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Creation, Craft, and COVID-19: A Documentary

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Creation, Craft, and COVID-19: A Documentary

by

Joshua Stockstill

A Thesis
Submitted to the Honors College of
The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment
of Honors Requirements

May 2022

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Vincenzo Mistretta', written in a cursive style.

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ABSTRACT

Creation, Craft, and COVID-19 is a documentary film that looks into the creation and development of a small jewelry business called Novi Creations based in Laurel, Mississippi. This thesis interviews Shauna Stockstill, the owner of Novi Creations, and presents the history of the business, its daily processes, and its struggles through the COVID-19 pandemic. This thesis also covers the planning and pre-production of the film and the performative method of approach. It breaks down different styles of documentary filmmaking and addresses ethical dilemmas found commonly in documentaries. I express my reason for creating this film and desire to share Shauna's story, and I explain how my use of lighting, footage, and music add to the emotional expression in the film.

Keywords: *film, documentary, performative, craft, covid, jewelry*

DEDICATION

This honors thesis is dedicated to my wife, my parents, my brother, and my sister. You all have encouraged me, supported me, and brought wisdom and joy into my life. I could not have done this without you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank my advisor, Professor Vincenzo Mistretta, for all his effort, help, and encouragement through this process and my time at University. He is a great professor and filmmaker, and he has taught me so much. I would also like to thank Dr. Katrin Pesch who has greatly contributed to my knowledge and love of film.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CU	Close up Shot
LS	Long Shot
MS	Medium Shot

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION AND FINAL CUT OF CREATION, CRAFT, AND COVID-19

In March of 2020, the United States began to shut down in hopes of reducing the spread of the COVID-19 disease. This shutdown affected many businesses, one of which was a small jewelry business based in Laurel, Mississippi called Novi Creations.

Creation, Craft, and COVID-19 looks into the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic had on Novi Creations from the perspective of its owner, Shauna Stockstill. I intended to craft a film that fully captures the emotional weight and challenging reality Shauna experienced during this time. This film also explains what Novi Creations is and how the story of its founding, craft, and perseverance is one of hope and encouragement. In creating a performative documentary, lighting design, sound design, shooting location, narrative structure, and interview incorporation all serve to honestly capture her story and effectively communicate the emotions and inspirational elements present in Shauna's experiences.

Shauna's story provides personal insight into the livelihood of a small business during the COVID-19 pandemic. This thesis also addresses the methodological approaches I took as the filmmaker to tell Shauna's story truthfully, create an intriguing film structure, and communicate the emotional depth this story holds. This thesis explains how the influence of performative documentary and implementation of the interview-based narrative structure present an honest reproduction of Shauna's story. The specific use of B-roll footage and music to heighten the emotional expressivity of the film are also explained, and the films that were influential in the design of *Creation, Craft, and COVID-19* are also discussed. The pre-production stages including the treatment,

documentary script, and interview questions are incorporated in this thesis and allow the reader to discover the planning and evolution of the project. The research I conducted through Shauna's interview, the shooting and production of the film, and the rationale behind my directorial decisions culminate in this project and help tell a story worth hearing.

Final Cut of *Creation Craft, and COVID-19*

<https://youtu.be/VcckPJmw054>

Film Specifications

Title: Creation, Craft, and COVID-19

Years Produced: 2021-2022

Duration: 00:12:00

Format: HD

Locations: Laurel, Mississippi & Birmingham, Alabama

CHAPTER II: METHODS OF DOCUMENTARY

Creation, Craft, and COVID-19 is a documentary about Shauna Stockstill and her small jewelry business, Novi Creations, based in Laurel, Mississippi. This film looks into the founding of Novi Creations, the crafting process of its products that occurs within, and the struggles the business has faced throughout the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of its owner, Shauna. In order to tell her story, I first had to decide how I was going to structure the film. It is important to note that when creating a documentary, one must first decide the style and manner in which it will be filmed and edited. Six primary modes of documentary exist; these modes are poetic, expository, reflexive, observational, participatory, and performative (Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 175). Each of these styles approaches documentary making in a different way, but occasionally, traits from various modes will overlap due to the subjective nature of film.

