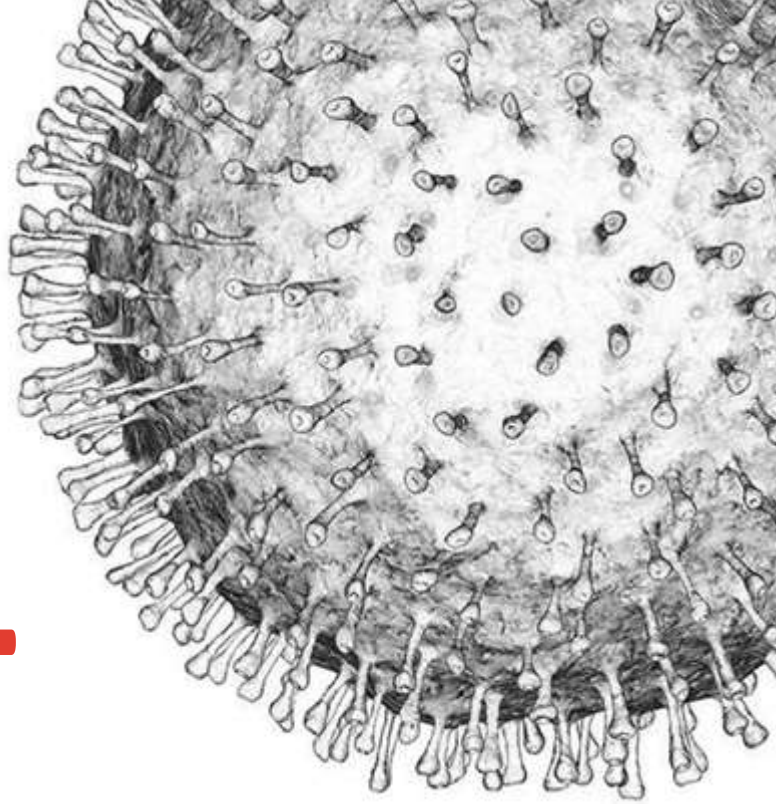


VIRAL

by Sagi Bornstein and Udi Nir



A 90-minute documentary film & 8x10 series - 100% made from YouTube material



Accompanies 6 characters over the period of 1 year before, during and after the Corona crisis.



A bitter-sweet document how the Coronavirus is changing our lives in the long term.

gebrueder**beetz**
FILMPRODUKTION

udiVsagi

LOGLINE

VIRAL uses YouTube as a gigantic archive of the present and tells through the authentic material of our protagonists how Corona inscribes itself into our lives and changes them.

SYNOPSIS

VIRAL is neither a collection of video diaries nor a story about exhausted doctors and tragic deaths during the Corona crisis. It is a character-driven, grand narrative of the collective experience we share with 4 billion people: What does it feel like when your life is suddenly stopped in its tracks? How is life in a lockdown? What carries us through the crisis and helps us to overcome it? And how will Corona change all our lives in the long term?

VIRAL has a "natural" dramaturgical tension as it accompanies six protagonists throughout the entire period of the ongoing crisis. Our protagonists encounter conflicts and obstacles and find creative ways to overcome them: from before the crisis, to day one of the lockdown, through the crisis and fear on the fifth day, the new routine and the explosion of creativity in the second week, to the liberation when at some point everything will go back to normal? Not quite. As the more extreme measures against the Coronavirus are being lifted in some places, we are realizing that Corona will not simply disappear. Instead, it will accompany us for months and possibly years. **VIRAL uses YouTube as a gigantic archive of this ongoing development and – through the unfiltered and authentic material of our protagonists – tells how Corona inscribes itself into our lives and changes them.** This dramaturgical condensation of individual stories into a grand narrative is at the heart of VIRAL.

