



LONDON KOREAN FILM FESTIVAL 2024

A Girl at My Door

A Girl at My Door (Dohee-ya)

Directed by: July Jung

©: Pinehouse Film Co. Ltd., Nowfilm Co. Ltd.

A Pinehouse, Now Films production

Presented by: MovieCollage, Pinehouse Film, Timewise Investment

Executive Producers: Simon Lee, Lee Joondong, Shin Kang Yeong

Producers: Lee Changdong, Lee Joondong

Screenplay: July Jung

Cinematography: Kim Hyunseok

Editing: Lee Younglim

Production Design: Yoon Sang Yoon

Costume Design: Kim Ha Kyung

Music: Jang Younggyu

Sound Recording: Kim Hyun Sang

Cast:

Bae Doona (Young-nam)

Kim Sae-ron (Dohee)

Song Sae-byeok (Yong-ha)

South Korea 2014©

119 mins

Digital

The screening on Mon 11 Nov will be introduced by Professor Jinhee Choi, King's College London

BECOME A BFI MEMBER

Enjoy a great package of film benefits including priority booking at BFI Southbank and BFI Festivals. Join today at bfi.org.uk/join

SIGHT AND SOUND

Never miss an issue with **Sight and Sound**, the BFI's internationally renowned film magazine. Subscribe from just £25*

* Price based on a 6-month print subscription (UK only). More info: sightandsoundsubs.bfi.org.uk

SIGHT AND SOUND

BFI PLAYER

We are always open online on BFI Player where you can watch the best new, cult & classic cinema on demand. Showcasing hand-picked landmark British and independent titles, films are available to watch in three distinct ways: Subscription, Rentals & Free to view.

See something different today on player.bfi.org.uk

Writer-director July Jung on 'A Girl at My Door'

A Girl at My Door is your first feature film: how did the meeting with producer Lee Changdong (Poetry, Secret Sunshine) go and how did you convince him to follow you in this project?

I studied at the Korea National University of Arts in Seoul, where screenwriting competitions were organised to discover young talents. My project was one of the five finalists but was ultimately not selected. The director and producer Lee Changdong, then a professor at this school and member of the committee, contacted me shortly after the competition to tell me that my script had caught his attention. He then suggested that we work together on its development.

Your film addresses many taboo subjects: abuse, incest, the exploitation of undocumented immigrants, homosexuality, etc. What message did you want to convey and what line did you set yourself to find the right balance?

I am fully aware that *A Girl at My Door* addresses many subjects that could each have been the subject of a separate film. For me, it was not a question of making a speech about South Korean society but of making people feel the deep loneliness of each of the characters in relation to the context. The writing and integration of these different elements in the final screenplay were carried out with this sole objective.

You gave the lead role to a South Korean film star: Bae Doona. Why did you choose her and how did you convince her to play Young-nam, a young homosexual woman and police lieutenant, transferred to a small fishing village?

Bae Doona was my first choice to play the character of Young-nam. Her performance in Hirokazu Koreeda's *Air Doll* had fully convinced me, even if the role she plays is totally different. In addition, when producer Lee Changdong sent her the script, Bae Doona was experiencing a rather lonely moment on a personal level, which allowed her to immediately understand the emotions of the main character.

How did you help young Kim Sae-ron understand her character, especially in the scenes that confront her with her father and Young-nam?

When reading the script, Kim Sae-ron quickly understood that the role of Dohee would be particularly difficult to play, which led her to initially refuse it. Then, we discussed it at length so that she could understand how this character works and the reasons why she behaved this way in certain scenes. Since Kim Sae-ron is a mature and intelligent young actress, she ended up taking ownership of the issues induced by this ambivalent character and agreed to play her.

Your film was presented exclusively at the Cannes Festival: how do you analyse the first reactions of the audience?

At first, I was convinced that I had only written a short story set in a village in South Korea. I was really not sure of the impact it would have on viewers. When I heard the applause from the audience, I told myself that I had succeeded in conveying a message. I was surprised, but above all very happy.

LONDON KOREAN FILM FESTIVAL 2024

Opening Gala: Victory bik-to-ri + **Q&A with director Park Beom-su**
Wed 6 Nov 18:45

Closing Night Gala: Love in the Big City Dae-dosi-ui Sarang-beop + **Q&A with director E.oni**
Wed 13 Nov 18:45

Women's Voices

A Girl At My Door Dohee-ya

Fri 1 Nov 17:50; Mon 11 Nov 20:20 (+ intro by Professor Jinhee Choi, King's College London)

Sisters on the Road

Jee-geum, ee-dae-ro-ga jo-a-yo

Sat 2 Nov 20:40; Tue 5 Nov 18:20 (+ intro by LKFF curator Eunji Lee)

The Truth Beneath Bimil-eun eopta

Sun 3 Nov 18:45; Sat 9 Nov 20:40 (+ intro)

Concerning My Daughter Ddal-eh dae-ha-yeo + intro

Thu 7 Nov 17:50

FAQ Mak-geol-li-ga al-lyeo-jul-geo-ya

+ **Q&A with director Kim Da-min**

Sat 9 Nov 15:00

It's Okay! Gwen-chah-na gwen-chah-na gwen-chah-na! + **Q&A with director Kim Hye-young**

Sat 9 Nov 17:50

Women's Voices Forum

Mon 11 Nov 18:10

Cinema Now

Following Geu-nyeo-ga jug-eoss-da

+ **intro by programmer Anton Bitel**

Fri 8 Nov 18:10

Mother's Kingdom Uhm-mah-ui wahng-gook

+ **intro by programmer Anton Bitel**

Fri 8 Nov 20:45

The Tenants Se-ip-ja

+ **intro by programmer Anton Bitel**

Tue 12 Nov 20:30

LONDON KOREAN FILM FESTIVAL



kofic

Bae Doona on 'A Girl at My Door'

Was working with July Jung on her first feature film a way for you to mark your commitment to New Korean Cinema even more?

In recent years, I have had an international career and the prospect of working with July Jung on her first feature film convinced me that I would rediscover the passion that drove me when I was a young beginner. While filming *A Girl at My Door*, I felt the same emotions as when I enthusiastically discovered South Korean cinema.

How did you learn about the script written by July Jung?

The script was sent to me by producer Lee Changdong. I later watched July Jung's first short films but it was really the story of *A Girl at My Door* that made me decide to join the cast.

How did you approach the psychology of your character and the ambiguity of her relationship with the young Dohee?

Playing Young-nam was a real challenge for me because I detected in this character a certain psychological instability and many internal conflicts. Confucianism remains predominant in South Korea and continues to govern a whole system of values based above all on honour. My character's sexual identity contradicts this system, especially since Young-nam, as a police lieutenant, is supposed to represent the law. However, I did not seek to theorise my character's suffering in advance. I simply tried to put myself in her shoes, to feel each situation. As for her relationship with Dohee, it is up to the viewer to detect its meaning and to elucidate the ambiguity of this relationship. Some see it as a mother-daughter bond, others a romantic relationship, and it is this uncertainty that I like in the film.

In your opinion, is the fact that Young-nam is homosexual an aggravating factor in the eyes of the inhabitants of the village where she is transferred?

Young-nam's homosexuality characterises her in the eyes of those around her. Personally, if I had been in her place, I don't think I would have tried to hide it as much as she does. But given her profession, the fact that she has difficulty assuming her sexual identity contributes strongly to her physical and psychological isolation. The fact that she hides herself to drink is directly linked to this. In a way, it is her relationship with Dohee that allows her to free herself from the gaze of others, from the prejudices that weigh on her and, consequently, to be less afraid.

Production notes