

18th ifva Awards - Open Category Jury Meeting Transcript

Jury Members: Ying Liang (Ying), Alex Cheung (Cheung), Ma Fung-kwok (Ma), Shum Long-tin (Shum), Felix Chong (Chong)

Organizer representatives: Teresa Kwong (Kwong), Kattie Fan (Fan)

Kwong: The mission of ifva is to encourage media creation in Hong Kong and Asia as well as exchanges among filmmakers in these regions. The competition emphasizes content, form and technique, but we pay special attention to independent spirit and creativity. Do you have any questions?

Ma: I notice that among the 9 finalist works, 4 have been part of the Fresh Wave Short Film Competition, organized by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council. I have served as the chairman of the HKADC for 6 years. Would that be a problem? Also, these works have been judged by other panels, and some have received awards. If our decisions differ from other jury panels, would that cause any problems?

Kwong: We invited the five of you to be the jurors for this category because of your achievements within your field, and therefore we trust your professional and artistic judgment. In the past there have been jurors who are professors at institutions where entrants study, and they would declare their interest before the discussions begin. As for the work experience you mentioned, I think the relationship is more distant, so it is not a problem. As for some of the works having been part of the Fresh Wave competition, I am sure many of the entries have also participated in other festivals, which have their own positions and roles. I believe that Fresh Wave has its own ideology, as does ifva. In the past there had been works that have received awards at Fresh Wave, and may or may not get an award at ifva. I believe that the standards of judgment are different, so it is not a problem.

Ma: Can you explain the organizer's interpretation of independent spirit?

Kwong: Everyone can have their own views and ways of interpreting it, and this is what independent spirit means. The organizer defines independent spirit is that we do not accept commercial films, or works that promote a funder's particular brand. We accept works that originate out of the creator's autonomy. We emphasize how filmmakers use the work to express their views and feelings. This is just a general

way of interpreting independent spirit. In the past, there had been works that repeats or copies mainstream productions, and to some jury members, that work lacks independent spirit.

We invited all of you to act as Open Category jurors because of your experiences in the industry. I believe each of you will have your own ideas about independent spirit, and we allow for different interpretations of independent spirit.

Ying: I want to declare my interest. One of the finalist works, **Sam Hui Yat** is done by a student of mine at the Academy for Performing Arts. Even though I was not directly instructing this group of students, I know clearly how they went about the production. When discussing this work, should I refrain from comment?

Kwong: We have encountered similar problems in the past. The jury member would refrain from commenting on works that they have a relationship with. If you do not have further questions, we will start by discussing **Paradox**.

Chong: Us three first round jurors had a heated discussion about this work already. I think we can let the two new jury members (Ma Fung Kwok and Alex Cheung) say a little more about it.

Cheung: I think the technique of **Paradox** is okay, but its perspective is not wide enough and seem one-sided. It puts together many unhappy things. Coincidentally, the theme of the work is similar to another finalist, **6th March**. By comparison, I prefer the latter, because its perspective is more well-rounded. Both pro and against arguments are presented, and the work lets the audience make the final decision. **Paradox** simply gathers together many things that the director is unhappy with. I'm not too comfortable with this work.

Ma: **Paradox** gave me several feelings. It emphasizes the director's personal feelings, and expresses his message through the main character. The story is about a guy who used to be a social activist, and after some time decides to become involved in social activism again. I am okay with this, but I have problems with the film's structure. I cannot completely follow the director's train of thought. The structure jumps around, and is not complete. I don't think it has enough dramatic elements. Even though it is generally smooth, there is a lack of climax. There is a great deal of

documentary footage in the middle, which simply illustrates that many people are involved in social activism today, but does not explain why the main character is involved. His motivation and goals are not clear. On the whole, this work does not move me very much.

Among the finalist works, I gave **6th March** the highest mark. It is clearly superior to the other finalists, and I personally like it the best. It is very mature in many regards. The story is complete and it's clear that a great deal of attention is paid to the dialogue. The story is very taut, and the structure is complete. It brings out a complete story through the interaction of six people. The use of camera shots is good. The actors are not bad, some are wonderful, while others basically okay. In terms of drama, the director uses the two brothers to bring out the climax, which demonstrates superior technique. The editing and camera work are both smooth. Therefore I really like this film.

