

“SEWOL: Sealed Eternally With Our Love” (2025)

SHORT SYNOPSIS:

Having been on the front line as an activist for the Sewol Ferry cause since that Korean tragedy in 2014 and having visited Korea on several occasions over the last decade, award-winning film director Jason Verney brings his heartfelt tribute for the families of victims, survivors, fellow activists and friends of those lost to the sea. We begin in London, where Jason first became interested in Korean culture and its tragedies and take a journey through various memorials in Korea, including those taking place for the 10 Year Anniversary, whilst being provided with a little more insight on the incident.

This documentary is like a sealed letter of love from the director and on behalf of those involved with the monthly memorials still happening in London from the group, "Remembering Sewol UK".

It spans more than 10 years, 10 visits and is a documentary of 10 parts, including the special docu-montage entitled "District Sewol" ("세월호 디스트릭스").

LONG SYNOPSIS:

Having been on the 'frontline' as an activist for the Sewol Ferry cause since that tragedy in 2014 - in Central London, South Korea itself and during his years living in Korea-Town UK (the New Malden and Kingston area of London / UK) - and having visited Korea several times over the years (and a few of these before the tragedy happened), video artist, filmmaker, activist and journalist last decade, film director Jason Verney brings a heartfelt tribute to those who were lost to the sea, but also for the many who are still keenly interested in this tragedy, including of course the directly impacted family members, survivors, fellow activists and friends of those lost to the sea.

The director got involved as an activist back in 2014 and never felt that he could document the situation or in fact whether he even should. Perhaps getting deeper into Korean culture, issues and other tragedies - such as Jeju 4:3, Gwangju 5:18, the navy base issue on Jeju Island, the 'comfort women' issue, the plight of Korean adoptees - helped persuade his heart and head to make something.

So, we start from the film director's time in London back in 2008, where he first became interested in Korean culture, which itself came from other Asian culture and visits to Thailand & other countries in that part of the world and go on a 10-part journey from that time and right up to the present day.

These 10 parts align, coincidentally or otherwise with the fact that this film not only covers 10 visits by our director to the land of Korea but also that a significant part of the documentary revolves around the Sewol Ferry's 10 Year Anniversary, which was only in the Spring of 2024.

In fact, it was that time in Korea (April / May 2024) which prompted Jason Verney to extend his already existing, but un-released video art, "District Sewol" (sparked from his first visit to the Sewol Ferry itself in Mokpo area, soon after it had been moved there in 2017) into this full length documentary. Perhaps Jason was never going to achieve anything so good or heartfelt as the 6 films which also featured at JIFF (Jeonju International Film Festival) 2024 that May but that also was a turning point for further inspiration and forming this feature film.

Amongst those 10 segments or tales in this film are ones relating to that festival in Jeonju and its own Sewol memorials area, a poignant visit to Jeju on a ferry by Mr Verney, the 10 Year Anniversary in Korea, the Sewol memorial classrooms, the UK activism work and even other Korean tragedies.

It's truly a journey across seas, through various memorials and of course bringing love from London by him and his fellow activist friends from the group, "Remembering Sewol UK".

MORE INFORMATION:

This feature film was made in a relatively short amount of time (some of the latter part of 2024) but has already started being submitted to festivals in 2025. This is a very personal film project, to the filmmaker - not least due to involvement with the Sewol Ferry cause.

Jason Verney never intended to document, in a feature film or any kind of film - apart from a couple of video art pieces made over the last few years - the Sewol ferry memorials in London and elsewhere, of which he was an integral member, but some footage from 2017 when Jason visited the ferry itself wouldn't let go of him, artistically.

An 'at-the-time', half-finished video art or what the director liked to call a docu-montage remained unfinished right up until this feature film reached its completion. It ultimately became what inspired him to turn all his partly-unintentional Sewol ferry

research, mostly via several visits to South Korea, into a feature film and that is “SEWOL: Sealed Eternally With Our Love”, a film of 10 parts [9 + the docu-montage/video art now known as “District Sewol” (“세월호 디스트릭스”)].

Older and even fairly newer Korean issues and tragedies* (older perhaps, but questions / resolutions ongoing too), which director Jason Verney knows a certain amount about, get mentions in this feature documentary... and so does very recent events from the end of 2024 and even going on into 2025.

* including: *Gwangju 5:18*, *Jeju 4:3 (massacres/uprisings)*, ‘*Comfort Women*’, *Jeju Navy Base*, *Itaewon Tragedy*, *Muan plane crash*

Our director knew one thing for certain though, and that was that a certain piece of music by well-known musician, Moby went so well with that 2017 footage, that it simply had to stay... and it remains in the feature film itself. Speaking of music, Jason also had been in discussions with Korean musicians, Love X Stereo about using some their music in projects and, almost by good fortune one of their tracks, which was written about the Sewol ferry tragedy fitted his planned editing idea and so that too was used.

Kevin MacLeod’s music also features in “SEWOL: Sealed Eternally With Our Love”, and in Jason’s previous film, “Reparation” Kevin MacLeod’s music was used there too. “Reparation”, a 30-minute, dual language drama, touched quite heavily on the Sewol ferry tragedy, as well as other issues from Korea and the UK.

CAST & CREW:

Jason Verney (as Himself)

Jason Verney (Director/Writer/Producer/Editor)

Jason Verney (DOP/Camera)

Patrick Chengzhi Wang (Segment - DOP/Camera)

Jiyoung Min (Segment - DOP/Camera)

Moby (Music)

Love X Stereo (Music)

Kevin MacLeod (Music)



JASON VERNEY

BIOGRAPHY:

British-born Jason Verney is an established, award-winning film director, video artist, editor, videographer, multi-podcaster and journalist.

Although mostly self-taught in the process of filmmaking, he combines his experience of working on film sets over the years, and courses attended at the Met Film School in Ealing and Raindance in Central London, with his love for writing, creating editing and ultimately directing.

His screenplays from 25 years ago may differ hugely to his recent works - which focus on different cultures and social issues - but his passion for Asian cultures and Asian cinema is what drives his fiction and documentary ideas, but loss, love and longing also play a big part.

Jason's recent film projects have been focused more on Korean culture and its diaspora, resulting in Korea-related video art which resided in the well-known Kingston Museum in London, UK and being commissioned to film a variety of events at the prestigious Korean Cultural Centre UK, for much of the last decade.

Other highlights include film work in Jeju, South Korea and creating an interactive a music video for a track by esteemed musician, Damon Albarn (Blur; Gorillaz), which rather predictably, perhaps, featured a Korean actress.

Jason has also been a film judge at the Seoul Whistler Film Festival in Seoul, Korea and assisted in other film festivals, such as the Kingston International Film Festival, UK.

In addition to this, Jason has given talks and speeches on Korean culture and issues, as well as been involved in panel discussions, Q & As and runs a podcast on filmmaking, as well as one on Korean culture.

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY:

PAN Asian (dir. - short - 2013)

Moon Jar: the Art of Imperfection (script advisor - 2015)



What Year, Korea (video art - 2017)

Reparation (dir. - short - 2021)

SEWOL: Sealed Eternally With Our Love (dir. - feature documentary - 2025)





