

Revue de Presse Land of Scarecrows

1/ Variety Asia Online

<http://www.varietyasiaonline.com/content/view/6717/1/>

Pusan reveals project funding winners

Written by Han Sunhee

Wednesday, 13 August 2008

Story Categories: Documentary, Festivals, Film, Finance, Korea, Pusan,

SEOUL – Twenty seven movie projects are to receive funding from the Pusan International Film Festival's Asia Cinema Fund it was announced Tuesday.

The ACF spans three sections that support different aspects of the production and post-production processes for movies that are deemed Asia's most creative film efforts.

The six recipients of coin from the 'Independent Feature Script and Project Incubating Fund' section include Korean helmer Kim Jong-kwan's "Seaside" and Malaysian director Woo Ming Jin's "Woman On Fire Looks For Water."

A further six projects are to receive coin from the 'Independent Feature Post-production Fund.' These include Korean helmer Roh Gyeong-tae's "Land of Scarecrow," Chinese helmer He Jianjun's "River People." Malaysian helmer Ho Yuhang's "At The End of Daybreak" was selected as the recipient of Asia Pacific Actors Network's production support fund, and was backed by Korean production shingle M&FC.

The AND Fund for docus rewarded five Korean projects including Korean-American female director Tammy Chu Tolle's "Resilience" and nine other Asian projects including Indian helmer Ranu Ghosh's "Quarter No. 4/11."

2008 Independent Feature Script and Project Development Fund recipients

"Seaside" (Korea) Kim Jongkwan

"Daybreak" (Korea) Cho Kyu Jang

"The Reason" (Korea) Min Yong Keun

"Woman On Fire Looks For Water" (Malaysia) Woo Ming Jin

"Half Truth" (India) Jahar Kan Ungo

"I Carried You Home" (Thailand) Tongpong Chantarangkul

"Balloon" (China) Wanma Caidan

2008 Independent Feature Post-production Fund recipients

"Breathless" (Korea) Yang Ik June

"The Pit and The Pendulum" (Korea) Sohn Young sung

"Land of Scarecrows" (Korea) Gyeong Tae Roh

"Ocean of An Old Man" (India) Rajesh Shera

"River People" (China) He Jianjun

"At The End Of Daybreak" (Malaysia) Ho Yuhang

2/ *Variety*

<http://www.variety.com/index.asp?layout=festivals&jump=features&id=3254>

Festival Features

Posted: Thurs., Oct. 9, 2008, 8:50pm PT

'Scarecrows,' 'Naked' top Pusan Films win top prizes at Korean festival

The 13th Pusan Film Festival wrapped Friday with top prizes from its New Currents competition section shared between South Korea's "Land of Scarecrows" and Japan's "Naked of Defenses."

Helmer Roh Gyung-tae's "Scarecrows" is a collection of stories of isolated people, including one about a transgender woman who wants to become a man. Ichii Masahide's "Naked of Defenses" delves into memories of a worker at a plastic factory.

Jury, headed by French actress Anna Karina, also made two special mentions, one for Baek Seung Bin's "Members of the Funeral" and the other for Yang Jin's "Er dong."

At a press conference Friday morning, fest organizers said Pusan had screened 315 feature movies including 85 world preems, with both totals the largest in the event's 13-year history.

"This year, we tried to introduce films from relatively unknown territories like Middle Asia, focusing on the Kazakhstan film industry," festival director Kim Dong-ho said. "It is also a significant result that 16 films among the 27 projects funded from Asian Cinema Fund were screened at this year's festival."

Audience total also hit record levels with 198,818 admissions and a seat occupancy rate of 72.3%.

Total number of guest and business attendees totaled 11,110, including 3,038 domestic guests, 638 foreign guests, 1,200 cinephiles whom the festival invited, 4,640 Asian Film Market guests and 1,594 members of the press.

