

The 11th ifva Open Category Jury Panel Meeting (Excerpt)

Jurors in Attendance: Ellen Pau (PAU), Linda Lai (LAI), Vincent Chui (CHUI), Winnie Fu (FU),
Susie Au (AU)

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

KWONG: Welcome to the 11th **ifva** Open Category Jury Panel Meeting. Today, we are going to award five outstanding works among the eight selected finalists the Gold Prize, the Silver Prize and Special Mention prizes. This is the distribution of prizes in theory, but if we decide to give two Gold or Silver Prizes after our discussion, we will re-distribute the prizes accordingly. Each of us can make suggestions as to how we shall proceed in the discussion, or we can talk about the merits of each film. Our comments can be taken as reference points. Does anyone have any opinion on this?

LAI: I'd like to ask about the decision process of choosing these eight projects. Was there any main point of dispute for our three jurors in the preliminary round (Ellen Pau, Vincent Chui and Winnie Fu)?

FU: There were not too many points of dispute. But I think we all had our preferences and we pointed them out quite early on in our discussion. I remember we had more than 15 projects selected, and we went back and watched them again, then discussed via email. Did we not?

CHUI: We did.

LAI: I would like to know if there was any dispute when choosing these projects, or you already had a priority during your discussion?

FU: No, but we could not pick ten, only eight.

AU: Since I was not involved in the discussion in the preliminary round, I would like to ask whether the criterion of the creative use of medium refers to the technical aspect? Was the preliminary round of discussion based on this? Because the eight projects are of very different styles. For instance, in one of the projects, I found the director very concerned with the aesthetics of filming, creating every shot in a refined and delicate manner. Whereas there were films that gave me the idea that they were the work of contemporary young people who want tell stories in a multi-media format, with their use

of DV and computer software like Final-Cut Pro, who were also successful in executing that idea. Since these were two distinctively different approaches, how do we assess? I think we should first decide on a platform...

LAI: I thought about that before arriving here, and I have asked myself a few questions. Firstly, we should not be skeptical of these eight selections since they are the last eight. Indeed, after watching the first screening I realised that due to the differences of the projects, they are beyond comparison. I think, in some film festivals or competition, there comes a point when it is no longer a matter of merits, good or bad, high or low, but what the judges would like to promote, or what kind of message they would like to assert. For the reason that I do not think there is ever a fair judgment. I wonder if we should discuss these issues first, or to deliberate on the individual projects?

AU: I agree. For example, I have seen short films from Japan and Korea. One can clearly see the objective of the selection, which is: I am trying to experiment different forms in telling a story, but my goal is to make feature films in the future. A clear underlying statement is presented in the shorts, therefore when one is picking a selection, one knows what is being promoted. It says: I hope when this filmmaker joins the film industry, he or she can create something that is different from what the mainstream is happening now. If that is the case for us, I think my approach in the selection would be very different.

FU: We do not necessarily have to use this approach.

CHUI: We did not encounter this issue while we were making the selection. We just picked the better ones.

FU: That's right.

LAI: So let's discuss this today.

FU: What you said earlier is a fundamental issue, since there tends to be a wide variety of films in the open category.

LAI: True, and it is what I expected. That's why I think we have to discuss this issue first.

FU: The 100 films the **ifva** committee has chosen for us to watch are already basically divided into groups, for instance there are films made by students, obviously from the universities in Hong Kong. In fact, the student films can be compared within the same category, such as those from the School of Creative Media, City University of Hong Kong are stylistically similar, the same thing is true for those from the Academy of Performing Arts. If you want to have a platform for comparisons, this can be taken as one. But we did not necessarily choose according to that principle, because I absolutely believe that this was the first attempt of many of the young people who entered ifva, and they did not necessarily intend to enter the mainstream.

LAI: I think she only made an example just now.

AU: Yes, I only made an example.

PAU: But I also think that was a telling example, one which a consensus might not be reached tonight. It is because if we were to make an underlying statement in our selection, can we reach a consensus tonight? Or should this issue be addressed by the ifva committee?

LAI: I did not want to discuss some general issues, such as “what is creativity?” I understand fully that creativity is what ifva is after, whether it is in the concept or the techniques of execution. The question I intended to pose though, is even more specific. That is, we are considering eight films, I only think about these eight films, and not a general issue. We all know these eight films, and I think we have a pretty good idea of their subject matter, approach, camera-use, their place when compared to industry standard, or whether they are experimental. Therefore, perhaps we can reach a conclusion faster, in the sense that, for instance, this year we would like to single out those bolder and more experimental pieces. If that is the case, “boldness” will be the quality we honour this year. Alternatively, if we decide that “skill” is something that had been lost in recent years, then “skill” can be something that we commend.

AU: Exactly.

LAI: I think we can exchange ideas on this.

AU: We are sitting here as jurors.... I think it is important to know what kind of direction we are taking. As a matter of fact, mainstream is just one of the examples. What matters

is what we want to encourage. As I have said in the last meeting, I think what ifva encouraged in the past was to shoot aimlessly... To me, it appears that they have abandoned formula and skill. Those two things are not necessarily restraining or confining, but they seem unimportant to the young filmmakers now! Should we continue to have this attitude? Personally, I think we should take a step back, pause and think. If you agree with me, perhaps we should reconsider whether this is the direction we take.

KWONG: As a matter of fact, since last year, the ifva committee has been emphasizing that what it promotes is not confined to films, but also extended to moving images in general. We hope the filmmakers whose works have been shortlisted or awarded do not copy or imitate other people. That is to say, we can accept flaws, but a film must have its own character and point of view. Since ifva is not American Idol, what we have to uphold is a certain attitude, a type of originality in execution or perspective. As for what the jury wants to encourage or highlight each year, I think we shall let the jury of each year decide for themselves. That is why we asked the five of you to be the jury this year.

LAI: Discussions are constructive. That was how I got to find out how Au thinks.

PAU: Therefore, do we need to have a consensus? As to how we choose the films...

AU: Actually, the example Lai gave just now demonstrated vaguely how a few "big words" can be conclusively used to represent the direction we might choose. For instance, "boldness" can be the direction we take today...

KWONG: Or as you said earlier, technique and skill can be a defining factor in determining a film's merits.

AU: How about "experimental"? Experimental or conventional are concepts that we can reassess. Or as you mentioned earlier, we haven't seen technique or skill in a while, and they are qualities that we are starting to take notice in again. That is to say, apart from the originality in ideas, we should also pay attention to the originality in execution.

CHUI: Actually, the films that we have chosen do not differ that greatly in style. For years, ifva has been this way, finding different people to express their own views. I remember Chow Keung (note: the organiser of the first ifva) once said, if a film is particularly

outstanding, there would not be much dispute among the jurors. Perhaps there was not any outstanding work this year...

LAI: No, I don't think we have to determine a particular direction first. But we might as well try to understand what our views are, it's better than jumping into discussing each film straightaway...

CHUI: May I be bold as to give this example: as I said last time, for the work like ***Name of Wu Mei***, I find it really difficult to join the discussion. I must admit, I don't really know how to look at this type of works. But since ifva has asked me to be a member of the jury, I should discuss it in the way that I know. For such a film, you can voice your opinion, but if I really could not get round to it and understand it, I will ask questions. I think it is better this way. If we suddenly decide "experimental" is the theme of selection this year, then I can leave immediately.

LAI: I don't actually want to reach a conclusion, I just want to know how everyone thinks. For instance, when I watched the films I kept changing my position. After I finished watching the films, I realised that the films that moved me are those that touched on social subjects. Although they looked rough, I somehow felt that there were still filmmakers that cared about what we did not want to see in life. But I do not mean to say that social consciousness have to be the theme this year. That is not my position either. I just want to get a view of whether there is anything that deserves to be pushed or promoted, and whether or not we have the same view. It would be good that we do, we could have a consensus. It also would not matter if we don't.

AU: Our approach can also be whether a film is genuine, then technique can take a back seat.

Taped

FU: Bourgeois, mainstream.

AU: I did not like ***Taped*** at all.

PAU, FU: Me neither.

