defining role), who leaves her middle-class life in Busan to search for the son she lost in Gilsoddeum during the war. An expert dissection of the social and familial rifts in modern Korea.

Mon 22 Oct 20:45 NFT3

Sun 28 Oct 18:20 NFT2

Mandala / Mandara

South Korea 1981. With Jun Moo-Sang, Ahn Song-Ki, Bang Hee. 117min. EST

Im's first undoubted masterpiece confronts Pobun, a young grad who has jilted his girlfriend to become an itinerant Buddhist monk, with Jisan, an older monk who drinks liquor, eats meat and is far from celibate – but nonetheless seems closer to enlightenment than anyone Pobun has ever met. Im conjures huge spiritual questions from a very physical, naturalistic depiction of Korea in 1981.

***Joint ticket available with Im Kwon- Taek in Conversation**

Thu 25 Oct 20:40 NFT1*

Sun 27 Oct 18:10 NFT2

Seopyeonje

South Korea 1993. With Kim Myung-Gon, Oh Jung-Hae, Kim Kyu-Chul. 112min. EST

Plaintive, elegiac and serenely beautiful, *Seopyeonje* centres on a young man's quest to find the woman he loves. Both were once apprenticed to the itinerant pansori-singer Yubong, but she stayed (and suffered) while he rebelled and fled. Yubong is dead now, but Songhwa is rumoured to still be performing... Im's greatest success at home and abroad, this is almost a Korean *The Red Shoes*.

Wed 24 Oct 18:20 NFT2

Fri 2 Nov 20:45 NFT2

Come, Come, Come Upward / Aje Aje Bara Aje

South Korea 1989. With Kang Soo-Yeon, Jin Yong-Mi, Yu In-Chon. 123min. EST

A female supplement to *Mandala*, this searing drama gives Kang one of her best roles. Unloved at home and in trouble at school, Sunnyo tries to become a Buddhist nun. But the Sister Superior refuses to ordain her, saying that her mission lies elsewhere. Sunnyo's travails in the world of work and sex are juxtaposed with the story of another nun who tries for asceticism and fails.

Tue 23 Oct 18:00 NFT2

Sat 3 Nov 20:30 NFT2

The Taebaek Mountains / Taebaek Sanmaek

South Korea 1994. With Ahn Song-Ki, Kim Myung-Gon, Kim Gap-Su. 168min. EST

Hauntingly scored by Kim Soo-Chul, Im's epic drama exposes a dirty little secret in Korea's modern history: the months in 1948-9 when communists set up local government in two southern towns and the state (abetted by the US army) used fascistic militias to crush them. Im's account of this pre-echo of the Korean War shows both ideologies failing and sides with the long-suffering people.

Fri 26 Oct 19:50 NFT2

Sat 28 Oct 14:50 NFT1

Drunk on Women and Poetry / Chihwaseon

South Korea 2002. With Choi Min-Sik, You Ho-Jeong, Ahn Song-Ki. 117min. EST. 15

Little is known about the life of painter Ohwon (real name: Jang Seung-Ub, 1843-97), but Im imagines him as the working-class embodiment of a libidinous quest for the sublime. As played by the magnificent Choi Min-Sik (*Oldboy*), Ohwon roisters through a series of doomed romances and drunken acts of creation, sometimes speaking Im's own words. Best Director prize, Cannes 2002.

Wed 24 Oct 20:40 NFT2

Tue 30 Oct 18:00 NFT2

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the BFI

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI Southbank is open to all. BFI members are entitled to a discount on all tickets. BFI Southbank Box Office tel: 020 7928 3232. Unless otherwise stated tickets are £10.0, concs £6.75 Members pay £1.50 less on any ticket. Website www.bfi.org.uk/southbank

Tickets for FREE screenings and events must be booked in advance by calling the Box Office to avoid disappointment

BFI Shop

The BFI Shop is stocked and staffed by BFI experts with over 1,200 book titles and 1,000 DVDs to choose from, including hundreds of acclaimed books and DVDs produced by the BFI.

The benugo bar & kitchen

Eat, drink and be merry in panoramic daylight. benugo's décor is contemporary, brightly lit and playful with a lounge space, bar and dining area. The place to network, hang out, unpack a film, savour the best of Modern British or sip on a cocktail.

There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archival collections, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you.

***** PICTURE DESK *****

A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting BFI Southbank screenings can be found at www.image.net under BFI / BFI Southbank / November 2012 / Im Kwon-Taek