

# Animal Town

A Film by JEON Kyu-hwan

**57<sup>th</sup> San Sebastian International Film Festival - New Directors Competition**

**11<sup>th</sup> Osian's Cinefan – In Dialogue**

**20<sup>th</sup> Stockholm International Film Festival – Asian Image**

**13<sup>th</sup> Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival– Eastern Sunrise**

**16<sup>th</sup> Vesoul Int'l Film Festival De Asie – Main Competition**

**International Jury Special**

**NETPAC Award**

**International Jury Special** a powerful film with a topic directed with strength and calm.

**NETPAC Award** for its frank representation of the horrors in modern urban lives,  
with an experimental and sincere direction and actors' daring actors performance.

**19<sup>th</sup> Black Movie Geneva – Official Selection**

**Le Prix du Public : The Audience Award**

**11<sup>th</sup> Jeonju International Film Festival – Official Selection (Korea)**

**4<sup>th</sup> Cinema Digital Seoul – Butterfly Competition (Korea)**

**Movie Collage Award**

**4<sup>th</sup> Chungmuro International Film Festival –Official Selection (Korea)**

**34<sup>th</sup> Sao Paulo International Film Festival – International Perspective**

**28<sup>th</sup> Torino Film Festival – Official Selection**



**97min South Korea 2009 HD Color 1.85:1 Stereo**

In Korean with English subtitles

**Treefilm (South Korea) and Lane Street Pictures (USA)**

Producer CHOI Miae / Reuben LIM

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<http://cafe.naver.com/mozarttown>

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# Comments and Feedback

Kyu-hwan JEON has a **very unique voice**.

It's very powerful, and people need to experience this story! **Amazing!**

- **Asger Hussain** Producer of <Precious>  
Film by Lee Daniels / Executive Producer Oprah Winfrey

It was a pleasure to meet all of you and have your film in the competition.

Your film is **very fantastic**.

- **Roberto Cueto** San Sebastian IFF Programmer

Kyu-hwan JEON **has a talent**. Keep going!

- **Wan Jen** President Jury at 16<sup>th</sup> Vesoul IFF de Asie

**I believe in Kyu-hwan's directorial vision and look forward to seeing next projects.**

- **Roya Rastegar** Tribeca FF Programmer

It was well made and some of it was very well shot - with a nice feel for the light.

It was quite clever and well acted (the child molester guy was very good).

- **Roger Garcia** Consultant of San Francisco IFF and Udine Far East, Producer

# CAST AND CREW

## PRINCIPLE CAST

### Actor

OH Seong Cheul ..... LEE Jun-hyeok

KIM Hyeong Do ..... OH Seong-tae

## CREW

Writer, Director ..... JEON Kyu-hwan

Producer ..... CHOI Mi-ae / Reuben LIM

Director of Photography..... KIM Jin-kyung

Lighting Designer ..... LEE Seung-won

Editor ..... HAN Jong-hoon / PARK Hae-o

Production Design ..... CHO Eun-hee

Realized with the financial support of



**SOUL OF ASIA Seoul Metropolitan Government**

and



**SEOUL FILM COMMISSION Seoul Film Commission**

# SYNOPSIS

## Full Version

SEONGCHEUL OH is a man out of parole but the tracker on his ankle reminds him that he is otherwise. He wants to be a changed man. He struggles with his inner demons by living a harsh life as a manual laborer, living in a dilapidated low rise apartment and continually going to see his psychiatrist. However, the fragile balance of his equilibrium is tested when he loses his construction job and he must work as a cab driver. He must truly test his desire to live as a member of society.

HYEONGDO KIM is a broken man. He is a family man that is burdened with the experience of a parents' worst nightmare. He goes through the motions of life until one day he sees Seongcheul by coincidence. The desire to have his revenge consumes him, and when he sees Seongcheul drawn to a nine year old girl he becomes obsessed with stopping him.

In Hyeongdo's close surveillance of Seongcheul, his fate falls into his hands when he stumbles upon the scene of Seongcheul's body struggling on a noose.

## Short Version

Oh Seongcheul is a man out of parole but the tracker on his ankle reminds him that he is otherwise. He struggles with his inner demons by living a harsh life as a manual laborer, and continually going to see his psychiatrist. Kim Hyeongdo is a broken man. He is a family man that is burdened with the experience of a parents' worst nightmare. He goes through the motions of life until one day he sees Seongcheul by coincidence.

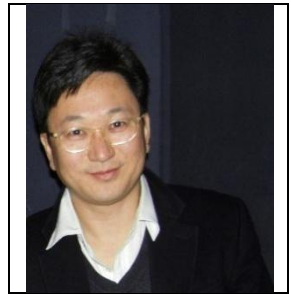
# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Some people hurt others and others get hurt.  
Everyone turns a blind eye to the hurt around them as we live in a beast-like city.