Cheung: I totally agree with what Mr. Ma said about **6th March**. Among the 9 finalist works, this one is very professional in terms of camera work, script, acting and lighting. I liked the film and felt very touched by it. Compared to the other finalist works, this one is closest to a professional film, and its content is good. I especially like its multi-dimensional nature. When I saw **Paradox**, I felt there is something missing in the middle, then I saw **6th March** and I felt that all the characters are very clearly depicted. The scriptwriter successfully created five different characters, with the three policemen all being quite distinct. The students are more similar, but each has his own personality. It is not easy to achieve this effect. If there was a best actor award, I would give it to the guy who plays the older policeman. His acting is really good, and his expressions and small details are outstanding. The editing is very precise, and the end result is even better than many professional films. This film really moved me, and I feel this director will be a future star. I particularly like the older policeman. He probably added many details himself.

Chong: Like the nasal inhaler?

Cheung: That's right, and also his way of smiling and his expressions. I believe it is hard for the director to put in these details. He can only rely on the actor to fully immerse himself into the role, and put in these details themselves.

Shum: He is a professional actor.

Cheung: I know. Several of the actors in the film are professional actors.

Chong: The three policemen are all professional actors with a wealth of acting experience.

Cheung: I think this is a really fine work.

Kwong: Do the other two jury members have anything to add?

Chong: Seeing the 9 finalist works altogether today gave me a different feeling than watching them the first time. After watching them today, there are only two works I can select, **6th March** and **Waiting to Drown**.

Watching these films on the big screen again, I feel the former is very solid, and the director's control of suspense is very good. Although the camera work has problems, with many shots out of focus, its dramatic treatment is very precise. As for **Waiting to Drown**, I had already seen it twice in my office, and this is my third time watching it. From the part at the end, I really admired the freedom with which the director made this film. As a creative person, we are often faced with many limitations, and therefore cannot be truly independent. This work is like playing a game. Watching it on the big screen today, I found it even more outstanding. Of course, from a rational perspective, I'll pick **6th March** because it is clearly superior to other works. However, as a creator rather than a juror, I prefer **Waiting to Drown**, especially after seeing it on the big screen.

Kwong: This is one of the reasons why we let our jurors watch the films on the big screen. Do you have anything else to add?

Chong: **Sam Hui Yat** has technical issues, and there is pixilation in the middle part. **Epilepsy looks** like it was filmed in 16mm, and there are problems with the filming, which affected the overall impression. Each of the shots is like a separate shot, like a perspective drawing with the perspective effect missing. I think the problem with **Sam Hui Yat** is the director's oversight. The automatic aperture opens and closes, which makes it hard to watch. Perhaps the students did not notice this problem.

Shum: I wanted to talk about *Paradox*. When I watched it the first time, I didn't like it, but watching it again I grew to like it. In response to what was said about it being from one perspective and one-sided, I feel that a work does not have to be all-rounded or even have multiple perspectives. This point only arose in comparison with *6th March*. *6th March* tries to use dialectics as a means of advancing the story, and establishes two opposing positions, within which there are radicals, middle and conservative sides. That's why it feels balanced. The script advances according to the rules of dialectics. The story is about the exchange of views and opposing positions. On the other hand, *Paradox* is about the suppression of emotions, and how the generation of post-80s and post-90s face these times. Watching it for the first time, I felt that it was too sad, but watching it again on the big screen, I thought this is exactly what the director intended. Through depicting suppression, it allows the pain to be shown. The two works are actually about the same theme, that even if people go out and march on the streets, they cannot change society. *6th March* expresses what a young person feels, and how he deals with the old policeman and older views, and in the process brings out multiple perspectives. *Paradox* talks about the same issue directly. I was touched by both works. *Paradox* presents two opposing sides through barriers, some are external and some are internal barriers. The metaphor about hearing and sound is a bit clichéd, which affected how I viewed the work the first time around. Speaking of clichéd, *Cow* is even more so. All its elements are outdated: the sentimentality, photographic film, depiction of new immigrants and the image of Hong Kong are all out-dated. By comparison, *Paradox* is not outdated. It looks better on second viewing, and I don't know if this has to do with watching it on the big screen.

