

Q&A: Alan Cinnamond

Head of Visual Communication, CDM x TBWA\Health London
Caples Awards 2024 juror.

10 answers to 10 questions that let us peer into the mind of one of the world's leading creative directors.



Alan has worked as a Creative Director in Advertising, Brand Strategy, Broadcasting and in Health & Pharma, in London and Sydney, on some of the world's most loved brands and products, solving their business problems with creative and engaging ideas.

He's won numerous creative awards but is most proud of being one of only a handful of Creative Directors to win Cannes Lions for Digital, Cannes Lions for Advertising and Cannes Lions for Broadcasting.

You're a top creative director. Do you have a side hustle? What do you do as a counterbalance to the pressures of your workplace?

My daughter plays Netball and Hockey at a high level, so I spend my time ferrying her around the country and watching her compete, not much time for anything else. I do though now know the rules of Netball, so you could say that this is currently my 'side-hustle'.

If you hadn't ended up in advertising, what would you be doing instead?

Playing in midfield for Leeds United and terrorising Man Utd.



In your career, what one piece of personal work are you most proud of?

At every agency I have worked at I have always sought out the projects that do ‘good’, the work where I can give back, charity work, and work that rights wrongs. The piece of work I’m most proud of is the collaboration with ‘Great Guns’ and the amazing Laura Gregory. Laura asked us if we could write some viral/digital films for a lovely man called Barrie Segal who had set up a website called AppealNow.com, whose mission is to fight unfair parking tickets issued to legally parked cars.

The result was three anarchic films that made the 6.0 clock news and national newspapers, the website crashed with the amount of visits, registration trebled... and we also won two Gold Cyber Lions at Cannes.



See the AppealNow.com films [HERE](#)

What work has your agency/team produced you’re particularly proud of?

Our ‘The Brain Tumour Charity X Snapchat’ campaign. It takes twice as long to diagnose a teenager with a Brain Tumour as the symptoms can look a lot like being a teenager. We used humour to engage teens, and then once engaged delivered our serious message. The campaign is still The Brain Tumour Charity’s most successful campaign, it is Snapchat UK’s best-ever performing filter campaign, and it was all done for the budget of £6,000.

What recent work have you seen from another agency (or agencies) that you would really like to see entered into The Caples? And why?

‘The Samaritans’ film by the in-house agency at Norwich FC. It’s simple and powerful. A gut-wrenching piece of data guided the idea – the average ticket holder for a Norwich FC game is sadly the same average age as those men most at risk of taking their own lives – and executed with a simple locked off shot. This isn’t ‘celebrity’ Tyson Fury fighting an invisible opponent with beautifully altered footage of the Wilder fight by MPC. This is the zig to their zag. The raw essence of the creative idea is king here and with over 53 million views in its week of release and national media coverage in all channels this has to be one of the best ROI’s of the year.



See ‘Check In On Those Around You’ for World Mental Health Day [HERE](#)

Can you identify any trends which you and your fellow judges should look out for at The Caples 2024? GenAI, perhaps, or new developments in influencer marketing, etc?

Well, there will invariably be more AI disruption. But with the world in disarray, the cost-of-living crisis, etc, could there be a rise in ‘local digital communities’ rather than international ones. Locally sourced produce and products, an increased appreciation for goods and services closer to home and the sense of doing the right thing for the world, it feels like local digital strategies will be the preference....along with joy and playfulness.

Are awards important?

Abso-bloody-lutely! Awards are great for business, great for agency and client morale and great for retention and recruitment of staff. The case for proving that creative excellence is linked to commercial effectiveness is undeniable. Peter Field and Les Binet’s work with Thinkbox/IPA showed that most creatively awarded advertising campaigns are 11 times more efficient at delivering business success – sales, share, profit or loyalty. End of debate.

What does it mean to you to be a juror of The Caples Awards in 2024?

To discuss and critique work from fellow creatives is always a privilege to do, but being part of an honest, it’s-all-about-the-creative, award show is an absolute honour. Plus I now get the chance to ask jury President David Harris why he never hired me!

If you could have five creative luminaries sitting around your kitchen table, having a drink and a chat, who would they be? What do you think you’d talk about?

John Webster from advertising, Paula Scher the Graphic Designer, David Bowie the singer and actor, Zaha Hadid the architect, and Banksy the artist. I would hope that we would talk about ordinary, everyday things...the fabric of life. The things that brought them joy, that drove them forward, the things that made them cry and laugh and the things they lived for.

Impossible question. But what is your one all-time favourite piece of advertising, the idea you most wish you’d done yourself?

Hamlet Cigars ‘Golf bunker’. It’s so pure and effortless in its execution. One shot, tracking into a Golfer stuck in a deep bunker on the 13th hole. All you can see is the continuous, feverish swing of the club and spraying of sand as the Golfer fails to get out of the sand trap. In the end he gives up. Cue the chords of Bach’s ‘Air on the G string’, the strike of a match, and the puff of Hamlet Cigar smoke as the Golfer consoles himself. We hear the VO ‘Happiness is a cigar called Hamlet’, then, pure comedy gold, the Golfers hand appears and throws the golf ball onto the green.

Genius.



See the Hamlet ad [HERE](#)