

**The 24th ifva Awards  
Open Category Jury Meeting Transcript**

Jury Members: Ying Liang (Ying), Adrian Chow (Chow), Candace Chong (Chong) , O Sing Pui (O), Stanley Kwan (Kwan)

Organizer representative: Kattie Fan (Fan)

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Fan: The first work is *The Bridge*.

Kwan: If I have no special feelings, can I not say anything?

Fan: Not everyone has to speak, but I suggest that you give some comments to each work so that entrants will know what jurors think of their works.

O: I guess entrants want to have juror's opinions and approval.

Chong: After watching the films, I looked at the comments of the first-round jury members. I agree with Ying Liang that *The Bridge* is too neat and safe, and many parts are overly straightforward.

Chow: I saw the film for the first time on a computer and again on the big screen, and the impression is quite different. I didn't have very strong feelings the first time around. However, the big screen magnified some things, and some subtle emotions such as that between the father and son and certain values between people of different generations, including what is freedom, political struggle, big and small issues, animal rights, coupledom (relationship), etc, all of these are magnified on the big screen, and perhaps become too obvious. These issues are not as apparent on the small screen, and now the feeling is more intense, and I give it higher marks compared with previously.

O: I'd seen this work before. I agree that it is interesting in that it is very light and pure. The artist brings out issues about self-identity and the relations between two generations which he has deep feelings for. This very simple piece is quite satisfactory. It could have been more refined, but I approve of its sincerity and that it is not too overly sensational, but merely wants to express the director's feelings. For me, he has achieved his goal, and even though technically it is relatively light-weight, I find it acceptable.

Ying: Because I wrote the review, I won't repeat what I had written. I agree with what you said. I can add that watching it on the big screen, many details, especially some small objects in the scenes left a stronger impression and my feelings for it improved. This generally good work can be seen in the context of the present social environment; even though it has the style and music of a Japanese family drama, it also has a certain local originality and brings out issues concerning this city and between generations. As for expecting more about the work and the thinking behind it, is the film a bit conservative or restrictive? The son decides to

become a civil servant, is it because his parents are no longer around and he is free to choose? Is this deliberate? Is it not a compromise but a kind of change? Looking at the relationship between the father and the son today, and I don't really know what it is. There is a kind of awkwardness and I wonder what is his attitude and position.

**Kwan:** I agree with Ying Liang in saying that the whole film is very straightforward in its form and scriptwriting. Many things are expressed directly. I don't doubt the director's goodwill or intention, but the story is so close to him, and because it is so close, I wonder if he needs to be so straightforward with the dialogue? In daily life, our conversations with parents are very trivial, but he chose to express himself in a straightforward way.

**Fan:** If you don't have anything to add, let's move on to the next work, *Home Change*.

**O:** Watching the film again, I feel that the director successfully brought out the main subject matter, but the technique is a bit crude and superficial. The director wants to explore social issues but he does not go deeper. In former times, the land was taken away by the government, and now it is usurped by developers. There are also issues involving reform and opening up, urban development, tree cutting and arson. He brings out these issues but failed to develop them further, which is a waste. The film is divided into close-up and distant views, but the structure is very loose. He merely raises issues but does not delve into it. How can he dig deeper and make the film richer? Upon viewing the film a second time, my feelings are the same.

**Ying:** The treatment is relatively superficial, but I imagine it's because he is observing his own family up close and loses perspective. The director has not dealt with many complicated issues. For example, the clan has many power relationships, whether internal or external, and has complex power relations with the government, the economy and social groups, including China's rural land issues. In fact, farmers do not have real ownership of land, and also there was collectivisation of land in former years, different types of power struggles, problems that had been festering for many years, etc. The director only brings out the surface phenomenon of these issues but does not probe the underlying problems, which are the most important. This film is not short, and it is a pity that it has not really penetrated into the key issues within its running time of some twenty-five minutes.

**Chong:** I thought it was very good at first, and the fact that the director involves his own family who is affected by these problems. This work reminds me of *Family Family Day*, which tells the story of the grandma's death and brings out some wonderful secrets. However, this film is a bit too fragmented. It's a pity that it didn't expound on the most important issues. If the filmmaker's family is still involved in this matter, there should be more ways to bring out their stories, but he does not go in that direction.

**Kwan:** I have got to know many Mainland young directors in recent years. I agree with what Ying Liang said, that the director does not dig deep enough perhaps because they are not mature enough. This is okay. But I know many young directors who

wants to explore such issues, but they censor themselves. The subject matter involving his clan is very interesting, but he is deliberately avoiding it or does not have the ability to explore it. This really bothers me.

