2025 ACFM Conference Official Report

Entertainment Finance Forum Busan Ⅱ

Session Topic: Fireside Chat with Simon Cornwell

Key Remarks by Speaker

Simon Cornwell (Co-CEO/Founder, The Ink Factory):

- **Unique Background & Language Skills**: After graduating from a UK university, he went to Thailand for a one-week vacation but stayed to work for the American Embassy within 24 hours of arrival. This led to his becoming a bilingual speaker and gaining deep experience in Asia.
- **IP Management & Production**: As Chairman of the company managing the John le Carré estate and Co-CEO of The Ink Factory, he focuses on adapting his father's literary works into high-end film and TV projects.
- **Partnership with Asian Industry**: He recently launched a new venture with CJ ENM and other partners, expressing a strong commitment to Asian storytelling and cross-border collaborations.
- **Content Strategy**: Emphasized the importance of rigorous rights management and the creation of prestigious, high-quality adaptations that maintain the essence of

the original source material while appealing to a global audience.

Q&A and Key Arguments

- **Modernizing IP with Universality**: The session discussed how to deliver classic spy novel IP (such as John le Carré's works) to contemporary audiences. Simon Cornwell responded that the key lies in reinterpreting universal themes—human nature and complex relationships that remain unchanged over time—using modern storytelling techniques.
- **Specifics of Asian Collaboration**: Beyond merely attracting capital, the discussion centered on how to introduce unique Asian narrative structures to Western markets seamlessly. He emphasized practical collaboration methods that combine the cultural insights of local partners (e.g., CJ ENM) with his own global network.
- **AI and the Future of Creativity**: Regarding changes in the creative ecosystem due to technological advancement, the talk highlighted the need to view AI not just as a threat, but as a supplementary tool to refine a writer's intent and depth more sophisticatedly.

Industrial Implications

- **Expansion of Global Storytelling**: Illustrates a successful collaboration model where a major Western IP holder partners with Asian studios to create innovative global projects.

Session Theme: The Asian Film Exhibition Industry: Crisis and Recovery Strategies

Key Remarks by Speaker

- **HWANG Jaehyeon (Strategy Communication Director, CJ CGV):** The Korean theater industry faces a dual challenge: stagnant attendance recovery and resistance to ticket prices. To overcome this, CGV is expanding "K-Theater" technologies like 4DX and ScreenX globally to provide a unique immersive experience exclusive to cinemas. Additionally, he highlighted the strategy of diversifying content (Alternative Content), such as live concerts and sports, to increase theater occupancy.
- **Karen MOON (Managing Director, Sony Pictures Entertainment Korea):** Noted that recent audiences have become highly "selective" and "price-sensitive." With a prominent "Wait and See" trend—where viewers check social media ratings before deciding to watch—she emphasized that managing early word-of-mouth and restoring audience trust is now critical in marketing and distribution.

Q&A and Key Arguments

- **Ticket Pricing and Resistance**: Discussed how to prove the value of cinema to audiences in light of increased ticket prices. There was a consensus that theaters must evolve into "experiential entertainment spaces" rather than just screening venues.

- **Holdback Policy**: Analyzed the impact of the collapsing "holdback" period (the window between theatrical and OTT release) and discussed the need for institutional measures to ensure the survival of the exhibition industry.

Industrial Implications

- **Securing Technological Advantage**: Theaters must prove their raison d'être by strengthening physical and visual experiences (premium format technologies) that OTT platforms cannot replicate.
- **Data-Driven Marketing**: Strategic approaches are needed to analyze changing consumer patterns, deploy targeted marketing, and establish the perception of films that "must be seen in a theater."

Session Theme: Fireside Chat with Janet Yang and Eugene Yi

Key Remarks by Speaker

- **Janet YANG (Emmy and Golden Globe-winning Producer/Former President, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences):** Emphasized that Asian content has shifted from being a symbol of "diversity" to becoming a core driver of the "mainstream market." She explained the systemic innovations within the Academy, such as changes in the voting body, and highlighted the impact created when Asian creators present their "most personal stories" to the global market.

- **Eugene YI (Director, *The Rose: Come Back to Me*)**:Through his documentary on the band 'The Rose,' he discussed narrative strategies that capture an artist's inner struggles and growth beyond the genre conventions of K-pop. He highlighted how the documentary format serves as a powerful medium to convey the authenticity of Asian artists to a global fandom.

Q&A and Key Arguments

- **Documentaries and Fandom Economics**: Discussed how artist documentaries strengthen emotional bonds with global fandoms and how this translates into financial success within the entertainment industry.
- **The Intersection of the Academy and Asia**: Analyzed the shift in Hollywood's perspective toward Asian cinema following *Parasite* and *Minari*, exploring production strategies for non-English content to maintain consistent recognition from the Academy.

Industrial Implications

- **Genre Diversification**: The success formula for Asian content, previously limited to dramas and films, should be expanded into documentaries and music films to diversify revenue models.
- **Leveraging Global Networks**: It is essential to build pathways for Korean creators to enter mainstream awards and distribution networks through connections with key Hollywood figures like Janet Yang.