STRONG ENOUGH FOR A MAN

AN ASSORTMENT OF THOUGHTS FROM SOME OF THE BEST FEMALE CREATIVE DIRECTORS

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Linda Locke
Masako Okamura
Pepa Rojo
Tiffany Rolfe
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I have long been a distant admirer of AdWomen, and I was quite surprised when the ladies behind this very insightful blog reached out to me about a year or so ago. It turns out that they had been following our own work at IHAVEANIDEA particularly our long-running, globe-spanning annual event Portfolio Night. They told me hey were astounded at our ability to so many of the world’s most respected creative directors to participate around the globe, and wondered if we could help them contact a few of the female CDs for future AdWomen stories.

As you can see, what started as a few blog stories has become so much more.

I’d like to say that the book you are holding was created with AdWomen and IHAVEANIDEA in equal partnership, but that would be giving ourselves way too much credit. While we at IHAVEANIDEA might have offered some guidance along the way, the contents of this book were forged in the blood, sweat and tears of the ladies of AdWomen, whose passion for the advertising industry knows no limits and crosses many social, language and gender barriers.

Please join me in applauding the efforts of AdWomen in creating this book, and for continuing to champion the dreams and accomplishments of creative women of the advertising industry, past, present and future.

Ignacio Oreamuno  
President & Founder  
IHAVEANIDEA
Introduction

We dedicate this book to women in the advertising industry, seen as professionals, consumers, opinion leaders and creators of new communication.

AdWomen focuses on some of the most distinguished personalities among female creatives, their works and their opinions on the role that women play in the industry. Our goal is to share with you many novelties related to the female world of advertising: new products, differentiating strategies, surveys, books and the latest news about women’s presence and performance in the most important advertising festivals around the world.

We have worked hard to create a virtual space to discover, debate and promote the work of ladies working professionally in the advertising industry. We invite you to join our initiatives such as The feminine side of the Advertising Festivals and Breast Cancer Best Advertising on Facebook. Our latest initiative, World’s Most Influential Female Creative Directors (WFCD) is where you will find some of the World’s Most Influential Female Creative Directors in the industry.

Thank you for your support.

AdWomen, the female side of advertising.
A recognized industry innovator and globally award-winning creative, Suzana has vast experience working with top brands, including Coca-Cola, Microsoft, Fiat, Ford, Warner Bros, Diageo, Cadbury Adams, Unilever, Nivea, Motorola, YouTube, and Mitsubishi.

Suzana began her advertising career as a copywriter in Rio de Janeiro, at one of Brazil’s pioneering digital agencies. There, she took part on the creation of one of the first world exhibitions of web-art called “My City” which was exhibited in Brazil, Spain and Italy. In 2000, she moved to Sao Paulo and worked as creative director at some of the largest, most respected digital agencies in the world, like AgenciaClick and JWT. In 2005, Suzana took on the challenge of infusing Africa, a respected but traditional agency, with digital culture and creative excellence; and just two years later, that agency placed second as International
Interactive Agency of the Year at the Cannes Advertising Festival. Most recently, Suzana was partner and chief creative officer of a multidisciplinary agency, creating campaigns and branded content for clients including Google, Red Bull and Valisere.

Suzana moved from Sao Paulo to New York to work as Executive Creative Director of StrawberryFrog, where she is currently leading the creative team and developing campaigns and digital projects for clients such as Procter & Gamble (Pampers, MDVip, Future Friendly), as well as BlackBerry and Propel (PepsiCo).

In addition to serving as a juror at top advertising shows such as Cannes, Webby Awards, ANDY and D&AD, Suzana has won 19 international awards including the Grand Prix at the London International Awards. Suzana has been elected the Brazilian 'Online Creative Professional of the Year' by MMOOnline Awards, created by the leading advertising publication Meio & Mensagem.
How did it feel to push an agency to get second placed as International Interactive Agency of the Year at the Cannes Advertising Festival?

It was a hard work. I was in a traditional agency, full of successful old school creatives who weren't really open to learn about digital. So the challenge was not only to create great digital work, but mainly to infuse the whole agency with a digital culture. So this award felt to me like a beautiful and emblematic recognition of all the work done. And it was a concrete way to prove the quality of it in a worldwide dimension. But actually the biggest reward for me is to see that even after I have left the agency, the digital over there has definitely gotten into the next level. This feeling of having left a legacy is my true “Grand Prix”.

You have won 19 international awards including the Grand Prix at the London International Awards, How would you explain the way you have reached the top in ad industry?

I think it’s a mix of some special things. First of all, I believe I was kind of “in the right place, at the right moment, with the right people”. I’ve started to work with interactive advertising in the very beginning of this industry, and I was fortunate to have started in one of the best agencies in Brazil, working with a visionary guy, who was surrounded by a great team. So I had the privilege of learning from these people and from the challenges of that time. When the digital industry started to grow, I was already there with an outstanding experience a creative portfolio. After that I managed to keep working in places and with people who were like-minded and who pushed me further.

But mainly, the I’m intense in everything I do, I’m obsessed with quality, and I’m always positive - especially towards infinite obstacles that come along the way (except during PMS days :). Summarizing, the passion for what I do and perseverance (added to some talent and a good heart) I believe are the main reasons for this success.
What does creativity mean to you?
Joy, fullfilment. The colors of life.

“This feeling of having left a legacy is my true ‘Grand Prix’.

What is your most successful campaign? Can you briefly explain your creative strategy?
I think it’s the “Micro-series” for Gradiente (a brand of cell phones in Brazil). The campaign was created to show the main point of difference of the Gradiente GF 910 cell-phone: its video recorder. The movies it generated had such a surprising quality that, instead of talking about its technical features, we decided to show them in action. We created the first Brazilian ‘micro-series’ shot with a cell phone and totally interactive. Internet users decided everything about the series through online voting. Each week they made a different decision. They chose the genre, the cast and all that happened in each chapter. The micro-series was published exclusively on an MSN Messenger tab, and in three months it reached an audience bigger than an MTV TV series; it received 2,985,000 page views. It was a world record audience for MSN tabs. And after this campaign, not only did Gradiente invest three times the budget they used to invest on digital media, but four different brands in Brazil launched similar online series filmed with cell-phones – pointing to a trend that this campaign has opened.
From your experience would you say that there is a feminine factor in creativity? What are the creative keys that best connect with women? Are there any differences with the creative keys that work with men?

Creating great communication today it has changed. Changed from a hierarchical, traditional and linear approach of one-way ‘broadcast’ messaging, where advertisers would ‘interrogate the product until it confessed’ its ‘unique selling point’ and then push it out to consumers. That hyper-rational, one-way relationship with consumers is gone.

Unlike the 1960s when there were few choices and limited media channels, consumers today have thousands of brands to choose from and 3,000 messages targeted at them every day. These days it is far more about finding a belief or a point of view that brands can stand for and putting that to market in a way that starts a movement amongst consumers, a movement that consumers want to belong to, join and spreads the advocacy for that brand. It’s all about listening to and engaging with your consumers in a way that aligns them to your brand values. Social media is a huge force in media today, and we need to connect with consumers about more than just product superiority claims. In fact, peer-to-peer recommendations and brand advocacy are greater influences on brand choices than traditional advertising. Nobody wants to talk about your ‘superior dryness’; consumers are adopting brands and products because they find their point of view in line with a way of living or their views on the world. You need to create content that people want to engage with and share in popular culture. And you have to live these brand values in the real world; in the digital age people can uncover the truth about your brand in an instant.

This shift from rational to emotional messaging is very relevant to the way men and women process information and arrive at a decision. Men try to find the answer and make a decision. Women are far more about an emotional attachment. As Faith Popcorn once said “Women do not buy brands they join them”. Perhaps that makes women more equipped to create break through and relevant content and experiences for today’s consumers. Women simply value emotional attachment more than men, and in a world where people are joining brands with a strong belief, perhaps the creative keys of women are more relevant.
Why do you think that “female oriented” advertising categories are creatively poor?

Actually I don’t think “female oriented” categories are creatively poor. There are some great creative examples that could be said to be female oriented categories in recent times.

7th Generation Baby Crawl, and the Hello Baby Pampers iPad application are two pieces of highly engaging activity in the diaper category.

Also Kotex’s recent campaign and the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty are examples of brilliant “female oriented” advertising campaigns.

“Women usually know better how to manage people’s emotions.”

How do women influence creative teams?

Women usually know how to better manage people’s emotions, and this allows them to get better attitudes and even better creative responses from people.
Do you think you contribute something special as a woman when creating the narrative space of female characters in an advert?

Yes. As a woman I usually can see more and feel deeper things related to the female universe. But it’s just like men: when it’s a narrative space of male characters, they also bring a special contribution.

And in the case of the male characters?

It works the same way for both genres. I also think that the “outsider” point-of-view (for example, the female view on man) brings a special contribution. Sometimes when you don’t live that reality, you have a more detached vision that results in more interesting observations and insights.

Give us the name of three creatives worth looking out for and the reasons why you think they will be a reference in the near future.

Fernanda Romano – Because of her strategic approach to the creative work, which adds value not only to creative ideas but also to the business results. In 2007 she was considered one of the Woman to Watch by Advertising Age.

Corinna Falusi – Because of the outstanding quality of her design, both in terms of ideas and interactive interfaces. She has been turning simple campaigns into brilliant content, and also has been turning websites into immersive experiences by having a rare quality of knowing how to conciliate technology innovations with strategic content and layout.
Alessandra Lariu – an amazing Creative Director that has been doing a great work in Digital. She has a brilliant mind to create not only content but also products that can be life-changing to brands. She is the #29 most creative person in business according to FastCompany magazine - June 2010.

“When you don’t live that reality, you have a more detached vision, that results in more interesting observations and insights.”
The incorporation of women into creative teams is said to be a slow process. Tell us about this process in your region.

In Brazil (where I was working previously for more than ten years), the incorporation of women into creative teams is natural and it’s not slow. It’s just a matter of having less women than men applying to creative positions. But I’ve never seen, for example, any kind of resistance from the team to get them incorporated. And when it comes to the quantity of women in creative teams, I believe that the more the advertising industry gets connected to entertainment and services, the more women tend to be in the creative department.

When you studied advertising, what percentage of men and women were there in your classroom? Do you think this percentage is reflected in the creative departments? And what about the rest of departments in the agencies?

In the university it was like 70% men and 30% women. What happens in the agencies actually is most women work either in accounts or in the planning team. When it comes to creative, it’s like 80% men and just 20% women.

At Festivals, men still seem to be charge. This is shown in the members of the juries and in the target of the campaigns awarded. What do you think are the reasons for this?

I don’t agree with this statement. I believe that it’s only because there are much more men in the creative environment, that they play bigger roles more times. And from the experience I have, the Festivals are always looking for women to make sure they will have a representative presence and will contribute with a female perspective to judge the works. And all of us are absolutely heard and respected during the whole process.
Also, related to the target of campaigns, I don’t believe those male campaigns are more awarded because they are made for men; once again I believe it’s a matter of quantity. There are much more campaigns targeting men than women; so they have more chances to be awarded.

“I don’t believe those male campaigns are more awarded because they are made for men...”
Young people are more and more qualified for the professional world. What qualities does a young woman need to be a good creative?