The fourth running of the Asian Film Academy wrapped Thursday. Headed by Taiwanese helmer Hou Hsiao-hsien as dean, the teach-in invited 24 individuals from 12 countries to attend four workshops and three mentoring sessions.

Moving from the metaphorical to the physical, Kim also outlined the festival's plans to build a permanent home. "The ground-breaking ceremony of Busan film center Dureraum on Oct. 2 was one of the most memorable moments this year, in that it will be the center of the Asian film industry when construction is completed," he said.

Pusan International Film Festival - 2008 winners list

New Currents Award - joint winners (\$30,000)

"Land of Scarecrows" Roh Gyeong-tae (South Korea)

"Naked of Defenses" Ichii Masahide (Japan)

New Currents Award special mentions

"Members of the Funeral" Baek Seung-bin (South Korea)

"Er Dong" Yang Jin (China)

Sonje Award (\$10,000)

"Andong" by Rommel Tolentino Milo (Philippines)
"Girl" by Hong Sunghoon (South Korea)

PIFF Mecenat Award

"Mental" Soda Kazuhiro (Japan)
"Old Partner" Lee Chung-ryoul (South Korea)

Fipresci Award

"Jalainur" Ye Zhao (China)

NETPAC Award

"Members of the Funeral" Baek Seung-bin (South Korea)
"Treeless Mountain" Kim So-young (South Korea/U.S.)

KNN Movie Award (Audience Award, \$ 20,000)

"100" by Chris Martinez (Philippines)

"Land of Scarecrows"

Written by Richard Kuipers

Thursday, 20 November 2008

Story Categories: Film, Film review, Korea, reviews,

"Land of Scarecrows"

(South Korea)

A Neon Prods., Teddy Bear Films production. (International sales: Studio 2.0, Seoul.) Produced by Roh Gyeong-tae, Antonin Dedet, Kim Jae-chung. Directed, written by Roh Gyeong-tae.

With: Kim Sun-young, Phuong Thi Bich, Jung Du-won, Shin An-jin.

South Korean experimentalist Roh Gyeong-tae delivers a decidedly mixed bag with his sophomore outing "Land of Scarecrows." Following his widely praised debut, "The Last Dining Table," this similarly themed study of three misfits living on the very outer fringes of society contains striking imagery and interesting ideas but fails to connect on primary emotional levels or drive home any meaningful messages. Fests looking for outre art fare will step up, but this avant-garde exercise faces a virtually impossible task in domestic and offshore commercial arenas. Nonetheless, pic shared the top film prize in the Pusan fest's New Currents competish.

Using significantly more plot and dialogue than in the almost wordless "Last Dining Table," Roh opens on a riverside wasteland earmarked for development. In the first of many pointed comments about environmental degradation, scarecrows pathetically keep watch over a patch of heavily polluted land.

Living somewhere near this depressing place is Ji-young (Kim Sun-young), an artist-of-sorts who wants to become a man. Strapping her breasts and donning a suit, she visits the Philippines and returns with Rain (Phuong Thi Bich), a naive girl who discovers too late she has married a woman.

Meanwhile, sad young Loi-Tan (Jung Du-won) is sacked from his dishwashing job at a grimy restaurant. Believing he is a Filipino adopted by Koreans, Loi-Tan's search for family eventually leads to Li-young via Rain.

Though pic is filled with arresting visuals, the story never quite gets into gear. Auds intrigued by the bleak and slightly surreal landscape will have a much harder time relating to the initially interesting characters who eventually drift away in a sea of abstract mumblings about their unhappy situations.

Top-notch photography and production design create a memorable vision of decay and disharmony caused by unchecked industrialization. Piano-based score by Jaesin Lee is a major plus and rest of technical credits are right on the money. As with "The Last Dining Table," the end credit roll here carries a beautiful poem by Chung Yun-suk.

