

HAF 14 On High Ice



COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: South Korea, Israel

GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME: Documentary | Digital Format | English, Ladakhie | 80 mins

DIRECTOR:

Gary KAM Byung-Seok

PRODUCER:

Naama PYRITZ

HAF GOALS:

Funds, Co-producers, Pre-sales

BUDGET:

US\$ 550,000

SECURED BUDGET:

US\$ 162,000

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

First Feature Director

ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS

Girls create their ice rink by hand to play ice hockey in the Himalayan desert where the ice lasts six weeks, but their hope for a better life never melts away.

SYNOPSIS

In India, there are women who play out their unbridled passions on the ice. At the height of 3,500 meters, they build their ice rink manually in the brutal winter, at -20 to -30 degrees Celsius. They pour buckets of water for weeks on the bare ground until it turns into a frozen field of water; this natural ice allows skating only for six weeks. Girls in Ladakh, a serene land of high desert and remorseless sun, have been playing ice hockey for more than ten years. But in a society where women used to be excluded from sports, men still insist on their privilege to use the frozen pond, and women's teams suffer from the shortage of equipment and support. Still, the passion of the girls never melts away. They keep playing on hard ice covered with frozen weeds. They never stop teaching young kids to nurture the next generation of female players. They travel to promote skating and ice hockey among young girls in the remote villages. For them, ice hockey is something that fuels hope and transforms lives. This film follows their struggle to uplift the stature of the women in India through sports.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I wondered what ice hockey means to them, watching the girls pouring buckets of water in the harsh winter nights to make an ice rink. I watched them playing on sand with a coconut in the summer. They did not care whether the donated second-hand gear fits or not in the winter. They were just happy to fly on the ice freely. I saw their passion and I also noticed the social discrimination against women behind the beautiful scenery of Ladakh. Noor Jahan studies for her doctoral degree in Delhi and works as a temple mural restorer. Rinchen is a sports teacher at a local school. Kunzes works at an NGO and also is a news reader at a local TV station. They all could have easier lives if they wanted. But they always come back to the ice rink in winters to play, to teach the kids, and to keep challenging themselves to be better: "I don't feel I am less than anybody else. And ice hockey is giving me a chance to prove that." I wanted to make this sentence into a film. The women in Ladakh refuse to stop fighting to carve their names on the ice.

DIRECTOR

Gary KAM Byung-Seok

Gary Kam Byung-Seok has produced award-winning documentaries in Korea and worldwide. His recent filmography as a producer includes *Planet of Snail* (Best Feature Documentary, IDFA 2011 and many more) and *Breathing Underwater* (Special Jury's Award, CGV Arthouse Award, Jeonju International Film Festival 2016,). Actively working as a documentary filmmaker, he also lectures at the Docedge Kolkata, India and Docs Port Incheon, Korea. *On High Ice* is his first feature documentary as a director.

PRODUCER

Naama PYRITZ

For over 20 years, Naama Pyritz has worked as a freelance independent producer. Her recent filmography includes *1 out of 3* (2014, Channel 8, Israel); *Inferno* (dir. Yael Bartana, 2013), which had its debut at PAMM Gallery in Miami in December 2013, shown at Sydney Biennale in March 2014, and participated in film festivals such as Rotterdam, Berlin, Vladivostok; *Zamach, Mur i Wieza, Koszmary* (dir. Yael Bartana, 2007 – 2011), a trilogy of films shown at the Polish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2011, as well as museums and film festivals worldwide: MOMA PS1, NYC; International Short Film Festival Oberhausen; Tate Modern, London; Center Pompidou, Paris and many more.

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Ingenue Production

Ingenue Production is a leading production company in Israel. The company is in production with *If the Dead Could Speak* – a documentary by Asaf Galay, about the Jewish cemetery in Warsaw; *In My Room*, a documentary by Ayelet Albenda about how to become teenagers, made from archive materials from YouTube; *Abu Naim*, a hybrid feature film by Michael Zupraner (pitched at the Venice Biennale college, and Torino Film Lab); *Army of Lovers*, a feature documentary about the Swedish pop band from the late 1980's, and *The Adventures of Saul Bellow*, the first documentary ever about the author.