

"What the fu©k are we doing, man?"

By  Juanita Pienaar

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The 64th International Festival of Creativity will take place from Saturday, 17 June to Saturday, 24 June in Cannes, France. During the Festival, young creatives from the world over will go head-to-head, working on a live brief and proving themselves on the world-stage in the process. Safaraaz Sindhi reflects on 2015 Cannes Young Lions experience...

In 2015, Ogilvy copywriter (back then still working for Network BBDO), Safaraaz Sindhi, together with Hanro Havenga, won the Cinemark Young Lions competition and went on to represent South Africa at the Cannes Young Lions competition at the Festival.



South Africa's Cannes Young Lions are ready to roar!

Leigh Andrews 18 Jun 2015



While this year's winners Amri Botha and Carina Coetzee are packing their bags to compete in the 2017 competition, we asked Sindhi to reflect on his experience and to tell us how attending the festival impacted him as a creative.



SA winners of Cinemark 48-hour Cannes Young Lions competition announced

Juanita Pienaar 15 May 2017



■ ***In 2015 you won one of the 'golden tickets' after entering the Ster-Kinekor Cinemark 48-hour competition and attended and represented South Africa at the Cannes Young Lions event. How has this event influenced you as a creative?***

The Festival is a bit of a catch 22 in a way because you're in one of the most beautiful cities in the world and you want to explore and see everything but at the same time you've got some of the most influential and inspiring creative minds on a stage inside the Palais Des Festivals talking about the stuff that makes them tick. It's an incredible experience for a young creative, seeing the creators



of YouTube, creators of Google, creators of shark detecting buoys, Julia Louis Dreyfus (oh em gee!), the cast of *Slum Dog Millionaire* and if you're really hungover and need to catch up on some sleep, Kim Kardashian. It's like being in a city with hundreds of gods showing off the cool sh!t they've been creating to entertain, change and save the world. The most beautiful part of it all though is that there's a sense of pride amongst these creators, an unspoken promise and responsibility that the sh!t they put out there needs to be exceptionally great, otherwise it's just litter and the world doesn't need any more of that.

You can't go home after experiencing something like that and write a long copy ad for an insurance company expecting to be satisfied – Pandora's box has been opened, and if you're not at least trying to create and add to the playlist of cool sh!t you see there then you've got to ask yourself, what the fu@k are you doing, man?

■ ***So true. Since then how has your life changed? What have you been up to?***

Well, I've been making sh!t, sometimes I make a lot of sh!t, sh!t and sometimes I make okay sh!t. The okay sh!t usually ends up on my office walls to remind me that I can also add to the playlist of cool sh!t made by the inspiring individuals we all look up to. And in between it all when I'm not making sh!t, I sit around sulky, asking myself, "what the fu@k are you doing, man?"

■ ***How do you think the industry has changed in the last two years?***

The work has changed. And not in a good way. We've started taking ourselves too seriously. We answer briefs instead of ignoring them. We give our clients exactly what they want instead of what they could have never imagined. We easily throw our work into research and develop clutter that consumers expect to see and we're okay with it all. Account management protects the clients and manages the creative, it should be the other way around. Deadlines tighten and the respect, desire and love for really, really good, strong creative work just doesn't seem to be there anymore.

What's worse is that we've started to specialise our creativity, give it a formula, a method and with it, titles like content creator and head of social engagement. "Creativity isn't a department" – I saw this tagged on a wall in an independent ad agency in Kenya and thought it to be true. You know, when the television was invented agencies didn't form breakaway TV-only specialised agencies called "Aqua On Television" and do their own thing, instead they embraced the new medium and then mastered it. We're outsourcing creativity when we have copywriters and art directors in our agencies that are talented enough to make great content for all the mediums at their disposal. Because these people know that content is more than just a linked canvas ad that links to YouTube, that links to your Instagram account, they know that sometimes content is as simple as a beautifully art-directed print ad for a pair of Diesel jeans on a billboard, or a well-crafted radio ad to celebrate genius men with simple inventions. They know that it's everything insightful and everything relatable in an ad. They know that ultimately, the big idea is king and given half the chance, they can apply that thinking to the ever-growing and exciting medium known as online advertising, just like they do in other mediums.

We've all got to take a long, hard look at the industry and ask ourselves... what the fu@k are we doing, man?

■ ***Definitely some food for thought. That said, what do you think of this year's winning ad?***

I like the simplicity of it. I'd like to see it brought to life as an app that plugs into other instant messaging apps and acts as a moral compass/conscience of the user because that will actually change behaviour.

■ ***What advice can you give this year's winners?***

Go be inspired and when you're done, have a drink at the Gutter Bar for me, please.

■ ***Are there any exciting plans in the pipeline for you?***

This month marks my one-year anniversary at Ogilvy Cape Town. It's a place where I'm hoping to learn, grow and stay inspired but most importantly, it's a place where I'm surrounded by a very strange bunch of human beings, each very different and weird and smelly. Some are short and ugly, others look like mutated beasts from a radiation spill – one thing

that's true about them though is, you won't find 'em sitting around asking themselves, "what the fu©k are you doing, man?" too often.

Here's wishing this year's winners, Amri Botha and Carina Coetzee all of the best competing in the Cannes Young Lions competition. Keep an eye on our [Cannes Lions](#) special section for all the latest updates.

ABOUT JUANITA PIENAAR

Juanita is the editor of the marketing & media portal on the Bizcommunity website. She is also a contributing writer.

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