



나는선무다

I AM SUN MU

ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT



I AM SUN MU

directed by ADAM SJÖBERG

produced by ADAM SJÖBERG & JUSTIN WHEELER

executive producers BLAINE VESS, RUDY & LAVONNE BLANCO,
DAVID JACOBSON, SEANNE WINSLOW

co-producer MARIANA BLANCO

LOGLINE

Operating under a pseudonym which means "no boundaries" - North Korean defector Sun Mu creates political pop art based on his life, homeland, and hope for a future united Korea. His hidden identity is nearly compromised when a massive historical exhibit in Beijing is shuttered by Chinese and North Korean authorities.

SYNOPSIS

Operating under a pseudonym which means "no boundaries" - North Korean defector Sun Mu doesn't just paint about his troubled life in the world's most reclusive and repressive state - he paints images of hope. Sun Mu's work is imbued with nuance and heartbreak, political pop art that inverts the propaganda work he used to paint for the North Korean regime. In July of 2014, Sun Mu is offered an historical, though potentially dangerous, opportunity - a solo exhibition in the capital of Asian Art - China. As he prepares his show undercover, an unexpected twist of events puts Sun Mu and all of his friends and family in danger.

IMPACT

THE NORTH KOREAN ISSUE

The people of North Korea are denied even the most basic rights of free speech, free movement, and information freedom, because the ruling elite prioritizes regime survival over all else. They use a brutally repressive system of political control to ensure their domination over society, employing extreme measures including collective punishment, public executions, and political prison camps.

To make matters worse, international attention has focused on nuclear weapons & the Kim family. The international politics is deadlocked, but that is still what the international media focuses on. This affects the people because the highly politicized and securitized image of North Korea makes the issue seem hopeless, with nothing you or I can do to support the people.

SUN MU'S WORK

As someone who grew up in North Korea under her oppressive system, but whom also loves and longs for his homeland and family, Sun Mu literally and symbolically paints a unique perspective that is depoliticising. His paintings focus on love, home for a united Korean peninsula, longing for his homeland, and for turning the global issue on its head. Instead of creating images of hate, Sun paints images of his daughters trying to send a letter to their grandmother in North Korea, or soldiers listening to iPods, or North and South Korean students walking hand-in-hand.

WHY THIS FILM IS ESSENTIAL

The PEOPLE are breaking away from the control of the regime & are transforming their society from the bottom up.

Since the collapse of the state economy in the 1990s, unofficial markets have not only enabled the North Korean people to make a living but also provided the people with goods that are outside the government's control, including technologies like DVDs, USBs, laptops, and cellphones. These new information channels provide the people with new ideas, perspectives and possibilities. North Koreans are not as isolated as they once were, and they are gaining physical and psychological independence from the regime.

Not only does "I Am Sun Mu" tell a unique, nuanced story that isn't mired in global politics or trafficking in stereotypes, but this film itself is a symbol of freedom. For someone who has grown up in such a closed, restrictive society, "I Am Sun Mu" is itself a protest - and, hopefully - will become a beacon of light for other North Koreans mustering up the courage to defect, revolt, or subvert the current system.

CREW

Adam Sjoberg (Director), founder of LOOSE LUGGAGE MEDIA, is a documentary filmmaker whose work has taken him to over 60 countries. His recent film, "Shake the Dust," was a collaboration with hip-hop superstar Nasir "Nas" Jones - an epic global film about the power and dignity of youth in the slums that are using breaking and hip-hop to change their world. This is his second feature film.

Mariana Blanco (Editor, Co-Producer), is an editor, cinematographer, and filmmaker. She has worked on dozens of projects on a broad range of subject matter from music, to sports, to geo-political issues and war. Most recently she worked on "Shake the Dust," "The Barkley Marathons," and ESPN's 9 for IX shorts.