O: It may be because he is making a film about something close to him, and perhaps has omitted some details because it is too sensitive or not good for his family or for himself, he side-steps certain topics.

Chong: So perhaps it is not political censorship but has something to do with his family.

Kwan: This issue bothered me while watching the film. The text at the beginning introduces an interesting topic.

Chow: To a certain extent, this kind of avoidance or self-censorship is understandable. In particular, this situation involves the relationship between the family and the village. I feel that sometimes, documentaries do not have to deal with problems in a very clear way. It is okay to bring out some issues for everyone to think about. What matters is whether the work is mature or not, and whether it is done well or not (technically). Viewing it on the big screen, many of its problems are magnified and becomes very clear. The sound, especially, is really not ideal.

O: It fails to reach basic standards.

Chow: It really affects the audience's appreciation of the film. The director brings out some problems for the audience to think about, but these flaws really affect our viewing of it.

Fan: The next work is *Silent City*.

Kwan: There is nothing wrong with this film, but I question whether it has to use such professional actors as Ng Yuen-yeek and Lam Wai.

Chong: I agree. I understand your point.

Kwan: This film is about a person who is released from prison. It is not supposed to be a showcase for Ng Yuen-yeek's acting.

O: Maybe he needs a professional actor to play this role, but I understand what you mean. They are two different styles of acting. When we choose actors, in theory we will choose the most suitable actor for the role. Perhaps for some of the scenes, the director requires a more experienced actor to enrich his film.

Kwan: This is a question of choice. Perhaps the role will be better played by a non-professional who should suit the tone of the film better. For me, all I see is Ng Yuen-yeek, no matter how good her acting skills are.

Chong: Ying Liang is not familiar with these two actors. Do you feel the same?

- Ying: I don't have this feeling or got this type of message.
- Kwan: Maybe we are too familiar with Ng.
- O: If we look at an actor objectively, one should not pay attention to whether she is a big star or not as long as she can achieve what the director wants to express and require. If it was a non-professional actor, perhaps they may not be able to deliver physically, or perhaps the film needs an actor with more skills to help it reach a higher level.
- Chong: I have this feeling too, so I agree with Kwan.
- O: The director's idea is to find a professional to interpret his images?
- Kwan: Non-professionals may achieve another effect, but Lam Wai does not raise the dramatic effect of the film. He plays a person who has just been released from prison, but his physical figure does not look like that of a tramp. Some details like the hole on the nylon bed, it is obvious that the finger is enhanced by make-up. He plays a down-on-his-luck person, yet wears make-up on his hand. I can't accept that.
- O: The wooden strip next to the nylon bed looks too new, and the running shoes are too clean.
- Kwan: The film's details do not hold up together, they are too incongruous.
- Chow: Your point of view is good. If the director wants to express his ideas with images, he should focus on these two characters and their stories. Using a professional actor may not help, maybe it would have been better to capture some real people from this city. It may not be appropriate to use professional actors to enrich the film, it is not a suitable choice.
- Kwan: Because this film relies on pure image with no dialogue, it requires a certain purity that is more than conventional drama. This reminds me of the touching simplicity of *Family Family Day*, which makes you not mind its use of long shots and the fact that the art direction is not very good. I think the purity of that film is the most interesting quality, while this film is pretentious.
- O: It is very difficult to convey feelings just with images.
- Ying: I don't know much about these two actors, but I feel that the director has put a lot of thoughts into the visuals. The jurors talked about this in the first round. Watching it again today, I try to think about why he chose to present things this way, like some of the special effects, which seem to be too exaggerated, while other parts need to be considered more. What you have said so far is reasonable.
- Fan: The next work is *Be a Rider or a Fool*.