In times of 'social isolation', videos are clicked, commented and shared by millions and become more than just a metaphorical "window to the world". As we look back on this historic event, we will all remember the images of empty supermarket shelves, the touching videos of singing Italians on their balconies, and the ingenuity with which parents brought their children through the crisis. At the same time, the increasing tensions in the post-lockdown phase are also becoming visible on YouTube: the demos and protests against the Corona measures, the videos of conspiracy theorists and the escalating situation in the USA, where Corona, the ongoing presidential election campaign, and racial unrest are mixing into an explosive cocktail.



As part of the collective memory in the digital age, these videos shape not only how we look back on what has been, but also how we make sense of the present and prepare to step into an uncertain future.

In fact, one question becomes more and more pressing: What will life be like after/with Corona? Here, too, recourse to YouTube material gives us the opportunity to be up-to-date until shortly before the completion of the film and, even, to continue our protagonists stories in an ongoing series - bearing witness to the moments in which collective memory becomes entrenched in our history.

The filmmakers Udi Nir and Sagi Bornstein have already gained extensive experience in cinematic work with existing YouTube material in 2016 with the documentary #uploading_holocaust (BR, rbb, ORF, Keshet). This experience, also in the clarification of rights and the technical processing of the material, is the basis for a fast and high-quality realization of the project.

DELIVERY

The project will be made available in two formats. **A 90-minute documentary** film and a **8x10 series**. While the 90-min documentary will be ready for broadcast in March 2021 - exactly one year after the WHO officially classified the Coronavirus as a pandemic, the series can turn into a continuing project. The serial format allows us the possibility to document our lives *with* and *after* Corona in an ongoing fashion, as many of the consequences and implications of this unprecedented historical event are yet to unfold, shared, clicked, and uploaded.

FILMIC ELEMENTS



Storylines: There are 6 main characters and about 10 secondary characters. Some of them are established YouTubers and some of them only started shooting videos during the Corona outbreak. They are strong characters with unique stories from different places and with different backgrounds, documenting their daily life under quarantine at home or in hospitals. In contrast to vlogs, VIRAL focuses on the grand dramaturgical narrative, which increasingly comes to the fore as the film progresses. At the centre of this narrative are the people who upload authentic video material from their lives, whose stories intermingle, people who all encounter conflicts and obstacles and find ways to overcome them.



Viral videos: Using montages of viral "Corona videos" from around the world, the pandemic is presented as we experience it through our screens at home and the way it will be inscribed in our global, collective memory. From an Italian grandmother explaining the grave situation in her own funny way to world-famous artists performing for free in front of their cameras. From Iranian doctors and nurses dancing together amidst the chaos, to thousands of people in Spain applauding for medical staff from their balconies. From parents entertaining their children with useful and creative ideas to a son who sings a serenade in front of his old mother's balcony - these are clips that show humanity at its best - creative, humorous, generous, inventive.



TV News: While most of the user-generated videos will be shot in people's homes, the outside world (from medical chaos and deserted streets to political leaders' speeches) will be represented by footage from international news agencies and TV announcements by Merkel, Macron, Trump & Co.. This will constitute the smallest element of the film and will serve mainly to contextualize the dramatic course of the crisis and allow us to revisit the evolution of our understanding of this disease and its implications.

STRUCTURE

Chapter one - the calm before the storm. In this chapter, we experience the world just before the chaos arrives. We get to know the main characters, their life situation, their interests and worries. We learn about their plans and dreams and already guess that many things that seem natural and normal today will be completely different tomorrow. Then the turning point comes: the first news about the pandemic are accompanied by the nonchalant reactions of most of our protagonists. The news are alarming, but the changes in daily life are initially minor. Travel restrictions create confusion and change the plans of some of our protagonists. While younger people take the issue less seriously, older, disabled and other disadvantaged people are worried and start to reorient their lives accordingly.

Chapter two - Isolation comes into effect and changes the daily life of all protagonists in an unprecedented way. Some must now decide where and with whom they will isolate themselves. Others will finally take the opportunity to speak more openly with their loved ones, meditate or slow down - but all will have to restructure their routines and adapt to the new reality.

