

# South Korean Women's Cinema

Conference 2021

23 – 25 September



Still image from *Us, Day by Day* (2019)

**Sheffield  
Hallam  
University**

**AK** THE ACADEMY OF  
KOREAN STUDIES

# Welcome

Hello – and welcome to the South Korean Women’s Cinema conference!

When I first envisaged a conference dedicated to South Korean women’s cinema, I had planned to offer you a warm welcome to Sheffield Hallam University and our purpose-built cinema, The Void. The pandemic situation however hasn’t let up enough to hold an in-person event, and here we are, meeting virtually. Although I am a little saddened by not being able to meet you in person, an online format has allowed it to be more accessible, and we have speakers from all over the globe.

I was a little nervous when I released the Call for Papers for the conference that is the first of its kind – an English-language academic conference solely on South Korean Women’s cinema, but I needn’t have worried – I couldn’t be happier with the programme I have been able to put together. The wide-ranging talks you will hear over three days showcase filmmaking talents of the past and present, address important issues, and illuminate the current status of women’s cinema in South Korea.

In addition to two keynote lectures from Chungmoo Choi and So Mayer, we have talks on topics ranging from the Kaidu Club of the 1970s to recent independent films that explore challenges and issues that women face in contemporary South Korea.

I’m also super excited and honoured to have four amazing women filmmakers – **Kangyu Garam** (강유가람) who will be in conversation with an acclaimed British documentary filmmaker **Jeanie Finlay**, **Lee Kyung-mi** (이경미) and **Yim Soon-rye** (임순례) – attend the conference. There will be three online film screenings (links on pp. 3-4) as well.

I hope the SKWC 2021 will be the first of many events that celebrate vibrant and varied South Korean films on and by women.

- Chi-Yun Shin

- **Conference Organiser:** Chi-Yun Shin
- **Event Assistants:** Alejandra Armendariz & Denise Hobart
- **Translation:** Hyun-Jeong Lee (Roc)
- **Special Thanks:** Juyeon Bae, Ashley Barnes, Chris Berry, Chungmoo Choi, Fiona Herrick, Jeanie Finlay, Jill Hitchenor, Jin-ha Hwang (MOHO Film), Dan-ah Kim (Megabox), Ho-jin Kim (INDIESTORY), Kaley Kramer, Hee-Seung Irene Lee, Mi-Jeong Lee, Sangjoon Lee, Craig Ian Mann, So Mayer, Shelley O’Brien, Tom Payne, Suzanne Speidel, Ellie Tomsett, and Sarah Wild.

# Online Conduct

We aim to provide a safe and supportive space for all our speakers, guests and attendees. Please keep your microphones muted during presentation and do not share your screen unless you are presenting.

There will be a zero-tolerance policy to any and all abusive comments or behaviour during the conference, and we reserve the right to remove individuals from our Zoom meetings for poor personal conduct.

**\* Please do not share the Zoom or Vimeo links with any third party.**

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## Film Screenings

### **Us, Day by Day / 우리는 매일매일** (KANGYU Garam, 2019)

In this quietly remarkable documentary, director Kangyu revisits her fellow ex-members of Young Feminists, a student group formed from several universities in the 1990s. Now in their forties, these women have forged their own paths, with different jobs in different parts of the country. Yet the concerns that united them years ago remain. We follow them as they continue to integrate their beliefs into daily life.

The film's director Kangyu Garam will be in conversation with Jeanie Finlay on Day 1 (Thurs 23 September) at 3pm (BST).

<a href="https://vimeo.com/590912856">https://vimeo.com/590912856</a>	PW: daybyday20
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### **Little Forest / 리틀 포레스트** (YIM Soon-rye, 2018)

Based on a manga series of the same name by Daisuke Igarashi, *Little Forest* is about a young woman Hye-won (Kim Tae-ri) who leaves the city to return to her hometown in the countryside, where life is dictated by the changing seasons and what the nature

offers. Q&A with the film's director Yim Soon-rye, the leading Korean woman filmmaker, will be held on Day 3 (Sat 25 September) at 2pm (BST).