- Ying: I feel the film is a little inadequate, obviously it does not go far enough. For example, I wonder why they use interviews. What is the basis of the premise? I didn't fully understand it after seeing it, but it doesn't matter, I just failed to find the reason. When I watched it the second time, I wondered why the director chose this point in time to tell the story and why it is the most important time. I finally understood that it is related to why they have fireworks in the New Year. But that is not an adequate reason. The feelings of two people and the one being killed are too simple. Some of the special effects of riding bicycles on the road are very nice and impressive, but some parts are still not adequate. The character setting of the two people is too simple, one is a very impulsive person, the other is very loyal, and that's it. There is no depiction of ethnic groups, social violence, neglected power relations and respect for the differences in socially disadvantaged groups. It is a pity that these parts are dealt with in overly simple ways because the idea is very good.
- Kwan: The film has many simple and superficial elements, like choosing a young person to narrate it. Is he telling the truth or telling a story? Is the story written to serve the interview? The contrast between illusion and reality of this story brings out the realistic yet illusionary nature of film. If you say *The Bridge* is too real, I wonder if this film is made just to express anger and revenge? I don't think too much about the power relations and injustice. The character is of a certain age, and talks about something he may not know and do not know how to judge. Maybe he is simply mistreated by his boss. Perhaps the film serves to deepen social grievances and conflict with South Asians. The character merely follows others by saying, "I am angry, I want revenge."
- Chow: In addition to being bullied by the boss, the character also mentions that he feels invisible, which is his reason for cycling. Before, cycling was a way to affirm his existence and to attract attention, but now cycling has become a way to avoid people because he does not want to stay at home. I think he has taken in a lot of discrimination against South Asians in Hong Kong and suppressed some grievances.
- Chong: This is one of the works that I like very much. It is interesting that I know that the screen on the left is a drama, I can't help but want to follow it. While listening to his narrative, I want to keep watching. This is also true of many of his monologues. People feel they are not like that and this is wrong, but it makes me not want to judge. As an ethnic minority in the city who is forced to live a certain way, it has to affect him. Perhaps the filmmaker does not explore the issue in depth, but as a short film, it made me think about the issues.
- Chow: The value of this film is in providing a chance for Hong Kong people to reflect. We live side by side with South Asians, but what have we done? However, watching it on the big screen this time, I sense a certain danger. I don't know if the big screen magnified it, but I wonder if the impact is overdone. For viewers who are unwilling or who don't want to think about such issues, perhaps they will think South Asians are violent. Will the audience deepen their discrimination against

South Asians? Perhaps this danger is heightened on the big screen, and I wonder if the filmmaker should adjust the tone to prevent that kind of danger?

Kwan: By using this form, he has strived not to deepen discrimination.

O: My feelings for this film has not changed since watching it the first time. The young man's accusation against society is interesting and powerful. However, watching it on the big screen this time gives me a feeling that it is fake and made-up, and I was unable to get into the drama. His presentation technique is good in that he chooses to use a documentary form to tell this story about himself rather than a made-up drama or concept.

Chong: What you said about deepening discrimination changed my views somewhat. The reason why there would be this danger is because we don't know the character. However, when I watch this film, I like him and am able to identify with his situation. He says a lot, like the police are very bad, and I am able to see things from his perspective, which is very interesting.

Fan: The next film is *busydoingnothing*.

Chow: This film is very interesting. In the first round, all three jurors of us, (Ying Liang and O Sing Pui too) chose this film and we all liked it. We appreciate the absurd, comic book style of the film. Again, watching it on the big screen brings out some problems. The absurdity comes from many silly and idiotic things, which the big screen magnifies but obscures the comic book effects, making the film seem very scattered. There is a big difference watching it on the big screen versus the small screen.

O: I like this film. The technique and skill are not perfect but I like his concept of using black humour and absurdity. Why must we work hard? Why do we have to have a goal? Can I take it easy my whole life? The film uses a negative approach to bring out a positive idea, which is the basis of his humour. Interestingly, the director's technique may not be very mature, but I like the sense of nothingness. In the end, it's as simple as having a small party and enjoy the moment. This idea is very interesting, and I also like the egg. I appreciate this attitude of life. Why can't I do this? His ideas seem childish, like using adhesive tape on the floor. It seems like a small step, but it is constantly improving.

Chow: I want to add that I like the values of nothingness and decadence. I like that very much. I also like the content, the absurdity works well on the small screen, but the big screen also magnifies the problems for the audience and covers up its good points.

O: The technique may be messy, and the director needs to improve his skills in order to execute the absurd elements. The director's skill is still immature, but I like the film conceptually.

Chong: I like it very much. The protagonist works in a \$12 store, which is a lively premise. I like it very much and I enjoyed myself while watching it. It is very humorous. However, it's a pity that I have a feeling of being too full and having had a little too much. The filmmaker should adjust the rhythm, now it feels messy and busy. I don't know how to describe it. Maybe it should be more compact and not so full, and not every character needs to be so naively complete. Maybe it will be more interesting that way?

Kwan: The greatest meaning of this work is to encourage some young directors and let them know that it's alright to be lazy. In recent years, many young directors seem to me to have a tendency to look down on minorities. This film assures young directors that they can be lazy and that to be an optimistic and humorous slacker is okay. However, the director's lack of skills offsets this interesting story.