Chapter three - We are at the height of the Corona eruption. This chapter marks another turning point of the narrative. Parents are desperately trying to keep their children happy; some people are worried about the health of their relatives and friends who are particularly at risk due to pre-existing conditions or old age. By now almost everyone knows someone who has caught the virus and long days of loneliness take their toll. At the same time, this moment is marked by great solidarity, creativity, balcony parties and extraordinary efforts to keep the mood up. Some of the people who have contracted the virus speak out and try to encourage and help others to stay calm.

Chapter four – Summer is arriving to the Northern Hemisphere and people start to carefully mingle with others, streets slowly fill up with life again and the sun seems to shine brighter than it did before. What might have felt like the end of the lockdown a few months back, is retrospectively no more than a small light beam in the gray scales of uncertainty as we go through the painstaking process of learning to live with this new virus. The realization that Corona is not going to go away – but will accompany us for months, and possibly years to come – is sinking in. Conspiracy theories are rampant, and the dissatisfaction of some people shows itself in protests regarding corona measures.

Chapter five - Epilogue. January 2021, the economic consequences of the Corona Crisis such as unemployment or increasing debt are palpable for everyone, political effects (US elections, beginning of the election year in Germany etc.) are becoming apparent. We have learned to live with Corona, at first glance everything is the same as always – or is it completely different?

POSSIBLE PROTAGONISTS

While some stories have already been completely shot and uploaded by users, most stories are still in full development. New material is uploaded every day, with the starting point and the major conflict already in sight - yet the end is not quite foreseeable.



Cassandra | South Africa

Cassandra is a 25-year-old dancer and singer from South Africa. In early 2020 she joined the entertainment crew of a brand-new cruise ship. Her first month at sea is a dream coming true – she loves her new job, visits beautiful places, and even falls in love with a fellow crew member. Just when it

seems life can't get any better – Cassandra's new boyfriend has to transfer to another ship, and right after they part for a few weeks, Cassandra's ship is quarantined off the coast of California. Hours turn to days and weeks, and Cassandra has to adjust to living in a small windowless crew compartment. After more than 70 agonizing days, she is finally allowed to disembark the ship with the rest of the crew and passengers, only to find out that all flights to South Africa have been cancelled and the USA will not let her in. Disappointed and heart-broken, Cassandra is forced to embark the same ship again, not knowing when she will be free to finally go home or meet her boyfriend again. After 20 more days of uncertainty, Cassandra is finally allowed to disembark the ship and fly to London. Aiden, her new boyfriend, rushes through deserted airports and government restrictions from Israel to London to meet her. The two finally meet in London after months of being apart. They plan to come to Aiden's home in Israel for a few months but cannot get a visa for Cassandra and once again find themselves stuck, this time at least together and on dry land in the UK.



Tina Meyer | Germany

After spending 2 years working hard and saving money, Tina finally buys a van and starts living in it, as she travels across Europe. Unfortunately, she starts her travels in the winter of 2019, and after only a few months on the road, she finds herself stranded in her van in Portugal as the

Coronavirus hits. Without a permanent home or address, she tries to navigate the constantly changing reality of lock-down and restrictions, relying on the kindness and friendliness of complete strangers in a foreign land. After escaping across rapidly closing borders, Tina finally makes it back to the UK, where she lived in the past 8 years, only to discover that London is rapidly becoming the new epicenter of the Pandemic. Living an extreme quarantine in her tiny van, Tina discovers surprising new opportunities for work and a growing audience on YouTube. Born in Germany,

a long time London resident who left after Brexit – she tries to figure out what, after all, is home for her. After a few weeks of confinement in London, Tina decides to sell her van and go back to her hometown in Germany, where she buys a new Van and uses the lockdown time to convert and renovate it. As restrictions in Europe start to lift – Tina is back on the road. At least for now...



