

## Student Award

### **Miles Apart, Ling Lee, National Film and TV School**

Miles Apart is made with maturity and confidence and stood out above the other entries because it feels like a film, rather than a documentary. The lack of commentary and style of shooting permits us to peer into the family life of three generations affected by the difficulties of rural migration.

Two old people plant their land, gently chatting as they work in peaceful rural surroundings until we are abruptly taken to Beijing, to a wedding. Laomoa and his wife Meizi are filming the event - outsiders..... Twelve years ago, they left their two children in the countryside to build a business 600 miles away. We palpably feel the confined conditions of city living and the relentless grind of a working life.

When they are joined by their daughter Ying Ying, it becomes immediately obvious that she doesn't share her parents' work ethic. Meizi's frustration is raw as she pushes her daughter towards employment. Long distance, their son Lei Lei, isn't applying himself to his studies. Laomoa travels home to try and sort his son out. Hard working parents, ungrateful children - a familiar story we can all identify with. This beautifully made film is a searing portrayal of a family at a time of crisis. We are left with an intense pessimism that there is little hope of liberation for people the world over from having to leave their families to find work....

### **Hooking in JoBurg, Rohith S Katbamna, Goldsmiths, University of London**

This was a powerful film with excellent contributors, which takes a look at three women's experiences of being sex workers in South Africa. Their different, compelling stories succeeded in lifting a subject which an audience might feel almost too familiar with into an absorbing, intimate documentary about the circumstances which drove them to a life of prostitution. Rohith must be commended for the casting of and the access he got to his subjects, not only the women but the clinicians and brothel owner, which provided a rich narrative arc to the film. Hooking in JoBurg dug into a story with care and sensitivity and these women emerged as whole people not characters and drove a nail into how society deals with prostitution.

### **Living Without Men, Luo Yi, Goldsmiths, University of London**

Beautifully shot and shrouded in low light, from within an old peoples' home a group of Chinese women who'd taken a pledge of celibacy in their 20s (before the revolution) told their stories. This pledge was a respectable option if a woman was not going to marry.

The ritual which sealed that pledge was having their hair combed into a bun. These women had maintained a sense of obedience to that pledge all their lives, despite having the option to break it after the revolution. We all hope for an old age without regret and this film was uplifting as well leaving a vapour of loneliness in its wake. Now the end of their lives, we were given a rare glimpse into history and culture through personal testimony. This film was a fascinating portrait of a society we're not familiar with.

### **Members of the Jury**

CHAIR: Julia Waring, Head of Production Talent, RDF Television

Steve Boulton, Executive Producer, Steve Boulton Productions

Lina Prestwood, Director of Content, Current TV

Carol Salter, Filmmaker

