



# SECRET OF MY NORTH KOREAN FATHER

북한 아버지의 비밀

A FILM BY JÉRO YUN



FESTIVAL DE CANNES

## Jéro Yun

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Since 2000, the Festival Residence has provided each year accommodation and support to twelve selected young directors in order to help them prepare their first or second feature film. A jury presided by a film director sits twice a year, selecting these young filmmakers on the basis of their short films, or even first

feature film, and the merits of their feature film project.

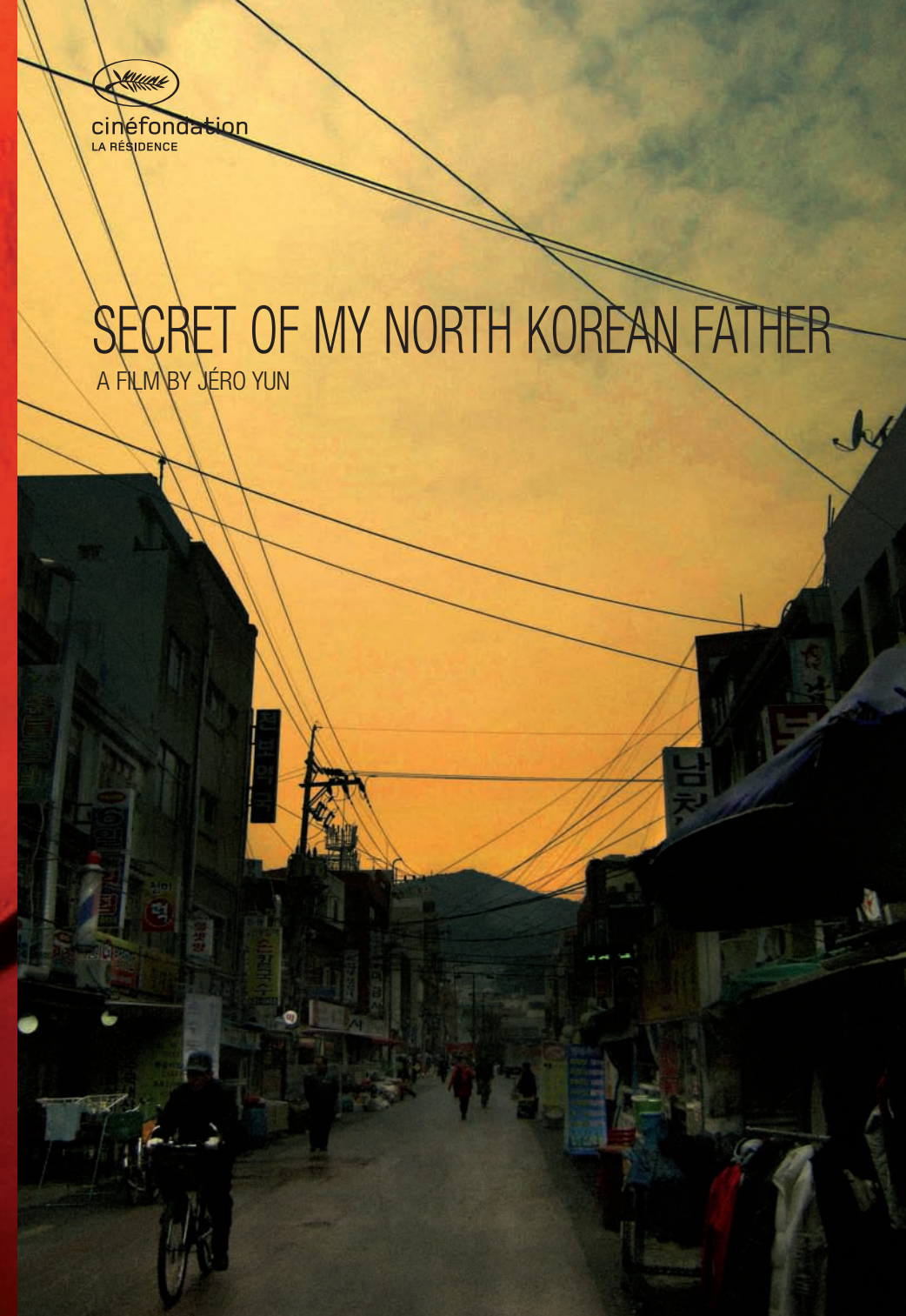
During their 4-and-a-half-month stay in Paris, they work on the writing of their feature film project, have meetings with professionals and try, with the support of the Cannes Film Festival, to bring their project to co-production status.



cinéfondation  
LA RÉSIDENCE

# SECRET OF MY NORTH KOREAN FATHER

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## Technical Information

**Working title:** Secret of my North Korean Father

**Director:** Jéro Yun

**Screenplay by:** Jéro Yun

**Nationality:** Korean

**Genre:** Drama

**Length:** 90 min.

**Shooting location:** Korea / China

## Director's Filmography

**Promesse (Promise), 2010, 13 min.**

**Award :**

- Grand prize *Asiana* International Short Film Festival (2011) – South Korea

**Selections :**

- *Short Shorts* Film Festival & Asia (2012) – Japan

- Rio de Janeiro International Short Film Festival (2011) – Brazil

- International Festival of Documentary and Short Film of Bilbao (2011) – Spain

- *Heart of Gold* International Film Festival (2011) – Australia

- Festival *Les États généraux du film documentaire*, Lussas (2011) – France

- Festival International *Shortfilm Interfilm* Berlin (2010) – Germany

- Festival International du film d'Amiens (2010) – France

**Red Road, 2010, 9 min.**

19 festivals screening worldwide (Molodist Kyiv, Interfilm Berlin, Split film...)



