

How to press the refresh button on your creativity



By Leigh Andrews

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The fifth speaker of the day was Sebastian Padilla, co-founder of Anagrama Studio in Mexico and also involved in a handful of other companies. He describes himself as 'a semi-adult', and in just 39 minutes, shared the essence of a typographically beautiful presentation on the power of collaborating and bouncing off others' strengths to unlock your own passions.



Sebastian Padilla, cofounder of Anagrama Studio and Loeries 2018 design jury president. ©Al Ncoll, Gallo Images.

Explaining his origin story in the notoriously difficult 'post-lunch' seminar session, Padilla cracked through and had the audience laughing along when he explained that while Anagrama have done work for Rihanna and brands all around the world, they started off tiny, working from a cramped bedroom with just an idea.

“ Mexico City is obviously the capital of Mexico, but we’re not from there, we are from Monterrey. It’s an industrial, graffiti-rich city, but if you’re visually minded you can find beauty and inspiration in anything. ”

Not that Padilla has always been tuned into his own power, as he says he definitely wasn’t the best student as he had ADD at school – even though design is his lifework, he was fired from his first design job within a week.

There were even more laughs from the audience as Padilla confessed that he likes design but isn’t actually passionate about it. That made it hard for him to choose a major focus for the rest of his life once finally done with school.



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Due to his less-than-stellar results, the study options he had were all the creative ones like film and graphic design.

He chose graphic design as it was the easiest field to get into – there was no physical exam, no relocation required and it seemed the safest option.

Choices, choices... This is the rest of your life

It's now been 16 years since he was at that cross-roads and he still doesn't know what to do with his life, because he wants to do as much as possible.

But Padilla's not one to see this as a problem. Instead, he treats it as the opportunity to work on side projects that interest him, tying into the freelance/gig economy mindset.



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He's not necessarily the leader of each one, explaining, "Some creatives are turbochargers, not motors," but is happy to be part of so many things that make him happy.

From chaos to creative collaboration

Padilla said collaborating with the creatives you know is amazing, but it's better to collaborate with people with different talents to your own. For example, Anagrama began the day Padilla found someone to put order to his chaos, and the more they worked together, the more they appreciated each other's skills.

They have since grown to include 40 workers.

Anagrama has worked on design that's infused with emotion through vibrant colour palettes and textiles, breathed new life into historic buildings and even turned a library into a 'fun playroom' filled with ramps. And books, of course, in case anyone was actually there to read.

On the topic of inspiration, Padilla spoke of **the thin line we live between favelas and pseudo-Monaco** - it's similar to the situation in SA, with fancy hotels in walking distance from slums and shacks. This 'culture clash of context' is what helps Anagrama build their approach to projects and come up with new ideas.

How culture clashes boost creativity

Padilla said the unexpected bonus of clashing with reality in that way is that it helps us press the refresh button and become more original and creative in our thinking when solving problems.

In line with this, Padilla explained that he enjoys jumping on projects where he can reverse his branding approach of the moment, and admits that there isn't a project he's worked on that would be better if he'd done it on his own.

In conclusion, Padilla drew on the lessons he's learned over his career – most notably that you don't need to feel pressured to choose what you want to do with the rest of your life, because if you're surrounded by the right people, you can do almost anything.

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He listed six qualities to look for in others that will make you a better creative:

“ Look for a specific energy, as well as diversity of experience and culture; remember to share the experience and let others take the reins; stick to your principles – you can work from different talent sets but based on same values; when it comes to skills, respect experience and specialisation alike; and don't forget about trust, as it's the most basic value in any human relationship. ”

Padilla says he still doesn't know what he wants to do with his life, but he's now doing everything he's ever been interested in.

That's how it's done. Here's to more creative collaboration! Padilla was also this year's Loeries' design jury president. Keep an eye on our [Loeries special section](#) for all the latest updates and live coverage of the 40th annual Loerie Awards, taking place in Durban from 16 to 19 August 2018.

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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