Poetic

The poetic mode stresses expressivity as the director crafts the composition of the film. Nichols states, “This mode stresses mood, tone, and affect much more than displays of factual knowledge or acts of rhetorical persuasion” (135). Much like a poet who compiles words to elicit emotions, thoughts, and feelings, a director of a poetic style documentary does the same. This film style often approaches topics indirectly or experimentally and frequently uses expressive shots of subjects to capture their essence more than capturing the subject directly. Instead of a straightforward approach, poetic documentary approaches themes and ideas indirectly, striving to illuminate the depth and soul of a person or subject. This approach adds an emotional richness and expressive quality to the main story or idea being communicated. It is less traditional, and often the

goals or intents of the filmmaker are not clearly stated. Joris Ivens' *Regen* (1929) and Jean Vigo's *A Propos de Nice* (1930) are both poetic films that document feeling and emotion in impressionistic ways. These films capture details that do not always progress a story but capture the essence of the world they are creating. In *Regen*, images of puddles and flapping street canopies create visual motion while constructing a solemn and drizzly response. In *A Propos de Nice*, Vigo's desire to capture life in France is curated through juxtaposing images of the ocean and countryside and all facets of city life. The use of nontraditional shots and unique angles plays into the specific emotion he tries to communicate through this film. Without a character or story arc in either of these films, the focus becomes the symbolism and emotional response of the viewer.

Expository

The expository mode strays from expressivism and deals more directly with the source of historical information. This style adopts an argument or story, and the information and footage are collected and displayed to support the narrative. These films often include commentary by an unseen narrator or "Voice-of-God" (140) that leads the story, and the images on screen are used to support or display what the narrator is discussing. Nichols calls this "Evidentiary Editing" (142). This mode is much clearer than poetic filmmaking as its arguments are made to be clearly stated and understood. Nichols explains, "The expository mode addresses the viewer directly, with titles or voices that tell a story, propose a perspective, or advance an argument" (140). These films often approach the subject from an outside perspective and a broad overview. The voice-over used in these films comes from a place of omniscience and presents objective truth in order to guide the viewers through what they see on screen, clearly presenting

facts and the argument the filmmaker is making. A primary example of expository film is Luc Jacquet's 2005 film, *March of the Penguins*. This film documents the journey of emperor penguins in the Antarctic to their annual breeding grounds. This film exhibits the common "Voice-of-God" trope that narrates the events happening on scene from a seemingly all-knowing perspective. With scientists and filmmakers working in unison, the facts and actual happenings of the penguins are documented clearly, and this film presents a natural wonder to the audience.

Reflexive

The reflexive mode presents awareness to the film itself. These films are often self aware and recognize their shortcomings. Nichols says, "Instead of seeing through documentaries to the world beyond them, reflexive documentaries ask us to see documentary for what it is: a construct or representation" (144). This mode of documentary draws the reader's attention to itself and is not as concerned with continuity and narrative and visual cohesion as it is with presenting a problem worthy of reflection. These often focus on the documentary-making process and draw the viewer to analyze what they are watching with a heightened sense of awareness. Nichols states, "These films set out to heighten our awareness of the problems of representing others as much as they set out to convince us of the authenticity or truthfulness of representation itself" (145). This style allows the viewers to not only see the problem presented by the film, but also the problem of presenting the problem and the intricacies found in representation. One of the most recognized reflexive documentaries is Dziga Vertov's 1929 film *Man with a Movie Camera*. Vertov documents a day in a Russian city and captures all the intricacies at play. Throughout the film, he displays footage of the film itself being made.

Many scenes show the man with a movie camera in action and filming the scenes previously displayed. He even records footage of the editing process and the splicing together of film strips. This awareness brings attention to the creation process of the film and allows viewers to have a special perspective on the film's production.

Observational

The observational mode captures what happens in front of the camera without the interference of the film crew. This mode is an effort to capture life as is. It neglects the narrative voice-over and editor articulation found in other styles. The goal is to present what happens naturally and truthfully. When stepping back from director to observer, the filmmaker allows the subjects to guide the film. When editing, scenes tend to have fewer cuts and slower pacing, which is more akin to reality than the heavily edited types of films popular today. This editing style allows the viewer to be drawn into the events on screen in real time. Debates have arisen over this style, as some filmmakers become more proactive in their participation in events before shooting, which results in questionable objectivity and truth claims. Also, the presence of a camera potentially compromises validity as the camera's presence arguably affects the subjects' behavior and their decision making processes. Overall, the objective of this mode still remains capturing and presenting life as if the viewer were observing it as a "fly on the wall" (156). This style, due to its practice of minimal interference, is often the style associated with being the most truthful in its methods of capturing and presenting footage. D.A. Pennebaker's 1967 film, *Don't Look Back*, exhibits these characteristics and is a good example of an observational documentary. This film follows musician Bob Dylan through his tour in England in an unobtrusive way. The film presents the events as they happen with little

interaction so that the full experience and actuality of the film is communicated effectively.

