

25th ifva Awards
Youth Category Jury Meeting Transcript

Jury Members : Adam Wong (Wong), Tsang Tsui-shan (Tsang), Lo Chun-yip (Lo), Lee Cheuk-pan (Lee), Chui Tien-you (Chui).

Organizer representative : Kattie Fan (Fan), Samantha Szeto (Szeto), Wong Ming Lok (Lok).

Fan: Today, our goal is to select a total of 5 awards: Gold, Silver award winners and 3 Special Mentions among the 10 finalist works. The Gold and Silver award winners will receive HK\$20,000 and HK\$10,000, respectively, while the Special Mentions will receive certificates. We can first state your views and opinions on the works one by one and then discuss the prizes. The first work is *Her voice*.

Wong: I think the subject matter of this work is the most typical among Youth Category entries, namely the conflict between aspirations and reality. Even the examples the filmmaker chooses, such as using himself to represent aspirations while reality is represented by company stocks and opposition of family members, etc., are quite cliched. However, the filmmaker does add certain topics such as New Territories indigenous people's housing rights and the use of female and ordinary women characters to express the inequalities of society. However, these subject matters are not new to me, even though the director does show some creativity and effort in his treatment. Despite the ordinariness of the subject matter, the director does manage to give the work a sense of texture and feeling.

Chui: What the director wants to express is quite simple, and he could have stated his ideas in a straightforward manner, but instead, he uses various shots and filming techniques, which makes the work quite special and even theatrical while at the same time clearly conveying the ideas behind the work. It would be nice if the film was longer, but on the whole, I think the way the director handles images is one of the most unique aspects of the work.

Tsang: I quite like this work, and was at first attracted to the way the director handles the topic and the issues about indigenous people's housing rights and the presence of a female perspective. Watching it again some time later, I noticed the work's weaknesses, such as the unconvincing and contrived plot development. The work was chosen as a finalist due to the director's thoughtful treatment of the subject matter and outstanding filming technique. Compared with many works that deal with school bullying, the use of female perspective in *Her voice* and the lead actresses' performance made it stand out from the rest, but among the 10 finalists, this work is somewhat lacking. For example, compared with the storytelling and plot development in *Special, Her voice* is too formalistic.

Wong: I agree, this work pays too much attention to form and tries to look cool and atmospheric. As a result, the storytelling pales in comparison, including the use of texts and the way they appear, which is too repetitive. Is the director from Lee Shau Kee School of Creativity?

Lok: No.

- Lo: Among the 69 works, there seem to be no works from Lee Shau Kee School of Creativity.
- Szeto: There are, but because of the age requirements, most works from this school are in the Open Category.
- Lo: I also want to talk about my views on *Her voice*. I think when the work has problems with the use of script and editing. The form of the work, including the use of camera angles and color, can actually remedy its shortcomings and at the same time make it not confined to conventional filming methods. From the perspective of gender issues, the work is not overly abrupt, or like children pretending to be adults. The director's own feelings are adequately represented, which is quite good. The director is also made another finalist work, *A candle lights others and consumes itself*. Comparing the two, we can see they have different filming techniques, which is worth encouraging. The treatment of *Her voice* is not just for showing off, and the overall effect is enjoyable.
- Fan: The next work is *Special*.
- Tsang: I quite like this work. Films about families and the handicapped can easily become too conventional or else too melodramatic, but the director uses a light touch to create an appropriate and touching work. Of course, there are problems, such as the fact that the director does not delve too deeply into the subject matter and everything appears too wispy, but the aesthetics allow for an effect that is not too overbearing and tear-jerking, which are the strengths of this work. It is worth a Special Mention.
- Wong: If you talk about Special Mention, *Special* is my favorite work and deserves the Gold Award in my mind. I agree with what you say about the work's strengths and weaknesses.
- Tsang: Compared with *Her voice*, which emphasizes visuals, *Special* is a different kettle of fish. Jurors need to think about what we want to promote and what are the most important qualities in a work.
- Wong: I appreciate the naturalness of *Special* the most. Everything from the interaction between characters and the movement of the camera is natural. The naturalness of the emotion is handled very well, and I think this is the most complete work. But in terms of the story line, the handling of the ending is actually very weak and it does not express any deep struggle. But at the same time, the director chooses to end the story this way, which shows deft handling of cinematic language and aesthetics, and that she has her own understanding of what she wants to express.
- Chui: I agree that the work is emotive, but the themes could have been explored more fully than it is now. Too many things are lightly glossed over.
- Lee: I don't have strong feelings about this work, but in the first round of jury meeting, I thought *Special* was not too dramatic, but places more emphasis on recording things as they happen. The cinematography is not bad; it's not the kind of style that young filmmakers want to

emulate these days, but rather a more naturalistic and foreign style. The best part about the work is its depiction of the relations between family members, rather than the textual or social issues elements. The director does not delve into the condition, nor does she hope to draw attention to it. Instead, she focuses on recording the relationship between family members. I appreciate this work, but as for whether it deserves an award, we can discuss it later.

