

Recognize Myself

Contributed by Noralil Ryan Fores
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While undoubtedly indulgent at times, Eva-Marie Elg's *Recognize Myself*, a study of the intersection of visuals and the written word told through the eyes of a depressive, shows early promise of an interesting new directorial voice.

Photo Credit Eva-Marie Elg's *Recognize Myself*

When working with any narratively stylistic conceit, its focus and the energy put into making it work without falling into a streak of indulgence holds pivotal. It's a point, unfortunately, missed in Eva-Marie Elg's *Recognize Myself*. In studying the intersection of visuals and the written word, the short spends too much time with the avant garde and too little with its compelling honesty. While this is off-putting, the film's moments of understated brilliance do shine through, and it's these which make Elg's directorial voice noteworthy in the new scene.

Waking up in a bit of memory's stupor, a depressed young man Justin (Mark West) admits that he does not recognize himself. Emotionally confused, he retells the story of his break-up with the beautiful Joanna (Jessica Randell) in flashback sequences. Throughout the film, he entirely takes the blame for their dissociation, saying at the end that by separating himself from her he's hoping to prevent any additional pain. It's a narcissistic self-denigration to be sure but perfectly reflective of both reality and the punk rock soundtrack that backgrounds the short so fittingly.

A journal keeper, Justin visually offers his story both in voice and writing. Calligraphy marks in subtitles the entire film and plays tricks on the viewer who is simultaneously hearing dialogue and reading along in English. It's clever only to the point of distraction and while quite beautiful serves only to sever the bonds with the emotionality of the scene. This is doubly a shame as the acting is guided well in Elg's hands. There's a confidence in Elg's directorial voice and a candor in her observation. It's as if she empathizes with her characters, almost delicately adores them. A montage dance sequence of Joanna in a wife beater and undies is both quintessentially romantic and familiar. Likewise, the final break-up scene is handled with emotionally nuanced charge, the actors both perfectly in the moment. Here too though, the calligraphy pulls attention away from the most intriguing element on screen--the evident anguish and passion expressed in the actor's eyes.

Were it not obscured by cinematic theatrics and poetics, *Recognize Myself* would showcase Elg's greatest talent--finding emotional truth and pointing her camera directly its way.

For more information on the film visit www.myspace.com/happyendingsproductions.