

# Following your Creative Passions with Cameron Maitland - FCAT After School Podcast

Stephanie Werner 0:09

Welcome to FCAT After School, a podcast from SFU's Faculty of Communication, Art, and Technology. In each episode, we join student hosts in conversation with alumni as they explore career journeys since graduation, and gather advice for the next generation.

Stephanie Werner 0:26

In this episode, host Emma Jean - a fifth-year student in the school of communication - sits down with FCAT film school graduate Cameron Maitland. Cameron is a film and content specialist at Hollywood Suite, a Canadian media company that screens and promotes films through cable, streaming, and social media. There, Cam is the face of their online presence, curating and creating content about films and infectiously advocating for what makes them so great. Recorded remotely from his Toronto office, Cam provided insight into the desire to make art, the need to make money, and collaboration and community as the backbone of the filmmaking world.

Emma Jean 1:18

How do you marry your career and your passions? Is it possible? If it is possible, does making money off your passions strip you of your, well, passion? These are thoughts that come up in nearly every conversation that I have with other students, anxiously staring down their graduation date... Thank goodness there are people who can speak to this from experience. This week's guest is one of those people who may have found a way to have both.

Emma Jean 1:43

How are you feeling today?

Cameron Maitland 1:45

Ah fine, you know, Monday. [laughs]

Emma Jean 2:25

Yeah, whenever I visit home and see my parents, and they have cable –

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MEMBER continue doing. But film also kind of combines a lot of those elements so just seemed like a good way to go.

[beat]

Cameron Maitland 4:06

I grew up in Edmonton. [pause] At the time, there was not a lot of film programs in Alberta that were that well regarded. Part of it was my grades. A lot of places required a lot of math and science, which I wasn't very good at. SFU required more of a like submission of creative intent to get in.

Emma Jean 4:31

Studying film at SFU meant learning every aspect of film production, but also working to find his niche within it.

Cameron Maitland 4:37

It was a lot of training, like literal training on various forms. We were still shooting on film. We were still recording sound on tape, a lot of the program because it was kind of focused on experimental film. There was a lot of that. I think what I was really interested in at the time was writing. I wasn't as focused on directing at the time, because it was a bit late, it just kind of seemed like that's what everyone said. So writing was really my focus. But at the start of my degree, it definitely was learning all this different technology, learning kind of theories, lighting, all of that stuff. It just felt like there was kind of a lot to take on before you understood the greater world of filmmaking.

Emma Jean

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Cameron Maitland 6:16

I graduated in 2007. So we were kind of on the cusp of the horrible economic downturn of 2008, which really did kind of rattle the BC industry.

Emma Jean 6:27

Without access to the film jobs that he dreamed of, Cam went looking for any job that would let him write.

Cameron Maitland 6:33

I think for the most part, just about everybody kind of looked aside from film, because we just needed to pay rent. So one of the big things, in Burnaby, near SFU, a job you could always get was working for Electronic Arts. I ended up doing a few things in the video game industry. And then eventually, I kind of started getting these jobs where I could write, essentially, digital copywriting. So something like Yelp, for instance, they paid me to just like I would walk around a neighborhood take a photo of every business right down there like ours. That was like the basis for what Yelp was, and it paid pretty well. And I ended up doing various things like that, working a lot on early social media.

Emma Jean 6:46

As time went on and the B.C. film industry remained seemingly unviable, Cam began to set his sights elsewhere.

Cameron Maitland 7:25

I kept looking for film stuff, the writing stuff, the opportunities weren't there. And Toronto seemed the better place for that I especially wanted to work in pre production and writing. And just knowing that there was production offices, there was so much more in Toronto. And eventually, you know, I cracked in with various internships. My first big thing was

Emma Jean 8:48

Could you tell me more about your experience with – what was it? – theatre and improv?

Cameron Maitland 8:51

Yeah, yeah, that was just a thing I loved in high school. We did Canadian Improv Games, we had an improv team, we won a few awards. It's the basic stuff you can do anywhere. I honestly really promote it with people I know. I think that improv is a big part of business and a big part of comp confidence, like a lot of anxiety. If you get better at improv, you'll still be anxious, but you have strategies to deal with it. You don't need to be able to be great at comedy, to use these various skills. And I do just think it, I don't know, there's something there that I find comes up in all of my work.

Emma Jean 9:29

Cameron was soon able to “yes-and” his way into more and more marketing opportunities for brands like Nintendo. He created branded video content, and used his improv skills in what's for b

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Cameron Maitland 10:50 So I'll try to speed through it because it's like, unless you're exactly

Cameron Maitland 13:46

It's definitely complicated. I think it involves a lot more checking in with higher ups and things like that, especially

Camero Maitland 16:39

I do wish that I was able to do more creative stuff on my own. I do a lot of art and stuff just for fun. I do still like to write and yeah, I would love to, you know, write something, I don't have a project right now. I feel like that I'm super driven on. Right now, I think I just like, continuing to experiment, here and there. I like to paint I like to, you know, sculpt and do little projects, I find that I get a lot of satisfaction from that sort of creativity. I do think that I want to just craft something a little more personal. I'm not sure that that's in





[roars]

Narrator 19:18 Narrator:  
Hungering for meat!

Emma Jean 19:20

Okay, put away your Letterboxd watchlist, or pause the episode until you've finished updating it with those flicks, because you're going to want to listen to Cam's next piece of advice.

Emma Jean 19:29

How can we stay motivated after graduation

FCAT After School is produced by Emma Jean, Torien Cafferata, and Stephanie Werner, with help from Stu Popp and Tessa Perkins Deneault. We respectfully acknowledges the Musqueam (mus-kwee-um), Squamish (sqw) C