Lo: I think the images are restrained in a way, that is to say, the style is very light and the tone is soft. This image strategy is not bad, but as a work that reflects the creator's sentiments, it is a pity that this light touch prevents the audience from entering deeply into the characters' mindset, and instead hold them at a distance. Of course, the creator has a right to choose how much she wants to reveal rather than satisfy the audience's every desire. However, this "lightness" does mean that it is easy for the work to lose some of its emotional impact.

Fan: The next work is *The Toilet Exorcist*.

Wong: I wonder if the director is influenced by *Tetsuo*?

Fan: Yes, he mentioned it in the information provided.

Wong: I sense the influence of *Tetsuo* from the very start, which is a boyish prankster style and a cult film with a recurring storyline. It is not held back and extreme with a constant stream of visual provocations, using heavy metal music as background to provide a strong sense of energy. On the whole the work is very agitated and impulsive, without restraint. I personally appreciate creations that are without baggage, that explore the more extreme possibilities in one's favorite genre. However, this work lacks detail, and I don't think that insufficient budget is an acceptable reason. In the past, some Youth Category works choose to do impactful visuals that are more meticulous, and does not require a lot of money or well-crafted props. With this work, I can see that the cinematography is not very precise and everything is just thrown together, and the black and white is just used to cover up mistakes. But of course, this urge to be wild and creative is very worthy of encouragement.

Chui: I also like zombie movies, and I know how difficult it is to shoot them. This work is a bit rough. But at the same time, I appreciate their ideas and creativity, and their ability to persevere in the face of difficulties as well as their unbridled energy. Being able to do your own creation with limited resources is precisely the dynamism and power of this work. But the problem is that despite its energy, the work feels too long to me, and they should put more thought on how to progress from one plotline to the next.

Lee: I very much agree. At first, I thought this work really stands out, both in terms of creative concept and shooting method, from other works set in schools. I feel their carefree spirit and their pure youthful energy. However, the plot is a bit repetitive, and there is not much breakthrough in the later half, which feels a little lengthy. But the ideas and creative sparks of the work are very commendable.

- Lo: In recent years, are there fewer works of this nature? It seems that such a feeling of youthful abandon, enjoyment and creative energy can only be found in this work.
- Tsang: Yes, this is the only work like that in this year's competition.
- Lo: This type of work is rarely seen in the Youth Category nowadays?
- Fan: I personally agree, perhaps Adam has something more to add?
- Wong: Recent editions, especially the past two years, had been relatively weak and works of this type are rarely seen. In the past, works like this would appear now and again.
- Lo: Back to this work. The structure takes the form of perpetual recurrence, which adequately expresses the main theme of the film, which is logical even though it is a bit rough. On the whole, there is a unique feeling about the work. The director does not aim for realism, and the audience does not altogether suspend disbelief but at the same time are not overly sceptical. I am impressed with the montage of Carrie Lam and cells. The film sets up toilets as the source of evil at the beginning, which reflects current social realities and shows young people's view of society in decline. The ending speech is a manifesto on mutual destruction, which is the most open and honest among all the Youth Category works this year.
- Tsang: This work is very eye-catching, but its execution is not perfect. For example, some actors laugh during their performances. It is nice to see that they enjoy making the film so much, and it is not a run-of-the-mill campus TV production that aims to teach lessons. Compared with the sincere emotions of *Special*, the filmmakers behind this work should also think about how to move others.
- Fan: The next work is *Bully's Wording*.
- Chui: There are three works dealing with bullying this year, and I tend to put them together.
- Tsang: Me too.
- Chui: I think this work works well by presenting the story as a trial, but some things are lacking in the later half to advance the plot. The ending is a bit weak but the atmosphere is well done.
- Tsang: I should add that among the 60 works in the first round, there was another version of this work edited by another group of students. The first-round jurors all agreed that this version is better. The actor's performance is very good, and not like acting at all. They really bring out what new-comers to Hong Kong are like, which is very nice.
- Wong: The film touches on such issues as bullying and marginal characters in society, and different parts of the work also exude a marginal feeling, which matches with the theme of bullying and make the work very special. However, it is difficult to tell whether the director consciously considered and arranged these elements, or maybe it was just a coincidence? Some parts seem realistic, but at times I also sense some deliberate arrangement by the

director. For example, documentary style, parallel editing of the bullying incident and the confession, the acting skills of the actor and the method of reading the narration, the all-forgiving ending, etc., are all a mixture of deliberate and natural, marginal and life-like. The overall feeling is somewhat unbalanced.