Participatory

The participatory mode often engages the filmmaker as a character that instigates progression in the film. The filmmaker is keen on discovering and uncovering truth without a need for developing personal relationships with the subject. These films often include the filmmakers' interactions and interviews with their subjects. The filmmaker provides an inquisitive perspective because of his or her curious nature. The questions and conversations that occur between the subject and filmmaker are included to deepen the viewers' understanding of the subject and the world the filmmaker is presenting. This mode invites the viewer into the filmmaker and subject's interaction and invites them to be a part of the events and discussions in the film. Nichols states, "When we view participatory documentaries, we expect to witness the historical world as represented by someone who actively engages with others rather than unobtrusively observing, poetically reconfiguring, or argumentatively assembling what others say and do" (158). Participatory is considered one of the least truthful representations in the different modes because of the filmmaker's direction and interactive manner. Since the filmmaker directs some of the action, this interference can be mistakenly linked to wrongful manipulation if the filmmaker is not careful. A good example of this style of film is Laura Poitras's 2014 film *Citizenfour*, where Poitras personally investigates messages and interactions between herself and former NSA member, Edward Snowden. This film is carried through the subject matter on the platform of Poitras' investigation. Her interviews with Snowden

reveal much of the content of the film and allow the viewer insight into the happenings of the world around them.

Performative

The performative mode highlights personal experiences from either the filmmaker or the subject. The experiences evoke emotional understanding about historical topics and provide more insightful perspectives to the viewers. This mode often combines some artistic elements of the poetic mode, and relational elements of the participatory mode; however, the historical truth presented in these films is addressed from a personal perspective. These films are often more focused on memory and the recollection of experience as more important than the event experienced (Nichols 172). The goal is not always to present an arguable topic or explain events, but to communicate the experience and convey its significance. This focus on experience can often be used to reveal an uncommon or unknown perspective about events widely experienced by many. Performative mode seeks to reveal emotions, experiences, perspectives, and stories the filmmaker deems worthy of sharing. Morgan Spurlock's 2004 film, *Supersize Me*, documents his experience dining at fast food restaurants and the health implications he experienced throughout his journey. This film communicates his personal experiences and documents his actions and thoughts in relation to the events occurring around him. *Supersize Me* (2004) provides a more intimate view into Spurlock's life, and as he documents himself, he shares the significance of his own thoughts and their significance in relation to the film.

Additional Modes

In his book, *Directing the Documentary*, film director and author Michael Rabiger also categorizes modes of documentary filmmaking. Unlike Nichols, however, Rabiger only proposes two modes, observational and participatory (22). Observational mode is composed of many of the same ideals as Nichols' observatory mode with the prime goal being objective, unhindered truth. Participatory mode is also similar to Nichols' participatory mode, yet also features elements from the performative and expository methods. Rabiger's two categories are more specifically defined by the filmmaker's participation in their film.

CHAPTER III: ETHICS IN DOCUMENTARY

One of the fundamental questions in documentary filmmaking is the question of truth and how documentaries present it. The different modes of documentary filmmaking can vary in their degrees of truth due to the manner in which they are formed.

Observational and participatory sit at opposite ends of the spectrum. Each handles truth in different ways. Observational tends to be the mode striving to capture unhindered truth.

By limited interaction and the drive to capture uninhibited, natural behavior and occurrences, observational mode strives to present objective truth. Participatory, although still presenting the truth, does so in a more intrusive manner. The filmmaker acts as a guiding catalyst who unearths truth by inquisition and intervention. They, in part, drive the story more so than the naturally occurring events.

Even though the nature of documentary is the revelation and communication of truth, the subjective nature of the filmmaker will always clash with the standard of objective truth. In *Directing the Documentary*, Michael Rabiger explains that documentary is a construct, not a reality, and he states, “You cannot show events themselves, only a construct of selected shots and viewpoints that sketch in the key facts, action, and emphases - all subjectively determined by you, the filmmaker” (68). No matter the drive for communicating complete, objective truth, the process of choosing which shots to include in the film and constructing them together is a subjective decision made by the filmmaker. The very nature of juxtaposing shots creates meaning that neither of the two shots had on their own. The degree of manipulation of recorded events varies from film to film, and with it, arguably the degree of truth. Given that manipulation through editing is unavoidable, the attention is then drawn to what degree of truthful

representation exists in each film. In an ideal world, each filmmaker would strive to represent objective truth, but some filmmakers have agendas and desire to persuade their audience. Because of persuasive filmmakers' influence sometimes the truth is manipulated beyond ethical reasoning and twisted to satisfy the desired outcome.

In *Creation, Craft, and COVID-19*, my goal was to represent Shauna as truthfully as possible. There is no driving argument for this film that I hope to persuade viewers to agree with, it is simply the telling of a personal story that I thought should be shared. This alleviated the pressure of manipulation for the sake of an argument, but the pressure was then placed on my ability to truthfully represent Shauna's experiences. Due to the length of recorded footage, it was necessary for me to eliminate parts that were not essential. I recorded an hour and a half long interview and ended up with a twelve minute film, so it was vital that I keep the cornerstones of her story. After keeping the most important parts and combining them in a way that truthfully represented the story and progressed the film, I showed Shauna, and she approved of the decisions I had made. I had no desire to misrepresent or augment the footage in a way that communicated a position, and I strived to represent her with integrity.

