

Q&A: Mike Spirkovski

Chief Creative Officer, Saatchi & Saatchi Australia



Most ad ideas last for an instant. Mike has had an idea which has not only lasted for 15 years, it has grown year on year. Big respect for Earth Hour. ([HERE](#) is the website.) Big respect for Mike and how he really has used the power of advertising to make the world a better place. Take a look at 2021 Caples Gold winner ‘Donation Dollar’ as evidence ([HERE](#)).

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

M: I guess its unlike anything I’ve ever experienced before. It’s also proved how delicate we are as a species and the importance of having a light touch on our planet and to back off mother nature when she says so. The last few years have been a great time to reflect on the most important things in life like family and how we can all be more sustainable as a species.

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?

M: I love cycling and spend every free hour on my road bike riding up and down the rolling hills of the upper North Shore in Sydney and other idyllic and isolated locations. Finding cycling years ago changed everything for me and has made me better at everything especially my health, well-being, and overall mindset. I build my own bikes and love the craft and delicate detail which goes into making a superbike. I’ve also found my love for camping again and now own 4-wheel drive which I am also building up for a family trip around Australia to relax and do absolutely nothing.

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

M: There are many ideas I am proud of but none more than Earth Hour which we launched in 2007 whilst at Leo Burnett Sydney. It’s by far the most important idea I’ve ever made and has lived on globally and continues to grow each year. Plus, it’s the one idea my young children found out about on their own through school initiative’s and support each year all while never knowing their dad made it.



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

M: Probably working for the CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) and solving environmental problems through innovation. Or I'd be building bikes or cars or anything that involves making something.

Q: Are awards important?

M: Yes, because they identify the best of the best and push us to do better. Whilst awards are a sense of acknowledgment and achievement (and sometimes just a necessary pat on the back for working bloody hard), they are also about direction and foresight. Importantly awards can identify changing cultural trends and have the power to encourage the type of work we do for brands in the future.

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

M: It feels excellent. I've never judged the Caples before and love the fact the Caples is free to enter which puts all focus on the work. An award show that's not just about money says a lot about the organisation and its values, so I'm super proud to be involved.

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

M: I'm hoping to see ideas that make me feel that special feeling you get when you see something special. It's like a combination of pride, envy, and gratefulness all at once, and that someone somewhere had the ability to do something you didn't think possible.

Q: 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?

M: There are so many ideas I envy, but one that really impacted me at a very positive part of my career was the **Tap Project for Unicef by Droga 5**. (Ad Age report [HERE](#)) The sheer simplicity of making consumers think about the true value of something they get for free, and the difference this can make to those who don't, really changed my point of view on the world.

The Tap Project, and many others like it are the reason why I love work that has a greater purpose in life. I'll always push to make ideas like this above all else because they matter, and work that matters is what we as an industry should all be striving for every day.

