



**2012 International Film Festival Rotterdam  
– Tiger Awards Competition**

# **ROMANCE JOE**

**Written and Directed by LEE Kwang-kuk**



**WORLD SALES M-Line Distribution**

6F Samhwa Bldg., 536 Shinsa-dong, Gangnam-gu, Seoul 135-889 Korea

T: +822 796 2426 F: +822 796 2429 sales@m-line-distribution.com www.m-line-distribution.com

# Information

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**CINE21** PRESENTS

A **BORI PICTURES** PRODUCTION

Screenplay & Director	LEE Kwang-kuk
Executive Producer	KIM Sang-yoon
Producer	YIM Soon-rye
Line Producer	YANG Dong-myung
Cinematography	JEE Yune-jeong
Editing	SON Yeon-ji
Lighting	LEE Ui-haeng
Music	PARK Jin-seok
Recording	SEO Young-jun
Sound	KIM Yong-joo
Production Sound Mixer	YOON Jong-min

## Cast

KIM Young-pil	as Romance Joe
SHIN Dong-mi	as Waitress
LEE Chai-eun	as Cho-hee
LEE David	as Romance Joe (a child's part)

**Technical Specifications:** 2011 | HD | Color | 115min | 2.35:1

**Genre:** Black Comedy

**World Sales:** M-Line Distribution

# Synopsis

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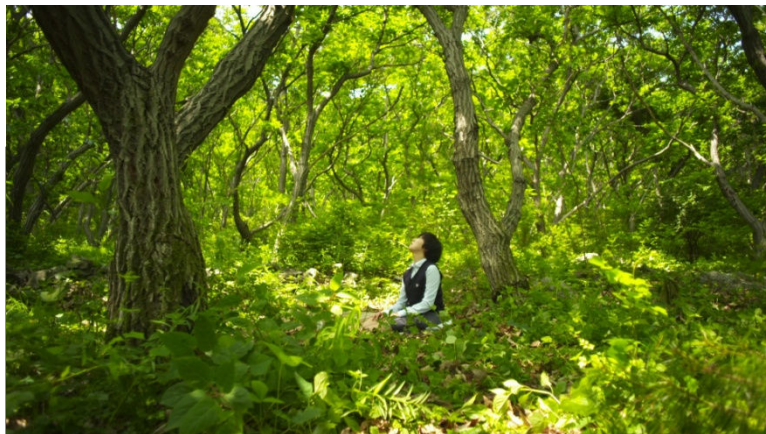
Romance Joe had been assistant director on starring top female actress WOO Joo-hyun.

Soon after she commits suicide, he quits filmmaking and heads down to a small village in the countryside with the intention to take his own life. Just as he is about to commit suicide, Romance Joe meets a waitress from the local coffee shop and recalls memories of his first love through this encounter.



A famous director named LEE comes down to the village to work on a new screenplay.

He calls the waitress over to kill some time and hears the unique story and conclusion of Romance Joe's love story. LEE is determined to adapt Romance Joe's tale into a film, but things just keep unraveling in a strange direction.



## Director

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**B**orn in 1975, LEE Kwang-kuk graduated from the Seoul Institute of the Arts with a Bachelor's degree in film.

His short films include <I.D.>, <Where Is Daddy?>, and <A Blind Alley>. LEE built up his experience on set as 1st Assistant Director for Korean auteur HONG Sang-soo, on such films as <Tale of Cinema>, <Woman on the Beach>, <Like You Know It All>, and <Hahaha>.

<Romance Joe> is the official 2010 selection for Cine21's "New Director Discovery Project". The film was recently screened in the *Korean Cinema Today: Vision* section of the 16th BUSAN International Film Festival 2011 and won the Yellow Pine Tree for the Citizen Reviewer's Award. In addition, the film was screened in The 37th Seoul Independent Film Festival 2011.



## Director's note

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**I** suddenly realized one day that so many of us, including myself, are saying and hearing about countless things in this life. Some of these conversations are definitely necessary, but we tend to spend our time talking about pointless, meaningless things most of the time. We badmouth others for our personal satisfaction and create rumors based on false assumptions, which sometimes leads to the tragic suicide of a wounded soul. Like so, the world is filled with an endless variety of stories. There are even some that must create stories in order to make a living. So then why are we, as people, so dependent upon stories? What would happen if stories did not exist?

These were the contemplations upon which I began the screenplay for <Romance Joe>.

## Commentary

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This is, in a way, a comprehensive anti-narrative film. The storylines are monumentally complex. Although the director was assistant director to HONG Sang-soo on <Tale of Cinema> and <Hahaha>, his work seems even more disjointed, even more abstract, than his teacher's. But still the director asks, "Why do we need a story? What would happen if there were no story?" Is this dissolution or experimentation of narrative? It is severe irony.

Befitting to a former assistant director to HONG Sang-soo, traces of HONG Sang-soo can be found throughout the film. The fact that this is also a meta-film about filmmaking about a once famous film director is also one of them. What's more, the same actors appear in other episodes with no restrictions. The actor who plays the director looks just like KIM Sang-kyung. He has a similar image but the color and the tone of his voice are almost identical to those of KIM. The various episodes are independent yet have small or major connections. The mischievous way in which he intentionally reminds the viewer about our realities is also just like HONG Sang-soo. Even so, the film doesn't really come across like 'an imitation of HONG Sang-soo'. How on earth is that possible?

*(JEON Chan-il, Programmer at Busan International Film Festival)*