

FAR EAST
FILM
FESTIVAL
21

26 April/4 May 2019 – Udine – Teatro Nuovo and Visionario

FAR EAST FILM FESTIVAL 21

BIRTHDAY

Korean director Lee Jong-un's powerful bourgeois drama will be the film that opens FEFF 21.

Five years after the Sewol ferry disaster, the film that the whole of Korea is waiting for.

Press release for the 28th of March 2019
For immediate release

UDINE – 16 April 2014. South Korea. The Sewol ferry, which is travelling from the port of Incheon to the island of Jeju, lists fatally to one side and sinks, killing more than 300 passengers. They are almost all teenagers on a school trip. It is an immense tragedy. The tragedy of a nation and of hundreds of families. And it is precisely this anatomy of pain and experience of public and private mourning that is the focus of the narrative power of ***Birthday***: the film that **the whole of Korea is waiting for** and the film chosen by the **Far East Film Festival** to officially open its twenty-first edition on **Friday the 26th April**.

Produced by **Lee Chang-dong**, who has given us masterpieces like *Poetry* and *Burning*, and directed by young **Lee Jong-un**, who was *Poetry*'s assistant director, ***Birthday*** will be released in Korean cinemas on the 3rd of April before coming straight to Udine (International Festival Premiere). The **2014 FEFF** was dedicated to the memory of the Sewol's victims and, exactly five years after the tragedy, **FEFF 2019** will once again pay homage to Korea and to that human, political and social wound which has been so hard to heal.

In order to recount the dynamics of a family that lost its eldest son on the Sewol, **Lee Jong-un** constructs an uncompromising narrative: suffering speaks the language of petit-bourgeois everyday life, of normality without normality, and has no room for facile cinematographic manipulation. There is no place for rhetoric, nor for sentimentality. ***Birthday***, which finds a perfect protagonist in the beautiful **Jeon Do-yeon**, is simply (and powerfully) this: two parents who are no longer able to communicate with each other, a daughter to love despite everything, and an absence to learn to accept. The same absence which an entire country must also try to come to terms with.

Press Office / Far East Film Festival 21

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