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TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



# Winter in Sakecho

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# Winter in Sokcho

(Hiver à Sokcho)

A film by KOYA KAMURA

with BELLA KIM & ROSCHDY ZEM

104 min - France / Korea

« WINTER IN SOKCHO » written by Elisa SHUA DUSAPIN (Editions Zoé)





## Synopsis

In Sokcho, a small seaside village in South Korea, Soo-Ha, 25, lives in a bit of a rut, rhythmmed by visits to her mother, a fishmonger, and her relationship with her boyfriend, Jun-Ho. When a French man named Yan Kerrand arrives in the boarding house where Soo-Ha works, it awakens within her questions about her own identity, and that of her French father, of whom she knows almost nothing. As winter settles over the town, Soo-Ha and Kerrand will observe and gauge each other, trying to communicate any way they can – through cooking for one and drawing for the other – delicately weaving a fragile bond between them.





## About the adaptation of the book **W**inter **I**n **S**okcho

Winter in Sokcho was adapted from the novel of the same title by Elisa Shua Dusapin, who won the National Book Award. Reading the book, I felt a deep, nuanced connection with the main character and the author's universe. This chemistry only strengthened when I met Elisa while I was adapting this story into an intimate work that echoed my own life story.



# Director's Statement

I come from a multicultural background. My mother is French and my father Japanese. Often proud, at times ridiculed, I built my identity over the course of my life around this “originality.” Never completely French in France, certainly not Japanese in Japan, I searched a very long time for my place in society as I felt the need to be accepted in both countries.

Winter in Sokcho explores multicultural backgrounds and the quest for identity, drawing its inspiration from the French-Korean author Elisa Shua Dusapin’s book, which incisively and with great sensitivity tackles the complexity of one’s identity through its leading character Soo-Ha.

How is a person’s identity truly defined? Is it through the language we speak or our cultural heritage? For Soo-Ha, raised in Korea by her mother, her French father remains a mystery, a haunting absence that influences how she perceives herself. A void that she will







try to fill as best she can, often to the detriment of her physical and mental well-being. This missing foundation to half of her origins raises questions about the importance of heritage in the construction of one's identity.

Is it physical appearance, which also plays a crucial role in the search for one's identity? Soo-Ha, self-conscious about her distinctive physical features like her big light-colored eyes or her tall frame must suffer the social pressure of conforming to tainted beauty standards that are very much present in South Korea. I broach the theme of cosmetic surgery, a veritable phenomenon in South Korean society. This pressure impacts her relationship to her body resulting in eating disorders, underlining the complexity of being able to accept oneself in a society with rigid expectations. Without turning to surgery, our eating habits become our only way of exerting an illusory, indeed dangerous "control" over our bodies.

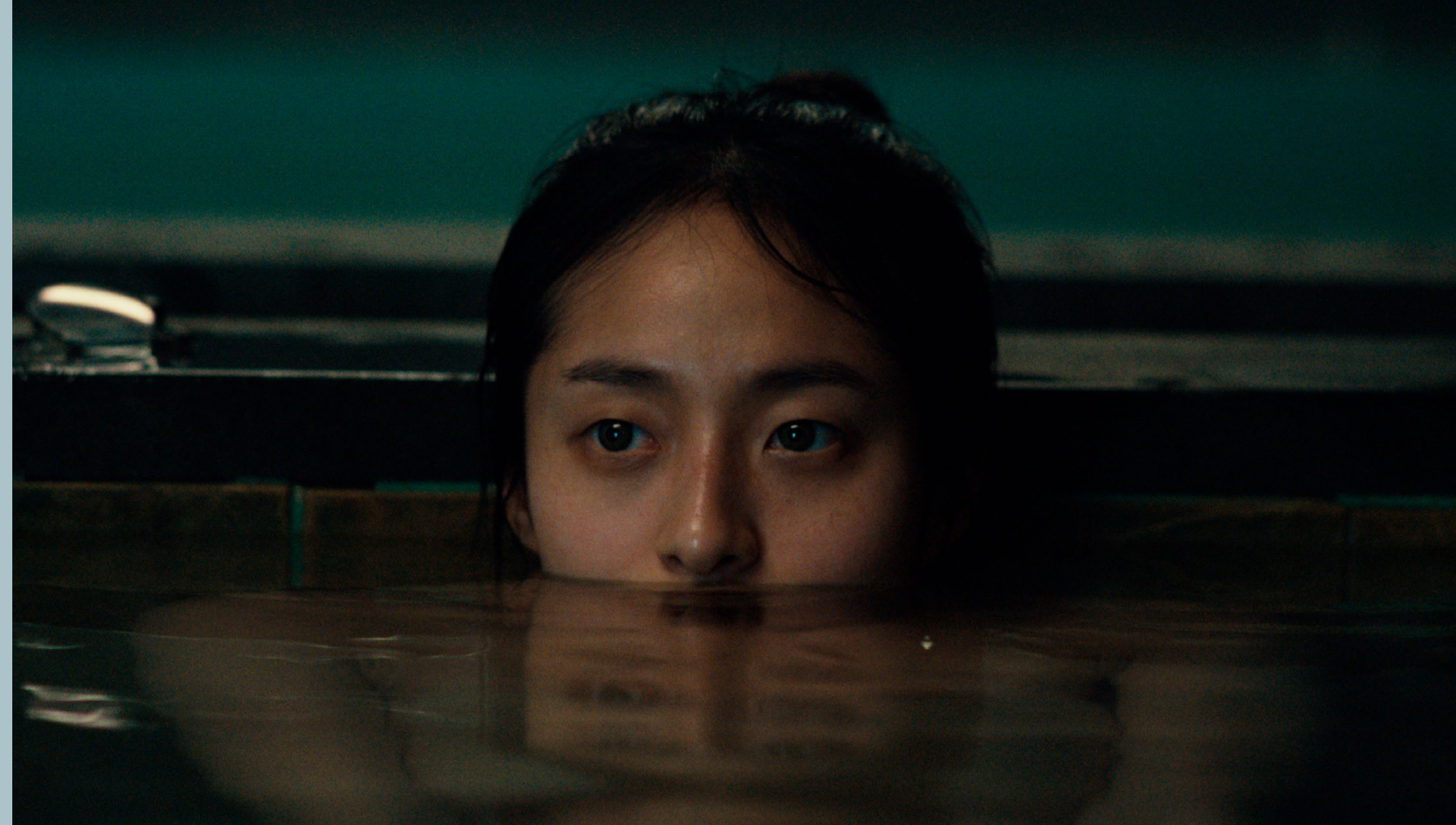
Is our identity shaped by how our entourage sees us? Soo-Ha navigates between the expectations of her mother, her boyfriend Jun-Oh, and Kerrand, an older man who becomes a father figure to her and ends up triggering questions about her own identity. Her mother,



