

Lockdown diaries: Camille, dancer, choreographer & environmental activist (US)

In the fourth story of [Madrid Lockdown Diaries](#), we're hearing from Camille Hanson, a dancer, choreographer and environmental activist. She's originally from Minnesota (U.S.) and has been living in Madrid for 15 years. Camille offers a unique perspective on what it's like for artists in Spain right now during lockdown, as well as how quickly we can make change happen that affects the entire planet.

What was your life was like a week ago vs. today?

I'm a dancer, choreographer, and teaching artist. A week ago my studio classes were full and flowing with physical rigor. Now seven days later, I'm thankful just to be able to go outside for a 20-minute walk with my dog on a short leash held by a plastic glove while breathing through a face mask.

What do the street looks like?

One can sense the tension. The streets are a reminder that we're living through a plague. The mood is "Lynch" like – empty, strange, and unpredictable. Yet this empty space offers me a break from the fast pace. I welcome that. It brings with it a return to hearing birds sing and leaves ripple – the needed absence of speeding engines driving by.

Have you noticed any random acts of kindness or uplifting things recently?

Have you heard the applauding that happens every night at 10pm from the housebound balconies and windows of Madrid in honor of the Spanish medics? The sense of togetherness it creates is thrilling. However, the most encouraging experience for me has been discovering that we are capable of making change happen over night. In Spain, air, sea and land transportation have been reduced by 50 percent. China's pollution has dropped by a quarter. People are buying local and consuming less. Are these not the same behaviors we need to have happen for the environmental crisis?

A month ago, we were struggling to discuss the changes needed to stay under two degrees of global warming. Today we are witnessing just how quickly agreements can be made.

My work as a choreographer has been inspired by the environment for many years, so I am well aware that we cannot separate the state of the health of our planet from that of the health of our bodies and our lives.

How are you coping?

I believe this global health crisis is a reminder that we need to ask and offer support whether that support be emotional, physical, virtual or financial.

Over the past 72 hours I have had an unspeakable amount of performances and workshops completely suspended due to the coronavirus. Although, I am deeply sensitive to the emergency of the Covid-19, and what is happening for everyone, there will be no aid for me as an artist. There will be no compensation for the loss of these cancelled shows and contracts. In response to this loss, I have put together a fundraiser to help raise support – to keep my life and work afloat. In just 24 hours I've raised almost 50% of my goal. That's amazing. Support is life giving. I hope the darkness of the coronavirus cracks open light and opportunity for many of us. Maybe nourish the qualities of listening and connectedness to each other and the wider community of life.

What's the first thing you'll do once the lockdown is over?

Dance. And then I am going to get radical and completely stop supporting the animal agriculture industry. Their "business" is at the core of our environmental crisis which is at the core of our health crisis, in the sense of the link between humans' poor treatment of wild animals and the coronavirus. It is a dot to dot scenario. The challenge is obvious. It's time to cure the core.



If you could tell the government one thing right now, what would it be?

I would remind Sanchez and Iglesias* that the destiny of our lives cannot be separated from the destiny of earth.

**Pedro Sánchez is the current Prime Minister of Spain, and Pablo Iglesias is Second Deputy Prime Minister*

Here is [Camille Hanson's website](#)

See all stories of [Madrid Lockdown Series](#) here

If you'd like to submit your story, please send an email to daphne@veracontent.com