Persmap



THE HANDMAIDEN

Een film van Park Chan-Wook

Korea, de jaren 1930, tijdens de Japanse kolonisatie. Een jonge vrouw (Sookee) is aangenomen als dienstmeisje door een rijke Japanse erfgename (Hideko). Zij leeft op een groot landgoed, afgesloten van de buitenwereld en in de macht van een tirannieke oom. Maar Sookee heeft een geheim. Met de hulp van een oplichter, die zich uitgeeft voor een Japanse graaf, zijn er andere plannen voor Hideko...

De cast bestaat uit de Koreaanse sterren Ha Jung-Woo, Kim Min-hee en Kim Tae-ri. Park Chan-Wook's eerdere films OLDBOY (2003) en THIRST (2009) wonnen op het filmfestival van Cannes beiden de juryprijs en werden net als THE HANDMAIDEN genomineerd voor een Gouden Palm.



Speelduur: 141 min. - Land: Zuid-Korea - Jaar: 2016 – Genre: Drama, romance Release datum bioscoop: 2 februari 2017 Distributie: Cinéart

Meer informatie over de film: Cinéart Nederland – Julia van Berlo Herengracht 328 III 1016 CE Amsterdam Tel: +31 (0)20 5308840

Email: Julia@cineart.nl

www.cineart.nl

Persmap en foto's staan op: www.cineart.nl/pers - inlog: cineart / wachtwoord: film

Introduction THE HANDMAIDEN

From PARK Chan-wook, the celebrated director of *OLDBOY, LADY VENGEANCE, THIRST* and *STOKER*, comes a ravishing new crime drama inspired by the novel 'FINGERSMITH' by British author Sarah Waters. Having transposed the story to 1930s-era colonial Korea and Japan, Park presents a gripping and sensual tale of a young Japanese Lady living on a secluded estate, and a Korean woman who is hired to serve as her new handmaiden, but who is secretly involved in a conman's plot to defraud her of her large inheritance.

Powered by remarkable performances from KIM Min-hee (*RIGHT NOW, WRONG THEN*) as Lady Hideko, HA Jung-woo (*THE CHASER*) as the conman who calls himself the Count and sensational debut actress KIM Tae-ri as the maid Sookee, *THE HANDMAIDEN* borrows the most dynamic elements of its source material and combines it with PARK Chan-wook's singular vision and energy to create an unforgettable viewing experience.

As the first-ever period film from PARK Chan-wook, the 1930s setting provides new inspirations for his striking visual sensibility. Working with longtime collaborators such as DoP CHUNG Chung-hoon and Production Designer RYU Seong-hee, Park sets his story within a vividly imagined grand estate blending elements of European and Japanese architecture, and later moves the action to Japan for an indelible denouement.

The novel 'FINGERSMITH' was first published in 2002, and was shortlisted for both the Man Booker Prize and the Orange Prize. Set in Victorian England, the novel was adapted into a 2005 BBC drama starring Sally Hawkins and Elaine Cassidy, and also into a stage play performed at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. It is the third novel by the famous Welsh-born writer Sarah Waters, who has received numerous awards and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 2009.

Cast

Lady Hideko KIM Min-hee
Sook-Hee KIM Tae-ri
Count Fujiwara HA Jung-woo
Uncle Kouzuki CHO Jin-woong
Miss Sasaki KIM Hae-sook
Aunt of Lady Hideko MOON So-ri

Director Park Chan-wook

Born in Seoul, Korea, Aug. 23, 1963

Winner of the Cannes' Grand Prix for *OLDBOY* and the Jury Prize for *THIRST*, Park Chan-wook stands at the forefront of Korean cinema's modern-day renaissance. Renowned for his explosive visuals and dynamic storytelling, he is a director who continually challenges and defies expectations.

An ardent cinephile, Park juggled film directing and criticism in the 1990s before his commercial breakthrough *JOINT SECURITY AREA (JSA)* in 2000, which broke local box office records and screened in competition at Berlin. However it was with his critically acclaimed follow-up *SYMPATHY FOR MR*. *VENGEANCE* in 2002 that he established the intense, relentless cinematic style for which he is now renowned. After the success and worldwide recognition of *OLDBOY* (2003), his follow-up features *LADY VENGEANCE* (2005, Venice competition), *I'M A CYBORG BUT THAT'S OK* (2006, Berlin competition) and *THIRST* (2009, Cannes competition), further demonstrated Park's cinematic and thematic range. He then went onto make his first English language feature *STOKER* (2013), a Fox Searchlight film starring Nicole Kidman, Mia Wasikowska and Matthew Goode, further cementing his status as an important global auteur.

