

Interview: Get Ready With Me director Jonatan Etzler

[Lydia Hallsworth](#) interviews Swedish director Jonatan Etzler about his satirical thriller short film, *Get Ready With Me*

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Image: London Flair

Get Ready With Me is a film that looks at how we construct an online presence by what we chose to upload about ourselves and how quickly something that appears harmless can turn sinister.

We interviewed director Jonatan Etzler on how he has addressed the dark side of our social media obsession.

Nouse: Where did the idea of flipping something seemingly vacuous and light-hearted into something so menacing come from?

JE: I do like the contrast between the light-hearted and the sinister. It was what attracted me to the original situation. The start of the film happened for real. I was working as a film teacher and some of the children had made a very disturbing film about suicide that they showed to the entire class in the classroom. There was the contrast of the light-hearted storytelling from the children and the content of the video. I didn't know how to handle the situation, and that's where we got the idea for *Get Ready With Me*.

Nouse: Did you find it challenging to reach a balance between the dark thriller and comedy elements of satire when making this film?

JE: Yes, especially in the editing we had to work a lot with this balance. But finding this balance is also what I love doing, when I create my films. When we see a film that portrays something that we find uncomfortable, we tend to seek the lightness, the humour, and that's why balancing the darkness with the comedy works so well.

Nouse: How closely did you work with the writers Amanda Högberg and Axel Nygren on the film? Did you have a similar vision for how it would turn out?

JE: We worked very closely in developing the story and we had both a similar vision, but it could also sometimes feel like totally different vision, so we had to find a way, a language for what we wanted to create. And this was a tough process and it took us more than half a year to work out the script together, but in the end everyone was very happy with the process and the result.

Nouse: YouTube seems to be full of scandals, with only recently YouTuber Logan Paul uploading a video in which he finds a dead body. Do you think this morbid curiosity with social media is just a fad or we will reach a point where all ethical concerns are completely disregarded?

JE: The Logan Paul video came out a month before we started shooting the film, and it had a strong impact on me and the film. It was kind of unsettling that the video stayed online for 24 hours before it got deleted. I don't know what will happen in the future, but the online world is growing, and companies like Facebook or Google are becoming their own nations, governed by the possibility of total surveillance, but also by total anarchy. It's all very new and it's all happened the last few years so our society still doesn't understand it or how to deal with it. I think this is an important thing for the artists to portray and examine.

Nouse: Do you think *Get Ready With Me* will make people think differently about how they view the online personas of others?

JE: I hope so, but I think it will be perceived very differently by different people from different generations or backgrounds.

Nouse: In both *Get Ready With Me* and your film *Intercourse*, the characters face socially stigmatized scenarios. What is it that draws you to stories that focus on this awkwardness between people.

JE: I'm very moved by watching people in awkward situations. Those sorts of situations make us aware of ourselves, the limits of our abilities and feelings. Awkward situations also make us aware of the absurdity of our society, our rules and constructions – like the transactions in romantic relationships, or the possible power of moving images in the classroom.

Nouse: I believe you've previously worked in roles relating to camera and cinematography, what is it that has drawn you to directing films?

JE: Well, I decided I wanted to be a film director when I was a little kid, watching a film at home and learning about film trickery. I've been working with different professions though, primarily as a sound technician on TV, and I've been directing ten or more short films before this one.

Nouse: Short films are often disregarded as merely a rung on the ladder towards features. Do you have any ideas on how they could receive more public attention and credit as a medium in their own right?

JE: They have received more attention now, thanks to YouTube and Vimeo, where everyone's interested in short videos, maybe not short films per se, but this is a place where I think the short film has its greatest potential today.

Nouse: Have you got any plans for your next project that you could share with us?

JE: I'm working on a short film called *Swimmer*, which will be more humorous and shorter, like 10 minutes. Apart from that I'm slowly starting up two features and a TV series, projects that might become reality or not. The fact that we won first prize at the Student Academy Awards for *Get Ready With Me* has created lots of opportunities in the last month, and I'm very happy about that.



Image: London Flair

Get Ready With Me has been awarded the Student Academy Gold Award and has qualified for consideration for a 2019 Oscar.

For more information on Jonatan Etzler's films go to: <https://www.etzler.se/>



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