**\* Only available until 10am on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> September**

<a href="https://vimeo.com/606291128">https://vimeo.com/606291128</a>	PW: LITtle100@@
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## **Crush and Blush / 미쓰 홍당무** (LEE Kyung-mi, 2008)

Director Lee's directorial debut film, *Crush and Blush* is a dark comedy about Mi-sook, an eccentric and obsessive young teacher who has been harbouring a crush on Jong-cheol, her former teacher and now married colleague. Nicknamed 'Miss Carrot' for her tendency to go red in her face, Mi-sook forms an unlikely alliance with Jong-cheol's misfit teenage daughter when he shows interest in an attractive teacher. The film was the first film produced by Park Chan-wook, for whom Lee had worked as a scripter/assistant director on *Sympathy for Lady Vengeance* (2005).

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WkCNKroJo8r-NK9nkKtLHTpTELTfoZno/view?usp=sharing>

# Conference Schedule

\* All times given below are for British Summer Time (GMT+1hr).

### Time zone key

Time zones	City or country	Diff BST
Pacific	LA, California, Seattle	- 8
Central	Chicago, Louisiana	- 6
Eastern	NYC, Toronto, Massachusetts	- 5
Central European Summer Time	Berlin, Croatia, Denmark, Italy, Madrid, Paris, Vienna	+ 1
China Standard	Beijing, Hong Kong, Singapore	+ 7
Korean Standard	Seoul, Tokyo	+ 8
Australian Eastern	Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra	+ 9
New Zealand	Auckland, Wellington	+ 11

# Day 1: Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> September

Link: <https://shu.zoom.us/j/94604563752?pwd=WGpOSHlQc3E5SjhYNGdwRVRITm4rdzo9>

Meeting ID: 946 0456 3752

Passcode: SKWCC1

Time	Panel	Presenters (affiliation) & paper title
2:00–2:10pm	Welcome Remarks	<b>Chi-Yun Shin</b> (Sheffield Hallam University)
2:10–2:55pm	Keynote	<b>Chair: Chi-Yun Shin (SHU)</b> <b>Chungmoo Choi</b> (University of California, Irvine) Korean Women Doing Film Creating Heterotopia
3:00–4:00pm	Filmmaker Spotlight	<b>Introduction: Chi-Yun Shin (SHU)</b> <b>Translation: Hyun-Jeong Lee (Roc)</b> <b>Kangyu Garam</b>   강유가람 in conversation with <b>Jeanie Finlay</b>
4:15–5:00pm	Women & Crime	<b>Chair: Frances Gateward (Howard)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Kristina Horn</b> (UC Irvine) Biological Mothers and Vengeful Wives: The Representation of Maternity in <i>Lady Vengeance</i> and <i>The Truth Beneath</i></li> <li><b>Juyeon Bae</b> (Sogang University, Seoul, Korea) Korean women filmmaker's crime films: questioning the genre's conventions and exploring women's narratives</li> </ul>
5:15–6:00pm	Experimental Film Practices & Kaidu Club	<b>Chair: So Mayer (Raising Films)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Hannah Baek</b> (Harvard) The Director is Nude: Unpacking Kaidu Club's Experimental Filmmaking as a Radical Feminist First in South Korean Women's Cinema</li> <li><b>Sara Simić</b> (Central European University) The Legacy of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha and Han Ok-hee: Women Experimental and Independent Film Practices in Contemporary South Korea</li> </ul>

