

YOUTH

Shooting stars of film

Fujian festival supports young talented directors with funds, **Wang Ru** reports.



Prizewinning films at the festival include *Accordions* (top) and *Unfinished Lives*.

Director Wang Xiaoshuai recalls when his maiden work, *The Days*, was shortlisted for a prize in the international forum for new cinema section at the Berlin International Film Festival in 1994.

He was told the prize would be given to the crew with the least funding. At that time, he borrowed money to make films — but he didn't receive the prize, as it was given to a candidate from Russia, who made films with the money he received begging on the street.

Wang told this story in the promotional video of the second In Moments Film Festival, which was held in Pingtan, Fujian province, in November.

The festival honored dozens of young filmmakers with prizes of more than 3 million yuan (\$470,000) and included forums and workshops.

Organized by the Fujian Film Bureau, the Fujian Administration of Radio and Television, and the Fujian Media Group, the festival aims to support young filmmakers and promote communication among them.

Since the launch of this year's festival in April, it received 1,376 works from 290 educational institutions, including 103 from 26 universities in Taiwan.

Director Emetjan Memet from Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, who has just graduated from the Beijing Film Academy with a master's degree in fine arts, won the best film award in the festival for his short film



Contestants pose with British director Malcolm Clarke at the award ceremony of this year's In Moments Film Festival held in Pingtan, Fujian province, in November. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

“Whether they are workers, academics, professors, politicians, I think what we really want to know is who the Chinese people are.”

Malcolm Clarke, director, talking about the significance of showing Chinese people's stories in filmmaking

Accordions, which has won prizes in other competitions.

Memet says: “At 30, I got 300,000 yuan as support fund. It may be a turning point in my life. A student who has just graduated from school doesn't have much money, so the fund is vital for my next film. I will make good use of it.”

For prizewinning director Ji

Jinglu, the festival has enabled her to reconnect with herself.

“After making a film, I used to feel I no longer had any connection with it, and even negated my feelings about it, like a piece of white paper ready to make the next film,” she says. “But by participating in this festival, I found my former self again.”

Judges of the festival include Wang, Hu Zhifeng, deputy director of the Beijing Film Academy, and Ruby Chen, co-founder of CNEX Foundation, a nonprofit in the film industry.

Hu says that the festival showed the filmmakers' sense of social care, better imagination and creativity, displaying “life landscapes”.

Memet's film shows an amusing story of a Xinjiang boy buying an accordion; award-winning film *The Speech* focuses on China's fight against SARS in 2003; and *Unfinished Lives* is about overseas Chinese students and campus security.

“Reflecting the reality is the instinct of every creator and our most affectionate feedback for the environment where we grow up,” says Hong Kong film producer Tsui Siu-ming.

Oscar-winning British director Malcolm Clarke urges filmmakers to pay more attention to people and show their stories.

“I often see Chinese documentaries and films talk a lot about China's achievements, but we don't often hear stories of the people who have achieved those things. Whether they are workers, academics, professors, politicians, I think what we really want to know is who the Chinese people are.”

“What do they think? Are they afraid? Do they love? Do they fear? Are they wicked? Are they good? True emotions will always travel across oceans,” says Clarke.

Contact the writer at wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn

CAS makes new AI poker program

Chinese scientists have developed an artificial intelligence program that is quick-minded and on par with professional human players in heads-up no-limit Texas Hold'em poker.

The AI program called AlphaHoldem equaled four sophisticated human players in a 10,000-hand two-player competition, after three days of self-training, according to a paper to be presented at AAAI 2022, a global AI conference to be held in Vancouver, Canada, in February.

Texas Hold'em is a popular poker game in which players often deceive and bluff. It is more similar to real-world problems than Go and chess since decisions are made with imperfect information.

The researchers from the Institute of Automation of the Chinese Academy of Sciences reported that AlphaHoldem, a fast learner, used only about three to four milliseconds for each movement, about 1,000 times quicker than that of first-generation AI Hold'em players DeepStack and Libratus. AlphaHoldem got the better of DeepStack in a 100,000-hand competition, according to the researchers.

DeepStack, developed by the University of Alberta, and Libratus, developed by Carnegie Mellon University, beat professional players in heads-up no-limit two-player Hold'em in 2016 and 2017.

The two previous AI players, based on an algorithm called counterfactual regret minimization, spent respectively three and four seconds for each movement, consuming a large amount of computing power, the researchers say.

AlphaHoldem, which employs a new framework by incorporating deep-learning into a new self-play algorithm, used only eight GPUs during its training, which is ultralightweight compared with DeepStack's 13,000 GPUs, according to the recent news release by the CAS.

The researchers say looking forward, they will apply the underlying technology to other games like mahjong and bridge, fostering smarter AI.

XINHUA

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