



## BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

### **A TRAVELER'S NEEDS [Yeohaengjau pilyo] (12A)**

Director: Hong Sangsoo

Starring: Isabelle Huppert, Lee Hyeyoung, Kwon Haehyo

South Korea, 2024, 1 hour 20 minutes, French/Korean/English + English subtitles

Hong Sangsoo is a prolific South Korean filmmaker; since he started directing in 1996 he has made 31 feature films and several shorts, often with a common theme or style, sometimes self-referential, sometimes meandering, always witty and interesting. Reunions in bars or cafes over a beer or two recur in his films. This is his third collaboration (after *In Another Country* and *Claire's Camera*) with Isabelle Huppert, who plays Iris, a puzzling Frenchwoman adrift in Seoul, and it's a gem.

The official synopsis is revealing: "This woman who came from who knows where says she came from France. She was sitting on a bench in a neighborhood park, diligently playing a child's recorder. With no money or means of supporting herself, she was advised to teach French. In that way she became a teacher to two Korean women.

"She likes to walk barefoot on the ground and lie down on rocks. And when she is up to it, she tries to see each instant in a non-verbal way, and to live her life as factually as possible. But life remains as hard as ever. She relies on makkeolli every day for a small bit of comfort."

"...as ever, there is immensely precise craft at work in this film (although early scenes suggest a degree of loose, improvised limbering up). There is certainly a lot of subtle patterning here: three characters suddenly moved to give Iris a taste of their musical talents; two poems inscribed in stone, by 20th-century Korean writer Yoon Dongju; the curious use of a certain shade of green in Iris's cardigan, her ballpoint pen and a flat roof on which her espadrilles emit comic squishing sounds." Jonathan Romney, **Screen Daily**.

"...even the snippets of Iris on her little walk are a delight, particularly a moment where she walks onto a rooftop that is painted the same fetching shade of green as her cardigan. It's a lovely film and not a particularly demanding one from this director (his last one, *In Water*, was purposefully filmed out of focus). But where the humour perhaps asks the viewer to not take the action too seriously, it's also a perceptive film about the performative coping strategies of a stranger in a strange land." David Jenkins, **Little White Lies**

Notes compiled by Jo Comino

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#### **SISTER MIDNIGHT**

Writer-director Karan Kandhari's feature debut is a surreal, punkish and distinctive comedy, tinged with offbeat horror, stylistically fresh, inventive and magical.

#### **FOUR MOTHERS**

A loose adaptation of Gianni Di Gregorio's *Mid-August Lunch* (2008) turns out a touching, often funny and intimate tribute to middle-aged Irish gay men and their working class matriarchs.