

How Dan Mace embraced his otherness to enhance his true creativity

By  Leigh Andrews

7 Feb 2019

SA-born filmmaker now based in New York, Dan Mace, was the speaker at Creative Mornings Cape Town's first event of the year, held at Friends of Design on Bree Street. Mace spoke through all things surreal, and how to put your otherness to your creative advantage.



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This is a real image (no photoshop) of me wearing a suit and tie inside a barrel. Click on my story for the behind the scenes. I'm busy working on a video about juxtapositions and this shot sums it up perfectly. I have a running joke with my mate @pauldanielvideo, who also took these magical images, about me being named 'Sea-man' because I have had a trifecta of incredible ocean experiences in the last week. First a whale blew its blowhole spray right into my face while shooting. Secondly, an otter climbed onto my surfboard with me while surfing and thirdly a seal kissed me on the arm while diving - these are all true stories as crazy as it sounds. Therefore I am like Spider-Man, but the ocean version. Long story short i couldn't be happier.

A post shared by Dan Mace (@dannmace) on Jan 29, 2019 at 5:17am PST

As a legacy of Cape Town being the World Design Capital in 2014, Creative Mornings Cape Town is entering its sixth

year, fittingly kicking off with insights from Mace, one of SA's top creative exports.



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Mace kicked off by explaining that life is hugely surreal for him, based on the ideology of embracing your own otherness. He added that film is what he does, not what he is, yet what he does influences his films, so the two coexist.

So his work life overflows into his personal life, with its surge of creativity

Talking the surreal and creative surges

In his 20 minute talk, Mace echoed the sentiment of 'fibre artist' Danielle Clough, the March 2018 Creative Mornings Cape Town speaker, who said it's important to step away from the safety net and have the courage to try new things.



#CreativeMornings: "Creative success from courage" - Danielle Clough


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Mace added that embracing your otherness and vulnerabilities is the way you get ahead in life, no matter the platform you use to express that.


For Mace, this took the form of creative short films. He looks at a situation through a new lens to gain a lighter sense of what some call dark, deep or uncomfortable emotions – that's what fuels his filmmaking.

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Welcome to the official Bru headquarters. Like a creative playground! I built this studio for myself with everything I need to make shit happen. It's been a long time coming! Yes I am going back to NYC, but this will always be my studio in SA. Thank you for all the help @luke_vey and @janettedevilliers. I'm doing a workshop at @heavychef tomorrow. If there's still tickets pull through! Have an epic Monday bru.

A post shared by [Dan Mace \(@dannmace\)](#) on Dec 3, 2018 at 10:37am PST

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But he doesn't do it alone. Mace has met many like-minded people over the course of his short-yet-impressive career, and says collaboration is a huge part of his success.

Through 'feeling different' and like 'the other' at school, the context has completely changed as people now approach him, not just because of his success but also because he has showcased his own vulnerability upfront.

Collaborate and embrace your otherness

The power of otherness and collaboration is another common Creative Mornings Cape Town theme, as artist Chris Aurret led attendees of the September 2018 Creative Mornings Cape Town session through an interactive process of seeing the effects of working together to make order of chaos in creativity.



The beautiful yin-yang chaos of collaboration in creativity

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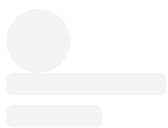
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Mace says that often, you'll just "click with someone, on that shared weirdness thing," as it's hard to find success until you embrace your otherness.

The end goal for Mace is for people to wake up and think "I'm not normal," with a smile. It's about going back to who you were before the world told you what to be. That's how you make 'the surreal' real.

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A post shared by [Dan Mace](#) (@dannmace) on Jan 21, 2019 at 7:29am PST

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THIS WILL BE THE FOCUS OF THE SECOND SERIES OF MACE'S NOT NORMAL, WITH THE PILOT SET FOR LAUNCH ON 3 APRIL 2019. UNTIL THEN, BE SURE TO FOLLOW HIS [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) AND [YouTube](#) ACCOUNTS.

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ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of

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