KWONG: Would you care to deliberate on what you like or do not like about it?

AU: The film possessed a contemporary mentality, which I found repulsive. The director's execution was aimless, as if the idea of depicting the mindset of youngsters today was to put together a few meaningless shots.

KWONG: What kind of mindset do you mean?

AU: The view of love nowadays, the contemporary treatment of the visual medium, one's imagination and one's reality. Perhaps we have lost the guts to commit, or to communicate through words. It seemed to say, if I liked you, I would only film you without your knowledge or consent. This mentality could be a very interesting subject matter to explore, but since he used this style to make the film, and since he used these two actors (Carl Ng and Maggie Q), since that is the way he treated the story, I felt that this mentality was what the director himself had fallen into, and it was so disgusting. That's what it was to me, I'm sorry.

PAU: I did not think the film was that bad. I did not dislike it completely, I only think it was pretentious. In fact, when you mentioned the word genuine earlier, I felt that if genuine is what we are after, we could immediately dismiss this film. But I do think the reason it deserved a place among the eight finalists was that I don't really believe he shot it aimlessly. At least I have a feeling that the director had briefed the actors what to shoot, and the shots were done with a purpose. The only thing was, the filming was done by the actors and not a cinematographer.

LAI: I went to the screening and listened to the discussion, and I know the background of the production was not like that. In fact, the shots were done with a professional camera, and pretended to be shot by the actors themselves.

CHUI: The form he used has nothing to do with the content of the film. He only tried a new technical approach, for example, using two cameras. But at the end, in terms of content, he did not have to use them.

AU: I think he did not explore what he set out to explore.

CHUI: He did not have anything to explore.

AU: Outwardly, he used a lot of techniques favoured by young people today to dress up a lot of things, but it was for show-off and no substance. It could not lead you to a main

point. Neither his heart nor his head could accomplish that. As for what I meant with “aimless”, I don’t mean to say technique is essential, it’s only that people have started to fall into a type of casualty, a type of attitude that says “just film some stuff and go home”...

AU: As a result you find that everyone is using this way to present images, but how does one say what one wants to say within this spectacle? I think in terms of attitude, he did not genuinely explore this phenomenon about the reality of images. If that was the topic he was to explore, I would certainly like to see it.

LAI: There was a lot of potential in the set-up.

PAU: It was not perfect though. His editing, the shots that you considered casually shot, his camera use, or the whole story – the theme you mentioned earlier, of detachment and the inability to communicate in a relationship, he has dealt with. You considered this theme hip, and you thought that was the reason he chose to make it his theme. Perhaps he really did intend to explore this theme, and I think he had done the job. The only thing that disappointed me though, was exactly what you said, that he could have done it better and made it more touching. Although I don’t consider deliberate sentimentality an important motivation, but my impression was that the whole film was shot by those two characters, and it made the film... Unless he has added more scenes in the story, it would only be the way it was now, there was a limitation to this form. Certainly he could have handled it better, like you said, he had a lot of potential to develop the story...

LAI: Perhaps there could even be a third or fourth angle.

PAU: I agree, perhaps there could even be a third or fourth angle. He could even use different colours to represent image and imagination. It could even be that, for the cameras the two characters used, in a certain point of the story, become indistinct from each other, the Audience not able to tell which shot was whose. These are the things he could have achieved. He did not execute it well enough, but one could see that was his intention. And for him to have this idea and this motivation, to me, was good enough. It is nice to see a film with this intention.

LAI: However, I think the way he handled it only emphasised the star gaze. I think the choice of these two actors was significant. For there are indeed many films that

explore the ways and means of film cameras, but this film fell exactly into the kinds of traps that we always talked about when discussing this type of design. To use multiple cameras, to shoot in this style, could be an examination of detachment, because a film is purely a gaze. I believe this film could have reinforced this idea, rather than abandoning the idea midway, and failing to make us see more clearly this kind of relationship between two people with the multiple camera use and dual angles. Nor could it comment or judge on the effects of the camera. I find this film very pretentious.

PAU: I don't think he wanted to deconstruct this...

LAI: Deconstruction was not what he was after, so he simply showed off some fashionable techniques.