Chong: Absolutely. After watching the first 5 minutes, I felt Lo Chun-yip is the best director out of all the finalists. His problem is his lack of creativity. The part with the radio appeared three times. He simply stuffs the film with headlines, and there is no variation. The first time it appeared the sound editing is impressive. The second time my interest waned. The third time it was drowned out by the image. I think his style is too monotonous. However his treatment and editing is better than *6th March*. It's a pity that he just repeats himself, and is no fun to watch.

Shum: The progression is problematic.

Chong: Actually there is no progression. The one chance for progression is when the old woman who picks up cigarette stubs appears. I can only say that his choice of script is not very good.

Shum: This has to do with the way he shoots. I can imagine that he first shot the July 1 protests and then tried to construct a story around it. This way of working limited his options. Then he goes around to find social activist characters.

Ma: I also participated in social activism in the past, so when I watched **Paradox**, I thought I would rediscover those feelings. The only moving part about the whole film is when the lead character goes to look for the cigarette stub picking old woman and their conversation. This part moved me a little. However the work as a whole is flat.

Shum: It is like an edited news program. It lacks everyday occurrences.

Ma: It'd be better if the director could express his passion or feelings more. Perhaps I would be touched.

Chong: To use a film industry expression, the film lacks gimmicks.

Ying: I agree that from the point of view of direction, the director of **Paradox** did very well. Even though there are problems with the script, he performed well as a director. When I saw it on the big screen just now, the film made me believe that such a family exists in the world, which is quite something. After watching the film, I could take in his message and the history he portrays. I can only say that its flaws are too obvious in that it does not have a good story. All the sections are just fragments, which when joined together only forms a collage. The desire to speak is greater than the will to communicate. From the point of view of the script, it does not consider well the characters. For example, the character used to work on the airport runway. What does this have to do with his situation in the past and present? I can't find a connection. I understand his deafness. But I'm not sure about the airplane as a means of transport. Also the message in the dialogue and whether the words have power and is believable--this flaw is quite obvious. We discussed this in our first round meeting already.

Shum: All the background information is just expressed in words rather than shown, and lacks the support of real life situations. Therefore it seems unconvincing.

Cheung: This is my first time watching this. At first I thought it was okay, but then he keeps repeating himself. The radio appears three times.

Ma: If it can be shortened by 4 or 5 minutes it would be better.

Chong: The second time with the radio is like a commercial for a radio station.

Ying: I want to talk about **6th March**. The other jurors talked about its good point, so I'll talk about its flaws. I don't agree with the older brother's performance. For example, the fact that they are brothers is not a point of suspense, but the director tries very hard to develop it as a suspense. Actually this film is very good. I'm just being picky. I quite agree with Chong. From the perspective of a professional filmmaker, this film is easy to like. But as a filmgoer, I am a little put off by and suspicious of its maturity and neatness. But on the whole, among the 9 finalists, I most approve of **6th March**.

Kwong: Let us discuss **Epilepsy** next.

Cheung: I think this work is quite unique and bold. It reminds me of the works Shūji Terayama that I had watched when I was young. The director sets up a stationary shot, and has people looking into the camera. This is a bold and uncommon approach. There is a scene where someone wearing an orange necktie walks back and forth. However the story did not leave a big impression on me.

Ma: I agree that this work is bold, and the director tries to make something different. This intention is quite obvious. Even though the work is not too long, I felt a bit bored by it. Perhaps there is something wrong with the actors' performance, I felt that they were a bit too much. Their performance seems at odds with the tone of the work, and ruined its overall consistency. As for the experimental nature of this work, I was expecting something special, but felt disappointed afterwards. The work did not resonate with me, and I felt it could be better. However I applaud its attempt.

