

## The 12<sup>th</sup> ifva Asian New Force Jury Meeting Transcript

Jurors Present: Song Ilgon (SONG), Asai Takashi (ASAI), Tammy Cheung (CHEUNG)

Organizer Representative: Teresa Kwong (KWONG), Chelsea Man (MAN)

KWONG: This year we have over 300 entries for the Asian New Force category. After the first and the second round selections, we end up with 11 finalists. These works are entitled to compete for the Grand Prize and Special Mentions. Now, may I suggest the rundown? First, I would like to invite the Jury Panel to go through the finalist works one by one. You may each briefly talk about how you think about the work – its pros and cons. And after the discussion, we can go on with the voting. Three of you may vote the work which can be considered to get the award. This is the rundown we adopt in all other categories. . Do you have any question? If no, we can start the discussion.

CHEUNG: I wonder if you two will consider giving prize to different kinds of films because there are mainly three types of film: animation, documentary and drama. I found there are many films in animation which are very good. In drama, there are also really good films. I found very difficult to select which one is the best because they're in different categories.

KWONG: Maybe we can address to this issue later in the meeting.

CHEUNG: Okay.

**Meat Days** by Joe HSIEH

SONG: To me, I really like the film. It's beautifully drawn. It gives me a lot of new emotion. It's beautiful.

CHEUNG: I like it a lot, even though it's a horrifying story.

ASAI: The film is cute, "kawaii". The style of painting is original. That's very interesting.

CHEUNG: I agree.

KWONG: Is there any weakness in the film?

CHEUNG: Who is the old lady in the film? I was curious.

SONG: You may say the story-telling is a little bit...

CHEUNG: It's not clear.

SONG: Yes.

CHEUNG: Who is the old lady? Is she the mother of the woman?

SONG: It's her sister, as the subtitles say.

CHEUNG: Oh really? The subtitles say it's her sister.

SONG: Old sister.

CHEUNG: The subtitles are translated from Chinese. As far as I understand, when you call someone "older sister", it doesn't mean the person is really your sister. You know what I mean. We call everyone sisters and brothers.

SONG: He's very old. But the young lady called her "sister."

MAN: The character's original name in Chinese is "六孀".

CHEUNG: So she is Auntie.

SONG: Aunt?

CHEUNG: Yes.

SONG: She looks like the mother.

CHEUNG: She is an aunt, according to the Chinese name.

ASAI: Does the director himself produce everything?

MAN: According to the film credits, he did everything, including the animation. And the music is by another person.

**Trainee by Craig ROSENTHAL**

CHEUNG: Technically it's very good.

ASAI: Yes.

CHEUNG: But I found the story a bit too clever.

ASAI: Too clever?

CHEUNG: Too clever for me. I mean, like a very smart kid making a fun story.

ASAI: It's a typical story for a short film.

SONG: It's from Singapore but the director is not from Singapore, right?

KWONG: He's from Australia, or New Zealand, but he moved to Singapore and stayed there for six years. He's already got the citizenship. And according to our regulations, as long as you have the residence in Asia, you're qualified.

**Glasshouse by Aaron Kim.**

CHEUNG: Well, it's a very well-made film.

ASAI: Is this the only work that shot on film?

KWONG: We got another entry shot on film, but only **Glasshouse** submits the film copy.

ASAI: Oh, I see. But I have one question. **Glasshouse** is a very exciting work but according to its credit, the production year is 2005.

KWONG: It's okay because we accept work made within the past two years.

ASAI: So does he enter the film himself?

KWONG: The film is distributed by IndieStory.

SONG: So somebody from IndieStory entered the film?

ASAI: So IndieStory is...?

SONG: A distribution company in Korea.

KWONG: We have good contact with them and they have kept submitting their works to us. So **Glasshouse** is one of them.

SONG: I wonder how you think about the film.

CHEUNG: I think it's a very well-made film but it's not my choice. Amongst the fiction films, I prefer the Japanese one, **Hakko-fermentation**. I don't know it's a matter of taste or experience. **Glasshouse** talks about detachment, alienation, how people don't communicate with each other. The whole presentation also gives me the feeling that I can't really feel for the characters. I can't really get close to them. I think that's the problem.

ASAI: I found the same problem. Technically, it's very professional.

CHEUNG: Yes, very professional.

ASAI: And it's shot on 35mm.

CHEUNG: It's beautifully made.

ASAI: But the story is weak, I think. It's about people in modern cities. It's kind of typical.

