

# THE HYPNOSIS / HYPNOSEN

A FILM BY ERNST DE GEER



Languages: Swedish / Norwegian / English

Running Time: 98 minutes

## Press contacts

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## PREMIER

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## **LOGLINE**

What if you started to act without a social filter?

## **SYNOPSIS**

André and Vera are a young entrepreneurial couple. They get the opportunity to pitch their female health app at a prestigious competition. Before going there, Vera tries hypnotherapy to quit smoking. From this point, her attitude changes and André starts to behave unexpectedly.

## **DIRECTOR'S NOTE**

I wanted to depict a couple that really want to fit in with others, and what happens when one of them stops wanting that. The film originates from my own feelings of discomfort and near second-hand embarrassment in social situations. I wanted to explore how that might affect a romantic relationship. At the same time, I wanted to pose questions about what it really means to be "oneself," and play with the idea of how much of a pain in the ass someone who "is more oneself" could be. Slavoj Žižek has a quote as follows: "All too often, when we love somebody, we don't accept him or her as what the person effectively is. We accept him or her insofar as this person fits the co-ordinates of our fantasy." I think that fits *The Hypnosis* rather well.

*Ernst De Geer*

## **Q & A with ERNST DE GEER**

### **Can you tell us about the genesis of this film and how you came to this particular idea?**

The hypnosis part actually initially came from seeing a Donald Duck cartoon where he hypnotizes Pluto. The other initial spark came from just a thought about how someone would react if a person close to them suddenly started acting with less of a social filter, with the idea that this could bring forward some of the reacting person's worst sides.

### **What was it like writing this film with Mads Stegger?**

Me and Mads went to film school together and I've worked with him on every project since. We're just very in sync and our tastes align, I guess. We live in different countries, so we usually do a lot of discussing and writing apart, and then meet up to do the heavy lifting. We were walking around with this idea for a while before actually writing the whole script, just trying to come up with situations and ideas for how the story would evolve. When we finally decided to write it, we took a couple of weeks in a cottage and wrote the first version. Then there was a lot of rewriting over the next couple of years, of course.

### **The majority of the film takes place during a pitching competition. Was this always in your original idea for the film? And what was it about this pitching environment that made you want it to form such a large part of the film?**

There was always this thought that they would be at a conference, but the initial idea didn't have that pitching competition element, I don't think. But it was there pretty early, long before we started writing. We liked having this competitive element in the film, that would help up the stakes for André and Vera. And we liked the idea of this place where everyone's competing to do good in the world.

### **Can you describe some of the themes *The Hypnosis* explores?**

I'm not sure if that's for me to say, but if I'd have to, I'd say there's a question of identity at the centre of it, both for André and Vera separately but also as a couple. Is she not acting like herself, or was André just not seeing her for who she is? There's a theme of artifice and truth I guess, both when it comes to how they act and when it comes to things like their pitch and telling a story just to sell something. And there's a theme of shame and second hand embarrassment, and with that this whole thing about gender roles, what it means to be part of a group and who gets to stand out from a group.

### **For the characters of Vera and Andre, can you tell us about casting those characters and what you feel the actors bring to their roles?**

We cast them very early, before we wrote the script. Having Herbert and Asta was central to even making the film, I think. I had worked with Herbert before and then we found Asta after some early casting. Asta's role is very challenging, because she's supposed to be this angsty inhibited person, that then gets some kind of sudden release. I think she really nailed that balance. Herbert was perfect for this guy that is not very sympathetic, but that you still want to audience to follow. I think he's great because you can both laugh at him and totally empathize with him. They're both just great actors.

### **What was it like filming in the hotel and how did you go about scouting the locations? And what were the challenges of filming there?**

It was pretty difficult to find a good location that we could afford. That was probably one of our biggest challenges. In the end we were very happy with the hotel we found, but we also had to do a lot of changes to the script because of it, since it's a bit different to what we initially imagined. Some of us lived in the same hotel that we shot in, which was pretty great, as that meant we could be at location whenever we wanted to.

**This is your first feature. What challenges did you have making the film?**

I think the biggest challenge was that the low budget meant we didn't have that much shooting time. We kind of tried to find a style of shooting that would work with that. I like doing some improvisation, for example, but that's difficult to do when you have pretty limited time, so we had to be pretty well planned out. Sometimes that would mean having to cut some shots that we wanted, to instead have time to go further with the ones we did, which is always a difficult choice. I think that sometimes limited us in the edit, not having all that coverage, but in the end it worked out since I think it kind of fit the style of the film.

**Can you tell us a bit about your creative team and what they bring to the film?**

- **Director of Photography**

Me and Jonathan went to film school together, but had only worked on a single short film before this. I knew I wanted to work with him on this film very early. I just felt there was something in his sensibility that fit this project. We both agree that ugly images can be just as good cinematography as pretty images, and that was very important for me.

- **Production Designer**

Linda had to do a lot with very little resources, which I think she did masterfully. She had worked on lower budget features before, which was very reassuring for me, who was doing my debut feature, and she knew that it meant being very hands on and working with what you have. We knew early that finding the right locations was key, since we could then focus our resources on the important changes that we needed to do.