The same as men... Curious, scholarly, alert to society’s behavior, connected to the culture, familiar with the digital landscape, passionate for ideas, open minded, obstinate.

What will be required of young creatives in the new scenarios: social networks, web 2.0, 3.0- in which they are expected to develop creative strategies and ideas?

To be always alert to technology, by keeping up with the news and innovations brought by technology across various digital devices.

What advice would you give to young female creatives with hopes of becoming great advertisers?

I would tell them to never forget that advertising is more and more about people, rather than only about products. So the more they get connected to society and to cultural movements, the bigger the chances are of them to come up with ideas that can make a real difference in people’s and brands’ lives. Summarizing, I’d say: Enjoy life, work hard and be nice to people.
“I would tell them to never forget that advertising is more and more about people, rather than only about products.”
Susan Fowler Credle joined Leo Burnett USA as the agency’s Chief Creative Officer in September 2009. She joined the agency from BBDO New York, where she started her career and ultimately became Executive Creative Director and a member of the BBDO New York Board of Directors.

Throughout her tenure at BBDO, she created award-winning work for iconic brands including M&M/Mars, AT&T, Pepsi, FedEx, Bank of America, Lowes, Pizza Hut, Armstrong Flooring and Visa.

Under her creative direction, her teams won numerous awards at the top global shows, including Cannes, One Show, ANDY, Clio, ADE and the EFFIES.

She also sits on the Creative Review Committee of the Ad Council. In 2004 she was inducted into the AAF Advertising Hall of Achievement. In 2008, she received the first
New Generation of Leaders Award from the University of North Carolina Journalism School and currently sits on the school’s Board of Visitors. In the summer of 2009, she joined the board of AgenciesInAction, a not-for-profit organization created to galvanize the advertising community behind alleviating poverty in NYC.

Credle has served as a juror at The Cannes International Advertising Festival, The London D&Ads, The National Addys, AICP, The Andy’s and The Art Director’s Club.

Most recently Credle was chosen by Boards Magazine as one of their “Advertising Women of Excellence,” which recognizes leaders who have made significant creative and business contributions in the international advertising.

Susan graduated from University of North Carolina in 1985 with a bachelor’s degree in journalism and mass communication. She lives in Chicago with her husband.
What does creativity mean to you? What does your position as creative director imply for your agency’s creative team?

Creativity to me means expressing something in a way that cause people to take notice and once they are engaged, they have a human reaction that leads them to act.

As a creative director I believe you must be generous - generous with your own ideas and generous with others. As a creative director I am looking for big ideas that people inside and outside this agency can amplify. The biggest ego in the room must be the brand and its purpose, its reason for being.

You started as a secretary in BBDO and rose rapidly. Did you have a fixed idea of where you wanted to go when you started? How has your work changed since then?

I started as the bathroom break girl for BBDO in 1985. I chose BBDO because it was on every cover of the trades that summer. I have always believed that if you surround yourself with talent, some of it will rub off on you. I worked my way up at BBDO by focusing on creative product versus politics. If someone was doing good work, I listened and tried to do work for that person or team.

I wrote a short story, fiction, about a young girl who works her way up to a corner office. Perhaps, that was a way of committing to where I wanted to go. 23 years later when I found myself sitting in a corner office looking out at Radio City Music Hall, I did have that feeling of accomplishing a mission, fulfilling a naive vision.

Since I first started in this business my work has changed, I would hope. In some ways I am better and in some ways I feel I am jaded. Early on, I did not understand or know what advertising was. I just looked at spaces that needed to be filled with communication and thought how can I make this space stand out. I didn’t know the rules of advertising or even what was traditionally expected of an ad. So I think I was actually
more unique, more fresh in my ideas. Today, the most positive difference in how I think about advertising is long term. When I was young it was about a brief or a specific ad. Today, it is about a brand and the long term vision of where that brand can go.

“...if you surround yourself with talent, some of it will rub off on you.”

Boards magazine chose you as ‘Advertising Women of Excellence’ in recognition of the major impact your leadership has had on the advertising sector in the world. What did that mean for you and your career?

It was an honor to be acknowledged by Boards in their Advertising Women of Excellence edition. One never fully knows how her career is impacted by these things. I assume it is a cumulative effect of work, recognition and one-on-one relationships. I am thankful for the opportunities and the support I have received so far in this industry.
From your experience would you say that there is a feminine factor in creativity? What are the creative keys that best connect with women? Are there any differences with the creative keys that work with men?

When I first thought about a career in advertising back in 1983, I was excited to find so many fantastic female role models: Diane Rothschild, Yvonne Smith, Nancy Rice, Diane Cook Tench, Penny Hawkey, Mary Wells, Charlotte Beers, Phyliss Robinson, Shirley Polykoff. Advertising definitely seemed like something women and men could do equally as well. I have noticed something interesting, however. Women tend to embrace ideas directed at men far more than men embrace advertising directed to women. I worry that for some reason we continue to dumb down advertising aimed at women. This infuriates me. Great work is great work. Gender, race, religion and geography tend to be a non-factor with fantastic work. We are human beings and at our core great communication is embraced by most of us. I see women laughing at Old Spice ads and buying the product. I see women tearing up at a Hallmark ad. I think women have a fantastic emotional range. And it is wonderful to create work that appeals to them. But we as an industry have to respect her intelligence, her sense of humor and her life as it exists in 2010.

How do women influence creative teams?

I do believe that female creative directors can be more nurturing. This is a fantastic characteristic if you have people motivated by positivity. If you have a bunch of masochistic creatives, this might not work out so well. Sometimes this “mothering” way of directing can be seen as weak or precious. Trust me, these “mothers” expect a lot.
Do you think you contribute something special as a woman when creating the narrative space of female characters in an advert? And in the case of the male characters?

When it comes to male and female characters in advertising, I hope that most writers seek to be authentic whether they are male or female. I do find that a nice mix of people makes for richer content. We can help each other as writers be more authentic. And that authenticity goes beyond male and female.

“Trust me, these “mothers” expect a lot.”

Why do you think that “female oriented” advertising categories are creatively poor?

Advertising aimed at women for the most part disappoints me. Every once in awhile a piece of work or a brand will speak to us in a way that is fresh and relevant. I think a lot of work aimed at women is also the work that goes through the most rigorous copy testing. If there is one thing I would like to see while I am still in this business is creative work that respects the intelligence and humor and the need for women to be entertained as well as sold a brand and a product. And when I say entertained I mean touched emotionally rather than simply rationally.

Give us the name of three creatives worth looking out for and the reasons why you think they will be a reference in the near future.

Three creatives I would be on the look out for? Hopefully they are all at Leo Burnett and you’ll be seeing their names in the press repeatedly for the work they are doing.
The incorporation of women into creative teams is said to be a slow process. Tell us about this process in your region.

Incorporating women into the creative process is no different than it is for men. If you are talented, smart, quick, generous, fun, committed, you will be embraced immediately. This business on the creative side is not that sexist. The work wins the day. The media coverage of talent is far more sexist.

When you studied advertising, what percentage of men and women was there in your classroom? Do you think this percentage is reflected in the creative departments? And what about the rest of departments in the agencies?

I can’t remember the percentage of men and women in my advertising classes. I think it was more men. When I first started at BBDO it was more men. It is still more men. But that’s just math. Where I think it gets hard to be a woman in advertising is when family is involved. We are always asked to put the work above anything else. I think it is hard to put work above children. In fact, I think it is wrong. So that can become a huge factor. And I do think at the executive level, when it is no longer just about the work that you create, it can be difficult. I am often times mistaken for the wife of a colleague. It takes a bit more energy to explain who you are in social situations because people simply don’t expect you to have the position or title.

At Festivals men still the main character; this is show in the members of the juries and in the target of the campaigns awarded. What are the reason for this?

Until we get more women choosing a career in this business and we figure out a way for this business to embrace a healthier work/life balance, the number of men versus women will probably be skewed. So you will see more men than women in departments, in top positions and on juries.
“It takes a bit more energy to explain who you are in social situations, because people simply don’t expect you to have the position or title.”
Young people are more and more qualified for the professional world. What qualities does a young woman need to be a good creative?

A dear friend once said to me, “There is a special place in hell for women who don’t help women in this business.” I agree with one small edit. I would put the adjective, talented, in front of the second mention of women.

I think it is a great time for women in this industry. Primarily, because I believe we are going back to big brand-building ideas. Ideas that brands can invest in over time. Women are incredibly insightful and I believe visionary. The quick fix, famous for a quarter type idea is unsustainable.

What will be required of young creatives in the new scenarios: social networks, web 2.0, 3.0- in which they are expected to develop creative strategies and ideas? What advice would you give to young female creatives with hopes of becoming great advertisers?

Women coming into this industry today must challenge themselves to be ahead of what is relevant. They must be strong in their convictions. They must believe in themselves. They must recognize where they are weak and be smart enough to connect with people who can be a counter-balance to any shortcomings. They must speak their minds. They must laugh. And they must not get caught up in the fact that they are women - just be human beings trying to connect and communicate with other human beings.
“They must not get caught up in the fact that they are women - just be human beings, trying to connect and communicate with other human beings.”
Colleen DeCourcy is the CEO and Founder of a new company called Socialistic. Launched January 24th. Socialistic is a Marketing Technology Studio that works across the Social Graph. In short, Socialistic is what happens when you take a bunch of great programmers, writers, and videographers and put them in a room together with strategic leadership that has been trained in both the advertising industry and the technology sector.

Prior to founding Socialistic, DeCourcy served for three years as TBWA’s first ever Global Digital Chief.
On her watch, TBWA invested in digital talent and won some significant interactive assignments, such as chores for Adidas, which it pitched in partnership with sister shops 180 and Critical Mass. The shop also helped clients like Pepsi launch online initiatives.

Last year, DeCourcy established a global group of 10 “digital artists” to ensure that the agency’s 267 offices had the best talent and operational structures to execute digital campaigns. Those experts also tackled client briefs directly.
What was your reason to leave TBWA after three years?

During the time I was at TBWA I found I kept circling in on this idea of Advertising at the Speed of Culture. Always on. Two way. Socially driven. App enabled. The Pitch for the adidas digital business (and the subsequent building of a unit called RIOT with 180 Amsterdam that was built to deliver that business) really clarified those ideas for me. I found that, increasingly, I really just wanted to focus on creating an operational structure that could deliver that kind of creative. So, when the time felt right...I left to do that.

Last year you established a group of ten “Digital artists”. How did you come up with this? How did it work?

Digital Arts was originally created to service a specific client with the kind of structure I’ve just described.

While seemingly a stellar concept, this “group of ten” didn’t last. Why do you think this was so?

When the unit came up against some internal resistance. It started to become something else. something it wasn’t built for. What we ended up with was a group of talented people who were dispersed across the network. Always on planes, usually in ones or twos, and I think it created a situation where we were all lone fire fighters instead of a group of artists who honed our delivery and skills as a group.

Moving forward with Socialistic, what is your principal objective?

Making things. Focusing on the development of a studio that makes technology and uses it as a platform for engaging people in a brand’s behavior.
How would you like to see yourself professionally in five years?
Satisfied.

“I really just wanted to focus on creating an operational structure that could deliver that kind of creative.”
From your experience would you say that there is a feminine factor in creativity? What are the creative keys that best connect with women? Are there any differences with the creative keys that work with men?

