

NOTE OF INTENTION

The first component is a documentary about the funeral of the director's maternal grandmother. Lee was raised by her grandmother in the countryside until the age of seven. Her close relationship, the bond they shared as women is highlighted in the film as she makes the trip back to the village to pay her final respects to the woman who meant so much to her.

The second component focuses on the contrasting viewpoints regarding life and death, time and the ephemeral nature of things between the director and the fictional male character of Sangwoo. While the director sees the importance and meaning behind all of her grandmother's possessions, Sang-woo does not. He wants to clean up and go; to him, there is little point in making time stand still and holding onto the past. Their incongruous conversations are scattered throughout the film.

The third component is the director's own self-reflexive journey which brings together the two previous components so that they culminate in the director's final experience. In this part, the director makes a pilgrimage to Ululu in the center of Australia where she ponders on a male-oriented view of God of the Western world and contrasts it to the female-oriented "urination over the world" mythology of Korea. This theme is subtly weaved like a thread throughout the film.

Korea is still heavily influenced by Confucian culture which has traditionally oppressed women. The director hopes to use her role as a female filmmaker to examine and juxtapose global myths and symbols with traditional Korean ones, to create a new aesthetic – coexisting and unforgotten that transcends traditional barriers and constructs.

SYNOPSIS

Hyun-jung visits the house of her late maternal grandmother in Seo-chun after the funeral. There, while looking at old family photographs, she ponders on the past. Hyun-jung tries to capture the memory and time but her efforts are futile as time cannot be captured.

The house is the symbol of her childhood and the joy she felt while living there with her grandmother. Thus, her grandmother's death is beyond her comprehension and her logical understanding. The funeral serves an embodiment for immense sorrow, life-changing resolutions; it serves as a catalyst for Hyun-jung to confront the reality of the rawness of Korea and experience the mysterious and cosmic coincidence that will allow her to transcend personal beliefs - Christianity, Korean Confucian culture and Shamanism.

BIOGRAPHY

Director Hyun-jung Lee once thought her future would be in music. At one point, she considered a career in radio but later changed to television. Lee is a former anchorwoman for the news channel YTN. She studied Christian Theology at Ewha University but has harbored a passion for film for many years. She decided to continue her studies in film and hopes to grow and evolve further as a filmmaker.

SHORT VERSION OF

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‘Virgin Forest’ is comprised of three components, woven together like a tapestry.

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FILMOGRAPHY

STORY OF NEARLY EVERYTHING (7’28”) 2010

MYUNG JI (3’10”), 2011

VIRGIN FOREST is the first feature film.