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The South Korean Film Renaissance: Local Hitmakers, Global Provocateurs (Wesleyan Film)



Synopsis

For the past decade, the Korean film industry has enjoyed a renaissance. With innovative storytelling and visceral effects, Korean films not only have been commercially viable in the domestic and regional markets but also have appealed to cinephiles everywhere on the international festival circuit. This book provides both an industrial and an aesthetic account of how the Korean film industry managed to turn an economic crisis—triggered in part by globalizing processes in the world film industry—into a fiscal and cultural boom. Jinhee Choi examines the ways in which Korean film production companies, backed by affluent corporations and venture capitalists, concocted a variety of winning production trends. Through close analyses of key films, Choi demonstrates how contemporary Korean cinema portrays issues immediate to its own Korean audiences while incorporating the transnational aesthetics of Hollywood and other national cinemas such as Hong Kong and Japan. Appendices include data on box office rankings, numbers of films produced and released, market shares, and film festival showings.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Here is an excellent book to add to the too-short shelf of work on the cinema of South Korea, which of late has produced some excellent films. Deftly illustrated with frame blowups, and including useful appendixes charting box-office hits, film production overall in South Korea, and award-winning films, Choi’s book provides an energetic, accessible overview of the Korean cinema as a popular art form. An excellent choice as either a course text or a library

resource, this book fills a particular niche. Highly recommended (for) all readers. W.W. Dixon, Choice "Choi's book does admirably what it sets out to do: to explain, from a theoretically critical, technical/aesthetic point of view, how Korean cinema modernized itself in the face of many challenges, both domestic and international." Gord Sellar, The Japan Times "South Korean Film Renaissance: Local Hit Makers, Global Provocateurs, written by Choi Jin-hee in English probes how the Korean film industry turned an economic crisis into a cinematic renaissance. The book gives an exact historical chronicled assessment of the Korean film industry." Chung Ah-young, The Korea Times "It's a well-rounded examination that knits together the many filmic strands of the last two decades to construct a thesis on how the 'renaissance' occurred." James Havis & Borah Chung, Cineaste "An earnest focus on the fundamentals of the film industry's growth in the past decade. Choi's real strengths shine in the first pages of each chapter, which lucidly describe the domestic and sometimes foreign triumphs of various cycles and forms, and which also suggest the particularities and innovations that differentiate Korean products from the global conventions from which they draw." This detailed comparative perspective will prove useful for students of Korean film for the way they flesh out the body of national cinema with concrete and specific detail. Steven Chung, Journal of Intercultural Studies "Jinhee Choi's book contains information and insights that simply cannot be found elsewhere. It represents a major new contribution to the field, and has obvious value to researchers in the field, and to teachers, for use as a textbook on undergraduate Korean cinema courses." Daniel Martin, Film and Television Studies

"Not all blockbusters come from Hollywood. For a decade South Korea has created films that galvanize a local audience, regional audiences, film festivals, and the European and North American multiplexes. In this discerning study, Jinhee Choi reveals in fascinating detail how a small local cinema became a global powerhouse." (David Bordwell, University of Wisconsin-Madison) "This is the book we've all been waiting for on the unique success story that is the New Korean Cinema. Choi provides a thorough and engaging account of the film industry and how it has transformed narrative and style in genres ranging from gangster films to high school films, horror, and romance." (Chris Berry, Goldsmiths, University of London)

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