

# Poignant tales

A man who lost his sense of smell and a mother-to-daughter cautionary story are in BMW Shorties 2012, writes **Dennis Chua**

IT'S the sixth outing of annual short film competition BMW Shorties this Dec 20 and 10 films are in the running for the coveted Best Film award which carries a RM75,000 grant.

The films are *Sincerely*, *The End* by Lee Wei Sheong, *Talent House* by Tan Hyon-Le, *Crossroads* by Rebecca Yau, *Da Capo* by Tan Ce Ding, *Das* by Suresh Naidu, *Haruman Hujan* by Martin Chong, *Johan Adam* by Lim Pik Lan, *Leap Of Faith* by Bryan Lim, *Murdered* by Chua Dick Woei and *Muthal Naal Indru* (The First Day) by Jagatesh Letchumanan.

*Haruman Hujan*, which is also up for Best Sound Design, is a humorous yet poignant story of a man who lost his sense of smell in a car accident.

Chong, its director, says: "The seven-minute film is a true story. Khairul Ridzuan, its main actor, had a car accident in 2008, and has since struggled to regain his sense of smell."

Sound designer Razif Mohamad says: "Khairul also experienced short-term memory loss, which he is coping with. We named the film *Haruman Hujan* because rain symbolises hope for Khairul to fully recover."

Chong and Razif spent two weeks shooting the film in Subang Jaya and Petaling Jaya. They were assisted by producer and assistant director Hoang Ng and lighting designer Kenny Chew.

"Ng and Chew are our students in Taylor's University," says Chong.

"The four of us watched past winners in order to come up with a good story," adds Razif, who used to work in a computer games company.

They are fans of *Guang*, last year's winning film directed by Quek Shio Chuan. "Its simple storytelling inspired us," says Ng.

"We recreated a hospital scene for Khairul,

who was bedridden and unconscious for a month following the car crash," says Chew.

*Haruman Hujan* is their first entry in the competition. Previously, they participated in the KL 48 Hour Film Festival 2011, winning Best Character Design for short film *Escape*.

Director Jagatesh says his film, *The First Day*, is a major awards contender in the festival.

"We have been nominated for Best Film, Screenplay, Sound Design, Editing, Actress (Jaya Ganason) and Cinematography," he says.

An accounting lecturer at UCSI University, he created the 16-minute film with his brother Soma Kanthan.

Soma, the film's producer, says it is their second year in the festival. "Last year we had a Best Actress nominee, Angel S, for our film *SRK*," says Soma.

*The First Day* is about a woman (Jaya) who tells her daughter how she met her father 15 years ago. "It's dark and emotional," says Soma.

"And she is not your average girl-next-door," adds Jagatesh.

There are three actors in the short film who play the father, the mother in the present and the mother during her youth.

"The lesson behind the film is that the truth hurts but it is better to tell the truth than to hide it," says Jagatesh. Filming took 20 days at Jagatesh's house in Seri Kembangan.

"The film is entirely in Tamil," says Soma.

Soma and Jagatesh are currently working on their first English film which is set for release next year.

They will also be coming up with *Saatan*, their first full-length Tamil film next year.

✉ [dchua@nst.com.my](mailto:dchua@nst.com.my)

## DISTINCT POSSIBILITIES

BMW Shorties, BMW Group Malaysia's short film competition, encourages and spurs creativity in the Malaysian film community.

Last year's winning film, *Guang*, picked up numerous awards internationally — including Best Film and Audience Choice — at the third Who Likes Short Shorts Film Festival 2012 in the United States. This year's theme is "Possibilities".

The winner will receive a RM75,000 grant to make a professional short film to be showcased in Malaysia and internationally.

Ancillary awards are for Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Cinematography, Best Production Design, Best Screenplay, Best Editing and Best Sound Engineer as well as the People's Choice Award.

Entries for the competition were open from Aug 30 to Oct 26.



*Soma and Jagatesh (right).*





Razif and Chong (right).

PIXS BY AZREN JAMALUDDIN