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PRESS Release

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Winners of the Grand Prizes for the 27th Tokyo Video Festival "TVF 2005" Selected Video Grand Prize: *Chieko Oki of Ibaragi Prefecture, Japan for "Grainy Days"* JVC Grand Prize: *Brent and Craig Renaud of the United States for "Off To War: Chapter Two"*

The 27th Tokyo Video Festival "TVF 2005," sponsored by Victor Company of Japan, Ltd. (JVC), attracted entries of 2,605 works from 39 countries and regions from around the world (1,001 works from Japan and 1,604 works from overseas). From among the entries, 30 works won Excellence Award and 70 Selected Works were mentioned. After the final review, the Video Grand Prize and the JVC Grand Prize (one work for each prize) were selected from among the works that won Excellence Award, and the High-definition Digital Video Camera Award (one work) was chosen from among the works that won Excellence Award or Selected Work. In addition, three works were chosen for the People Awards from among the works that won Excellence Award by a popular vote on the Internet.

The Video Grand Prize was awarded to Chieko Oki (part-time employee, 24) of Ibaragi Prefecture, Japan for her work, *Grainy Days*. Tired of a mundane life spent at a part-time job in a *natto* (fermented soybeans) factory, the filmmaker looks for concrete proof of her existence as she meets up with an old friend and takes flight in a prop plane to get a bird's eye view of her day-to-day world. Hailed by the judges — "This is a masterpiece in which a 24-year-old woman uses filmed images to create a 'self-portrait' or a 'personal novel'." (Isao Takahata) "This is my favorite work. It is skillfully composed and organized!" (Susumu Hani).

The JVC Grand Prize was awarded to American video journalists Brent and Craig Renaud for their *Off To War: Chapter Two*. Following 57 young soldiers with the Arkansas National Guard deployed from their home state to the Iraq war as they experience the horror of the battlefield and place tearful phone calls to loved ones back home, the film chronicles days spent at war, days in which the extraordinary is reduced to the routine. Typical of the critical acclaim for *Off To War: Chapter Two* was one judge's comment, "The main thing this handy cam video diary from the war front conveys is the image of yet another war victim. I want this pain to become the shield of the citizens." (Hiroaki Sato).

The High-definition Digital Video Camera Award went to Ikuo Nakamura (Photographer 59, Tokyo, Japan) for his work *The Limitless Sea*.

The People Awards, which were selected by popular vote on the Internet, went to Wu Ping Hai (32, Taiwan) for *Shei-Ting and Her Songs*, Kazuhiro Morita (45, Kyoto Prefecture, Japan) for *Kyoto Trolley Tale — Clang-Clang Kitano Line Trolley* and Shimogamo Junior High School PC Club (Kyoto Prefecture, Japan) for *Introduction of a School for Good Children*.

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Attachment 1:

Outline of Tokyo Video Festival

- Since 1978, JVC has annually hosted the "Tokyo Video Festival" to popularize "video-making" which increases the possibilities of recording, message transmissions, and free expressions with videos.
- The festival is open to professionals, amateurs, individuals, and groups of any nationality and ages. Video compositions must be produced with a video camera. Playback time must not exceed 20 minutes. Any subject matter is acceptable.

"TVF 2005" Award

Video Grand Prize (1 work):	500,000 yen (prize money for "Excellence Award" included); a JVC high-definition digital video camera "GR-HD1", a TVF trophy, and a citation.
JVC Grand Prize (1 work):	400,000 yen (prize money for "Excellence Award" included); a JVC high-definition digital video camera "GR-HD1", a TVF trophy, and a citation.
Excellence Award (30 Works):	Prize money for video-making: 100,000 yen, citation, and plaque
High-definition Digital Video Camera Award (1 work):	Plaque
People's Award (3 works):	Plaque
Selected Work (70 works):	Citation and plaque
Judges:	Nobuhiko Obayashi, Film Director; Hakudo Kobayashi, Video Artist and Professor of Seian University of Art and Design; Hiroaki Sato, Video Artist and a teacher at Nippon Engineering College; Makoto Shiina, Novelist; Isao Takahata, Animation Film Director; Susumu Hani, Film Director; and Masanori Kitami, General Manager, Camcorder Category Div., Victor Company of Japan, Ltd. (JVC).