In *THE HANDMAIDEN*, which is inspired by Sarah Waters' historical crime novel FINGERSMITH (2002), Park returns to Korea for one of his most ambitious productions yet. In this latest work he continues to display the bold and innovative approach to storytelling and visuals that made him internationally famous.

Filmography 2016

2016	THE HANDMAIDEN
2014	A ROSE REBORN
2013	BITTER, SWEET, SEOUL (documentary)
2013	STOKER
2012	DAY TRIP (short)
2010	NIGHT FISHING (short)
2009	THIRST (short)
2006	I'M A CYBORG, BUT THAT'S OK
2005	LADY VENGEANCE
2004	CUT (short)
2003	N.E.P.A.L. (short)
2003	OLDBOY
2002	SYMPATHY FOR MR. VENGEANCE
2000	JOINT SECURITY AREA
1999	JUDGMENT (short)
1997	TRIO
1992	THE MOON IS THE SUN'S DREAM

Interview with Park Chan-wook

Tell us about how you chose this project as your next film.

It was the same as what happened with *OLDBOY*. Producer Syd LIM came across the source material first, showed it to me and asked, "What do you think?" I'm sure it was the same with other readers, but when I read the novel, the end of Part One caught me completely by surprise, but not only that, I fell in love with the author's very detailed and vivid writing. More than anything, I chose this story because the two women at the center of the story felt so alive. One is a person with a dark past, and one is a person living in a desperate present, but both exude a very strong sense of individuality and charm.

Why did you decide to move the setting from Victorian England to the Colonial Era of the 1930s, as opposed to another time in Korean history?

There were practical reasons. When thinking about such plot elements as a society where there's still the separate class of the nobility, where the occupation of the handmaiden exists, where there's a character who collects rare items, etc., it seemed the only reasonable option. That was an era in which some traditional elements remained, but modernity was just beginning to take hold.

All of your previous films have featured striking production design, but THE HANDMAIDEN in particular is outstanding in this regard. Can you explain your intention and concept in terms of the art direction?

The house is an important space. KIM Hae-sook says in the beginning, "Not even in Japan can you find a home that combines Western and Japanese styles. It reflects Master Kouzuki's admiration for Japan and England." So when characters enter the Japanese-style quarters they must take their shoes off, and when they walk through the Western-style wing they must put them back on again. The personality of the home is an important element. Hideko's room is located in a Western-style wing, so she sleeps in a bed and lives the life of a Western lady. In contrast, the maid's room next door is in the Japanese style, where Sookee lives in an 'oshiire', a kind of a closet for storing bedclothes.

The most important space in terms of production design is the library. The exterior is traditional Japanese architecture, and inside there is a Western-style library. Inside the library there is also a section with tatami mats, which during readings get made up like a Japanese garden with white pebbles, stones and water. Japanese gardens are meant to reproduce the world in miniature -- mountains and rivers, lakes and forests -- so Kouzuki's act of moving it inside is akin to creating a new world inside his own kingdom.

Let me ask about the camera movement. I don't think I've ever seen a film in which the camera moves through space like it does in THE HANDMAIDEN.

The house in this film is large, and there are only a few characters in this big, empty space. In addition, there are multiple scenes which we see from Sookee's perspective in Part One, and then from Hideko's perspective in Part Two. Throughout this, there is a sort of "game of glances" in which someone is looking at someone else, or ignoring someone, or suspecting another's gaze. There were times when this dynamic was best expressed in close-ups, and other times when the moving camera was more effective.

Actually, at the beginning I planned to shoot this film in 3D. Usually it's science fiction or action films that use 3D, but I thought using it for this kind of quiet drama would be interesting. The 3D would have emphasized the perspective of each character in a more pronounced way. In the end we couldn't make it work financially, but I think the camera movement functions as a kind of replacement for that effect I wanted.

Can you tell us about your decision to use an anamorphic lens? I heard the production designer had to make the set wider to accommodate the lens.