O: I agree with what Kwan said. He seems to be negative but to some extent, he is very positive.

Fan: The next work is *The Umbrella*.

Chong: I like this work. I felt the work is very singular at the beginning in that it talks about a corrupt policeman and a Mainlander, but it is interesting that three things happen at the same time, which makes me want to follow along. In the end I feel very touched, and the three strands coming together creates a sense of suspense.

O: I like this film. It depends on the camera to tell its story. Many directors, when they start out, tend to think in terms of shots, but this is a purely personal choice and the variations can be quite large. The content is not very interesting. There is a scene involving slapping, a bookworm, and then later a group of young people who had just joined the Umbrella Movement. The shots are very clever. Seen apart, there is nothing special about these elements, but when these simple things are presented in different ways, the effect is special. For example, why does the film *An Elephant Sitting Still* use such long shots? It is a natural choice. If the shots are not so long, their meaning is not apparent. The director of *The Umbrella* did not come about his results by chance; he knows how to use shots. The film is not very dramatic, but what is interesting is the thinking behind it and its attempt to explore the mentality of young people in society today. The director chooses to talk about the future through the school and the education system. The use of rain as a symbol is interesting. The director has thought through things and is mature.

Kwan: I agree, he chooses to tell this story, and cleverly picks this singular way.

Chong: The director uses a simple method to talk about some complicated things, such as the state of society and young people. It is hard for scriptwriters to come up with this kind of story.

Ying: I also like it, and my reasons are similar to that of O Sing Pui. This story can only be told on film. The only thing that gives me pause is that the film is dominated by sound, which leads the audience into the various spaces and helps the audience get

into the story, but I can't accept this part. Long shots should be relatively open and allow the audience to choose and interact with people in different spaces, rather than forcing emotions, judgments, etc. upon the audience. The sound takes a strong leading role, which is very technical and intentional and made me feel uncomfortable. We can discuss this further. I don't mean to put the film down, but it is obvious that the director has certain ambitions, but does he go overboard in the end? When it gets to the part about the suicide, it seems unnecessary to be presented so strongly.

Chow: This is a stage play that is made using film techniques, and every part is designed.

Kwan: The sound design is like the lighting effect on a stage play.

Chow: Every time I watch it, the emphasis is different and I find that everything is calculated. It is a highly designed work, and very difficult to handle. How did he rehearse this performance?

Kwan: I also want to know how he rehearsed. What Ying Liang said is worthy of discussion. The director uses this format and sound to lead us along. Instead of cutting from wide shot to close up, the director uses sound.

O: I agree with what you said about the sound. Perhaps if the film uses 5.1 or 7.1 stereo, the feeling will be less intense. On a 4:3 screen, it is hard to separate the sound from the picture. The director could have used technology to enhance the sound and improve it, perhaps redesign it. The content seems to be nothing special and the picture is still, and so the audience has no choice but to listen to the sound, yet it does not flow.

Kwan: If there is no content and the dialogue is like this, the director should have used an open way to handle it. It is not necessary for us to understand every line of dialogue. Audiences can have choices, but now they are being restricted.

Chong and Chow: I agree.

Kwan: This form is fine if the director does not control us and force us to follow along and watch. The problem is the division of scenes, which is not the best. I shouldn't have to follow along this way. If you open things up, the audience can follow on their own.

Fan: The next film is *Out of Sound*.

Ying: I have written comments for this film, and my views haven't changed. There is something wrong with the premise. Calling a sex line is not something we see today. The drama uses this as the main focus, and the concept is very good, like with the role play and the child pretending to be an adult, but the part about the operator showing concern for the child just appears briefly before dropping off. The overall effect is very one-sided and not too ideal. Some points are interesting,



such as the appearance of the old woman on a rainy night, but what is the meaning of this image? The director fails to develop it.

