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Is It 2024 Already?

Upbeat Hybrid Feature Documentary



Photo by [Adolfo Félix](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Viewing *2040* by Damon Gameau for the second time was as entertaining as the first. Thanks to the UK-based charity [Population Matters](#), I had a chance to participate in the screening event.

Some documentaries about climate crisis are serious in its core, and there is no place for smiles. In the case of *2040*, you can thoroughly enjoy this beautifully shot movie and still be surprised at how much you can educate yourself and how serious the topics are. They are still the same old issues with energy, agriculture, overconsumption and overpopulation. But here, you are invited to attune to the solution-based approach and start making a difference for yourself, your community and your planet.

One Planet

An Australian actor and filmmaker, Gameau is the protagonist of the story. Dad shows his young daughter how taking care of the environment can change the world. What will it be like in 2040 for her? Are we still non-stop polluting and harming Mother Nature, still mindlessly overconsuming and suffocating from our economic growth? Is population expanded to such gigantic proportions that extreme poverty is the new normal?

In 2019, the filmmaker packed his bags and went on a journey to Bangladesh, the USA, and his home country too. What I liked the most is that he wanted to find doable solutions to the problems that we are all aware of but don't necessarily feel that something is changing for good on the global scale.

Have you heard of regenerative agriculture, agroforestry, or marine permaculture? There are exciting stories and stunning visuals to these terms. The story about microgrids in Bangladesh is quite amazing. You will learn about how people share solar energy within communities on a daily basis but without gigantic energy companies behind it. The start-up SOLShare has a hopeful example of how things can actually work. Not in the future. Right now.

I, Me, Mine...

I personally liked that this documentary talked about the two kinds of vision and behaviour towards environmental emergency: self-centred and community-driven. Both perspectives are valid, but the latter is what should be truly embraced.

Right at the beginning, Damon imagines the world with its environmental problems but as if it's all happening at his home. It's a hybrid documentary, which allows imagination flow. The air is polluted because of the fireplace in his living room. Water is overflowing in his bathroom. Obviously, he cares about his house and his family and tries his best to deal with the problems. What do you think? Would you worry about other people's houses in a faraway country?

Awareness is Fun

The opposite example is about converting "Me" into "We." It was shown in public places in Oberlin, USA. There, you can find the real-time animated environmental dashboards. People that pass them can see a beautiful data visualization of how people in the city are interconnected with natural resources. For example, how much energy is consumed in the city? What is the total drinking water per person today?

It's interesting how this type of awareness can ignite curiosity. If you think of it, it's simple information with numbers. However, the way it's presented is what makes it special. Adults might be interested in the consumption rates on a daily basis or simply the weather forecast. Pupils are learning to use water and electricity mindfully. Who knows, the number on the board might change if I switch off TV today and read a book instead? What if the board changes when not only me but my friends from school or colleagues at work do the same? It might have a similar effect to what the WW (formerly Weight Watchers) app did: you can control numbers, colours, stats. You accomplish something and are happy to trace your progress.

Surprise

One special issue was raised in this documentary-overpopulation. It was a discovery in a way for the narrator and, I guess, for a lot of viewers. People don't consider overpopulation in the top environmental issues. Yes, we're talking about global warming, fossil fuel disaster, or ocean pollution. But have you ever thought about the number of people on our planet? The quality of life, woman empowerment, and family planning? If you haven't thought about this topic, you'll find this part of the film especially interesting and surprising.

Apparently, we've almost lost our connection with nature. But when you look around, there is empathy, curious and determined people, and innovative start-ups everywhere. Join.