AU: I agree I found a showy quality to it, I feel the same way. But does that make it socially or politically incorrect?

LAI: I don't mean to say anything as deep, I just feel the director did not make his point. He used a lot of resources to put up an eye candy. Even the story was badly-told.

PAU: I couldn't even see it as a story, he was only attempting to play with the idea of merging those two films.

FU: I also considered it a visual experiment. It had a sense of contemporaneity. I'd like to defend it, since I was among those who picked this film. I disagree with the notion that it did not have anything to say. I think the director was only playing with different media, obviously trying to experiment with the theme of "machine". Certainly, the film was pretentious. While I was watching it I also find the things that made me the most uncomfortable were how calculating he was in shooting in those angles, and his affected use of colour. But then again, I also agree, if I had to choose eight finalists, the film will not be the first, second, nor third.

Our Steps

FU: It is stylistically very similar to the productions of RTHK (note: Radio Television Hong Kong). It left a deep impression on me.

AU: But it was finely done...

PAU: But there was no surprise. When it ended, it did.

CHUI: I think it was very good. But I also agree, in this competition, if you take into account the independent spirit and so forth, I can only give it the third place. I saw this for the first time when it was shown at the Academy of Performing Arts. I believe this team has a lot of potential, especially in the cinematography. The music and editing were also very nicely done. But that was it. When I looked at it again, I realised there was problems in the story. Towards the end of the story, with the part about the father losing his clothes, I did not know what happened there. What was in that case? They did not even provide some very basic information. However, they are undoubtedly very dedicated and talented filmmakers.

AU: I also agree it was very fine, I was quite surprised. They have set high demands in execution, the composition of the shots...

LAI: For every line in every shot, it was composed beautifully...

AU: Or the props in the foreground... This was a beautifully shot RTHK drama. Personally I would not be touched by these films. The RTHK has been promoting how they tell stories about social issues in order to touch the audience but always fail. What we got are aesthetically fine programmes that surprise us, in the sense that the productions all look like commercials, and make us wonder where these filmmakers come from. I believe this is the case for this work as well. There were also a lot of plot holes in the story. If one look at it in terms of story, of the techniques in story-telling, or narrative approach, it fell short in every aspect. But at the same time it was evident that a lot of thoughts had been put into making this film. For instance, the director used a certain shot in place of a certain line of dialogue, obviously he had contemplated it. But creatively speaking, it was not outstanding.

Hae

PAU: I think we all remember this, it was a fake documentary. In fact, there were a few fake documentaries among the projects submitted, they were obviously school assignments. We only picked the best one out among them.

CHUI: It seems **Hae** tried to make a statement.

PAU: It was a little too long. I think if it were shortened by half, I would have enjoyed it a lot more. Since it dealt with the concepts of the real and the unreal, the director had found a few professors to discuss what is "Hae", some of them real professors, some of them made you wonder if they are real or not. I find that this theme of the real and the unreal in this documentary was explored quite interestingly. But as for originality and whether it could touch people, I think it was not up to that standard.

AU: It did reflect the contemporary viewpoints on certain things. For example, it utilised different broadcast elements, like inserting interviews in the middle of the story. The project had its interesting points, but is it original? It did not appear so.

CHUI: In the middle of the film with the part about Tung Chee Hwa, I thought the director had more to say. But at the end he just slacked off. I was quite disappointed when I saw the ending. However, this was the most outstanding one among those in this format. The others were very senseless and silly.

LAI: I found it quite good too, and this was also my first time seeing it. I enjoyed his crazed approach, in the sense that he ran out to do research based on one simple idea, to substantiate a theory. But there had been plenty of people who had done this in the history of film, it had become a genre. I also found the film quite rough, it could not be among the first three prizes.

The Blacks

LAI: I like ***The Blacks***.

PAU: I found it very true when I saw it.

FU: It's a comfortable piece of work.

PAU: It resembled reality TV in the sense that it followed the subject everywhere. Even for a simple shot, it worked.

LAI: I liked that the fact that the crew followed the subjects around. The director invented a few activities, so it was not just merely following, the crew was actually involved in the subjects' lives. As a matter of fact, I would like more people to see this film.

