

Net#work BBDO to launch limited edition book on creativity

To mark its 23rd year, Net#work BBDO is publishing a limited-edition coffee table book that examines insights into the nature and process of creativity by 30 of South Africa's top creative leaders. The proceeds will go towards building a library in a disadvantaged community.

Crafted and designed by one of the country's rising stars, Emma Strydom, the book titled Creative#Director (#CD) contains provocations, inspirations and award-winning work from 30 of SA's leading creative minds as they endeavour to define creative work and its significance.

Mike Schalit, Net#work's creative co-founder and creative chief of BBDO SA Group, says, "Instead of simply looking back at our last 23 years of learning on the fly, most notably through mistakes, I thought it might be more instructive to look forward and see if we could identify some wisdom on the subject. And what better than through the eyes of some of the extraordinary ideasmiths who've passed through our creative incubator?"

#CD probes what it really takes to direct creativity. "Breaking through the wallpaper of mediocrity and breaking down the wall of indifference calls for the very best of ideas, yet the most original are oh-so-elusive," says Schalit. "These ideas have no precedent. They defy any logic or pattern."

Creativity is a powerful business weapon

The 30 creatives in #CD have all been part of the Net#work journey. Some went on to become creative directors in their own right, some formed their own agencies, some simply found themselves, and some are still with the agency today.

#CD ponders whether one can ever learn to master the bastard art, or inexact science, of being creative.

Mariana O’Kelly, executive creative director, Ogilvy & Mather, says: “Awards will come if you chase that voice inside you that tells you to go higher, brighter, better and simpler. Learn to listen carefully, as it’s the best creative director you will ever work for.”

Asheen Naidu, now flying the flag in Australia as executive creative director, BWM Dentsu in Sydney, advises aspirants to make work that people in the real world will like. “And if you’re lucky, there will be a few pieces they love.”

South Africa’s legendary Robbie Brozin, Nando’s co-founder, early Net#work client, and crusader for so many ground-breaking creative initiatives has penned the foreword:

“ I’ve been on the receiving end of some awesome work which I thought was crap, and some crap work which I thought was awesome, and a whole lot in-between, but most enduring at the end of it all are the characters and souls behind every idea – the creatives. Creativity is the most powerful business weapon in any marketer’s arsenal. Hey, it can help change the world! Just look at what it’s done for us! ”

Work hard and be nice to people Sometimes it’s a little more philosophical, according to early day Net#work copywriter, now one of the country’s most influential creative leaders for a new generation, Neo Mashigo, creative partner M&C Saatchi Group, “One who sows the seed will not enjoy the shade. The one generation sows the seed, another waters the seed, another prunes, another enjoys the shade. It is an intergenerational sacrifice.”

Mike Barnwell, executive creative director FCB Cape Town, advises succinctly, “Work hard and be nice to people,” and this speaks directly to the group’s ulterior motive for the book. “I’m thrilled to announce that we’re also forming a #CD Collective across our respective agencies to collaborate on making some dents in the universe,” says Schalit. “First up is education: we’ve banded together for this first limited edition to contribute a library to a disadvantaged community. With a bit of luck, we’ll help inspire a force out there to keep fighting the good fight, one insanely ambitious step at a time.”

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