

Moe Kekana on being a judge in the Print category

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We chat to Moe Kekana, senior art director at The Odd Number, about his experience as a judge in the Print category at [Loeries 2021](#).



Moe Kekana, senior art director at The Odd Number

■ *How do you feel about judging at this year's Loeries?*

It's incredibly humbling, to the point of being uncomfortable. Especially knowing the talent that exists, the number of experienced individuals, and the level of expertise in the industry. To then be selected from this pool, and be counted among a group of people who both inspire and infuriate based on the amazing work they do; is an honour.

■ *Tell us more about yourself and why you believe you were selected – your judging experience and so on.*

For me, the judges selection process is somewhat of a mystery, a black box, the contents of which are known by a select few. I can only assume that over the years I have contributed to the industry in ways that are meaningful and are of some value. Those contributions may have come in the form of my work, perhaps one of my guest lectures, a bit of mentoring, my points of view in a Q&A or on previous judging panels. Ultimately, I believe (or hope) that these contributions were consequential, and seeing that someone of consequence quietly dropped my name into this black box. In doing so, they have given me and all other judges the opportunity to continue contributing in ways that are meaningful.

■ *When you heard about being selected as a judge, how did you celebrate the news?*

I poured a stiff whisky and gave myself an extra scoop of ice cream.

■ *What does this mean to you, personally?*

We all have voices and opinions, both of which are accompanied by a high degree of subjectivity. Being invited to offer my voice and my opinions on a judging panel is a recognition of these very personal things.

“ Beyond the privilege, being considered for a judging spot validates the time and energy I've put into my career. To me it means maybe, just maybe, I'm doing something right. ”

■ **Which category will you be judging?**

I will be judging the Print category, as well as the Print Crafts.

■ **What do you expect to experience as a judge?**

After seeing who my fellow judges are, I expect to learn a lot from them. We have all been brought together to apply our experience and expertise to select work that is worthy of an award. Because of this, I really feel that being on a judging panel is a real masterclass in creativity. There are eleven other people who are experienced in ways that I am not and are experts on subjects that I may never fully grasp.

■ **What specific criteria will you be looking for when judging**

It's not scientific, but I'm just looking to be surprised. That's what I love about print. The gut level, instantaneous reaction to a piece.

■ **You have some major experience in the creative industry. Could you comment on the impact of Covid-19 on the industry?**

When Covid hit, the world stood still in more ways than one. Many campaigns and communications that were in the pipeline came to a grinding halt as they were checked and rechecked for relevance, substance, and sincerity. Overnight, we took on a different role. Brands took on a different role.

“ There wasn't that same need for a brand newthingamabob, or whatchamacallit, financed over however many months, finished off with a disclaimer two sizes too small under a logo three sizes too big. ”

If we were to say anything to anyone, if we were to invite ourselves into peoples homes, browsers, and social feeds there had to be a really good reason for us to be there. And so, there was a level of care we took in what we said and how we said it. This was not there before, not in the same way. Brands and agencies had to prove, in ways that we never had to, what our value was to each other and the public. I hope we never lose that.

■ **Any predictions of trends that are likely to stand out at Loeries 2021?**

I stopped trying to predict anything after I was caught off guard, twice, by the words *With Immediate Effect*.

■ **What do you believe SA creatives bring to the Loeries judging mix?**

It sounds cliché, but, diversity. Not just in terms of culture, but the background, upbringing, geography, and personal stance on whether or not boerewors belongs on pizza. I am always amazed by the conversations. You can't help but be exposed to new exciting points of view and see work that you may have dismissed in a completely new light. And at the end of it all, with conflicting biographies, come to a consensus on what's truly great and truly South African.

■ **Lastly, what are you most looking forward to from Loeries 2021?**

Seeing where we are as an industry. There is much that has been warped and obscured by uncertainty, separation, and survival. So, where are we now? I look forward to seeing what we as an industry have chosen to make through it all. What

we choose to award and say “That’s our new standard and this is what we want to see more of going forward”. What about us have we decided to keep, and what (no matter how inconvenient) do we as an industry have to let go of. I think all of this will be represented in the work, the people who’ve created it, the conversations on every judging panel, the ceremony, and the celebrations thereafter. This is going to say a lot about us all, and I’m excited to see what that is.

▣ ***What does #FightTheGoodFight mean to you?***

To me, #FightTheGoodFight means the desire for self-actualization. More coffee than is medically advisable. All in the hopes that we might dust off our shiny shoes and walk them on stage. And doing all the above in a way that pushes the industry forward.

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