CHAPTER IV: WHY PERFORMATIVE?

I found Shauna's story to be one that I admired and wanted to share. My goal for this film was to share her history and do so in a way to which people could relate and by which they would be inspired. As she discusses the different stages of her life, I wanted viewers to see the creativity and effort dedicated to her business, her joy in sharing what she does with others, her struggles as a business owner during difficult times, and her hope that she has for the future. I wanted the viewers to hear her tale and take heart, be encouraged or inspired to create and do what one is passionate about, and to see that small dreams can become big achievements with hard work. This is why I felt this film would be best communicated through the performative mode.

Even though the goal was to communicate experience and personal story, elements of other modes of documentary can be seen in my documentary film as well. Nichols discusses in his explanation of documentary modes that the lines for such categorization are not always clear (123). Due to the subjectivity of creating art and films, it is quite common for the mode of a film to be more than one. Films can be completely singular in mode or have a multitude of influences from different modes. I found that *Creation, Craft, and COVID-19* was heavily influenced by the performative mode with elements of the participatory mode found throughout. As expository, performative, and participatory are modes often structurally led by interviews, my film consists of attributes of the latter two.

I wanted Shauna's recollection of her personal experience to lead the narrative, so I asked her simple questions throughout the interview process that helped her elaborate. My questions to her were ones that created an opportunity to tell her story and were not

conceived to craft an argument. My personal relationship with her, as well as my direction from the interview, combine both elements of participatory and performative. It is evident that I am not present in the film, so this aspect is less like the “present investigator” type of filmmaker found in participatory. Also, my desire for Shauna’s experience to be the focus builds the foundation of the film on the performative mode. Even though the film is an interview-based documentary, the focus is the story of the subject’s memory and experiences.

In my approach to this style of film, I knew the interview would be the vital backbone of the project. The interview would be the most practical and truthful means of storytelling as it could effectively cover the nearly twelve-year time period discussed in the film. Since the information and occurrences throughout the founding of Novi Creations lies almost solely in Shauna’s memory, it made the most sense for her to discuss them. In pre-production, I thought of questions that would assist Shauna in discussing her experiences. Because there was a great number of stories and events she could have discussed, I asked specific questions to guide her in the direction of the main topics of the project: creation, craft, and COVID-19. The questions were optimized to allow her the most room to talk about these subjects without imposing an ulterior motive from myself. It was important that the questions were there only to help her communicate and not to support an argument I might have made. I believe this was the best way to share objectively, and the interview base and performative mode helped convey the subjects in a truthful and entertaining way.

Looking back, the subject matter of this project might have made an interesting poetic style documentary. Handcrafted jewelry is an incredibly interesting visual subject,

and nontraditional creativity would have been a great accompaniment. I found that the method I used was most beneficial for what I wanted to communicate. The interview provided both a clear organization to the film and a structure to build off creatively. If the film were made in the poetic mode, the interpretation might not have been clear and the story not fully told. The opening sequence and the additional B-roll footage were the most enjoyable to capture, and these might have constituted a beautiful poetic style documentary of jewelry crafting at Novi Creations. Nonetheless, I was able to incorporate elements of my own creative visions through B-roll footage into the film that did not inhibit the telling but added to the richness and visual interest.

CHAPTER V: DIRECTORIAL DECISIONS

This chapter discusses a few of the decisions I made as the director through the shooting and post-production process including filming location, lighting design, sound design, music, and B-roll footage. Each of these decisions contributes to the film in a significant way and furthers the message and emotional impact of the film.

Shooting Locations

I chose to shoot this film in Shauna's studio because her studio is where most of the business life of Novi Creations takes place. The studio is where Shauna and her workers spend most of their time and feel comfortable. It also provided an opportunity to capture the crafting process and much of the jewelry that had already been made. This location allows viewers to see where the creation and creativity happen. It also adds relational depth to the viewers' connection to Shauna as it is an intimate place, and the decorations and nuance of the environment show more about who Shauna is as a person. Her studio is also where she spends the most time. The other location I filmed was her trade show in Birmingham, Alabama. This also allowed the viewers to better picture her explanation of trade shows and how she sells jewelry and interacts with her customers. Shauna's primary trade shows she attends each year are outside the state of Mississippi, so capturing footage from the Birmingham trade show allows viewers to understand the scale of these events if they are unfamiliar with them. This footage also reveals the effort that Shauna spends preparing for the shows. Both her studio and the trade show locations provide a visual aid and sense of Novi Creations' functioning environment. It was also necessary to film in these locations because most of the processes and actions that Shauna

discusses occur at these locations, and these are the places that I needed to film in order to get accurate footage of all that she mentions.

