

'Brave' Austrian film is No-1

The Austrian drama "Import Export" bagged the Best Film Award at the World Film Festival of Bangkok last night.

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The jury said in its announcement that the film had won "for its brave, uncomfortable look and unspoiled access to reality, which forces spectators to confront their own lives in the successful capitalist-driven world and for giving and revealing an insight into human existence of uncovered bodies and souls".

The film depicts a lonely Ukrainian lady who seeks a new life in Vienna but ends up as a cleaner. Her life runs in parallel with that of a bored Austrian guy who goes to the Ukraine searching for a new life.

Two films shared the Special Jury Prize - the Taiwanese "Help Me Eros" and the simple comedy from Israel "The Band's Visit".

"Help Me Eros" is the latest film of Lee Kang Chen, who is well-known as an actor under famous director Tsai Ming Liang. "Help Me Eros" was the most popular offering in the festival this year.

"It's a pleasure to win the award, and it's the first one I've ever got in my film-making career," said Lee, a familiar visitor to the festival.

"The festival is really for the audience. Unlike other world-renowned festivals that mostly are people from the industry going to watch films, this festival is really an event for moviegoers, and it's a very warm welcome for me," he said.

"The Band's Visit" impressed the judges with its simple, lovely story portraying the Orchestra Band from Egypt getting lost in a quiet small town in Israel.

Turkish director Semih Kaplanoglu took the Best Director Award for his work "Egg", which follows a poet coming home when his mother dies. His return lets him meet women who share his emotion under the special circumstances.

Kaplanoglu was recognised for his "respectful and beautiful way of looking at human beings and for his serene and fine cinematic presentation of the desire for identity and love".

This year the jury decided to change the Best Screenplay Award to the Best Artistic Achievement Award on the grounds that that there was no qualifying script.

The jury voted for the American stylised film "Phantom Love" for its outstanding black-and-white cinematography "composing narrative structure and extraordinary usage of sounds that create a surreal atmosphere offering access to deeper levels of reality".