

# Q&A: Livio Grossi

Creative Director, Dentsu Redder, Vietnam  
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.



Livio hails from Milan but has spent longer working in Vietnam than he did working in Italy.

He currently leads a team of over 35 creatives, chasing down big ideas for 70 clients

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

There are lots of things I'm into, but I don't really have a proper side gig, unless being a husband and a parent could be considered one.

As an advertising creative, my mind is always on. I believe that the most compelling ideas stem from linking brands to the ever-evolving landscape of culture, technology and entertainment, therefore pretty much every experience become inspiration or opportunity for whatever projects I am working on at the moment.

But to keep myself sane, I maintain a few daily rituals.

Running is like a kind of meditation for me and I wish I could do it more often. Unfortunately, the air in Saigon isn't always great and running on a treadmill or working out at the gym just don't hit the same spot.

I also enjoy reading during my lunch break. It helps take my mind off whatever I am working on in the morning and lets me look at it again with fresh eyes right after.

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

I have asked myself this question countless times, yet an answer continues to elude me.

Despite the inherent frustrations, rejections, and disappointments that accompany this job, my love and passion for it has only deepened with the years.

My fascination with stories, shapes and colours has roots in my upbringing, where both my parents were involved in the print industry. My mother was a partner in one of Italy's leading music-specialised printing companies and my father was a printing machine operator. Undoubtedly they shaped my career trajectory. Even today, by simply closing my eyes, I can be instantly transported to the rhythmic sounds of those noisy machines and the lingering scent of freshly printed papers.

However, if I were forced to imagine an alternate multiverse – a "sliding doors" scenario – considering my foreign language studies in high school, I might have ended up involved somehow in travel and exploring different cultures. Perhaps I could even have had the opportunity to work with Antony Bourdain!

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

Wow... it's like asking if I am more proud of my son or my daughter.

I find myself deeply attached to all my work, likely because putting something out in the world always feels like the most challenging process where the possibility of things going very, very bad looms at every turn.

If I had to pinpoint a specific project, it might be the first one I successfully sold and executed exactly as I had envisioned. It was a print ad series for Legambiente, an Italian environmental NGO, aimed at promoting more respectful behavior and rallying people for the yearly initiative to clean up our cities. I vividly recall sketching the idea during the briefing session and it was brought to life by one of my favorite Italian advertising photographers. This experience provided a significant boost of confidence for a young art director with ambitious dreams.

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

Beyond any individual project, I take immense pride in the ongoing journey we've embarked on with Biti's, our local shoe brand client.

Over the past four years, each campaign has unfolded as a chapter within a broader brand narrative. We've experimented with various mediums and executions, ranging from short movies to a 1.6-second campaign, from meticulously crafted key visuals to a Xeroxed Fanzine. We have personified shoes into Tinder profiles and even coined a term for gender-neutral individuals in the Vietnamese language, to name just a few. Within these creative explorations, we have consistently preserved a distinctive tone of voice and identity, establishing the brand as a reference in the market.



*"A Step Forward", as much an expression of national pride as a campaign for a footwear brand.*

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

I've always been drawn to work that boldly challenges conventional norms within its category, and a striking example is "F.U.nd" from Uncommon Studio, promoting a new savings app called Communion. The launch film is a perfect blend of simplicity and power, borrowing elements from punk rock to capture the current zeitgeist and convey an unmissable message. Yet, it's not solely the film that packs a punch; it extends to the to the naming, logo, design, and art direction of posters and collaterals. Every element is crafted with a distinct storytelling approach.



*Client: Communion. Agency: Uncommon Studios. See the film [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?**

I'd like answer by doing the opposite and call out a trend that I just don't like: the "Fake Out Of Home" trend.

The absence of interactivity makes these displays one-sided, and after seeing a few examples, they all seem to blend into a repetitive... ehm ... fake execution.

Personally, I appreciate Out Of Home ideas that become destinations, providing an experience one can physically witness.

A stunning example is Louis Vuitton's monumental installation of Yayoi Kusama on the side of their building in Paris last year, turning the Out Of Home space into a captivating encounter.



### Are awards important?

Yes. And no. But also very much!

The significance of awards, in my view, depends on personal and agency ambitions and priorities. Personally, I have become a better creative since I began valuing awards more.

These accolades not only acknowledge the industry's best but also serve as source of inspiration and motivation. Annuals and showcases, akin to textbooks, offer valuable lessons.

Particularly in creatively challenging markets, award shows can be instrumental for young creatives and even marketers, sparking innovative problem-solving approaches and instilling the confidence to explore less conventional ideas. However, my hope is for a shift towards recognising more everyday briefs and fewer tearjerking purpose-driven works.

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

Being part of any jury is undeniably an honor, yet it is also an exciting learning opportunity.

With The Caples standing out as the only award show exclusively judged by creatives and dedicated to recognising work that creates a tangible impact, I can't wait to gain insights from the diverse lineup of creative leaders judging this year.

On a personal level, winning our first global award for a Biti's campaign at Caples holds a special place in my heart, and it feels great to be able to contribute to the process.

### 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?

What a fun question!

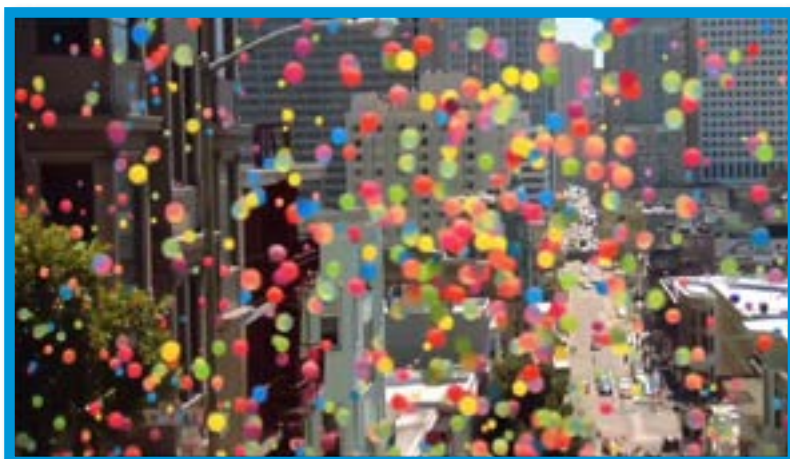
Picture Salvador Dali, Leonardo DaVinci, Maradona, Virgil Abloh, and Notorious B.I.G. all savouring my killer Risotto ai Funghi and drinking good wine together. What a night that would be! I would probably just shut up and simply soak in the experience, listening and absorbing every moment.

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

The very first one that comes to my mind is the timeless classic: Sony Bravia "Balls".

Going beyond its artistic charm and captivating execution, the ad is a straightforward product demonstration designed to immediately grab the audience's attention. The carefully chosen music further transforms the commercial into a piece of pure magic.

Also, it has aged beautifully; if released today, it would likely have an equally, if not more significant impact, considering our familiarity with CGI and the rarity of practical shoots in contemporary advertising.



Client: Sony. Agency: Fallon, London.  
Year: 2005. Watch [HERE](#)