Shum: When I watched *Epilepsy* for the first time, and then watching again just now, I felt this work is pretentious. You said it is bold, but I disagree. He is merely using theatrical style, and people who frequent the theatre would not find anything special about it. The theme is old, with epilepsy as the reaction to the system. The design of sets introduces visual depth, but the logical connection between scenes is not clear. Necessity and level of rule system are related. Usually rules have an external set of governing principles, which then become internalized, leading to self governing. In the end you think that you are free, not is actually ruled by the system. This kind of work usually follows this formula, but this work only goes so far, and then stops. It merely talks about external factors until the student jumps off a building. The story takes the point of view of a person being oppressed, and then a girl appears. Usually the girl would play the role of a redeemer, but this hope comes to naught. You can say that this director is being subtle and his technique is good. The end scene merely recalls the first without expressing any point of view or any sense of progression. Usually when watching a work on the small screen, I would find that I had missed many small details that I was able to catch on the big screen. However watching *Epilepsy* for the second time, I did not discover any new elements, so I found the work disappointing.

Chong: I had chosen *Epilepsy* to be included among the finalists. I like its mise en scene, which many professional directors are not able to do. His control of the rhythm of each scene is very good. When watching it on the big screen today, the resolution is a big problem. It is related to the TC transfer from film to video. The end result lacks depth. When watching it in my office, I found the lighting design to be very well done. The contrast between highlight and lowlight was around five to six stops. But now the image is flat.

Long: The most obvious part is the elevator scene.

Chong: Not only that scene, but also the push-up scene and the scene with the mother in the room—they all become flat. The other reason I chose this film is because I felt there should be many kinds of experimental works in this kind of competition. There are many traditional dramas this year, whose style is similar to TV dramas. I feel there should be different kinds of works.

I feel strange about this, I remember when I entered the first ifva, even the drama category works were experimental. I think the problem with film education today is

that everyone emphasizes creative industries, and they all try to become part of the industries. They push this idea onto the students when they were still not fully mature. Being an industry, everything you say has to be well understood by people and liked, rather than simply understanding it yourself and doing things one likes. I chose this film to highlight the idea of “independent”.

This work is one of the most outstanding one out of the more than 50 works in the first round. I did not suffer through it when I watched it.

Kwong: This is a trend in recent years.

Chong: This trend over-emphasize the industry element, it cares too much whether audiences will understand.

Ying: In the previous round, I also supported ***Epilepsy***. The problem when viewing it today is the visual part. Its message is very dependent upon visuals. I was quite surprised when watching it in a theatre that its sound treatment is not good. These two elements are regretful. Just now, Long Tin talked about the internal state of the character, and I agree. I can only say that watching it on the big screen did not offer this work any advantage. When watching it on the small screen, the scenes where the character looks directly at the camera were really shocking, at least for me. However this feeling was gone today. Yet I feel that we should support this kind of work that is complete, has independent spirit, expresses personal feelings and is different from other people.

Kwong: Let's discuss ***One . Superhero*** next.

Shum: This works should be discussed in conjunction with ***GwanGong VS Alien***. In the last round, we felt the two works are similar, and that only one should make it to the final round.

Chong: It's because I insisted on ***One . Superhero***.

Shum: That's why both works made it into the final round.

Chong: I felt that if we let **GwanGong VS Alien** into the final round, then **One. Superhero** should be included too.

Ma: I have made a list that includes marks for each work. I gave **6th March** the highest mark, and **Waiting to Drown** the second highest. They are both dramas. I agree with having different types of films, and they should be encouraged. After giving marks, I would compare films from the same genre, for example, **Sam Hui Yat** with **Kwun Tong-going away**, which are both documentaries. The other two that I made comparisons were the “superman” films, **One. Superhero** and **GwanGong VS Alien**. Personally I like the former more because its theme is clear, and uses special effects to bring it out.

Shum: It is low-tech.

Chong: It's not low-tech, but beyond the director's ability.

Ma: It can't be helped, being low budget.

Chong: I don't think that's a problem. Monty Python also has these kinds of outlandish special effects.

Ma: I personally like **One. Superhero** more. I particularly like the fact that it subverts the conventions of superman films, which are usually about superman against monsters, but in this work the monster emotionally moves superman. I like this innovation, which subverts the idea of heroism and inspires the audience to think. On the whole, **One . Superhero** ranks 4th on my list.

