

The 13th ifva Animation Category Jury Meeting Transcript

Jurors in Attendance: Rice 5 (RICE), Neco Lo Che-ying (LO), Wong Ying (WONG), Alan Wan (WAN), Vincent Yeung (YEUNG)

Organizer Representatives: Bobo Lee (LEE), Mickey Choi (CHOI)

Flipflap

RICE : The merit of this work is the detailed observation. It goes deeply into the challenges faced by lefthanders. Overall visuals and art direction are very good. As the topic is very personal, I as an audience can get to know the difference of being left-handed or otherwise, but I don't feel much actually. It is difficult to be immersed in this work.

LO : Its movements are simple and flat. This subject matter doesn't need very dramatic actions though, so it is well matched, but at the same time lacking breakthrough.

WONG : Animation is the weakest point, lacking dynamics and empathic power. We only see it making the statement.

WAN : I like ***Flipflap***, its creativity lies in its framing. It can deliver a sense of beauty, simple but impressing. I like this work, very feminine and subtle.

YEUNG : I hope to see more, to have delights. Now it's like Powerpoint, more of a tool. It delivered the knowledge, but full of limitation, can't deliver the feelings. In comparison, other works would be better.

Childhood and Life

RICE : The overall art direction is good, every shot has something which catches our attention, such as the drawing overlapping the images, but the movements are not smooth, e.g. the whole person shifts horizontally when he moves, and the hand movements are too simple. We can see the content but there's no surprise, too flat.

LO : The beginning is more delicate, but the ending is too abrupt, the boy grows up all of a sudden. And the text is too much, although there are dialogues and monologues already. Animation doesn't need to rely on text, they should be omitted if not

necessary. On the whole it is quite good.

RICE : He used a lot of hand drawings, such as that on the human face. If he could develop more on this aspect by using more frame-by-frame pencil drawings for the movement it will be much better.

LO : It is now more like a mix of everything.

WONG : Very stylistic, nice style, with paper cut-outs and animation. The ending is strange, he seems to be accusing the oppression by his mother ever since she gives him his name, but then it goes very fast, the most funny thing is he said "Thank you mother" in the end. It looks autobiographical at first, but then turns out like this. Full of contradictions.

WAN : My views are similar to yours. At first I was attracted by its graphics, but then I jeered in the end. Using so many frames and shots, what exactly does he want to achieve? Is it accusation or anything else? But if it is accusation, it doesn't get the point. So I didn't give it a good priority.

YEUNG : Good art direction, but it doesn't make the most of what it has and has wasted good material. They should put more effort on presentation, framing and editing.

WONG : Nice foundation on design, but there should be much more in animation, such as movement and framing. This is a kind of film-making, and there's narrative, which needs much more careful consideration.

LO : He couldn't handle all of them, got one but failed in another.

YEUNG : On the contrary I think those quality behind [the visuals] are more important, for example if you don't spend so much time on perfect drawing, but instead create better [movement, framing...], then the work will be closer to its intention.

The Red Buds

YEUNG : The drawings are so-so, kind of raw, movement is also not fluent enough. The story is not impressive. Actually I think this one is not good.

RICE : Personally I think this one is the most boring because it is very long, very quiet and

repetitive. The first part makes me tired, the movement are too flat, giving no delight.

WAN : Very boring, neither the characters nor its animation is attractive. Sorry, I put it at the last of my list.

WONG : On the contrary, I think the timing of this one is the most accurate. There are tempo and rhythm in it, though the story is boring. There are many fragmented scenes, they should be more patient in storytelling. Too choppy and repetitive is what I don't like, but among the finalists, this one has the most complete storyline, although boring and fragmented.

LO : I agree. Its repetition is actually its way of emphasizing something in a simple way, every time that thing lures the protagonist to exchange something to give to the girl. Its repetitive scenes which tell a common story are its weakness, but it can get to the point. There's no dialogue and the music is very simple, it takes patience to watch, and once you have entered its world, you'll find its expression delicate and clear, which highlights the feeling. This work needs to be watched attentively.

Wisdom Tree

LO : It is obviously in the style of Japanese anime, and the now popular sci-fi animation. The art direction is OK, but human movements are weak, no rhythm at all. And the presentation is not good, although the story is interesting. It ends in a sloppy way. There's not enough elaboration on how the man becomes a tree, it only shows him having seen a 'tree-man' in his childhood, but then all of a sudden he becomes a tree, there's not enough to impress the audience.

WONG : The story is fairly commonplace, those themes of power, government, protests... all too common, no breakthrough. The movement is awkward, but I can see it is a result of hard work.

RICE : We are impressed by their ambition. I agree the movement is not good, on the whole it has the look of a big animation movie, but the story is not sharp enough for us to remember. It's like putting together some prettily designed key frames, but you feel it lacks something. It makes you want to compare it with Japanese anime, but the gap is huge.

YEUNG : It got the mood, but the art direction isn't strong enough. I only feel that he has transformed the Japanese style, but in a bad direction. Expression of the story is not good. There're defects on every side. If he wants to become a director, he should work harder on storytelling and editing.

