

Acropolis Cinema
presents:



June 5 - 11, 2020 – Acropolis Virtual Cinema

ABOUT THE FILM

One of Hong Sangsoo's most delightful comic mysteries is now available in the U.S. When painter Youngsoo (Kim Joohyuk) learns that his girlfriend, Minjung (Lee Yooyoung), was recently seen having drinks with another man, he can't help but question her about it. It doesn't go well and they part on bad terms. The next day, Youngsoo tries to find her, but can't. As he wanders and frets, Minjung has a series of encounters with other men. But to them it seems she's not herself.

Featuring a supporting cast of Hong regulars including Kwon Haehyo, Yu Junsang and Kim Euisung, *Yourself and Yours* is a pleasing puzzle full of mistaken identity, excessive drinking and lots of he-said, she-said. As the rumors pile up, Hong asks: In a relationship, how important is it to know everything?

86 min. | South Korea | 2016

Yourself (and Yours) by Scott Tobias

The following article was originally published by Variety, September 14, 2016

At least two female doppelgangers drink coffee and soju, flirt with various men, and spark gossip and mass confusion in Hong Sang-soo's "Yourself and Yours," a wise and gently absurdist allegory about how best to approach relationships. An inspired reversal of Luis Buñuel's "That Obscure Object of Desire," which had two different actresses playing the same woman, the film casts one actress playing multiple versions of herself — or so it would seem. Following last year's exceptionally ambitious (and just plain exceptional) "Right Now, Wrong Then," the film reps a confident return to the low-key pleasures of Hong's recent work, graced by a swooning romantic spirit. While a slot in the New York Film Festival may help boost its profile, it otherwise stands to reach the Hong faithful down the expected festival and theatrical pipeline.

"Yourself and Yours" opens with Youngsoo (Kim Joo-hyuck) in emotional crisis. His mother is gravely ill, having gone nearly two full days without eating, and her mortal state has him thinking about Minjung (Lee You-young), the other woman in his life. Should he get married? His neighbor (Kim Eui-sung) laughs off the idea, calling him "clueless about women," and relays a rumor that Minjung has been spotted drinking without him, despite their agreement that he would keep track of her alcohol intake. (Youngsoo limits Minjung to five glasses of soju and two beers a night, which is temperate only by Hong's supremely boozy standards.)

Later that evening, Youngsoo confronts Minjung about breaking her promises to him,

but she denies the rumors forcefully and leaves him on his own. From there, things get a little weird. When grey-haired writer Jaeyoung (Kwon Hae-hyo) recognizes Minjung at a coffee shop, she treats him like a total stranger, claiming not to go by that name. She appears several scenes later at a bar, where filmmaker Sangwon (Yu Jun-sang) eagerly makes her acquaintance, but once again, she refutes the claim that they've ever met before. By the time Youngsoo re-enters the picture, after fruitlessly searching for her at home and work, Minjung's true identity is a question mark.

Puzzling over who the real Minjung is — or how many doppelgangers there truly are, if any — isn't worth expending the mental energy. And that's the underlying insight of "Yourself and Yours": In a healthy relationship, sometimes it's better just to let some things go. The multiple Minjungs act like a manifestation of Youngsoo's insecurities and hang-ups, because he's tortured by the thought of her violating his trust and drinking with other men. Hong advocates for a more liberated relationship, with the women, especially, unbound by their partner's controlling impulses. When Minjung says, "Don't try to know everything," it doubles as a thesis statement.

Yet such insights fall lightly in "Yourself and Yours," which sets the tone with Dalpala's jaunty score in the opening credits and never darkens, even with Youngsoo's mother on death's door. As Minjung (and/or her doppelgangers), Lee You-young is so charming and self-possessed around her suitors that a withering cut-down ("I've never seen a truly impressive man") lands like a kiss. And when the liquor starts to flow, any lingering negative feelings dissipate in the buzz, like a bar confrontation that stumbles drunkenly into a male bonding session.

Hong doesn't impose any structural gamesmanship on the film, and he only presses the central gimmick as far as it needs to go for Youngsoo and Minjung to sort through their relationship. Buoyed by Hong's romantic optimism, the immensely satisfying conclusion hints at the possibility of love as a renewable resource, so long as both partners are flexible to different terms. "Yourself and Yours" asks the audience to take the same leap — best to keep an open mind and go with the flow. ♦

(Yourself and) Yours **by Robert Koehler**

The following article was originally published by Cinema Scope, September 16, 2016

A parlour game likely to happen at many festivals around the world over the next several months will be this: Is there one Minjung who appears on screen as the central female character in Hong Sangsoo's *Yourself and Yours*, or are there at least two, maybe even three? Does she have an identical twin? Is she a pathological liar, or the victim of ruthless gossip? If you turn this into a drinking game (preferably with Hong's drink of choice, soju), you will be guaranteed to have many drunk cinephiles by the end of the evening.

Even more than usual, Hong leaves these and other questions open to the viewer, a key element in his artistry and human comedy, and a reason why distributors and exhibitors have never been fond of him.

Unlike certain past Hong scenarios—such as his previous Locarno Golden Leopard-winning *Right Now, Wrong Then* (2015), which created the possibility of two pathways for his characters—*Yourself and Yours* is closer to a Rohmerian moral tale, with a single narrative track containing a situation that leads to personal self-discovery. Immediately after watching it at TIFF, I felt that it was a fairly minor piece by Hong, but after a couple of days digesting it the film has grown for me, its prescription for relationships resonating in ways that go far beyond the pleasures of watching sly and elegant Hongian games play out on screen.

A small speech from Alain Resnais' *Muriel* (1964) could sum up the spirit of *Yourself and Yours*: “We never know those we love. We think we do, but we don't. Every person is a world.” As usual with Hong, the man in the male-female comedy is a fool—in this case he's named Youngsoo (Kim Joo-hyuck), an artist whose mom is dying. But that isn't his real crisis: instead, it's the rumour being floated by a neighbour and pal that his girlfriend Minjung (Lee You-young) is a lush who fools around with other men.

It may not be true, but it poisons the well of Youngsoo's mind, and when he challenges her about the rumour, her denials don't sway him. Doubt breeds contempt, and yet, the evidence in front of our eyes suggests that Youngsoo's fears may be true—until we're once again uncertain. A woman who certainly looks exactly like Minjung is seen alone drinking at a bar-restaurant, and yet she denies to an older man that she's Minjung. She insists that she's Minjung's identical twin sister. Can we believe it? What is to believe anyway?

The viewer is presented with two sets of possibilities, both of which can't be true, either of which is somewhat plausible. The solution to this conundrum isn't the point: instead, it is Youngsoo coming to terms with what's really his lover's ploy at liberation. Minjung owns the line of the movie, the one that everyone who sees it will be quoting—“I've never seen a truly impressive man”—and it is a means by which Hong allows his female protagonist to own the movie as well. Youngsoo's friends resent Minjung for speaking her mind (not always admired in Korean society), and her “doubling” (and possibly “tripling”) is her way of breaking social codes altogether. Hong's string of scenes bring Youngsoo to a kind of self-realization that's as sneaky as the way things began, and it's as simple as this: Live and let live. But, Hong being Hong, it doesn't stop there. Near the end, Minjung asks him, “Do you know me?” Youngsoo, in a moment of honesty that he wouldn't have been capable of at the start, says, simply, “No.” ♦



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