The 30th Busan International Film Festival Holds Forum BIFF!

The Jiseok Film Institute of the 30th Busan International Film Festival will host Forum BIFF under the theme 'Revisiting the Path of Asian Cinema.'

JIA Zhang-Ke (China) and MIN Kyu-dong (Korea) to Deliver Keynote Addresses at Forum BIFF — A Platform for Reflection and Insight Through Cinema

The Jiseok Film Institute of the Busan International Film Festival will host Forum BIFF from September 18 (Thurs) to 21 (Sun) at the Busan Film & Audiovisual Industry Center. Held under the theme 'Revisiting the Path of Asian Cinema,' the forum will examine the current realities facing Asian cinema across industry, policy, criticism, technology, and education, while charting future trends. Notably, celebrated Chinese filmmaker Jia Zhang-Ke and Korean director Min Kyu-dong — renowned for expanding the spectrum of Korean cinema across genres and forms — will deliver keynote addresses to open the program. This year's Forum BIFF will feature four sections and nine sessions, offering an in-depth exploration of the present and future of the Asian film industry.

■ Section A. Exploring Solidarity in Asian Cinema – Diagnosing Two Diverging Issues

The first session, **'Asian Cinema: A New Chapter in Co-Productions'**, featuring Jia Zhangke as a keynote speaker, examines the current state of global collaboration between Asia and Europe through Japanese arthouse cinema, as well as the present situation of Korean cinema, which has shown a somewhat diminished presence at recent international film festivals. The section provides a concrete analysis of the issues that international

co-productions raise from both creative and industrial perspectives. Speakers include director Hayakawa Chie and producer Eiko Mizuno Gray of *Renoir*, selected for Competition at the Cannes Film Festival 2025 and screening in this year's 'A Window on Asian Cinema' section at BIFF; director Jang Kunjae of *Because I Hate Korea* (2024); and film critic Philip Cheah, who serves as a programming consultant for major festivals in China, Vietnam, and the Philippines.

The second session, **'Is OTT Empowering or Undermining Asian Cinema'**, will address the dual impacts of the rapid expansion of global streaming platforms. Producer Phil Tang, who spearheaded the Taiwanese Netflix original series *Copycat Killer* (2023), and film scholar Park Jinhee will deliver an in-depth analysis of the current landscape in Korea, Japan, Greater China, and Southeast Asia. In addition, Lee Hwabae, CEO with over 20 years of experience distributing and marketing more than 100 films, and Professor Hwang Seungheum, a legal scholar, will lead a critical discussion on the institutional challenges sparked by OTT.

■ Section B. Save the Korean Cinema! Revisiting 30 Years – The Growth and Shadows of Korean Cinema

The first session of Section B, opening with a keynote presentation by director Min Kyu-dong, **'Flashback to 1996: Gains and Losses of Korean Cinema'** explores the trajectory of the Korean cinema renaissance that began in earnest in the mid-1990s. Participants include Kim Sunghoon,

Director of Digital Contents Division at CINE21, and film critic Ahn Sihwan; producers Lee Joondong and Tcha Sungjai, who were central to the era's resurgence; Han Jaeduk, producer of *Revolver* (2024); and Professor Joo Youshin of Youngsan University. Together, they will reflect on structural crises and aesthetic limits underlying the past three decades and

explore the possibility of a new generation to follow Park Chan-wook and Bong Joon-ho amid today's challenges.

The following session, **'What Does Korean Independent Cinema Dream Of'**, will address the survival strategies of Korean independent cinema. Despite ongoing structural difficulties and limited production conditions, the session highlights the voices of independent filmmakers, whose creative breakthroughs and aesthetic achievements continue to sustain and redefine the landscape of Korean independent film.

