

Rayleigh Film Maker Says 'Bonjour' to Cannes World Film Festival

A film about the COVID-19 pandemic, which was produced, directed and edited, by a South Essex College student, has been recognised at the Cannes World Film Festival.

During the first Lockdown, from her base in Rayleigh, Alex Gulland created the documentary short film, entitled - 'LOCK 4 TIMES'. The 25-minute film received Nominee status in the 'Best Health Film' category February 2021, as well as Semi-Finalist in the 'Best Short Film' category.

Cannes World Film Festival is an IMDb Qualifying monthly and annual competition of all genres for international Filmmakers from all over the world.

The success follows a number of accolades where the film was recognised by film festivals around the world:

- It was selected to be part of the Phoenix International Short Film Festival and The Cyrus International Festival both in Toronto.
- It was also a semi-finalist in the Luleå International Film Festival in Sweden and most recently, the film made it through to the finals at the 'Beyond The Curve' Festival in Paris.
- In addition it received an *Honorable Mention at The Hollywood International Golden Age Festival in New York.
- The film was selected as a finalist at 'The Niagara Falls Festival' and received another *Honourable Mention from The London Indie Festival.
- During 2021, the film was selected to be part of the Paris International Film Festival.

The catalyst for the film was due to the start of the lockdown, when her work like many others, had slowed down significantly. Around her, she saw the harsh impact the lockdown was having on both friends and business contacts. Consequently, she wanted to put her talents to good use, and 'LOCK 4 TIMES' was born.

Initially the project was meant to be a 10-minute documentary film, but as the importance of the powerful stories unfolded, it ended up being 25 minutes.

The film examines the real stories, of four disparate people behind the headlines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Alex has a successful career in advertising and marketing and also a passion for helping clients with mental health issues.

She currently runs two companies – Contented Brands, a promotional film company where she makes films for companies/agencies and the other, Contented People, involves working with horses to help people with mental health issues.

Last year she returned to education to study [Level 2 Counselling Skills](#), at the college's Southend Campus to further her knowledge within the mental health area.

Alex said she was overwhelmed at the Film Festival response to the film.

She said: "I expected the film to be selected for some festivals, but it has far exceeded my expectations. It's great that it is far-reaching and has proved to be extremely powerful in the fact that it tells the stories of our interviewees' experiences."

Alex hopes the film will raise awareness of mental health and in particular, the charity Phoenix Heroes.

The charity, which provides PTSD Veteran Support, is very close to Alex and her campaigning company. You can find out more at www.phoenixheroes.co.uk and you can also donate at <https://donorbox.org/phoenix-heroes-ptsd-veteran-support>



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Alex added: "One thing that lockdown has taught us is that our surrounding community is vital for our survival, both physically and emotionally. I hope the film will emphasise to viewers and give them comfort, that they are not alone in their fears and that we really are all in this together and therefore should look to assist whenever possible, our fellow man/woman."

For more information about courses at the college, visit www.southessex.ac.uk

For more information about the Cannes World Film Festival, visit www.cannesworldfilmfestival.com

*An "Honourable Mention" is an extra distinction of the official competition. That is to say; the Jury does not intervene; it is granted exclusively by the Festival directors. Here, the film that has distinguished itself from the others will be awarded, in its general aspect, concept, aesthetics, and/or particularly brilliant performance, in its direction, photography, acting, editing, and/or soundtrack.

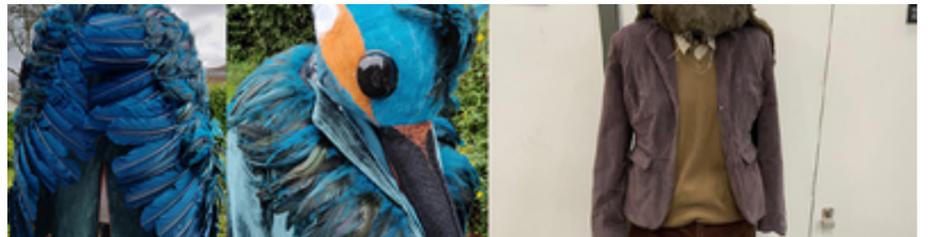
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