

Suhana Gordhan on judging in the Film category

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Suhana Gordhan, executive creative director at Duke, shares her experience on judging in the Film category at [Loeries 2021](#).



Suhana Gordhan, executive creative director at Duke

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

I was quite curious to see what the Film category would yield this year. I know that marketing budgets are constantly being slayed so I was interested to see how the industry would meet this challenge. I also think that in South Africa, we're really good at making 'The Big TVC' and I was keen to see if this is still the case, in a content landscape that is changing everywhere else in the world.

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

I think it's because I'm an Auntie! (Lol, meaning that I have been in the industry for a while) I was first invited to be a Loeries' judge in 2013, so I think my experience counts. But I also think that curators of panels look for a range of things in a judge beyond just experience – diversity is one of them, and someone who will bring a different voice to the panel.

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

With quiet, little internal flic-flacs that I'm unable to do in real life! In all seriousness, it is always a privilege to be invited to judge and never something I take for granted. I think the honour increases every year, especially when the rest of the panel is revealed, and you realise what awesome and seasoned talent you will be amongst.

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

It means a great deal to me because I believe you have to earn your place on a panel, so in many ways it's a nod to your career growth.

“ It means I get to represent the industry in setting the bar on work that is outstanding. ”

And lastly, it means I get to learn something because every single year the experience is slightly different, and you always walk away with knowledge.

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

Film

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

I expect to be moved in some way – to see work that provokes me, makes me laugh out loud or cry. I love seeing work that is brave and reminds me why we chose this industry as a career.

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

I'll be looking for strong insights, brand relevance, surprising solutions to a problem, work that makes a dent and sticks with you – work that you can fall in love with.

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

I think we've all suffered an immense collective grief over the last two years. Apart from lamenting the loss of so many industry greats, we've also had to experience loss in so many other forms. We've seen the diminishing of budgets, the decreased appetite for edgy, provocative ideas and the dearth of big integrated campaigns for more short-burst retail work. Despite all of this, I think that creativity always endures.

“ I think creativity is resilience and while it is our livelihood, it's also the place where all our grief can go, to turn into something beautiful. ”

■ ***Share a few of your favourite Loeries-related moments over the years – either from attending personally or agency winning work-related.***

For me, the Loeries is always a story of extremes. Intense joy, weepy misery, massive euphoria, fizzy reunions, that unsettling feeling like something or someone is missing, five solid days of deep-fried food, and always always the post-party pain. My favourite moments are as big as being the 'Chair Aunty' for two years, and as tiny as driving through all of Durban in a packed car looking for food at 1am. But always there is the crazy security in knowing that whatever happens, we will all find each other at the Tall Ships bar some time before the sun rises, whether we're clutching gold or not.

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

I think that like last year, there will be a fair amount of work tackling Covid conundrums and social issues. However, I think that by now there is some fatigue around these issues and we'll be looking for work that goes beyond the context of our time, but still honours big, fearless, innovative thinking.

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

Sense of humour – our daily lives play out like a soap opera. I think we are resilient people with lots of rich, unique stories to tell. This brings a powerful dynamic to the panels. But most importantly, we are super passionate, and this is contagious. Finally, we've held our own on international stages and so, I think we hold up a high standard of excellence.

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

Seeing the faces of old friends, reconnecting, and repeatedly saying no to tequila even though tequila is extremely pushy and always wins.

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

It's getting harder and harder to make brave, outstanding work and the glory belongs to the ones who are willing to defend the work despite resistance. For me, #FightTheGoodFight is not just about upholding the power of creativity, but knowing when to fight, and which ideas to fight for. It's about annihilating mediocrity and indifference. It's not just a creative's fight. It's everyone's fight. It's about getting into battle so that baby ideas grow up in the world unscathed. And it's about understanding that we fight because nothing great comes easily and we fight because without creativity - without great ideas - there is no industry.

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- More info: [Loeries Creative Week](#), [Bizcommunity search](#), [Google](#), [Twitter](#)

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