



Student work lights up the big screen

Students, staff and figures from the film industry gathered at Harbour Lights Picture House on Thursday 4 June to see the latest final-year film projects from Southampton Solent University's film and TV courses.

The morning's showings covered an extraordinarily diverse selection of films on topics as wide as identity and uncertainty, journeys, moments of life-changing crisis and social interconnectivity.

Darren Kerr, Programme Group Leader for Film and Television, says, "The final-year project is a huge investment of time and effort for students, especially while the rest of their studies are still going on... yet the quality of the films, and the students' technical abilities, get better every year."

Among this year's films was Brian Daunat, Clemence Kolodziej and Stuart Thompson's *The Cut*, an ambitious crime drama shot in a single unbroken take. During filming, one take was actually interrupted by the arrival of real-life police officers, after a neighbour became worried by all the shouting!

Meanwhile *From Boats to Pasties*, by Marcus Palmer, Charlotte Briggs and Kieron Yeoman, was an unvarnished and occasionally hilarious account of the film-makers' attempt to cycle from Dover cliffs to Land's End for charity. The event also presented some moments of extraordinary beauty, such as *Shaman's Pass* - a fantasy tale in the spirit of *Game of Thrones*, shot on the snowy heights of Norway's west coast.

The critics' choices

Eventual 'Best Film' winner *Shells* was another visually strong work, telling the moving wartime story of a shell-shocked soldier and a brother's sacrifice. Tamzin Novakovic, who worked on the film, says, "Creating a period drama is always a huge challenge and I'm proud of us for being ambitious and rising to it! Being chosen as the best was just the cherry on top of an amazing experience and achievement!"

The support from our tutors and the fab feedback they provided has given us lots of confidence for our futures in film. This has been the best finish to a growing experience!"

Dave Burden, Senior Lecturer in Digital Film, called *Shells* "...a powerful, moving film with an excellent script, brought to life by very impressive visual storytelling, well-rounded performances and high production values."

Writing for film

Students' written work was also praised, with dissertations by Liam Nicholson and Poppy Reed singled out for distinction. Liam's *The New Flesh*, winner of the Dissertation Prize, looked at the relationship between emergent technology and postmodern subject, with reference to the films of David Cronenberg. Screenwriters Adam Sklar and Dan Berry-Tatnall picked up the script prizes, with the Screenwriter's Choice award going to Adam's *The Rising*. "It's amazing to receive this award," says Adam. "I've always focused on filming and editing, so to be able to discover this skill and receive an award like this, it's remarkable! My gramps passed away last weekend, and I know he'd be extremely proud to see me here."

The audience's choice

The event concluded with an Audience's Choice award, and the final film, *Wobbly Rob: a Portrait of an Ordinary Man*, emerged as the favourite. A powerful and moving documentary about an ordinary Southampton man, the film revealed the

extraordinary life beneath surface impressions. Tom Beal, the film's producer, met Rob while working in the Standing Order pub, where Rob would come to drink - and when the final-year projects rolled around, the film-makers quickly realised what a powerful documentary subject he'd make. "We originally planned to make a fictional piece, but as we spent more time with Rob we realised he had a far more interesting story to tell. "Our plans changed so much - and it was such a surprise to win the audience award! We'd really like to thank Rob, and our tutor David Alamouti." For Solent film and TV leader Darren Kerr, who organised the event with Harbour Lights, it's been a great end to the year. "The stories have been so strong - film-making is such a balance between technical skill and storytelling, and this year's selection have really managed that balance well. With City Eye and the National Film and Television School in attendance at the showing, we're sure our students will go on to great things." For more information on the University's creative courses, visit www.solent.ac.uk.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT THE MEDIA OFFICE ON 023 8201 3040 or press.office@solent.ac.uk

About Southampton Solent University

Southampton Solent University offers more than 19,000 students over 200 qualifications ranging from HND to PhD, in subjects such as maritime education and training, fashion and design, media and television, music, health, sport and leisure, business, IT and technology. The University was awarded the 2013 Quality Assurance kitemark for quality and standards of teaching and learning. Solent was voted one of the most creative universities in the UK in a Which? University 2014 poll of students. Solent Business School has been awarded the Small Business Charter Award, which is supported by the Association of Business Schools and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and 'gold approval' by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA).