


FEATURES, FILM FESTIVALS

NEW FILMMAKERS LA: CONVERSATIONS WITH RACHEL WORTELL


JUNE 11, 2020








GARRETT BROWN

He/Him or They/Them
Garrett loves film, theatre, and believes a...









Several hundred miles away via Zoom call, **Rachel Wortell** smiled and laughed: “I’m always worried I’m codependent with people.” Although **Wortell** was talking about her personal life experience, such a statement rings true in a post-pandemic world. While I have been able to connect with friends and colleagues via the internet during these strange times, I share the sentiment, worrying about keeping friendships going with people I haven’t seen in person in a while. Our interactions now seem larger, and carry much more weight than normal.



Romance Analyst (2019) – Source: NewFilmMakers

On Saturday, June 6th, I had the pleasure of attending a Q&A panel over Zoom with *Romance Analyst* (2019) director **Rachel Wortell** and star **Lily Meyer**. The panel was moderated by **Emily V. Gordon**, Academy Award Nominated Co-Writer of *The Big Sick*. **Wortell** was promoting her comedic film *Romance Analyst* at the New Filmmakers LA festival (June 5-7 2020) which, due to the ongoing global health crisis, moved online. Instead of crowded theatres, we all watched the films from the comfort of our own couches.

Romance Analyst follows the story of a young woman (**Lily Meyer**) in New York City, who is in a platonic love triangle with her best friend (**Peter Vack**) and her therapist (**Lily Meyer** in a dual role). For **Rachel Wortell**, it was a chance for her to explore relationships where “someone knows everything about you, but you don’t everything about them.” From there, things get trickier, and the platonic crushes become a recipe for lust and intrigue.

Throughout the Q&A, there were many opportunities for **Wortell** to go into detail about the creation of the film. One of the most interesting aspects included how **Meyer** had to play the main character and her therapist. According to **Wortell**, the crew would have the actor play each person individually, doing their lines across from a body double. **Meyer** would then switch roles, and do the other lines. The two shots would then be composited together, creating scenes that were very seamless (indeed, I didn’t realize **Lily Meyer** played both characters until the Q&A).

While I do hope to return to the movie theatre one day, I think that online is the future for many film festivals, especially smaller ones. The infrastructure required to put on a festival is often more than many organizations can sustainably afford, and filmmakers have to spend a lot of money to travel and showcase films. However, moving online allows people to watch at their leisure, and allows for creatives to connect and network. Without the convenience of being online, I likely would not have had the chance to interview **Rachel Wortell**, and to view her film, which would have been a real shame.

Thank you to New Filmmakers LA and Seed & Spark for these opportunities and I’m excited to see how creatives can build on this for the future. Although we may not be in a single theatre, I believe that film will thrive and flourish in the coming years.

Find more information about Seed&Spark’s online screening events [here](#).

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He/Him or They/Them Garrett loves film, theatre, and believes a public library is the soul of a community.Garrett graduated from Pacific University with a B.A. in Anthropology, with minors in Theatre, and Gender and Sexuality Studies. They perform and create art in Portland, Oregon.