Shane and Hanna | USA

Shane suffers from muscular dystrophy and uses a wheelchair. Hanna is his girlfriend. For several years they have been documenting their unusual relationship on a YouTube channel. If Shane were to get the corona virus, he would probably die. When the virus

spreads in the USA, the two must immediately go into self quarantine. To avoid contact with other family members, the couple moves into Hanna's apartment, which is not accessible to wheelchair users. In the first few days their main concern is that Shane cannot take a shower in Hanna's inaccessible apartment. However, they solve the problem in a creative way. A few days later Hanna can no longer work from home and the couple runs into financial problems. To help themselves and others in their situation, they start an online donation campaign.



Mohamed | DUBAI

The 25-year old millionaire living in Dubai is known for his luxurious lifestyle and spends his lockdown days making YouTube videos about his recent purchases: expensive cars, exotic animals, and a 15,000 USD Corona-

Virus-Gate that disinfects everyone who enters his house. When he travels to Sweden – in the midst of the Corona Pandemic – he documents deserted airports where he seems to be the only one traveling.



Aynih Iysel | Spain

Aynih is a young medical laboratory assistant from Spain. When Spain imposes the lockdown, she continues to work under great pressure. She uses her YouTube channel to let off steam after work, but also to explain the situation to other people.

When she comes home from work after 10 days without a break, she sees many of her neighbors applauding on balconies to thank the medical staff. This moves her deeply and fills her with motivation. A few days later, at the height of the outbreak,

she is told that her brother got the virus and her mother may have been infected as well. She is worried and frustrated that she cannot see or support her family.



Father Sean | USA

Father Sean is the pastor of a community of hearing-impaired people in Pennsylvania. When the corona virus strikes and the congregation can no longer gather, he opens a new channel of communication for the members on YouTube. The community

members post videos in sign language, report about their situation and share their questions and concerns. Father Sean shares his thoughts and sermons via video. When a community member tests positive for the virus, Father Sean organizes the other members to support the person by providing food and medicine.



Shakir Subhan | India

Shakir is travelling around the world with his motorcycle and dreams of becoming a YouTube star. On his way from Azerbaijan to Europe, the countries gradually begin to close their borders. As he drives through Georgia his temperature is measured at the border

and it turns out that he has a fever. He spends the next few days in a border town in Azerbaijan and tries to find a way to return home. When he finally lands in India, he is welcomed by paramedics in full protective gear and immediately is brought to a hospital. Shakir posts videos from the hospital and local news channels broadcast some of them on the evening news. After he recovers, Shakir is released. When he finally comes home, he learns that he has fulfilled his dream and has become a media star.



Sarah Rae | Italy

Sarah is an 18-year-old high school student from northern Italy. For two years she has been fascinated by films and TV series about viruses and pandemics and she writes reviews and updates. When the coronavirus appears in Italy, she realizes that her fascination with

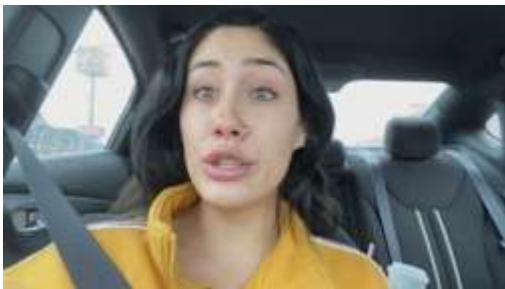
fiction is gradually becoming her own reality. When her school closes down and she has to stay home, she devotes much of her time to upload videos that analyze and describe the new reality as if it were a film.



DR. ED | UK

Dr. Ed is a physician and YouTuber. He regularly uploads videos with tips, advice and stories from his work as an intensive care physician. When the coronavirus appears in the UK, he is the focus of public attention and begins to document his everyday work. After

a few days in the midst of the crisis, he realizes that he is at high risk of infection and does not want to put his wife and children at risk. For this reason he moves in with his boss - the head of the intensive care unit.



kaelyn gutierrez | USA

Kaelyn is a Los Angeles-based makeup and beauty YouTuber. When the corona virus strikes, she is celebrating her 25th birthday, and it is hard for her to ignore the new reality. As her boyfriend is fired as a result of the suspension of public life, he moves in

with her and the two begin sharing an apartment for the first time. While they are in quarantine their relationship is put to the ultimate test. At the same time it forces the two to work things out and stick together.