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

### JEON Kyu-hwan // Director, Screenwriter

Up and coming director JEON Kyu-Hwan received favorable reviews for his debut film <**Mozart Town**>(2008). JEON's debut work is certainly his own unique vision as it received widespread recognition at Osian's Cinefan, Tokyo Int'l Film Festival, Tallinn Black Nights, Philadelphia IFF in Asia, Europe and North America. He then directed his second film, Town Series 2 <**Animal Town**> (2009) which received wonderful reviews from critics and journalists at San Sebastian as follows: "*<Animal Town> has a*



*very powerful cinematographic density, A surprising capacity of the script and the images that capture and intrigue the audience, A probing look in portraying the urban landscapes and characters, the audience faces something – on which they can bet double – they have never seen in the western films."* It has since premiered at Stockholm IFF, Osian's Cinefan, Tallinn Black Nights, Jeonju IFF, CinDi Seoul FF, Chungmuro Int'l FF and won the awards, **International Jury Special, NETPAC Award** and **the Audience Award** at Vesoul Int'l FF de Asie and Black Movie Geneva. Animal Town has been invited from the Int'l Film Festival until now. JEON has been a critical success both at home and abroad for "**he has shown a capacity as a master of Cinematic Arts.**" Recently, he directed Town Series 3 <**Dance Town**> which was selected at JPP work in Progress. Currently, JEON is working on his fourth film, <**The Weight**>. He also has new global projects including <**Varanasi**>, <**Waves**>, and <**Jive**>.

FILMOGRAPHY (As a Screenwriter and Director)

**2008 Mozart Town 2009 Animal Town 2010 Dance Town**

### CHOI Mi-ae // CEO and Producer

Korean-born producer CHOI Mi-ae majored in Film and Theatre at The Dongguk University in Seoul and earned an MA degree in Film & Theatre at The postgraduate School of the Dongguk of Seoul. *A Master's Thesis subject : A study on Creative Communication Methods of Actors and Directors for Creating Role (Focusing on Director Lee Myung-se / Hong Sang-soo / Lee Chang-dong)* She was a writing team of "Actor Training" for her acting teacher Ahn Min-soo's book release. She taught Acting at



Dongguk University (DUCSI) and Seoul Art College (SAC). She has been working in Treefilm since 2007 and has produced Town Trilogy as MOZART TOWN (2008), ANIMAL TOWN (2009) and DANCE TOWN (2010). She Has made notable achievements such as a number of award-winning films with high praises. And now, she is going on a new global project of **Weight, Varanasi, Waves** and **Jive**. It will be co-production with abroad.

## ABOUT THE COMPANY – Treefilm



Treefilm was established by producer CHOI Mi-ae and director JEON Kyu-hwan in 2007 as film production company in South Korea. To realize its ambitious vision of being the global company. In 2008, The first feature **Mozart Town** was produced with all over the world as the target audience. It had been shown to the world wide audience through the International Film Festival as **10th Osian's Cinefan, 21st Tokyo International Film Festival, 12th Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival and Philadelphia Film Festival**. And it premiered of Main Competition with world famous directors as Michael Winterbottom <GENOVA>, Paolo Sorrentino <IL DIVO>, Olivier Assayas <SUMMER HOURS>, etc.

And we made the second film, Town Series 2 **Animal Town**. It was filmed on 2009 and co-production with Lane Street Pictures in USA. It realized with the financial support of Seoul Metropolitan Government and Seoul Film Commission. It had screened for **the Kutxa - New Directors at the 57th San Sebastian as a world premiere**. It received rare reviews by the critics and journalists and won the prize as **International Jury Special, NETPAC Award, The Audience award and Movie Collage Award**. It premiered at Stockholm, Osian's Cinefan, Tallinn Black Nights, Vesoul IFF de Asie, Black Movie Geneva, Jeonju IFF, Cinema Digital Seoul, Chungmuro IFF and will be screened at Sao Paulo Int'l FF and Torino FF in Europe, Asia and South America.

And now, we are editing of Town Series 3 **Dance Town** about the story in the lives of a female North Korean defector in South Korea. It was selected by Work In Progress JPP finals at Jeonju IFF.

**Mozart Town, Animal Town and Dance Town** is **Town Trilogy** about the town people's sadness, hurt and longing by director JEON Kyu-hwan.

We are going on our 4<sup>th</sup> film, global project **The Weight**. It is selected IT PROJECT of NAFF at Puchon IFF. It will be co-production with abroad.

And also, we have a global projects, **Varanasi, Waves and Jive...**

Diario Visco (Basque Daily News) Sep 25 2009

Written by **Begona del Teso**, one of the most renowned Critics of Basque Country. She has a cool head and is well-known for her sharp criticism.



