

Q&A: Brett Colliver

Creative Director, DDB New Zealand

10 answers to 10 questions that let us peer into the mind of one of the world's leading creative directors.



Brett has made a habit of winning Golds and Silvers at international awards shows, including The Caples. In 2022, his work for Samsung, 'iTest', won Best in Show. Have a look at his website (brettcolliver.carbonmade.com) and be consumed with envy.



Samsung 'iTest' won Best in Show at The Caples Awards 2022 as well as Gold in Mobile and Gold in Radical New Strategy.

You're a top creative director. Do you have a side-hustle? What do you do as a counterbalance to the pressures of your workplace?

Is this question going to be listed first? Because people are going to think that I'm super boring when I say that running and working out are what keep me feeling fresh outside of work. Maybe I should take up hang gliding or something.

If you hadn't ended up in advertising, what would you be doing instead?

As a child I wanted to be an architect... which I've found over the years is surprisingly common amongst ad creatives... and especially fussy art directors (which is where I started my career).

In your career, what is one piece of personal work are you most proud of?

Tough question... I'm proud of pieces like iTest and Re:scam, but a spot called 'Armoured Truck' is also up there. What I love about that piece is that almost everyone in New Zealand sees the Lotto ads, so it's a great to be able to talk about it when people ask what I do for a living.



'Armoured Truck' for NZ Lotto created by Brett Colliver and Mike Felix.

What work has your agency/team produced you're particularly proud of?

I didn't work on it but I'm still impressed every time I see 'Sperm Positive', the first HIV-positive sperm bank. Not only did it help break down stigmas around HIV, but it has also literally created human lives.

What recent work have you seen from another agency (or agencies) that you would really like to see entered into The Caples? And why?

I've seen lots of great stuff on the industry sites over the last 12 months, but I'm most excited to see things pop up that I've never seen. It's those new pieces of work, - often built on a fascinating local or cultural insight I haven't heard of - that are the most exciting to me.

Are awards important?

I think we over-prioritise them but they're the currency of the industry and they certainly have their place. I like that they show us what's possible and they inspire me to keep pushing.

What does it mean to you to be a juror of The Caples Awards in 2023?

I'm really looking forward to seeing all the great work. It's always inspiring - and slightly depressing - to see so much good work in one place.

The Caples is free to enter. Is this brave. Or very, very stupid?

I think it's great, as long as we all keep our standards high when deciding what to enter. Free shouldn't mean roll the dice on stuff you wouldn't bother putting entering if you had to pay.

Impossible question. But what is your one all-time favourite piece of advertising, the idea you most wish you'd done yourself?

Virgin Mobile's 'Jason Donovan' by Host and The Glue Society.
([Check it out here.](#))

Since becoming an ad person, I've seen lots of campaigns that I love. There are far too many great pieces to name just one. But 'Jason Donovan' has a special place in my heart because I loved it well before I got into the industry. As a regular human, it made me go out of my way and choose to engage with it. It told me, and everyone in Australia, not to call the 0403JASOND to harass 80s soap opera star, Jason Donovan... so I called the number and harassed 80s soap opera star, Jason Donovan. Multiple times. So, I still love it as a campaign now. But for managing to capture my attention back when I was a regular human who tried to avoid all ads, I love it even more.



Host & The Glue Society for Virgin Mobile Australia, 2006