Interview Location

I also chose to film the interview in Shauna's studio. I interviewed her in her studio so that she would feel more relaxed, and I would be able to feature the jewelry she has made in the background. I moved her chair away from the wall behind her so there would be a greater sense of depth as the focal length of the lens blurred the background. It is common to arrange furniture and subject placement during interviews to create an intriguing background that is significant to the story and does not compete with the subject (Asher and Pincus 453).

I used a three-point lighting setup to evenly illuminate Shauna so that her expressions and emotions were visible and she would be brighter than the background. The key light is the brightest source of light and is paired with the fill light that balances the shadow cast by the key light; the back light sits behind the subject, illuminating their silhouette and further separating them from the background (Nichols, *Engaging Cinema*, 58). The key light in this film stands above Shauna to her left while the fill light stands equal in height to Shauna's right. The back light sits below and behind Shauna's chair facing up and creates an edge light that is predominantly seen on the strands of her hair, separating her from the background. Shooting the interview in Shauna's studio also familiarized me with the setting so that I would be able to better capture the essence of the environment when I would later return to record footage of Shauna and her employees working. When I set up the equipment in her studio for the interview, I had time to determine locations for filming interesting shots, and I was able to see how the

studio felt and functioned on an average workday. Shauna's interview also informed me of the daily work structure, her creative processes, and her employees' roles and workloads. This knowledge allowed me to better understand the setting and helped me determine how I could best capture it. Knowledge and familiarity with the subject and setting allow photographers to capture the subject naturally (Henderson 95). The insight I gained through interacting and existing in the studio environment, and the information Shauna discussed with me in the interview helped me to capture Shauna and her studio atmosphere honestly and naturally.

Sound Design and Music

I decided to audibly drive this film with music more than diegetic sound. Apart from Shauna's voice and the opening sequence, music is the only other audio heard throughout the rest of the film. The film's opening begins with the sound of the studio. The tumbling machine drones in the background while Shauna's hammering is heard but is not seen on screen. This noise sparks curiosity which is then resolved when the film shows Shauna hammering a copper cuff bracelet. Various detailed shots of the studio follow while the diegetic noise of the studio atmosphere plays. The final shot before Shauna's introduction shows the source of the droning noise as the tumbler. I then fade the environmental audio as Shauna begins to speak.

I used this short period at the beginning of the film to help convey the atmosphere with diegetic sound and orient the viewers in the environment. I soon transition to Shauna's voice, and this transition begins her narration of the film. Shortly after she begins talking, I introduce somber music that reflects her dedication to her faith and the earnestness with which she explains what Novi Creations is. It was important that the

music I use act as an emotional reflection of Shauna's words and story. Music can encourage viewers to examine the emotional aspects of a film and heighten the voice of the narrator by giving expression to his or her feelings and tone (Rabiger 490). As the opening sequence ends and the title fades, the music changes to have a higher cadence. This tempo increase and shift in music help communicate the excitement Shauna shows in her retelling of how she started making jewelry. This music increases in volume and parallels the joyous laughter Shauna exhibits as the following scene shows her and her employees in the studio creating jewelry.

I specifically chose the music to have a sense of uncertainty and solemnness during the time Shauna discusses the effects of COVID-19 on her business. I wanted Shauna's concern to be reflected in the music and help convey the impact of this time in her own life and the life of the business. I also ensured that the music at the end of the film was lively and exciting as her employees work happily in the studio and Shauna declares that the business is moving forward.

Additional B-roll Footage

I captured hours of additional B-roll footage to play on-screen while Shauna talked. The interview composes the structure for the film, but the B-roll adds visual representation, credibility, and creative expression that populates most of the film. Without this footage, the film would be a recording of an interview, and many of the processes and descriptions Shauna discusses would be difficult to imagine. I used the B-roll throughout the film to layer on top of Shauna's voice so that the viewer can see specifically what Shauna talks about. This footage gives the viewer a visual representation of her crafting techniques, her specific pieces of jewelry, and her tools. It

also gives the viewers a sense of place as her work studio is shown from many angles, and her trade show experiences are displayed on-screen. The incorporation of this footage also is important because it gives credibility to her work. Photographs are a source of evidence and credibility as they reflect what can be seen in the natural world and offer the same visual representation that would be available to a person at the location the photograph was taken (Plantinga 42). By incorporating footage of Shauna performing the very acts she describes in the interview, her story and experiences are validated.

Shooting B-roll also allowed for the incorporation of visual creativity. I was able to shoot Shauna's jewelry in a way that is visually interesting to the viewers and captures the beauty of her jewelry. Since the filming location was also an active worksite, Shauna and the employees would constantly be working on various tasks and moving to different locations in the studio. I was forced to make decisions quickly and adapt to the changing locations, subject matter, and lighting conditions to capture footage, quickly framing the new scene and adjusting camera settings, focus, and exposure to create a pleasant image.

