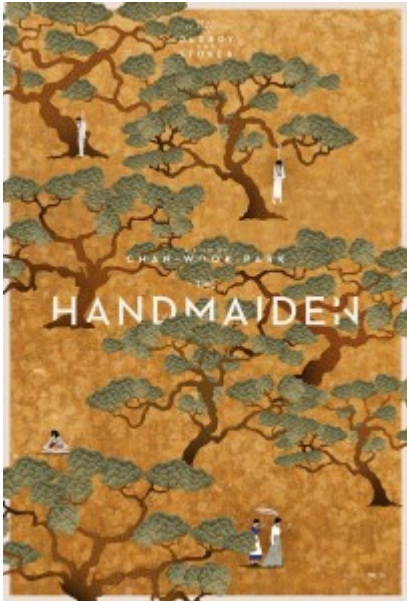


Film Review: The Handmaiden



In 1930s Korea, a young Korean girl, Sook-Hee, is sent to work as the handmaiden to a Japanese heiress, Lady Hideko, who lives in a secluded mansion with her Uncle Kouzuki. We soon find out that all is not as it seems because Sook-Hee turns out to be a skilled pick pocket aiding a con man, Count Fujiwara, in courting Lady Hideko in order to gain control of her fortune. It also is revealed that the uncle runs a lucrative series of readings and auctions of rare fiction, which he is actually forging. Count Fujiwara intends to wed Lady Hideko and then have her committed to an asylum in order to control her wealth, but when Sook-Hee and lady Hideko become closer, events become more complicated.

Chan-wook Park has long been considered a master filmmaker and *The Handmaiden* is no exception. The story is dense with layers and character, which gets both more intriguing and shocking as the story unfolds. The three lead actors are all fantastic while Tae-ri Kim and Min-hee Kim as Sook-hee and Lady Hideko respectively stand out, especially when in a scene together. And these scenes look amazing due to cinematographer Chung-hoon Chung, who has worked with Park many times before; he photographs *The Handmaiden* in a manner that is both lush and lurid while maintaining a fantastic sense of classical frame composition.

The Handmaiden is a fantastic piece of cinema that is worth seeing theatrically as it was truly crafted for that experience. Chan-wook Park has made many great films and can add this period piece, love story, thriller to the list of future classics. *The Handmaiden* opens at the Cable Car Cinema on Friday November 18.

The Handmaiden (2016); Director: Chan-wook Park; Starring: Tae-ri Kim, Min-hee Kim, and Jung-woo Ha