

Korean angst

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THE black-and-white style of the South Korean movie, *My Generation*, which plays at the Singapore International Film Festival tonight (Siff), indicates that the reality portrayed within is bleak.

In the debut feature by director Noh Dong-seok, 32, the ennui of restless, unemployed young adults, apparently a growing problem in Noh's homeland, is starkly depicted.

Speaking to Today at Ngee Ann Polytechnic yesterday — where he was participating in a digital film workshop with students, organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation and the Siff — Noh said his film offers a true indication of how hopelessness is creeping into the lives of South Koreans in their mid-20s.

"Commercial films are not so realistic," he said through an interpreter. "They show young people all happy and cheerful, but that's artificial. My film shows what they're really facing."

Noh, who made *My Generation* when he was 30 — just past the age group he's so intrigued by — said that he hopes to make more films about disenchanting youth.

This particular film is about a couple who have trouble finding employment. Their troubles mount when debt enters.

Noh — who said he's been hugely influenced by Taiwanese director Hou Hsiao-hsien, a fellow guest of the SIFF this year — said he wrote the story based on the experiences of his friends, as well as his own.

The \$500,000-movie took four months to make. The director even had to handle a boom microphone at times, so short-handed was the shoot.

Noh's film received a "positive response" when it played in eight cinemas in South Korea last year, especially from critics and young adults — who found the movie "sympathetic". Asked how it felt to have made it as a director, Noh

modestly said: "I'm still trying to make my dream come true."

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