I’m not sure how I feel about this question. Is there a feminine factor in creativity. Of course. It’s the way ideas are nurtured and shared. I think that the very complex media world with many moving parts needs the kind of leadership and collusion building that is inherent in most women.

How do women influence creative teams?

The only sustainable way to influence a creative team is by inspiring, sorting and nurturing unique ideas. That applies to men and women.

The advertising world is said to be too demanding for women who want to have a healthy family life. Is this sacrifice necessary to reach a position of responsibility as a creative?

I don’t really have any answer to that other than to tell you what my experience was. I can tell you that my career has given a lot to my family but it’s taken a lot too. My daughter is sixteen now. I think it’s fair to say that I missed a lot of the everyday pleasures of being a mother. I could never coach the soccer team or volunteer in the classroom. I could rarely commit to being in the place I was expected if we were on a pitch or a client called. We had a live-in nanny who did most of the cooking and homework assistance. When I was lucky I had weekends to be a mother. On those days I battled jet lag, stress and general fatigue to be the best parent I could be. It’s been a mixed bag. Would I change it if I could? Yes, I would do it differently now.
I think that we’re moving into a much more entrepreneurial time where women can lead businesses on their own terms. It’s too early to say whether it will make things easier for our families.

“...I had weekends to be a mother.”

Now that we know that there are significant neurological differences between men and women, that the differences between the sexes are even more important than the differences between races, how do you think that will affect creativity and the advertising industry?

I think that, sadly, we haven’t seen much progress in advertising around race or sex in decades. It’s a shame. Our industry really hasn’t kept pace with the rest of the business world in either regard.

Do you think you contribute something special as a woman when creating the narrative space of female characters in an advert? And in the case of the male characters?

No, I’m not very in tune with my inner goddess. My favorite accounts have been Dodge and Jeep. When I was on brands like Sunsilk Shampoo – I really didn’t relate. Maybe it’s a product of being continually surrounded by men at work, but I can make a man laugh faster than I can get an emotional response from a woman. On the other hand, I think I was just born that way.
The incorporation of women into creative teams is said to be a slow process. Tell us about this process in your region.

It’s happening. Slowly at first but more rapidly now.

When you studied advertising, what percentage of men and women was there in your classroom? Do you think this percentage is reflected in the creative departments? And what about the rest of departments in the agencies?

I didn’t study advertising. I didn’t pick advertising. It picked me. So I don’t know.

One of your tasks as creative director is to recruit talent. What do you think of the people who join your profession in your country? In particular, what do you think of young creatives? What do you look for in a professional creative?

I have huge respect for young creatives. The really new ones come integrated and social right out of the box. When I’m recruiting talent I look for ideas and freshness and confidence. A certain twisted perspective on the world. But mostly, I look for people who are terriers with an idea. Who will not let go until the idea is made and made the way they envisioned it. That takes skill and fortitude.
At festivals, men still seem to be in charge. This is shown in the members of the juries and in the target of the campaigns awarded. What do you think are the reasons for this?

There are fewer women jurors because there are fewer women creatives. The ratio at the shows is probably right if you look at it from that perspective. It’s just not optimal. Look, I’ve been asked a million times if I can recommend female jurors for shows. It’s like looking for honest car salesman. Everyone would like one – there just aren’t that many.

“I didn’t pick advertising. It picked me.”
What is the creative level among young women in your country?

I think it’s the same as the men. I just think some women are more timid with their ideas. They want to be liked more than they want their ideas sold. We all suffer from trying to make everyone happy with an outcome.

In your opinion, what is the advertising field like for young women who wish to enter it and are ambitious?

If you’re talented and ambitious there are very few barriers you can’t get over.

What qualities does a young woman need to be a good creative?


What advice would you give to young female creatives with hopes of becoming great advertisers?

Ditch the politics and make as much work as you possibly can.
Young people are more and more qualified for the professional world. What will make them stand out?

Maturity, humility, and hard work.

“If you’re talented and ambitious, there are very few barriers you can’t get over.”
Mary Dean is an award-winning creative director and internationally recognized expert on marketing to women. Prior to founding KickSkirt, she held leadership positions at some of the world’s top ad agencies including Leo Burnett (Chicago), Chiat/Day (San Francisco), Foote Cone and Belding (San Francisco) and Publicis USA. While working on brands such as Levis, Maytag, Celestial Seasonings, Curves, and Procter & Gamble, Mary developed a reputation for creating compelling strategies and campaigns that were particularly effective at connecting with women.

Mary has won multiple honors from the Advertising Women of New York for contributing to the positive portrayal of women and has also been recognized nationally and internationally by the Clios, ADDYs, The One Show, Communication Arts, Archive, and the EFFIES.

Mary was the author of the campaign that launched the Curves women’s fitness franchise from a grassroots organization to a worldwide phenomenon. During the five years she led
their advertising, Curves grew from 1,500 locations to over 7,000. In April of 2007, she left her position as VP/Creative Director at Publicis to found KickSkirt, one of the nation’s first agencies specializing in marketing to women. KickSkirt immediately attracted national clients such as New Balance, Genworth Financial, & Abbott Labs.

‘Give me a 2econd’ is an online campaign/video she did in 2010, “something we all had a lot of heart for” says Mary Dean.

A frequent and popular presenter at national and international conferences, Mary has delivered keynotes on the art of connecting with women at forums as far away as Dubai and Sweden. She graduated from Emory University and Portfolio Center where she was a Dean’s List Student and the recipient of the Portfolio Award respectively. She lives in Austin with her husband and two great kids.
Studies tell us that most women do not feel understood by brands. What is the reason for this? Do you think this would change if there were more female creatives working on campaigns led by women?

Brands have historically been a bit lazy in their approach to women. They have relied on stereotype and the notion that all you need to attract women is a coupon and a sale. Nothing could be further from the truth since women are tough customers – we expect a lot.

You have been awarded the Advertising Women of New York prize twice for creating a positive image of women. What does this positive image consist of? How did you get the advertiser to overcome their fears and create a new image of women and what were the results?

The campaigns for which I won awards were created for Curves and reflected that brand’s deep respect of women. They were actually the first to use real women in TV commercials and portray them beautifully. By real, I mean women on the “wrong side” of 30 who were 20 pounds overweight. A group I call the “invisible woman” because they are ignored by most advertisers and media – or at least they were back when these spots first ran. Things have improved since Dove took up the torch. We made sure the camera loved them, we put them in situations that demonstrated their confidence and happiness. That was huge change and women responded.
After your experience working on the campaign for Curves, what would you say are the communication keys that best connect with women?

Aretha Franklin had it right when she said it the first time: R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Respect their intelligence, show them empathy without going sappy and sympathetic, give them a smile and a solution. I’d really like to see more female humor. Women have a great sense of humor – it’s just a bit more sophisticated than what the boy’s clubs give us.

“Women are tough customers – we expect a lot.”

Can you talk to us about your return to the Brand? What do you have planned?

I had been the Creative Director on the Curves account while I was at Publics but left to start my own agency over three years ago. I was pleasantly surprised when Curves called KickSkirt’s office this summer and wanted to talk. Before we knew it, we were producing their 2011 TV, print and radio campaign and will hopefully be contributing a social media campaign to go with it. It’s good to be back. I love what the brand stands for. I like to think I’m helping women change their bodies and their lives.
From your experience would you say that there is a feminine factor in creativity? What are the creative keys that best connect with women? Are there any differences with the creative keys that work with men?

Those are big questions. Look, the thing is that men and women are equal, but we are not the same. Brain studies show that we react differently to emotion & humor to name just two. But the fact that I always point out to clients is that in a normal conversation, women will pick up on 90% of very subtle visual and tonal cues will men will only pick up on 40%. That means men are missing out on 50% of the conversation. I consider advertising and marketing to be a conversation. If part of my audience is women, I want all those subtle cues to be sending the right message. So yes, I think it can help quite a bit to have a talented female creative working on a campaign that targets women.

How do women influence creative teams?

They don’t. Not in any substantial way. Not unless they’re at Group Creative Director level or above and even then, the degree of their influence will be determined by the agency and the ECD. Here’s the deal: creative DEPARTMENTS are largely influenced by award shows. And award shows are judged by men to reflect their sense of humor, their design sense, their emotions. In case this sounds like sour grapes, I’ve won my share of major awards and so have lots of female creatives. But from a big picture perspective our industry’s default setting when judging creative is male. Period.

Do you think you contribute something special as a woman when creating the narrative space of female characters in an advert? And in the case of the male characters?
I think I contribute first as a talented creative. But I believe there are qualities I bring as a woman and a mom that would be tough for a 20 year–old single guy to match. Again, it really comes down to how we’re wired as women. We are masters at mirroring and empathy— in other words, it’s second nature for us to be able to imagine how other people feel. That helps me whether I’m creating a campaign for men or women.

“Our industry’s default setting when judging creative is male. Period.”

Why do you think that “female oriented” advertising categories are creatively poor?

See above. It’s a vicious cycle. No one wants to work on those accounts because they can’t win awards on them and they can’t win awards on them because we have an awards show system that is male dominated. It’s a catch 22— If you do creative that works with the target, even if it’s really great, chances are the men judging the awards won’t like it. And, if you do a great job, the agency you’re working for will give you more female accounts and then you get pigeon-holed. It can be career suicide. Don’t let that happen to you.

The female categories also tend to suck because a lot of it is health or pharma and those clients get in their own way. Beauty brands and perfumes have long been creative directed by men. That’s why so few of them resonate with women. Speaking of beauty category, did the Suave “Anthem” spot ever win anything? (I’m asking— I really don’t know) I love that spot. Simple, Smart. Gives you a smile. Perfectly executed – I think Leslie Decktor shot it. He is a guy in touch with his feminine side. I shot with him one year on Curves.
The incorporation of women into creative teams is said to be a slow process. Tell us about this process in your region.

I think smart, talented people always rise to the top. I certainly felt very welcomed at the beginning of my career and really took off. I think what we need are more women hanging around at the TOP of the ladder. That’s when you can start to have influence. The things is, it’s really gruelling up there. Most women want a life and not just a job. Lots of us end up saying, “Well, the pay check is nice, but the rest of it bites. I think I’ll go out on my own now.”

When you studied advertising, what percentage of men and women was there in your classroom? Do you think this percentage is reflected in the creative departments? And what about the rest of departments in the agencies?

It felt pretty even at Ad School – although I must admit that I didn’t pay much attention to male/female quotas back then. Once you got into the agencies you started noticing it was a man’s world. To be honest, in the beginning, I liked that challenge. I liked being able to give as good as I got and I liked it when my work beat out anyone’s – it’s competitive.

The other departments in agencies have a much better representation of women.
“I liked being able to give as good as I got and I liked it when my work beat out anyone’s – it’s competitive.”
Young people are more and more qualified for the professional world. What qualities does a young woman need to be a good creative?

A woman has to be tough. That doesn’t mean she has to be a bitch or act like a man, but any creative must have a thick skin.

What will be required of young creatives in the new scenarios: social networks, web 2.0, 3.0- in which they are expected to develop creative strategies and ideas?

We’ve always had to develop creative strategies, now we just have new toys to play with.