## Day 2: Friday 24<sup>th</sup> September

Link: <https://shu.zoom.us/j/91391217772?pwd=ejhSVXpHRDlYeEJ4cTl5TWkxWW1ZZz09>

Meeting ID: 913 9121 7772 Passcode: SKWCC2

Time	Panel	Presenter (affiliation) & paper title
10:00–10:45am	Keynote	<p><b>Chair: Chris Berry</b> (KCL)</p> <p><b>So Mayer</b> (Raising Films   Club des femmes) A Gull at My Door: New Narratives of Rape Culture, Abolition &amp; Survivorhood</p>
11:00–12:10pm	Documentary Practices	<p><b>Chair: Colette Balmain</b> (Kingston)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Yoojin Kim</b> (Kingston University) The Voices of Women in the 1980s Gwangju Democratic Movements</li> <li>• <b>Mi-Jeong Lee</b> (Université de Montréal, Canada) War-Zone Bodies: Aesthetic Rethinking of Labors and Lives of Women in Film <i>Murmuring Voice and Factory Complex</i></li> <li>• <b>Jihoon Kim</b> (Chung-ang University / Columbia) Activism Reloaded and Beyond: Korean Feminist Documentary Practices since the Mid-2010s</li> </ul>
12:10–1:00pm	(Lunch) Break	
1:00–1:45pm	Feminist Filmmaking – pioneers	<p><b>Chair: Jihoon Kim</b> (Chung-ang / Columbia)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Chris Berry</b> (King's College London) Parituh Feminist Film Collective and Even <i>Little Grass Has Its Own Name</i>: Towards an Archaeology</li> <li>• <b>Andrew David Jackson</b> (Monash, Australia) Korean Women's Participation in the 1990s Art Film Boom and Cinephilia</li> </ul>
2:00–3:00pm	Filmmaker Spotlight	<p><b>Introduction / Q&amp;A host: Chi-Yun Shin</b> (SHU) <b>Translation: Hyun-Jeong Lee</b> (Roc)</p> <p><b>Lee Kyung-mi</b>   이경미</p>

3:15–4:30pm	Women's Agency in Male-directed films	<p><b>Chair: So Mayer</b> (Raising Film)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Faye Mercier</b> (Amsterdam) The (Dis)Articulation of the Korean Woman: Contradictory Expressions of Women's Agency in <i>The Woman Who Ran</i> and Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982</li> <li>• <b>Zakir Hossain Raju</b> (Independent U, Bangladesh) Locating Women's Agency in <i>Bandhobi</i>: Voices from the Margins in inter-Asian Context</li> <li>• <b>Eun Ah Cho</b> (UC Irvine) Crossing Families: North Korean Women's Narratives and Close-ups of Faces in Jero Yun's <i>Madame B</i> (2016), <i>Beautiful Days</i> (2018), and <i>Fighters</i> (2021)</li> </ul>
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## Day 3: Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> September

**Link:** <https://shu.zoom.us/j/91067150442?pwd=QnlsYjROeFlYMHkoeGIDcjF3cktqQT09>

**Meeting ID:** 910 6715 0442

**Passcode:** SKWCC3

Time	Panel	Presenter (affiliation) & paper title
10:00–11:10am	Bodily Matters	<p><b>Chair: Chi-Yun Shin</b> (Sheffield Hallam)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Myoung-Sun Song</b> (Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) To Shave or Not to Shave: Gendered Politics of Hair in Contemporary South Korean Cinema</li> <li>• <b>Hee-Seung Irene Lee</b> (Auckland, New Zealand) <i>Halmeoni</i> Project: Ageing Femininity in Contemporary Korean Cinema</li> <li>• <b>Oriana Virone</b> (ULB, Belgium) Pregnancy, Female Subjectivities and Solidarities in contemporary South Korean cinema: A Closer look at <i>Madonna</i> (2015) and <i>More Than Family</i> (2020)</li> </ul>



11:15–12:25	Worlds of Their Own: Space & Place	<p><b>Chair: Myoung-Sun Song</b> (Illinois, Urbana-Champaign)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Jinhee Choi</b> (King’s College London) House of Their Own? Domesticity and Korean Women Directors’ Independent Films</li> <li>• <b>Hyun Seon Park</b> (Yonsei University, Seoul Korea) Weaving “worlds” in a House: <i>House of Hummingbird</i> (2018) and <i>Moving On</i> (2020)</li> <li>• <b>Gemma Ballard</b> (U of Sheffield) Place, Space and The Enigma of National Belonging in Jeong Jae-Eun’s <i>Take Care of My Cat</i> (2001) and Kim Bora’s <i>House of Hummingbird</i> (2018)</li> </ul>
12:25–1:00pm	<b>(Lunch) Break</b>	
1:00–1:45pm	Independent Films – newcomers	<p><b>Chair: Colette Balmain</b> (Kingston)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dave McCaig</b> (Lincoln) &amp; <b>Rachel Elizabeth Barraclough</b> (Lincoln) ‘Radicalizing the Walled Garden’: Female Ghostly Presence and Transitory Pleasures in the Poor Theatre of <i>Microhabitat</i> (2017)</li> <li>• <b>Eugene Kim</b> (Kingston) The 90s generation is coming: a new perspective to young generation women independent filmmakers in contemporary South Korea</li> </ul>
2:00–3:00pm	Filmmaker Spotlight	<p><b>Introduction / Q&amp;A host: Chungmoo Choi</b>  <b>Translation: Hyun-Jeong Lee (Roc)</b></p> <p><b>Yim Soon-rye   임순례</b></p>
3:15–4:30pm	Workshop: Teaching South Korean Women’s Cinema (overseas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chris Berry (facilitator)</li> <li>• Chi-Yun Shin (facilitator)</li> <li>• Chungmoo Choi</li> <li>• Colette Balmain</li> <li>• Zakir Hossain Raju</li> <li>• Jinhee Choi</li> </ul>
End of Conference		