protective but silent about the past, refuses to share their family history. As for Jun-Oh, he reflects the social norms and aesthetic pressure, while Kerrand, through his gaze as an artist and someone with his own perspective on society, offers Soo-Ha a new but disquieting perspective of herself.

Winter in Sokcho is a visual and intimate exploration of these universal questions about one's identity. Cooking, an art handed down by her mother, becomes for Soo-Ha a means of expression and comfort, symbolizing her cultural roots. The interactions Soo-Ha has with the other characters reveal her inner struggles and her journey towards accepting her mixed origins. These inner battles are highlighted through animated sequences, giving the audience a vision of Soo-Ha's emotional state.

Winter in Sokcho will resonate not only with those who share a similar experience of mixed origins, but more widely with everyone who wonders about what defines them. In filming Soo-Ha's doubts, hopes and discoveries, I wish to capture the beauty and complexity of one's search for identity, all the while paying homage to the spirit of the novel.







## About The Director

Koya Kamura is a French-Japanese director born and raised in Paris. Graduated from Film University at Paris VII before studying at Keio University in Tokyo, he began his career in France at VIACOM group (MTV, GameOne) in 2007 and later joined the Walt Disney Company in 2008 as a Creative Producer and Director.

Koya Kamura's fictional directorial debut came with his short film «Homesick» in 2019, set in the Fukushima No-go-zone, which garnered acclaim and awards at major international film festivals, including a selection for the French Academy Awards (César) in 2021.

In 2023, Koya directed his first feature film, «Winter in Sokcho,» starring French A-list actor Roschdy Zem and Bella Kim, filmed in Korea. Koya Kamura is currently in development on his second feature film, «Evaporated,» a dark film noir set in Fukushima.





## Crew

Director  
Screenplay  
Cinematography  
1st Assistant Director  
Production Design  
Editing  
Animation  
Composer  
Sound Design

Production Company  
Co-production Companies  
Producer  
Associate Producer  
Production Manager

Co-financed by

French Distributor

International Sales

Koya KAMURA  
Koya KAMURA & Stéphane LY-CUONG  
Élodie TAHTANE  
Jawahine ZENTAR & Woosang KIM  
Hyein KI  
Antoine FLANDRE  
Agnès PATRON  
Delphine MALAUSSÉNA  
Didier FALK, Clémence LOUESDON, Kinane MOUALLA

OFFSHORE  
KEYSTONE FILMS, BNP PARIBAS PICTURES  
Fabrice PRÉEL-CLÉACH  
Yoon-Seok NAM  
Laura LESTRADE, Eunjae JUNG

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REGION SUD, KOFIC, FONDATION GAN POUR LE CINEMA, CINECAP 7,  
COFIMAGE 34, PALATINE ETOILE 21, DIAPHANA, BE FOR FILMS, PLAYTIME

DIAPHANA

BE FOR FILMS



# Cast

Soo-Ha  
Yan Kerrand  
The mother  
Mr. Park  
Jun-Oh  
The aunt

Bella KIM  
Roschdy ZEM  
Mi-Hyeon PARK  
Tae-Ho RYU  
Doyu GONG  
Kyung-Soon JUNG





# Technical Details

Sound Format	5.1
Aspect Ratio	1:85
Running time	104'
Genre	Drama
Original version	French, Korean
Subtitles	English
Year of production	2024
Countries	France, Korea

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