What advice would you give to young female creatives with hopes of becoming great advertisers?

My advice for young women. Have fun. Enjoy being in an office with some of the brightest, funniest people you could ever want to work with. Ask for what you need and expect to get it. If you don't, move to a new agency.
“That doesn’t mean she has to be a bitch or act like a man, but any creative must have a thick skin.”
Ilkay has been working as creative director at TBWA\Istanbul for four years, and during the last three years the agency has been named the agency of the year in Turkey according to the number of awards achieved such as Crystal Apple and the annual survey of the business magazine Capital.

Her work has been recognized internationally at various festivals such as Golden Drum and Cannes Lions 2010 for her campaign “Need space?” for IKEA.
Can you describe your career path? How have you evolved as a creative? How did you get this far? What instruments did you use?

I studied International Relations and Political Science, and at the last year of college I did my minor in Marketing at the University of Washington Seattle where I’d been an exchange student. When I came back to Turkey, I was almost sure I’d be a marketing person. What else could I do? But honestly speaking, I did not want one of those jobs where they can immediately replace you with someone else. No matter how good or bad I am, I would like to be seen for who I really am as a person, as Ilkay. Only in creative fields is your character and your talent — your name specifically — irreplaceable. What you bring to an environment will never be identical to another colleague. I think this is very exciting about our job, and it was one of major reasons I got into it.

I always used to write, draw and do all sorts of stuff. I had a certain amount of creative productivity, but I had no idea what to do with these “things”. Finally I collected my “stuff” and made what I called a “portfolio” out of them! Totally envying the arts students, I remember I spent a fortune on an expensive portfolio bag — as if the portfolio bag will get you somewhere! — and I started to visit the agencies with my ideas inside.

It seems very naïve to me now that right after you graduate from college, especially if you have been a good student, you think that everyone in the corporate world has been waiting for you all those years! I think that naive confidence somehow got me somewhere. I had an interview with the most famous and creative guy in advertising, the Executive Creative Director of Y&R/Turkey then, Serdar Erener. He actually quite liked my portfolio. He gave me a trial time of one month. In that month, I guess I found my best ideas ever, and started as a copywriter at Y&R. I was very lucky. It was the best agency then, and the perfect school for a new learner.

I worked for Y&R for five and a half years before Erener got his favourite people together and founded his own agency, Alametifarika. It was the biggest agency in Turkey at the time. I became the Creative Director in my last year there, responsible for all of the accounts. And after working more than eight years with Erener, it was time for me to do something on my own as a Creative Director. I moved to TBWA\ISTANBUL where I’ve been for the past four years. I am now the Executive Creative Director of the agency and also the Vice President.
**What does creativity mean to you?**

I think creativity is having no other choice but to do stuff, to not be able to stop yourself from thinking and making new things. Lock a person inside a room and tell him nothing, and if he comes out having done stuff, he is creative.

“That naïve confidence got me somewhere.”

**Could you give a brief definition of yourself from a professional viewpoint?**

Childlike, energetic and happy, with a short-term-sad-things-memory that resets every morning.

**What would you consider has been the most gratifying part of your entire career, and what has been the hardest?**

You have all the tools in the world and you get the chance to dance throughout many different disciplines. You start as a copywriter. A storyteller. Then you become a film maker, or an editor, or an actor directing the cast sometimes. A musician, a voice-over director, a photographer, a stylist! One day you are going to the photo shoot of a very fashionable brand, talking in avant-garde terms with the photographer about the fancy fashion world and the nail colour of the model. The next meeting, you find yourself talking to the CEO of one of the biggest GSM operators of Turkey, discussing ARPU, average revenue per user units. What a life! There is no way one gets bored in advertising. And better than all of that, it makes you a bigger person. Advertising, especially under Turkish conditions of inhumane working-hours, takes a lot from you, but in the end you find out that it also gives you a richer personality.
How do you work and what does your work consist of? What is your work philosophy?

How do I work?

I have my favourite pen, I have my favourite big A3 papers. I sit down by a table and start thinking like we all do. Problems make me work better. First I try to define the problem in the right way. That gives me a very clear direction to work. Then I try to find links between the problem and human nature. I can work alone or with people. I love both ways.

My work philosophy:

I ran into graphic designer Anthony Burrill’s typographic posters about work a few years ago. So far, these sentences have been the best expressions I could find about my understanding of work. They are “Work is play. Work more, live more. Work hard and be nice to people.”

What does your position as creative director mean for your agency’s creative team?

You should ask my team! It’s a hard question. I think we have the best team of creatives in Turkey. I really mean it, they are already very good! I guess my role as the creative director is more like a dynamo.

After working together a certain amount of time you get to know each other better. Your thoughts, your feelings, and your desires as a creative director lead their path. They are all very good runners with advanced muscles. You just give them the direction in which to head.
What have you learned in your long and successful career?

It’s all about people. If you want to have a good life, surround yourself with nice and talented people. Run away from the contraries. The quality of your life depends on this.

“I think we have the best team of creatives in Turkey.”

What do you wish for in the future? What motivates you to keep going?

Now I am making sentences for brands. In the future I want to make my own sentences on life. The mediums would probably be writing, film making, music making or product designing.

I don’t know what motivates me to keep going. I just keep going. I think it’s an innate drive.
From your position, you have a greater chance of creating models for women unlike those that Turkish advertising has presented so far. How does the client take these changes? Can you give us a recent example or a curious case?

I don’t think the client cares if you are a man or a woman. They look into the words coming out of your lips. Whether it’s a woman’s lips or a man’s lips doesn’t make any difference.

In Muslim countries, women tend to be treated in a particular way. Does this help or hinder you in your work?

I did not work in any other country.

I don’t know how women are treated in other countries.

I don’t think I am treated in a particular way in Turkey.

It doesn’t help or hinder my work.

Many other things help or hinder my work.

What is your most successful campaign? Can you briefly explain your creative strategy?

Anadolu Insurance, Turkey’s number one insurance company. We’ve got the client three years years ago, and in those three years we’ve succeeded in making significant improvements in its perception. They are the leading company, so we had aims not only to acquire new consumers but to enlarge the market in general.
Turkish people don’t believe in insurance. They only value the importance of insurance if something happens to them in person. For instance, we visit the insurance company on the day a flood takes over our apartment! We have this funny and almost naïve overconfidence, claiming “forget it! Nothing would happen to me!” This was the main Turkish insight that we built the whole strategy on. In the launch campaign we showed people saying foolish words like “I am not afraid of thieves! Thieves cannot enter this house! We live on the fifth floor! There is no way they can get here! I am the insurance of this family!” Meanwhile, two thieves are in the background, robbing the house completely from the beginning until the end of the commercial! The guy notices nothing. Even at the end he is unaware of his own blindness. It is so true and so “us” that this campaign worked really well. The approach really convinced consumers about the importance of insurance.

In all our Anadolu Insurance work, we have shown the dangers very explicitly and almost severely as they happen in life, but we always conveyed a funny approach in tonality. So on the one hand, consumers fear the dangers and get convinced about insurance, and on the other hand, they get closer and closer to the brand because of its sense of humour.

Most important of all, insurance commercials in Turkey up until then have been very informative, corporate and boring in general. I think Anadolu Insurance has played an important role shifting the category in a disruptive way.

“I don’t think the client cares if you are a man or a woman.”
You have been working as creative director at TBWA\ISTANBUL for four years, and for the last three years the agency has been voted the Agency of the Year in Turkey. Have you had anything to do with this recognition of TBWA?

TBWA\ISTANBUL has always been highly creative and one of the most award winning agencies. That’s why I wanted to work here! It has always been very cool.

What do you think you have contributed to the agency during your time as creative director?

I think my major contribution has been that I don’t enjoy creativity that does not bring about business. I am a creative but I like business. Awards alone do not make me happy. I love to do talk of town stuff that works. I like our commercials to get on the news. I have to go home and hear my mom say “I love that commercial you did,” or else I would not be happy sitting alone with all those awards. I guess this understanding changed the agency’s look in a way. We’ve started doing a lot of populist stuff that appeal to the crowds. The good thing is that we did not quit winning awards with this approach. In fact we got more awards!

This is very rare actually. As agencies get bigger, they inevitably get drawn into mediocrity. That wasn't the case with us. We have entered seven national pitches in the last two years, and we've won all seven of these big pitches. Pitches start a very romantic relationship with the clients. Thanks to the good-vibe psychology of our pitches, we started with edgier work with most of these clients. Besides giving us the opportunity to do big and creative work, winning all these pitches reassured the agency confidence. And in the end, life is all about confidence. You feel good. Your people feel good. Your agency feels good. Things get better.
Where do you get your inspiration from when working on your campaigns?

From the brand itself. From its own realities. Sometimes it’s its logo, sometimes it’s its packaging. I’m inspired by the people who love the brand and from the people who hate it. Why is the brand there in life? What does it stand for? Does it have any meaning for our lives? Do we miss it when it’s not there? How do you consume it? Slowly? Happily? Passionately? All these facts and thoughts about the brand itself is the source of inspiration. I don’t have to look elsewhere. It’s all there in the product.

“I don’t enjoy creativity that does not bring about business. I am a creative but I like business. Awards alone do not make me happy.”
From your experience would you say that there is a feminine factor in creativity? What are the creative keys that best connect with women? Are there any differences with the creative keys that work with men?

Honestly speaking, I think that men are actually by nature more capable of engaging in creative activities. Think of what children do with their toys. Boys break, destroy, crush, mess up and damage. Girls organize, arrange, neaten, sort out and tidy up. Creativity is about breaking. The idea finding process requires disruption. You have to be naughty and not so well-behaved to find ideas. However design is about order. I think that’s why there are many talented and famous women graphic designers, typographers and illustrators. It’s the same with my creative department. Most of my copywriters are men — and men-minded women — but my best art directors are women. Yes, I do have very talented women copywriters. But they all have the men sort of thinking skills as well. They don’t look like men, they all have a very feminine style, but their minds do work like men. Twisted and disobedient, like little naughty boys!

Another major difference between men and women is that men are more primitive. They are simpler human beings than women. Like cave men! Remember the scene in Closer where Clive Owen says “I’m a caveman!” Just like that! In other contexts of discussion this statement may sound like an insult, but in terms of creativity this is an advantage indeed. A simpler mind works better.

How do women influence creative teams?

I think they have more gusto and design initiatives.

It is always nice to have a tasteful woman in the department to preserve a certain level of quality. If you leave men alone by themselves, the world can become a very nasty and unpleasant place. Just like it happens at home. Women somehow get a hold of things and make the world around you better. They work very much in
detail which is very important throughout the creative process, especially during the realization of ideas.

“Creativity is about breaking. The idea finding process requires disruption.”

Do you think you contribute something special as a woman when creating the narrative space of female characters in an advert? What about male characters?

I do care a lot about the role of women in ads, but I also care about the role of men. It is my job and responsibility to reflect life as it is and give my characters a sincere, genuine personality. I think I am successful if I expose reality.
The incorporation of women into creative teams is said to be a slow process. Tell us about this process in your region.

Foreigners are quite prejudiced about Turkish society. Most have very little information about reality.

When I go to international juries, people are very much surprised to see me, a very young lady in Turkey leading a very big agency. I see that they don’t expect that out of Turkey. Maybe some still think we go to work on camels or something!

