

Interview: Season Seven Opening Night Film for Chicago's Asian Pop-Up Cinema is 'Adulthood'

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CHICAGO – It's another opening and another show, as Season Seven of Chicago's Asian Pop-Up Cinema (APUC) starts its run of showcase films, beginning with South Korea's "Adulthood" on Wednesday, September 12th, 2018. Director Kim In-seon and lead actress Lee Jae-in of "Adulthood" will appear on behalf of the film at the screening, which begins at 7pm at the AMC River East 21 theatre. For details and tickets, [click here](#). [25]

"Adulthood" is the story of Kyung-Un (Lee Jae-in), a 14-year-old girl who meets her uncle Jae-Min (Um Tae-Goo) for the first time at the funeral of her father (and his brother). The attention the uncle gives her at first is confusing, but his motive was to steal her insurance money to pay off a loan shark. When Kyung-Un finds out, she has no recourse but to join her uncle in a con job, designed to romance and then rip off a lonely pharmacist named Jum-Lee (Seo Jung-yeon). Somehow, these three souls learn more than they bargained for in this situation, and this emotional film is a simple story of unexpected redemption.



Lee Jae-in (left) and Um Tae-Goo in 'Adulthood'

Photo credit: AsianPopUpCinema.org

Season Seven of APUC, which runs from September 12th through November 14th, 2018, and will highlight films from South Korea, the Philippines, China, Thailand, India, Hong Kong, Japan, Tibet, Vietnam and Taiwan. The main feature film presentations will occur at the AMC River East 21 in downtown Chicago, with other various locations for special events, in addition to a number of free screenings.

In anticipation of the Season Seven Opening Night of APUC, HollywoodChicago.com spoke to director Kim In-seon and actress Lee Jae-in, and the two women collaborators talked about, through an interpreter, the process of creating the special relationships in the film.

HollywoodChicago.com: Kim, in writing the screenplay and piecing together the story, which of the characters did you most identify with, and how do you think that identity came out in the story?

Kim In-seon: At first, I connected to the character of Jae-Min, the uncle trying to find himself as an adult in his thirties... despite his age, he acted immature, and at that time it felt like me. [laughs] But as I was finishing the film, I was more connected to the younger character of Kyung-Un, because what she was going through was how I felt when I was a teenager, which was a loneliness and a desire to become an adult as quickly as possible.

HollywoodChicago.com: Jae, when you first read the script, what did you immediately understand about your character of Kyung-Un that made you know that you could portray her?

Lee Jae-in: We are of similar age as teenagers, and I understood her feeling of loneliness. All of the expressions of her emotions came through her feeling of being alone, and I knew I could portray that side of her.

HollywoodChicago.com: Kim, one of the underlying stories in the film is the difficulties of South Korean women to trust men. But what difficulty did you most want to portray in the relationship of the pharmacist Jum-Lee to the uncle Jae-Min?

Kim In-seon: More than a general distrust for men, I was focusing on the specific situation that Jum-Lee was facing... she was in her late forties, single and a professional. Her relationship options were limited, and she was finding that the attitude of men she was encountering was not serious. In that process she felt isolated, and it was hard for her to stay open to a possibility of connection.

What made the difference in the way Jae-Min approached her is that he had a daughter [part of the con was that Kyung-Un pretended to be Jae-Min's daughter], and that is what opened Jum-Lee to the possibility of taking a chance again in that relationship. It was really about trusting her emotions and where she was in life.



On the Road for the Niece and Uncle in 'Adulthood'

Photo credit: AsianPopUpCinema.org

HollywoodChicago.com: What part of the process while doing the film did you feel comfortable with your co-star Tae-Goo Um, and what part of his portrayal of the uncle Jae-Min did you most connect to?

Lee Jae-in: When I first met Tae-Goo, it felt awkward, but as we went through the stages of filmmaking he was incredibly nice and very funny. He also taught me a lot about acting, especially in detailed facial expressions.

His personality was so different than the Jae-Min character he was portraying, so I was amazed at times how well he was able to become the role. I believe that between Jae-Min and my character, they were fulfilling the emotional things that each were missing, and filling the void that

they felt.

HollywoodChicago.com: Kim, the three main characters got a bit of redemption by the end of the film. Which of the characters do you believe most benefited by this redemption?

Kim In-seon: My intent was not to show any dramatic changes in the lives of those characters, but only a hint of change by the end. For example, Jae-Min slowly came out of his immaturity and started realizing his responsibilities, so there was growth there. With Kyung-Un it was the realization that someone could love and care about her again, which gave her self confidence. I didn't see much growth in the Jum-Lee character, except to connect with Kyung-Un as a friend.

HollywoodChicago.com: How are women filmmakers treated in South Korea? Do you think there is opportunity there if you make successful films, or do you believe men are given better chances to succeed or try again than women?



Lee Jae-in and Kim In-seon in Chicago for 'Adulthood'
Photo credit: AsianPopUpCinema.org

Kim In-seon: Before I got the opportunity to do this feature film, I started with three short films. At short film festivals in South Korea, the percentage of women filmmakers participating is around 70 percent. But when it comes to making either independent or commercial feature films, it's almost impossible for women to get an opportunity. And as you said in the question, it is men that are more likely to get a second chance to make a film if the first one doesn't make money. For women, that second chance doesn't exist.

The type of films available for women to direct is also very limited. The commercial films are mostly in the thriller and action genre, and those are almost all directed by men. It's frustrating for me, but the only way to change things within is to keep doing the work and putting it out there.

HollywoodChicago.com: Finally, for both of you. As Jae-Min and Kyung-Un walk down a new road in their relationship, what do you think is the most important things they learned in their journey of coming together?

Kim In-seon: To me, it was about really spending time with a person and getting to know them, and that leads to becoming a better person. Jae-Min and Kyung-Un learn a lot about each other and themselves in the time they spend together, and in that way become better people through that relationship.

Lee Jae-in: The character of Kyung-Un was seriously alone at the beginning of the film, and had learned to adapt to that loneliness. Her and Jae-Min adapted to each other, and for the first time in a long time she depended on someone, and learned to trust a togetherness in a relationship again. The uncle and the niece, in the end, had similar personalities, and I think they'll continue to develop and cherish those similarities, and continue to be more honest as their lives go on.

Opening Night of Season Seven of the Asian Pop-Up Cinema is "Adulthood" on September 12th, 2018, at the AMC River East 21, 322 East Illinois Street, Chicago. Director Kim In-seon and lead actress Lee Jae-in will make an appearance on behalf of the film. For a complete overview Chicago's Asian Pop-Up Cinema, [click here](#). [26]



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