



# 22nd Leeds International Film Festival

## Golden Owl Competition 2008: Judges' Statement

Before we reveal this year's winner we would like to raise the difficulty we have had in deciding upon the recipient of this year's Golden Owl. Both the films chosen – the winner and our highly deserved special mention – display great honesty and personal dedication in bringing their visions to the screen. These were films we felt had to be made rather than simply another project to be completed and put on the shelf. Both films demonstrate near obsessive dedication in making cinema against the odds using readily available technology to bring forth exciting and forward thinking visions of cultures from around the globe. It is with great honour that we award this year's Golden Owl to Tariq Tapa and Zero Bridge.

Few films combine the observational honesty of Tapa's vision of Kashmir – creating an emotion and political landscape from the very personal and everyday experiences of his non professional cast. This is a raw, dramatic and thrilling film that never falls in to melodrama or cliché. As such we commend Tapa not only as director but writer, cinematographer and sound recorder in creating this disorientating portrait of two characters torn between family responsibilities and expressing their personal potential. In awarding the Golden Owl to this film we hope to bestow upon it added international prominence and widen the reach of this extraordinary debut feature.

A special mention is given to Nina Paley's Sita Sings the Blues. Already the recipient of a wide range of awards we felt we could not let the opportunity pass to further raise the awareness of this magical animated film. Completed over 5 years on domestic equipment it displays near limitless creativity in its wild collage of narrative strands, animation styles and music.

These films demonstrate that personal cinema is not only alive and well but also a vital educational force in the fragmented and troubled post millennial world.

Golden Owl Competition Winner 2008 – Zero Bridge, directed by Tariq Tapa

Special Mention – Sita Sings The Blues, directed by Nina Paley

- The Golden Owl Competition 2008 Judges were: John Bradburn, Paolo Moretti & Luciano Chelotti.