SONG: I agree with what the two said. But the acting is not very professional. I found it strange. Sure, the film is really well-made by the director. Take the images as example. I have seen many Korean short films. And in this film, the images of flowers, birds and the cage can be taken as a kind of symbolization. Some shots are really good.

CHEUNG: It has a lot of details which are very good, for example the dogs, the flowers...

ASAI: I think it's important for the images to say things. The Glasshouse is itself a metaphor. It's about isolation in modern city.

**The Drawer of Memory** by CHI Po-chou.

CHEUNG: The music is a problem for me.

ASAI: What kind of music? I forgot.

SONG: Beethoven.

CHEUNG: It's kind of cliché.

KWONG: So it would be better if the music is original?

CHEUNG: I don't know but the music just took all my attention.

SONG: Technically it's very interesting but the problem is the story. The way how the director developed the story is weak. I expected a lot at the beginning of the film, which looks really nice. I also saw a lot of creative elements there but...

ASAI: I think it may be a result of one-man production. Nowadays, digital filmmaking allows one to make animation on one's own. Unlike the production of fiction films which often involves a crew and a cast as well as a scenario, many animation works are done by one man and there's no discussion during the production. Everything is to be solved by himself/ herself. That's what I think the problem is. If a producer joins in, maybe it'll be much better, especially the script, because most of the animators concern more about the animation than the script. I think this filmmaker has created a very good 3-D animation himself but the script is weak and the music is not good. I think it'd be more interesting if the music was originally made or sound effects were used.

CHEUNG: The music is too familiar. If the music is so well-known, it hurts the film actually.

**Equally Red in Tooth and Claw is Fur** by GUNG Yu-ling.

CHEUNG: Do you think it's possible that I watch it again? I wanted to view it again last night but I couldn't. I just want to remind myself.

(The Jury is watching ***Equally Red in Tooth and Claw is Fur.***)

CHEUNG: I think it has a big problem – it has too much text as a film. It looks like a children book when you have so much text.

ASAI: I think it is a very good propaganda short film.

CHEUNG: I found it too much text and I think it's not necessary.

ASAI: It's fashionably made and it makes sense.

SONG: I think so.

**Sixteen Shots About Mr. C** by WANG Yun-lin

CHEUNG: It's a lot of fun. I like the film.

SONG: I have seen many Tsai Ming-liang's films and it looks very similar, for example, the style.

ASAI: The director said he likes Tsai Ming-liang's films and so he did the same style.

SONG: I think this is a good project. The subject is very private and individual. I enjoy the film though there're some parts rather boring. There are many possibilities to be a very good film. Two more thing to note though: one is the film has too much influence from Tsai Ming-liang; the second is he couldn't have his own new ideas.

**Life With Happiness** by Lin Wan-Yu, Hsu Ya-Ting

SONG: So many Taiwanese films...

KWONG: Yes. A lot young filmmakers from Taiwan submitted to the festival this year.

SONG: Amongst the 11 works, I like this most. It's because this film did not bore me. This documentary could show me more about the subject. I can see the directors have spent more time with the subject. From the film, I can see what's going on in Taiwan and its social problem.

ASAI: From an audience point of film, some of these finalist works are boring. But I really enjoy seeing this film. The subject of the film is good and it's good that the filmmakers made a strong focus on it.

CHEUNG: I think this is a good film. I really like the way they treat their characters – with a lot of respects and dignity. The people there are very interesting. You really want to look at them and know more about their lives. As a student film, it's very good.

KWONG: It's a graduation project, I remember.

CHEUNG: About the structure of the documentary, I think they need more materials to edit the film. But still, it has good images and a powerful theme.

**Hakko-fermentation** by Madoka KUMAGAI.

CHEUNG: I really like it, personally.

ASAI: I like it very much too. Both the techniques and the acting are good.

CHEUNG: And it's really funny.

ASAI: Yes, it's funny and entertaining.

**Wall** by James Lee

SONG: The music is not original score.

CHEUNG: I found it's a bit student-ish. I mean it's like the films I saw when I was a student. We did this kind of films when we're young.

**Life Show** by Thunskā PANSITTIVORAKUL

CHEUNG: I don't really like it.

ASAI: You don't? Why?

CHEUNG: I found it again too smart. I mean the way he made it. It's gimmicky. Technically it's very interesting. Can I call it technically? Sorry. I mean it's different. When you see it, you know he's doing something different but it doesn't really reach any goal. When you interview someone, you don't do that. And it's not necessary.

KWONG: It's kind of mockumentary.

