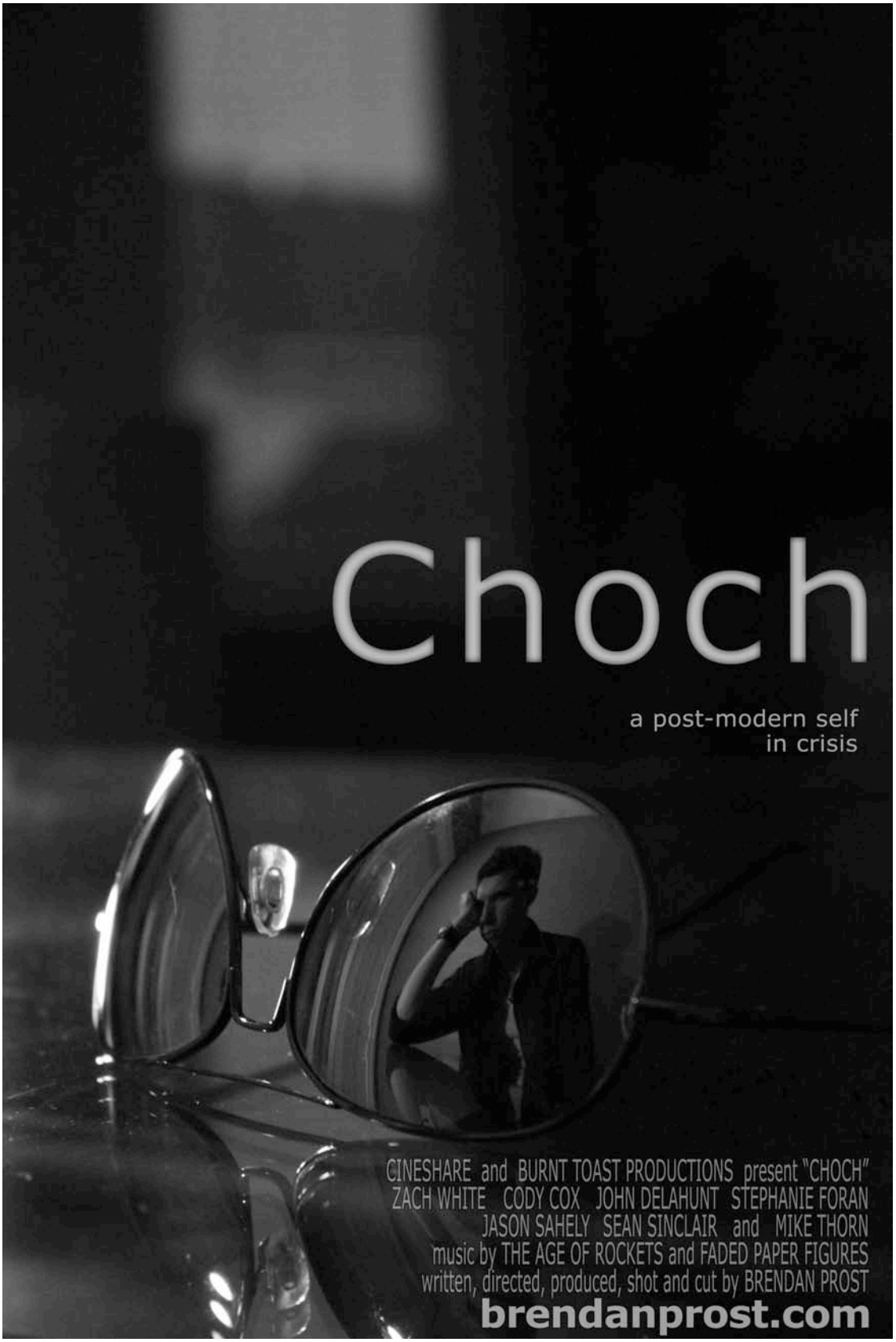
Choch


Choch
a post-modern self
in crisis
CINESHARE and BURNT TOAST PRODUCTIONS present "CHOCH"
ZACH WHITE CODY COX JOHN DELAHUNT STEPHANIE FORAN
JASON SAHELY SEAN SINCLAIR and MIKE THORN
music by THE AGE OF ROCKETS and FADED PAPER FIGURES
written, directed, produced, shot and cut by BRENDAN PROST
brendanprost.com

Choch

Logline
A character-driven drama about an unlikely individual's identity crisis.

Synopsis
A six-day portrait of a young man struggling with an unattractive and misleading "choch" identity he's developed for himself over a number of years. Day after day he recoils at the things he says and does, but is confined to complacency and self-hate by the same insecurities that birthed his false persona in the first place. A cycle of regret and resignation seems doomed to repeat itself until circumstance manifests a confrontation between his outward and the inner selves, suggesting that perhaps there is hope for this partially assembled soul to be more than what he pretends to be.

