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CultureLab
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Universe hopping wins Quantum Shorts film competition

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Competitions   Film

Michael Brooks, consultant

Quantum Daughter *(Image: GLeNKTV)*

After months of waiting, we can announce the results of the Centre for Quantum Technologies/ *New Scientist* Quantum Shorts film competition.

Our illustrious panel of judges was blown away by the quality of the shortlisted films. Ben Bowie, twice-Emmy-nominated producer of Discovery Channel's *Stephen Hawking's Universe* and creative director at Darlow Smithson Productions, was impressed by the variety of submissions. "I think it's safe to say each and every film has something special," he said.

Quantum physicist Artur Ekert, the director of the Centre for Quantum Technologies, said the brief of the competition made it a real challenge. "Given that the subject matter is difficult I

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thought it was an interesting collection to watch."

We asked the judges to rate their top three films, and from this we have a winner and runner-up. In addition, we asked you to vote for your favourite: the People's Choice.

First prize of 2000 Singapore dollars (just over £1000) goes to the animation _Quantum Daughter_, an astonishing snapshot of life in a future where we can travel between different universes. Lisa Randall, Harvard University professor of theoretical physics and author of _Knocking on Heaven's Door_, acclaimed it as easily her favourite. "It's clever, creative, had some of the physics and is funny," she said. Ariane Koek, who leads the arts-science programme at CERN, near Geneva, Switzerland, also marked it as a favourite, calling it "original, quirky and funny, as well as technically good".

For the runners-up prize, the judges showed an even split, with no way of choosing between two films. So, the prize of 1000 Singapore dollars (just over £500) is shared between _Alice in Quantumland_ and _Heisenberg_.

Alice in Quantumland uses the quantum trick of existing in more than one place to open up a romantic opportunity. This, according to Lonce Wyse, director of the Arts and Creativity Lab in the Interactive and Digital Media Institute at the National University of Singapore, had "good cinematography and a rich connection to various aspects of quantum theory". Jeremy Webb, editor-in-chief of _New Scientist_, liked the fact that you don't need to understand quantum theory to follow the plot. "I think it introduces people to some funky quantum effects in an intriguing, humorous, enjoyable way," he said.

Heisenberg's cheeky dialogue tickled many of the judges. "It's pretty funny," Randall said. Bowie agreed. "It's funny and sexy," he said. "Who'd have thought that was possible in a film about quantum physics?"

All the judges agreed that it wasn't easy picking out winners from such a strong field. "I am really impressed that quantum theory can inspire such creativity," said Webb. "I would like to congratulate all the directors on their imaginations and the skill with which they have told their stories".

And the People's Choice? Well, hundreds of you voted, and _Alice in Quantumland_ came out on top, with quantum thriller _the Cat_ coming a close second.

Congratulations to all the entrants. If you haven't seen the films, it's worth checking them out - they're available to watch here.

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