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OIAF Shorts Competition 1 Review

2009 Ottawa International Animation Festival

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Oct 28, 2009

What shorts played at the 2009 Ottawa International Animation Festival's Shorts Competition 1? Find out the good, the bad and the ugly.



The Shorts Competition 1 (Wednesday, October 14th) featured a lot of shorts with family themes. That's not to say they were fit for family viewing, merely that they addressed notions of family and childhood.

Not surprisingly, many of them were quite dark and brooding, since family is often a contentious thing among angsty artists.

The Good

It was immediately apparent that the lineup of shorts at the 2009 Ottawa International Animation Festival featured a much higher level of quality than at [last year's festival](#). There were no stinkers, and quite a few wonderful shorts on display. Here are the ones that really stood out:

- 'Love on the Line' (G. Melissa Graziano, USA): a hilarious, sexy look at young love via Morse Code. Graziano shows a wicked sense of comic timing, and inventive use of imagery.
- 'Changeling (Vaihkokas)' (Leena Jääskeläinen, Finland): A harrowing look at post-partum depression, it features a young mother becoming obsessed that a dark force has replaced her baby with something other. Some genuinely tense, terrifying moments here.
- 'Q&A' (Mike & Tim Rauch, USA): Animation based on a real-life conversation between a mother and her son, who has Asperger's Syndrome. The unforced dialogue that covered everything from love to cockroaches gave the inventive animation a solid grounding, making this a compelling, beautiful short. "That's great, huh?" one audience member said to her neighbor. "Lovely," the neighbor replied.
- 'Git Gob' (Philip Eddolls, Canada): Short and very sweet, this short featured a shambling creature who decides to wear a planet for a hat.

The Bad

As mentioned before, there were no real stinkers in this selection. However, some shorts simply weren't as strong as the other contestants.

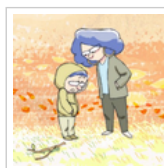
- 'Kids': (Christy Karacas & Ray Tinton, USA): Set to MGMT's hit single, it was a nightmare vision of childhood fears, but that didn't make it compelling to watch. One also questions the morality of terrifying babies with monster costumes during the live-action segments. "That'll make for some nice dreams," one audience member whispered.
- 'The Passenger' (Julie Zammarchi, USA) featured nice animation technique, but the story didn't work and continuity issues plagued the short as well.

The Ugly (Winner)

This was truly an ugly choice, since Jääskeläinen's haunting 'Changeling,' Philip Eddoll's hilarious 'Git Gob,' Hamish Lambert's touching high school piece 'The Paper Prince,' and Graziano's funny, inventive 'Love on the Line' were all compelling contestants.

But it was the Rauch Brothers' 'Q&A' that touched Animation Boy's cold, dead heart the most. An animation based on the real-life conversation between a mother and her Asperger's-afflicted son, it was raw, honest and beautiful. Well done.

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[a scene from the Rauch Bros.' 'Q&A'](#)

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