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Attachment 2:

Trends and topics of awards-winning works in TVF 2005

1. Grainy Days – Outstanding Expression Born of Serious Self-Examination

In the 2005 Video Grand Prize winner *Grainy Days* by Chieko Oki (24, Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan), a part-time worker at a local *natto* factory attempts to escape the drudgery of her daily life. Her work expresses with brilliant clarity the conflicting emotions of a restless heart — testimony to the idea that directing and editing video gives the filmmaker the opportunity to take a long, hard look at her, or conversely, this filmmaker creates her video in order to do precisely this. Highly praised by nearly every judge during the jury review, *Grainy Days* was the overwhelming favorite for this year's Video Grand Prize.

“Expression that concentrates on internal aspects’ was the impetus for the fine work *Grainy Days*. This differentiates it from any literary, film, or television piece up to the present. I also felt that, after all, video has created its own original ‘audience.’ The conclusive difference in terms of readers and audience up to the present is that the ‘audience members’ are also the ‘creators.’” (Susumu Hani). “Neither fiction nor documentary, it instead borrows elements from both genres. This is a masterpiece in which a 24-year-old woman uses filmed images to create a ‘self-portrait’ or a ‘personal novel.’ The crane shots of ‘what is seen by the eyes’ in high boots that was inserted in order to confirm ‘whether or not her feet were on the ground’ were brilliantly comparable to flying in a plane.” (Isao Takahata).

2. Video Journalism Comes into Its Own

In contrast to television as “mass” media, video can be characterized as a “personal” medium. Video journalism’s *raison d’être* is the social relevance of this “personal” point of view in examining, depicting, and bringing before the public any number of material issues. *Off To War: Chapter Two* (Brent and Craig Renaud, U.S.A), winner of the JVC Grand Prize, depicts the confusion and fear of National Guardsmen unexpectedly shipped off to the Iraq war. This video provides personal perceptions of the society. In his comments on the selection of the film for this award, Nobuhiko Obayashi stated: “It depicts the ‘daily life’ of young American citizens who were dispatched to Iraq, in the context of their life as soldiers, and set against the backdrop of war. The ‘individual’ daily expression unexpectedly draws out the sense of ‘something hugely wrong’ inescapably affecting our world today, in an attempt to make us consider that ‘something.’ We should remember the ‘power to make us think’ is the essence of journalism.”

3. Outstanding Works of Fiction

The significant number of outstanding dramatic stories and other works of fiction also defined this year's video festival. *Little Natsu's Summer* (Excellence Award, Kotaro Sengoku, 44, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan), a mysterious drama that begins with the sudden and simultaneous appearance of an email and a small girl in one man's life, was lauded by Makoto Shiina as "I feel that this is probably the best short film that I have seen in the last decade of TVF history as it provides a closely-woven drama structure, fixed scenes, unified colors, and a well-fashioned pathos."

This was only one of many top-notch entries in this year's fiction category. Others include *Hale and Hearty Water Flea* (Excellence Award, Nihon University Fujisawa High School Broadcasting Club, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan), the story of a man who discovers a "strange object — a water flea" in his eye; *Kyoto Trolley Tale — Clang-Clang Kitano Line Trolley* (Excellence Award, Kazuhiro Morita, 45, Kyoto Prefecture, Japan), a retrospective short drama that successfully blends old recorded footage with present-day images; *Do You Like Planes?* (Selected Work, Hidekazu Shigaki, 36, Aichi Prefecture, Japan), an expressive work that captures perfectly the feel of the moment one looks up to discover a plane flying overhead; *a vase* (Selected Work, Toshihiro Yoshiki, 43, Gifu Prefecture, Japan), which chronicles a typical day in the life of a young, thoughtful girl surrounded by lush nature; and *Grandson's Summer* (Excellence Award, Yoshihiro Arakaki, 41, Okinawa Prefecture, Japan); among many others.

The majority of the fiction entries this year were less than ten minutes in length, falling into the "short film" category. TVF judge Hakudo Kobayashi explains, "This is likely a reflection of the fact that their contents have recently been attracting attention as appropriate broadband posting material."

4. Works by Seniors Applauded for Their Unique and Profound Perspectives

As a direct reflection of the filmmakers' life experiences, video works strike a deep chord with their audience, eliciting empathy and emotion in response to the visual images. Each year the best of the videos created by senior citizens — videos that never fail to impress with their wealth of life experience — find their way to the Tokyo Video Festival, and the entries by seniors in 2005 are as powerful as ever. The mesmerizing world of images these filmmakers deliver is born of a unique perspective only our senior citizens can offer.