Before shooting I spent a lot of time discussing the anamorphic lens with the cinematographer. It's one of the luxuries we could accommodate while shooting with a digital camera. I still feel that film is superior to digital, and if I could have my choice, I'd prefer to shoot on film. But one of the things we could do while shooting on digital was to afford the use of an anamorphic lens. I have a special affection for films shot with old anamorphic lenses, plus my cinematographer had an interest in combining an old-style lens with a new digital camera. The look that it creates is quite unique, and it seemed appropriate to the period setting of the film.

Before shooting, you gave music CDs to the cast and crew. What was your intention with that? It wasn't that I planned to use the music in the film, but rather I wanted the actors and crew to be able to feel what the atmosphere of the completed film would be like as they made their preparations. There are the drawings in the storyboard, but since music is also effective in creating a mood, I prepared three CDs worth of music and gave it to them.

Tell us about the process of casting KIM Tae-ri.

I definitely wanted to use a new, unknown actress, so we prepared a large-scale audition. I met a lot of great young actresses with potential, after which process it became clear to us that KIM Tae-ri was our Sookee. She has a unique look about her, and when she speaks, she has real backbone. I had a very similar feeling when I first met Gang Hye-jung [the actress in *OLDBOY*]. She is a person who expresses her own strong point of view.

I'm curious if there were times on the set with actor HA Jung-woo when, without any specific instruction, he produced some unexpected expression or gesture that impressed you.

In my films, what I want is always quite particular. I'm not the kind of director to just hand an actor the script and say, "You figure it out." Compared to some other directors, I give actors a very narrow space to work in, but there are times when very talented actors express themselves within that narrow space so well that it really surprises me. That's the kind of acting I hope for, and with HA Jung-woo there were quite a few times that happened.

In a previous interview you commented that the films of yours that contained humor have all done well. What about for THE HANDMAIDEN?

The humor in this film comes from the fact that the characters are hiding their true identities and acting. There are many scenes where they're hiding their feelings, and thinking something different from what they're saying. Even if the audience doesn't burst out laughing in the theater, I think viewers will be able to enjoy this sort of humor throughout the film.

How would you describe THE HANDMAIDEN, in a few words?

It's a thriller movie, a story about swindlers, a dramatic story with several unexpected twists, and more than anything else, a romance.

Kim Min-hee as Lady Hideko

Actress KIM Min-hee has been a familiar face in Korean film, TV and fashion circles for the past decade and a half, but her performance in Byun Young-joo's thriller *HELPLESS* in 2012 garnered widespread praise and captured the attention of many viewers, including PARK Chan-wook. With her subsequent films, including a memorable leading role in Locarno Golden Leopard-winning *RIGHT NOW, WRONG THEN,* she has continued to redefine herself as an actor who exhibits considerable range, precision and force in her performances.

For her portrayal of Lady Hideko, a woman who has lived isolated from the rest of the world since the age of 5, Kim gives a smooth, multilayered interpretation of a complicated woman with hidden depths of feeling.

Filmography

-0 -1 1	
2016	THE HANDMAIDEN
2015	RIGHT NOW, WRONG THEN
2014	NO TEARS FOR THE DEAD
2012	VERY ORDINARY COUPLE
2012	HELPLESS
2011	MOBY DICK
2009	THE ACTRESSES
2007	HELLCATS
2002	SURPRISE PARTY
2000	ASAKO IN RUBY SHOES

What kind of character is Hideko?

Kim Min-hee: "She seems to have been much affected by her upbringing. She thinks differently from other people, and she has a lot bottled up inside her. In the midst of all that oppression she hasn't been able to live like a normal person. Living in an environment where she felt no love or affection, she simply walled up all her emotions inside her."



Kim Tae-ri as Sookee

For the role of the Korean maid Sookee, PARK Chan-wook wanted to cast a completely unknown face. After auditioning no less than 1,500 actresses, he ultimately settled on this 26-year old journalism graduate with little acting experience beyond an independent short film and some high-profile advertisements for The Body Shop and other brands. Comparing her to *OLDBOY*'s Gang Hyejung, Director Park has expressed strong confidence in her talent, and described her as a perfect match for the role.

