

Q&A: Jon Wicks

Creative Director, the LEGO Agency



Q: These are strange and unusual times. How has the pandemic been for you personally?

J: Personally, it's been a difficult at times. My wife and I had a baby at the start of lockdown so navigating that and working from home was a bit of a dance. But working at the LEGO agency has been incredible. Despite COVID we have managed to make our way through restrictions to deliver some of our best work. In the last year we produced a global brand campaign, streamed the first ever LEGO Con and launched some incredible partnerships and products. The work has paid off and we have seen amazing sales and growth for two years running.

Q: Do you have a side-hustle? What do you do outside your job as a counterbalance to the stresses and strains of your job?

J: At the start of lock down I created a Doodle Club for the agency and their families. Every week we set a theme, ran workshops, and celebrated the work with a Hartbeat-style gallery film. The club has grown from strength to strength and has helped us identify skills we didn't know we had as an agency. It also gave our kids something to do other than watching Netflix or playing Minecraft when schools were closed. Everything else has been looking after my young family and watching Disney's Encanto on repeat.

Q: In your career, which one piece of work are you most proud of? And why?

J: I'm very proud of the work I made for Amnesty International at VCCP with my partner Anstice Murray. UK law meant many refugee children were being unfairly separated from their families. We put real families on display on London's Southbank to remind our audience that being together can be easily taken for granted (maybe less so after two years of COVID restrictions). The resulting buzz and campaign targeted at MPs managed to shift opinion enough for the law to be changed.

Q: If you weren't in advertising, what would you be doing now?

J: Probably teaching. I'm not sure how good I'd be. It looks like an incredibly difficult and challenging job but many of my tutors and teachers had a huge effect on me so it would be great to follow in their footsteps.

Q: Are awards important?

J: Absolutely... if the work that's being awarded is honest and effective. Making work at the best of times can be tough especially when the culture of our industry gets overly critical and negative. It's important that we take time to lift and celebrate great work, the people who made it and take time to learn from them.

Q: What does it mean to be a juror of The Caples Awards 2022?

J: I am incredibly honoured to be a judge this year. The quality of work submitted to the Caples in the last few years has been phenomenal. I'm excited to see what we get this year. It's also exciting to be part of an awards show that's free to enter. Hopefully this will provoke out industry to think differently about how we celebrate the work.

Q: What sort of work are you hoping to see?

J: Obviously, I'm hoping to see beautifully crafted work and big ideas. But it's important for me that the work has been effective and had a real impact for the business or cause. I'm also hoping to see inclusive work that is reflective of the world we live in.

Q: I know, I know. Impossible question but - what is your one all-time favourite piece of advertising, the one idea you both admire and envy and wish that you'd done yourself?

J: I have far too many to mention.

The most relevant is the iconic 1981 LEGO 'What it is beautiful' press ad of the little girl holding up a multicoloured castle. It's inclusive and doesn't try to suggest that girls should play with a certain type of LEGO. It doesn't make building seem intimidating or difficult but shows the LEGO system can be a medium to express yourself. It's a big part of the rich history of the LEGO brand and something I often come back to when developing new work.