Chong: Watching these finalist works again, I am more convinced that **One . Superhero** is superior to **GwanGong VS Alien**. When watching the latter, I could completely imagine its final cut. This is a haphazard work in which the director simply packs with whatever element strikes his fancy. There is no relationship between characters. Of course sometimes haphazard works can be good, but this work lacks that chemistry, because it does not go far enough. When watching it again, I really felt this is a conservative work. It uses cliché means to criticize clichéd topics. On second viewing, the low tech nature of **One. Superhero** is outlandish. On the big

screen, it seems too bright, it would be better if it was darker. Of course **GwanGong VS Alien** is very clever. The director uses a multi-layered film look to cover up many of its flaws, which **One. Superhero** did not do. However, the latter reminds me of the comedy show **The Funny Half Show**, starring Liu Wai Hung and Lam Mun Chung. I appreciate the fact that the director tries his best to tell his story, unencumbered by the special effects, and his story-telling is smooth. I will not consider **GwanGong VS Alien** for an award, because seems patronizing. I think Alex Cheung should say something. You are the pioneer of Hong Kong special effects films.

Cheung: Your ideas are more progressive, while my point of view is more basic.

Shum: When watching them the first time, I thought the technique and other elements of **GwanGong VS Alien** is better than **One. Superhero** . However, watching it on the big screen, I sense the works' underlying elements. The latter does not hide its crudeness, which makes its satire clearer. The whole work is satirical from start to finish, including the part after the credits. Even though its message is shallow, it is consistent in its satire. As for **GwanGong VS Alien**, it is more calculated, and talks about being a cult film from the beginning. The director wants to make a cult film that contains political metaphors.

Chong: I think the director uses the label of cult film to do whatever he wants, and everything is allowed because it is cult. But **One. Superhero** is truly cult. When I saw the part about **Battleship Potemkin**, I wondered how serious the director was about his dream. However he treats this topic very seriously. It is a true cult film.

Shum: Watching the film more than once reveals the fact that **GwanGong VS Alien** is too calculated, which makes it hard to accept. Its ending and theme are also hard to accept. He uses a very serious issue to achieve what he wants, which makes it unsuitable.

Chong: **GwanGong VS Alien** lacks humor.

Shum: The part about June 4th simply becomes a tool.

Ying: In the first round, I supported **GwanGong VS Alien**. Because I come from a politically repressed region, my perception is different from the audience in Hong Kong. I find the freedom of this work interesting, powerful and fun, even though it lacks discipline. Perhaps because of my cultural upbringing, I find these elements interesting, powerful and fun, such as when the names of Hu and Wen appeared. When watching **One . Superhero** on the big screen, my perceptions improved, but I still felt it did not go far enough. It could still go further.

Cheung: When watching these two works, my feelings were mixed. I admire their courage in attempting special effects. Just now someone mentioned Monty Python. I really idolized them when I was young. I can sense that the directors of both these works are sincere.

Chong: It is hard to reach the level of Monty Python.

Cheung: Those works are of very high standards, and would make me wonder how they did it.

Chong: From the point of view of special effects, these works remind me of **Holy Grail**, with equally outlandish special effects.

Cheung: Perhaps because this is my first viewing of both works, I feel that the technique of **GwanGong VS Alien** is better, while **One. Superhero** is more 2D and more flat.

Chong: I wonder if he has the ability or the intention to do better. On the big screen, it is even more ridiculous.

Ma: I tend to forgive all these, because they have limited resources. I like his humor and sense of satire, and care about whether its message is clear. I think he delivered his point from start to finish.

Shum: That is his only good point.

Ma: Yes, I would not treat it as a special effect film.

Chong: I like the scene where they go up to the 5th floor, I think the treatment is good. However its crudeness and editing is obvious. I think this is a pure cult film.

Kwong: Now we'll discuss ***Kwun Tong-going away*** .

Chong: There are two documentaries among the finalists. I feel that for documentaries, the camerawork and image quality are very important. The quality of image has to match with the message. Watching the two works on the big screen, neither achieved this.

Shum: ***Kwun Tong-going away*** is more flawed.

Chong: ***Kwun Tong-going away*** has serious problems. It was filmed in DV, and uses DVHS format. The aperture of ***Sam Hui Yat*** is unbearable. I had just had Lasik surgery, so I am very sensitive to light. ***Sam Hui Yat*** goes from bright and dark, and as a documentary these are serious technical flaws. I would not consider these two works for awards.

