

Covid-19 as an equalizer for filmmakers - Dr. Fiona Jackson



Screenshot: [Lockdown Band – Fiona Jackson and Chris Sam Lam](#)

Worldwide lockdowns brought film productions to a grinding halt. For many, this meant time to focus on their own creative projects, and without the resources they could normally access, filmmakers were creative in the construction of new works. Lockdown opened new possibilities for collaboration and experimentation and with studios closed, Covid 19 became an equalizer of resources. Filmmakers utilized technology on hand, relationships were nurtured through digital connections, momentum became internally rather than financially motivated, and many creative people who were usually time poor found themselves with an abundance of the resource of [time](#).

This taps into Silviya Svejenova's four stages which describe filmmakers' career pathways to professionalism: *exploration*, learning the craft at an amateur level, *focus* as a filmmaker begins to express their identity through their work, *independence* as they gain control over the creative and business aspects of their work, and *professionalism* as an established filmmaker in their country¹. In my [PhD thesis](#), I discussed how filmmakers accrue macro-resources in order to move through Svejenova's levels, such as skills, passion, trust, relationships, reputation, momentum, resources, technology and output. Lockdown disrupted filmmakers' access to many of their meta-resources so as production halted, some professionals became more open to collaboration with amateurs.

In New Zealand, children's performer and composer, [Chris Lam Sam](#), put out a call for filmmakers of any age or ability to make 30 second 'Bubble Movies' for him to score. I relished the opportunity to collaborate with an established creative, so made a fun [Zoom inspired video](#) that Chris created the soundtrack for. For the internationally collaborative film project, [Transmission: The Distance Between \(Us\) Matters](#), Jeremy Mayall organized writers, voice artists, filmmakers and composers to work remotely in teams of four to create a short visual piece of around two minutes, addressing their experiences of lockdown, resulting in [31 short films](#).

¹ Svejenova, Silviya 'The Path with the Heart': Creating the Authentic Career. Journal of Management Studies, Vol. 42, No. 5, pp. 947-974, July 2005



Screenshot: [Undiluted Trust](#).

Written: James Mathias, Voice: Nadine Kemp, Images: Joe Hitchcock, Music: Ben Jackson

Invitations to participate in virtual creative projects appeared worldwide, connecting creatives from all disciplines. Ridley Scott and Kevin Macdonald again invited people worldwide to send footage documenting their lives on July 25, which will be edited into a feature length film, [Life in a Day](#). Kathrin Steinbacher and Emily Downe united animators who contributed over 90 uplifting clips based on their time under lockdown for their animation project [Flatten the curve](#). Graphic designer Raissa Pardini involved 37 designers, illustrators and lettering artists from around the world to [create a new font called Group](#) and raise money for World Health Organisation. [Vogue Italia](#) exchanged cover models for drawings made by children. To name just a few.



Photo credit: [Vogue Italia](#)

Covid has interrupted creative projects around the globe, but is it possible lockdown may help level the playing field, allowing innovative emerging filmmakers to develop work and progress their careers as never before?