TVF judge Isao Takahata was especially taken with *Mystery of Life (Swallowtail Butterfly)* (Excellence Award, Yoshimasa Ogihara, 66, Tokyo, Japan), the product of three years of detailed study of the life and ecosystem of the swallowtail butterfly. "As a remarkably persistent witness, the filmmaker offers the audience the miracle of the mesmerizing life of a swallowtail butterfly. This work reaffirms that beautiful images can make people happy." Other selected works by seniors include: *The Life of a Senior Citizen: 92 Years Old* (Selected Work, Giichi

Monma, 92, Yamagata Prefecture, Japan), a video diary of the life of a 92-year old living alone who records each day to show his children and grandchildren how well he is doing; *Video Poetry Anthology "Angel Songs"* (Selected Work, Zinnosuke Kondo, 70, Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan), an expression in informal film visual images and haiku brimming with the joy of a first grandchild born as one nears 70 and the complicated emotions of approaching the end of one's life; and *Friendly Singing Voices Echo Through the Mountains* (Selected Work, Hiroshi Ebisawa, 80, Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan).

5. Videos From the Classroom

A notable trend over the past few years is the increasing number of videos that address the situation in Japan's classrooms today, an increase seemingly related to the introduction of integrated studies to the Japanese curriculum. Works of this type include videos created as part of school club activities, documentaries focusing on extra-curricular activities, broadcasting club projects, and even videos created by teachers themselves.

The award-winning *Introduction of a School for Good Children* (Excellence Award, Shimogamo Junior High PC Club, Kyoto Prefecture, Japan) is a fictional story of junior high school students who show their school around to sixth grade students preparing to start junior high school.

Reincarnation — The Life of a Former Terrorist (Selected Work, Higashiharima High School Broadcasting Club, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan) and *Tobacco and Health* (Selected Work, Nishikawa Mutsuai Elementary School Child Gymnastic & Health Committee, Yamagata Prefecture, Japan) are just two of a number of entries based on school club and committee projects. Entries submitted by teachers include "*Clear and Bright*" — *Awash with the Principal's Thoughts* (Selected Work, Yutaka Nakazawa, 59, Nagano Prefecture, Japan) and *Thanks to Everybody* (Selected Work, Yoshihisa Ishizu, 42, Ehime Prefecture, Japan), among others. *Sticks and Stones* (Selected Work, Ollie Robbins, 11, U.K.), an overseas entry work that deals with "bullying", was created by 11 year-old students.

6. Higher Level of Quality in Animated Video

Though still representing a fairly small portion of entries overall, roughly 10% of the 2005 award-winning videos featured animation and computer graphics prominently. As the general public becomes increasingly computer savvy and software advances even further, these effects have become relatively accessible even for amateurs. As the level of quality in this year's animated video entries clearly demonstrates, the digital generation is flocking to the field of video animation thanks to these advancements.

Award winners in this category include *TOKYO CITY* (Excellence Award, Yusuke Koyanagi, 21, Tokyo, Japan), a black comedy depicting the indifference of people living in urban sprawl through images of people text messaging in silence from their cell phones; and *DIGITAL SNAPSHOT* (Excellence Award, Daniel Lo Iacono, 27, Germany), a work of visual magic created with digital technology. The two clay animation award winners were *The Tree Officer* (Excellence Award, Neil Jack, 25, U.K.) and *ELVIRA* (Excellence Award, Juan Manuel Costa, Argentina).

7. Focus on Documenting Global Realities, Dealing With War

A significant number of the 2005 entries reflect the realities of a world still plagued by conflict, with overseas entries in particular focusing again this year on the topic of war.

In addition to the JVC Grand Prize winner, *Off To War: Chapter Two*, quite a few Selected Works also focused on war and conflict, including *Remzi Cej: A Ticket To A New Life* (Ludwing Duarte/ Erin French/ Amy Joy/ John Hong, Canada), which chronicles the experience of war in Kosovo; *A Story about a little girl* (Studio "All Children are ours," Russia), which turns the spotlight on a seven-year-old girl to tell of the sorrows of a nation-less people caught in the middle of tribal warfare; *1521* (Erik Barron Vargas, 25, Mexico), which uses digital technology to depict the tragedy of the war in the historic capital of Mexico; and *The Pawn* (Dawn Westlake, 39, U.S.), the story of a widow who lost her journalist husband in Iraq.



Video Grand Prize
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