- O: Watching it a second time, the film is still interesting. The main character is a very lonely child. He is lonely, loses his temper and throws a toy out of the window. The characters of the young lady (the operator) is well written and effective. I wonder if it is better if we don't see the face of Yoyo (the operator) at the end, but of course, that's just a small problem. Is it necessary for the father to beat the child at the end?
- Kwan: The whole film is about loneliness. The child is lonely. Yoyo should have known that he is a child but does not let on. If the director had dug deeper, these characters may be more moving, but the director fails to provide many details.
- Chong: This story is too strong but not very convincing. The Christmas lights and the single father taking care of the child is too fantastic. But what if the fantasy is taken one step further? Right now, the story seems not believable and hard to get into.
- Chow: I guess he wants to talk more about the reasons behind the child's loneliness. For example, when the father comes back to beat him at the end, it is perhaps because he works as a chef in a western restaurant, and it is normal for him to be busy during Christmas. Perhaps he has had a rough day and he gets a complaint about throwing out objects from his window, so he hits the child. This is very revealing and testifies to the relationship between father and son. But why does the child impersonate his father when talking to the woman? To some extent he is projecting, but that is not so obvious. I feel touched that the child has to resort to such a phone call, and connects with Yoyo who is willing to listen to him, and even invites her to a show. When watching the film on big screen, the pathos is heightened and I nearly cried.
- Fan: The next film is *Family Family Day*.
- Kwan: Is that his own family in the film?
- O: Yes, this is not a drama but a documentary, made after the director's grandma passed away. I guess the director did not start out with a plan, but just wanted to record and put those records together. It is more moving than a long drama. The texture and reality of this film is not readily achievable; many elements have to come together.
- Kwan: Are you sure this is a documentary? But I didn't think of the film as a documentary because the spacing is not like a documentary.
- O: According to my understanding, the spacing is not achieved by blocking, but something that happens naturally. The effect is very powerful.

- Chong: I also tend to think that it is a documentary. The director is very powerful, able to control the tension well. It is dramatic yet real at the same time, and the director's technique is good.
- Ying: I know a lot about the director's background. He is a student at a documentary workshop. Two of his works are among the finalists. He also made *Turn-Off\_Turn-On*. That's the way his mind works. He had tried making dramas, but the process was very painful for him, but the end result followed his original intentions, which was not the conventional way of telling stories. He edited many versions, and considers this one to be the ideal length. He also has a two-hour version as well as a version that is a few minutes long. I think this version is the most appropriate. His father had asked him to make a video for the family record. He had no purpose at the start, but merely filmed every day and edited a film out of the materials he shot.
- Kwan: Only he is able to make such choices.
- Ying: He studied documentary at Visible Record, and his homework was also experimental, similar to this style and direction. He also has other specialties such as dancing and painting, and the main dancer in the other film, *Turn-Off\_Turn-On* is his younger brother, a professional dancer.
- Fan: The next film is *Turn-Off\_Turn-On*.
- O: To me, the significance of this work is independence. Young directors are more inclined to a certain style, such as drama or narrative. They should explore different types of independent films, like experimental films. Young people grow up on conventional dramas, but they should not just stick to certain types of films. This film is interesting in that it tries to separate sound and image and image from text, allowing the audience to focus not only on the drama but they are given the space to think.
- Kwan: The director only reveals the sound and subtitles in the last third of the film, and it would be better if he could do so earlier.
- O: Perhaps he wants to go step by step and is worried about going too fast. Maybe he could have done so earlier as you said, but he chooses to do so step by step.
- Fan: The next work is *My World*.
- Kwan: I think the characters' dialogue is appropriate. For example, the Yam character is very informative. This kind of logic is very youthful and I find it interesting.
- O: The protagonists are very distinctive and the dialogue is very good. They are able to convey emotions well and are very interesting. From the beginning to the end, the director is able to convey character relationships, gender and identity in an inspired manner. I don't know if the director himself is very interested in this topic, or he is very experienced and skilful.

- Kwan: The energy level of this entire work is very powerful.
- O: Yes, every scene is powerful in the portrayal of relationships between men and women, patriarchy and feminism, etc.
- Kwan: This film is also humorous. *busydoingnothing* also depicts a humorous topic, but the execution of this film is better. The director has a way of making all the elements and actors fit in together.
- O: The material is very rich.
- Chow: I don't have strong feelings about this film. As Kwan said, like *busydoingnothing*, this film also has a sense of humour, however, this film is at another extreme. The humour is there, but it seems to highlight the arrogance of the director. I have a feeling of being offended as an audience member. I feel that he is challenging the audience and arrogantly telling them that he can do these things. This is my feeling as a viewer. I don't know this director. I know that he has done some good works before, but with this film, I got a strange feeling.
- Kwan: My feelings are very different from yours. When you said you were offended, I think it has to do with the Yam character and his sister, which contrasts with the main character. The director wants to talk about gender and power. I think he has no boundaries.
- Chow: I have no problems with the gender part.
- Kwan: Does bringing out this information offend you? He is presenting a character.
- O: From the perspective of the director, I am very interested in the topic he talks about. Through this kind of depiction, you can see that he is confident, even over-confident. For him, this issue is familiar to him, and I dare not say if he is being calculated. Since he is familiar with these topics, why shouldn't he present what he is interested in and show the world? He handles these things very well, and many parts are very mature.
- Chong: He is calculated, very much so, and he is clever. This is not my favourite film, but it is among the top three or four. I think he is very interesting and knows how to play the game, and does it with a certain energy level, as Kwan said, and captures the youthful world. But the arrogance you just mentioned may be a kind of youthful arrogance, or because he knows how to play this game, he feels free. This is an interesting film.
- Kwan: Be youthful while you are young.
- Chong: When applied it to this topic, I think it is acceptable.

