

Q&A 2019 Loeries Africa and Middle East judges: Yash Deb

Yash Deb is managing director and chief creative officer at Isobar, Nairobi, Kenya.

Have you been to SA before? If yes, please answer the question below; if not please give us an insight into your expectations of the country.

Yes, I have, several times in fact but this will be my first trip to Durban.

How does work from your region differ to what you've seen from SA?

It's amazing to see how creative work in SA is always evolving and adapting to the ever changing needs of the consumer landscape.



One great example is the Nando's "More South African Flavour" spot. The ad questions the surplus of "Afro-futurism" on our screens.

It questions the way we celebrate the diversity and beauty of Africa. Should the portrayals always be so bizarrely over the top?

Do consumers really see the same Africa that is being shown by brands?

The Nando's approach puts the consumer at the centre of the campaign and beautifully weaves the product into the narrative.

Such bold work that goes against the ordinary is quite literally food for thought for both brands and agencies.

Kenya is also doing some great work creatively. We have no shortage of passion or imagination and in recent times Kenyan work has been celebrated and awarded at a global stage.

However what we do lack is enough culturally inspired work. Authentically Kenyan work.

I believe that this kind of work helps a brand in activating its purpose, signaling a point of difference and above all embedding itself in people's lives.

Don't get me wrong, there have been examples of work like this in Kenya in the past but there has always been a trend of looking for inspiration to the West while all we really need to do is look really hard at the consumer and the ideas, customs, achievements of our country and society as a whole.

What are you most looking forward to from Loeries Creative Week 2019?

I am really looking forward to seeing all the amazing work and engaging the brilliant creative minds we have in the region.

1. Please tell us a bit about your professional achievements.

I'm a 30-year-old, award-winning creative professional currently living and working in Nairobi, Kenya. I have had the privilege of working on some of the world's most loved brands with some of the world's biggest agencies and at inspiring creative shops. But my biggest achievement is that I have set up the creative department in Kenya from scratch and played

a pivotal role in winning and servicing all the accounts that are currently at the agency. The work we have done has seen Isobar currently ranked as the number-one Creative Agency in Kenya by the APA Loeries.

2. What makes you excited about brand communications? What new skills and technologies do you see coming through in media and advertising right now?

The evolution of data and what we can do with it. It has made us start rethinking not only how marketing gets made within marketing departments and in partnership with agencies, but also how it lives and breathes in the wild. I believe in the balance between math and magic—head and heart—this is a big consideration in putting the right stories in front of the right people and level setting the huge amount of data we now have at our disposal,”

3. What is unique about brand communications in Africa and the Middle East?

The shift towards culturally and socially relevant work has been a breath of fresh air. We have started to move from safe to provocative by relooking at tradition and questioning the status quo. It is an extremely exciting time to be alive.

4. What kind of innovation and creative work will you be looking for as a judge of the Loeries 2019?

I won't be looking at just innovation. I will simply be looking at how creatively a piece of work has crafted a solution to a problem.

5. Do you think the tenets of a successful media campaign are universal? What makes a campaign work in your country?

Definitely not. I feel that more and more we'll see that the strength of a creative campaign lies not in how well it can be controlled but in how rapidly others can build on it.

When it comes to Kenya I feel that campaigns that build strategies around local culture, the addressable consumer and who are brave enough to cede control win.

These elements help personalise the brand message to the individual consumer and make them the champions of the campaign.

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