But it is not the case about Turkey. Istanbul is one of the biggest metropolitans in the world, and I think it’s the most beautiful city. Turkey is also a fast learner in the advertising industry. Advertising is growing rapidly. Schools have just recently opened up their advertising departments. There are many new female graduates every year. and you see more and more cool ladies in the creative departments of agencies.

What percentage of men and women are there in your creative department? What about the rest of departments in your agency?

The percent of creative people in my team is not much, about 1 out of 4 creatives is woman, but then how many people does the executive creative director count for? On the other hand, almost all of our account managers are women. We have very few men in client relations.
At festivals, men still seem to be in charge. This is shown in the members of the juries and in the target of the campaigns awarded. What do you think are the reasons for this?

If there are less women players in advertising, there would be less women in the juries. It is normal and democratic. That’s the way life is. For example, compared to advertising, in the world of design there are more women players, and thus the design juries are full of women.

“People are very much surprised to see me, a very young lady in Turkey leading a very big agency.”
What will be required of young creatives in the new creative landscapes of social networks, web 2.0, 3.0 and so on? How will they be expected to develop creative strategies and ideas?

The idea finding process will never change.

We will always be sitting in our rooms, at our tables with our favorite pencils in our hands and paper in front of us, trying to find the best ideas out there. The medium changes, and it changes very fast. But we should not confuse the medium with the idea. Medium is a means, it is not the end. Many young interns coming to our agency think that medium itself is the idea. “I have an idea! Lets do something on Facebook!” What is the idea? What is the story? I am very happy that “the story” will always be there in all its glory, whatever happens. It is the lovely guarantee that this technology craze will not bore us to death. The story will save us and it will give meaningful definitions to these new unidentified mediums.

What advice would you give to young female creatives with hopes of becoming great advertisers?

Advertising is harsh. It is a severe war.

It is a “despite-everything-profession”.

And I see that in the long term, only those who can wake up to a new day every day succeed. So my suggestion would be take it easy and SMILE.

As the song goes...
Smile though your heart is aching
Smile, even though it’s breaking
When there are clouds, in the sky, you’ll get by
If you smile, through your fear and sorrow
Smile, and there’ll be tomorrow
You’ll see the sun come shining through
If you’ll light up your face with gladness
Hide every trace of sadness
Although a tear, may be ever so near,
That’s the time, you must keep on trying
Smile, what’s the use of crying?
You’ll find that life is still worthwhile if you’ll just smile.

“Advertising is harsh. It is a severe war.”
Uschi, Executive Creative Director, founding partner of Zapping M&C Saatchi, has a degree in Communication Design at Darmstadt. She finished her studies and began her career at Young & Rubicum Frankfurt in Munich. She later moved onto Madrid before joining the agency Contrapunto, where she worked for five years, during which Contrapunto was chosen by Advertising Age Agency of the Year. Uschi then continued her career at Lowe, Grupo Barro / Testa and Zapping / M&C Saatchi where she is partner, founder and Executive Creative Director.

Her work has received over one hundred national and international awards with different clients in festivals such as Cannes Lions and New York Festival, DA&D, Clio, Epica, Eurobest, FIAP, El Sol / San Sebastian, Laus, CdeC, and Pencils in the One Show.
She has been a judge on two occasions in the Cannes Lions Festival and the CdeC, on three occasions she was part of the Laus jury, and has also been a judge at El Sol / San Sebastian, Eurobest, Genius, The New York Festival, El Ojo de Iberoamerica and Festival Caribe.
You have participated on the juries of advertising festivals where not many women are selected. How does it feel to be chosen?

I don’t feel as if I had been ‘chosen’, not at all. I think it’s simply fair and logical. It seems that the festival organizations are reticent to include women in the juries.

The argument that there are not enough women in important positions, leads to situations such as what happened this year in El Sol, the Iberoamerican festival where there are entries from all Spanish speaking countries and where half the world participates, a half of the world where many women work. Yet in the juries appointed by the organization, for the important categories: TV, graphics, radio and outdoor, there was not a single woman.

Although it may sound very feminist, I think that we should insist on having a share of women in the juries. It is unbelievable that in 2011 we are still stuck at the same point, but it could help to accelerate the acceptance by organizations of the talent and professionalism of women in festivals and high management.

Which of the awards that you have won are the most significant to you? Why?

Well, honestly, I am very fond of all of them. Very much so. Although I have already won more than one hundred awards, I remember the story behind each one of them. They are part of my story and memories of my professional career, and I love them all.
Have you ever imagined yourself at the top of the advertising industry?

If you refer to having an agency with nearly ninety people employed and all that this implies, the answer is no.

But there is something I do know. I never aimed to become a boss. Rather the opposite, I was very happy working as an Art Director. I used to see my Creative Directors putting out fires, all of them ending up being involved almost exclusively in the executive aspect of the business and all of them pretty unhappy.

But in my case, I’ve managed to avoid this. I spend my time doing mainly creative work. I have managed to structure the agency in such a way that I can keep a schedule that allows me to have a family and also to be able to focus on creative activity, where I feel my talent is put to good use. So I am happy compared with what my own bosses were like.

“I think that we should insist on having a share of women in the juries.”

Where do you see yourself in ten years?

In ten years I see myself working in projects. Projects for the agency, design projects and above all in my own projects. I’m a bundle of energy. I have tons of accumulated projects that are waiting for me and I am eager to start them.
Which is your most successful campaign? Can you briefly explain your creative strategy?

I’ve been working for El Corte Inglés for four years. It’s the second biggest department store in the world.

We basically do their fashion campaigns. Years ago they would only hire international cinema stars for their spring and autumn campaigns, and they used a “department-store language” that was far removed from fashion.

Young women, the most important fashion-minded public, stopped considering El Corte Inglés as a good option.

We started by analyzing the young Spanish woman: she is proud, passionate and modern, a woman of strong character, with many objectives and goals in her life. With an eye on this and the help of experts in the fashion industry, we began to create concepts, ideas; magic stories, all beautiful and suggestive, reflecting that type of woman.

Our campaigns have hit the target turning a big department store into a tempting fashion option.
“I can keep a schedule that allows me to have a family and also to be able to focus on creative activity, where I feel my talent is put to good use.”
From your experience would you say that there is a feminine factor in creativity?

We, as creative, are first and foremost, individualistic. In our agency, it’s about “different folks, different strokes”, and we like it that way. I see characters with different behaviors and people coming from multiple countries. I believe in mix and multiculturalism in any form. Fusion is the new culture, it is a sign of our times: borders belong to the Middle Ages.

What are the creative keys that best connect with women? Are there any differences with the creative keys that work with men?

*Madame Bovary* was written by Gustave Flaubert. Henry James wrote *The Portrait of a Lady*, Marguerite Yourcenar wrote *Memories of Hadrian* and Virginia Woolf wrote *Orlando*.

I deeply believe that creativity knows no gender.

The fact that the best fashion designers are still men and museums are full of art mainly created by men, I think is simply because they have had more time to fulfill themselves than we had. With all the washing, cooking, shopping, giving birth and taking care of children, it’s rather difficult, don’t you think?

How do women influence creative teams?

I’ve asked myself that question and what I can say is that I try to push forward the best idea with all my objectivity and strength. I deeply believe that better creativity sells more and as I believe in it, I encourage creatives to bring out the best in them.
As a woman, do you think you contribute something special when creating the narrative space of female characters in an advert? What about male characters?

A creative, male or female, must be capable of finding an equally efficient and significant communication solution for a bank, a car, a baby food product, an anti-aging cream, golden years holiday, or whatever, as you have learned this profession to this effect. You wouldn’t ask whether a cook is a woman or a man, you just notice if the food is good or not.

But most likely, perhaps, maybe, our instinct or sensitivity is different. This is noticeable in products where these instincts do matter, as in fashion. While a man enhances the model’s sex appeal, we rather stress her character. Whereas a man is looking for competitiveness, a woman is looking for consensus. But honestly thinking it over, this could also be a cliché, so I’m not sure.

“I deeply believe that creativity knows no gender.”
Why do you think that female-oriented advertising categories are creatively poor?

Advertising aimed at women goes beyond reality. We still work with some clichés that often make me laugh to keep from crying. Women have changed a lot in a very short time. Our goals, dreams, fears or ideals have nothing to do with those of five years ago.

But the male world has remained more or less the same, anchored in their values, creating a lot of insecurity in decision makers who are mainly men. In order to ensure the success of a campaign for feminine products, they leave many decisions in hands of thousands of researchers. And we all know that these researchers’ campaigns are creatively poor, unsubstantial, grey and fainthearted campaigns.

Give us the name of three creatives worth looking out for and the reasons why you think they will be a reference in the near future.

Ana and Jorge, Jana, Lara, Luis and Fran, María and Mario, creatives who work in The Zapping Village. They have a lot of talent and work very hard and that’s why they are here with us.
“Women have changed a lot in a very short time. Our goals, dreams, fears, or ideals have nothing to do with those of five years ago.”
The incorporation of women into creative teams is said to be a slow process. Tell us about this process in your region.

I know of an unconcealed secret that illustrates this question. Here, in Madrid, there is a multinational agency that makes me wonder. An excellent and brilliant creative director who has been working there for many years and has showed her high capability by winning the most prestigious awards with her campaigns and who has been a jury member in the most important festivals, and yet, she has no possibility of becoming the head of the agency, even though she fully deserves it. Just because she is a woman, even though the company has constant troubles with that position, where no head — a masculine one, of course — seems to fit. By the way, this is an American agency.

Another brilliant creative, very qualified and with a great CV, was fired by the president of the agency because he wanted “to rejuvenate” the position and the agency. She was in her forties, and at that time the owner of the agency was almost sixty. The press never reacted to this cockiness. An absolute disgrace. There are still very few female creatives occupying high positions in Spain and the fact that I am one of them is probably because I happen to work in my own agency and my partners are certainly not sexist.

When you studied advertising, what percentage of men and women was there in your classroom?

I studied in Gemany and there was a balanced percentage at that time. Nowadays, here in Spain, most of the advertising students are women, but I am quite certain that this was also the case at the end of the eighties and beginning of the nineties.
Do you think this percentage is reflected in the creative departments? And what about the other departments in the agencies?

In my agency there is an approximate 50/50 rate of men and women, and it is pretty stable. In the last three weeks, three women who work for us were made agency partners. One of them is only 24 years old and she is an ace.

The percentage of women in other agencies is more or less the same. But generally speaking, things change when it comes to the top positions, where they are scarce. The market makes it hard to have children and combine it with a good position. When you get to that point, things start resembling the story in which ten little indians disappear one by one until finally “there were none”.

“At festivals, men still seem to be in charge. This is shown in the members of the juries and in the target of the campaigns awarded. What do you think are the reasons for this?”

In festivals, it is the networks you belong to that are extremely important. It is no longer an individual or national issue, it is a competition between international networks.

If in those international agencies women don’t get to become creative directors, they won’t be part of the jury either, it’s that simple.
Young people are more and more qualified for the professional world. What qualities does a young woman need to be a good creative?

To be persevering and to persist in doing a good job with every communication piece. It can be very small, almost insignificant, absurd, complicated, for a difficult client, at very short notice, with weekends in between, with fussy and fearful executives. Never mind, there is no excuse. A good creative always tries to do a work that is worthy of being awarded a Lion in Cannes. You'll do it for yourself. Awards are still the best step to open doors.