The 8th

LAI: I like it.

CHUI: I found it very enjoyable too. Afterwards I watched it again, since I found it too long the first time. There was a shot in the middle before the male protagonist put on glasses that I did not know what the director wanted to say. Moreover I did not want to find out as I did the first time the story was indeed so superficial and simple. But it did not matter, I watched it once again and it was still okay to me.

LAI: But I did not understand how it would end this way. It was as if the director couldn't figure out an ending, so he repeated the fifth day when Eve appeared. I really like the beginning though...

CHUI: The beginning was very good.

LAI: The first half was good too.

AU: I also preferred the beginning. Whereas for the end I found there were things that were not clearly explained. The set up at the beginning was nicely done.

FU: But he did not know how to end it.

AU: It did give an impression that he was still thinking while he went on. That was what it felt like.

LAI: I feel that he amended the lack of resolution with editing, rather than having a complete ending beforehand. It was not in the script.

FU: I think this film is either the best or the second place.

AU: It was not good enough to win either first or second place. But I do believe the subject matter is quite interesting. There were things that were not explored fully, but it did not ruin the overall rhythm, so it was okay.

LAI: How do you feel about the actors? Did they match the performance requirement?

FU: They were okay.

PAU: They were okay, we could not ask for too much.

CHUI: It's hard to say...

PAU: I have already sung praises for them in a comment I wrote. I believe that without those two actors the film would have been a disaster, the whole film would not work.

CHUI: I did not think there was any problem with the ending. The first time I saw it I thought it was too long, so I was not too keen on it. But when I saw it for the second time, I found the ending acceptable.

LAI: It was quite concise.

PAU: I don't remember the ending that well.

LAI: Actually I want to see it again...

AU: I did not like some of the details, but then I thought would those details affect the film as a whole? Not necessarily. Take for example I did not like the appearance of God on television. When I saw that I thought, wow, how come it became that bad? I was quite taken aback by it. But as a whole, I believe he was very focused on doing one particular thing. So was that really that bad? Nevertheless I did not see the point of it, as he had been using the voice to represent God, and then in this juncture I wondered why he thought it necessary for God to appear? These were the decisions he made that I was skeptical about.

LAI: As a matter of fact, that was the voice of the director. It represented the voice of the creator, and not God.

(The jury re-watched *The 8th*)

CHUI: His use of music was very good as well...

PAU: He had taken into consideration every aspect of the production. It was well done, and very all-rounded.

Just Love

PAU: I like this film a lot.

LAI: But there were one or two scenes the appearance of which I did not understand. For instance, the scene where the mother character watched television.

AU: I believe the director wanted to reinforce the conflict between the two characters.

LAI: But I found the mother odd.

PAU: That was because the actress who played the mother did not know how to act, because she was not her real mother. This was only a tiny flaw. The director added this scene for a particular purpose, I think it was necessary.

LAI: But that scene stood out from the rest. When I watched to that point, it was as if I was woken up suddenly.

PAU: That was the fault of the actress. But the other two actresses were very good, they acted very naturally. Of course, apart from those two actresses, the other actors were not as good as them.

LAI: The man who sold flowers woke me up, then the mother character woke me up as well.

PAU: That is right. The others were not nearly as good as the main actresses, their acting was very good. More to that the story was very convincing, and the director had portrayed the two characters well, making them three-dimensional. One felt that they were human.

AU: I agree that **Just Love** was a charming story, though it did have faults in its execution. One would think, what made you cast this character in this way? How could you accept such a take? But apart from that, the whole film was sweet and charming, perhaps due to the fact that it had an authenticity and realness, it was not pretentious at all. It might be odd at times technically, but there was one thing that was interesting – as we discussed just now, the director had used this form to handle the story, like the documentary element that it used. The structure of the story made it interesting. Without these elements, one would think she did not know how to make a film, only taking a good story and tell it in a handy way. But with these elements, her

motivation was clear. Although I disliked the scene of the mother as well, I tried to analyse the purpose of the scene. Added to the fact that she inserted documentary sequences into the film, the scenes of the mother's reaction became reasonable. For as though her acting was really bad, one understood the intention of the director, and realised that if the scene were taken out, she would not have said what he wanted to say.