ANIMAL TOWN received rave reviews from critics and filmmakers at 57th San Sebastian International film festival. This film got favorable reviews as the best film of 290 films which was screened in San Sebastian. Dario Visco (Basque Daily News) has been distributed all over the Basque Country.

### “The tree of the hanged”

Almost at the end of the movie (a few scenes were left yet, one of these scenes. **The scene that closes the second production of this Korean director is impressive, astounding, defining and has an incredible cinematographic efficiency**), the audience faces something – on which they can bet double – they have never seen in the western films : the fight between a hanged man and the other man who came to reassure his death, or maybe to save him from the suicide attempt so that he could extend his horrible existence a bit longer.

**ANIMAL TOWN has a very powerful cinematographic density. A surprising capacity of the script and the images that capture and intrigue the audience. A probing look in portraying the urban landscapes and characters.** This city, where buildings get demolished, constructions get stopped, the workers don't get paid, and the small businessmen have to decide which one of the only two workers left should go, is described with a subtle insight. Like the silhouette of the two characters, carried out by the minimal details which convert the audience into the accomplices of the crime scene when they catch the intentions. An example : the man on probation puts on his socks every time someone visits his cold pit hole. Why? Simply to avoid someone seeing the detector on his ankle. Nobody, except the prostitute, who wasn't able to make him reach an orgasm...

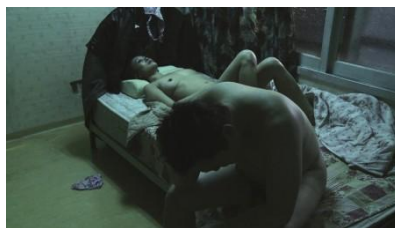
**There's something honestly powerful in ANIMAL TOWN.** Up to the TV news in the background : this history of a wild pig that escaped from the woods and entered the hostility of the city, the news that weighs more and more as the movie progresses. **In a certain way, it's a very hypnotic film. Little by little it submerges the audience. In the beginning they refuse it. Then they get dragged deep into the images. Finally, they cheer it.**

## Review by Benoît Thevenin - on the French Website, **Laterna Magika**

<http://laternamagika.wordpress.com/2010/01/31/animal-town-de-jeon-kyu-hwan/>

Portraits croisés de deux âmes égarées dans la Corée moderne, **Animal Town** constitue le second volet d'une trilogie consacrée à la ville, après **Mozart Town** en 2008, et réalisé par le cinéaste coréen Jeon Kyu-hwan.

La ville est effectivement un cadre important dans cette histoire. Elle est en mutation (les échafaudages sont omniprésents) mais les chantiers sont à l'arrêt, conséquence de la crise économique. La ville est à l'image des deux personnages principaux, deux êtres en souffrance dont on ne sait ni très bien ce qui les relie, ni très bien ce qui les affecte. Ils sont eux aussi dans un état intermédiaire, proche de basculer vers quelque chose, sans que l'on sache quoi... Seongcheul est manoeuvre sur un de ces chantiers arrêtés. Il vit dans un tout petit studio dans un immeuble qui doit être rasé sitôt la reprise des travaux. Seongchul est dans une position on-ne-peut plus précaire et incertaine. Le personnage apparaît au début du récit en train de tenter de faire l'amour à une femme apparemment plus âgée que lui. Il est impuissant, n'y arrive pas, et celle qui est en fait une prostituée le quitte. La scène est filmée dans un réalisme très cru. On découvre aussi que Seongcheul porte un bracelet électronique à la cheville. Hyeongdo Kim est lui un homme en errance, patron d'une petite entreprise et obligé de licencier un employé à cause du contexte économique. La police le trouve un jour pour lui apprendre que la moto dont il est le propriétaire a été retrouvée sur les lieux d'un accident. Le voleur, responsable du drame, est décédé.



Jeon Kyu-hwan construit son récit par très petites touches, dessine les portraits parallèles de ces deux personnages et, même si l'on se doute que leurs destins finiront par coïncider, on n'imagine pas très bien comment. A la suite d'un entretien avec un psychiatre, on apprend que Seongcheul a été coupable d'agression sexuelle envers un enfant. Cette révélation intervient tôt dans le récit et va contaminer immédiatement l'ambiance. Une petite fille croise tous les jours la route de Seongcheul, présentant une proie facile pour le jeune homme dont on voit bien qu'il lutte contre ses démons. La menace autour de la petite fille est bien réelle et le cinéaste réussit parfaitement à instaurer une véritable paranoïa, par petites touches encore. Le titre se justifie pleinement car Jeon Kyu-hwan inscrit son film dans le registre de la pulsion, avec tout ce qu'elle peut connoter de malsain et d'inquiétant. Dans une scène, Seongcheul



semble suivre une enfant, on a comme l'impression qu'il est proche du passage à l'acte, d'autant qu'il n'a plus rien à perdre depuis que sa vie a basculé encore du mauvais côté pour une autre mauvaise raison, une autre mauvaise pulsion. Ce qui rassure le spectateur dans cette scène, c'est l'apparition au fond du cadre d'un personnage tiers, indépendant du récit, qui pourra potentiellement intervenir. La tension est alors forte mais le cinéaste la désamorce lui-même, et l'on saisit là que Seongcheul n'était pas à ce moment précis sur le point de commettre encore l'irréparable.



