

Roanna Williams, the first woman to chair the Creative Circle

Roanna Williams, the chief creative officer of Net#work BBDO, has been recognised and honoured for the role she plays in the South African advertising space by being named as the first woman to be chairperson of the Creative Circle.



Roanna Williams, newly appointed chairperson of the Creative Circle

The Creative Circle is a non-profit organisation that has been dedicated to promoting creativity as a business resource and maintaining high levels of creativity in the advertising industry for 30 years. It seeks to inspire the transformation of product, people and perception through the power of creativity.

Williams, a highly-respected creative thinker and accomplished illustrator and artist, has worked at many of South Africa's top agencies. Her appointment at Net#work BBDO coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic, which, she freely admits, was a challenging time for the industry.



Creative Circle 2021 winners announced

10 Mar 2022



Despite the restrictions of the pandemic and lockdown, Williams and her team were inspired to come up with the #Meltdown campaign, in which they melted all of the awards Net#work BBDO had won in 27 years and moulded them into pendants.

They presented the Hashtag pendants to the 670 past and present employees of the agency to pay tribute to the role they played in the agency since 1994. Williams believes it was a necessary and important act in recognising and celebrating achievement and the people behind the work, and marking new beginnings.

“We treasure the awards we win because they are milestones in marking the quality and effectiveness of the work we produce for our clients,” said Williams. “But as much as we celebrate the awards, so should we value and recognise who helped us win them, and what having a symbol of that work will mean to them.”

Chairperson of the Creative Circle

That, said Williams, is why she was particularly honoured to be named to serve as chairperson of the Creative Circle for the next two years.

“Agencies and the advertising industry are fuelled by the extraordinary creativity and dedication of the people in it. Ideas can be born from one incredible spark of inspiration or hours of brainstorming. The process of bringing that spark, the idea, to fruition involves teams of talented individuals dedicated towards the quality of the work and serving the client.”

The Creative Circle endorses international awards shows that will earn agency entrants ranking points, thus levelling the playing fields for small, medium and large agencies, allowing them to compete by standardising the points for international awards shows.

Rankings are calculated on points allocated per win in each award show: Loeries, One Show, D&AD, Cannes and CC Ad of the Year (Made up of Creative Circle Ad of the Month). The points are combined to find and award the Agency of the Year and regional Agency of the Year.

“As chairperson of the Creative Circle, I’d like to further transform the perception of creativity in South Africa and the importance of the people in our industry,” says Williams.

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