

The 14th ifva Youth Category Jury Meeting Transcript

Jurors in Attendance: Juno Mak (MAK), Chan Wai (CHAN), Chan Wing Chiu (CHIU), Chan Pik Yu (YU)

Absent Jurors: John Wong (WONG)

Organizer Representatives: Teresa Kwong(KWONG), Rachel Wam (WAN)

MAK : ***My Rose*** and ***Life Must Go On*** are the most impressive among the ten short films I have screened. I believe I am the youngest in the panel; and for people of my age, the lives of this group of youngsters are what we consider fresh and thus are attractive to. I guess they are around 18 years of age, who want to enjoy life here and now and pursue the dreams they aspire to. It's like burning up their youth as they follow some abstract kinds of dreams, but somehow get lost on the way. They are waiting for something to happen, thus putting themselves in a state of contradiction and helplessness. It gives a stark contrast between their looking for a dream and for a life. The music and cinematography of both works are relatively immature.

CHAN : ***Life Must Go On*** surprises me because the work is very complete. As it is the first work shown in the screening, I find it quite hard to look at the rest of the entries that follow. (laugh) Despite the overall techniques of ***Life Must Go On*** have flaws, the level of skills displayed in this year's Youth Category is unexpectedly high. I like how he captures people's faces and also his friends. He did it in a seemingly arbitrary way, but it is a very true reflection of their lives. I also appreciate his humanistic concerns towards children and his friends, even if that was not intended. The work touches me as its originality and concerns speak to me.

Two features, ***Let You Know*** and ***I' m Back***, have a well-balanced execution. They live up to some dramatic requirements. For examples, ***Let You Know*** has furnished a complete story, but is inept in terms of directing the performers and also the delivery of emotions. The same flaws can be found in ***I' m Back***, where a voice-over is used in the finale to, at a fast pace, convey an awakening. It demonstrates a kind of political correctness but at the same time it turns a somewhat original idea into a melodrama.

I find ***The Empty Body*** very outstanding. It gives a very precise delivery. Yet, it is relatively short in length, which is about three minutes, with no dialogues. Basically its imagery works and is up to the standard.

Without Title also outstrips the others. And when I came across the phrase “please feel it yourself” in its introductory text, I reckon it is a work with a view. It enables people to feel its passion and invites us to look at the world in its eyes. Its subject matters are Central and Hong Kong which we are all familiar with. The camera is very passionate and rhythmical; there you find neither story nor drama, dialogues nor text. It is particularly impressive for a work in the Youth Category to have reached this standard.

My Rose is very unique and impresses me. It gives a very precise delivery even though it does not have any dialogues. It astounds me.

MAK : At first I would say **Let You Know** is a good work, even though it is much less an original story but a cliché melodrama; and the treatment is not at all creative though it is very appropriate. After I saw **Life Must Go On**, however, I believe it simply outstrips **Let You Know**.

I’ m Back is impressive because it carries humour. I think it is very difficult to make people laugh. There are a couple of scenes which are very funny in **I’ m Back**.

I was drawn by **Life Must Go On** and **My Rose**. The latter, in particular, impresses me. It is not a long piece of work, but looks stereotype.

I would consider **Life Must Go On** a documentary, and it is the strongest among the others.

YU : I think the ending of **Life Must Go On** is the magic touch of the whole film, and that also makes the work a great one. It astounds me. **My Rose** is the most eye-catching, with the theme best articulated. It makes use of simple language to present what it says--without uttering a single line of words—but you do understand what it tries to tell you.

CHIU: I like **Life Must Go On** very much, emotionally. I cherish the fact that it is a good work done by a teenager. It tells something about the times we live in, and what are in our minds. It is a very integrated work. The director documents his friends with sincerity. He stresses that this documentation must be done before he turns 18 years old so as to make a record about this young generation of Hong Kong.

The Empty Body hangs together and it is also about students. I find its story subversive, which expresses his resistance to wearing uniforms. I can tolerate the weakness in its techniques. The protagonist did not simply die. There you can see sublimation, which I find extremely poetic.

