

## #BehindtheLoeries with... Ryan McManus

You know him as regional ECD of Native VML, but Ryan McManus is also a member of the Loeries' 2016 [Digital & Interactive judging panel](#).

He studied at AAA School of Design and Advertising; has worked at some of the world's top ad agencies, including FCB, JWT, HAVAS Amsterdam & Paris, Serviceplan Munich; and collected an impressive host of awards including Cannes, ADC, Effies, NYF, One Show, Loeries and D&AD.

The fact that he has worked across different continents has given him a unique perspective on creativity, adding fuel to his belief that creativity can solve real-world problems. For example, in Amsterdam, he co-founded the "Join the Pipe" NGO that won Best New Initiative from Unicef, wrote and directed an environmental documentary that was shot on location in the South Pacific islands, and co-founded The Soon Institute, which focused on prototyping futures within the communication industry.

Now, with this year's Loeries themed '[Creativity Unites](#)' and McManus the creative behind the campaign, what could be more fitting than picking his brain? While he admits to having some creativity-rut medicine for himself, he's not sure it's a standard thing, and says, "Everyone needs to find their own inspiration. And having no inspiration is part of the process. My basic rule is to get away from the computer."

Sound advice, especially as he says creativity is everything and that he doesn't ever think of it as a job title, despite being executive creative director of Native. Instead, he says creativity is a human function, like saying that you can eat or walk or speak. So while everyone and anyone can be creative, this doesn't mean that everybody is all the time, but anyone can be, it's just about what you channel your creativity into, whether that may be writing, neuroscience, building, carpentering, teaching or cooking. "It's just how you do things. And how prepared you are to constantly challenge yourself and believe absolutely that there is always a better way."



McManus in his happy place: Weekend surfing, exploring and whale watching.

Here, McManus shares his views on the true impact of creativity as he takes us behind the scenes of his daily work life...

## 1. Where do you live, work and play?

**McManus:** Live in Cape Town. Work in my head. Play in the ocean.

## 2. What's your claim to fame?

**McManus:** I once worked out how to get into a full, overpriced party by carrying a case of beers past the long queue and up to the front door. The bouncers thought I was just bringing in more beer and let me straight in over the red carpet.

And I can do handstands for ages.

## 3. Describe your career so far.

**McManus:** Widespread, inspiring, diverse, culturally rich, always new and exciting, filled with great mentors, great people, and adventure.

## 4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

**McManus:** Family. Friends. The ocean. Beer. Ideas. Film. Design. Biographies. Music played with instruments. Goosebumps. Sunshine. Fresh powder. Human behaviour. Tequila. Nature.

## 5. What do you love about your industry?

**McManus:** That it's not a science. That greatness can come from anywhere. That it can solve problems. That it relies on

intuition. And that it's never, ever dull.

## 6. Describe your average workday, if such a thing exists.

**McManus:** There is no such thing as an average workday. If you constantly have average workdays you should probably find something more interesting to do. Work and life are not separate – and I don't like anything average.

## 7. What are the tools of your trade?

**McManus:** Pen. Paper. Time. Space. Communication. Inspiration. And sometimes a computer.

## 8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

**McManus:** RGA. Apple. Nike. Serviceplan. Patagonia. Ideo. Jane Says.

## 9. Tell us some of the buzzwords floating around in your industry at the moment, and some of the catchphrases you utter yourself.

**McManus:** Lots. Probably too much. (Puke)

## 10. Where and when do you have your best ideas?

**McManus:** There is no formula, but hard work. I do feel that the best ideas come when the energy is good. And certain places feel like they have ideas floating in the air around them, waiting to be plucked. Walking helps. Talking helps. Sometimes sitting quietly helps. Usually they just reveal themselves when they are good and ready.

## 11. What's your secret talent/party trick?

**McManus:** Arm-wrestling.

## 12. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

**McManus:** I am pretty schizophrenic with tech. I love tech that make sense for human beings and helps to push society forward in a direction that is good. But a lot of tech forgets to ask the question of WHY. And that scares me. Just because we CAN do something doesn't mean we should. (e.g. Google Glass...)

## 13. What would we find if we scrolled through your phone?

**McManus:** Lots of photos, constant and irritating reminders to update my software, lots of idea notes, to do lists, guitar-tuna, a dormant Twitter account, a full calendar, 13,607 unread emails, 938 unread messages, WSL app, Slack, and now VR apps.

## 14. What advice would you give to newbies hoping to crack into the industry?

**McManus:** Find great mentors. Stay open to learning. Work harder than anyone else.

Simple as that. You can read more McManus by [clicking here](#), visiting Native's [press office](#) and following [McManus on Twitter](#).

Also remember to visit the [Loeries website](#) and our [special section](#) to keep your finger on that creative pulse if you just can't wait for Loeries® Creative Week™ Durban, from taking place 15 to 21 August 2016.

## 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 course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh\_Andrews.

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