Kim's portrayal of the pickpocket Sookee who poses as a maid captures the rough edges of her character's lower-class upbringing and also her warm, vibrant personality. It's a performance that simultaneously expresses a crafty deceitfulness and a naive innocence.

What is PARK Chan-wook's style as a director?

Kim Tae-ri: "Very theatrical. He really likes extreme actions and feelings, so there were many times that he told me, 'That's not enough.' He wanted more energy. More energy on the screen. He'd ask me to give a little bit more, and I'd think to myself, 'Isn't it a bit too much?' So that was a bit difficult for me... Eventually I learned to just trust him and go with it."

Filmography

2016 THE HANDMAIDEN2015 MOON YOUNG (short)

Ha Jung-woo as the Count

Over the past decade, HA Jung-woo has established himself beyond doubt as one of Korea' most popular and widely praised actors. He has headlined smash commercial hit films like ASSASSINATION (12.6 million admissions), THE TERROR LIVE (5.6 million admissions), THE BERLIN FILE (7.2 million admissions), TAKE OFF (8.1 million admissions), and THE CHASER (5.1 million admissions), while simultaneously appearing in critically acclaimed smaller-scale films like MY DEAR ENEMY, US-South Korea co-production NEVER FOREVER and KIM Ki-duk's TIME. He has also recently taken up directing, with two feature films to his credit: novel adaptation CHRONICLE OF A BLOOD MERCHANT (2014) and comedy FASTEN YOUR SEATBELT (2013).

Nonetheless, *THE HANDMAIDEN* marks Ha's first-ever collaboration with PARK Chan-wook, leading to widespread anticipation on the part of his fans to see what kind of performance results from the meeting of these two minds. As depicted by HA, the Count is a scheming, untrustworthy character who sets the events of the plot in motion by recruiting Sookee as his accomplice. However as the film progresses, his character gradually becomes more rounded, and we get tantalizing glimpses into his true nature.

How were you cast for the film?

Ha Jung-woo: "As the shoot for ASSASSINATION was about to start, I met PARK Chan-wook at a production dinner and heard about this project for the first time. Production Designer RYU Seonghee was with him too. I'd always loved and respected his work, and felt that I'd like to work with him, so I felt quite excited. He told me he'd send me the script on October 15, and sure enough at 9AM that morning an email arrived. I read it through in one sitting, and found the character of the Count to be attractive, and the project as a whole to be just hugely intriguing."

Filmography	
2016	THE HANDMAIDEN
2016	THE TUNNEL
2015	ASSASSINATION
2014	CHRONICLE OF A BLOOD MERCHANT
2014	KUNDO: AGE OF THE RAMPANT
2013	THE TERROR LIVE
2012	THE BERLIN FILE
2012	LOVE FICTION
2012	NAMELESS GANGSTER: RULES OF THE TIME
2011	THE CLIENT
2010	THE YELLOW SEA
2009	TAKE OFF
2008	MY DEAR ENEMY
2008	THE CHASER
2007	NEVER FOREVER
2007	BREATH
2006	TIME

THE UNFORGIVEN

Cho Jin-woong as Kouzuki

Although he started his career as a character actor, CHO Jin-woong left such an impression with his varied performances in film and on TV that he now is regularly cast in leading roles, and ranks as one of the industry's hottest names. Originally attracting widespread attention in NAMELESS GANGSTER: RULES OF THE TIME (2012), he has continued to garner acclaim in HWAYI: A MONSTER BOY (2013), A HARD DAY (2014), KUNDO: AGE OF THE RAMPANT (2014), mega-hit ROARING CURRENTS (2014), and ASSASSINATION (2015).

In *THE HANDMAIDEN* Cho plays Kouzuki, Hideko's authoritative uncle who wields controls over her life and makes her take part in his unhealthy obsession for rare books. It marks Cho's first experience playing a much older character, for which he lost 18kg and spent three hours each shooting day in the make up room.

How were you cast for the film?

Cho Jin-woong: "This shoot gave me a lot to think about, in terms of cinematic sensibility. The whole process took a lot of effort. But in the end it was more than just working in a functional sense, rather, in terms of the meaning behind each shot, the actors were able to contribute and collaborate as creators themselves with this production. PARK Chan-wook is extremely capable, of course. But it's more than just him. You can feel it from the fine touches of the make up artists, to the placement of each bonsai plant on the set, to the expressions on the faces of the camera and lighting crew... So I never felt like I was acting alone. We were all working together."