The Island tries to tell a story with a big theme and deeper meanings. It tries also a variety of techniques. Relatively, however, it is not as complete as the others, and performs badly as far as the techniques are concerned. The same flaws can be seen in ***Rule & City***.

I find ***My Rose*** too complete and its techniques too perfect. The director displays too well his story-telling skills, with strong visuals. I believe he will shine in the future. He knows what he should and should not do; he understands so well about editing and how to develop the story. The treatment in the ending about the relationships of the three protagonists, and the reflections about homosexuality, is very integrated.

Quite a lot of things about ***Woke Up*** are praiseworthy. It tries to tell a story in a skillful way, but the overall performance is just average.

I was not quite into ***Let You Know*** at the beginning. However, after our last discussion, I was convinced by your viewpoints. It has good techniques, a very integrated use of camera movement and the script. It knows how to put an end to things and how to edit the material. When I saw it for the first time, the extras (in the group scenes) really disturbed me. But now I have new discoveries about them. They do carry meanings and play a significant part in pushing forward the plot; their dialogues are important. With your opinions in mind, I am thinking if we need to consider giving it an award.

Without Title is a special one. At first it was not at all my preference for I thought it was just something arbitrary. But the more I saw it and discussed it, the more I was drawn into it. It has achieved consistency in its visuals and music, and at some point, it touches the heart.

I'm Back lingers in the middle. Viewing it as a feature, I prefer it to ***Let You Know***. ***I'm Back*** is child-like and cheerful; the performers are playful. Its theme is close to the world they are living in.

CHAN : ***Without Title*** is an alternative work. It has its own aesthetics; its focus and

cinematography are up to the standard. It is full of emotions instead of being just a demonstration of techniques.

CHIU : **Graduation** has a clear and lucid concept with an integrated use of cinematography, music and performers. It tells a story with a song of just a few minutes long. The skills are delicate, but you will easily lose sight of such delicacy along the way. In the first round of selection, we did come across a lot of works too skillfully crafted that its truthfulness in the making was shrouded. **Graduation** is obviously one of them. It is so polished that two girls can be posed to make a perfect heart shape. Everything in the work is calculated.

CHAN : It looks familiar to me when I saw it for the first time. It is very fine. There is a kind of mood or sensation flowing in the work but I have no way to fathom its theme. The treatment in framing and colour temperature is very well put. But it seems just too familiar to the extent that I feel reluctant to vote for it.

CHIU : What you have just pointed out is that it is in fact a copy cat. Its story-telling is so common and popular nowadays, which is nothing new to us.

First Round of Voting

IFVA : John WONG votes for **Life Must Go On, My Rose, The Empty Body, Woke Up** and **The Island**. We can first recommend the Gold Prize, but first of all we need a nomination.

CHIU: **Life Must Go On**

YU: I choose **My Rose** and **Life Must Go On**.

MAK : I nominate **My Rose** for the Gold Prize.

IFVA : John WONG nominates **Life Must Go On** for the Gold Prize. So now, two works have the same number of votes. I suggest we do some lobbying among ourselves. Shall we award a shared Gold Prize, or one Gold and one Silver Prize?

MAK : I value the creativity of a work. My preference is **My Rose** for it has richer elements in its camera treatment, creativity and art direction. **Life Must Go On** is a good work, too, just that I reckon it is a record of the life of the director's own. It touches me for

its being a good documentary. If we consider the effort it takes to make a short film from scratch, I would give **My Rose** the Gold Prize and the Silver Prize to **Life Must Go On**.

CHIU : I am speaking from a totally different perspective. I think being realistic is the valuable thing about **Life Must Go On**. It takes a close look to life and originates from a truthful heart. Its value lies in its originality and creativity, all displayed by the fact that the director has paid much effort in developing the concept, shooting the stories around him, and then editing the material. More importantly, everything was done in a spare style.

Secondly, the creativity of **Life Must Go On** is rooted in its origin--it captures the attribute of the present times. It is subversive for being seemingly a film about youth problem while exposing also the fact that the same problem can be shared by the elder generations. It is thought-provoking especially when it is voiced out by someone who is not even 18 years old.

