

Q&A: Firrdaus Yusoff

Head of Creative, Forsman + Bodenfors, Singapore
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.



There can't be many logisticians who've transitioned into top creatives but that's what Firrdaus has done.

He's been reported as believing there is a bias against work from Asia at major awards shows. "The nuances get lost." Juries don't always pick up on the cultural context, he says. Well, at The Caples Awards 2023 he and his team picked up three Golds and three Silvers and in 2024 he's a judge himself so he can help make sure work from the region gets every chance to win again.

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?

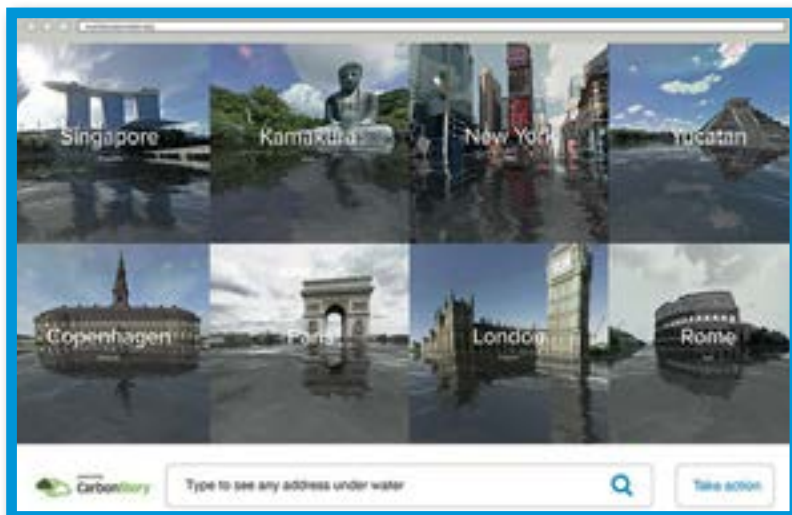
No, I don't. I feel more people should also appreciate the art of slowing down and switching off. Work is hard enough as it is. I simply wind down with family and perhaps binge on random content on Tik Tok to recharge.

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

Probably something to do with the logistics industry. That's my educational background. Yes, quite the pivot.

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

I still quite like a thing we did for Carbon Story. To highlight rising sea levels, we created World Under Water. It was a website where users could type any address and see it virtually submerged. I would argue this project is even more relevant in today's context. It was featured on CNN and won FWA's Project of the Year. Forbes called it "One of summer's biggest successes in scientific content marketing". Not sure what that meant but we appreciated the love.



View the case history [HERE](#)

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

There are a few from my agency which I am mighty proud of. The great thing is that they span across different clients within the agency. But the one I am particularly fond of is a project we did for Down Syndrome International. With the rise of virtual influencers and how they all tend to look a certain way, we felt that diversity and inclusion in the digital space was becoming an afterthought. So we created the world's first virtual influencer with Down Syndrome called Kami. She was co-created by over 100 women from the DSI network, and they determined every aspect of her social presence. Since her creation, Kami has been showing up in places that truly matter. She's also now in META's Ethics Guidebook as a case study for future virtual influencers.



See the case study among *The Caples 2023* winners [HERE](#)

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

Hotshot Philippines agency GIGIL created a hilarious pop-up experience of what it's like to be inside a giant cooking pot while giant chefs loom over you. Yes, the experience is as unnecessarily bizarre as it sounds. But it's a smashing fun idea for me. I think we should strive to reward advertising that is just unapologetically advertising.



See the TikTok [HERE](#)
Read about it [HERE](#)

Are awards important?

It depends. It depends on the awards itself, the budgets that you have, the agenda of the agency in question, the career trajectory that you're set on. And if those are aligned with your own personal goals, then sure. But one thing I remind my creatives is that the pursuit of great work should always be the priority—the awards are simply a by-product of that. If you do excellent work and your agency has no budget to submit it to any show; it does not reduce the value of that said work. Any creative leader worth their salt will be able to gauge good work and creatives (without the need to have metals attached to it).

That said, award-winning work tends to skew more on the side of thinking that's different to what's conventionally out there. And as creatives, that's the kind of thinking we should all be striving for to help our clients.

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

It's refreshing. It's exhilarating. It's interesting. Might come up with another word that rhymes.

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?

I am always intrigued by people who start their own agencies and turn it into iconic names. So obviously Anselmo Ramos, Greg Hahn, Badong Abesamis, Tony Bradbourne, and Jaime Robinson. They'll definitely talk about "AI and its impact on creativity"! Just kidding. Obviously they will talk about what koolaid they were all on when they decided to start their own stuff.

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

Oh tricky. There are quite a few. Nike's 'Tag' comes to mind. Maybe Audi's 'Clown'. Bing's 'Jay-z Decoded' was another favourite of mine. I can't decide. All of them. You're right, this is an impossible question.



Audi "Clowns" from BBH London, 2017