What will be required of young creatives in the new creative landscapes of social networks, web 2.0, 3.0 and so on? How are they are expected to develop creative strategies and ideas?

Those who begin to work in communications now — the word advertising seems to me a term of the past — have an advantage over all the rest of us and they should make the most of it. They are the internet generation. They are the first human generation to have grown up with and within this ‘megamedium’. There is a big difference between having it in your blood and having to learn it like I had to do. Because in the future, that is tomorrow, or today, ideas should be ‘media neutral’. This is the big difference with our generation; we have learned to think and create in terms of movies or ads. I’ll give you an example: we come across Marketing Directors who feel lost in the digital revolution and as a result of the crisis, and so we have budget reductions of 50/60/70%, fears, doubts and so on. They don’t know what to do anymore. I do know what they should do: they should retire.
What advice would you give young female creatives with hopes of becoming great advertisers?

To work hard and to do it well, I see no other way. But do it with the same spirit as Robert Carlyle in the Johnnie Walker ad: ‘keep walking’. No matter how many difficulties you find in your way, don’t forget to keep walking, and always in the same direction because that straight line will take you all the way up without you even noticing.

“You’ll do it for yourself. Awards are still the best step to open doors.”
Natalie lives in Shanghai, one of the most exciting and experimental markets of the world, where she builds and runs the creative department of OgilvyOne for clients like adidas, Unilever, Johnnie Walker, Vans and Lee Jeans. She was also both the youngest and first female regional creative director for OgilvyOne Asia.

Her very first job was to hand kern letter spaces for a logotype in New York, where she lived for seventeen years since the early 90s. In New York, she worked in a number of agencies, from boutiques to national networks, crossing disciplines from design, branding, technology, interactive and traditional advertising. Prior to moving to China, she worked at R/GA as creative director for Nike, leading Nike Running and NIKEiD, and was part of the original team that created Nike+. Her last big gig in New York was to launch the first global Nike Human
Race in which one million runners from 24 cities over the world ran a 10k race on the same day, the scale of which prompted her to venture into China, a brand new market with over 450 million netizens.

Natalie is a Hong Kong native, but for many years she could not imagine moving back to Asia. Nowadays she’s humbled by the fact that there IS a big world outside New York.

Her work has picked up a Cannes Titanium Grand Prix, D&AD Black Pencil, One Show Interactive Best of Show, Grand Clio, ADC Gold Cube amongst many others. Most recently her team was the only one from China who earned a number of international interactive awards, including a Cannes Silver Lion for The North Face’s Red Flag campaign.
Recently your team was the only one from China who won a number of international interactive awards, including a Cannes Silver Lion. How does it feel?

I thought they made a mistake! But seriously, it’s encouraging. Even though there’s a big gap between China and the rest of the world in many ways, it shows that at the end of the day, a good idea is still a good idea.

How was to go back to China and Asia? Is it more difficult as female creative in Asia than in New York?

I’ve actually never lived and worked in China so it isn’t “going back” per se. Actually it’s quite fresh to me. I think that anywhere you are in the world is more or less the same, but certain things you’ll never get outside China, and vice versa. For example, I love the fact that the price of a Starbucks coffee can get you from a domestic airport to downtown Shanghai. In terms of being a female creative, it’s actually quite similar to New York, especially in the interactive field, where it’s not as gender specific as in the traditional fields.

Have you ever expected going this far in your career?

I’m just starting, and there is still lots to learn and I wish I knew how to do it all! I got into this career being very curious about what persuades people to believe in mass communication, since my parents believe in everything in the news. A good part of my education came from news clippings my parents saved to show me.
What is your most successful campaign? Can you briefly explain your creative strategy?

The Nike+ Human Race in 2008. We were tasked to digitally sign up one million runners across 24 cities globally to run while the Olympics were happening -- a scale which me and the team, I think actually few other agencies -- had never experienced before. The official strategy was to have a suite of digital tools to engage and sustain interested runners. The unofficial strategy was six months of sleeplessness and giving 200% of everything we had.

“...it shows that at the end of the day, a good idea is still a good idea.”
From your experience would you say that there is a feminine factor in creativity? What are the creative keys that best connect?

Yes and a very good one. The advantage of being a female creative is you can be both hard and soft. You can decide when to have balls and when to chill. It’s harder to be a guy and turn soft. When you’re in a tough situation it’s very easy to solve everything with a smile, calm everyone down to step back for a clearer look. We are blessed with a much wider range than guys.

How do women influence creative teams?

Exact same thing as guys do: do what makes sense and get the team to a better place.

Do you think you contribute something special as a woman when creating the narrative space of female characters in an advert?

I can switch myself into the mindset of the audience in a split second.

Why do you think that “female oriented” advertising categories are creatively poor?

Because most creatives follow the same old formula of traditional advertising that was maybe best used for cars and beers.
Give us the name of three creatives worth looking out for and the reasons why you think they will be a reference in the near future.

Steve Peck, Wade Convey and Jeff Baxter. They all worked with me at R/GA, I’d always go to them knowing that they can do anything. Pretty sure those qualities won’t disappear all of a sudden.

“I can switch myself into the mindset of the audience in a split second.”
The incorporation of women into creative teams is said to be a slow process. Tell us about this process in your region.

It’s slow, but not because of thresholds in the industry. Surprisingly, the industry is very non-discriminatory here because it’s so new, but because fundamentally there are two layers of barriers in this society. One, the universal under-appreciation of creative-related jobs, and two, women in Asia don’t want “tough” jobs where they have to be confrontational with men. Unfortunately they like to maintain the pretty, gentle images that are handy in attracting good boyfriends or husbands.

When you studied advertising, what percentage of men and women was there in your classroom? Do you think this percentage is reflected in creative departments? And what about the rest of departments in agencies?

I actually went to a very small, a bit unconventional fine arts school called Cooper Union in New York where I picked classes with the lightest equipment. There were about 40% girls and 60% boys. In my department it’s 30% girls and 70% guys. In the other departments it’s the reverse, especially in account servicing, where it’s a female-dominated field.
At festivals, men still seem to be in charge. This is shown in the members of the juries and in the target of the campaigns awarded. What do you think are the reasons for this?

Men are louder, better at promoting themselves and have higher pressure to show they’re still in. Actually I read somewhere that statistically whenever a big organization is in trouble they put a woman in charge, when things are good the top guy is a man, since if a woman fails it doesn’t look as bad as a guy. It’s both a blessing and a curse to be a woman, you have less pressure but you’re expected to do real work.

“Women in Asia don’t want “tough” jobs that they have to be confrontational with men.”
Young people are more and more qualified for the professional world. What qualities does a young woman need to be a good creative?

Balls, lots of common sense, gender-agnostic mindset, and only pull out the woman card when all else fails. Of course talent is a must.

What will be required of young creatives in the new creative landscapes of social networks, web 2.0, 3.0 and so on? How are they are expected to develop creative strategies and ideas?

Actually I think these things are second nature now to the younger generation. It’d be harder for them to not work within these scenarios. One of my favorite stories is when my 70 year old mother and her 65 year old brother was with his three year old grandson, they had to ask him how to use the computer.

What advice would you give to young female creatives with hopes of becoming great advertisers?

Don't set goals, don't take anything too seriously, but always do what you love and give in at least 200%. Life is short, and if you're not doing what you love, you're wasting your time. Leave a little room so you can always step back a little and laugh, even in the worst case scenarios.
“Don’t set goals, don’t take anything too seriously, but always do what you love and give in at least 200%.”
As SVP Group Creative Director at McCann, Alessandra has worked primarily on MasterCard, General Mills, Kohls, Nikon and Verizon. She has recently been picked by Fast Company as number 29 of 100 most creative people in business, beating out Tom Ford, Jamie Oliver and the co-founder of FourSquare.

Before McCann, Alessandra worked at Agency Republic in London — four times Agency of the Year — and before that, Framfab/LBi.

Her work has won various awards, most recently the Cannes Cyber Lions for Golden Grahams and OneShow Interactive, D&AD and New York Festivals for MasterCard’s Priceless Picks.
Alessandra also loves helping others out. That’s why while in London she co-founded SheSays, an initiative to help women further their careers in digital and technology fields. Alessandra also teaches the prestigious Master Class for Hyper Island.

Alessandra grew up in the Amazon jungle in Brazil, but in 1990 swapped monkeys for computers, and has been obsessed with all things digital ever since. She regularly speaks at conferences, and writes opinion pieces for magazines and blogs. She was also elected top 25 ‘women in tech to watch’ by AlwaysOn conference in Stanford, CA.
SheSays is an association that trains and prepares women within the advertising world. How did it come about? How have you managed to attract over 3000 female members so far?

We haven’t really done a lot in terms of ‘advertising’. It’s mostly word of mouth. And this self-propagating activity proves there is a need for what we do. Everyone who hears about it immediately falls in love with SheSays.

What was the most important milestone in the history of SheSays? What has it meant to you personally?

I don’t think that has happened yet. Obviously being recognised by Fast Company was a huge honour, but SheSays has a lot of unexplored potential. One day I’d like to see it become more than just a community of women who help each other. I’d like to see it as an active community of women who work together around the world.

You are a reference in communication for women. Does this facilitate your work or does it give rise to objections by the agency and the client?

Both my agency and clients are very supportive of what I do. Phew!
What is your most successful campaign? Can you briefly explain your creative strategy?

Priceless Picks. Mastercard is known all over the world as the ‘Priceless’ brand. In 2009 we made the campaign more interactive by letting people tell each other what they thought was priceless. We created an iPhone app that pinpoints where you are and gives priceless recommendations for the things around you.

This app made the Top 10 in iTunes store under the Lifestyle category. It also won a load of advertising awards including One Show, New York Festivals and D&AD.

There’s also the Golden Grahams Golden Grant. The cereal brand Golden Grahams wanted to expand its customer base from teenagers to young adults out of college, ages 18-25. To appeal to this audience we tapped into a powerful insight: people out of college are finding it hard to get jobs. So we created a cathartic space were people could tell us about their difficult job interviews. We read them all and animated the ones we liked the most. We also gave people with the best stories twelve boxes of Gold Grahams to help fuel their search. This was awarded in the Cannes Cyber Lions.

“Being recognised by Fast Company was a huge honour but SheSays has a lot of unexplored potential.”
From your experience would you say that there is a feminine factor in creativity? What are the creative keys that best connect with women? Are there any differences with the creative keys that work with men?

I think having a great idea is not gender specific. In fact a great idea should make people change their perception about the brand and become brand advocates whether they are male or female.

In terms of creative keys that connect with women, I think women are more detail oriented, and often their sense of humour is more sophisticated.

How do women influence creative teams?

Women are better team managers. They have more of a sense of teamwork, they have a genuine interest in developing other people and most importantly, they know how to listen.

Do you think you contribute something special as a woman when creating the narrative space of female characters in an advert? And in the case of the male characters?

As I said before, I think something special is created when you have both perspectives, male and female. It can be interesting to get a male perspective on a female oriented brand and vice-versa. As long as the team is mixed.
Why do you think that “female oriented” advertising categories are creatively poor?