More than one option (Co) Tube Entertainment

(Co) Studio 2.0 (South Korea)

Camera (color), Choi Jung-soon; editor, Choi Hyun-suk; music, Jaesin Lee; production designer, Eum Jin-sun; costume designer, Choo Jung-hee; sound (Dolby Digital), Lee eun-jee; associate producers, Noh Bo-sung, Lee Jun-kyu, Lim Rok-young; assistant director, Lim Jin-seung. Reviewed at Pusan Film Festival (New Currents -- competing), Oct. 6, 2008. Running time: 90 MIN.

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Movie Review – Roh Gyeong-tae’s “Land of Scarecrows”

By Christopher Bourne

For a jaded filmgoer and film festivalgoer like me, surprises can often be few and far between. Whether it is the latest Hollywood super-spectacle or the most obscure, experimental art film, most films nowadays are variations on the familiar and endlessly overdone.

So it is quite a pleasure to come across such a film as Roh Gyeong-tae’s “Land of Scarecrows,” a true masterpiece whose elliptical, initially challenging style is nevertheless eminently accessible. Roh’s second feature, which shared the New Currents Award (for best first or second film) at this year’s Pusan International Film Festival, is one of the great discoveries one always hopes to find at a film festival, especially one with as vast a selection as Pusan’s.

Opening with a cryptic image of two mudang (Korean female shamans) performing an elaborate ritual dance, “Land of Scarecrows” alternates between two locales: Honghae, a rural area of South Korea, and the Philippines. The film follows a number of characters, the three most significant being Jang Ji-young (Kim Sun-young), an amateur installation artist who also happens to be a transgender woman living as a man; Rain (Bich Phuong Thi), a young Filipina who dreams of living in Korea; and Loi Tan (Jung Duwon), an ethnic Korean young man who was brought from the Philippines as a foster child. A beautiful and lyrical alchemy, not dissimilar to the artworks Ji-young creates, brings these characters together and unites their destinies into a tapestry that is mesmerizing to watch.

“Land of Scarecrows” melds humor, melancholy, and an ethereal sense of spirituality in a way that elevates it far above the sort of pretentious, self-consciously arty films that are far too prevalent at film festivals. The phenomenon of Korean men seeking arranged marriages with Southeastern Asian women is presented in a very humorous way, with repeated scenes of nervous potential brides being sized up by their suitors. Ji-young meets and marries Rain at one of these marriage agencies, of course with Rain initially being unaware that her new husband is a biological woman. Their relationship, however, isn’t played for laughs and in fact leads to some of the most poignant moments of the film. The film is also full of beautifully-rendered scenes that could stand alone as short films, such as Ji-young and Rain’s initial meeting, and a later scene in a karaoke bar where Ji-young belts out a plaintive, romantic song.

Roh Gyeong-tae, a former stockbroker who previously made a number of experimental short films and the feature “The Last Dining Table,” emerges as a major talent with “Land of Scarecrows,” which has a richly textured look and an unusual approach to storytelling that yields great rewards. This makes it all the more gratifying that the New Currents jury, headed by French New Wave icon Anna Karina, recognized this extraordinary work.

“Land of Scarecrows” shared the New Currents Award with a Japanese film, Masahide Ichii’s “Naked of Defenses.” [Click here for more information about the film on the Pusan International Film Festival Web site.](#)

5) *Hancinema.net*

<http://www.hancinema.net/noh-s-land-of-scarecrows-in-production-15370.html>

NOH's Land of Scarecrows in Production

By Nigel D'Sa (KOFIC)

After an impressive and eclectic debut with "The Last Dining Table", director NOH Gyeong-tae is hard at work on his sophomore effort, poetically titled "Land of Scarecrows". The new feature, produced by Teddy Bear Films co., was recently awarded post-production support through the Pusan International Film Festival's Asian Cinema Fund.