YU : It seems to me the two films belong to different types. It would be difficult to choose between them. We can see craftsmanship in **My Rose** done in a very controlled way. There is something tough about **Life Must Go On**, and it allows us to understand more about young people nowadays. In the final scene, the director does not forget to raise his own question.

When I came across some social workers by the latter part of the film, I thought they must be the one who asked the youngsters to engage in art making so as to put their energy into good use. I even had this thought about the film being made by a group instead of just one person. But as the director started filming, he must have gained a lot of sensations and feelings of his own, leading him to work out his plans. In this way, this film is very different from **My Rose**.

CHAN : I am reluctant to make any comparison for it is cruel to do so. The way **Life Must Go On** uses to establish relationships with people through the camera is not an easy task. The director leaves his own remarks by the end of the film, making the work complete.

CHIU : We seem inclined to award a shared Gold Prize, don't we? Here we are, just four of us, a situation which is quite embarrassing.

MAK : I am okay with a shared Gold Prize, but not giving out a Silver Prize. I think ***Life Must Go On*** is realistic whereas ***My Rose*** is surreal. To make a choice between the two means that we have to choose between “realistic” and “surreal”. For me, “surreal” is definitely the choice. If all of us agree with a shared Gold, I think both films deserve the award.

CHAN : If we give a shared Gold Prize, I don't think any work deserves the Silver Prize.

YU : I agree.

CHIU : Taking into consideration of your opinion, I tend to give a shared Gold Prize. In fact I tend to vote for ***Life Must Go On***; as Juno observed correctly, I am more into realism. The way ***My Rose*** expresses the inner heart is dear. I am delighted by how Chan Wai described it with the word “desire”. I think the work deserves our respect and affirmation for its craftsmanship and creativity. It is exceptional for a Youth Category entry like this one.

Personally I think we have a very high standard this year. There are many works that deserve the awards. If to vote for the Silver Prize, my favourite is ***The Empty Body***. Like what I said before, its concept hangs together and it is poetic. There is something unique about it and it deserves our support.

IFVA : What do you think about the Silver Prize? Any other nominations?

YU : I rank the works in three levels. The first level is ***Life Must Go On*** and ***My Rose***; the second, ***The Empty Body*** and ***Without Title***; the rest of them go to the third. I would say, ***The Empty Body*** and ***Without Title***.

CHAN : I'd rather not give the Silver Prize. Again, it is difficult to compare ***Let You Know*** and ***The Empty Body***. They are just different in terms of the production and story-telling. On the other hand, ***The Empty Body*** can be grouped with ***Without Title***, but that does not give any of them more credit.

MAK : There are some good and bad works among the rest of the entries. I would recommend no Silver Prize, nonetheless I suggest Special Mention for ***Let You Know*** and ***I' m Back***.

IFVA : John WONG has chosen ***My Rose*** for the Silver Prize. Is voting needed for the

Silver Prize?

CHIU : I don't think so. I call back my previous suggestion and opt for no Silver Prize.

Voting for Special Mention:

IFVA : John WONG chooses *The Empty Body* , *Woke Up* and *The Island*. It becomes clear that *The Empty Body* and *Without Title* are in.

MAK : And now it's between *The Island* and *Let You Know*.

CHIU : We have three choices: to pick two, three or four films.

YU : If I have to pick just one, I will go for *Let You Know*. *The Island* is a very lovely work, but less successful than *Let You Know* which has a better execution in the narrative, craftsmanship and structure. I am also impressed by *The Island* it expresses a kind of innocence and sincerity about movie making. Sadly, its outcome does not pass muster.

CHAN : I agree to give three Special Mention because we are not going to award the Silver Prize.

IFVA : If no objection, we will award the Gold Prize of this year's Youth Category to both *Life Must Go On* and *My Rose*; *The Empty Body*, *Let You Know* and *Without Title* are the three Special Mentions.

Youth Category

Gold Award

Life Must Go On

Ka-ki SHAM

Gold Award

My Rose

Lok-to TANG

Special Mention

The Empty Body

Sze-ming WONG

Special Mention

Let You Know

Kai-tung KWONG, Hiu-kwan WONG

Special Mention

Without Title

Toson CHAN