# Keynotes



## CHUNGMOO CHOI

Professor of Korean Culture  
East Asian Studies Department  
University of California, Irvine

### Korean Women Doing Film Creating Heterotopia

In this talk I broadly apply Foucauldian notion of heterotopia to the alternative cultural space that women filmmakers have created within Korean society, especially in the neoliberal new millennium. I pay particular attention to three aspects of Korean women's cinema.

Philosophically, one of the noticeable characteristics is an active embrace of alterity and hospitality toward the precarious, which necessarily call for effective cinematic aesthetics. Yim Soon-rye's films, among others, exemplify such heterotopic aesthetics. Politically as well, Korean women's films, in particular, documentary films have made a significant contribution raising a broad range of feminist as well as communal issues thereby transforming affective space. The third aspect I discuss is the impact of a broad range of women professionals working in Korean film industry. Together these women filmmakers shape and tell stories from women's perspectives, which create and present very different types of female characters who are new and distinct from those in the films made by men.

**Chungmoo Choi** is professor of Korean studies at the University of California, Irvine where she regularly teaches courses on Korean women's cinema. In 1997 she had the very first Korean film course offered in the US and directed the US premier Korean film festival, *Post-colonial Classics of Korean Cinema* in which thirty eight feature and short films were screened. She is the author of *Healing Historical Trauma in South Korean Film and Literature* (Routledge, 2020) and contributed book chapters on Korean film that includes "Politics of Gender, Aestheticism, and Cultural Nationalism in *Sop'yŏnje* and the *Genealogy*" in *Im Kwon-taek, the Making of a Korean National Cinema* (2003).



## SO MAYER

Author  
Club des Femmes  
Raising Films

### **A Gull at My Door: New Narratives of Rape Culture, Abolition & Survivorhood**

Bracketing the transnational #MeToo movement, including its impact in Korean film and media, *Doheeya* (*A Girl at My Door*, July Jung, 2014) and *Gal-mae-gi* (*Gull*, Kim Mi-jo, 2020) are debut independent Korean films by women filmmakers that share a number of codes and concerns beyond and including gendered violence – and resistance thereto. The films operate simultaneously within (and against) the context of mainstream South Korean cinema's tropes – this paper's alternate title could be 'No More *Lady Vengeance*' – and a complex emergent twenty-first century independent transnational feminist cinema in which South Korean filmmakers navigate particular local contours that resonate with international trajectories. As Kangyou Garam's documentary *Candle Wave Feminists* (2017) presages and shows so vividly, South Korea's #MeToo moment in 2018 was contextualised and supported by the candle-wave groundswell that began its activism for equity, transparency and change on the streets. At the same time, the narrative of revealing gendered violence within the Korean screen industries not only drew international coverage to the related feminist movement because of its structural parallels with Hollywood revelations, but also offers an opportunity to compare and contrast the cinematic responses within the two industries

Both *A Girl at My Door*, which precedes the candle wave, and *Gull*, which emerges therefrom, differently resonate with the movement's search for social justice rather than individual vengeance. Although their protagonists Do-hee and Obok differ in characteristics – Do-hee is a teenage girl in coastal Suncheon; Obok is a market vendor in Seoul, a menopausal, married mother of adult daughters – both find their divergent circumstances are equally disempowering, and their narratives are shaped by their urgent drive to find responses to gendered violence and sexual assault that are bound to

neither the generic codes of the revenge film, nor the *policier*, criticising not only policing and carceral politics, but also – more or less explicitly – the generic codes that mirror and sustain them. Do-hee, in conjunction with (disgraced) lesbian police officer Young-nam, and Obok, in collaboration with her daughters, generate new narrative forms shaped instead by intimacy, revelation and change that reshape the heteronormative family.