I’m not sure if they are. I can think of great examples like Nokia, Selfridges, Dove and Nike.

“Women are better team managers... they know how to listen.”

Give us the name of three creatives worth looking out for and the reasons why you think they will be a reference in the near future.

Ziva Moskric. She is a multitalented art director who can illustrate, animate, direct – with a great attitude.

Kelly McCormick. She’s an ambitious writer with a lot of drive.
The incorporation of women into creative teams is said to be a slow process. Tell us about this process in your region.

I’d say in the UK and US the male/female ratio is about 60/40 at the start. But that drastically changes when we get to more senior positions e.g. CCO where there are very few women.

When you studied advertising, what percentage of men and women was there in your classroom? Do you think this percentage is reflected in the creative departments? And what about the rest of departments in the agencies?

When I was at university the ratio was 60/40 male/female. When I started working in digital and advertising back in 1995 that ratio changed to 90/10 male/female. Today the creative department of my agency is 50/50. The same for other departments.

At festivals, men still seem to be in charge. This is shown in the members of the juries and in the target of the campaigns awarded. What do you think are the reasons for this?

Because there are few women in senior creative positions and awards judges are chosen by seniority. Having said that, at all of the awards that I have judged so far, such as DMA Asia, D&AD, IAB, ADDY, BIMA, ANDYs, EFFIEs, Clio’s and One Show Interactive, I have made sure that results weren’t skewed towards a male perspective. I even remember having a raging argument at the ANDYs about a Tampax ad that I didn’t think appealed to women at all.
“I even remember having a raging argument at the ANDYS about a Tampax ad that I didn’t think appealed to women at all.”
Young people are more and more qualified for the professional world. What qualities does a young woman need to be a good creative?

They need to be hungry, motivated and great lateral thinkers. Everything else can be taught.

What will be required of young creatives in the new creative landscapes of social networks, web 2.0, 3.0 and so on? How are they expected to develop creative strategies and ideas?

Young creatives already have the ‘new landscapes’ DNA built in them. They live digital so they should just keep doing what they do.

What advice would you give young female creatives with hopes of becoming great advertisers?

Be curious.

Make mistakes and learn from them.

Look for sources of inspirations outside of advertising.
“Be hungry, motivated and great lateral thinkers. Everything else can be taught.”
Linda graduated from Middlesex Polytechnic with an honours degree in art and design in 1976. She worked as a designer in Hardy Aimes in London from 1976 to 1977 on advertising, graphic design, surface design and textile design.

From 1977 to 1979, Linda was Art Director at Batey Advertising and worked on the Air Lanka and SIA Cargo accounts. She then joined Leo Burnett in 1979 as Senior Art Director where she worked on Levi’s, Nestle, Cadbury, Shakey’s Pizza and Procter and Gamble. In 1982 Linda helped the agency take top position at the Creative Circle Awards.

Linda joined Saatchi & Saatchi as Creative Director in 1983, and in 1984 was promoted to Chief Executive Officer, whilst remaining the Executive Creative Director of the agency. During her tenure, the agency was consistently one of the top ranking agencies creatively, with the agency winning Singapore’s first Cannes Gold Lion. The agency achieved success in all major international shows, including a much coveted D&AD Black Pencil.
Linda was appointed to the Asian Board, formed in October of 1994. Also in 1984, she was also appointed as one of two Regional Directors responsible for South East Asia. Linda previously held the position of Chairman of Asia for four years before deciding to step down.

Linda rejoined Leo Burnett in January 1997 as Chairman / Executive Creative Director of the Singapore agency and in January 1998, was appointed to Regional Creative Director of Leo Burnett Asia Pacific. Linda has been named amongst an elite global few in Advertising Age International’s feature story ‘Women Breaking Barriers’ and in October 2003, she was honoured with the prestigious Chairman’s Award at the Singapore Creative Circle Awards. At the same award show in 2005, she was one of five individual recipients honoured with a Champion of the Creative Circle Award for her years of contribution to the industry. In 2006, Linda was appointed Chairman of the 4A’s advisory board, responsible for creative standards in Singapore.
Always one to break boundaries, Linda worked closely with her China and India teams as well as with director Yasmin Ahmad, to produce two groundbreaking documentaries focused on understanding people at the bottom of the economic pyramid. She also conceived and produced Engage 2006, a conference at “the edge of the cutting edge”, focusing on the new media and communication landscape. It attracted people from fifteen countries with speakers from America, the UK and Asia.

In 2007, Linda started her own consultancy, Godmother Pte Ltd., which was appointed to produce and direct the Engage 2007 conference. Engage proved to be an even greater success than the first, with a 96% increase in the attendance of brand clients. It was completely sold out. Godmother continues to run creative training workshops in the region and be involved in strategic positioning projects, both on the client and agency side.

In the last year, Linda has found herself on the other side of the brand table working as the Marketing Director of local global success story Club21, the luxury fashion retailer. She works with a team of twenty, building awareness and driving sales of the 30 and more mono brands under the company’s management.

In addition, she markets the Club21 corporate brand at events such as the Singapore Biennale 2008 with ‘Art of the T’ installation to critical acclaim and has helped develop a new service offering: Style Services, personal shopping and styling for its exclusive membership base.
She continues to work on brand projects within the advertising industry.

Over her agency career, Linda has been awarded over 300 accolades to her name including a string of awards from local, regional and international shows. In October of 2008, the 10th anniversary of the Singapore Advertising Hall of Fame Awards, Linda received the ‘Newsweek Lifetime Achievement Award’ in recognition of her three decades of service to the Singapore advertising industry. Linda was the first woman to achieve the award.
You were considered to be the most powerful and influential people on the Asian ad scene. How did you manage that recognition?

I try to use it to make a difference by mentoring talent in the industry and working with the 4A's of Singapore to raise standards in the industry, especially in the creative arena.

How do you think that women will develop in advertising industry?

I would like to think we will see more women in advertising, especially in leadership roles in creative and agency management, but that will only happen if agencies can offer a better work/life balance. Otherwise we will continue to see a drift to the client side.

What positive aspects do you think that females creatives bring to advertising?

A great deal of advertising is in fact aimed at women, as they tend to be the decider of what the family needs and eats, and it goes without saying women are in a stronger position to create more insightful advertising that will resonate with women.
“...that will only happen if agency’s can offer a better work/life balance. Otherwise we will continue to see a drift to the client side.”
From your experience would you say that there is a feminine factor in creativity? What are the creative keys that best connect with women? Are there any differences with the creative keys that work with men?

It depends on the product, but generally speaking, if you are reaching out to women, an emotional approach can be very powerful, whereas men respond well to rational arguments. I don't like stereotyping, so this is really a general tendency, and often both genders need a combination of both. An emotional argument might gain their attention but it might require a rational aspect to convince them and get them to act perhaps more for men than women, but trust me, if it is a car it might be women who have to be persuaded by their husband with a rational argument!

How do women influence creative teams?

It is not really any different between a man and a woman, except in my experience women may pay more attention to useful details.

Do you think you contribute something special as a woman when creating the narrative space of female characters in an advert? And in the case of the male characters?

If you are good at your job you should be able to understand both genders, but in some areas a woman may have greater insight and a heightened awareness in the area of fashion, children, health and most things in the home. For example, any woman knows that the most important day of a sale is the first morning. Or you could persuade a woman to set aside more money for a child's healthy diet if they felt it would give them a better start in life.
Why do you think that “female oriented” advertising categories are creatively poor?

I do not think you can entirely blame that on the fact there are so many men in creative departments. It may be true, but often the reasons are due to the complexity of the category. For example, sanitary napkins are heavily controlled by the health department, making it a challenge to deliver anything creative. Based on my experience, it is also often the clients who “dumb” down the advertising, placing ridiculous requirements so that the advertising ends up being mundane and predictable.

“In my experience women may pay more attention to useful details.”

Give us the name of three creatives worth looking out for and the reasons why you think they will be a reference in the near future.

I prefer not to answer this as I am not overly impressed these days.
The incorporation of women into creative teams is said to be a slow process. Tell us about this process in your region.

It is not a lack of will, it is a lack of candidates.

When you studied advertising, what percentage of men and women was there in your classroom? Do you think this percentage is reflected in the creative departments? And what about the rest of departments in the agencies?

I did not study advertising but rather graphic design, and I was one of two women in the class. Even when I was offered my first job, I discovered that I would have been the only woman designer as the only other women were secretaries. And they offered to pay a pittance! I did not join that company.

At festivals, men still seem to be in charge. This is shown in the members of the juries and in the target of the campaigns awarded. What do you think are the reasons for this?

A lack of women in advertising, which is why you regularly saw Yasmin Ahmad (before she died), Lim Sau Hoong, Ruth Lee and Jureeporn as regular fixtures at award judging, as well as myself.
“I discovered I would have been the only woman designer as the only other women were secretaries. I did not join that company.”
Young people are more and more qualified for the professional world. What qualities does a young woman need to be a good creative?

The same as a man, but also to be tough enough and passionate enough to stay in the industry and succeed. Many I know drop out or step back after becoming mothers or they want a less stressful life.

What will be required of young creatives in the new creative landscapes of social networks, web 2.0, 3.0 and so on? How are they are expected to develop creative strategies and ideas?

They need to be able to understand the business issue and find the strongest way of solving it using the most suitable channels to achieve it. They will know how to produce effective creatives for these channels, as they do not work in the same linear way. They also need to know what media the target audience uses – no point producing a Twitter campaign for people in their 50s, at least not for another possibly twenty years!

What advice would you give to young female creatives with hopes of becoming great advertisers?

You really have to be sure you have the stamina and passion to succeed, as it is a very tough career choice. It is very rewarding on many levels, but it will demand a great deal of you at a personal level and you need to be sure you can make the sacrifices that will be needed.
“You need to be sure you can make the sacrifices that will be needed.”
“Advertising can do things that politics or other systems can’t.”

More than ten years ago, these were the words of a reckless girl, Masako Okamura. Masako is the first female Creative Director at Dentsu and a pioneer among women.

Masako’s works are recognized by many award shows, including Cannes Lions, Clio, Spikes, London International Awards and AdFest. She has judged for Clio, YoungGuns, AdFest, Cannes Lions, Mediaspikes, One Show, ADC and many regional awards. Her public service ads for the Ad Council in Japan and the US are now showcased in a schoolbook in France. Other works are for Liberal Democratic Party (for PM Junichiro Koizumi), Toyota, Shiseido, Suntory, Thai Airways International and Shizuoka broadcasting. She was chosen one of the Asian Top 10 Creative Directors in 2007 by Media magazine.
Masako is a trendsetter who spread the word ‘Kawaii’ in introducing culture of Japan in many countries. In 2010 she’s due to publish her second book “How to Make Someone Love You by Your Words” First book is ‘How to Be a Copywriter’. Once a week, Masako lectures at university. She loves wine and football, and didn’t join Cannes last year as she devoted her body and soul to writing a daily column about World Cup 2010.
How does it feel being the first female creative director at Dentsu?