Tsang: Perhaps in some student works, there are no designated director, they are just a group of students working together, so it's difficult to evaluate whether or not a director had arranged things or not, like whether the actors' performances are arranged by the director. Is it necessary to assess the director's motivations in evaluating this work?

Wong: In a normal film production process, if the director has chosen these actors and directed their performance this way, he has done a very good job.

Tsang: I suspect this school is located in an area with a relatively large number of new-comer students.

Wong: I think so too.

Tsang: So this kind of marginal and grassroots feeling is natural. Do we have to consider how much of that is arranged by the director?

Lok: The entrants are indeed students from new-comer families. The school is located in Tin Shui Wai, and this version was edited by the entrant.

Tsang: I want to encourage different ways of production and participating, and jurors should be aware of the background of this work.

Lee: Since the entrant is the editor, this version is more profound than the other version, using a "Rashomon" type approach. Even though he is not completely in control of all aspects of the production, we can see how he arranged the story and visuals in this version.

Lo: I fully agree. The added information is very important. I don't know if we should compare this version with the other one, since the other version is not a finalist work. But it is true that three jury members have already seen the other version and are more aware of what the original materials look like. In the other version, the bullying is presented wholly, but this version is more restrained in its presentation of violence, making the trial the main focus. All the characters and casting are very strong.

Tsang: Yes, the students did a good job.

Lo: This work reminds me of Yau Ching's *We Are Alive*. It is hard to judge whether acting and characters are designed, but the work and visuals are powerful. I was pleasantly surprised that secondary school students have attempted to make a documentary. The editing and arrangement of this version reflect the director's restraint on the issue of bullying, and shows that they had constantly rethought what bullying is and revealing different perspectives on bullies themselves. The introduction of the protagonist's sister in the latter part of the film

takes the work to a different level, bringing in the family background and thus introducing multi-faceted perspectives on "victimization". Compared with other works dealing with bullying, this one is the most powerful. The zooming in at the end is also effective. Not using the shot of the teacher shows another kind of restraint.

Wong: The wide shot of the playground is indeed very powerful. But I am not sure if it came from a single creator or a group? Was it done by happenstance or consciously? Or is this the nature of their lives? I have a lot of doubts. There are some masterful touches, but some parts are primitive at the same time. It is strange that the creativity suddenly decreases as the film progresses. For example, the character turning good at the end, I wonder if they were instructed by the school to be more moralistic.

Lee: Yet the overall treatment is not mainstream.

Wong: I also don't understand what they have to stick adhesive tape over the school insignia.

Tsang: I guess to protect the witness.

Lo: I think that is deliberate.

Wong: I wonder whether it is deliberate or has other meanings.

Lo: In the bullying scene, the school insignia is not taped over, so it must be designed.

Lee: Perhaps they don't want to do it in post-production.

Tsang: I quite like this work. Perhaps we should move on to other works.

Fan: The next work is *Qualified Four*.

Tsang: This work is light and interesting.

Lo: Looking at the works of secondary school students in recent years, I often feel that there is a "distance" between them and their creative language. In other words, they try to create certain kinds of "powerful" images. But *Qualified Four* has no such distance, and their cinematic language is very close to them. Simply put, it is more like a youtuber-style image that you see on the internet, it uses a youtuber-style image strategy that mixes humor with melancholy; it is self-deprecating. As they say in the last section, it is their fate that they have to go to school. It's rare to see this kind of youtuber-style treatment in a short film, but the content is rich.

Lee: I agree, this work is very much like an online short film that you see nowadays, but much better, especially with its visual rhythm of the video. When I watched it for the first time, I thought seriously about the issue of qualifying for exams, but when I looked at the director's statement, it says that "In an absurd era, I use absurd methods to complete an absurd goal." This sort of precept is very absurd, and this is a powerfully ironic work.