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## SYNOPSIS

One summer, a family of modest means moves into a popular district of Busan in South Korea. Shin, the father, had migrated to the south in 1991, fleeing his native country: North Korea. Today, he works as a courier. One day, a call from a smuggler turns the family upside down and reveals its secret. Ji-hyun, the eldest child, a sixteen-year-old daughter, learns that her father had been married to a first wife in North Korea, and that her biological mother might be sent back to the north following her arrest by police in China. Try as she might, Ji-hyun is unable to find a way to free her mother...

Years pass. Ji-hyun has grown up. She is working in Seoul for a boat building company. Her father, Shin, dies on the day she is promoted. Through her half-brother who is preparing to go do his mandatory military service in South Korea, Ji-hyun learns at the funeral that Shin secretly went to China before he died. The following day, the reading of the will once again throws the family into turmoil: it reveals they have a younger sister and Ji-hyun is asked to find her and bring her to the south. With her half-brother, Ji-hyun leaves to search as far as China for her North Korean sister...

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The project is inspired by my journey through China and South Korea, during which I made a documentary entitled *Looking for North Koreans*. I spent several days at a smuggler's house. There I heard disturbing true-life stories that I couldn't get out of my head. In South Korea, I met several North Korean immigrants who had had to leave their families behind when they left the country. They were trying to get their families out using Chinese smugglers.

The film focuses on two periods in Ji-hyun's life, when she discovers the existence of her biological mother and then, when adult, that she has a North Korean younger sister. Considering the issues which then arose, I became interested by the confrontation between her half-brother and herself and highlighted this issue because her half-brother, Tae-soo, was readying himself for two years of mandatory military service and would have to be prepared to fight against North Korea, the native country of his father and half-sister.

Through this film, I hope to share the pain of the families separated by the division of these two countries. Thanks to this film, I too hope to understand the human issues affecting my country.

## SYNOPSIS

Un été, une famille modeste s'installe dans un quartier populaire de Busan en Corée du Sud. Shin, le père de famille, a migré au sud en 1991, après avoir fui son pays natal : la Corée du Nord. Aujourd'hui, il travaille en tant que coursier. Un jour, l'appel d'un passeur bouleverse la famille et révèle son secret. Ji-hyun, l'aînée de la famille, une adolescente de seize ans, apprend que son père a été marié à une première femme en Corée du Nord, et que sa mère biologique réfugiée en Chine, risque d'être renvoyée dans le nord après son arrestation par la police chinoise. Déboussolée, Ji-hyun tente de trouver un moyen pour libérer sa mère, mais en vain...

Des années s'écoulent. Ji-hyun a grandi. Elle travaille à Séoul pour une société de construction navale. Son père, Shin, décède le jour de sa promotion. Par son demi-frère qui prépare son service militaire obligatoire en Corée du Sud, Ji-hyun apprend lors de l'enterrement que Shin est allé secrètement en Chine avant sa mort. Le lendemain, la lecture du testament bouleverse une nouvelle fois la famille : elle révèle l'existence d'une petite sœur et il est demandé à Ji-hyun de la retrouver et de l'emmener au sud. Avec son demi-frère, Ji-hyun part à la recherche de sa sœur nord-coréenne jusqu'en Chine...

## NOTE D'INTENTION

Le projet s'est inspiré de mon voyage en Chine et en Corée du Sud durant lequel j'ai réalisé un documentaire intitulé *Looking for North Koreans*. J'ai passé quelques jours chez un passeur. Les témoignages troublants me sont longtemps restés en tête. En Corée du Sud, j'ai rencontré plusieurs immigrés nord-coréens qui ont laissé leurs familles en Corée du Nord. Ils essayaient de faire sortir leur famille par le biais de passeurs en Chine.

Le film se concentre sur deux périodes de la vie de Ji-hyun qui découvre l'existence de sa mère biologique, puis à l'âge adulte d'une petite sœur nord-coréenne. S'agissant des questions alors posées, je me suis intéressé à la confrontation entre son demi-frère et elle-même et je l'ai accentuée dans la mesure où son demi-frère, Tae-soo s'apprête à partir pour son service militaire obligatoire (deux ans) et devra être prêt, le cas échéant à se battre contre la Corée du Nord, pays d'origine de son père et de sa demi-sœur.

À travers ce film, j'aimerais partager la souffrance des familles séparées par la division des deux pays. Grâce à ce film, je souhaite prendre moi-même conscience des enjeux humains qui touchent mon pays.