Don't put your creative flow at risk

By Juanita Pienaar

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The 64th International Festival of Creativity will take place from Saturday, 17 June to Saturday, 24 June in Cannes, France. During the Festival, young creatives from the world over will go head-to-head, working on a live brief and proving themselves on the world-stage in the process. Hanro Havenga reflects on 2015 Cannes Young Lions experience...

In 2015, young creative, Hanro Havenga, together with copywriter Safaraaz Sindhi, won the Cinemark Young Lions competition and went on to represent South Africa at the Cannes Young Lions competition at the Festival.



South Africa's Cannes Young Lions are ready to roar!

Leigh Andrews 18 Jun 2015

While this year's winners, Amri Botha and Carina Coetzee are packing their bags to compete in the 2017 competition, we asked Havenga to reflect on his experience and to tell us how attending the festival impacted him as a creative.



South African cubs ready to roar at Cannes Lions

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In 2015 you won one of the 'golden tickets' after entering the Ster-Kinekor Cinemark 48-hour competition and attended and represented South Africa at the Cannes Young Lions event. How has this event influenced you as a creative?

Cannes Young Lions was definitely a first for me and going to a place like Cannes and seeing that side of an industry that I wasn't really familiar with was really interesting. Saf just phoned me up one day and asked if I was interested in entering this competition. I agreed, we entered and a week later, he asked me, "Do you have your passport ready?"



#CannesLions: "What the fu©k are we doing, man?"

Juanita Pienaar 8 Jun 2017

I didn't really know what to expect I just knew that it was like this massive festival with all these celebrities and these big influences and creatives and when I got there it was so surreal seeing these people out and about, people you normally only see on television.

It was a real eye-opener seeing on what level the industry can operate on, in terms of parties and talks. I mean they even had Uber helicopters. And coming back from something like that obviously just changes your whole perspective. Everything they did there was on a different level. So, coming back home, I didn't want to slide back in my own routine when doing that kind of work. I'd like to think it really inspired me to just up my standard a little bit.



© Hanro Havenga Facebook page

Clearly it was an amazing experience. Since then how has your life changed? What have you been up to?
I'm a photographer and videographer, I make music videos and direct. And recently, right after Cannes really, I started a band. Since then I have just really concentrated on making art and making music and whatever. How I've changed? I've tried to maintain my creative integrity. And I've tried not to dim my creativity when I am working for someone else. I have actually tried to stay away from work that will put my creative flow at risk.

It's been two years. How do you think the industry has changed since then?
I feel it's been a bit of a rollercoaster the past two years because when I came back from Cannes things were pretty hectic. All the people I was working with weren't really creative, it was just a job and a pay cheque. So, I think the industry, at that time, was really about getting the work out and meeting the deadlines and leaving the creative integrity behind and I feel it's still like that but we are currently experiencing a change and that has got to do with our youth. For them creativity is more important than that kind of livelihood. Obviously, everybody's got to eat but I think they feel more strongly that they'd rather stick to their guns than give in to that kind of stuff.

What do you think of this year's winning ad?
I like it! I think it was an interesting approach to give the system a sort of consciousness before allowing it to send messages. And I think it would be so cool to incorporate something like that in a real-life app. I think they brought a new perspective to the issue of cyberbullying. I think it's great to push awareness like that, to almost force people to be in that other person's head.

What advice can you give this year's winners?
Have fun! There's a lot of stuff happening, so just enjoy being there. And don't take yourself so seriously. But also, realise that you're there to do a job and stay focussed. Try to talk to as many people as you can, just interact with as much people as possible. It's a different, surreal world and I definitely miss it.

Are there any exciting plans in the pipeline for you?
Nothing really, no big projects coming up. I think I'm just enjoying taking photos, making music videos, creating art and every one of these have different avenues and projects, so it will be a lot to go into. But there are plans.

Here's wishing this year's winners, Amri Botha and Carina Coetzee all of the best competing in the Cannes Young Lions competition. Keep an eye on our Cannes Lions special section for all the latest updates.

ABOUT JUANITA PIENAAR

Juanita is the editor of the marketing & media portal on the Bizcommunity website. She is also a contributing writer.

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