- Fan: The next work is *The Handmade Buns*.
- Chui: I notice that in the end credits that this work was done by primary school students, and I was quite surprised. The sense of Hong Kong sentiments is very strong.
- Lee: I appreciate that a group of primary school students can complete a work like this/ I learned something from this film. It is nice that it promotes small shops with local flavor. However, I have reservations about whether it deserves a prize.
- Tsang: Yes, the production is not very outstanding, although the efforts of a group of primary school students is worthy of encouragement.
- Wong: It should be encouraged. We often encourage works that are out of the box, but this kind of proper short film that represent the hard work of diligent students is also worthy of encouragement. All aspects are well executed and not sloppy at all. Although the treatment is nothing special, everything from audio recording and filming are well done.
- Lo: The first time I watched it, I didn't notice that the work was done by primary school students, so I didn't have any feelings for it. Having discovered this fact, I understand that they took this direct approach because they were learning how to do a documentary. The materials they gather show their curiosity about the subject, and the work reflect their perspectives. If it was shot by secondary school or university students, the materials they choose to show would be different. This makes the work distinctive. Many schools nowadays have campus TV stations. If they can all produce such community-based videos, they will become a powerful force. *The Handmade Buns* shows how primary school students can achieve this.
- Fan: The next work is *Shelter*.
- Wong: The lead character is very good and has a sense of youthful gravitas.
- Chui: The overall acting good, but in comparison with *Bully's Wording*, it is a bit thin.
- Tsang: *Shelter* is very crisp and clean, complete and accurate. The overall feeling is good, and the production is mature. However, in terms of how it expresses its subject matter, the work is a bit weak.
- Lee: This work makes good use of cinematic language, and the cinematography and mise-en-scene are very accurate, but the ending on the theme of bullying is not powerful enough.
- Wong: Many films about bullying are like this. Some are very sentimental or the endings are incomplete without proper resolution. In the end, the two students just get together and make up, that's it.

- Lo: A lot of times a small change can mean a lot. If the ending can bring out a sense of ambivalence, it could address some of the issues. Now the character just says “it’s nothing” and that’s it. However, I appreciate the actors’ performance and overall production.
- Wong: At the end, they even point out the moral of the story. I wonder if they are influenced by the teacher ...
- Lo: This is the limitation of school productions. *The Toilet Exorcist* manages to get away from that, while most works are like school assignments.
- Fan: The next work is *Zero Sound*.
- Chui: Among the three works that deal with bullying, this one is the most emotive. The distinctive aspect of this work is the character with hearing aids, and all the performances are well done. The rain scene is very emotional.
- Lo: I appreciate the treatment of objects and images in this scene, like the mise-en-scene in the bathroom scene, which left an impression for me after having watched it a few times. The red cloth, hearing aids, etc., and the ability to use objects and symbols to bring out meanings is rare among secondary school students, which makes this film special.
- Tsang: The use of the song "Miss Tung" at the end is powerful.
- Lo: Even though the use of mise-en-scene is detailed, the connection between scenes is broken and the structure is relatively weak.
- Fan: The next film is *I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying*.
- Tsang: I like this work, a film about the future that is evidently made without a lot of resources. The script is well-considered and encouraging. I like its theme, which is very relevant to the present day.
- Chui: The structure of the story is good, and I feel the director has put in a lot of ideas. However, the execution is a bit contrived and I expect to see more of the storyline.
- Wong: I appreciate the work’s ambitions and its forward-looking nature. For example, we are not allowed to go out now. I also appreciate the apocalyptic tone of the film. However, the execution is off-kilter in many places, like the actors’ performances, the realism of the mise-en-scene, costume design, etc, are all faulty.
- Lo: I appreciate the design, such as virtual classrooms, etc., which helps realize the story. However, there are too many flaws which prevented me from enjoying this work. There are problems with the actors’ performances, and some of the dialogue do not match their age, all these elements distracted from the apocalyptic mood. If the editing was more concise, such careless mistakes will not be so noticeable.

- Lee: I understand the idea behind the work, but its problems stem from the handling method; the work is too didactic and fails to make a connection between the characters and their stories.
- Fan: The last work is *A candle lights others and consumes itself*.
- Tsang: The story is simple but the emotions are lively. If there was more story development it'd be better.
- Wong: The director pays more attention to technique than plot development, and fails to move me. The story is about the fine feelings of a female student for her teacher, but the filming technique does not drive the emotions. However, this young filmmaker displays great skills in terms of sound effects, camera, lighting and editing, which makes the work attractive, although the story is not very creative.
- Chui: The story is communicated through technique, and the visuals are not bad. However, the content lacks depth and the emotions are not presented adequately.
- Lee: I agree. The director is the same as that of *Her voice*, and this film showcases his technique.
- Lo: This work treads a fine line before it becomes a show-off of filmic technique, but the story of the girl is well thought-out. The part at Sung Wong Toi is very show-offy, but the film does talk about the teacher taking students to travel around, so it is appropriate. The script and execution are well thought-out. Compared with *Her voice*, which lacks character and plot development, the script of *A candle lights others and consumes itself* is better.
- Lee: It'd be better if the teacher character were better designed.
- Lo: That's right, now the work is too much like a student film.
- Fan: We can now nominate awards. Do you have works that you want to nominate for awards?
- Lo: Is there a usual procedure for doing this?
- Fan: It differs from year to year. It depends on whether jury members have any works that they want to nominate. For example, last year the Gold Award was omitted.
- Wong: The standard this year is quite average, I don't think we need to omit Gold this year.
- Lee: I suggest giving Special Mention to *The Handmade Buns*.
- Lo: I concur.
- Tsang: Should we talk about Gold and Silver awards first before moving on to Special Mention?