Filmography

2005

2016	THE HANDMAIDEN
2016	BLUEBEARD
2015	ASSASSINATION
2015	SALUT D'AMOUR
2014	WE ARE BROTHERS
2014	ROARING CURRENTS

2014	KUNDO: AGE OF THE RAMPANT
2014	A HARD DAY
2013	HWAYI: A MONSTER BOY
2013	AN ETHICS LESSON
2012	PERFECT NUMBER
2012	NAMELESS GANGSTER: RULES OF THE TIME
2011	THE FRONT LINE
2011	G-LOVE
2010	BESTSELLER
2007	GP506
2006	LES FORMIDABLES

Kim Hae-sook as Mrs. Sasaki

A veteran of the TV scene who has also left an unforgettable mark on Korean cinema, KIM Hae-sook had a major role in PARK Chan-wook's *THIRST* (2009), and is also well remembered for playing Simon Yam's love interest in CHOI Dong-hoon's *THE THIEVES* (2012). She brings not only experience to her roles, but also a hard-edged steeliness that directors have been keen to utilize. In *THE HANDMAIDEN* she plays Ms. Sasaki, an intimidating figure at the estate who maintains a rocky relationship with Lady Hideko and also Sookee.

Filmography

2016	THE HANDMAIDEN
2015	THE THRONE
2015	ASSASSINATION
2013	HOPE
2012	THE THIEVES
2009	THIRST
2008	VIVA! LOVE
2008	OPEN CITY
2006	SUNFLOWER
2004	MY BROTHER
2003	OH! HAPPY DAY
2003	THE SCENT OF LOVE

Moon So-ri as Hideko's Aunt

One of Korea's most acclaimed actresses, first brought to fame by LEE Chang-dong in *PEPPERMINT CANDY* (1999) and *OASIS* (2002) and then continuing to push boundaries in a diverse spectrum of roles from *A GOOD LAWYER'S WIFE* (2003) to *SA-KWA* (2005), *FAMILY TIES* (2006), *FOREVER THE MOMENT* (2008), *HAHAHA* (2009), *MANSHIN: TEN THOUSAND SPIRITS* (2014) and others. In recent years she has also directed several critically praised short films, including *THE BEST DIRECTOR* (2015) and *THE ACTRESS* (2014). In *THE HANDMAIDEN* she plays Hideko's aunt (Kouzuki's wife), who feeling oppressed by her domineering husband, ultimately chooses a desperate means of escape.

Filmography

2016 THE HANDMAIDEN 2015 LOVE AND...

2014 HILL OF FREEDOM 2014 MANSHIN: TEN THOUSAND SPIRITS 2014 **VENUS TALK** THE SPY: UNDERCOVER OPERATION 2013 2013 AN ETHICS LESSON 2012 IN ANOTHER COUNTRY 2011 LEAFIE, A HEN INTO THE WILD 2010 THE HOUSEMAID 2009 НАНАНА 2009 **FLY PENGUIN** 2009 LIKE YOU KNOW IT ALL 2008 FOREVER THE MOMENT 2006 **FAMILY TIES** 2006 **BEWITCHING ATTRACTION** 2005 SA-KWA 2005 **BRAVO MY LIFE** 2005 THE PRESIDENT'S BARBER 2003 A GOOD LAWYER'S WIFE 2002 **OASIS** 1999 PEPPERMINT CANDY



About the Production Companies

MOHO FILM was established as an auteur-driven film production company in 2002 by the world-renowned filmmaker PARK Chan-wook. Apart from award-winning films directed by Park himself, including *LADY VENGEANCE* (2005) and *THIRST* (2009), the company has produced the critically acclaimed English language sci-fi film *SNOWPIERCER* (2013) directed by BONG Joon-ho, and the award-winning debut feature *CRUSH AND BLUSH* (2008) by LEE Kyoung-mi. Moho Film has also produced a series of works by *PARKing CHANce* (a collaboration between PARK Chan-wook and his brother PARK Chan-kyong), including the Berlinale Golden Bear winning short film *NIGHT FISHING* (2011), shot entirely on iPhones, and the crowd-sourced documentary *BITTER*, *SWEET*, *SEOUL* (2014).