■ Section C. The Future of Cinema: Tech Innovation and Film Education

This year, Forum BIFF will also feature co-hosted sessions in collaboration with Dongseo University, the Korean Film Archive (KOFA), and the School of Film, TV & Multimedia at Korea National University of Arts (K-Arts). The session **'Envisioning the Global Future of Visual Culture from Local Contexts'**, co-hosted with Dongseo University, will examine how regionally rooted visual culture — including animation, film, and design — creates new meaning on the global stage in the digital media era. In partnership with the Korean Film Archive, **'Re: booting Korean Cinema'** will assess the present and future of classic film remastering and sound restoration technologies, while also exploring the management and practical use of digital asset data, which has become integral to today's visual effects production. The joint session with K-Arts, **'Exploring the Present and Future of Film and Media Education in Asia'**, will evaluate the outcomes and challenges of collaborative film and media education initiatives between Korea and other Asian institutions, while presenting new directions for transformation. Notable panelists across the three sessions include director Kang Yunsung of the upcoming Disney+ series *Low Life*; director Erick Oh, whose short *Opera* (2020) was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film; and director Makbul Mubarak, whose debut *Autobiography* (2022) gained international acclaim at Venice and other major festivals.

■ **Section D. Mapping the Future for Korean Cinema**

Solidarity groups formed within the Korean film community will take the lead in diagnosing the current crisis in the film industry and exploring pathways for renewal. The Film Festival Policy Network will present the session **'Policy Shifts for the Future of the Film Festival Ecosystem'**, addressing the structural limitations of festival support policies and strategies for improvement. With reduced public funding and systemic constraints under the previous administration, the discussion will focus on how festivals can secure long-term sustainability. Panelists include journalist Lee Sunphil of OhMyNews and director Choi Changhwan of *Layover Hotel*. The Korean Filmmakers' Solidarity session, **'Endangered K-Movie: We Will Find a Way. We Always Have'**, will feature voices from across the industry, including director Oh Jung-min of *House of the Seasons* (2024), and Yang Junyoung, CEO of the OTT platform Kino Lights. Together, they will discuss strategies for overcoming the ongoing crisis and fostering collaborative growth. Both sessions aim not only to address the industry's immediate challenges but also to chart a roadmap for the next decade of Korean cinema.

This year's Forum BIFF will offer a multifaceted perspective on pressing issues in cinema, providing a platform for leading experts across Asia to share their insights. As a meaningful forum for dialogue on the direction of film in times of change, Forum BIFF 2025 will be open to the public free of charge without prior registration. It will be held exclusively as an in-person event.

[Forum BIFF 2025 Schedule]

Date	Time	Session	Host	Venue
9/18 (Thurs)	13:00 ~ 15:30	Forum BIFF 2025 Opening Ceremony		Conference Hall, 11F, Busan Film & Audiovisual Industry Center
		[Section B] Save the Korean Cinema! [Session 1] Flashback to 1996: Gains and Losses of Korean Cinema		
	16:30 ~ 18:30	[Section A] Exploring Solidarity in Asian Cinema [Session 1] Asian Cinema: A New Chapter in Co-Productions		
9/19 (Fri)	10:00 ~ 12:30	[Section C] The Future of Cinema: Tech Innovation and Film Education [Session 1] Re: Booting Korean Cinema	Co-Host: Korean Film Archive	
	13:30 ~ 16:30	[Section C] The Future of Cinema: Tech Innovation and Film Education [Session 2] Envisioning the Global Future of Visual Culture from Local Contexts	Co-Host: Dongseo University	
	17:00 ~ 19:00	[Section D] Mapping the Future of Korean Cinema	Host: Film Festival Policy Network	

		[Session 1] Policy Shifts for the Future of the Film Festival Ecosystem		
9/20 (Sat)	10:30 ~ 12:30	[Section A] Exploring Solidarity in Asian Cinema [Session 2] Is OTT Empowering or Undermining Asian Cinema		
	14:00 ~ 17:00	[Section C] The Future of Cinema: Tech Innovation and Film Education [Session 3] Exploring the Present and Future of Film and Media Education in Asia	Co-Host: School of Film, TV & Multimedia at Korea National University of Arts	
9/21 (Sun)	13:00 ~ 15:30	[Section D] Mapping the Future of Korean Cinema [Session 2] Endangered K-Movie: We Will Find a Way. We Always Have	Host: Korean Filmmakers' Solidarity (KOFISO)	
	16:00 ~ 18:30	[Section B] Save the Korean Cinema! [Session 2] What Does Korean Independent Cinema Dream Of		

▶ The 30th Busan International Film Festival: Sep 17 (Wed) – Sep 26 (Fri)

▶ The 20th Asian Contents & Film Market: Sep 20 (Sat) – Sep 23 (Tue)