Ying: In the previous round, I did not like ***Kwun Tong-going away***, and like it even less this time around. I feel that he has a definite plan before he started, and went out to find the people and the situations to put in it. I cannot feel any sense of life and movement, which are things that can draw the audience in. I don't care about the technical details, because I know the technical situation of documentaries. If a creator has strong feelings about a community, he could make the "I" less hidden, and express his ideas through interviews with people in the neighborhood and scholars. If he wants to be "objective", he must go deeper and spend more time, and record the details and lives of people within that community. In this way, he can bring the audience into that community. I feel that he has failed in both regards, and is at odds with the way I approach documentaries.

Ma: I feel a little differently about this work, probably because I grew up in the area it was filmed. With regards to the two works, I think ***Sam Hui Yat*** is good at describing its characters, but the cinematography is a bit too shaky. Perhaps the director is

trying to depict the narrowness of the space with moving shots, but it is hard on the audience. As for ***Kwun Tong-going away***, because I'm very familiar with the things in it, I was more emotionally involved. I accepted its filming style. Even though it has its flaws, at least the camera does not move around so much. Obviously it was pre-designed, but I can accept this way of expression. Both these works are about the same in terms of quality, although I gave higher marks to ***Kwun Tong-going away*** than ***Sam Hui Yat***.

Chong: In the previous round of discussions, I insisted on selecting ***Kwun Tong-going away***. I explained to Ying Liang that the people depicted in the film are disappearing, and they have their own way of speaking. This is a problem Hong Kong society faces, that it is trying to phase out these people. When I watched this film I was powerfully moved. The fact that it is pre-designed does not affect my enjoyment. As for ***Sam Hui Yat***, it is trying to explore something, but fails at the end. I will not judge a work by the creator's initial intentions, but from its final quality and whether it touches me. I agree with Ma Fung Kwok. I especially like the scene where they rinse the whelk.

Ma: I am even more touched. I pass by such scenes daily.

Chong: When I was young I often see Chiu Chow people wash whelks, and such sounds are familiar to me from a young age. I grew up in North Point, and I did not realize that the sounds of North Point and Kwun Tong are the same. No one would dress this way when exercising or have such hairstyle. It's great!

Shum: I had lived in both communities described in these two works. I grew up in Western District, and have passed by the community described in ***Sam Hui Yat***, and have eaten at that restaurant. For the past 4 years I have been living in Kwun Tong, and bore witness to the changes and disappearance of the community. Therefore I feel strongly about ***Kwun Tong-going away***. In the previous round of discussion, I liked the film's design, leading people into the story with one character after the next. In the end the main character is the community rather than the people. These characters lead us to traverse the community and observe its appearance. I really like the whole editing logic. But when watching it on the big screen, the image quality was an obvious flaw. The sense of a community's disappearance is

important to this work, but it not come across. By comparison, **Paradox** succeeded in portraying the substance of Kwun Tong's older communities.

Chong: That's because they used HD.

Shum: The quality of the cinematography affected the nostalgic feeling of **Kwun Tong-going away**, which brought down its overall quality. Emotionally I am more drawn to **Kwun Tong-going away**, and find it superior to **Sam Hui Yat**. Even though it did not spend a lot of time in the community, it probably took longer to film than the latter.

Chong: The character in the latter changed clothes three times, so it probably was not filmed in one or two days.

Shum: I think **Kwun Tong-going away** spent a lot of time in Kwun Tong.

Ma: I feel that **Sam Hui Yat** spent a lot of time preparing. It only started filming when it established a relationship with the people. I agree that the editing of **Kwun Tong-going away** is very good. Even though I watched it on the small screen, it was still good.

Chong: The editing and sound are professional.

Ma: My deepest feeling is that it can capture the changing community. My parents still live in that community, and I visit them often, so my feelings for it run deep.

Chong: Among the finalist works, this is probably the only one that has sound editing. I don't know why the others don't do it.

Cheung: I find **Kwun Tong-going away** to be stronger. I have not lived in Kwun Tong, so I do not have those direct and indirect feelings that you have. I like news shows like "Hong Kong Connection" and "Sunday Report", because they are able to take me into different communities and help me discover details. I would look at the two

works from this angle, and feel that they do not dig deep enough, and seems superficial. Of course this comparison is not fair.