- Fan: I want to add that Special Mention does not mean that the work ranks third or fourth after Gold and Silver, but rather is given to works that jury members want to mention and highlight.
- Tsang: I want to respond to *The Handmade Buns* getting Special Mention. To me, being a finalist is already a form of encouragement. Even though the entrants put in a lot of hard work to deliver a complete work, I don't feel it needs any additional encouragement. I feel that in recent years, the quality of works has been in decline. In the past, Special Mention winners were awarded for their creativity and the artistic potential of entrants. I hope jury members can consider the difference between giving encouragement in the form of an award and being a finalist work.
- Fan: Perhaps you all have works that you think are deserving of awards. Why don't you nominate your favorite works and we will discuss them?
- Wong: I have served as a jury member for the Youth Category for many years, and the standard this year is unusually high. In past years, some finalists don't really deserve to be there, while this year, every work has some qualities worthy of being lauded. I suggest *Special* as the Gold Award winner.
- Lo: I nominate *Bully's Wording* for Gold Award.
- Lee: I also nominate *Bully's Wording* for Gold Award.
- Tsang: I nominate the following works: *I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying*, *Bully's Wording*, *Special* and *The Toilet Exorcist* for awards, but I'm not sure about awards.
- Chui: I nominate *Her voice*, *The Toilet Exorcist*, *I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying* and *Zero Sound*.
- Fan: So far, works that have received nominations include *Her voice*, *Special*, *The Toilet Exorcist*, *Bully's Wording*, *Zero Sound* and *I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying*. Is anyone nominating *The Handmade Buns*?
- Lee: I nominate *Qualified Four*.
- Fan: Works that have received no nominations include *Shelter*, *The Handmade Buns* and *A candle lights others and consumes itself*. *Special* and *Bully's Wording* are nominated for Gold Award.
- Chui: Should Gold Award be the one that most people nominated?
- Fan: Just because it received the most nominations does not mean it is the best work. We should first discuss them or put it to a vote.
- Tsang: For me, Gold Award is a choice between *Special* and *Bully's Wording*.

- Wong: For me, *Bully's Wording* does not deserve the Gold Award. As I mentioned, every work has good elements, but for me, Gold Award should not have major flaws. According to this criterion, I favour *Special* getting Gold Award. I think *A candle lights others and consumes itself* is perfectly up to standard in terms of its execution and precision technique. *Special* is sincere and flawless, and every scene is motivated while the cinematic language is not overly contrived.
- Tsang: How should we vote now?
- Fan: I hope jury members can nominate Gold Award works, and see if *Special* and *Bully's Wording* are the only contenders.
- Tsang: I like *Special*, but don't think it deserves the Gold Award. I pick *Bully's Wording* as Gold Award and *Special* as Silver.
- Lee: I also favour *Bully's Wording* as Gold and *Special* as Silver.
- Tsang: I like the sincere emotions that *Special* displays, while the point of view and overall quality of *Bully's Wording* is outstanding. The two works are very different and hard to compare. Can we give two Gold awards?
- Lee: *Special* is a very personal work, while *Bully's Wording* uses complex techniques to explore a general issue. Of course, *Bully's Wording* has certain flaws in its execution, but making a film about a social issue is harder and more complicated than making a personal film. For a Youth Category work, the flaws of *Bully's Wording* are entirely forgivable.
- Chui: I favour *Bully's Wording* for Gold Award.
- Lo: I have been thinking about the problem with *Special*, which is its playing it safe approach. This work is about the family and involves certain issues, which the director chooses to deal with in a light-hearted manner. As I said before, this method makes the story stay within a personal dimension. Perhaps because the filmmaker is middle class, problems can be dealt with in light-hearted way. Of course, I am not using class to determine its quality and I am touched by the familial relationships expressed in the film, but the characters and issues are not too thorny or nuanced. This even-handedness means there are not too many outstanding elements, and is not deserving of the Gold Award. *Bully's Wording*, on the other hand, offers more room for interpretation, and not just in terms of emotional expression. I think about what kind of competition ifva is, and in my mind, ifva has always encouraged works that are more edgy, which is different from most other short film competitions. *Bully's Wording* does not have flawless cinematography or execution, but the way it deals with issues showcases the filmmaker's point of view and sensibilities.
- Fan: Currently, *Bully's Wording* has 4 votes while *Special* has 1 vote. Adam, do you have anything to add?

