

#BehindtheMask with... Simon Kotze, junior animator at Made by Radio

 By Jessica Tennant

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This week, as part of our #YouthMonth feature, we go behind the mask with Simon Kotze, junior animator at [Made by Radio](#).



"Glasses and masks don't work."

Kotze recently won a Gold in the Animation and Visual Effects category for the Stellenbosch Academy of Design and Photography at the global Young Ones Student Awards.

1. So tell us, what's really behind your mask (literally and/or figuratively speaking).

Mainly a moustache and a smile. I really hope that the people I meet can tell this about me, even though I am wearing a mask. I also try to keep my hope strong in this time and I feel truly blessed to be in a line of work that is not directly influenced by the current pandemic when so many people I know are having a really difficult time keeping their heads above the water.

“





[View this post on Instagram](#)



And so it begins... #charcoal #art #portrait

A post shared by [simon kotze](#) (@simonkotze45) on Oct 28, 2016 at 9:41am PDT



2. Where are you locked down?

I am staying with my parents. I also appreciate the time that we can spend together as a family, cooking and eating together really makes this time something to appreciate.

3. How are you finding working from home or physical distancing at the office?

I find my workflow to actually be better when working from home. I do miss my colleagues a lot, and the studio time that we spend together reflects the work, but there are a lot of benefits from working from home. I enjoy skipping the traffic and the kind of isolation at home really helps me to focus on my work.

4. Describe a typical workday, if such a thing exists.

I do some personal drawing work from 7am to 8am, then I try to do some exercise and have breakfast up until nine when work starts. I like to start strong and try to get as much done until lunch and then focus the rest of the day refining or reviewing my work. Work usually ends at six, but working from home makes it easier to push it a little further since there is no traffic and commute time before I get home and rest.

5. How do you maintain a good rapport with your teammates/clients?

Currently, we use media platforms like Dropbox, Slack and Zoom to communicate and share working files. We also have meetings in the mornings via Zoom to discuss the day's work and just have a general catch up/check-in.

6. How do you socialise these days?

I stay with both my parents, my two brothers and my soon-to-be sister-in-law, so there are a lot of people to talk to. Besides them, I go running with my girlfriend and Zoom chat with friends from time to time.

7. What do you do to keep fit, healthy and sane (physically/mentally)?

I like to run in the mornings. It is great to get out of the house and winter mornings are really beautiful to me. I also have some other hobbies like music and things that keep me busy when I'm not drawing.

8. What new apps would we find if we scrolled through your phone?

I actually try to avoid my phone as much as possible. It becomes too distracting for me when I start using it too much. I probably have the least amount of apps on my phone than most people I know.

9. Share your favourite Covid-19/lockdown-related meme with us.

There are so many!





10. What is the first thing you plan to do when the lockdown lifts?

Take my girlfriend to the beach for a picnic!

11. Describe your career and if/how the pandemic/lockdown has affected its course.

Thankfully the lockdown did not affect my career that much, other than the experience of working from home. But I am

really thankful about how the company has handled the situation.

12. Any companies/brands that you feel have responded particularly well to the crisis and/or Covid-19-related campaigns that stand out to you, and why?

There are many brands that have adapted so well in the past months to all kinds of challenges, especially those surrounding retail and delivery. I get very annoyed when brands use the current situation as a marketing opportunity, rather than a business opportunity to fill the actual need that the people have. It is really sad that many good companies are left helpless as the regulations force them to shut down their businesses.

13. What are you working on right now?

I can tell you, but then I will have to kill you.

14. What does the 'new normal' look like to you?

A lot of family time, yelling at the dog to stop barking (especially during work hours) and seeing my friends on a screen.

15. What are some of the buzzwords floating around at the moment, and some of the catchphrases you utter yourself?

Yikeeez, Sanitize Sanitize Sanitize. 2020, what a time to be alive!

16. What advice would you give to other industry folk during this time?

Focus on your work and acquiring new skills. Make amazing work without having to constantly seek other people's approval or attention, but rather because you want to get better and you enjoy the process of learning and growing. If you put in the time to build, it will come. Don't just sit on the talent that you have been given and expect it to multiply.

"I can't wait to tell my marketing lecturer about this," he says. Follow Kotze on [Instagram @simonkotze45](https://www.instagram.com/simonkotze45), where he posts a lot of his personal drawings or visit his website [SimonKotze.co.za](https://www.SimonKotze.co.za).

**Interviewed by [Jessica Tennant](#).*

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