

Raphael Janan Kuppasamy: a quiet success story

By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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Recently named the 2022 Loeries Young Creative of the Year, art director at Joe Public, Raphael Janan Kuppasamy, started his professional career at M&C Saatchi Abel in 2019.



Source: © Twitter [Twitter](#) Recently named the 2022 Loeries Young Creative of the Year, Raphael Janan Kuppasamy is an art director at Joe Public

Kuppasamy is a quietly spoken young man. It is clear he weighs his words before speaking.

“I am a quiet person. I like to think before I voice my opinions. I avoid arguing as much as possible because it requires you to make decisions on the spot,” he says.

Don't let his quiet manner fool you. This young man has worked on some of South Africa's most iconic brands such as Nando's, Standard Bank, Lexus South Africa, Danone, and Bakers Biscuits.

During his time at M&C Saatchi Abel, he also launched TikTok to the South African market with copywriter, Bernice Puleng Mosala, winning the 2020 SA Cannes Young Lions competition as well as picking up a few industry awards along the way.



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An local inspiration from abroad

Also a London International Awards (LIA) mentee, he explains that the programme pairs young creatives across the world with global creatives (ECDs and CCOs) for one year. “You meet with the ECDs and CCOs once a month for an hour's chat, and they give you advice on your career, your life, and basically anything that you'd like guidance on.”

He has been working with three creatives, since March, one of whom is Tim Jones, the ECD of Grey in New York.

Jones is originally from South Africa and he says there was an instant connection. “He lived on the same street as me, which we only found out half an hour into our chat.”

An inspiration to Kuppasamy, he says: “Jones is proof that South Africans can be an ECD/CCO abroad, and somewhere as big as Grey in New York because we all want to work in New York at some point in our careers. It seems impossible, but he shows us that it is possible.”

M&C Saatchi Abel’s chief creative officer, Neo Mashigo put Kuppasamy forward for the programme when he was working at M&C Saatchi Abel.

A different story

“I started at the agency straight out of Vega. I had job offers from three big agencies, but when Adam Webber interviewed me, I felt an instant connection to him.”

Kuppasamy worked under Webber for four years, winning some awards along the way, and then at the beginning of the year, in March he moved to Joe Public.

He says that being named Loeries Young Creative means so much to him.

“This is because my story is very different. I could have ended up in any industry, I literally had no plan after matriculating.”

He applied for quite a few scholarships, and while he was offered quite a few, the one he accepted was for a Higher Certificate in Creative Development from The Vega School of Brand Leadership. Although he did not realise it at the time, it was a decision that would set him up for a career in the creative industry.

That year he was the highest-achieving student. He was then offered a full scholarship from a subdivision of Ogilvy, called Rockstart, to do a three-year degree in Creative Brand Communications specialising in Art Direction.

Again he graduated being the most awarded student in the South African advertising industry at the time as well as winning some industry awards, including a D&AD New Blood Award.



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Discovering an aptitude

He admits that if it were not for the scholarship, he might never have entered the creative industry.

“It was the scholarship that took me in this direction. It was only in my first year at Vega that I discovered I had an aptitude for it,” he says. “I also feel that you don’t really choose to work in advertising – it kinda chooses you,” he adds.

Now he says he cannot imagine doing anything else.

He says what really speaks to him is creating work that makes a difference. “I think that’s why I won the Young Creative Award because a lot of the work that I entered was work that actually made a difference.”

Make you own opportunities

So where does he see himself or want to be in the future He laughs and says” In New York as the ECD for Grey.” Then he laughs more and says: “I do eventually want to work overseas, and see what else the world and this industry has to offer.”

He says winning the Loeries Young Creative Award has taught him a valuable lesson. “I have learned that you make your own opportunities, especially as a young person. No matter how good of a designer you are or how loud (or quiet) you are, your work will always speak for itself.”

The Loeries Young Creative Award recognises a talented young mind in the industry under 27 who is on a trajectory of sustained creative excellence.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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