

Meet a Science Filmmaker: Yat-Long Sam Poon

Meet Yat-Long Sam Poon! He is a **science filmmaker**.

He has expertise in multiple aspects of filmmaking, including shooting, editing, sound engineering, and more. Sam also has a background in science - he studied marine conservation and ecology in school.



Sam uses his skills for many projects, including his role as a **media producer** for the popular science show "StarTalk."

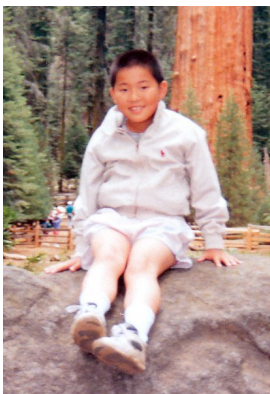
A major part of this job is editing the footage to make the show interesting and engaging!

What is editing? Editing is when you take filmed work and piece it together to make a cohesive story. Often you will put things together in a different order than they were filmed. Editing is very important; bad editing will make a show boring or confusing.

Sam has also worked as a **sound engineer**, ensuring the sound on the video or podcast is high quality and adding music. He also shoots his own short films that focus on science, community and culture, or other interests! He shares his wisdom as a professor teaching filmmaking, biology, or environmental education courses.

What was your childhood like? Did you like science?

As a child, I loved learning science and telling stories. My parents gave me lots of books about science, which I read all the time. I probably learned more from those books than I did from school!



Sam exploring nature as a child.

I would explore my yard and a nearby vacant field, looking for different bugs and other critters. Sometimes I would catch them and bring them home. My parents hated that! I also made short movies with my friends using a camcorder. We created our own special effects and even did our own stunts! In some of our videos, we tried to recreate scenes from our favorite movies. But we would also write our own original stories and make them into videos.

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Describe a typical day at your job.

If I have a shoot scheduled for the day, I will drive to the location where I will be filming. I will set up my equipment like my lights, microphones, and cameras. Then, I will spend much of the day recording footage. After recording whatever I need to, I will bring the footage home and edit it on my computer.

Describe a time in your career when something did not go as planned.

I was on location to shoot a short film at a museum after hours. We needed to finish filming before the museum opened the next day, so we had a very tight window of time to work in. During filming, the director and I realized that a scene from the script we were given would be technically impossible to do given our resources. So, we planned, scripted, and shot an alternative version of the scene.

At first, the writer was not happy about this because they insisted that we shoot the script as it was written. But later on during the editing, the writer saw that the new scene worked better than the original.

What advice do you have for students today?

Pursue everything that interests you.

There's more!

As you might have noticed from this reading, Sam can be considered a **polymath**, or someone who has many skill sets. In addition to his expertise in filmmaking, biology, conservation, and teaching, he is an excellent photographer, as you can see by his photos here!

