

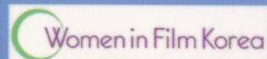
# KEEPING THE VISION ALIVE

## Women in Korean Filmmaking

Directed by Yim Soonrye

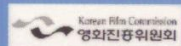


Presented by



Graduate School of Advanced Imaging Science, Multimedia & Film at Chung-Ang University

Sponsored by



## KEEPING THE VISION ALIVE Women in Korean Filmmaking



Joo Jin-sook

### Forward

In Korean film history, the presence of women filmmakers has been given little considerations. Men largely dominated the filmmaking field, and the only available job for women was script-keeping, which was then pejoratively called "a flower of the production field." It needs to be stressed, however, that women have always played important roles to film history, even during such dark times as the Japanese Occupation era; rare production stills illustrate their participation in film production practices. Although the dominant film historiography has long relegated this central role of women artists to the margins, these women have crucially shaped the contour of Korean cinema. The recent development in Korean film industry, led by phenomenal success of women filmmakers, demands a fundamental shift in understanding on women's position in Korean film history. A new dawn has arrived in contemporary cultural scenes. In particular, the success of women filmmakers have brought new enthusiasm and inspirations. They set up new models and expanded space for next generation to realize their vision in cinematic medium. This documentary aims to preserve the voice, vision and pride of Korean women filmmakers of the past, present and future. We envision it will make a first stride to move their marginal place to the center of Korean film.

#### Joo Jin-sook

Board Member of WIFK  
Professor in The Graduate School of AIM(Advanced Imaging Science, Multimedia & film) at Chung-Ang University

## KEEPING THE VISION ALIVE Women in Korean Filmmaking

### The Staff

Producer **Joo Jin-sook**

Director **Yim Soonrye**

Assistant Director **Kim Sun-a**

Line Producers **Ahn Ji-hae, Lee Soon-jin**

Cinematographers **Kim Yoon-hee, Jung Jong-hwa, Cho Won-dong**

Editor **Kim Jong-sik**

Sound **Do Jang-soo**

Abroad Coordinator/ Interviewer **Nam In-young**

Abroad Cinematographer/ Interviewer **Kim Jung-ho**

Translator **Cho Young-jung**

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Lee Mi-rye (director)



Kim Young-hee (editor)



Kim Yoon-hee (cinematographer)



Choi Eun-hee (director/actress)

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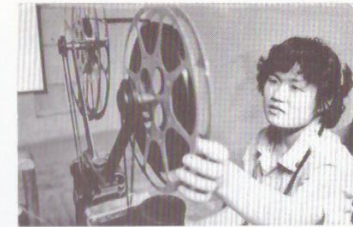
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## KEEPING THE VISION ALIVE Women in Korean Filmmaking

dominated the fields of film publicity and marketing, but also proved the talent in nearly every area of filmmaking process: acting, directing, producing, cinematography, lighting, and editing. "[In old days] it was so difficult for women to be socially independent that they couldn't get a specialized job like filmmaking," recalls a senior film critic. But, his words seem to have no echo today.

As the 90s begins, women are stepping into the center stage of filmmaking by making important business decisions and creative inputs to the overall environment of filmmaking. Director Hong Hyung-sook of Seoul Visual Collective made documentaries such as *Reclaiming Our Names*, and Director Byun Young-joo of Boim, the documentary group, produced a trilogy documentary on comfort women.

Both filmmakers exemplify the formidable presence of women filmmakers in the field of independent filmmaking. Women also proved the talent and influence in the commercial film industry as well. Kim Yoon-hee moved up the latter to become a principal cinematographer, and Lee Jung-hyang achieved popular and critical success with her film *A Museum by the Zoo* which she also wrote. Considering growing importance of women in short film production, women would provide influential creative force to the film industry in the future.

Last two years, in particular, show the remarkable growth of women executive producers. Kim Mi-hee, the president of Fun & Happiness, produced *At the Gas Station* which drew over two million audience nationwide. A critically acclaimed box-office smash hit, *The Foul King* was also produced by a woman producer, Oh Jung-wan, also the president of Bom Film. Yoo Hee-sook, the president of Yoo Cinema, produced a controversial films, *Bird Cage Inn* and *Yellow Hair*. Shim Jae-Myung, the president of Myung Film, produced *Panmunjum: Joint Security Area* that became the all-time box-office record.

And, women filmmakers gathered together and launched Women in Film Korea (WIFK) in 2000. WIFK is a non-profit organization and its main purpose is to support and encourage women in the field in present and future. As a part of its work, WIFK endeavors to rewrite Korean film history from women's viewpoint and highlight women filmmakers and their works, much neglected in conventional accounts of Korean film history. As part of this critical endeavor, we produced a documentary on history of women filmmakers, *Keeping the vision alive: Women in Korean Filmmaking*. This documentary would offer a chance to look at the brief history of women filmmakers and their working environment of the past and present. More importantly, it presents their talent, imagination, dream and love for film arts.



## KEEPING THE VISION ALIVE Women in Korean Filmmaking



Yim Soonrye

### Director's Note

It is true that women's position in filmmaking has significantly improved in recent years. Yet, difficult challenges and obstacles still remain ahead for women to realize their creative and artistic potentials. Women have to prove their outstanding talent and courage to make their voices heard in the various fields of filmmaking. One can, then, easily imagine the great difficulties that women filmmakers had confronted when they made films in the 50s and 60s. In this work, I endeavored to feature women filmmakers as comprehensive as I could. It includes the early generation artists such as film director Park Nam-ok and editor Kim Young-hee, to the promising contemporary talents of Youngpa Junior High School. These filmmakers left indelible marks on the screen by articulating women's experience, memory, fear, joy and hope from viewpoint of women.

In the course of making this documentary, I myself benefited the most. I had great opportunities to meet many great filmmakers. The pioneer filmmakers taught me the courage to overcome hardship and the wisdom to carry out passion for filmmaking. Similarly, contemporary filmmakers inspired me with their talent, ambition as well as camaraderie to cultivate their dream in cinematic art.

### Im Soonrye

Born in 1960 in Incheon, Korea. Earned a master's degree at the University Paris 8 in 1992. Returned to Korea to work as an assistant director in *Out to the World*. Directed a short film *Promenade in the Rain* in 1994, which won prizes at several international film festivals. Made her feature debut with *Three Friends* in 1996. It was invited to many international film festival and received numerous awards. Her second feature *Waikiki Brothers* is selected for the opening film of the 2nd Jeonju International Film Festival.



Board Members of WIFK

## About Women in Film Korea (WIFK)

The mission of Women in Film Korea, non-profit organization, is to represent and further the rights of diverse women professionals working in film production and film-related fields. We do this by promoting the works of women filmmakers, training women professionals, forming alliance with women's groups, and presenting the women's works to the broadest audience possible. The membership of WIFK, (now headed by Uni Chai), is limited exclusively to the women working in the fields.

WIFK's current members include such diverse professions as film producers, directors, editors, film historians, film professors, and film critics.



Uni Chai

### GOALS

- \*To establish broad and comprehensive information database on women film professionals which would be used by and for the members.
- \*To support and encourage Korean women artists working in film, video and other electronic media.
- \*To provide educational and training programs for women in the fields.
- \*To develop distribution and exhibition route in Korea for presentation of the works by Korean as well as international women filmmakers.
- \*To facilitate the critical inquiries on theory and history of women in Korean film.
- \*To form a close alliance with women filmmakers' organizations in abroad.
- \*To support and host the film festivals that highlight the works of women filmmakers.

### CONTACT: Women in Film Korea

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