- Wong: I don't agree that *Special* plays it safe, it's just that the director did not go for flashy cinematic expressions. If it was playing it safe, the treatment would have been more sit-com like, but at the beginning of the film, in the shots of the children running, there are some double cuts that left me pleasantly surprised. In terms of sound, the director uses the sound of the mother chatting to reveal the family background in a light-handed way. A more typical student film approach would be to add expository dialogue. The life-like treatment deftly brings out the issues related to the story, and I think the director's handling of cinematic language is mature and sensitive.
- Lo: I understand, perhaps by even-handed, I don't mean it is conventional, but reflects the director's mature handling of filmic images.
- Tsang: I agree that the main strength of *Special* is its sincere emotions, which I like very much.
- Fan: Right now, *Bully's Wording* still has 4 votes while *Special* has 1 vote. Do you have any issues regarding the Gold Award?
- Wong: To me, *Special* deserves the Gold Award.
- Tsang: Do you want to consider giving two Gold awards?
- Wong: Perhaps that would be too troublesome for the organizer.
- Fan: It's not that, you should consider whether both works deserve Gold award.
- Tsang: I understand, but considering that *Bully's Wording* has certain flaws while *Special* has unique strengths, can we really rank the two?
- Chui: Can we give two Silver awards? It seems the two films are evenly matched in terms of quality.
- Lee: Of course, all ten finalists have flaws, and no one work stands out as the shoo-in Gold Award winner. *Bully's Wording* is a well-rounded and thoughtful work, which is not to say that *Special* is not thoughtful, but it is more like a casual recording of the creator's ideas. What does she want to communicate? She wants to record her special family, just as everyone has particular feelings about their own families, but hers just happen to be a special one. What does she hope to communicate to the audience about this? I appreciate the complicated structure and issues that *Bully's Wording* brings out. I agree with giving *Special* the Silver Award.
- Lo: I insist on *Bully's Wording* getting Gold and *Special* getting Silver.
- Chui: I agree.
- Fan: According to the votes, the Gold Award goes to *Bully's Wording*, and Silver Award goes to *Special*. Next, we will discuss Special Mention.

- Tsang: I nominate *The Toilet Exorcist, I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying* and *A candle lights others and consumes itself*.
- Chui: I nominate *The Toilet Exorcist, I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying* and *Zero Sound*.
- Wong: *A candle lights others and consumes itself, I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying* and *The Handmade Buns*.
- Lo: I am torn between *Her voice* and *A candle lights others and consumes itself* and want to hear your opinions on the latter.
- Tsang: As per our discussion, *A candle lights others and consumes itself* has more of the director's feelings compared with *Her voice*, and is not just a showcase for technique. The film's visual treatment is also appropriate.
- Wong: I was pleasantly surprised by *A candle lights others and consumes itself*, for example the part that praises the teacher, which suits the showy technique. The maturity of the creator and outstanding technique are worthy of commendation. *Her voice* is very outstanding compared with Youth Category works from past years, but in terms of visual treatment and text, *A candle lights others and consumes itself* is the better work.
- Lo: I understand and I agree that *A candle lights others and consumes itself* deserves Special Mention. As for others, I need to think about it.
- Lee: I also agree that *A candle lights others and consumes itself* is worthy of Special Mention.
- Fan: *A candle lights others and consumes itself* has 4 votes.
- Lo: I want to nominate *The Handmade Buns*.
- Lee: Does that mean there are no votes for *Qualified Four*?
- Lo: I still have one vote and I am thinking about it. I liked *Qualified Four* very much and during the first round, I had strongly recommended that it become a finalist.
- Tsang: I like *I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying* very much, maybe you can consider it.
- Chui: I would like to know why you had chosen *The Handmade Buns*.
- Wong: Just as I mentioned, it is a complete work done by good students, and all aspects are well-done. Usually, **ifva** celebrates works by bad students that express their thoughts and feelings, so good students are the exception. I appreciate the diligence, hard work and sincerity of *The Handmade Buns*.

