

Spike Lee awarded first Cannes Lions Creative Maker of the year Award

As a part of the 70th edition of the International Festival of Creativity, Cannes Lions has unveiled its first honorary Creative Maker of the year Award. The award will be presented to the renowned filmmaker, screenwriter, actor, and producer, Spike Lee, during the Festival.



Spike Lee is the first Creative Maker of the year Award. Source: Instagram

When the Festival was founded in 1954, the original Lion was created to recognise world-class creativity in TV and Cinema advertising. Seventy years later, this award honours that heritage, and will celebrate an increasingly broad mix of creative makers who will bring ideas to life into the future.

World class creative work

Simon Cook, CEO of Lions, said: “We know that world-class creative work takes so much to deliver. Since its inception, Cannes Lions has always been about the makers and the creatives who walk through walls to realise their vision. Going forward, this award will honour creative makers, from any discipline who are inspirational beacons for our whole community. In our 70th year, it seems appropriate that the inaugural Creative Maker Award should go to a director.

“It’s a huge honour to present Spike Lee, one of the most influential figures in contemporary cinema and culture, with this accolade live at the Festival. Spike embodies the spirit of this award as a maker that strives to make creative stories and show the world what they can only see in their imaginations.”



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The award, supported by Black At Cannes, honours multi-Lion award winner Spike Lee, whose unparalleled body of work has made an indelible mark on filmmaking, television and the creative industry. And as the founder of his own creative agency, Spike DDB, his mission has been to help brands change the world by keeping pace with culture.

Alongside receiving the award, Spike Lee will speak on the Festival stage in a keynote fireside chat, with filmmaker and director, Barry Alexander Brown, on 23 June.

Obstacles still remain

Commenting on receiving the award, Spike Lee, filmmaker, screenwriter, actor, and producer, said: "I'm honoured to accept the inaugural Cannes Lions Creative Maker of the Year award for my contributions to the advertising industry, but a reminder: "We keep having these obstacles, these hurdles, we have to face and we have to keep knocking them down". I said this in 1997 and still say it today."

Lee's career spans over 30 years, receiving five-time Oscar nominations for: *Do The Right Thing*, *4 Little Girls*, and the critically acclaimed hit feature *BlackKkKlansman* that he co-wrote and directed, going on to win the Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay in 2018. He was also awarded an Honorary Oscar in 2015 for his lifetime achievement and contributions to the state of motion picture arts and sciences.

Lee is also known for his legendary Jordan Brand TV commercials and marketing campaigns with Michael Jordan. Commenting on the award and Spike's legacy as a world renowned creative maker, Shannon Watkins, chief marketing officer at Jordan Brand, said: "Spike's focus on telling stories, combined with his ability to capture the pulse of Black Culture sets him apart from others in the industry. Spike created iconic memories, and helped to build the soul of what Jordan Brand represents. Maybe the shoes on our feet wouldn't make us jump as high as MJ, but just for a moment, we might feel the confidence and self-belief of the greatest to ever do it."

Peter Ukhurebor, founder of Black At Cannes, commented: "Spike Lee is a creative role model who has paved the way for so many black creatives. The Creative Maker of the Year award inspires us to continue spearheading the creation of pathways for diverse voices and promoting inclusion and equity across the global creative industry. We applaud the partnership."

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