LAI: Basically I liked the fact that it had other layers to the story. To me, only the scenes of the two lead actresses were enjoyable. The exchange in the boxing hall was wonderful. But as soon as other actors appeared, I was taken away from the story.

PAU: Including the coaches...

LAI: The coaches, the young man who sold flowers, the mother, they pulled me out of the story.

PAU: I felt the same way. The coaches were particularly funny.

CHUI: Although she had a lot of problems in his execution and techniques, when I watched the film I found it a rare gem. I even considered the acting of the two lead actresses average, but this was the one of the stories among all that made me care about the developments of the characters. That was delivered in the story. There might be visually substandard shots in the film, but it was not shot aimlessly. But in terms of actors, I even felt the two lead actresses were problematic.

FU: I considered those two actresses rather good.

PAU: It seemed that we all have a generally good impression of this film.

FU: Mainly I think the casting was good, those two girls were charming. They carried the film and made it comfortable to watch. Plus the film was sincere, which was not found in other work submitted.

LAI: Those were their own qualities.

FU: It was sweet, but not so much as to disrupt the flow of the film. This was a bright and smart film.

LAI: There were places for improvement.

PAU: I think if it were any longer, it would become boring. This was the perfect length for vignette-style films like this.

LAI: Not necessarily. There could be simple improvements, like how to put together scenes, where to cut. These could be improved.

PAU: That's okay. If anything should be added, it should be portrayals of happiness in the story.

Graffiti and Home Movies

LAI: I dislike it very much, I'm sorry.

CHUI: I think it was acceptable. I quite like it.

LAI: As soon as I heard the voice I wanted to turn it off.

AU: I think the visuals were acceptable, although the repeat use of the same images was not an original technique, the whole film worked and it made me feel. But I found the voice repulsive, the director really should have taken the voice out. Other than that, if one were to look at the images and listen to the voice-overs, one would be moved. The only thing was that he was not too original, but in terms of the images and his use of them, and not inserting anything else in between, made this film realistic. By using his scripts and the interactions of the characters, he moved the audience in a simple manner. The approach itself worked.

LAI: Actually I liked those images a lot, I found them charming. But I did not like the voice, neither did I like what the voice said. It was because not only did the voice-over fail to compliment the images, it made them clichéd. I think the use of it was clichéd, and as a result the images were wasted.

KWONG: I would like to ask Au, you said earlier that parts of the film was not original enough...

AU: I think the thought itself was not original. For instance if one has a bunch of home movies that one would like to use, how to one know which ones to use? When you listened to what he wrote, you would realise he knew which shots could work, do you

understand what I mean? That is to say, you might have 20 tapes, now you have picked three or four minutes out of it, then of course you knew which were the shots that you want to use, and where you want to use them, and to make the audience feel. This is exactly what I meant by clichéd. Truth be told, this film was definitely clichéd, and I did not like his descriptions. But I also realised that some people might be touched by it, even I was touched by parts of it, perhaps because those shots worked. The fact was that he was talking about something clichéd but universal: his father was dying, the poignancy he felt towards life could then easily touch others. Nevertheless I think the way he used the images repeatedly, and the direction he took in his script were not original enough.

CHUI: I myself found it quite enjoyable, because I was truly moved by it when I saw it, and I did not mind that voice. But I do agree there were clichés in this work. I found it realistic though when I was watching it. But then at the end when he tried to explain his reason of making this film, it was redundant. I mentioned last time a documentary about a few middle-aged men forming a band (*Delay? No More!*), even though it was not selected at the end. As we have discussed last time, after watching more than 100 films, as long as there was one about middle-aged people, the film would definitely stand out. For the reason that there were too many films about teenage boys and girls wallowing in heartbreak, in which they spent half an hour depicting states of sadness, or telling how lost and aimless they felt. So then I quite like that documentary, it was delightful to see a group of middle-aged men forming a band. But then after thinking it through, you would realise this was a common enough theme. It just stood out though among these films.