The Hoffmans | USA

A father-daughter duo that danced their family to prime-time stardom in an effort to spread joy and humor during the difficult time of the lockdown. As the numbers in the US keep on going up and the line between the opposing political parties hardens, the

Hoffman Family uses their YouTube channel to spread love and understanding.

VISUAL CONCEPT

Based on the film #uploading_holocaust, the two directors Udi Nir and Sagi Bornstein have the experience to turn a huge amount of very different material into one big story. The great strength of the film lies in the authenticity of the material. Unfiltered and directly from the perspective of all of us, the film shows how we are dealing with the crisis as it unfolds. In order to maintain this authenticity, we will match the different materials technically and in terms of color, but otherwise we will not process them further. The private material will be combined with news material that contextualizes each chapter. We will also include the most important speeches by Angela Merkel, Emanuel Macron, Donald Trump or Boris Johnson. In contrast to the image, we will elaborately rework the sound. Music will fulfil an important dramaturgical function.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The Coronavirus forces people around the world to isolate and keep a distance, but also to stick together and act for a common goal, amorphous and unclear as it might be. On our first day of isolation we set on our balcony and felt a welcomed notion of freedom. On the third day we thought it might be good to start exercising and meditating. On the fifth day anxiety, loneliness and disorientation started to creep in. By now we aren't sure which day it is or whether this is a weekday or the weekend, but there is one thing we can be certain about – we are not alone.

A search for Corona videos on YouTube revealed thousands of people from every corner of the earth who are going through the same experience, dealing with the same difficulties. Whether it is a young woman from Germany living in her van and racing through rapidly closing borders, an American suffering from ALS who must self-isolate meticulously to stay alive, or an Israeli teenage boy who got the virus and is now afraid to infect his parents – Everyone is trying to keep their sanity, while having to reinvent human interaction, earning a living, and interpreting the ever-changing government guidelines.

Even in normal times, YouTube is a fascinating archive of authentic and diverse documentary material. You can see in it a reflection of our reality, and the more popular and vaster it grows over time – you can also see it as one of the forces that shape our story and our reality. The extreme situation of global self-isolation pushes more and more people to turn to YouTube, to document and share their experiences. YouTubers who uploaded vlogs and interesting documentary materials before Coronavirus – now have a major twist in their story. People who did not share much before are suddenly active on YouTube every day. All of them deal with the same questions, each one in his/her own way.

Looking at their stories and the questions that repeat throughout them provides an unmediated and intimate glimpse into the transforming experience that humanity is currently going through. It offers both dramatic moments that seem to have been taken from a fictional futuristic story, moments of humor, darkness and heart-warming solidarity.

Alongside the stories of YouTubers and ordinary people documenting their daily lives in quarantine, VIRAL uses two other types of rushes: Viral corona videos (from funny and playful memes to balcony concerts in dozens of cities), and daily briefings of world leaders and heads of states, which have already become one of the unusual characteristics of this time. With these tools, we set out to examine what our leaders choose to tell us from their palaces in these difficult moments of crisis, what we

choose to tell each other with the humble means we have, and how this pandemic will register in our collective-viral memory.

We have the expertise and experience needed for structuring and formatting online user-generated-materials, as well as obtaining the broadcast rights for them. Our film #uploading_holocaust (75 min, 2016. BR, RBB, ORF, Keshet, DokLeipzig, DocAviv, Krakow IFF) was composed entirely of over 200 different YouTube clips, and we have already created the production and content schemes to research and obtain materials from hundreds of private and professional sources. We are strong believers in the authenticity and uniqueness of these materials, and the up-to-date and relevant style of documentation they allow for.

PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

Besides the countless private and professional difficulties and challenges, the pandemic will change our lives profoundly. How will we look back on this year 2020, when 4 billion people shared the experience of living in lockdown? Will there be a *Corona-Generation*? What images and stories from this time will become part of our collective memory?