WAN : I feel the same way as you guys, I felt good at the beginning as it looks like a professional animated film, but then I found it tried to do everything, but none of them is above standard, it cannot highlight its own strength.

Link

WAN : I like **Link**, the animation is not outstanding, but the atmosphere is well made. The Causeway Bay scene gives me a very homely feeling, those motion scenes get me very involved. The characterization is good, dialogues are kept to a minimum but the atmosphere is very engaging, although in the end it's just an ordinary story. But I'm totally engaged in it, every shot can make me get into the scene. It's outstanding and delighting. The music is nice too. I like it very much.

WONG : In terms of techniques, **Wisdom Tree** is better, but **Link** is better in terms of presentation and rhythm, the beginning is very simple, just the giant overhead screen already delivers the background of the story, then the chasing scenes follow. It's a very economic way to tell a story.

YEUNG : The characters are not exaggerating or very pretty, but it can lead the rhythm of the whole story, I like it.

RICE : I agree. The rhythm gets into it, as I watched it I couldn't help imagining myself looking down at the streets of Causeway Bay from the lift in Times Square. I can project my daily life experience into it.

LO : **Link** has made a clever choice. It's a film on a tiny scale that successfully delivers the story about the appearance of a monster, telling the story by storyboarding and rhythm, and it gets it just right.

RICE : It's eye candy. From their artist statement, the director should have a warning message, but we just see the bacteria monster appears in the end, it cannot deliver the message. Maybe they have spent their effort in the rhythm and storyboarding, the storytelling is then weakened.

Hoopala

- LO : Characterization and the whole thing are in the form of Hollywood 3D animation, very cartoon-like, humorous, well handled. But the content is nothing new, just a punch, but it's effectively delivered. Just it lacks independence.
- WONG : The punch is for kids. The design and rendering is well thought of, the effect of coloured pencils are not just mechanical, but is the result of some effort. The rhythm is very traditional, like what it was 80 years ago, these things have existed ever since the days of Walt Disney.
- YEUNG : The shading is special, otherwise it will score worse. As she has such techniques in movement, she should go one step further and think more about it.
- WAN : There's nothing enlightening in this work, it doesn't reach our goal. In terms of techniques it may be better than other contestants, but in terms of professional work it will be among the worst of professional animation. It gives no light on how to develop techniques and on creation.

Happiness

- LO : The subject matter is interesting and is well delivered. Very simple and short, but I can understand and share a bit of the feeling. What I don't like is the sentimental music °
- RICE : What is good is that it has some original movements such as twisting a fallen tooth back in, in comparison with *Flipflap* and *Childhood and Life*. Her art is not as good as the other two, but its strength lies in the concept of the story. Art direction is not as good.
- WONG : The most interesting thing is the carton paper background. Some of the movements are also better than the last two films, it has some hand drawn artwork and some flat graphics, which makes it more lively. But I don't like the way he uses words. He said he is pushed, you have to be careful with the twists and turns of the story, this just makes the audience uneasy. It can't have the effect of Chaplin's laughter in sorrow.
- YEUNG : Among 2D works this one has more variation, with unique angles, not so flat and

boring, but the story is not so successfully delivered. The texture in its art direction, such as the carton paper background, fits in with the raw feeling. It doesn't have as strong an impact as the black and white work, but it gives a soft feeling, I can say it's another type of art. The characterization of the old lady is ok, just this kind of 2D works need more effort on the movement design.

WAN : My prerequisite is not to ask so much about their technical level, but rather require works to be able to immediately get the message across. Second requirement is whether the subject matter is treated right. This one is able to grasp the material, but is just too pretentious, the old lady is obviously in distress but she has to say that she is having fun.

The Hole

RICE : This is the only one among the finalists that is kind of imaginative, and is sharp in its story, colour and characterization. Nice grasp of rhythm, and the punch in the end gives me a nice surprise.

WAN : Among all the films I like this one most. At first I don't quite understand, but the echo in the end is full of British humour, which is a nice thing to have in Hong Kong. The other films are still within the confines of typical Hong Kong people's way of thinking. This one is very special, full of wild imagination, you probably won't get it during the first viewing. The ending is very humorous, that thing always tries to go out, but it turns out to be an eye of a rotten doll, lying by the rubbish bin. It's enjoyable to watch and humorous. The technique can deliver the message, and the graphics is interesting. It can inspire other artists, after seeing it you can think of more possible ways of expression, to express your thoughts in animation rather than just do what most people are already doing. Not everybody can do this. Her creativity is very strong. Maybe because she sees a lot and has lived in England for a few years which has affected her a lot.

WONG : I agree about vision. When you have gone outside and have seen more you will become different. I think the ending is OK, but it can stop just outside the rubbish bin, no need to go out of the world into the universe and then looking back at planet earth. I like the way it's lively and imaginative, a very British style. Comparatively this one is more interesting and humorous.

LO : In terms of independent animation, it is clever and free, such compact works are

rare nowadays. The good thing is she has the confidence, and the punch line works, while the progression of the story is well thought of. I am satisfied as an audience, and it is not just a joke, it has its own world, this is where it's clever. On the whole it is a success.

