

18.5.2020

Inspired in self-isolation: Mikki Kunttu

With Covid-19 lockdowns worldwide and health authorities urging people to self-isolate and practice social distancing on a massive scale as part of an enormous effort to #FlattenTheCurve of this global pandemic ... we are reaching out to industry friends, colleagues, associates, partners, etc., and asking them to share their #StayAtHome and #QuarantineAndChill activities with us during this extraordinary time.

Mikki is a talented and highly respected lighting and visuals designer whose work spans all areas of the performing arts, live music, and television production. He's just returned to his native Finland after a two-year stint working with Cirque du Soleil in Montreal and as a freelance designer and creative in Canada and the USA. The move back to Europe was accelerated by the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, and he and his family now have quarantined twice – once in Canada and once in Finland.

Robe: Where are you right now?

Mikki: Helsinki, Finland ... where I am sorting out buying a house and resettling.

Robe: How are you spending time whilst isolating / on lockdown?

Mikki: Sorting out life for myself and my two boys (Mikki is a single parent), which is quite full-on, and apart from that, trying to get involved in as many online educational forums as possible. I am also talking to many contacts about starting / developing online educational programmes and learnerships.

I am a freelancer, and likely to have some time on my hands before the industry restarts. I'd really like to share my knowledge and experience in a meaningful way and hopefully this can help support me financially.

Robe: What's the most creative thing you're able to do whilst in isolation?

Mikki: I am still working on the production design for the Finnish National Opera for the second part of Wagner's "Ring Cycle", although right now there are no firm dates!

I usually do a lot of running, so as I have more time during lockdown, I am running regularly – around 120 kilometres a week in fact and around 20-25 a day if possible.

My general daily routine is a slow breakfast - sauna - cooking - computer time as I am working on some 2021 projects that are semi-active – then a run!

Robe: Are you looking after anyone else during the Covid-19 crisis? Like neighbours or others in the family?

Mikki: My two boys, and they are now joined by their younger sister – so yes, the three children.

Robe: Has anyone particularly inspired you since this crisis started?

Mikki: Not one person in particular, but what has inspired me are things like the amount of new creative collaborations around the world that are emerging from the circumstances.

Personally, I think that online meetings will – and should – become a lot more prevalent when this is over! In so many cases they are an efficient use of everyone's time, budgets, and the planet's resources in averting the need for people to fly between continents ... for 10 or 15 minutes of input to a meeting!

Showing 3D models and animations via the online platforms means I can demonstrate my visualisations a lot better ... than sitting in a conference room!

Robe: What has been your favourite book / movie / Netflix or TV series / viral video / Games / music?

Mikki: I have really gone into audiobooks whilst running since a few years now – which are fantastic – Audiobooks are much like albums ... you can always go back to them and to your favourite chapters!

I have watched the whole Narcos Mexico series (crime drama web TV series exploring the origins of the modern drug war by going back to its roots) and Tiger King and also Unorthodox (a recently released German-American drama mini-series on Netflix).

Robe: What's the first thing you'd like to do when we are through this crisis?

Mikki: I don't think there's going to be a 'that's it' moment ... it will be a gradual return to whatever will be a 'new normal' ...

Robe: Own question / answer / message of solidarity or something you'd like to say?

Mikki: I think it puts into perspective the importance of people – loved ones, friends, colleagues and so on. But also, the central role of business and commerce, so this situation can potentially bring us a different quality of life and alternative opportunities to make better choices in the future.

But what I feel really makes a difference is having a good heart! And that is really underlined under these circumstances.

I feel this crisis is also unifying the worlds of arts and events, and we are becoming more aware of each other and hopefully of our potential as individuals and human beings.