- Lo: I appreciate this work because it is a first documentary done by primary school students, but if it was done by secondary school students it would pale in comparison to others. As a work shot by young students going out to find suitable materials to film in the community, this work is not simply a creative endeavour but also a powerful community project. It is good for the Special Mention award to recognize values that go beyond the work itself, and *The Handmade Buns* has value for the community.
- Chui: I want to change my vote from *The Toilet Exorcist* to *The Handmade Buns* because the former seems like a casual work done by students. It is dynamic and energetic but the content can be better.
- Fan: Now *The Toilet Exorcist* has one vote.
- Tsang: It'd be a pity if *The Toilet Exorcist* or a "crazy" work like this was not awarded. I understand why you like *The Handmade Buns*, but I am sad that this is like a step backward. More than 10 years ago, when we considered works from the Youth Category, we looked to youth creators to make films about what it was like to be young, and treasured such works for their wild sense of vitality. Now we are reduced to rewarding good students for a proper looking film, which makes me sad. I wonder if there are still young people who go out on their own to make films? Should we reward primary school students simply for showing up to make a film?
- Lo: I understand. I still have one vote, and am trying to decide between *Qualified Four* and *The Toilet Exorcist*.
- Lee: I cast my vote for *The Toilet Exorcist*.
- Tsang: We should support films made by crazy young people.
- Lo: I need some time to think about my last vote.
- Fan: Lee, you still have one more vote.
- Lee: I vote for *Qualified Four*.
- Fan: You voted for *The Toilet Exorcist*, *Qualified Four* and *A candle lights others and consumes itself*.
- Lee: That's right.
- Fan: Right now, *A candle lights others and consumes itself* has 4 votes from Lee Cheuk-pan, Adam Wong, Lo Chun-yip and Tsang Tsui-shan. *The Handmade Buns* has 3 votes from Lo Chun-yip, Tsang Tsui-shan and Adam Wong. *I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying* has 3 votes from Chui Tien-you, Tsang Tsui-shan and Adam Wong. *The Toilet Exorcist* has 2 votes from Tsang Tsui-shan and Lee Cheuk-pan. *Zero Sound* and *Qualified Four* each has 1 vote.

- Lo: Then I cast my vote for *The Toilet Exorcist*.
- Fan: Now *The Toilet Exorcist* has 3 votes. The four works with the highest number of votes are *A candle lights others and consumes itself*, *The Handmade Buns*, *I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying* and *The Toilet Exorcist*. We aim to award three Special Mentions.
- Chui: I switch my vote from *Zero Sound* to *The Toilet Exorcist*.
- Fan: Now the works with the highest number of votes are *A candle lights others and consumes itself* and *The Toilet Exorcist*, each with 4 votes. The final Special Mention work is a choice between *The Handmade Buns* and *I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying*.
- Lo: Lee Cheuk-pan, what would you like to do with your vote for *Qualified Four*?
- Lee: I already said I don't like *I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying*.
- Lo: Adam Wong and Chui Tien-you both voted for *The Handmade Buns* and *I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying*. How would you choose between the two?
- Chui: I admit I gave *The Handmade Buns* extra points because it was made by primary school students.
- Wong: If I had to choose between the two, I tend towards *The Handmade Buns*, but I voted for both.
- Chui: I also voted for both.
- Lee: So if I switched my vote from *Qualified Four*, that vote becomes the deciding vote? I already said I don't have any feelings for *I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying*. Why don't you discuss among yourselves?
- Wong: Otherwise the five of us can vote between *The Handmade Buns* and *I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying* and decide which should get the third nomination.
- Lo: The regretful thing about *I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying* is that it started out very ambitiously and the theme and ideas are good, but as the film progresses, it becomes more careless.
- Wong: Some of the cinematography, like the overuse of drone shots and top shots are big flaws. If I compared the two works by deducting points, I think *I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying* has many more faults.
- Chui: I like both films.

Tsang: For me, having *The Handmade Buns* as a finalist is already encouragement enough. *I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying* is more in-tuned with societal sentiments today and resonated with me. I also appreciate its ambition and crazy ideas.

Fan: Let's vote between *The Handmade Buns* and *I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying*.

Tsang: I vote for *I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying*.

Wong: I vote for *The Handmade Buns*.

Lee: I vote for *The Handmade Buns*.

Lo: I vote for *The Handmade Buns*.

Chui: I abstain.

Fan: According to the vote count, the third Special Mention goes to *The Handmade Buns*. The following is the award list for this year's Youth Category.

25th ifva Awards Youth Category Award Winners

Gold Award

Bully's Wording

Cheung Ching-ho

Silver Award

Special

Emma To

Special Mention

The Toilet Exorcist

Choi Shing-ho

The Handmade Buns

Lee Pui-wa, Wong Nok-yin, Ho Cheuk-lam, Yeung Ching-tak Douglas, Chan Long

A Candle Lights Others and Consumes Itself

Chong Man-chung

25th ifva Awards Youth Category Juror's Comment

Her Voice

Tsang Tsui-shan: Telling its story with decent shots and mise-en-scène, it is a rare work that delves on such issues as gender inequality. The inner anguish of the female protagonist is subtly portrayed with well-devised cinematography and editing. The film also features diligent sound design.

However, certain plots develop too abruptly and the acting of the two male leading roles feels awkward and unconvincing. The film is better in terms of ideas than of plot development.

Lo Chun-yip: Addressing gender issues, labour condition and family conflict, the work refrains from being didactic and straightforward by featuring stylistic images. Unfortunately, certain dialogues and acting feel too explicit and do not parallel with the overall tone.

Chui Tien-you: Visually well made.