CHEUNG: But clearly when you look at it, it's not a documentary. When you make a mockumentary, you want people to believe at the very beginning it's a documentary.

ASAI: I found it interesting. I think different countries have different cultures and different censorship. Perhaps, for people in Japan, in Hong Kong or in Korea, this kind of mockumentary doesn't make sense. But maybe it makes sense in Thailand. I take into consideration of the cultural background of Thailand and that's why I found it must be an interesting work in Thailand.

**The Silence of Nu-jiang** by Wu Jie.

SONG: The images are very good. The places are beautiful. The people look very nice. But the director needs more concentration on the story and the script. I think he needs more time on editing. He has some shots repeated. The storytelling also needs to be polished. I think it should be developed into a full story.

CHEUNG: Yes, I agree. There's not much story in the film.

SONG: The nature is good but I think he needs more stories.

ASAI: Yes. It'd be interesting to compare *Life With Happiness* with *The Silence of Nu-jiang*.

Both of the films focus on local political and social issues but ***The Silence of Nu-jiang*** uses western music while ***Life With Happiness*** uses Japanese music.

CHEUNG: They use Japanese music?

ASAI: Yes. They are singing in Japanese language. Taiwan was occupied by Japan so the old people know about Japanese. In ***The Silence of Nu-jiang***, western music was used. It's so hidden, like the deep side of China. People in China are singing that kind of western music. So, in a totally Taiwan subject, the old people are thinking about Japanese music and in Japanese language. I don't know. It's just a point of view, but it is really interesting to see their use of music. But for ***The Silence of Nu-jiang***, I think there is too much use of music.

CHEUNG: Yes, the story is itself a bit weak.

ASAI: Music is a very important part of a film. Sometimes the audience will cry when the music play. Without music, it's very difficult for the filmmaker to move the audience. But when a documentary uses music, it must be very careful. When the music comes out in the documentary, it might interrupt the audience's thinking. So, I think there's too much music in ***The Silence of Nu-jiang***.

CHEUNG: Yes, I agree.

KWONG: Shall we now go to the second round? You can nominate the works that can be given the Grand Prize.

SONG: There are 3 films I am interested. They are the ***Meat Days***, ***Life With Happiness*** and ***Hakko-fermentation***.

CHEUNG: Mine happened to be the same.

ASAI: I go for the same.

CHEUNG: These three look good. I mean, one is animation, one is documentary and one is drama. It looks very good. And you have a Special Mentions.

KWONG: Shall we go to the nomination of the Grand Prize?

CHEUNG: Can we give the Grand Prize to three films? Is it possible? What do you think? Because they're three different types of films. Maybe it's a bad idea because the money is not much. But they're different types of films. I don't know how to compare them.

KWONG: You can further discuss this. But according to the history of ifva, we never have 3 works got the Grand Prize.

ASAI: So we have to choose.

CHEUNG: We can choose two films or only one?

KWONG: It's a decision made by three of you.

SONG: For me, I want the Grand Prize go to ***Life With Happiness*** because I want them to continue their work of making documentary.

KWONG: So one nomination for ***Life With Happiness***?

SONG: And I like ***Meat Days*** to have the Special Mentions. It's my opinion.

CHEUNG: I would choose ***Hakko-fermentation*** as the Grand Prize. I really like the story. I think it's better made than ***Life With Happiness***. For Special Mentions, I would choose ***Meat Days***. Can we have 2 Special Mentions?

KWONG: Yes.

CHEUNG: Then, Special Mentions for both ***Meat Days*** and ***Life With Happiness***.

KWONG: Is there any other nomination for the Grand Prize? If not, we can do the voting. Or lobbying? Because we got 2 nominees for the Grand Prize.

ASAI: Personally, I like the Japanese film ***Hakko-fermentation*** very much. It already got the Grand Prize in the Pia Film Festival in Japan. If we can give the winning director the energy of making films in the future, I prefer giving the Prize to other works.

CHEUNG: I know what you mean. I agree with you. Well, as the winner of the Grand Prize will be the model of other young people, and they will look at the film and say, "this is the film that wins the prize." For me, I would like them to look at **Hakko-fermentation**, because it's better made than **Life With Happiness**. **Life With Happiness** is good too, made with a lot of devotion and dedication. I hope again, as you said, both of the girls will keep on making documentaries.

ASAI: So **Hakko-fermentation** is Special Mentions?

CHEUNG: Actually, it's very difficult for me because I want people to make documentaries. That's why I want to choose a documentary.

