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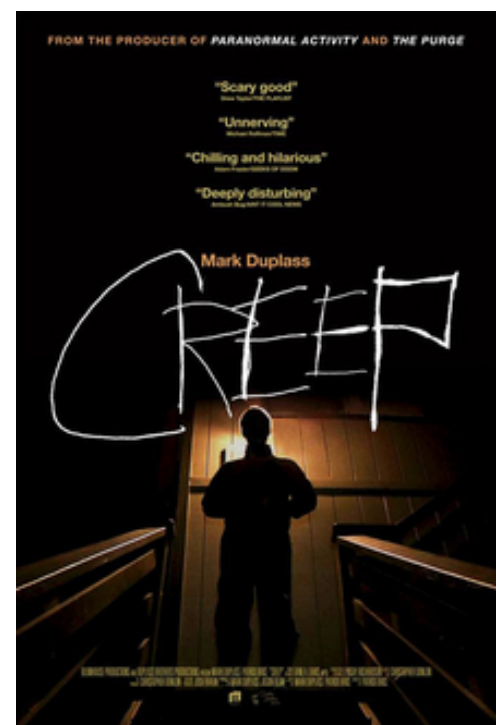
## **Upsweep Release**

Why do people make films? Do they make them simply because they enjoy making them or do they make them for other people to see? How do you share that film? Twenty years ago, the avenues used to make a film were very limited. You needed to buy or rent an expensive camera, sound equipment, actors, and have an amazing script that you could get funding to produce. In today's film world, you can get a cheap camera or even use your mobile phone to make your vision come to life without financially jeopardising yourself. Once you've made your film, you now want others to see it. The real challenge can come from reaching a specific audience. You don't know any contacts at a production company and, while your Mother really likes your film, you don't know who it was really made for. That's where the research comes in. Knowing your audience to satisfy and meet specific standards set by a genre is an imperative. In this case, I have made three films all relating to the paranormal. There is a huge market for horror films and over the years it has been shown that horror films don't have to be very good in order to be a box office success. With a modest budget, it should be a perfect genre for film students.

In the past years, the ways you could get your film noticed have grown massively. There are specific video platforms to share your short films on like Vimeo or YouTube, and then even more ways to advertise them to the world through building your social media profile. Regardless of negative connotations associated with social media, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, are amazing ways to spread your message. Once the hard part of making the

film is done, it comes time to release it which can be done in a variety of ways. I have my own personal Instagram, Facebook, Twitter accounts along with a production company in which I share my projects called Purple Nebula Productions. Having your own social media page on each platform is great if you can get people interested in seeing your work. If you make a film and someone that follows you on social media is interested in it, there's a good chance you have gained someone who is also interested in seeing your next project. You can share stills from your films to get people interested before the release or show them behind-the-scenes photographs to personalise yourself with the audience, before sharing the final cut of the film.

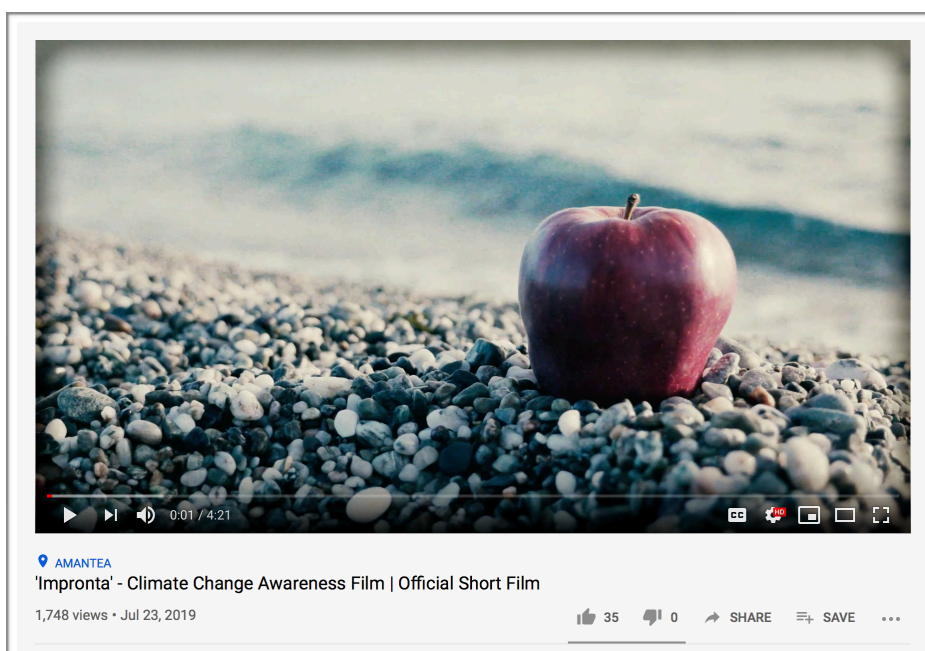
I wrote, directed and acted in a found footage film called *Upsweep*, and it is by far the best film out of the three that I was involved in. I will be using *Upsweep* as an example for marketing a film before and after release. Prior to the film being made, I was researching found footage films relentlessly. By looking at what worked and what didn't work, budgets and what they had to work with, I concluded that with a solid foundation, the writing could begin. I wanted to create a story that had a satisfying payoff, so it wasn't a waste of time to watch but still left the audience with questions at the end like any good found footage film usually does. There is a great found footage film directed by Patrick Kack-Brice titled *Creep* (2014). It wasn't the plot of the film that grasped the viewer's attention, but instead the tension felt throughout the film. In an interview, Brice describes "...wanting to keep true to the small-scale style of the *Creep* series" (Brice, 2019). Found