CHAPTER VI: FILM INFLUENCES

One of the primary influential films through the creation process of *Creation*, *Craft*, and *COVID-19* was *My Octopus Teacher* (2020). Although the two films share no thematic or subject similarities, they do share similar film and storytelling structures. In *My Octopus Teacher* (2020), Craig Foster spends a year developing a relationship with an octopus in a kelp forest off the coast of South Africa. Craig is interviewed and discusses his story and experiences with the octopus. His retelling of the story in this interview is the structural backbone of the film, and Craig guides the narrative by what he discusses. Much like in *Creation*, *Craft*, and *COVID-19*, Shauna's retelling of the past similarly provides the narrative structure for this film. In both films, B-roll footage is used to display what the narrator is discussing; its imagery acts as a visual aid and simultaneously crafts a beautiful image. Occasionally, both films return to the footage from the interview for moments of sincerity or emotional expression to communicate to the audience the subject's passion and involvement with what they are speaking about.

When Craig discusses his relationship with the octopus with deep emotion, the film often cuts back to reveal his face and the emotions expressed on it. This creates a connection between Craig and the viewers that furthers their relationship to the film. I, too found this meaningful, and I found that displaying footage from Shauna's interview of her discussing things of emotional depth would also help the viewer connect to the story. *My Octopus Teacher* (2020) also uses music to further heighten the emotions Craig discusses and displays. I found this beneficial to my film as well and similarly used music to accentuate and communicate the emotions Shauna expresses.

Just as *My Octopus Teacher* (2020) influenced some of my decisions about narrative structure and formative storytelling, two other films have influenced this type of interview-based documentary storytelling and proven its success in communicating. Various short documentaries also influenced this film. “Brave Art” (2018) and “A Pursuit of Mastery” (2022) both display artists at work in their studios, retelling personal stories of struggle and passion. The interviews of each of these films carry the story, and the compelling B-roll shots add explanation and credibility as well as artistic value. Shots and closeups of the artists in these two short documentaries display their tools, their hands creating, and the two artists working in their studios. Many of the shots in these films helped inspire the B-roll footage for *Creation, Craft, and COVID-19*. Although both films are short in length, they communicate effectively, and the personal recollection discussed by both artists creates honesty that the viewer can recognize and connect with. In *Creation, Craft, and COVID-19*, I hoped to similarly communicate truthfully the honesty and passion Shauna exemplifies in a meaningful way.

CHAPTER VII: TREATMENT AND DOCUMENTARY SCRIPT

This chapter includes both my film treatment and documentary script. During the pre-production phase, the treatment acts as a rudimentary narrative structure for the film, and the documentary script is created to provide a visual and auditory description of what will show on-screen in the final film. Both items are created before filming starts and with limited information of the subject. As a result, the treatment and script are loose guides and expectations of what will happen. Once filming begins, the story can go in an unexpected direction or focus on details not outlined in the treatment or script. It is common for the final cut of films to turn out differently than planned.

As I interviewed Shauna, she focused the conversation in areas I had not anticipated, and because of my desire to present her story as she described it, I altered the treatment and script structure in the final cut of the film. I also changed what appeared on-screen to better present what Shauna discussed.

Treatment

Logline

A jeweler tells the creation story of her small jewelry business, Novi Creations, and the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic on this business.

Subjects

Shauna Stockstill- Creator, owner, and head jeweler of Novi Creations.

Novi Creations- Small jewelry business based in Laurel, Mississippi.

Summary

This documentary tells the story of the creation and evolution of Novi Creations, and it reveals the struggles the business faced during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of business owner Shauna Stockstill. Shauna begins telling of the founding and reasoning behind the creation of the business, telling the story of its roots in the family home and the inspiration from her faith. This documentary then looks deeply into the inner workings of the business to fully understand how it functions. This includes investigation of the creation process of jewelry, artisanship, inspiration, production, and sales. Then Shauna discusses the arrival of the pandemic, the struggle of her business to remain open during this time, and the methods she used to help it do so. She provides insight into the hardships that many small businesses faced during the countrywide lockdown as well as methods she used to stay open during this time that can provide help to other small businesses if a similar situation ever occurs.

Act One

Shauna enters her studio on a normal business day morning. She begins her work crafting pieces of jewelry and helping her apprentice start their work for the day. They talk intermittently as they work, both concentrating on their individual tasks. Shauna works for a while then sits down in front of the camera.

Shauna begins telling the story of her business, Novi Creations, discussing its creation, the rationale behind its creation, the struggles of startup, and its evolution to where it is today. While she talks, pictures from the past appear on-screen, mixed with footage of her working on jewelry pieces today, showing the development of her business visually.

