

Search for the best short film

More than 190 entries received from local filmmakers since April

story by CALVIN LOO



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TELLING stories has always been a dream for Kyle Soong, 23, who inspired viewers with his short film titled *Sam Sir* which examined the pursuit of happiness in a man's life.

"I have written a number of scripts with a similar story in mind but none of them were used. I am producing this short film based on my mentors who dedicated their lives to help youths.

"What they did for the younger generation touched me and I want to do the same through my short film, which is to inspire other people," said Soong, who is a church youth minister.

His efforts paid off as he was crowned the champion of the Berjaya Youth Short Film Competition 2015 at Berjaya Times Square Hotel Kuala Lumpur recently.

Coming a close second was *A Gift Of Gab* by Sidney Chan, 25, which saw the efforts of a widowed father attempting to reconcile with his distant daughter.

"The biggest challenge of shooting the film was time constraint. It feels surreal to be here as I did not expect to win.

"It really is a huge step forward for me to be here among the other winners," said the cinematographer while holding back tears.

In the nationwide hunt for local filmmakers aged 18 to 25, more than 190 entries were received since April but only a selected few were shortlisted for the grand finale.

Uniting young Malaysians to flex their filmmaking muscles at the competition, Berjaya Corporation Bhd Group Corporate Communications senior general manager Judy Tan said: "As the future leaders of the country, this is a platform for them to use their talents and express themselves. They are given the opportunity to tell stories and inspire others," she said.

Second runner-up Ling Kah Yong, 24, uplifted viewers through his documentary *Superman*, which also won the People's Choice Award.

"Making the short film on physical disability was challenging as we could not ask the character to act like a real actor. We just captured scenes from his everyday life," he said.



The themes set for this year's competition centred on abbreviated youth slangs and hashtags which are #YOLO – You Only Live Once, #TBT – Turn Back Time, #ABC – Always Be Creative and #LOL – Laugh Out Loud.

Making the winners efforts worthwhile, the fifth edition of the competition offered cash prizes and personal computers worth more than RM90,000.

A series of roadshows featuring experienced film directors and producers were also organised in selected colleges and universities to expose Malaysian youth to the local film industry.

Also present were directors Datin Paduka Shuhaimi Baba, Afdlin Shauki, Aniu, Gayatri Su-Lin Pillai and Ruby Yang who were the judges for the competition.

Pleased with the overwhelming response, Gayatri had her hands full trying to select the winners but stressed the competition was important for the future of local talents.

"The entries for this year's competition shared similar themes compared to last year but they have shown improvements in technical and cinematography aspects," she said.



1 The Top 10 finalists with the judges at the awards presentation ceremony of Berjaya Youth Short Film Competition 2015 at Berjaya Times Square Hotel Kuala Lumpur. 2 Afdlin was among the returning judges for the short film competition. 3 Gayatri found the short films to be entertaining and an overall improvement compared to previous years.