- Ying: We are probably not prepared to see a "youth film" on the big screen while feeling a strong sense of elitism. However, I didn't feel uncomfortable, especially seeing it on the big screen. The director has many skills and his knowledge and background may be different from many young directors. He has his own style and has his own unique knowledge base. I have also seen his previous short films, which are not like this. They are very realistic, a bit like *The Bridge*. This film is different and rather attractive.
- Chong: I also admire the dialogue. Sometimes you can carefully craft a script but the result may not be good.
- O: His skill is good.
- Fan: Next, do you have any nominations or favourites? Each person can select three works you like the most for discussion, or directly nominate the winning works. Unless we have to, we don't vote. Instead, I hope we can reach consensus through discussion.
- Kwan: Should we first nominate three works?
- O: Can we choose four?
- Fan: Yes, there are no restrictions on nominations. First, let us narrow down the choices to works that you like and consider worth discussing.
- Chong: I nominate *The Umbrella*, *Family Family Day*, *Be a Rider or a Fool* and *My World*.
- Chow: *Be a Rider or a Fool*, *The Umbrella*, *Out of Sound* and *The Bridge*.
- Kwan: *Family Family Day*, *My World*, *The Umbrella* and *Be a Rider or a Fool*.
- O: *The Umbrella*, *Family Family Day*, *busydoingnothing* and *My World*.
- Ying: *Family Family Day*, *My World* and *The Umbrella*. Just these three.
- Fan: You can narrow the discussion first. Right now, most people picked *The Umbrella*, with 5 votes, even though that does not necessarily mean it automatically gets Gold. *Family Family Day* and *My World* received the second largest number of votes with 4 votes each. Three people picked *Be a Rider or a Fool*, while *The Bridge*, *busydoingnothing* and *Out of Sound* each got one vote. We can eliminate those that received no votes, including *Home Change*, *Silent City* and *Turn-Off\_Turn-On*.
- O: We can return to these works when we discuss Special Mention, which does not have to go to works that are generally excellent, but because we want to recognize particular aspects.

- Ying: I agree, we can then further explain which aspects of the works we wish to highlight.
- Fan: I would recommend limiting the discussion to the three works that received the most votes. Perhaps you already have Gold and Silver Awards in mind or are still undecided.
- Chow: Can we give *The Umbrella* the Gold Award? In the first round, all the jury members chose it, and now it received 5 votes.
- Fan: Five people chose this work, but do you think this is the best work?
- Kwan: I personally think that *The Umbrella* does not deserve Gold.
- Ying: *The Umbrella* is not my choice for Gold, I chose it in the first round because it deserves to be a finalist.
- O: Yes, we did not really discuss this in the first round, we merely think that it should be short-listed and left for discussion in this round.
- Fan: Can you seek support for your favourite works?
- O: It is difficult for me to choose, for I like all three. I like works with no plans. What is independent for me, and how to judge it? Is independent distinct from commercial considerations and daring to be creative? If this is the case, I choose *Family Family Day*.
- Kwan: I think Gold belongs either to *Family Family Day* or *My World*. The directors of both works choose to face themselves with honesty. *Family Family Day* is not without plan, and documentary productions always involve choices which people make in the editing phase. *My World* is all out in the open in expressing itself and is more mature than *Family Family Day*.
- O: By “plan” I mean starting off with no script.
- Kwan: Editing is also a creative process.
- O: I understand that editing is a third-step creation. The whole film started off with recording everything without knowing what will happen next. Both films are interesting. One involves planning everything in one’s head and knowing what one wants with every scene. That’s what I meant by planning. It is knowing what you want and choosing a way of production, whereas documentaries are tearing open the most authentic side of things and presenting one’s own pain.
- Kwan: I am inclined to believe that the original intention of *Family Family Day*’s director is not just going out and film when his father tells him to.
- O: Both works are true to themselves, that’s why they are moving and powerful.

- Kwan: If you have nothing else to add, can O Sing Pui and I nominate our choice for Gold?
- O: Let's discuss the Gold Award first before moving on to Silver.
- Chong: I don't know how judge the meaning behind independent films, I can only say what I like. I choose *The Umbrella* over *My World* and *Family Family Day* because I have not seen the former's subject matter, whereas I have seen subject matters similar to the latter but not quite the same. I admire the method used in *The Umbrella* to capture things that are difficult to explain, but at the same time tell of relationships typical of Hong Kong. I also like the other two films, but I choose *The Umbrella*.
- Chow: My choice is very different. The starting point of *Family Family Day* is a family video, and then selecting footage from it in the process of creation. I can accept that. As I mentioned in the first round, the whole process surrounds a family problem, however, it does not show their love for the grandma but rather highlights the situation and quality of Chinese people. I accept Ying Liang's explanation that there is happenstance involved, but whether he planned things from the start has nothing to do with independence. He edited this film out of hundreds of home videos, and I appreciate the creativity behind his efforts. But for me, the work has not reached the level of the Gold or Silver award. As for *My World*, it is not my choice because I can't accept it. He is very loyal to himself, but does that mean he is avant-garde? I don't think so. Nowadays, many people also have this kind of thinking. He is loyal to himself. He is also arrogant. How can a person express his own values? I don't think one needs to stand on a high pedestal. I appreciate people who are smart but still have a sense of modesty. I do not appreciate his arrogance, it's not that he is not good, but this director's approach gives me this feeling. He is very capable. The cinematography, colour, technique and various things are very rich. He wants to show that he is good, but I don't appreciate this expression and attitude. If he won Gold or Silver, I would be a little uncomfortable, but I will respect this result.
- Fan: What is your choice for Gold?
- Chow: *The Umbrella* and *Be a Rider or a Fool*.
- Ying: I think that *The Umbrella* is also very strong. His technique is subtle, yet there is something brilliant about it. *My World* is more consistent, the presentation and the thinking behind it are the same, and I find that attractive. I didn't pick *Be a Rider or a Fool*, and my discussion has focused on the other three, but if I had to select a fourth, I would choose it. This feels more like an independent film. *Family Family Day* also has independent spirit because it feels hand-crafted and does not need help from others, there is no repetition and no one can replace or imitate it. From the perspective of awards, I can't say whether I prefer *Family Family Day* or *My World*, and it is more difficult to judge which one is more independent. Perhaps it is more important to encourage *Family Family Day* because it is not part of the film industry and the director needs room to grow and needs encouragement. The

director of *My World* has already entered the film industry, so he should simply receive due appreciation.

Fan: Now you have three films nominated for Gold Award: *Family Family Day*, *My World* and *Be a Rider or a Fool*.

Kwan: Why don't I tell you my choices for Gold, Silver and Special Mention?

All: Ok.

Kwan: Gold is *Family Family Day*, Silver is *My World* and *Be a Rider or a Fool* is Special Mention.

Ying: My choices are exactly the same.

Fan: *Family Family Day* received three votes for Gold; are there any objections? If not, we can discuss the Silver Award. At the moment, there are two nominations for the Silver Award.

Chong: If *Family Family Day* is Gold, then I want to nominate *The Umbrella* for Silver Award.

Chow: I concur.

Fan: O Sing Pui holds the deciding vote. Kwan and Ying chose *My World*, Chong and Chow chose *The Umbrella*.

Kwan: Both Ying Liang and I agree that *The Umbrella* is too deliberate. Although we said that this is his only way, the sound does not open up the work to allow audiences to feel it.

O: I like them both, I can't decide right away. I listened to the opinions of other jury members. If you apply conventional script analysis to *The Umbrella*, the story behind it is not good. What makes the film so powerful is that it is able to reflect the whole society, politics and young people, and portrays a social tragedy in the end. *My World* is very personal. If you consider a film and its relations to society, I would say the technique of *The Umbrella* is good, but the technique of *My World* is superior to *The Umbrella*.

Kwan: I want to add something. If you say *The Umbrella* talks about Hong Kong society, I feel that Hong Kong people bring their own emotions into the mix when looking at the Umbrella Movement and student protests. For example, *Weeds on Fire* is a youth film about baseball, but it includes images of the Umbrella Movement to bring out its relationship with Hong Kong society. As viewers, when we see Umbrella Movement and student protests, our judgement may not be calm and objective.