Mask

RICE : Simple composition, as compared to those who filled up the whole frame. It lets me breathe, visually. The story is simple, but the art direction is too simple. Not so delightful. I appreciate the fact that he has really studied human movements.

WONG : The concept was good at the start, the idea of drawing the father's face. But it cannot sustain till the end. This is a heavy issue but now it is too simplified. He described the matter, but didn't solve it.

RICE : The ending could be re-considered. In the end the father draws his own face. I really didn't expect it to end so simply, I have been wondering how the father will take off his **Mask**.

YEUNG : I think it is acceptable in different aspect, has done its duty. It is just that we have seen too much similar things, it's too within expectation. An average work in all aspects.

WONG : The mindset of solving the problem is pretty narrow. He has got the idea, but it doesn't sustain through the whole story. He gives you a traditional angle to the solution, and the audience is left with no room for imagination.

LO : Very one-dimensional, a very symbolic **Mask**, and you immediately know there's a real face behind it. He really only pointed this out. What is outstanding is that it is the only work composed of only simple lines, and can fit into the subject matter. Very special.

WAN : I am resistant of this kind of subject matter. I appreciate his grasp of the medium of animation and the mood, overall the flow is smooth and comfortable. But I expect something creative, this story is not, and is too conventional.

Hope of Home

RICE : After the viewing I was still unable to grasp what the theme was, is it a kid's fantasy about home? There's no clue. Why is he in a walking building which looks as if it's alive? What gave birth to this idea? It seems to have ample room for imagination, but there's no guidance as to what she is talking about, which makes you get lost.

YEUNG : Its 3D element aren't good enough, the motions are awkward, clothings are roughly made. Many animation artists are in love with Hong Kong's old architecture, but its storytelling is not clear, it could have been better. I think it kind of copies Howl's Moving Castle, this idea plus Hong Kong's architecture should have good potential, but just the artist doesn't know how to make the most of it.

WAN : Character design is bad, the protagonist is not attractive at all. It's made with dedication, but just I cannot understand what she is trying to say. It is its biggest problem. After seeing twice I still can't get it. An average work.

WONG : I tried to approach it from the film title, the Chinese and English ones don't match. Is she talking about a person fantasizing about home, or "hoping", longing for a home? Is she talking about the general situation in Hong Kong where people live in cramped space, so that they long for a bigger home? I don't know what she is talking about really. The last shot is a light that looks like a road sign. Is it like that in ***The Hole*** which symbolizes hope for a home? It's a bit confusing.

LO : The artist statement is very simple also, he got impressed by Hong Kong's old architecture and then he plays around with these elements. There's no story, just like a dream in which people keep chasing each other. He hopes the audience can think about something, or feel excited, I think this is his intention, it's that simple, but not so successful. I don't like the mechanical sound that lasts throughout the film without a pause. Even in the punch at the end, the protagonist becomes something like a pipe. This is told subtly, but at the same time lacks impact, becomes very fragmented.

[The juror each selects his choice of films]

WAN : First is ***The Hole***, 2nd choice is ***Link***, 3rd choice is ***Flipflap***, order means my priority.

WONG : My first choices are ***The Hole*** and ***The Red Buds***, either of them takes the first or second place is OK. 3rd is ***Link***.

LO : First place, **The Red Buds**, **The Hole** is 2nd, **Link** is the 3rd.

YEUNG : I don't have a choice for the first prize, 2nd is **Link** and **The Hole**, 3rd isnone.

RICE : **The Hole** and **Link**, no priority.

LO : If there's no objection, simply according to our lists, **The Hole** comes first, because we all agree on its British humour and that it gives other contestants inspiration, and that it is different from other works so it deserves attention. The Silver award will go to **Link**. This is an interesting work, not very special, but is all-rounded...

LEE : Any objection? If no, then **The Hole** is the winner of the Gold Award, while **Link** gets the Silver. How about Special Mention?

LO : I think there can be more than one. Such as **The Red Buds** and **Flipflap**, but I don't feel like giving it to **Flipflap**.

RICE : We choose **Wisdom Tree**.

LO : Yes we can encourage it. We can see its ambition and vision. Just that they're not yet there, but some parts have achieved its aims, at least the opening looks like a major film.

WAN : **Wisdom Tree** is worth mentioning. I think **Flipflap** is special, but considering the effort and resources that was put into **Wisdom Tree**, even if there's only one Special Mention I would choose **Wisdom Tree**.

WONG : In terms of style, **The Hole** and **The Red Buds** are similar, while **Link** and **Wisdom Tree** are also alike, I think is OK.

LEE : Under no opposition, we have two Special Mention awardees: **The Red Buds** and **Wisdom Tree**, while the Gold Award goes to **The Hole** while the Silver goes to **Link**.

Animation Category

Gold Award

The Hole

Cherry Suet-yan LEONG

Silver Award

Link

Chun-yu CHUI, Wai-yee CHAN

Special Mention

The Red Buds

Man-ki LEUNG

Special Mention

Wisdom Tree

Man-kit HO, Ka-hei TSUI, Ka-long TSUI, Siu-chung CHAN