*Gull* builds in the space opened by *A Girl at My Door* to stakes a feminist claim to define both language and symbolism, one that pushes back precisely against Korean men's rights activists' ludicrous and terrifying attempts to take control of the semantic field, as solidarity.kr reports.<sup>1</sup> Importantly both films structure their narratives around actions that engage everyday routes to survivorhood. Located through their socially and socio-economically marginalised characters, the films contrast with glossier Hollywood revenge fantasias such as *Promising Young Woman* (Emerald Fennell, 2020) and *Bombshell* (Jay Roach, 2019). Kitty Green's more daring and austere *The Assistant* (2019), like *Gull*, focuses on sexual violence as a labour issue, one linked to gentrification and social class. Through this observation, *Gull* finds a bold, practicable activist resolution that resonates with the images of protest in *Candle Wave Feminists*, even as it foregoes the collective resolutions of *Uri saengae choego-ui sungan* (*Forever the Moment*, Yim Soon-rye, 2008) and *Kateu* (*Cart*, Boo Ji-young, 2014) to hold onto the individuated, isolating experience sexual assault – and, at the same time, to show the power of an individual feminist awakening.

**So Mayer** is the author of *The Cinema of Sally Potter: A Politics of Love* (2009), *Political Animals: The New Feminist Cinema* (2015) and *A Nazi Word for a Nazi Thing* (2020), and a programme adviser on Women's Voices at LKFF (2017-2020). They write for *Sight & Sound* and *Film Quarterly*, work with queer feminist film curation collective Club Des Femmes and campaigning organisation Raising Films, and sit on the LUX board.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://twitter.com/solidarity\\_kr/status/1420792731572441096?s=20](https://twitter.com/solidarity_kr/status/1420792731572441096?s=20)

# Spotlight Filmmakers



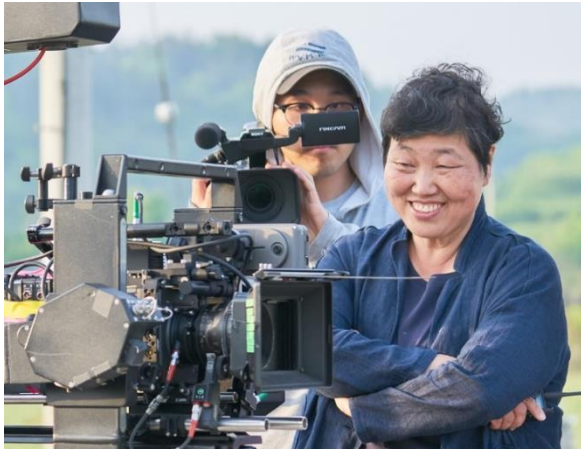
## KANGYU GARAM

- *My Father's House* (2011) – Best Korean Documentary Award at the DMZ international Documentary Film Festival
- *Itaewon* (2016)
- *Candle Wave Feminists* (2017)
- *Us, Day by Day* (2019) – Best Picture at the 2019 Seoul International Women's Film Festival

## LEE KYUNG-MI

- *Feel Good Story* (2003) - short
- *Sympathy for Lady Vengeance* (2005) – as scripter / Assistant director
- *Crush and Blush* (2008) – feature debut
- *The Truth Beneath* (2016)
- *Love Set* (2018) – segment in *Persona*
- *The School Nurse Files* (2020) – Netflix drama





## YIM SOON-RYE

- Out to the World (1993) - assistant director
- Promenade in the Rain (1994) short
- Three Friends (1996) – feature debut
- Waikiki Brothers (2001)
- The Weight of her (2003) short in *If You Were Me*
- Viva! Women Directors (2007) documentary
- Forever the Moment (2008)
- Fly, Penguin (2009)
- Rolling Home with a Bull (2010)
- South Bound (2013)
- Whistle Blower (2014)
- Little Forest (2018)
- The Point Men (upcoming)