

## Poetry

South Korea 2010

**Directed by**  
Lee Chang-Dong

**Screenplay**  
Lee Chang-Dong

**Director of Photography**  
Kim Hyunseok

**Sound Recordist**  
Lee Seungchul

**Cast**  
*Yang Mija*  
Yoon Jung-Hee  
*Wook*  
David Lee  
*Mr Kang*  
Kim Hira  
*Kibum's father*  
Ahn Nae-Sang

139 minutes Subtitles

*Our next screening...*

**Chico and Rita** (Spain)

Tue 1 November 2011

Dir: Javier Mariscal

Jazz music, Cuba and adult animation combine for a hot treat on a cold night!

**Tonight is our seventh South Korean screening in recent seasons, and the first from Lee Chang-Dong. Indeed *Poetry*, his fifth feature as writer-director and considered by many to be his best yet, is his first film to receive a cinema release in the UK. The reviews are consistently superb.**

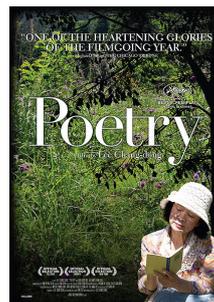
What a wonderful film is Lee Chang-Dong's *Poetry*. Its general release has been impatiently awaited by those of us lucky enough to see it last year at Cannes, where it won Best Screenplay. Gorgeously photographed and exquisitely acted, it takes a story almost buckling under the weight of its sadness, and from it magics a work at once mysterious and luminous, suffused with anger and patience, endowed with — yes, that most over-used, but here wholly accurate word — poetry. What makes *Poetry* so involving is that it's never clear how the story will be resolved. The abrasions and vagaries of Mija's life might, in another director's hands, be rendered as melodrama. But Lee's decision to lure Yun out of retirement (she was a well-known actress in Korea during the 1960s and 1970s) proves a masterstroke. Dressed in lovely floral dresses that suggest her eye for beauty, she pulls off the difficult trick of being both plaintive and purposeful, erratic and strong, self aware (of her

good looks, of her idiosyncrasies: "I do like flowers and say odd things"), and lost. The world she inhabits is crooked, a patriarchy full of misers, bent policemen and cynical businessmen (Lee, a former Korean Culture Minister, offers a quietly devastating social anatomy), and her task is to see how best to navigate it. It's a world where the cardinal sin is one of not connecting; poetry, with its search for similes, its ability to make fleeting moments and quotidian experiences seem of huge importance, its capacity to move readers, becomes a potential tool against such disconnection. Lee recently said that his work is always informed by the question: "What does it mean to be making films at a time when film is dying?" In its sharp, understated fashion, *Poetry* offers a memorable answer: cinema, dying or not, must aspire to a condition of grace and of humanity.

*Suhkdev Sandhu, The Telegraph*

*Poetry* is daring in the ways only quiet, unhurried but finally haunting films have the courage to be. A character study of remarkable subtlety joined to a carefully worked-out plot that fearlessly explores big issues like beauty, truth and mortality, it marks the further emergence of Lee Chang-dong.

*Kenneth Turn, Los Angeles Times*



Voting for *I Am Love*: A-36 B-33 C-9 D-1 E-0 Attendance: 95 Rating: 82.9%