"Land of Scarecrows", like NOH's first feature, presents a cross-section of modern society, focusing on isolated lives in a poetically charged squalor. The story revolves around three characters, Jang Ji-young, a transvestite lesbian living in the guise of a 40 year-old man, Loi Tan, an adopted Filipino boy, and Rain, a young woman from the Philippines with a Korean dream. Their lives intertwine bringing them face to face with tragic results.

NOH studied at KAIST and worked at Samsung Securities Company as a stockbroker before turning to film. His experimental short films *Father and Son* (2005) and *Reincarnation* (2005), won several awards at festivals worldwide. His feature debut "The Last Dining Table" (2006), was shown at the Locarno, Sundance, Rotterdam and Pusan International Film Festival where it won the NETPAC award and then the CGV Best Film Award at the Seoul Independent Film Festival.

Nigel D'Sa (KOFIC)

6) *The Korea Herald*

http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/NEWKHSITE/data/html_dir/2009/02/05/200902050058.asp

7 Korean films at Berlin film festival

By Yang Sung-jin

Seven Korean films will be screened at the 59th Berlin International Film Festival, which kicks off today in the German capital. Although no Korean films made it to the much-coveted competition section, five titles have been invited to this year's forum section. The sidebar will feature "My Dear Enemy," "Land of Scarecrows," "Treeless Mountain," "Members of the Funeral" and "One Fine Day."

Director Lee Yoon-ki's "My Dear Enemy" is drawing keen attention both at home and abroad. Lee's debut feature "This Charming Girl" and third film "Ad Lib Night" were invited to Berlin in previous years.

"My Dear Enemy" also stars Jeon Do-youn, who won the best actress award at the Cannes International Film Festival in 2008, and Ha Jung-woo, who built his fame with a memorable act in "The Chaser."

"Land of Scarecrows," directed by Roh Gyeong-tae, is also deemed a promising film likely to capture the attention of foreign critics and distributors. The film made a debut at the 2008 Pusan International Film Festival and won the New Currents award.

Roh's debut feature, "The Last Dining Table," won awards at the Pusan International Film Festival and Seoul Independent Film Festival. Roh is adept at weaving an experimental tale, as showcased by his short films such as "Father and Son" and "Reincarnation."

Meanwhile, Kim So-yong's "Treeless Mountain" is a Korea-U.S. co-production. Kim gained recognition with her thought-provoking debut feature, "In Between Days." In the new film, Kim puts her camera on two young sisters who encounter different yet similarly frustrating situations ranging from their hapless mother to an alcoholic aunt.

Kim's new film has already screened at several festivals and won the Best Film award at Dubai and the Jury prize at Tokyo FILMeX.

"Members of the Funeral" is the debut feature from Baek Seung-bin, who solidified his position with his successful short film "The French Lieutenant's Woman." Baek is rapidly gaining reputation in Korea and elsewhere thanks to his new film, which won the NETPAC award at last year's PIFF.

Director Lee Suk-gyung also joins the Forum with her debut feature "One Fine Day." Lee's entry to the Berlin film festival came after her 13-minute short film "Once Again" was well-received by critics.

Aside from the Forum section, two Korean films are set to join the Berlin film festival. Jung Ji-yeon's short film "Blooming in Spring" is invited to Generation 14-plus and Min Kyu-dong's third feature "Antique" will screen in the Culinary Cinema section.

Jung's film received the KODAK short film production grant and got positive reviews when it was featured in the Wide Angle section at PIFF last year. Director Min's "Antique" involves four handsome young Korean men at a cake shop, a peculiar story that drew many female moviegoers last year.

So far, eight Korean movies have made it to the competition section at the Berlin film festival. Maverick filmmaker Kim Ki-duk won the best director award with "Samaria" in 2004, and veteran director Im Kwon-taek received the Honorary Golden Bear award in February 2005 for his contribution to cinematography over the past four decades.

In 2007, world-renowned director Park Chan-wook won the Alfred Bauer Prize with his film "I'm a Cyborg, But That's OK" at the Berlin film festival.

