

Q&A: Mark Denton

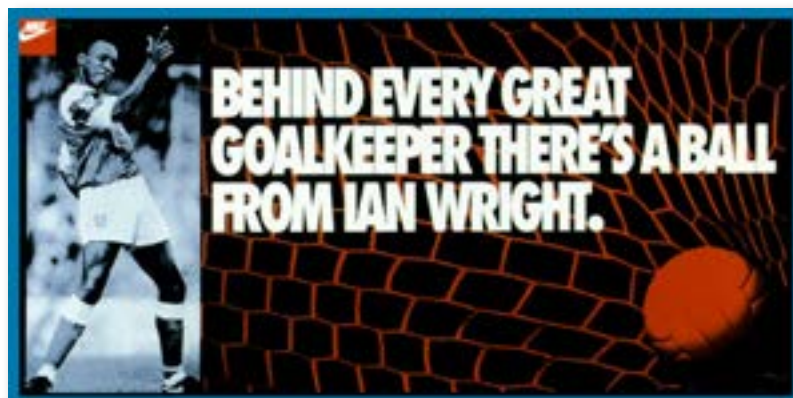
CEO, ECD and tea boy at COY! Communications.
Caples Awards 2024 juror.

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



Mark has been a creative partner in a much-lauded agency and the owner of a design agency. He's art directed famous ads, directed commercials, illustrated campaigns, launched a magazine and written a book.

When he says he's won "an obscenely large number of awards", he really has – for Nike, Wrangler, Heineken, Levi's, Greenpeace...



1994. Agency: Simons Palmer Denton Clemmow Johnson.
Art Director: Mark Denton

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?

I AM indeed a top creative director but sometimes it seems that being a CD is actually the side-hustle. I spend most of my waking hours either looking at my phone, watching TV or engaged in some creative pursuit or other, f'instance...

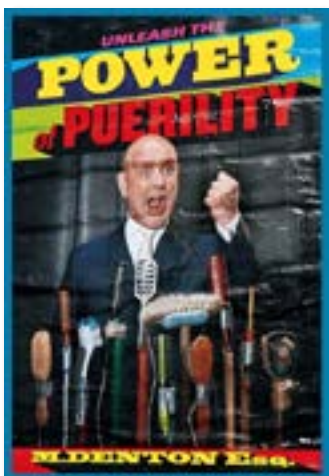
ART - I've had my work exhibited in the V&A, Saatchi Gallery, the Royal Academy, The National Football Museum and sold all over the globe.

DESIGN - I've designed everything from my furniture to my clothes (suits, shoes, jewellery, the lot). I've even designed my own Grave!

TALKS - I've done hundreds of them for tons of different international companies; D&AD, BBC, SKY, ITV, TIME Inc, Channel 4, PROMAX, numerous ad agencies, design companies, clients (basically, anyone who asks).

FILM - over 500 commercials and a couple of short films (I've even been the star of a few commercials in my time).

PUBLISHING - a few magazines and books (I still like ink on paper). I'm currently working on a NEW creative newspaper that'll be out in the autumn.



Available for £20.00 [HERE](#)

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

If I hadn't ended up in advertising (by mistake) I probably would have taken up one of my first two career choices - panel beater/sprayer or hairdressing. Because I was a bit 'arty' as a kid my Mum suggested that I get a job painting the flowers on crockery but that was a non-starter because I didn't want to move to Stoke-on-Trent.

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

It's tough to say what piece of personal work I'm most proud of. Good work is useful for opening doors but generally I'm most excited about what's happening next. Given that, I'm generally proud of most of the work I've done when I've been given a free hand. If I had to narrow it down to one piece of work it's a Nike 48 sheet poster featuring the Rugby star Brian Moore. I didn't write the line (that was Sean Doyle), I designed (or art-directed) the poster...happy days!



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

Last year I was engaged in a very exciting, albeit slightly different, project. I volunteered to be an intern (at 66 years of age I thought it was about time I found out how advertising works). I put myself out there on social media and my offer was picked up by Grey London. I spent six very educational weeks there and it was filmed by a wonderfully talented director - Jonnie Malachi. I enjoyed the experience enormously, so much so that I'm taking up acting and going for some more opportunities in front of the camera in '24. The film, 'The 66-year-old Intern' should be out early this year.

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

The piece of work that I liked most last year was the Pot Noodle Campaign from adam&Eve/DDB London, 'It fills a hole'. There were a bunch of posters and a TVC. It was such a simple idea. There was a collection of holes (pot-hole in the road, open washing machine, entrance to a bird box, etc, etc...) all of which had been filled to the brim with Pot Noodles. There was even some online activity where some mad bloke actually started filling in potholes with Pot Noodles. STUPID/FUNNY and perfect for the target audience with not a good cause in sight! I hope it's eligible from a timing POV, it's just the sort of irreverence we need in these 'challenging' times.



Agency: adam&eveDDB

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?

Here's a trend I'd like to start. How about Humanity? With the wind blowing in the right direction I think it might take off.

Are awards important?

Awards are extreeeeeeeeemly important. It's essential to reward and inspire at the same time. Although you shouldn't give away too many, otherwise they lose all their value. I'm not a 'less is more' type of bloke but in this rare case I think you'll find I'm right (more or less).

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

I'm genuinely fluffed-up to be asked to be a 2024 Caples juror. I can't wait to meet my fellow jurors and get stuck-in BIG TIME.

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?

Five creative luminaries? Tough question.

Andy Warhol (ad-man done good, obvs), Tex Avery, Jean Paul Goude, Leo Baxendale and David Shrigley. We might not talk much but we'd definitely play 'BLOW FOOTBALL' (probably create a mini league with fictional teams that we'd make up, along with the strip, mottos etc).

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

Impossible question... NOT-SO-Impossible actually. LEGO 'KIPPER'.



LEGO "Kipper" by BBH, 1980. See the commercial [HERE](#)