FU: I found the image texture of the Super 8, the colours and the images poetic. I did not really mind that voice, only that he talked too much, and that it might not help the film. This film was not too outstanding either, but it did move people. If he really did exaggerate, he only exaggerated the feelings. Or perhaps it was a bit outdated?

AU: If you use the word outdated, I absolutely agree. His intention, approach and execution were all outdated.

FU: This was the part in which he lost some points.

PAU: She spoke my mind, it was outdated. The only thing that moved us was the combination, it moved middle-aged people like us.

LAI: The combination did not work, I only liked those images.

AU: I think for a long time, people like us missed Super 8.

PAU: Middle-aged people like us.

AU: As soon as I saw that texture... Truth be told, if you ask me what he said, all I remember was a few words. You would not remember what he talked about, only those shots.

FU: It was rather old-fashioned.

PAU: I think the film was completed, there was not much to be developed. Therefore I do not think it deserves the first or second place.

LAI: I agree.

Name of Wu Mei

FU: This was a very professional film. I remember it was me who recommended it. In fact I have seen it before at the Microwave Media Arts Festival, I found it to be a very calculating vision and sound experiment...

PAU: I did not find it particular innovative, text has been used quite commonly. To read the text out was, to me, a relatively weak method. There was a television set in it, why couldn't the director turn the text into something we could see onscreen? In fact, there could also be another layer. I found the whole film too flat, with only one soundtrack... What one soundtrack meant was that there are two characters, one soundtrack and one image. He could have turned the imagery in the book into a metaphor, which is to say to turn the film itself into a metaphor, it would be much better than just playing with form to this extreme extent. What you see now is a play with form, obviously quite a lot too, but it did not utilise the things in the literature.

AU: When I first saw it, for the first three minutes I did not like it. But I realised if he was trying to speak something and when he spoke it so loud he was making you understand he was using media creatively. His formalism statement was loud and clear, one must know what he was doing. And I meant to say, I appreciated that, only that there were places that I did not like. One was the way two voices kept speaking

those text, and then a man typing at his computer furiously, these were the things I did not take too well. But it is only how I personally feel. I absolutely agreed with the notion that he was very calculating in the visual and audio execution, he knew when to shock you with a sound, and then to merge the sound into the narration of the text. Towards the end of the film, I found the impact greater and greater, which is to say the previous parts were rather loose. For my personal taste, I do not like this type of work. That was why I kept asking how should we decide when I first came in. I think this was the only piece in which the form was played so thoroughly. If I chose to put aside my personal preferences, I think we should pick a film of this type. This was the only film among the eight that explore the form, and it had an independent spirit. But whether it was done in a unique way or whether it was done well, I do not think so. Nevertheless it had its brilliant aspects, and it could earn high marks.

FU: Another point you said he did not achieve was that... in fact he did not want to use the text, in the way that you read a novel would be so different from the story he told us. For me too, I could not get into it at first, and I also did not care for the scene of the man in front of the computer, it seemed strange to me. It took me quite a while to get into the film, but once I did I was completely absorbed into it. It was the particularly the case for the scene with the paper bag in the elevator, it fired my imagination. His play with form was taken to an extreme, but in a standard and monotonous way that inspired in the audience to imagine a storyboard and to create the rest of the story in their own mind. I particular appreciate this, and I think he achieved it. Though not everyone might feel the same way.

KWONG: Are you all ready for the next round of this meeting, the nomination of the films for the prizes? Each of you can nominate three films.

(The voting result: **Taped**: 0 vote. **Our Steps**: 2 votes. **Hae**: 0 vote. **The Blacks**: 4 votes. **The 8th**: 5 votes. **Just Love**: 2 votes. **Graffiti and Home Movies**: 0 vote. **Name of Wu Mei**: 2 votes.)

KWONG: In other words, we can delete **Taped**, **Hae** and **Graffiti and Home Movies** from our list. Now we have 5 films. Can we nominate the films for the Gold Award and other prizes? Let's vote now, giving marks to each of the films. Three for the Gold Award, two for the Silver and one for special mentions. The film with the highest mark gets the Gold Award.