Special

Tsang Tsui-shan: In a semi-documentary fashion, the director portrays interactions among her Down's syndrome brother and the family as well as her school routine. In a refreshing tone, the film is devoid of sentimentality. With the camera, the author articulates the pressure she bears and her loving concern towards her brother, which displays a great deal of sincerity. Genuine records are what make young people and their cameras valuable.

Lo Chun-yip: A piece of light-toned work. The struggle and conflict among family members feel slightly superficial. The work would produce deeper emotional impact with a more personal visual style and retrospective approach.

Chui Tien-you: While the subject matter is fine, the content needs more depth.

The Toilet Exorcist

Tsang Tsui-shan: By using primitive stop motion techniques and simple computer editing skills, the creator composed a genre film about how teenagers imagine violence. It is a rare chance to experience the craziness of film-making. The acting and editing could be more tense and vivid.

Lo Chun-yip: Not refined but powerful. Those strong and raw images allow the absurd and unreasonable plot to unfold its logic. What makes the film more remarkable is the students' confidence in thorough handling of such challenging form of expression, which contributes to a sense of completeness and cheerfulness of the product. The film serves as a personal manifesto, narrating the changes in youth's mind in this particular year.

Chui Tien-you: It is well conceived and creative. But the rhythm could be more articulate.

Bully's Wording

Tsang Tsui-shan: In video format, the film revolves around school bullying and reveals the inner state of victimisers and victims through interviews. The imperfect acting brings a touch of reality. Incredible cast. A decent combination of cinematography, editing and performance.

Lo Chun-yip: It is a rare chance to view a mockumentary produced by secondary school students. With performers (interviewees) as its core, the film reflects the nature of bullying from the perspective of victimisers instead of victims, leaving out the actual scene of bullying as much as possible. It therefore adopts an uncommon approach comparing with other productions addressing the same subject matter. Leaving blank space and pursuing detachment in filming violence makes the work more powerful.

Chui Tien-you: The story lacks completeness.

Qualified Four

Tsang Tsui-shan: In a light mood, the film managed to bring laughs and tears. Schooling does not guarantee any fun but only ceaseless stress. With a humourous tone, the film is an elegy that ridicules our education which accentuates standardised tests and reveals the depressing truth that any student who does not achieve the best grades is constantly being marginalised.

Lo Chun-yip: Employing the visual language of youtubers familiar among contemporary teenagers, the creators composed this tragicomedy in which they mock themselves with a sense of helplessness. A film that hits the nail of the head.

Chui Tien-you: The content is not rich enough.

The Handmade Buns

Tsang Tsui-shan: One of the very few documentary entries. Not original but full of human warmth.

Lo Chun-yip: A heartening piece by primary school students which reveals their curiosity, and curiosity is what generates knowledge. The film draws a living portrait of a well-organised community.

Chui Tien-you: The theme captures the heart of Hong Kong. The film will be better with more interviews of customers.

Shelter

Tsang Tsui-shan: A mature production on the whole with good actors as well as precise editing and shots.

Lo Chun-yip: There is a lot of noise throughout the film. But the neat shooting and editing styles make the whole picture more tranquil.

Chui Tien-you: The camerawork features diverse styles but the content needs more depth.

Zero Sound

Tsang Tsui-shan: A nice expression of feelings. Shots and editing are fairly well designed. The ending scene concisely conveys the pain of helplessness of someone being bullied.

Lo Chun-yip: Certain scenes are made with great details. I was impressed by the use of objects – hearing aids, camera, umbrella and mirrors in the bathroom - as the device of metaphors. Unfortunately, the overall story structure lacks coherence, leading to incongruity between scenes.

Chui Tien-you: Character settings are well conceived.

I Was Alone On Nathan Road Crying

Tsang Tsui-shan: The feeling of sadness, inspired by pay offs in the story, provokes reflection on the future life. Despite its immature visual technique, the script perfectly delivers the lament for disappearing culture and people. While the overall acting performance is awkward, the plots are filled with surprises. It is a courageous attempt to film a story about future under a tight budget constraint.

Lo Chun-yip: An ambitious Sci-Fi story and great setting. With a dystopian future world foreseen from 2019, the narrative can voice the concern about the current times more concisely without being too self-centred and donnish.

Chui Tien-you: The story structure and atmosphere are fairly good.

A Candle Lights Others and Consumes Itself

Tsang Tsui-shan: Visually powerful and highly imaginative. With an extensive use of sound and image, the film portrays the bonding between a teacher and a student. Lively-paced, neat and touching.

Lo Chun-yip: The work shows profound technique in video making. From the perspective of students, the story describes the inspiration from teachers and the pressure of schooling. Furthermore, it questions the dragsaw between examination and learning. The lineage between teacher and student, however, feels inadequate. The sub-story line, on the other hand, feels more potent than the main one.

Chui Tien-you: Decent camerawork and music. The content needs more depth.