

Q&A: Andy McLane

Creative Director, Anything is Possible (Brighton, London, Manchester, Cape Town)

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



Robert Plant (of Led Zeppelin) told Andy he didn't have a future in rock music. So he made his way into advertising and he's been here for 35 years. Mind you, he still plays with three bands though he's keeping it secret from Robert.

Awards for The Army, Aidi, Levi's, O2, British Airways.

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?

A side hustle is essential. I play drums and percussion in 3 bands. And I paint huge semi-abstract landscapes - oil on canvas.

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

Probably a teacher. I like seeing the moment when people amaze themselves with their ability.

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

Probably coming up with the idea of celebrating kids getting mucky for Persil Non Bio, which was summed up in the line Dirt Is Good.



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

The Christmas campaign we created for Ordnance Survey. It has run for two years now and has not only hit all sales targets but created an uptick in brand awareness and positive sentiment.

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

Uncommon come to mind, but they get enough PR. Quite rightly. I quietly admire the work of the agency Pablo. They've worked hard to build a creative reputation and have a varied and always creatively excellent output. Their Ukraine appeal is great. And I like their Deliveroo work. Not sure if they came up with the line 'Food. We get it' for Deliveroo.



Can you identify any trends which you and your fellow judges should look out for at The Caples 2024? GenAI, perhaps, or new developments in influencer marketing, etc?

Ideas that have been created by our audience. I'm thinking primarily younger people who are naturally makers and creators, so we have to involve them in the process and learn how to have a lighter touch as creative directors.

Are awards important?

Yes. They set the standard for agencies and clients to aim at. But, besides creative excellence, they need to underline the business advantage great creativity should always remember to achieve.

What does it mean to you to be a juror of The Caples Awards in 2024?

I come to it with 35 years of seeing many great ideas but with the humility to know that I am here to learn new ways of thinking that I can transmit back to my agency, clients and future hires. And I have to say that 2024 feels like a time in the world where creativity has a great responsibility to enlighten in dark days.

If you could have five creative luminaries sitting around your kitchen table, having a drink and a chat, who would they be? What do you think you'd talk about?

John Webster, Frank Whittle, Nina Simone, Tom Waits and Vivienne Westwood.

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

Oh crikey. So much creative I get that feeling about, which I think is a good motivator. The one that comes to mind is a poster I saw in New York in 2011, from a cab as I went to JFK. Very simple and punchy line in bold typography - 'Don't like gay marriage? Don't get gay married' -

I don't know who created it but it has a brevity, wit and activist quality to it that raises a smile and a question of conscience.