footage films are all about tension building rather than elaborate and expensive shots, and if done wrong and without payoff, you get a terrible looking film that doesn't satisfy the audience. Although this can be restricting, it also gives you the ability create a satisfying story without having to think about tricky camera movement.

I would market *Upsweep* to a horror specific audience and try and get the video shown on horror YouTube channels such as Omeleto Horror, Scremfest and even other not specific to horror channels, but that still host a wide range of different genres in film. With monthly active users reaching more than 1.9 billion (Mohsin 2019), YouTube has proven to be an excellent platform for beginner film makers. Channels dedicated to horror short films can wrack up views anywhere from 10,000 to 2,000,000 views depending on what actors are involved and quality of the film showcased. If the film were to get onto one of these channels, it would already be in a place where people are searching for this kind of content. This would be the ideal situation, but there is every chance that *Upsweep* wouldn't get accepted to one of these channels so then there would be Plan B. This would be to upload the video to my own YouTube channel and gather an audience myself in which I already have had to do from my days of making YouTube videos and more recently with my short film *Impronta*. I have never dealt with

gathering a horror specific audience before, but I would start by, while editing, uploading relevant screenshots to my social media accounts to start generating some



anticipation for the film. Then would come the release on YouTube through my Purple Nebula Productions channel, where my previous film *Impronta* is uploaded that received 1,750 views on YouTube and over 3,000 views on Facebook just from simply sharing it with friends and family on social media and from there, by word of mouth. By entering *Impronta* into film festivals and other showcases like art journals I was able to aid in the increase of attention towards the film. According to Rachel Fiddes, festival manager at *Glasgow Film Festival, UK*, the purpose of film festivals in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to “cultivate an interest in cinema and give audiences access to films that they might not otherwise have the opportunity to see.” (Screen, 2016). Sharing the link to *Upsweep* once uploaded to social media with more stills



from the film gives people a visual synopsis of what the film's tone will be. If the film then receives a positive reaction, I would then enter it into horror film festivals, starting locally at first, and then expanding internationally, to see if I can gain some more interest in the film. There are hundreds of horror film festivals I have found which *Upsweep* would fit into. Some include;

Frightfest, Screamfest, Toronto After Dark Film Festival, etc. Starting a month before release, I would slowly post content via social media, related to the film and then post relevant information like what film festivals the film would be selected for following the films release.

I would like to think I have a decent understanding about trying to find an audience for my content and looking to gain specific audiences for certain films that I make. Horror, being a new genre for me, has been a learning experience about adhering to genre specific forms that are required to please the audience. I love making films, but if I can't get people to view them, then I wouldn't be able to make a career out of what I do. Dealing with social media and releasing content in a thoughtful and well-constructed way to a specific audience is essential in modern filmmaking. Thinking about audiences and who I'm trying to reach with my films prior to even starting to write the script has been a valuable lesson moving forward in my future projects.

## References

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