Seongcheul a cependant commis une faute précédemment, on l'a dit. Le personnage perd ses nerfs dans une altercation avec une jeune femme alors qu'il est maintenant chauffeur de taxi. Cette scène justifie également le titre, rend compte de l'influence de la ville sur les comportements. Seongcheul, qui débute dans son nouveau job, perd le bon chemin, ce qui provoque la crispation de sa cliente, et un déchaînement pulsionnel des deux personnages dans la voiture.

Dans sa note d'intention, Jeon Kyu-hwan explique que « *certaines personnes font du mal à d'autres, et certaines en souffrent. Tous les gens font semblant d'ignorer la souffrance autour d'eux car nous vivons dans une ville bestiale* ». **Le cinéaste rend plutôt bien compte de cette idée. Le film est excellentement construit, captivant, étrange, soit les signes d'une véritable maîtrise. Animal Town distille une ambiance trouble et malsaine, pas forcément facile à appréhender tant le caractère incertain de tout ce qui se joue est bien présent. On est plongé dans un état de latence, dans un univers en construction mais déjà corrompu et dont il n'est vraiment pas facile de s'extraire. Les deux anti-héros peuvent en témoigner.**

**ANIMAL TOWN is well constructed, captivate an audience, is very a mysterious... In other words, Director JEON has shown a capacity as a master of Cinematic Arts.**

Benoît Thevenin (Film Critic)

Film Note by **Benoît Thevenin**



**Animal Town** - Note pour ce film : ★★★★★

Réalisé par **Jeon Kyu-hwan**

Avec Lee Jun-hyeok, Oh Seong-tae, ...

Année de production : 2009

Another Film Note by **Benoît Thevenin**

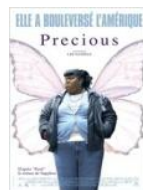


**Dream** - Note pour ce film : ★☆☆☆☆

Réalisé par **Kim Ki-duk**

Avec Jô Odagiri, Lee Na-young, Odagiri Joe

Année de production : 2008



**Precious** - Note pour ce film : ★★★★★

Réalisé par **Lee Daniels**

Avec Gabourey Sidibe, Paula Patton, Maria Carrey

Année de production : 2009



**Cannes 2009 Competition**

**Le Ruban blanc** - Note pour ce film : ★★★★★

Réalisé par **Michael Haneke**

Avec Ulrich Tukur, Susanne Lothar, Burghart Klaussner Avec Jeon Do-youn, Lee Jung-jae

Année de production : 2008



**Cannes 2010 Competition**

**The Housemaid** - Note pour ce film : ★★★★★

Réalisé par **Im Sangsoo**

Avec Jeon Do-youn, Lee Jung-jae

Année de production : 2009

Review by **Darcy Paquet** (Film Critic as the Variety, Cine21, Korean Films)



Two Characters stand at the center of *Animal Town*, the second feature by **up-and-coming director Jeon Kyu-hwan**. Seong-cheol is an ex-convict living with a tracker on his ankle who struggles to overcome his inner demons and lead a normal life. Hyeong-do is an emotionally broken man whose family has been torn apart by Seong-cheol's crime. One of surprising things about this film is that the audience's sympathies are more naturally drawn to Seong-cheol, as he visits his psychiatrist's office, struggles to earn a living wage, and remains stubbornly in his apartment which is slated for destruction. However, the potential for violence remains inside him, and as economic pressures start to weigh him down, his ability to repress his inner urges is weakened. **Shot in just two weeks on a tiny budget, *Animal Town* is a forceful work that draws its strength from a direct, unadorned filmmaking style and a remarkable performance from lead actor Lee Jun-hyeok. It is a film that displays a fervent sympathy towards its protagonists, and is not afraid to make its audience uncomfortable.**

**57th San Sebastian International Film Festival**



포토콜



인터뷰 및 QnA



with Jim Jarmusch



세계적인 거장  
집자무쉬 감독님과



영화제 폐막식 레드카펫 관객들과 즐거운시간

with Laurent Cantet

심사위원이자  
세계적인 감독들  
**Hana-Samlra  
Makhmalbaf**

<The Class>로  
칸느 영화제에서  
황금종려상을 수상했던  
도랑강태 감독님과

