

# TREASURES FROM THE YALE FILM ARCHIVE

AN ONGOING SERIES OF CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY FILMS PRESENTED IN 35MM BY THE YALE FILM STUDY CENTER

SUNDAY  
DECEMBER 2, 2018  
2:00PM • WHITNEY  
HUMANITIES CENTER

## SPRING, SUMMER, FALL, WINTER...AND SPRING

PRESENTED WITH SUPPORT FROM  
PAUL L. JOSKOW '70 M.PHIL., '72 PH.D.



"I started this film with the question, 'What is the meaning of life?' Everybody needs their own chance to ask themselves what life means to them, especially when a person goes through a painful period."

—Kim Ki-Duk

The life of a Buddhist monk from childhood to maturity is chronicled in Kim Ki-duk's *SPRING, SUMMER, FALL, WINTER...AND SPRING*. Marked by sparse and simple dialogue, the 2003 chamber drama is primarily told through the exquisite cinematography of Baek Dong-hyeon. Critic Derek Elley called the film "a sublime, witty, gritty, and transcendental movie," while Andrew Sarris said it "probably represents the purest and most transcendent distillation of the Buddhist faith ever rendered on the screen." A.O. Scott praised the film's "lyrical plainness" as "the sign of a profound and sophisticated artistic sensibility." "It seems less a modern work of art," Scott wrote, "than a solid, ancient object that has always been there, waiting to be found."



The film—Kim's ninth—marked a departure from his earlier work, which had focused on themes of alienated youth, prostitution, and revenge. "In my other films, there has been a lot of brutality and cruelty and anger inside them," Kim said. "But with *SPRING, SUMMER*, I also wanted to show the healing powers of forgiveness and tolerance." The film was shot over the course of a year in and around a floating monastery, which was built for the film on the 300-year-old Jusanji Pond in the Juwangsan National Park. "For every season, we had to come back and shoot for about five days," Kim commented. "If you count all the actual days it took to make the film, it only took twenty-two days. That's not a whole lot of time, so you have to film very quickly. We had only one or two takes to get the shots."

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY **KIM KI-DUK**  
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY **BAEK DONG-HYEON**  
(2003) 103 MINS.  
STARRING **OH YEONG-SU, KIM YOUNG-MIN,**  
**SEO JAE-KYEONG, HA YEO-JIN**  
AND **KIM KI-DUK**

Kim insists *SPRING, SUMMER* is not a religious film, though he has utilized religious motifs throughout his career, and states "the religious elements in my stories offer a return to Mother Nature and innocence.

These days, our lives are full of artificiality. We have to try much harder to regain our innocence." Richard James Havis observed that *SPRING, SUMMER* diverges from South Korea's long tradition of films about Buddhism: "In place of the calmness and spiritual reflection that often dominate such films, [Kim] focuses on the brutality and irrationality of human existence that act as obstacles to enlightenment. Although his characters are contemplative, they are riven with lust, jealousy and sadism. It's an unusually mature take for a film dealing with religion, and it did not sit well with everybody." Havis also highlights the film's "focus on redemption through suffering, penance and forgiveness, rather than a rejection of the physical world," which relates to Kim's education in a Christian mission school and his early interest in becoming a minister.

Others see the film as more straightforwardly Buddhist, with Dimitri Ehrlich calling it "essentially a parable of two basic Buddhist truths—attachment causes suffering, and even the most violent negativity can be purified." Ming Zhen Zhakya also provides a Buddhist interpretation of the "gorgeously filmed allegorical account of spiritual ascendance" (with spoilers): "Kim's camera plots the trajectory of a Soul as it passes from its Nirvanic womb, through the birth cries of its loss of innocence and entrance into Maya's realm, Tattvas 36 to 6, those principles of material existence that are referenced in the Heart Sutra. And finally, he follows the soul through the Gateless Gate of Tattva 5, right on to the zero point of the Divine Couple's offspring, the exquisite Miroku, Maitreya, the Future Buddha, caught by a sculptor as He dreams into existence the material world."

**DID YOU KNOW:** THE FOURTH ACTOR TO PORTRAY THE MONK IN THE FILM IS THE DIRECTOR, KIM KI-DUK. HE CAST HIMSELF RELUCTANTLY AFTER ANOTHER ACTOR CANCELLED JUST BEFORE THE WINTER SEQUENCE WAS FILMED. "WE COULDN'T LOSE THE OPPORTUNITY WITH THE SNOW," KIM REMARKED. "THE SEASONS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE CHARACTERS THEMSELVES IN THIS FILM, SO WE HAD TO CAPTURE THE SEASONS. THE TIME PERIOD FOR THE SNOW TO COVER THAT LAKE AND FREEZE OVER IS NOT VERY LONG."

**FIRST**, JOIN THE FILM STUDY CENTER FOR THE FINAL INSTALLMENT OF OUR SEMESTER-LONG **INGMAR BERGMAN CENTENARY SERIES**. TO CELEBRATE 100 YEARS SINCE THE BIRTH OF THE SWEDISH DIRECTOR, WE PRESENT NEW 35MM PRINTS OF **SMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT** AND **WILD STRAWBERRIES**, WITH AN INTRO BY PROF. JOHN MACKAY, **THURS., DECEMBER 6 AT 7PM**

**THEN**, WE OPEN 2019 WITH A TWENTIETH-ANNIVERSARY SCREENING OF TERENCE MALICK'S SECOND WORLD WAR DRAMA **THE THIN RED LINE**, PRESENTED ON 35MM ON **SATURDAY, JANUARY 12 AT 7PM**.