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KCCLA Presents “CineNext: Stories from KAFA” — A Special Screening Showcase of Emerging Korean Filmmakers Recognized by International Film Festivals

- ▶ Event Title: CineNext: Stories from KAFA
- ▶ Date: December 9th, 6:30 PM, December 10th, 7 PM
- ▶ Venue: Korean Cultural Center Los Angeles (Ari Hall)
- ▶ Host: Korean Cultural Center
- ▶ Partner: Korean Academy of Film Arts (KAFA)
- ▶ Inquires: Seonji Jang, 323-936-7141(x116)

Los Angeles, CA — The Korean Cultural Center Los Angeles (Director Haedon Lee, KCCLA) will host *CineNext: Stories from KAFA*, a special two-day screening event presented in collaboration with the Korean Academy of Film Arts (Director Geunsik Cho, KAFA) of Korean Film Council (Chairman Sang-joon Han), on December 9 at 6:30 PM and December 10 at 7:00 PM at Ari Hall.

The showcase will present four outstanding works—three shorts and one feature—by next-generation KAFA filmmakers whose films have garnered international attention at major film festivals such as the Cannes Film Festival and the Annecy International Animation Film Festival.

Founded in 1984 under the Korean Film Council, KAFA is Korea's premier national film school and has produced many of the country's most celebrated filmmakers, including Bong Joon-ho (11th graduate), Hur Jin-ho (9th graduate), and Choi Dong-hoon (15th graduate). To date, KAFA has trained approximately 900 film professionals through its highly selective, production-centered curriculum.

CineNext: Stories from KAFA highlights works by the next wave of directors following in the footsteps of these leading filmmakers. The program features films that have received significant international acclaim, offering LA audiences a rare opportunity to experience the diversity and creativity of emerging Korean cinema.

December 9 – Short Films & Director Talk with HEO Gayoung (6:30 PM)

The opening night will screen two works by Heo Gayoung (KAFA 41st graduate)—"*First Summer*", winner of the 1st Prize in the La Cined section at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival, and "*Where Roots Go*"—along with "*Hole*" by Hwang Hyein (KAFA 39th graduate), recipient of the 2nd Prize in the same section at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival.

Following the screening, Director Heo will join the audience for a discussion about her films, creative process, and experiences at Cannes.

Heo's "*First Summer*" centers on *Yeongsun*, who finds herself torn between her granddaughter's wedding and the 49th-day memorial ceremony of her late boyfriend. The film has been praised for its nuanced portrayal of a woman's search for meaning and happiness within the rigid structures of Korea's patriarchal family system.

December 10 – Feature Animation & Director Talk with KIM Bosol (7:00 PM)

On the second day, the program will feature "*The Square*" by Kim Bosol (KAFA 35th graduate), winner of the Jury Award in the Contrechamp section at the 2025 Annecy International Animation Film Festival, as well as the Best Director Award at the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival.

Director Kim will be in attendance to share insights into his animation process and his journey across international festivals.

Scheduled for theatrical release in Korea next year, *“The Square”* has been invited to major festivals including the Sitges International Fantastic Film Festival and the São Paulo International Film Festival. The 73-minute animated feature follows the story of *Isak*, a Swedish diplomat stationed in Pyongyang, and *Bokju*, a North Korean traffic police officer, whose unexpected romance unfolds within a complex political landscape.

KAFA Director Geunsik Cho stated, “We hope this special showcase will serve as an opportunity for works by KAFA-trained filmmakers to gain wider exposure in the United States, the world’s most influential film market. We also look forward to this event becoming a meaningful starting point for creative exchange between young filmmakers of both countries.”

KCCLA Director Haedon Lee added, “We are delighted to host this meaningful screening event in collaboration with KAFA, which has produced many of the leading voices in Korean cinema today. We hope that audiences in the film capital of Los Angeles will discover the richness, diversity, and creative spirit of Korea’s emerging filmmakers.”

Screenings will take place at Ari Hall, 3rd Floor, Korean Cultural Center Los Angeles, on December 9 at 6:30 PM and December 10 at 7:00 PM. Admission is free with advance reservation through the KCCLA website (www.kccla.org). /END/