Combining vérité photography and new-wave editing with internalized and partially improvised performances, Choch offers a symbolic and moving portrait of a definitively post-modern self in crisis.

Production Notes
Choch was produced on a meagre budget of $1300 during the summer of 2010 whenever the cast and crew had time away from their various part-time jobs. Working from a sparse script and many conversations about the themes of the film, director Brendan Prost and lead actor Zach White collaborated together to develop a nuanced character to portray onscreen.

Shooting two cameras simultaneously from a distance and leaving the performers room to improvise their movements and different line-readings, White and the other actors were allowed to discover the natural rhythms and most spontaneous reactions and emotions within the scene without contrivance. After filling the mise-en- scène with symbolic properties and loading the script with provocative action, Prost used active handheld cameras consistently in close-ups to draw attention to the most meaningful images and moments. In the editing room a combined 27 hours of dramatic improvisation and scripted scenes was cut down to a slim 95 minutes by ruthlessly and overtly cutting to the most essential and revealing parts of each sequence.

The result is a vérité inspired piece of cinema that reflects the rawness and emotional honesty that informed the production and the filmmakers' motivations for embarking upon it.

Choch

Tech Specs

- 95 minutes
- High-Definition Video
- Black and White
- 1.78.1 (16X9)
- Dolby Digital 2.0

Websites/Video

- Film's website – http://brendanprost.com/choch.html
- Facebook page – http://facebook.com/chochfilm
- Private online screener - https://vimeo.com/25196599 (password: indiegogoviewer1)
- Trailer – https://vimeo.com/bprost/chochnowavailable

Filmmakers

Zach White … Tyler (the choch)
Cody Cox … Tyler's father
John Delahunt … Tyler's friend
Stephanie Foran … Tyler's new friend
Jason Sahely … Tyler's friend
Sean Sinclair … Tyler's friend
Mike Thorn … Tyler's old friend (the hipster)

The Age of Rockets … musical contributors
Faded Paper Figures … musical contributors
The Nix Dicksons … musical contributors
Stephanie Foran … costumes, hair, set dressing
Chelsey Syrnyk … costumes, hair, set dressing, on set photography
Brendan Prost … writer, director, producer, cinematographer, editor

Contact Information

Brendan Prost
778-686-5186 (cell)
brendan.prost@hotmail.com
http://brendanprost.com

Choch

Filmmaker Biography

Brendan Prost is a 22-year-old do-it-yourself filmmaker. Originally from Calgary, Brendan now lives in Vancouver, where he is pursuing his BFA at Simon Fraser University. He is currently in the process of self-distributing his second feature film, *Choch*, while preparing his third feature for production in August of 2012. Brendan is also the creator of such works at the Rising Star Award Winning *Generation Why*, the From Here to Awesome Showcase Selection *Fragments*, and the controversial teen suicide melodrama *Whodunnit*. His most recent short work is the 16mm character study *Jerk*.

Director's Statement

Choch began simply as a way to express the feeling of being perceived as an ugly person, inside and out. For personal reasons I wanted people to understand what it was like to imagine one's self as utterly and completely loathsome, to live a life riddled with constant regret. To manifest this onscreen I thought of the vilest type of character I was familiar with in my day to day life, a kind of stereotypical young adult male my friends and I referred to as a "choch". As I developed the character in preparation for a script, I considered how an undesirable self is built. No one aspires to be nasty or unpleasant, but yet there are individuals, like our choch character, who profusely exude those reprehensible qualities.

How can this be? Any self is constituted in the same way, and yet the challenges of developing and maintaining an identity today prove overwhelming for some. As the quality of our lives is increasingly dependent upon others perceptions of us, and as symbolic media images proliferate every sphere of our lives, the proper crafting of a whole self becomes a dream further and further out of reach. The essence of who we are becomes buried under a mess of insecurities, anxieties, expectations, external images, and aspirations. With our contemporary ontology so complex, it's easy to see how we can lose ourselves and become someone we never thought we could be. Someone pathetic, someone vain, someone ugly, someone not unlike a choch.

I think what the film eventually evolved into being was an expression of my fear of that potential present and future self. A fear that a misleading outward self could dominate whatever exists on the inside. I wanted to communicate what it felt like to be trapped inside an unfortunate persona, unable to honestly connect with other human beings, and unable to share what you really think and feel. During shooting the film blossomed into a character study of that lost, lonely, and definitively post-modern individual. I worked in close collaboration with a very talented young actor who had an intimate understanding of these concepts, who developed a rich and nuanced character that he was allowed to explore freely onscreen. I styled the film in response to the brokenness he revealed and in opposition to an overly aesthetic valuation of the character, and of the film itself. What we created together was *Choch*, a film that explores not *how* one comes to be this way, but what it is like to live this way.