- **Costume Designer**

Fianna is the kind of person who likes walking around observing people and finding details in the real world, and being at an actual conference hotel meant there was inspiration all around us. We had a close collaboration in trying to create this couple, working a lot with the world around them and how they fit in to that, which is a big theme for the film. She also did wonders for the Julian character, working with David Fukamachi Regnfors, the actor, and letting him be the only character that actively tries to stand out with his clothing. She also had to do a lot with very little, and really managed that, even finding one of the most important pieces, a jacket for the Julian character, in her own wardrobe.

- **Makeup Designer**

Jennie is a lot more experienced than me, having worked on countless features. She used to work in the art department, which is great, since she still has this curiosity even though she's so experienced. A big challenge was how to tackle Vera's character and her change. We knew we wanted to do

something pretty subtle, working with what she would naturally have in packing, and Jennie had a great collaboration with Asta when creating these looks.

**What do you hope that audiences take from this story?**

The dream would be that the film stays with them in some way, and that they can find multiple layers in it. Those are my favorite films. I hope it makes them think about their own relationships in some way.

## BIOGRAPHIES

ERNST DE GEER / Director, Co-Writer

- 1<sup>st</sup> feature film

Ernst De Geer is a filmmaker born in 1989 in Stockholm. He studied directing at the Norwegian Film School. His graduation film THE CULTURE (2018) won prizes at several festivals around the world, including Palm Springs and Premiers Plans. It was also nominated for the Norwegian National Film Award, Amanda. THE HYPNOSIS is his debut feature film.

### DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY:

- WIMBLEDON (Short, 2019)
- THE CULTURE (25 min, 2018)
- Nominated for Amanda for Best Norwegian Short Film 2019
- Winner Vimeo Staff Pick Award, Palm Springs Shortfest 2019
- Winner Best European student film, Premiers Plans, Angers 2019
- Winner Best Director, Poitiers Film Festival 2019
- Winner Best Norwegian Short Film, Bergen International Film Festival 2018
- Winner FIPRESCI prize, Greek Short Film Festival in Drama 2018
- Winner Best Short Film, Boston Film Festival 2018
- Honorable mention 1km film, Stockholm Film Festival 2018
- Nominated for Next Nordic Generation, Norwegian Film Festival in Haugesund 2018
- SUKSESS (Short, 2018)
- AXIS AND ALLIES (Short, 2010)

### SERIES:

- NACH (8x20min)

## ABOUT TOTEM FILMS

TOTEM is an international sales & production company based in Paris and launched in 2019. TOTEM ATELIER develops and produces projects with a strong international potential. TOTEM FILMS acquires feature films to export them all over the world.

TOTEM ATELIER filmography includes THE HYPNOSIS by Ernst de Geer (Karlovy Vary 2023), DEAD GIRLS DANCING by Anna Roller (Tribeca 2023), MARCEL ! by Jasmine Trinca (Cannes Special Screenings 2022).

TOTEM FILMS selected filmography includes, among many others, BLACKBIRD BLACKBIRD BLACKBERRY by Elene Naveriani (Directors' Fortnight 2023), A SONG SUNG BLUE by Zihan Geng (Directors' Fortnight 2023), ANIMALIA by Sofia Alaoui (Sundance 2023 - Special Jury Award), SLOW by Marija Kavtaradze (Sundance 2023 - Best Director Award), THE SUPER EIGHT YEARS by Annie Ernaux & David Ernaux-Briot (Directors' Fortnight 2022), COMPARTMENT N°6 by Juho Kuosmanen (Cannes Competition 2021– Grand Prix), MONEYBOYS by C.B. Yi (Cannes Un Certain Regard 2021),

BALLAD OF A WHITE COW by Behtash Sanaeeha & Maryam Moghaddam (Berlinale Competition 2021), WE by Alice Diop (Berlinale Encounters 2021– Best Film) & AND THEN WE DANCED by Levan Akin (Directors' Fortnight 2019).

## **CREDITS**

### **Production Companies (Countries):**

Garagefilm International AB (SE), Film I Väst AB (SE), Mer Film AS (NO), Totem Atelier (FR)

### **Institutions Supporting the Film:**

Swedish Film Institute, Norwegian Film Institute, Nordisk Film & TV Fond, Film i Väst, SVT, NRK, YLE

### **Distribution in Scandinavia**

Scandinavian Film Distribution

### **Directed by**

Ernst de Geer

### **Screenplay by**

Mads Stegger & Ernst De Geer

### **Director of Photography**

Jonathan Bjerstedt

### **Costume Designer**

Fianna Robijn

### **Production Designer**

Linda Elmborg

### **Make Up Designer**

Jennie Schubert

### **Producer**

Mimmi Spång

### **Co Producers**

Elise Fernanda Pirir, Laure Parleani, Bérénice Vincent, Kristina Börjeson

### **Associate Producers**

Alicia Hansen, Signe Höeg

### **Editor**

Robert Krantz

### **Sound Editing**

Håkon Lammetun, Matias Frøystad

## **Music**

Peder Kjellsby

## **Cast**

Vera / Asta Kamma August

André / Herbert Nordrum

Lotta / Andrea Edwards

Julian / David Fukamachi Regnfors

Karin / Moa Niklasson

Davor / Simon Rajala

Jessica / Aviva Wrede

Eva / Alexandra Zetterberg Ehn

Claudia / Kristina Braden Whitaker

Hypnotherapist / Karin de Frumerie

Bruno / Julien Combes