Ma: I did not use the standards of “Hong Kong Connection” and “Sunday Report” to judge the two works. The contrast would be too great.

Cheung: The comparison would not be fair. But I feel that the works could have given me more information.

Kwong: Let us talk about **Cow** next.

Chong: I did not pick this, so I give up (he laughs).

Ying: I did not pick this either.

Shum: I chose this despite their opposition. I like its out-datedness. Everything about it is outdated, but this is suited to its theme. The theme is about escape, and its outdated style is at odds with reality, and achieved what the work is trying to say. Watching the work a second time, I think many of the elements are superfluous, even though the work is not too long.

Ma: Even though I am not a professional in cinematography, I feel he spent a lot of effort in designing the shots. As a drama, it is not bad. Even though it is a bit outdated, I find it acceptable, particularly if it is talking about what happened 10 years ago.

Cheung: It is talking about the last HKCEE.

Ma: That is why it feels a bit outdated. Nowadays young people don't think this way.

Chong: I don't think it's a problem that the background or the relationship among its characters is outdated. When it comes to dramas about people, you have to find a special angle to portray it. Unfortunately this work did not succeed in doing so.

Kwong: Let's discuss ***Waiting to Drown*** next.

Shum: I think this is the main focus of discussion.

Chong: After watching it on the big screen I find this work controversial. Watching it side by side with the other 9 works, I feel this is the only lively work of the lot, even though it has many flaws. I feel this work is well suited to this competition, because it has a devil may care attitude that I want to emulate. I dare not say this is the best work that the 5 jury members can choose, but I like it a lot. The editing is great. I am jealous of this work. When I was in school, I was good at writing scripts like this, but haven't done so for a long time. The script follows a person's stream of consciousness, but also has a rigorous plot structure. This is something that every scriptwriter wants to achieve.

Shum: Recently such stories that blend fact and fiction are in vogue. When I watched it on the small screen the first time, I liked it. Even though I gave it high marks, I also thought it has many problems. I like the narrative that shifts between fantasy and reality. As a viewer or an interpreter, this kind of story is attractive. It successfully portrays the feelings of young men as they prepare for going abroad to study. The interplay between reality and fantasy give ground to the young man's sentiments. From the sentimental perspective I prefer ***Waiting to Drown***, but from a rational and content point of view, I would choose ***6th March***. The latter strongly portrays the social and social relationship of Hong Kong today, and giving it an award would be meaningful. Perhaps I would not give ***Waiting to Drown*** the grand prize, but its good point should be recorded here.

Chong: I think ***Waiting to Drown*** does not have fantasy and reality, everything is real. A young man imagines things that are important in his life, including fantasy about violence. He imagines going out to a restaurant with friends, and then has a fight and glasses get knocked on the ground. This is a fantasy. The whole film pulsates with life. The director does not depart from the main character. Many independent films get lost, but ***Waiting to Drown*** does not have this problem. The other thing is, do we have to consider the social situation of Hong Kong today? I am not against this consideration, just bringing up the issue for discussion.

Ying: This is my second time watching *Waiting to Drown*. I did not select this film in the first round. This time around my feelings about the work has changed. It is mainly a rational change. I can feel its methods and sentiments, and his need to tell this story. I wonder why I did not like this work at first, even though my feelings had changed. Perhaps it is because I don't identify with the main character and this way of expressing emotions. We mentioned previously that "In the Heat of the Sun" is the limit to what I can accept, and I can understand the part where they climb up on the chimney. This work is more difficult for me, perhaps because I know little about how local kids grow up. In contrast with the two of you, I accept this work rationally, but not emotionally. I think the film is a rare achievement. If someone I know made this film, I would admire him for it. I feel this kind of person should go on making films. However I can't get emotionally involved with it.

Ma: Rationally, I gave this film the second highest mark. I feel that my thinking is probably ahead of its time, because it is similar to young people today.

Chong: Me too. I think you must have studied in an all boys' school.

Ma: I have this feeling too. I think the director must have injected his own feelings into the film and dramatized them. He did a good job. Perhaps it has to do with my own experiences, for the film really resonates with me. The production is also good and the editing is smooth.

Chong: The shot where he hugs his mother is powerful on the big screen. The third shot from last.

