

# *British Shorts Jury Award Winner 2017: Tough by Jennifer Zheng*



## *Jury Statement*

In Jennifer Zheng's documentary Animation a young woman and her mother talk about the past for the first time – a past that involves both private and political matters. They talk about the childhood of the narrator (the young woman), who was born to Chinese parents in Great Britain, as well as the experiences of the mother, who grew up in China during the Cultural Revolution. Jennifer Zheng's film is personal and immediate, and manages to deal with bigger, complex topics such as migration, integration, identity and dictatorship in a very poetic way. The visualization and narration both work together perfectly. The impressive animation allows the story to feel open and universal, and that is what makes the viewer realize the complexity of the topic. Sometimes it feels like the viewer actually knows more than the two protagonists of the film – just the way it is in real life between mothers and daughters, or parents and their children in general, there's things that are left unsaid.

Even though Zheng's film deals with questions that are directly linked to the family history of the portrayed, these questions sound simple, and yet, those questions can be difficult to ask: What happened back then? What made you become the person that you are today? And how did that influence me? Traumatic experiences can influence generations and sometimes it can be difficult to find a common language, this is what Zheng's film talks about very precisely, but without trying to force meaning upon it or trying to lecture the viewer. „Tough“ is only a five-minute film, but it feels complete.

## *The Jury*

**Tatjana Turanskyj**, director and producer (Eine flexible Frau, Top Girl a.o.)

**Anna Mayrhauser**, journalist (Missy Magazine, Zitty a.o.)

**Ralf Beyerle**, director (Nachspiel a.o.) and producer (Comedy Central a.o.)

**Catherine Morawitz**, producer (Fonotone: An Electric Fairytale, Yellow a.o.)