

 **MNIBUS**
ENTERTAINMENT



2021 | SOUTH KOREA | 93 MINUTES
KOREAN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES | 16:9 | 5.1

PRESS CONTACT

Michael Krause | Foundry Communications | (212) 586-7967 | mkrause@foundrycomm.com

BOOKING CONTACT

Erin Farrell | Theatrical & Festival | (212) 941-7744 x206 | erin@filmmovement.com

BILLING BLOCK

A **PINKS** Production

Written & Directed by **BYUN Gyu-ri**

Cast **Nabi, Vivian**

Executive Producer **PINKS** Producers **Sona JO, LEE Hyuk-sang**

Cinematography **BYUN Gyu-ri, LEE Sei-yon, LEE Hyuk-sang,
LEE Som-yi, NAM A-rum**

Editing **KIM San(Sparging Lab)** Music **LEE Min-whi**

Sound & Production Sound Mixer **PYO Yong-soo**

World Sales **M-Line Distribution**

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SYNOPSIS

Gyuri Byun's groundbreaking Korean documentary centers on two working class mothers, Nabi and Vivian. Like many in South Korea, where there is a distinct lack of legal protections for queer communities and gay marriage remains illegal, neither women gave much thought to LGBTQ+ rights or its growing advocacy among the country's younger generations. Therefore, their lives and perceptions were upended when their respective children come out to them — Nabi's as trans, and Vivian's as gay. Reluctant to accept this news at first, both women's reactions reveal deep-rooted discriminatory beliefs about queerness. This is not uncommon in South Korean society, which makes their respective transformations all the more impactful — both women grew to not only accept their children's gender and sexuality, but became activists in their own right as members of Parents, Families and Allies of LGbTAIQ+ People in Korea. Both Nabi and Vivian grapple with the pain and loneliness their children feel, the struggle to access gender affirming care, and the yearning for social and familial acceptance. Without shying away from their initial discriminatory opinions, Gyuri's impressive film tells an unflinchingly honest story of hard-won allyship and gives faith to the idea that people can change their minds.



ABOUT THE FILM

A 34th-year fire officer 'Nabi' & a 27th-year flight attendant 'Vivian'

A new world has opened up to them after their children's coming out!

"This is the world my kid lives in?" Here come the fierce women fighters!

The heroines of the film are 34th-year fire officer 'Nabi' and 27th-year flight attendant 'Vivian', both in the twilight years of their lives. They were working moms and ordinary women of their generation who weren't quite familiar even with the term LGBTQ+. The film starts with their honest confessions - Nabi's first thought to Han-kyeol's declaration to get a mastectomy and live as the gender 'he' identifies himself with was, "What is this?" while Vivian reminisces that Ye-joon's coming out as a gay was "Something I have never even imagined, not once." The movie shows an honest portrayal of two very ordinary women reforming themselves into two fierce women fighters with a new, sudden identity as parents of LGBTQ+.

Director BYUN Gyu-ri attended the Parents and Families of LGBTAIQ People in Korea ("PFLAG Korea") herself for two years while working on *Coming to you*. Through the regular meetings, she met the members and became close to Nabi and Vivian, those who are now committee members of the group. Director BYUN Gyu-ri says about the cast, **"Both of them are very witty and charming. For the parents' generation, the LGBTQ+ issue could be hard to digest. I was also curious to see if the two, with their careers and social lives, could reestablish their view of the world and accept their children's coming out."**

Vivian says about her life after her child's coming out, **"I'm not a great person but I certainly have changed. I was able to break away from the frame I was in. It began with my kid's coming out but in the end I have achieved growth."** Nabi says, **"We have come to respect each other and each other's lives in our own ways. One's life belongs to oneself after all."** Shedding a light on their new world that has begun with sincere love, *Coming to you* is a film for all personalities of LGBTQ+ and all personalities in this world which will bring tears and laughter to all those living today's world.

**“In a hope to take a step forward”,
here comes director BYUN Gyu-ri’s 4-year project!**

A film coming a step closer to us even on this day, *Coming to you* was selected as the opening film of the Summer Pride Cinema 2021. Since then, the film has been in spotlight winning many awards including the Special Mention and the Documentary Award at the 22nd Jeonju International Film Festival, the Special Award-Brave New Docs Award at the 13th DMZ International Documentary Film Festival and the Audience Award at the 23rd Jeongdongjin Independent Film Festival. It was also selected as the opening film of the 3rd Seoul Independent Women’s Film Festival and won the Audience Award, and received official invitation to the 11th Seoul International Pride Film Festival.

Coming to you is significant for it is the 10th project of PINKS, a feminism media community and a solidarity for sexually minor cultures and human rights, and the 4th of the Coming Out series following *3XFTM*, *The Time of Our Lives* and *Miracle On Jongno Street*. It took four years for director BYUN Gyu-ri, one of the activists of PINKS, to complete her second feature-length film *Coming to you* in cooperation with the Parents and Families of LGBTAIQ People in Korea(#PFLAG). She spent about eight months preparing for the project, attended the PFLAG Korea’s regular meetings 17 times to research, then spent another two years filming the subjects at a close distance.