Our globalized high-speed world is standing still and yet, the world out there is changing rapidly and profoundly. We don't know what the world will look like after Corona, whether there even will be such a thing a "after Corona", how much damage our economies will suffer, whether Corona will seal China's final rise to global leadership or whether it will bring the export-dependent Chinese economy to its knees. What will happen to the USA and what to Europe? How will our lives change, and will *Friday for Future* and Greta Thunberg be history, or will the climate movement develop a completely new dynamic through the increased importance of science and the collective experience of coming to a standstill? Will we travel less in the future and what role will the Internet and social media play in our lives in this ongoing crisis? Will the comeback of science continue and will populists like Trump, Bolsonsaro, Johnson & Co. disappear in the face of risky and erratic crisis management?

This is all to be seen, but one thing is clear: since Corona, the world is a different one. Authentically, unfiltered and entertainingly, VIRAL uses YouTube as a gigantic archive of the present and tells through the authentic material of our protagonists how Corona inscribes itself into our lives and changes them.

TEAM

| DIRECTORS

VIRAL is realized by the Israeli director duo Sagi Bornstein and Udi Nir, who have recently made the film "Golda Meir - Prime Minister" for ARTE. For VIRAL, they draw on their experience gained during the production of the film #uploading_holocaust, which was produced 100% from YouTube material. VIRAL is the third production of the director duo with gebrueder beetz filmproduktion.



SAGI BORNSTEIN | DIRECTOR

Sagi Bornstein has 15 years of experience as director, producer and editor of documentaries and features. His work includes Golda Meir - Prime Minister (2019, ARTE, BR, Channel8, Radio Canada), #uploading_holocaust (2016, DOK Leipzig, BR, RBB, ORF, Keshet) and Kafka's Last Story (2011, Arte, SWR, SVT, Channel 2, DOK Leipzig, awards at several European and American film festivals). He studied photography at the film school Camera Obscure and worked for leading Israeli broadcasters before starting his own production company.

UDI NIR | DIRECTOR

Udi Nir is a writer, director and producer. His first documentary film was #uploading_holocaust (2016, DOK Leipzig, BR, RBB, ORF, Keshet). Most recently he directed the film "Golda Meir - Prime Minister" (2019, ARTE, BR, Channel8, Radio Canada). He studied at the School for Screenwriters



in Tel Aviv, created and directed theatre performances and worked as a producer at the Clipa Theatre. Before turning to the arts, Udi worked for Amnesty International and other human rights NGOs.

| PRODUCER

Christian Beetz is founder and managing director of gebrueder beetz filmproduktion - one of Europe's leading production companies for documentary and cross-media content.



GEBRUEDER BEETZ | PRODUCTION COMPANY

Since its foundation in 2000, gebrueder beetz filmproduktion has produced over 150 high-quality documentaries and cinema documentaries for the national and international market and is one of the

100 most important independent production companies worldwide, according to the global industry leader Realscreen. Its films regularly compete at major international A-festivals and have received many prestigious awards - including five times the Grimme Prize, the Cinema for Peace Award, the Prix Europa, the German Film Prize, the HotDocs Filmmakers Award, three times the British Independent Award and the Special Jury Award of the IDFA.

In 2013 the co-production *Open Heart* was nominated for the Academy Award®, in 2014 the cultural documentary *Wagnerwahn* received a nomination for the International Emmy® Award. In 2016, the cinema production *The Land of the Enlightened* at the Sundance Film Festival won the Special Jury Award for Best Cinematography. In 2018 *The Cleaners* celebrated its world premiere in the competition of the Sundance Film Festival selected. The film was screened at 80 festivals, won 15 awards, including the Prix Europa, the Grimme Prize and was nominated for an Emmy® Award. In 2019, *The Forum*, had a strong festival presence (including the opening film at the International Documentary Film Festival in Leipzig, IDFA, HotDocs etc.) and was then innovatively distributed in a combined cinema, TV and digital strategy and has now been shown on TV in over 15 countries.

Further information about current productions can be found at:
www.gebrueder-beetz.de