ASAI: So you let **Life With Happiness** be the model.

CHEUNG: But as a documentary, it's not that outstanding. And **Hakko-fermentation** is a better-made film. But of course, I understand both of your points.

SONG: I enjoy **Hakko-fermentation** but strangely I read a lot about this kind of stories about woman.

CHEUNG: You have seen similar films before?

SONG: I mean I have read many novels about strange things, like a girl of fetish. So, it's not new to me. Of course, I think it's very well-made.

CHEUNG: I know at it from a Hong Kong audience's point of view. I agree with you. At the beginning of the film, the **reverse scene** is not necessary. I think she just cut those out. It's really not necessary.

ASAI: Why is it meaningful to the Hong Kong audience?

CHEUNG: Because the story about the woman who went crazy is not common in Hong Kong. I am talking about the young people I met, for example my students. They don't really understand those issues and they are not familiar with those stories.

ASAI: Because they are students. But this is a baby-mother story.

CHEUNG: I mean the young people here might not read as much as you do. Are you talking about Yellow Wallpaper, that kind of story? About women being alone... they don't read those things.

ASAI: They don't read?

CHEUNG: They don't read those things. So, a story like this is something new to them. Maybe I am looking at it from a Hong Kong audience's point of view and I want the young people here to look at it.

ASAI: How about other Hong Kong audience?

CHEUNG: Actually, I will say most of the Hong Kong people don't really know much about this kind of story.

ASAI: But it's a kind of mother's experience. Do they have friends who have similar experience?

CHEUNG: You can't find this kind of story in Hong Kong cinema.

ASAI: But is a mother's life difficult here in Hong Kong?

CHEUNG: Yes, but they don't point it out. For example, at the end of this film when the woman went a bit crazy, it pointed out someone's so confined and got lost...

SONG: What does "Hakko" mean?

CHEUNG: Does it mean "fermentation"?

ASAI: Yes.

CHEUNG: I think it's about her life and a lot of women's life. I know in Japan there are a lot of women who don't go out to work. They stay at home.

ASAI: How about in Hong Kong?

CHEUNG: A lot of women go out to work because they hire foreign domestic workers. They still have to take care of the babies and the housework. They do two jobs. I guess, from a woman's point of view, this film is very good.

KWONG: When the director was asked about the meaning of the title and why did she use a lot photos, she said it's because the film was shot in a small town, in Kyoto, and the place is surrounded by river. The second reason is that she got the inspiration from seeing how some water got rotten, which led her to think how it would be to life if it goes rotten. That's why she wants to make a film about how human being goes through the process of getting rotten.

CHEUNG: The film is very universal. For example, during the fifties in the United States, a lot of women stay at home and they got really bored and didn't know what to do...

ASAI: So we are now comparing the two films?

CHEUNG: It's difficult to compare because they're completely different.

ASAI: I change my mind. I vote ***Life With Happiness*** for the Grand Prize and the other two, ***Hakko-fermentation*** and ***Meat Days*** for Special Mentions.

KWONG: So, we still have two nominees. One is ***Hakko-fermentation*** and one is ***Life With Happiness***. Should we vote now?

SONG: It's difficult to compare. If we have to choose one film, I prefer ***Life With Happiness*** because ***Hakko-fermentation*** is a good film but it can be more creative. There's also some cliché in the film and familiar metaphors – people getting crazy, summer heating. Some images in the film is very fresh and new. I hope someday she can be a really good director. But still, the film has too much images from the French novel and I want to see something new from a Japanese film.

CHEUNG: You mean you have a higher expectation.

SONG: I believe she can make a better film next time, with her own creativity. For the

documentary ***Life With Happiness***, it has weakness in story but it has a power to draw the audience. I really want to see what happens in Taiwan. Compared with other films, this is the one I could fully concentrate on. This is my opinion.

CHEUNG: Sure.

KWONG: So let's vote.

CHEUNG: It's really clear. We don't have to vote. We did it. It's ***Life With Happiness***.

KWONG: So, may I say this year, the Grand Prize goes to ***Life With Happiness*** from Taiwan. For Special Mentions, we have two films. They are ***Hakko-fermentation*** and ***Meat Days***.

#### **Asian New Force Category**

##### **Grand Prize**

*Life With Happiness*

LIN Wan-Yu, HSU Ya-Ting

##### **Special Mentions**

*Meat Days*

Joe HSIEH

##### **Special Mentions**

*Hakko-fermentation*

Madoka Kumagai