- Chong: When viewing that film, I watched myself for signs of that. Do I think the film is good because it is about the Umbrella Movement? I try to be objective about it. I don't think the film is just about that. To take *Weeds on Fire* as an example, that film has a certain political position which I was able to deduce. What is good about *The Umbrella* is that it captured this society, but not in an exaggerated way. It does not exploit its political position because I don't feel that it favours either side.
- Chow: I don't think the film exploits politics. You mentioned the juror's position. This competition has prize money, so which film do we want to encourage? That's the angle we should consider.
- Chong: When we discussed *Family Family Day*, we liked it because the film is not planned or designed. For Silver Award, both *My World* and *The Umbrella* are very planned and clever. *The Umbrella* achieved it without spending a lot of money or resources.
- Kwan: I don't think that *My World* is as calculated as you mentioned. The director is just mature enough to master his skills and film a subject he likes.
- Chow: I feel that if you look at independent or experimental spirit, *The Umbrella* is planned in an interesting way, while *My World* is more skilled. To me, *The Umbrella* is more independent and experimental. You (Kwan) said that using sound to guide the audience is not very open, but if you view it as a stage play, I think it's ok. With a 4:3 screen, I doubt if the audience can really hear those sounds.
- Ying: The audience can feel the humour in *My World*. Even though the acting is not particularly good, the actors, under the director's guidance, are able to act spontaneously and not according to plan. This director is relatively mature and knows how to deal with actors and sets, etc., and has his own space and flexibility. In contrast, *The Umbrella* is more complete and follows the original blueprint and how each step should go. Although the structure of *My World* is very detailed, there must be a lot of unplanned moments which you can pick out as you watch. As a film, *My World* is a stronger work.
- O: If I have to choose, I would consider the director. *The Umbrella* uses one shot to determine everything, which is a good choice, but I don't know if the director considered other options. The director of *My World* is confident in his skills and showed many inspired touches, which is apparent in the power of its editing, music and rhythm. *The Umbrella* portrays this era, which is interesting. Should I choose to honour a record of an era or a director? I think the director of *My World* releases and accepts himself with this film. In the end, I decide on *My World*, which is a difficult decision.
- Chong: If there is a bronze medal, I want to lobby for *The Umbrella*.
- O: Yes, it's difficult to choose among the three. Is it possible to have two Gold awards?



- Fan: Yes, it's possible, but what are your choices? Usually, if we have two Golds, then we omit Silver but still have Special Mention. Or we can omit Gold, but that sends out a strong signal that the quality of this year's works is not up to standard, and we can award two Silver awards. As for having one Gold and two Silver, that has never happened.
- O: It depends on how everyone thinks.
- Kwan: I would like to add that Jun Li (director of *My World*) took part in Fresh Wave and his film was noticed by Shu Kei and got the opportunity to direct *Tracey*. It can be expected that this director will continue to develop his career in the mainstream film industry. As we have just discussed, he is already in this industry, so should we encourage him further? My view is that I am willing to believe in this director, and even if he has entered the mainstream film industry, I still want to encourage him to shoot his own films, and this is also a kind of encouragement.
- O: I don't care if he is in the mainstream film industry, I just look at the present film. I just want to see if you concur with my choice, because it's a very difficult choice for me.
- Kwan: I have a hard time agreeing. For me, the Gold and Silver Awards are *Family Family Day* and *My World*, respectively. For Special Mention, I choose *Be a Rider or a Fool*. I can't accept *The Umbrella* and *My World* both getting Silver awards.
- Fan: If there are no changes, shall we go on to discuss Special Mention?
- Chong: For me, Special Mention are either *Be a Rider or a Fool* or *The Umbrella*. Special Mention is not the same as third place, right?
- Fan: From our perspective, this award is given to a work that has some qualities that deserve to be honored, whether the work as a whole or in certain parts. Of course, some jury panels treat this as the Bronze Award, and I respect your choices.
- Ying: Can there be two Special Mentions?
- Fan: Yes.
- Chong: If there are two, which two will you choose?
- Ying: Same as you.
- Chow: If there are two, I also choose these two.
- All: I agree.
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The 24th **ifva** Awards - Open Category Award Winners

**Gold Award**

*Family Family Day*

Lee Wai-shing

**Silver Award**

*My World*

Jun Li

**Special Mention**

*The Umbrella*

Tsang Hing-weng Eric

*Be a Rider or a Fool*

Law Wai-leung