FILMOGRAPHY - MOHO FILM

2014 BITTER, SWEET, SEOUL (documentary)

Director: PARKing CHANce

2013 SNOWPIERCER

Director: BONG Joon-ho

Cast: Chris Evans, SONG Kang-ho, Ed Harris, John Hurt, Tilda Swinton,

Jamie Bell, Octavia Spencer, Ewen Bremner, KO Asung

-2015 National Board of Review Awards (Top 10 Independent Films)

2012 DAY TRIP (short)

Director: PARKing CHANce

Cast: SONG Kang-ho, JEON Hyo-jeong

2011 NIGHT FISHING (short)

Director: PARKing CHANce

Cast: OH Kwang-rok, LEE Jung hyun

- 2011 Berlin Int'l Film Festival (Golden Bear Best Short Film)

2009 THIRST

Director: PARK Chan-wook

Cast: SONG Kang-ho, KIM Ok-vin, SHIN Ha-kyun, KIM Hae-sook

- 2009 Cannes Film Festival (Jury Prize)

2008 CRUSH AND BLUSH

Director: LEE Kyoung-mi

Cast: KONG Hyo-jin, LEE Jong-hyeuk, SEO Woo, HWANG Woo-seul-hye,

BANG Eun-jin

- 2008 Blue Dragon Film Awards (Best Screenplay, Best New Director)

2006 I'M A CYBORG BUT THAT'S OKAY

Director: PARK Chan-wook *Cast*: LIM Soo-jung, JUNG Ji-hoon

- 2007 Berlin Int'l Film Festival (Alfred Bauer Prize)

2005 LADY VENGEANCE

Director: PARK Chan-wook

Cast: LEE Young-ae, CHOI Min-sik, KIM Si-hu, KIM Bu-sun, LEE Seung-shin

- 2005 Venice Film Festival (Little Golden Lion, CinemAvvenire)

YONG FILM is a film production company established in August 2012 by Syd LIM, a veteran producer who previously served as President of SIO FILM and Vice President of BARUNSON FILM DIVISION. Aside from *THE HANDMAIDEN*, the company has produced romantic drama *THE BEAUTY INSIDE* (2015) and action film *THE TARGET* (2014), a remake of the 2010 French film *POINT BLANK*. It also has a diverse slate of upcoming projects in various stages of development, including works by directors BAIK, LEE Gye-byok, JUNG Ji-woo, and LEE Hae-young. Yong Film is always open to opportunities for international co-production, and is committed to producing quality films with topnotch directors and writers.

FILMOGRAPHY - YONG FILM

2015 THE BEAUTY INSIDE

Director: BAIK

Cast: HAN Hyo-joo, PARK Shin-hye, LEE Beom-soo, PARK Seo-jun, CHUN Woo-

hee, LEE Jin-uk, LEE Dong-wook, KIM Ju-hyuk, YOO Yeon-seok, etc. - Remake of *The Beauty Inside*, the social film by Intel & Toshiba (USA)

2014 THE TARGET

Director: CHANG

Cast: RYU Seung-ryong, LEE Jin-uk, YU Jun-sang, KIM Sung-ryoung, JIN Goo,

JO Yeo-jeong

- Remake of À Bout Portant (France)

- 2014 Midnight Screening, Cannes Film Festival

Credits

CJ Entertainment Presents

A Moho Film and Yong Film Production

A PARK Chan-wook Film

Directed by PARK Chan-wook

Executive Producer Miky LEE

Co-Executive Producer JEONG Tae-sung

Written by CHUNG Seo-kyung, PARK Chan-wook Inspired by the novel "Fingersmith" by Sarah WATERS Producer PARK Chan-wook, Syd LIM

Co-Producers YOON Suk-chan, KIM Jong-dae, Wonjo JEONG

Associate Producer Jay LEE

Director of Photography CHUNG Chung-hoon Production Designer RYU Seong-hee

Edited by KIM Sang-bum, KIM Jae-bum

Music by CHO Young-wuk
Costume Designer CHO Sang-kyung
Gaffer BAE II-hyuck
Make Up & Hair Designer SONG Jong-hee
VFX Supervisor LEE Jeon-hyoung
Sound Design by KIM Suk-won
Production Sound Mixer JUNG Gun