Ryan Wehner (Director of Animation) is the Founder and Creative Director of LA based Animation Studio Digital Twigs. He is a visual artist focused on design-driven storytelling. He is most proud of his continued partnerships with filmmakers and non-profits telling stories that are important to the human race and to making the world a better place. He has worked with a broad range of film and commercial clients including Disney, FOX, MTV, and NBC, and has worked as lead motion designer to create the worlds within movies like Transformers & Guardians of the Galaxy.

Joel P West (Composer) is a songwriter and film composer whose work draws on the wilderness and open spaces of North America. He has released three albums with his band The Tree Ring, and his feature film credits include Short Term 12 (Grand Jury Prize, SXSW 2013), About Alex (Tribeca 2014), and Grandma (Sundance 2015).

Jihyun Roh (Co-Producer) is from Daejeon, South Korea and completed his Masters in Liberal Arts at Lock Haven University, Pennsylvania in 2012. Jihyun currently works at Liberty in North Korea (LiNK) as a Resettlement Coordinator to empower resettled North Korean refugees to fulfill their full potential and achieve their dreams and goals in South Korea through various resettlement assistance and empowerment programs which he is in charge of at LiNK. Besides empowering the North Korean people he is also passionate about connecting North Korean people he works with to more people in the world by sharing their powerful life stories that many people from different backgrounds and cultures can relate to and be inspired by.

SUN MU

Sun Mu was born in North Korea and trained by the North Korean Army as a propaganda artist. Later he studied art in college. During a severe famine in the 1990s he fled to South Korea where he worked as a painter. Out of concern for the family he left behind in North Korea he uses the pseudonym "Sun Mu" instead of his real name and does not allow photos of his face. Sun has acquired fame and notoriety for the Socialist Realist style of his paintings, which resemble North Korean propaganda imagery and have even been mistaken for such. Art critics have noted that his images are replete with political satire; depicting, for instance, the North Korean leaders in Western clothing.

Education

2007 BFA Hong-ik University, Seoul, South Korea

2009 MFA Hong-ik University, Seoul, South Korea

Solo Exhibitions

2013 What are you doing? Gallery dam, Seoul, South Korea

2012 ALLTHATISBANNEDISDESIRED World Conference on Artistic Freedom of Expression, 25-26 October 2012, Oslo, Norway

2012 Who is me? Gallery idm, Busan, South Korea

2012 Korea, Gallery Art Underground Way, Seoul, South Korea

2011 Crossing the Line, The European Union Chamber of Commerce in South Korea

2011 Mind the Gap, SBD Gallery, New York, USA

2010 Bring, Gallery jung, Seoul, South Korea

2010 Line, Gallery idm, Busan, South Korea

2009 Exhibition of the 9th North Korean Human Rights International Conference, Melbourne, Australia

2008 Nothing to envy in this world, Gallery Ssamzie, Seoul, South Korea

2008 We are living in the happy world, Alternative Space Chung Jeong Gak, Seoul, South Korea

Group Exhibitions

2012 SEA OF PEACE, Incheon Art Platform, South Korea

2012 "ha ha ho ho" Lotte Gallery, Yeongduengpo Store, Seoul, South Korea

2011 "Tong" Haein Art Project, South Korea

2011 Art of National Division Daejon Museum of Art, Daejon, South Korea

2010 Korea Tomorrow, Setec, Seoul, South Korea

2009 Shared, Divided, United, Deutschland-korea; Berlin, Germany

2009 Art in Busan 2009; Inter-City, Busan Museum of Art, Busan, South Korea

2008 Seogyo Sixty 2008; The Battle of Taste, Gallery Sangsangmadang, Seoul, South Korea

2007 Wearehappy, Duo Exhibition by Noh Suntagand Sun Mu, Gallery Curiosity, Seoul, South Korea



LIBERTY IN NORTH KOREA

STRATEGIC PARTNER AND FISCAL
SPONSOR OF "I AM SUN MU"

REFUGEE RESCUES

Every year, thousands of North Koreans risk their lives to escape political and economic oppression. Even if they make it to China, they face grave danger because the Chinese government arrests and forcibly repatriates North Korean refugees. If sent back, they undergo interrogation and are at risk of extremely harsh punishments including torture, forced labor, forced abortions, and internment in a political prison camp. Even if they manage to evade the authorities in China, their illegal status forces them to work in invisible industries and leaves them vulnerable to exploitation by sex traffickers and unscrupulous employers. In these dire circumstances, many North Korean refugees do not have the resources or connections to get themselves out of China. That's where we come in.

RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE

Our Resettlement Assistance Program is designed to help newly-arriving North Korean refugees overcome their resettlement challenges in South Korea and the United States by providing support, information, and resources to ease their adjustment and help them become self-sufficient.

North Koreans face a range of challenges as they resettle in unfamiliar and complex new surroundings.

EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS

North Korean refugees who have resettled in safe and free societies have a vital role to play in bringing forth change in their homeland. They have emerged as essential channels for getting information and resources back into North Korea. They are also the most important advocates for the North Korean people, and an unrivaled source of insight on the country. The more they can maximize their potential, the greater force there will be for change in North Korea, and the stronger the North Korean people will be in the long term.

That's why we run our Empowerment Programs. We are investing in the long-term ambitions, potential, and strength of the North Korean people.

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

Mainstream media has defined North Korea as crazy Kims and nuclear weapons, which has created a barrier preventing ordinary people around the world from getting involved. We are changing this narrative: People over politics.

I AM SUN MU
END TITLES & CRAWL
9/9/15

Directed By
Adam Sjöberg

Produced by
Adam Sjöberg
Justin Wheeler

Executive Producers
Blaine Vess
Rudy & Lavonne Blanco

Executive Producers
David Jacobson
Seanne Winslow

Co-Producer
Mariana Blanco

Edited by
Mariana Blanco

Director of Animation
Ryan Wehner

Music by
Joel P. West

Director of Photography
Adam Sjöberg

Featuring
Sun Mu
Angeline
Cui Xianji
Lee Yongbaek
Liang Kegang

Unit Production Manager
Jihyun Roh

Additional Photography by
Daniel Smukalla
Ryan Wehner
Mariana Blanco

Key colorist
Chris Champeau

Supervising sound editor/designer
Ned Douglas

Key Production Assistant
Betsy Tsai

Lead Production Transcription
Veronica Kim

Lead Post Transcription
Veronica Kim

Additional Post Transcription
Shako Liu
HB Cho
Hanna Ji
John Kim
Veronica Kim
Betsy Tsai

Post Translation
Angeline Woo
Betsy Tsai
Wayne Chan
Sokeel Park

Subtitles
Joy Jacobson

Animation Assistant
Greg Rubner

Musicians:

Daniel Rhine: Double Bass
Erica Erenyi: Cello
Travis Maril: Viola and Violin
Beth Ross Buckley: Flute
Ji Eun Jung: Gayageum
Joel P West: Guitars and Keyboards

Score Recorded and Mixed by Chris Hobson

"I Am What I Am"
Performed by Spiritualized
Courtesy of Double Six Records
Under license from Domino Recording Co.

The Filmmakers Would Like to Thank:

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Tom Rice
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Daniel Wehrenfennig
Josh McBride
Hannah Song
David & Susie Sjöberg
Ho Bin
The Yuan Gallery in Beijing

FILM FESTIVAL ENGAGEMENTS

DMZ Docs Film Festival / South Korea / September 2015

Raindance Film Festival / UK / September 2015

DOC NYC / USA / November 2015

IDFA / The Netherlands / November 2015

The Frontline Club / UK / November 2015

Festival dei Popoli / Italy / November 2015

Human Rights Watch Film Festival / USA / January 2015

Amsterdam Human Rights Weekend / The Netherlands / January 2015

The Frontline Club / The Czech Republic / January 2015

Seattle Art Museum / USA / March 2015

Boulder International Film Festival / USA / March 2015

Human Rights Watch Film Festival / Canada / March 2015

Human Rights Watch Film Festival / London / March 2015

Cleveland International Film Festival / USA / March 2015

Salem Film Festival / USA / March 2015

CONTACT

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