Noting the parents of LGBTQ also get an identity as a parent of LGBTQ, Director BYUN Gyu-ri says about her intention behind the film, **“I waited till they finish their stories they wanted to tell while recording them. They were violated on a daily basis, and I questioned if the society respects them as human beings. Rather than contemplating on whether to show the reality as it is, I thought it was more important to think about how we will remember the hard moments and extract significances out of them and what kind of stories we will tell through it. I hope we could take a step forward through this movie.”**

She says about the title of the film *Coming to you* (Korean title: *On the Way to You*), **“A way has an image of incompleteness. As the title, *Coming to you* refers to a journey of the parents to their LGBTQ+ children and at the same time, it is a journey to themselves. I hope we could all take a step forward together through the film.”**

Through Nabi and Vivian, those who are taking another step forward every day, *Coming to you* will inspire us to think about our current selves and a step we could take and be loved with the warmth it brings to the theaters.

Nabi: "The first time you watch it it's a queer movie, the second time it's a family movie, and the third time it's a feminist movie."

Vivian: "A drama without a script to break the prejudice against documentary movies."

The unprecedented support from prospective audience raises the expectation of *Coming to you*. "I willed up after watching it at a film festival and will watch it again when it's in the theaters! I strongly recommend you to watch it!", "The best documentary I've watched this year. Go watch it everyone.", "A brilliant film with a confident and cheerful portrayal." "Don't miss it when it's released. One of the greatest documentaries I've watched this year.", "It hits directly at your heart with its weighty yet pure tactics while providing laughter here and there.", "I cried so much. Congratulations on the release!", "I watched a movie I've been waiting for. It's a great movie and people in it are nice and adorable! I laughed and cried. Can't wait to see it in the theaters!", "A heartwarming time I'll never forget.", "A deep resonance that is as touching as it gets.", "I learned, felt ashamed and promised myself.", "I cried and laughed facing a new world through their way.", "A film that readily walks with us for happiness of all.", "A work that breaks all the expected prejudices.", "The most important issue I faced in 2021." All these sincere reviews make us want to join 'Nabi', a mother to her transgender son, and 'Vivian', a mother to her gay son, taking one step a day to be stronger and prouder.



ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Q&A with Director BYUN Gyu-ri

◆ The meaning behind the title **COMING TO YOU**

'You' could refer to a person of LGBTQ+. To Nabi and Vivian, it could refer to their children, Han-kyeol and Ye-joon, or it could refer to fellow citizens with whom we could talk about the issues of LGBTQ+. I was impressed by the parents in the Parents and Families of LGBTAIQ People in Korea ("PFLAG Korea"), like Nabi and Vivian. One of the reasons why they shall be respected as an adult in our society is that they provide efforts to talk and discuss things with their children, those who are not from their generation. From the position as parents, you don't really discuss things with your children. Our children don't really go to school or take extracurricular classes as a result of discussions and debates. Sometimes, we want our children to follow the path we have set up for them. But these people broke away from it and try to talk to their children and learn about them. I came up with the title thinking that those efforts could become "the way to you".

◆ About planning and production of **COMING TO YOU**

In 2016, I created a promotion video for PFLAG Korea while I was participating in PINKS. Their faces and language talking about their children in front of the camera left a deep mark in my heart. Then, PINKS and the PFLAG Korea talked about creating a documentary on the community of parents. What happened to my friend at the time, who was a queer rights activist, also affected me. One of her queer friends committed suicide due to the social discrimination issues. The mother of the deceased did not know about her child's sexual identity and my friend couldn't write the name of the group on the envelope containing the condolence money. Listening to this story broke my heart. I thought the parents of LGBTQ+ shall also be talked about as an issue of LGBTQ+.

◆ About Nabi and Vivian, the heroines of **COMING TO YOU**

First, I invited the two for diversity of identity of children in the film. I also liked that they are both witty and good speakers. And the relationships they have with their children were interesting as well. Even those with liberal values among the parents' generation find the issues of LGBTQ+ hard to digest. I was also curious to see if the two, with their careers and social lives, could reestablish their view of the world and accept their children's coming out.

◆ About focusing on the relationship between mother and child

While preparing and researching for the project, I attended the monthly meetings of PFLAG Korea. There were more women, in other word, mother participants than men. I found it odd at first. The

group met on a Saturday every month, so it can't be because the fathers had to work, and most of the mothers there had a job as well. I learned the reason over the time. Mothers, based on their experience as women, understand the discrimination their children go through more quickly. In a way, I believe it's inevitable for women to have more experiences of being in solidarity than men. It seemed such experiences shine through at the parent group. Mothers bonded with their children through their sensitivity and empathized with the pain and wounds their children were experiencing. And I wanted to show that in the film. Fortunately, Nabi agreed to be in the film saying that the world needs this kind of story, and Han-kyeol was happy when we wanted to come with him on his process of legal gender recognition. Vivian, at first, felt uncomfortable filming her private story. But then she got used to talking about herself on camera, and said it feels like her life is being sorted out through the process.

