

Podcast Talk: Director James Choi on the Chicago Premiere of 'Empty Space' on July 1, 2017

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 30, 2017 - 7:44pm

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CHICAGO – The combination of two different souls with two different problems – isolated in rural Illinois – was the story that director James Choi knew he wanted to produce as his next film project. So armed with a micro budget, a four man production crew and a cast of passionate actors, Choi created “Empty Space.” The film is making its Chicago premiere at the Windy City Film Festival on Saturday, July 1st, 2017.



A Scene from 'Empty Space,' directed by James Choi
Photo credit: Beachwood Productions

“Empty Space” is a film about discovering similarities, especially in individuals who perceive that their handicaps are keeping them from experiencing life. Tom (Merrick Robison) is an overweight man plagued with self-doubt, who escapes to his grandmother’s cabin in the vast rural plains of Illinois. The small town residents attached to where he is staying still bullies him about his weight, except for a rebellious teenage girl named Becca (Mayden Frances) and a precocious woman named Lily (Elizabeth Stenholt). Lily happens to be blind, and is unconcerned with Tom’s appearance. Their friendship blossoms to a love connection, one that Tom needs all of his confidence to trust. The

sensitive and touching story was written by Judith Krant and Paul Boring.



Director James Choi of ‘Empty Space’
Photo credit: Beachwood Productions

The Windy City Film Festival is an inaugural event, taking place at the Mercury Theater in Chicago (see details below) from June 30th through July 2nd, 2017, and will showcase 76 films over the pre-holiday weekend. The co-festival directors are filmmaker Josh Hope (“The Life and Death of a Unhappily Married Man”) and actress Mindy Kay Parks.

HollywoodChicago.com talked to director James Choi on the eve of his Chicago Premiere for “Empty Space” at the film fest. He’s held various positions in the filmmaking industry, including representation at Innovative Artists in Los Angeles. He was a producer on “Made in China,” written and directed by “Empty Space” screenwriter Judith Kant, which won the Grand Jury Prize for Best Feature at the 2009 South X Southwest Film Festival. “Empty Space” is Choi’s second feature film, and he is also currently an instructor at the DePaul University School of the Cinematic Arts. In the following podcast interview, he talks about his history in connection with the screenplay, his casting of Merrick Robison and his career as a filmmaker.

The Chicago Premiere of “Empty Space” will take place July 1st, 2017 (5:30pm), at the Mercury Theater, 3745 North Southport in Chicago, as part of the inaugural Windy City Film Festival. For more information about the festival, [click here](#). [24]



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