

The producers' wrap: Ryan McManus of Native VML

By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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SA was responsible for 42 wins at the One Show 2017: six bronze, one silver, and one gold pencil, as well as 10 merit awards, with 10th spot in the country rankings. I spoke to some of the people responsible for this winning work behind the scenes. Next up is Native VML.



#OneShow2017: Final night's winners

13 May 2017



Native VML's Twitter Refugees for Passop walked away with a Bronze One Show Pencil for 'branded social post – real-time response. This work was also awarded a Wood Pencil at the recent D&AD Awards and has become one of Native's most awarded campaigns, with gold awards at both the Bookmarks and Loeries as well as a silver at the Cannes Lions last year.



#BehindtheLoeries with... Ryan McManus

Leigh Andrews 15 Jul 2016



McManus knows all about that, having won his first Loerie Award as a student of the AAA School of Advertising and being instrumental in positioning Native VML as a serious creative contender in the industry. Little wonder as he himself has judged at Loeries, New York Festival, AdPrint, and ADC, was listed in *Mail & Guardian's* top 200 South Africans 2014, and in *The Media Magazine's* Top 40 under 40 for 2015.

Here, McManus shares his input.

📌 Congratulations! Talk us through the way our creative industry collaborates and gets the job done.



Ryan McManus, ECD at Native VML.

On the best jobs, the collaboration between agencies and production partners feels seamless. It's usually just about the people and that the people are confident and comfortable in their ideas and what they can contribute.

It's always awesome when people aren't precious with ideas – like they know that they have lots of ideas or routes to go and they love to push the work and craft it. The best partnerships are always ones where the people are able to bring the best out of each other and they know that every conversation can improve the work. I really value partnerships with all the people we work with.

■ **Getting into the nitty-gritty, elaborate on your involvement in this specific winning work.**

This piece of work was actually born out of our tech department. They built a Twitter-bot that was capable of listening and responding to things. I was so impressed by the capabilities that it seemed like a good idea to make it listen to something that was being spoken about a lot, but listened to very little. This was the refugee crisis – and specifically the labelling of people that really bothered me.

Calling young children 'refugees' just puts it into a segment in your brain that seemed like a dehumanising way to talk about and think about a problem. When we put people in groups they can become anonymous. And so can the problem. I wanted to bring back some humanity to the way we talk about these people. And remind people that these are real human beings with real hopes and dreams just like yours. It's ironic that it took a piece of A.I. to bring some humanity to a problem.

■ **Share your opinion on SA's quality of creative work overall, especially as we ended up in 10th country ranking spot at the One Show with a gold and best of discipline in radio.**

I think SA has some amazing work. We are fantastic storytellers and conceptual thinkers. We have great empathy and can also tell a great joke. But I think there is still a long way to go and we should be doing better. I think we still need to fight for braver work. And create work that has scale. We have such a rich culture to draw on and amazing stories that have never been told. And I think we need to take away this invisible ceiling that seems to cap some of the creative work. We should experiment more!

■ **What are you most looking forward to from the rest of the year's award circuit, with Cannes Lions around the corner and Loeries just a few months away?**

It's always great to see the best work. I am always inspired by the best ideas and it's just amazing to see the different schools of thought from around the world. This year we are talking in Cannes at the Entertainment Lions, so that will certainly be a massive highlight!

Keep an eye on our [Loeries](#) special section for the latest updates and revisit our [One Show](#) special section for key interviews, insights and accolades.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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