◆ **About showing families of LGBTQ+ through the film**

We still have stereotype images of families. I thought it would be good to imagine something different from those images. With Vivian, I thought the way she maintains her relationship with her partner Jimmy was interesting. So I intended to show how they try to keep their relationship fair and equal. In fact, I filmed many footages of Jimmy doing domestic chores. It's similar with the part where Seong-jun, Ye-joon's boyfriend appears in the film. Normally when you have a son, you take it as granted that he will introduce you to his girlfriend or marry a woman. But I thought, shouldn't we imagine something different by now? I wanted to imagine and show diverse forms of family. With Nabi and Han-kyeol, I wanted to point out the issues of the "normal family" system through Han-kyeol's process of legal gender recognition. Although it is abolished now, they asked Han-kyeol to submit the parental consent even though he was already an adult then. He was told to get a consent from his biological father with whom he doesn't even talk to anymore. Those things are outrageous. I hope what I felt witnessing the process and the reality Han-kyeol had to go through are well-portrayed in the film.

◆ **About difficulties as a producer**

There certainly are some difficult points when it comes to reenacting a person's trauma. While working on this film, however, rather than contemplating on whether to show the trauma as it is, I thought it was more important to think about how we will remember the difficult moments we went through and extract significances out of them and what kind of stories we will tell through it. In fact, I believe a traumatic experience becomes a trauma because one is yet to properly extract significances out of the experience and talk about it. It's called trauma because one has not sorted out why such traumatic experience was occurred and how it shall be remembered and signified on a social level. Of course, finding the significance doesn't heal the wound but, I thought starting to talk about it could be one of the things we should do.

◆ **About things COMING TO YOUhas left us with**

While making the film, I felt the strength of the PFLAG Korea, which enables us to do things we can't do on our own. I have learned that creating and maintaining such communities is what we need to do at this point. Remembering that, I hope to try many fun things through the feminist view.



CAST



Mother of 'Han-kyeol' who lives as the gender he identifies himself with ✨

Nabi / JEONG Eun-ae

Nabi, a 34th-year fire officer, is confused to hear that her child 'Han-kyeol' wants a mastectomy. After the coming out of her child, who she thought was just a little different, Nabi decides to be the strongest supporter of her child who identifies himself as "bi-gender/panromantic/asexual". Nabi and Han-kyeol grow stronger through the difficult process of female to male sex reassignment surgery and the legal gender recognition. Nabi is taking one step a day towards her child's world.

“

Being with Han-kyeol was not easy. We really are different. Han-kyeol is sensitive and delicate, while I am tough and strong. We still struggle with our personality differences. I'm not the most caring or sympathetic person. Han-kyeol asked me to understand him, and there were times when I thought, "To what extent?" But then, I realized he wants me to understand him because he trusts me and has faith in me. I think we have found a way to keep the relationship appropriately. We respect each other in our own ways. We don't expect too much from each other and give up on certain things. Giving up could be sad but, you live your own life.

CAST



Mother of 'Ye-joon', a gay ✦ Vivian / KANG Sun-hwa

Vivian, a 27th-year flight attendant, is taken aback to receive a letter from her child 'Ye-joon' saying he is a gay. After the coming out of her child, who she thought was just a little special, Vivian decides to be the best friend of him who must have went through the pain and agony all by himself. Vivian and Ye-joon find their peace participating in a queer festival in the country where Ye-joon studies and attending the PFLAG meetings. Vivian is taking one step a day towards her child's world.

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I am not really a great person but I certainly have changed. It would not have happened if I wasn't involved in the PFLAG activities. Well, I guess I could have accepted the fact that my child is a gay.

I actually have a very strong attachment to my child and am ready to sacrifice myself. In the past, I thought about my child, "How could you do this to me after all the things I did for you?" But through several years of experience, I realized I was wrong and I could have been a very bad adult. It made me look back upon myself and motivated me to change. I was able to break away from the frame I was in. Then, I stopped thinking that my child belongs to me or that he is subordinate to me. I have become a mature citizen through my involvement in the PFLAG. It began with my son's coming out but I ended up achieving growth.

DIRECTOR



BYUN Gyu-ri



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I feel grateful for the audiences those who visit the theaters to watch this film.

I hope people will watch it with their parents.

I believe we will be empowered and able to take a proud step forward despite any attacks of hatred if those who are not necessarily a person of LGBTQ+ but willing to learn more about social minorities and queers and to raise their voice with us come watch the film.

It is her hope that *Coming to you*, a four-year project in cooperation with the PFLAG Korea - eight months of prep works, 17 regular meetings of the PFLAG Korea and two years of filming - will be of a small step towards someone's heart.