Act Two

Shauna begins preparation for an upcoming trade show. She packs all her jewelry, booth accessories, and displays into her trailer. As she packs, she discusses the importance of trade shows for the success of her business and the role that they play. She discusses to whom she markets at these trade shows and how this affects her creative process of designing individual jewelry pieces. While she talks, footage of her traveling and setting up her booth at a trade show appears on-screen. There is also footage of her interacting with her customers at the trade show.

Shauna returns to her studio and walks through the process of making a single piece of jewelry. She explains the significance of the jewelry and how the meaning behind each piece is crucial to understanding its beauty and function. She says that the business is most successful when she is there to tell each piece's story to the customer, and that is why trade shows are vital to her business.

She then talks of her fear of the unknown during 2020 with the arrival of COVID-19. During the lockdown, all trade shows were closed and there was no way to have the personal connection with her customers that is needed to sell her jewelry. She tells of her struggles with knowing what to do financially, how to market in a completely new way, and how she persevered through the hardships that COVID-19 brought to her business.

Act Three

Shauna works on more jewelry. She talks about how the business is doing after the pandemic, the transition back to trade shows, the development and success of her online store, and the hopes she has for the future. She mentions the unknown of what is to

come with COVID-19 and the real possibility of future lockdowns. She provides insight into what she would do if another pandemic were to happen again and methods for other small businesses to try in this situation. She finishes creating her piece of jewelry that she has been working on throughout the documentary and displays it. She then closes her shop, turns off the lights, and leaves.

Documentary Script

The documentary script is formatted into two columns, video and audio. The video column describes what will be shown on the screen, and the audio column describes the sounds that accompany what is being shown. This is more practical for documentary than a screenplay with created dialogue. When filming a documentary, it is unknown what the subject will say, so it is more efficient to describe the topics the subject will discuss in this format.

SCRIPT

Title: Creation, Craft, and COVID-19	
Video:	Audio:
Long Shot (LS): Shauna walks into her studio from outside.	Diegetic sound
Medium Shot (MS): Shauna turns on the lights and walks to her desk. She gathers tools and lays	Continued from above - Fade in of soft music

them out in an orderly fashion to begin working.	
Close Up Shot (CU): Shots of tools used for making jewelry	Continued from above
CU: Shot of tools being used, hammering, bending, cutting.	Shauna: (Voice Over) Begins telling the story of her business.
CU: Shauna's hands crafting the jewelry pieces.	- Continued
MS: (Interview) Shauna sits down in front of the camera.	Shauna: speaking
Multiple various B-roll shots of Shauna creating jewelry, using her tools, taking product shots, working on her computer, stocking inventory, shots of her studio, and tools on the wall.	- Continued Layered Diegetic sound: hammers and other tools making noises.
MS: Overhead shot of Shauna flipping through a book full of pictures from earlier years of her jewelry and crafting. She turns the pages of the photo album.	Shauna: (Voice Over) Tells the creation process of her story and reflects on the beginning stages.

CU: Specific pictures in the photo album receive closer viewing, primarily photos of her old jewelry and studio.	- Continued
Various multiple shots of her working again.	Shauna: (Voice Over) Discusses the importance of trade shows and how her business has come to rely on them.
FADE TO BLACK	
LS: Shauna packing her trailer, getting ready for her show. (Date appears on-screen)	Shauna: (Voice Over) Begins telling of the challenges of getting ready for a trade show. - Upbeat music
MS: Shauna and her employees load boxes, set design pieces, and inventory onto the trailer	- Continued
CU: Specific pieces being moved onto the trailer	- Continued

MS: Shauna and employees go over checklist in the studio, marking things off as the object are taken outside.	- Continued
LS: Shauna moves stuff from her studio out to the trailer.	- Continued
Various B-roll shots of loading trailer, product being loaded, close ups of workers loading the trailer, items being specifically packed.	Diegetic sound, and conversation clips from employees - Continued
LS: Shauna closes the trailer with it fully packed.	Shauna: stops talking
JUMP CUT WITH SOUND OF TRAILER CLOSE	
LS: Shauna's booth space at the trade show	Diegetic sound
MS: Costumers interacting with Shauna	- Continued
CU: Jewelry and set display	- Continued

Various B-roll shots of booth and trade show.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued - Fade in soft music
CUT TO HER STUDIO	
MS: Following Shauna around her studio as she crafts a piece of jewelry.	Diegetic sound
CU: Documenting the creation process of this single piece of jewelry.	<p>Shauna: (Voice Over)</p> <p>Begins talking of the significance of trade shows and the importance of telling the costumer about the story of her jewelry.</p>
Various B-roll shots of this process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued
CU: Final piece of jewelry is revealed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued
CUT BACK TO TRADE SHOW	