AU: But I would like to ask, would it be possible not to have a Gold Award?

CHUI: I think we should give out a Gold Award.

FU: I agree that I feel there is a film that deserves a Gold Award this year.

PAU: I think what sets this year apart from the rest is the Silver Award, since the standard of the finalists were quite even this year.

AU: If we must have a Gold Award, I think we need to turn back and decide what direction we should take in determining a Gold Award. Shall we have a consensus?

PAU: The system of giving marks to each film is most efficient way to narrow down our choices and singling out the outstanding pieces.

(The result: ***The 8th***: 6 marks. ***Just Love***: 5 marks. ***Our Steps***: 2 marks. ***The Blacks***: 2 marks. ***Name of Wu Mei***: 2 marks.)

PAU: I do not dispute this result.

FU: I do not disagree with it either.

PAU: I think we should give out three Special Mentions.

AU: That sounds good.

LAI: But do we all agree that ***The 8th*** is so good that we have to give it the Gold Award?

FU: I think we do have to give out a Gold Award.

CHUI: To me, it is true for this year...

LAI: Okay.

PAU: I think it is necessary to have this kind of encouragement.

AU: What is so special about this year that we have to give out a Gold Award?

FU: No, what I meant to say is if you let me decide this year, I would prefer to have a Gold Award.

CHUI: I mean to say it is the most outstanding film this year.

FU: Considered to be the best this year.

KWONG: Could you elaborate on the reason why we should have three Special Mention recipients this year?

LAI: It is because when we were deliberating, I remember not that many people liked ***Our Steps***, only Chui supported it, but it ended up receiving so many votes.

AU: I supported it, along with Chui.

KWONG: Could you elaborate on why ***Our Steps*** deserves a Special Mention?

CHUI: As Au told me at the beginning, every year, ifva gives out the impression of encouraging people to shot aimlessly. It might not be true, but there are people who hold that view. For this film, all the details were done rather well, which was something we could all see.

AU: I also consider it a very fine piece that can enter the mainstream. Personally I find the casting was good, the actors suited the roles of the father and the son. Although there was not much originality in every aspect, the techniques or the script, it did possess a sense of integrity that moved me. I mean it in the sense that, in these days when almost no one would make the effort to make a drama sincerely, to earnestly complete a fine piece of narrative short film, to design the foreground and background and to block how and where the actors should move. Added to that I also like those child actors very much.

CHUI: That actor was really good.

AU: It was quite demanding for the child actor.

CHUI: There were still things to be desired in the story, but within those scenes, the father and son did have chemistry.

AU: It was a difficult shot. It had integrity and was very all-rounded.

LAI: The topic of ***The Blacks*** deserves our notice. The director not only shot outdoors, he was involved in the story. He created certain events to participate with the interviewees. Therefore it was not merely a video project, but also a socially involved project.

AU: What I find interesting is that I never thought about having three Special Mention recipients. It was interesting in the sense that the three recipients represent three different genres: narrative, experimental and documentary. It is interesting for the whole competition to have this combination. If there was only one award, we could not have made this point.

LAI: I agree.

AU: That was why when three Special Mention were suggested just now, I instantly agree. I entered this room with exactly this doubt, at the end these three awards cleared my doubt. I feel the whole question is resolved.

KWONG: I have a suggestion: some of you will be presenters at the awards ceremony. Would you then talk about the reason behind your decisions? Au put it very well just now, especially with the point on the Special Mention prizes. I think people would like to know about the rationale behind the decisions. Would you share it with the audience then?

All: Yes.

LAI: I found ***Name of Wu Mei*** a well-rounded piece. I liked the way voices were used, the clear knowledge of how there are different functions for male and female voices.

Open Category

Gold Award

The 8th

Jervis SUEN

Silver Award

Just Love

FUNG King-long

Special Mention

Our Steps

LEE Chi-wai, KWAN Wing-men, NG Hoi-yan, YEUNG Ki-fai

The Blacks

CHOY Yuk-ling, KU So-lan, CHENG Man-wah, WONG Yuen-ling

Name of Wu Mei

KONG Khong-chang