Ma: The whole film is decent, perhaps because he has had professional training. The cinematography and music are good. The problem is if we should let two dramas win both awards, or should we strike a balance.

Cheung: I liked the beginning, but the second half is weak. Perhaps because I don't remember much about my youth, my feelings are opposite to yours. The overall technique is good.

Kwong: We have discussed all 9 finalist works. Please nominate 3 works for awards, and then we will vote on your choices.

Chong: I nominate **6th March** , **One. Superhero** and **Waiting to Drown** .

Ma: My choices are exactly the same as yours.

Cheung: I nominate **6th March** and **Epilepsy**.

Shum: I nominate **6th March** , **Waiting to Drown** and **Kwun Tong-going away** .

Ying: I nominate **6th March** , **Epilepsy** and **Waiting to Drown**.

Kwong: Shall we strike out those that did not get any nominations? They are **Paradox**, **Cow**, **Sam Hui Yat** and **GwanGong VS Alien**.

Everyone: Yes.

Kwong: Of the 5 remaining works, can we vote for the Gold Award winner? (The 5 jurors raise their hands.)

Kwong: The Gold Award goes to **6th March**. Now let us nominate the Silver Award.

Ying: I nominate **Epilepsy** .

Ma+Long+Chong: I nominate **Waiting to Drown** for Silver Award.

Kwong: The Silver Award goes to **Waiting to Drown**. Please make your nominations for Special Mention.

Ying: I nominate **Epilepsy**.

Ma: I suggest 3 Special Mentions, ***Epilepsy***, ***Kwun Tong-going away*** and ***One. Superhero***.

Kwong: The organizers are very flexible. We initially suggest only one Special Mention, but the final decision will depend on your consensus. There are only 9 finalists. If we give out 3 Special Mentions it may cheapen the award.

Ma: I should explain my suggestion. It is hard to compare films from different genres. ***Epilepsy*** is a strongly experimental work, ***One. Superhero*** is a special effects film, while ***Kwun Tong-going away*** is a documentary.

Chong: Perhaps we do not need to compare them. We can simply discuss which of the three deserves our commendation.

Ma: That means choosing only one work?

Chong: That's right. I would tend towards a work in a relatively weaker position. therefore I would choose ***One. Superhero***, because the director of ***Epilepsy*** will have a great future, while the format of ***Kwun Tong-going away*** is not quite suited to this competition. If CNN were to hold a documentary competition, this work may be more suitable. This is just my personal opinion.

Shum: Personally I feel both ***One. Superhero*** and ***Kwun Tong-going away*** are acceptable, but I will not give special mention to ***Epilepsy***.

Ying: I support ***Epilepsy***. Perhaps I'm not familiar with all Hong Kong shorts, but films like it are rare. By comparison, ***Kwun Tong-going away*** and ***One. Superhero*** are more common.

Shum: I should add that ***Kwun Tong-going away*** and ***One. Superhero*** are both very simple. ***Epilepsy*** looks complicated, but is in fact simple. It simply uses form to please people. Its form is stronger than its content, which I find comparatively pretentious.

Chong: I want to respond to what Ying Liang said just now. Among the 50 works that we saw, the rarity of experimental works like ***Epilepsy*** and so-called parodies like ***One. Superhero*** are about the same.

Cheung: I did not see all the 50 works in the first round, but only the 9 finalist works. From my point of view, ***Epilepsy*** is very bold.

Kwong: Now someone suggested that one work receives Special Mention, while Mr. Ma suggested 3 works get Special Mention. How should we solve this?

Shum: We can have two Special Mentions. I'm just opposed to ***Epilepsy***.

Chong: I feel that having only one Special Mention is better

Ma: We can have either three Special Mentions, or just one.

Kwong: Why don't we vote on the three works.

Fan: ***One. Superhero*** gets 3 votes, ***Epilepsy*** has 2.

Kwong: The Gold Award for the Open Category is ***6th March***, Silver Award goes to ***Waiting to Drown***, and Special Mention goes to ***One. Superhero***.

Open Category Award Winners

Gold Award

6th March / Wong Chun

Silver Award

Waiting to Drown / Nick Cheuk

Special Mention

One. Superhero / Ben Tang