Choch

Press

"Choch radiates an emotional honesty that makes it one of the most intriguing and involving low-budget indies to cross my desk in 2011."
The Independent Critic – Richard Propes (http://theindependentcritic.com/choch)

It must be weird to be Brendan Prost. At 21-years-old, the Calgary DIY filmmaker is a student at Vancouver's Simon Fraser University, a radio show host, an amateur podcaster and, of course, a filmmaker. Prost's first full-length feature, *Generation Why*, was praised by The Independent Critic as a "solid example of low-budget, guerilla filmmaking."

Choch is even better.

Our lead character in Prost's latest film doesn't go by a name, perhaps he hasn't earned the right. Instead, he is simply regarded as The Choch (Zach White). The characters around him? The Choch's father (Cody Cox), The Choch's friends (John Delahunt, Sean Sinclair and Jason Sahely) and The Choch's new friend (Stephanie Foran). Oh, and there's The Choch's old friend (Mike Thorn).

Just as he did with *Generation Why*, Prost has assembled a deeply felt and intimate world that is honest in its dishonesty and yet a world that seems, almost against all odds, as strangely fixable and, in quiet and unspoken ways, actually hopeful.

The Choch in *Choch* is an ultra cool kid who neither feels not exudes coolness, instead expressing his own self-hatred and inner loathing in his words, his actions and really in his very being. He looks normal. He acts normal. Is he normal? Is this normal?

Choch is heavy on the improv, an effective rarity among dramatic films but an approach that works wonders in giving the film an authentic, spontaneous feeling that makes even lead Zach White's body language feel deeply birthed and painfully realized. There's an old saying that "ignorance is bliss," which might explain why White's Choch is freaking lacking in anything remotely resembling bliss. The Choch is painfully aware of his inadequacies, they've been blown up in his mind to the point of serving as billboards of his own character flaws. He doesn't seem to care for the way he acts or the things he says, but he does it all anyway then cowers deep within himself. White, a non-professional actor with limited experience, gives a revelatory performance as The Choch, sometimes simultaneously being repulsive and compelling in the same shot. His scenes with his male friends are filled with macho bullshit bravado and hints of self-loathing that appears constantly on the edge of exploding either inwardly or outwardly.

It is The Choch's scenes with his new friend, played brilliantly by Stephanie Foran, that give *Choch* an emotional resonance and lasting impact that are simply unforgettable. Film after film has portrayed misunderstood youth, but Prost excels in drawing out the dynamics between The Choch and his new friend because he never forces either individual to completely sell out. There are no miracle cures, overnight changes or seismic shifts. There's simply the realization that, sometimes, when we least expect it someone impacts us and triggers something deep within that alters our psychosocial landscape.

Choch benefits from a tremendous accompanying soundtrack including music by The Age of Rockets, Faded Paper Figures and The Nix Dicksons, all giving the film a vibrant and compelling aura. Shot on hi-def video in black-and-white, *Choch* radiates an emotional honesty that makes it one of the most intriguing and involving low-budget indies to cross my desk in 2011.

Choch

Press

"If you have a chance to see Choch, do yourself the favor and check it out."
Film Threat – Scott Knopf (http://www.filmthreat.com/reviews/46982)

Choch opens on a group of loudmouthed "bros" asking each other questions like "How many times have you gotten your dick wet?" and hitting on a girl walking with her boyfriend. Shotgunning beers and popping collars just comes naturally to these guys. And while you're hoping and praying that none of these douchebags are the main characters, writer/director Brendan Prost has different plans for you.

The film follows Tyler (Zach White), a spiky-haired, sunglasses-donning dude as he struggles to find his place in the world. He seems stuck in this world of Ed Hardy shirts and thoughtless laughter and it's not long into the film before his character becomes relatable and sympathetic. As he meets a girl (Stephanie Foran) and bonds with his dad, Tyler does a lot of soul-searching while trying to figure out just how real this caricature he's become really is and if changing himself is an option. Can he just decide to become someone new or is he destined to stay the same unlikable kid forever?

The best scenes of the film occur between Tyler and a childhood friend who ended up in a different social clique (see: Hipster?). Unable to hang out with each other's groups, they set up hang-outs on the down low—meeting at restaurants or alone at each other's houses. They try to talk though each others (well, mostly Tyler's) problems and both actors give believable performances without falling into any clichés or overly dramatic territory. Not unlike *American History X* or *American Me*, *Choch* shows that the pressures can come in any type of social group, not just the ones on the fringe of society. It makes you wonder if any of the *Jersey Shore* kids dream of getting out of "the life."

