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Director Kim Yong-hwa returns with 'The Moon'

Sul Kyung-gu stars in acclaimed filmmaker's new sci-fi blockbuster

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Acclaimed director Kim Yong-hwa, behind the "Along with the Gods" film franchise, is returning to the big screen after five years with the upcoming science fiction blockbuster "The Moon."

Set in 2029, the upcoming film follows an astronaut named Sunwoo (Doh Kyung-soo) who tries to return home after an accident leaves him stranded in space. Actor Sul Kyung-gu plays the role of the former head of Korea's Naro Space Center who tries to rescue him while actress Kim Hee-ae stars as NASA's director general.

Describing "The Moon" as an ambitious space film with awe-inspiring visual effects, Kim, the director, said the creative team designed the lunar roving vehicle and spacecraft and enhanced them with computer imagery. They also utilized 4K resolution and incorporated IMAX film cameras into the film's set pieces to present the highest quality imaging format suited for IMAX and Dolby Cinemas.

"We consulted with researchers at Korea Aerospace Research Institute and Korea Astronomy & Space Science Institute for scientific accuracy. We tried to get the feeling of the detail correct, so we tried to get the appropriate textures of what a spacecraft or lunar roving vehicle would need," he said.

Doh, who previously worked together with director Kim on "Along with the Gods" film series, said he was taken aback after reading the script.

"I was shocked to find out that this kind of film could be made in Korea. It was a pretty lonely process because I spent most of the shoot solo. Thanks to realistic movie settings and having to wear a heavy space suit, however, I was able to immerse myself in the role and bring out complex emotions of extreme fear, anger and loneliness."

Sul said he chose to star in the film without even reading the script. "I have always been a huge fan of director Kim. I have watched all his films and was impressed by how his films differ in style and genre," he said.

Kim recalled meeting Sul 17 years ago at a cafe in Gangnam District. "I was a rookie filmmaker who had just made my feature directorial debut with 'Oh! Brothers' and Sul was already a big star back then. However, he approached me and told me how much he liked my film. That was quite a defining moment in my life."

Kim, the actress, said she was thrilled to star in a sci-fi film in which she could speak English. "It was amazing to be part of a spectacular film and to star alongside great actors and work with a reliable director," she said.

The director said he hopes viewers will emotionally engage in Sunwoo's adrenaline-fueled journey for survival and connect directly with the film characters.

"There have been a few mind-blowing space movies such as 'Interstellar' and 'Gravity,' but I can guarantee that our film has amazing visuals and cinematography. The last 40 minutes of the film, which centers on a rescue operation, will have something different to offer," he said.

"The Moon" will hit local theaters on Aug. 2.



Actors Doh Kyung-soo, left, and Sul Kyung-gu listen to a reporter's question at a press conference for the film "The Moon" in Seoul, Tuesday. Courtesy of CJ ENM