7)KOFIC (Korea Film Consil)

http://www.koreanfilm.or.kr/KOFIC/Channel?task=kofic.user.eng.b_filmnews.command.NewsView1Cmd&searchPage=1&Gesipan_SCD=1&Gesimul_SNO=1193

Berlinale Invites Seven Korean Films

By Yi Ch'ang-ho / Nigel D'Sa (KOFIC)

A total of seven Korean films are selected to screen at the 59th Berlin International Film Festival, running February 5 -15 in the German capital. Korean films will dominate this year's Forum section. The sidebar consists of five Korean titles: Land of Scarecrows, Members of the Funeral, My Dear Enemy, One Fine Day, and Treeless Mountain.

Recently announced was the addition of MIN Kyu-dong's third feature *Antique*, which will screen in the Culinary Cinema section. MIN, who debuted with the critically praised horror *Memento Mori* (1999) and the 2005 hit *All for Love*, studied film in France. His latest feature revolves around four handsome young men and a cake-shop.

Land of Scarecrows is ROH Gyeong-tae's second effort after his bold experimental *The Last Dining Table* which was awarded at Pusan International Film Festival and Seoul Independent Film Festival. His early experimental short films *Father and Son*, and *Reincarnation* are also multi-awarded films. *Land of Scarecrows* debuted at the 2008 Pusan International Film Festival (PIFF) and won the New currents award.

BAEK Seung-bin directed the successful short film *The French Lieutenant's Woman* which played at several film festivals. With his feature film directorial debut *Members of the Funeral*, he confirms his status as an emerging director on the world stage. *Members of the Funeral* received the NETPAC award at last year's PIFF.

Acclaimed director LEE Yoon-ki returns to Berlin with *My Dear Enemy*. Both his debut feature *This Charming Girl* and third film *Ad Lib Night* were invited to Berlin in previous years. *My Dear Enemy* stars 2008 Festival de Cannes' Best actress (*Secret Sunshine*) JEON Do-youn and 2008's emergent star HA Jung-woo (*The Chaser*).

LEE Suk-gyung's first shot at directing a feature film landed her a spot at one of the most prestigious film festivals. With *The Day After* she graduates to feature films after previously directing the short film *Once Again*.

USA/KOREA production *Treeless Mountain* is KIM So-yong's sophomore project after being praised for *In Between Days*. *Treeless Mountain* portrays two young sisters who are shuffled about from their hapless mother to an alcoholic aunt and on to their agrarian based grandparents. The film has screened at numerous festivals already winning Best Film at Dubai and the Jury prize at Tokyo FILMeX.

And the only short, *Blooming in Spring* directed by JUNG Ji-yeon is invited to Generation 14-plus . This film won the KODAK short film production grant and was acclaimed for Wide Angle section at Pusan International Film Festival.

8) *Hollywood reporter*

Land of Scarecrows

October 06, 2008 If Pusan's New Currents section is trying to cultivate a reputation as a hotbed of pretension then it's made an excellent choice in selecting "Land of Scarecrows," an obtuse and cowardly film about that most tired of subjects: identity. It's a film that says nothing really new about personal self-awareness or self-determination and grows wearying at an astonishing pace. Based on director Roh Gyeong-tae's track record (the superior "The Last Dining Table"), a wide variety of festivals will be lining up to program "Scarecrows," which has even less of a chance at wide distribution as Roh's first film.

9)Korea Society

http://www.koreasociety.org/film_blog/diary/land_of_scarecrows_bottom_line.html

Land of Scarecrows: Bottom line

Thoroughly original, mesmerizing, brilliant piece of visual poetry. Noh Kyeong-tae's second feature is not just a film, not just something you like/dislike, but an extremely beautiful experiment in thought.

These days, it sometimes feels like most movies we get to see are little more than one-hour-and-a-half commercials for a bunch of corporate sponsors and a celebration of their more or less good will. Land of Scarecrows is something else.