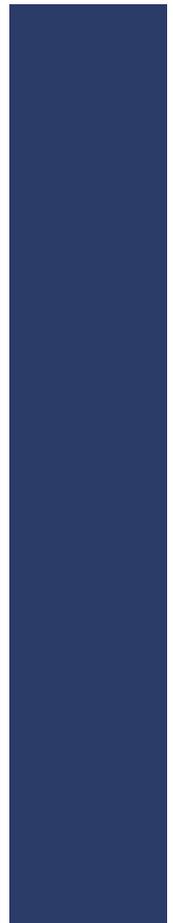


De-coding The Digital Nomad



**HOW MATTIAS
SÖDERHOLM
IS RE-DEFINING
THE WAY
WE WORK**



We are currently well into our Age of Information and an all-new industrial revolution that is embedded into every aspect of our lives. Along with these advancements come alternate cultures; a penchant for buzzwords and ever-changing trends fuelled on by an evolving digital landscape. We are foodies and techies as snail mail becomes a thing of the past. We work in virtual spaces that change the reality of our work. But this revolution comes with deeper meaning and a paradigm shift in corporate environments that go beyond a cool, new term to toss around the table.



Let's look at the concept of a Digital Nomad for instance – a fairly new word in the lexicon, but one that carries an entire lifestyle change along with it. To be a Digital Nomad is to be free of traditional bounds that have defined our idea of a workplace. Being accustomed to long commutes and daily traffic that takes us into artificial, air-conditioned environments is slowly making its way out the window, as are our spaces of work. Traditional environments are being abandoned for beaches and forests and mountains where people are more productive, more lateral and at the top of their game.



We recently sat down with Mattias Söderholm, an artist cum digital nomad who abandoned suit and tie for beach shorts and bigger dreams.

Mattias began his career as a 3D animator in 1993 and released his first animated short film in 1997. In 2006 Mattias quit his full-time career and went back to school, studying sculpture and graduating in 2009. Today Mattias' world is far different to what it was in 1993.

His latest major production Circadian Rhythm was for Nobel Media, Vive and One Reality where Mattias created a VR experience of the 2017 Nobel Prize in Medicine winner's project.

Other notable career events include co-founding ScioReality in 2014, developing the first prototype of a VR app to train orthopaedic surgeons, co-founding HaymakerFX in 2003 and acting as Production Manager at Sensavis.com from 2009 to 2012. Mattias was also Production Manager and Director at One Reality from 2017-2018.

Today, Mattias chooses Sri Lanka to work in and play in. With a love for the beaches of Mirissa and the Techies of Colombo, Mattias has found his perfect way to work as a Digital Nomad.



We sat down with Mattias to get an up-close and personal understanding of just what it all means

How do you identify yourself? As an artist or corporate?

That's a hard one, but I would say the first. Even though I work for money, I decide what gets done and I come up with my own ideas and projects first and then some one pays me for it – but I think that's the distinction. You make your own choice first. You think and you choose your path.

Where does that choice come from?

My first career with special effects, music videos and advertising stopped being fun anymore, so I quit the whole computer thing and went to art school. I felt like I had wasted 15 years of my life because it wasn't worth anything to me but when I went into sculpture, I realized instinct for shape and form and made me not touch a computer for over a year as I worked with my hands. When I came back to it, it was an entirely different experience with my new knowledge.

What was your typical work day like before and what is it like now?

The whole concept of going to work same time every day, no matter what, is now completely foreign to me. I start my days with yoga, a coffee, breakfast and maybe read and have relaxed time with myself to think and reflect. When working in an office, you don't really think. You just bum up and go to work. And you can keep doing that for a long time and maybe you're turning away from your path. Today, I'm not interested in mediocre stuff anymore. It has to be super nice. It has to be best. It's an art thing, it's not just delivering a job, it has to be something you're proud of. Something that makes you go 'woah!' Deadlines and payments take a backseat for me now and quality becomes the priority.



Why did you pick Sri Lanka as a base and a local partner to work with?

I've gone to Thailand and Japan, but the moment Leif Ohlson from Best of Sri Lanka mentioned the island to me, it sounded perfect. And when I arrived, I had a really good time. People here are super nice. One thing I like about Sri Lanka is that there aren't these huge gaps in income, compared to the US and India.

It makes for more natural living and it feels very safe and nice to walk around and everything. And mostly, Sri Lankans are super confident and capable in software development. Top notch really! I've heard stories about China, they are great in the meetings but far away down the hierarchy when it comes to actual work. With Lankan partners, I can get straight into it, create a model of the project with the team and get really hands on.

Does a country like Sri Lanka, with its touristic appeal, hinder your productivity?

I think I'm working more than I do when I'm at home comparatively. Because I do not feel like I'm working.

Sitting in an office, I feel panicked like I'm not supposed to be there, but out here seated by the ocean, I feel like I'm in the right place. I'm relaxed and able to work better. It's not about the hours anymore but doing the right thing. And while I work, I am also holidaying around the island.

What is it like working with the LiveRoom team and with Sri Lankans in general?

I'm super nerdy and a perfectionist and I find that the guys at here are like that too – which means we can work together really well. I need to do super nerdy stuff and I need people with a certain level of competency, like what my local partners brings to my projects. I am super impressed, especially with the coding. These are projects I can do myself, but I like having this team whom I can work with and am not worried at all.



Having worked with companies in Sri Lanka, where do you feel we could improve?

The same improvement that is true for the whole world: the ability to combine aesthetic and technical skills. We need to try and these people in the same room to work together. And we need to recruit more artistic people.

What comes next for you?

It's a different answer everyday. But right now I have this direction: I want to make the best education from VR to mobile phones available to everybody. That's a life purpose. My key role is to make the translation from the technical and the science to something artistic that a child can understand. My fiancé cried when she saw the Nobel Prize project, because I visualized the science into something everyone can understand. Knowledge shouldn't be locked in to complicated words and language so that only selective people can understand it.

Famous last words?

When you're younger you travel to a lot of places, but now when you're turning 40, you find and a place you really like, and you stick with it.

The guys at Liveroom have really become my friends and this is the kind of connection I need to have a great life and create fantastic productions.

It is more than just doing a job, it's like let's get together and make something great with this time on the planet.

Peace on Earth and all the best to all my friends in Sri Lanka and around the globe!

For more information on Mattias, you can contact him via email: mattias@liveroom.xyz



Best of Sri Lanka in Sweden was founded in 2010 by Leif I Ohlson, who saw a need for Sri Lanka to strengthen its brand abroad. The initiative also engages in related sidetracks, including Sri Lanka-centric events, exhibitions and conferences, together with the Sri Lankan Embassy, focusing on entrepreneurship and to convey contacts between Sweden and Sri Lanka. Best of Sri Lanka in Sweden is the core option for developing business relationships, complete with conferences, purchase trips and international meetings. Another part of the business is IT Sri Lanka, which introduces partners with high expertise, both technically and economically.



www.bestofsrilanka.se

Not all who wander are lost
J R R TOLKIEN