

Q&A: Jacob Bagai

Creative Director on the loose. Founder, Adcademy Århus.



Jacob has spent 23 rather reluctant years in advertising. He would rather be on the tennis court than in another meeting about the meeting that may or may not happen. Looking back over his career, he is more likely to talk about getting drunk in a London bar with Hollywood star Christopher Walkern than any of his awards.

As a creative person through and through, Jacob believes his role is to gather data, do research, plan strategically, talk to people and only then put pen to paper.

Q: These are strange and unusual times. How has the pandemic been for you personally?

J: Denmark was spared much of the horror that took place elsewhere, so I must admit that I took the liberty of enjoying the initial break. Then it got worse, and I realized that it's so much nicer to be told to fuck off in a physical meeting than it is to be asked to log off in an online meeting. The winter has been cold and lonely.

Q: Do you have a side-hustle? What do you do outside your job as a counterbalance to the stresses and strains of your job?

J: I play tennis. I'm so obsessed with tennis that I block my meeting calendar on sunny days and plan my vacations around the tournament calendar. I hoard new balls because I fear that the supply chain crisis might hit my hobby. Would have been great to be a better player, though.

Q: In your career, which one piece of work are you most proud of? And why?

J: I'm generally not proud of my own work, but if I had to pick one campaign, it would have to be a series of films that we did for a Danish bank back in 2010-11. We shot a series of black and white slice of life films involving quite a lot of the artists of the infamous Dogma 95 film movement and achieved substantial results for the client with a genuinely different campaign.

Q: If you weren't in advertising, what would you be doing now?

J: I wouldn't mind being a tennis coach again teaching kids to compete in friendship. I also wouldn't mind selling something a lot simpler than thinking, planning, and writing..

Q: Are awards important?

J: Yes! Our industry is about competition and excitement and awards keep us sharp and proud. The trick is to stay alert as a judge and remember to award ideas that you would like to have come up with yourself.

Q: What does it mean to be a juror of The Caples Awards 2022?

J: It's an honour and it's an opportunity to see great stuff, meet great people and to learn from the work and the other judges. It's also my chance to honour effective and creative work and to have my old and dusty assumptions wiped down.

Q: What sort of work are you hoping to see?

J: I'm hoping to see energetic, optimistic, and eccentric work. I'm hoping to see how the constraints of the pandemic have made creatives even more stubborn and brilliant. I'm hoping to see work from places and cultures that I wish I had known before.

Q: I know, I know. Impossible question but - what is your one all-time favourite piece of advertising, the one idea you both admire and envy and wish that you'd done yourself?

J: Among thousands of favourites, I really admire envy the courage and vision behind Fallon's bmwfilms.com – especially Wong Kar Wai's execution called The Follow. The idea, the acting, the direction, the score, and the attention to detail in execution.

Thank you