The narrative leads up to a night out where Tyler is forced with making the decision he's been avoiding for the entire movie. When two worlds collide, he finds himself at the middle and Prost handles it perfectly. *Choch* is a slow-moving film (shot in black and white, to boot) with a lot of introspection and contemplation but all of this self-examination never comes off as boring, especially not during this terrific ending scene. If you have a chance to see *Choch*, do yourself the favor and check it out.

Choch

Screenshots

Zach White, Sean Sinclair, John Delahunt, and Jason Sahely walk to the gym in *Choch*.

Sean Sinclair, Jason Sahely, and Zach White mock passers-by in *Choch*.

Choch

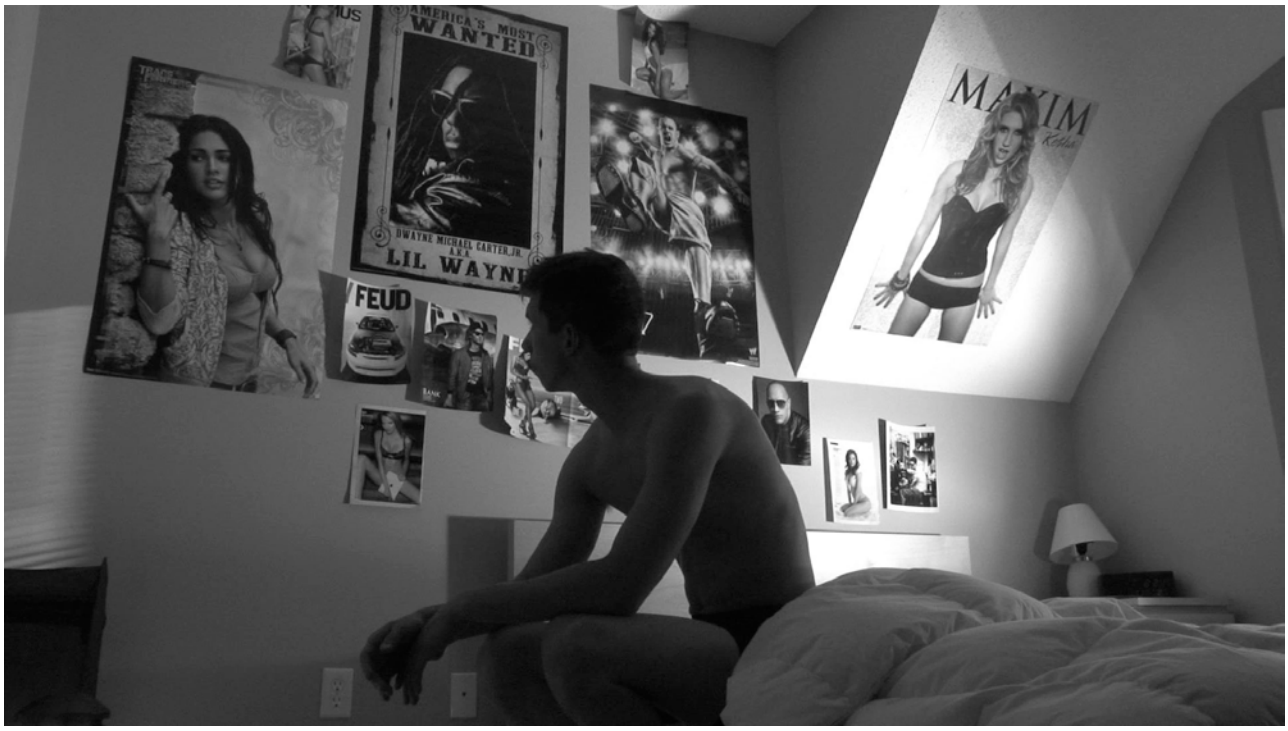
Screenshots

Zach White attempts to spend a day away from his established self.

Zach White contemplates the evening ahead of him in *Choch*.

Choch

Screenshots



Zach White awakes to a sample of the myriad of images that proliferate his life in *Choch*.

Stephanie Foran shares an uncertain gaze with an unmasked Zach White in *Choch.*

Choch

Production Stills

Brendan Prost directs Zach White on the set of *Choch*.

Jason Sahely, Sean Sinclair, John Delahunt, and Zach White share a laugh on the set of *Choch*.

Choch

Production Stills

Brendan Prost directs John Delahunt and Zach White on a location shoot for *Choch*.

Brendan Prost goes over the script with Zach White and Stephanie Foran.