LS: Shauna interacting with customers.	- Continued
MS: Shauna interacting with customers and talking to them and showing them different bracelets and necklaces.	- Continued
LS: Shauna and her crew start packing up their booth space.	Shauna: stops talking
MS: Each employee focuses on packing different items.	Diegetic sound
LS: the final booth pieces are taken out of frame.	- Continued
CUT TO INTERVIEW	
MS: Interview shot of Shauna talking to camera	Shauna: talks about the impact of COVID
Various B-roll shots of her working In studio	- Continued
MS: Interview shot of Shauna talking to camera	- Continued
CU: Shauna shows a finished piece of jewelry.	Shauna: talks about the overall journey of her

	business and what it looks for in the future.
MS: Shauna puts away her tools and cleans her workspace.	- Continued
LS: She turns the lights off and leaves her studio.	- Continued
FADE TO BLACK	Music fades

CHAPTER VIII: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

In this chapter, I list the interview questions I created for Shauna. These are the initial questions, however, not all are answered or discussed in the film. Through the interview process, some of the questions led to more interesting discussion of similar topics while others did not. In my film, I focused on the elements that seemed most important to Shauna's discussion of these topics and used these questions primarily as a basis to inspire further discussion.

History and Establishing Novi

- What is Novi Creations?
- How did you discover jewelry making?
- How did Novi start?
- What led you to the decision to start Novi?
- Why did you start Novi?
- What did you hope to accomplish?
- What is Novi's goal?

Novi Day to Day

- What does an average day at Novi look like?
- What do you do?
- What do your employees do?
- What is the schedule?
- How often do you work?

Jewelry Creation

- What do you make at Novi Creations?
- What goes into making a single piece of Jewelry
- Do you handcraft all of your jewelry?

Marketing and Trade Shows

- Where do you sell your jewelry?
- Can you describe what trade shows are like?
- How many trade shows do you attend each year?
- How do you prepare for these shows?

Effects of COVID

- How did COVID-19 affect your business?
- How did COVID-19 affect trade shows?
- How did it affect other small businesses you know of?
- How is it affecting your business now nearly a year and a half later?
- Are trade shows reopening?
- How has COVID-19 affected your online presence?
- What have you learned from your experiences with COVID-19?

Looking to the Future

- Where do you see Novi Creations progressing in the future?
- Do you have any goals?
- Will you expand the workshop or hire more workers

APPENDIX A: TALENT RELEASE FORMS

PRODUCTION TITLE: CREATION, CRAFT, AND COVID-19	
DIRECTOR & PRODUCER: JOSHUA STOCKSTILL	

TALENT RELEASE AGREEMENT

To Whom It May Concern:

I (the undersigned) hereby grant to Joshua Stockstill the right to photograph me and to record my voice, performances, poses, actions, plays and appearances, and use my picture, photograph, silhouette and other reproductions of my physical likeness in connection with the short film tentatively entitled Creation, Craft, and Covid-19 (the "Picture").

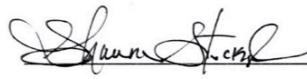
I hereby grant to Joshua Stockstill, its successors, assigns and licensees the perpetual right to use, as you may desire, all still and motion pictures and soundtrack recordings and records which you may make of me or of my voice, and the right to use my name or likeness in or in connection with the exhibition, advertising, exploiting and/or publicizing of the picture. I further grant the right to reproduce in any manner whatsoever any recordings including all instrumental, musical or other sound effects produced by me, in connection with the production and/or postproduction of the Picture.

I agree that I will not assert or maintain against Joshua Stockstill, your successors, assigns and licensees, any claim, action, suit or demand of any kind or nature whatsoever, including but not limited to those grounded upon invasion of privacy, rights of publicity or other civil rights, or for any reason in connection with your authorized use of my physical likeness and sound in the Picture as herein provided.

I further acknowledge and agree that any commitments beyond the scope and intent of this release are the sole responsibility of the above named production.

I hereby certify and represent that I am over 18 years of age and have read the foregoing and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof.

TALENT NAME:	Shauna Stockstill
ADDRESS:	
PHONE:	
EMAIL:	
CHARACTER NAME:	



TALENT SIGNATURE



PRODUCER SIGNATURE


4/14/2022

DATE

4/14/2022

DATE

I hereby certify and represent that I am over 18 years of age and have read the foregoing and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof.

TALENT NAME:	April Bullock
ADDRESS:	
PHONE:	
EMAIL:	
CHARACTER NAME:	



TALENT SIGNATURE



PRODUCER SIGNATURE


4/14/2022

DATE

4/14/2022

DATE

I hereby certify and represent that I am over 18 years of age and have read the foregoing and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof.

TALENT NAME:	Estherlith Bellrose
ADDRESS:	
PHONE:	
EMAIL:	
CHARACTER NAME:	



TALENT SIGNATURE



PRODUCER SIGNATURE

14 APR 22

DATE

4/14/2022

DATE

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