It’s a great honor for me. I had no idea I would be promoted to creative director at that time because I thought I was too young. But my boss was saying that he wanted to do something new to change the advertising industry as a whole, which was stagnant. He said that in light of the status quo, he thought it was a good idea to make me Creative Director. So I decided to accept his proposal to go along with that plan and try it out. Granted, it’s been nine years since that all happened, so for me it’s a thing of the past. Nowadays it’s not only Dentsu; female CDs are growing rapidly at other agencies too, and female producers in commercial production are increasing at an amazing pace. I guess it’s true that the industry has changed.

You studied to be a lawyer. Why did get into the advertising industry? What caught your attention about it?

Well, since I had passed the bar exam, I could have just gone on and become a lawyer. But when I talked to some experienced female lawyers, I was told that the bulk of their work consisted of post-processing of traffic accidents and dealing with domestic problems like divorce. I wanted to handle larger cases such as M&As and other business-to-business cases. I realized then that even if I became a lawyer, it would be a long time before I could take on the cases I wanted to handle, and so I decided to change my career path.

In the previous year, the situation in Japan changed dramatically with the introduction of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law. Dentsu opened its doors to female graduates, and I was curious to find out more about it. After talking with several Dentsu employees, I realized that advertising has the power to change things that the political system can’t. I abandoned my plans to become a lawyer and started working in Dentsu’s PR department. Five years later I moved to the Creative Department and started my career as a copywriter.
What is your favourite everyday task as Creative Director?

Structuring a whole campaign, including the media plan. But I still prefer writing a storyboard by myself...

“I had passed the bar exam, I could have just gone on and become a lawyer.”
What do you think is the most attractive thing of advertising to women?

The fact that you can use ambient expressions that appeal to the right brain. It’s probably a plus that you can use cute expressions, too.

How do you feel about commercials that still made for/by man?

I don’t know how it is in other countries, but in Japan the number of women landing jobs in the advertising industry is gradually increasing. The number of commercials produced by women has increased dramatically compared to ten years ago. To put it simply, if the absolute number of those involved in creative work increases, then the situation will change. It is changing as we speak.
“The number of commercials produced by women has increased dramatically compared to ten years ago.”
From your experience would you say that there is a feminine factor in creativity? What are the creative keys that best connect with women? Are there any differences with the creative keys that work with men?

Speaking in terms of my own basic abilities, the feminine factor does not make much of a difference. The work that I won awards for or was praised for during my copywriting years consisted of things like a public service announcement (the “Waterman” Ad Council/US-Japan Joint Campaign, which aired in both countries), a TV commercial for Toyota automobiles, an Apple Computer TV commercial, a print ad for a major food company, and so on – many of which were more or less male things.

That said, since I became a CD, I have headed up several campaigns for which I was appointed because the client said they wanted a female CD to do the job. The client said “ads made by someone who understands the female mentality get more sympathy.” Japanese women no longer respond to ads that just stand out. They respond to ads that they sympathize with, and they spread them virally and act on them. We could say that this suggestion by the client points to a certain perspective.

There are no differences at all when working with men. There are still far more men in creative positions at Dentsu, and personally I grew up in a school environment where there were not many girls. It could be that my way of thinking is logical and similar to a man, so I’ve just never noticed the differences!

How do women influence creative teams?

The young female staff members these days come up with completely new, flexible ideas. That is a wonderful thing. Also, someone told me they were happy because unique teas and sweets are served at my meetings. That would probably be hard to come by in a military-like team of only men!
The advertising world is said to be too demanding for women who want to have a healthy family life. Is this sacrifice necessary to reach a position of responsibility as a creative? Is this why women work mainly in the accounts and public relations departments in advertising agencies?

I can’t really deny that. When you try to create something wonderful with demanding staff members, the fact that it’s going to take time is unavoidable. And at times when there have been a lot of overseas trips, dangers have arisen in my own relationship! For a woman to remain on the front lines of the creative field, I think it is crucial to have her family’s understanding. Though there won’t likely be times when you’re working late at night, like in jobs such as sales and PR where you have to work with the client’s behavioral time frame, it is probably hard for creatives because in order for them to come up with wonderful ideas, in the end it comes down to a struggle with themselves.

I think it’s the same with people such as writers and actresses.

“Japanese women no longer respond to ads that just stand out. They respond to ads that they sympathize with.”
Now that we know that there are significant neurological differences between men and women, that the differences between the sexes are even more important than the differences between races, how do you think that will affect creativity and the advertising industry?

At this stage, I can't really say anything definite. Japan has too short of a history in that area (laughs).

Do you think you contribute something special as a woman when creating the narrative space of female characters in an advert? And in the case of the male characters?

I’m sure there are probably advantages to me being female, but this is a matter of personal ability. I can look at things from both a man's perspective and a woman's perspective. On my team, we have a male staff member who can write narration from a female perspective very well, sometimes even better than me! I think that whether it’s north, south, east, or west, good creatives and writers are able to portray both genders in their writing, don’t you?

Why do you think that “female oriented” advertising categories are so bad?

If we consider them bad now, that means there is a chance to change them.
Give us the names of three creatives who deeply inspire you and tell us why.

Alex Bogusky: The fact that Alex, who was the co-chairman of CP&B, left the advertising world, was a shock for ad people worldwide. I was one of them. When I worked with Alex in judging the Young Guns Awards, I remember being surprised that there was a person who could judge things so fairly -- and instinctively, at that. He was interesting to talk with while we were out drinking after the judging, too. He continues to make comments even now through his blog and Twitter, for example, which go beyond the realm of advertising. I am very interested in what he has to say from now on, more as a person than as a creative. As for the great works that he has created, there’s no need to even comment on them anymore. Incidentally, I have a picture that was taken of the two of us decorating my desk (laughs).

Nancy Vonk: She is a female creative and a person who views things from a very broad perspective. I like her adventurous direction in the Dove and Diamond Shreddies campaigns. When we worked together in judging One Show, it gave me courage to hear her make a lot of positive comments. She is someone whom I want to strive to be like.

Juan Cabral: I’ve never met him, but I like his work. The simple strength in works like Sony’s Balls and Paint and Cadbury’s Gorilla stimulates one’s instincts. I am curious about his new way of working as he works for Fallon London while raising his son in Argentina.

“Japan has too short of a history in that area.”
The incorporation of women into creative teams is said to be a slow process. Tell us about this process in your region.

I’ve never thought that. I don’t think that applies to Japan, where nowadays there are more and more female CDs and female producers.

When you studied advertising, what percentage of men and women was there in your classroom? Do you think this percentage is reflected in the creative departments? And what about the rest of departments in the agencies?

I went to law school, so I don’t know, but I can analyze it based on the current situation. For the past ten years, I’ve been teaching once a week at an art university. A lot of my students have gone on to work at places like ad agencies or companies that produce TV shows. What I recently realized was that the ratio of boys to girls in the first year was 9:1, and now it is 4:6, with more girls than boys. It’s not only in my class; the number of girls in the faculty is increasing. So it must mean that there are more people working as creatives.

My agency is unique. There are more people who majored in literature, science, or architecture than people who studied advertising. As far as Dentsu is concerned, one’s field of study does not matter. That’s because after you get in, they train you really hard.

Ad agencies in Japan, unlike those in other countries, hire new graduates as probationary creatives. Then they train them over several years to become full-fledged creatives. This differs from the Western way of doing things, in which they look at already-developed portfolios and hire people who have experience.
One of your tasks as creative director is to recruit talent. What do you think of the people who join your profession in your country? In particular, what do you think of young creatives? What do you look for in a professional creative?

We hire people who come from a variety of backgrounds and have diverse perspectives. People who have a flexible mind and a tough spirit are preferred.

“They train them over several years to become full-fledged creatives.”
At festivals, men still seem to be in charge. This is shown in the members of the juries and in the target of the campaigns awarded. What do you think are the reasons for this?

That’s something you should ask the organizers! All we do is make good ads and make sure that they get attention. One thing I can say, though, is that all of the women who work with me as judges for advertising awards are active and speak their minds without hesitation.

Do you think that the reduced number of award-winning campaigns directed at women is a consequence of the limited number of women in the juries?

NO! It has nothing to do with that. I have judged for quite a few advertising awards, both international and regional, around the world for the last five years, and not once have I known the gender of the staff when judging.
“All of the women who work with me as judges for advertising awards are active and speak their minds without hesitation.”
In your opinion, what is the advertising field like for young women who wish to enter it and are ambitious? What is required of them?

Surprisingly, women are more ambitious than men these days. If they have curiosity and flexibility, they'll be fine.

What qualities does a young woman need to be a good creative?

A flexible mind and emotional toughness. Someone with physical stamina, too, is preferable.

Young people are more and more qualified for the professional world. What will make them stand out?

Toughness. And the good fortune to run across good CDs.
What will be required of young creatives in the new creative landscapes of social networks, web 2.0, 3.0 and so on? How are they expected to develop creative strategies and ideas?

For them to be enjoying not only work but also their day-to-day lives. In particular, if they’re inept at romance or they’re not good at personal relations, they may not be able to master things like Twitter and Facebook.

“Surprisingly, women are more ambitious than men these days.”

What is the creative level among young women in your country?

Compared to ten years ago, it is improving dramatically. I encourage you to watch for great things ten years from now. As long as they are given good opportunities, female creatives are steadily acquiring the ability to create wonderful work. If more clients come to believe in the potential of women, there won’t be a problem. Perhaps if Japan gets its first female prime minister, the situation might change.
Pepa is Grey Group Madrid’s Chief Creative Director of Digital and New Media Development, and in that role she perfectly embodies the agency’s multidisciplinary integration and philosophy. She has worked in both the online and offline world, at agencies such as NCA, Ruiz Nicoli, Ad-hoc and Young & Rubicam.

After 2000, Pepa shifted towards the online sector, working for interactive agencies such as DoubleYou, Digital Bates, McCann Erickson Interactive and Tribal DDB. Her portfolio includes such clients as Volkswagen, Telefonica, Terra, Movistar, Telepizza, Lucky Strike, MSN, Visa, Coca-Cola and Vichy.

Pepa has won numerous awards at festivals such as Cannes Lions, Sol, FIAP, London International Awards, One Show and CdC. She has also been a member of the Festival del Sol 2009 Interactive Jury, the CdC 2010 jury, and the Interactive Jury at Eurobest 2010.
You are the Executive Creative Director at The Name Group. Did you ever imagine getting so far? Which award that you’ve won has been your favourite?

I wanted to be a copywriter since the beginning, I hope to be more copy today than yesterday. What appears at your visit card is only a “copy”. In terms of responsibilities I of course assume my position, but as a creative person I think you always want to make good stuff, as far as you manage that, you can say that you are getting far but not because of your position. Because of your illusions.

An online campaign for San Valentine with Volkswagen Beetle.

Gold in Festival el Sol, merit in C d C and shortlist in Cannes.

What do you think women find most attractive about working in the advertising industry?

I guess that it’s the same for men, but advertising calls for a lot of sacrifice, but it’s very satisfying and fun. We create daily, and that’s very powerful.

Why did you enter the advertising industry?

Since I was twelve years old I wanted to work in advertising. I love advertising and I love the internet. There is not a “Why”, there is a “I Will”.
What is your most successful campaign? Can you briefly explain your creative strategy?

“Galician UFO,” a local campaign for Terra Telefónica created to bring more traffic to the site.

We worked with Javier Fesser, the cinema director to create several videos and although it was very special, it was not the most important part. The way everything came together on the internet was really surprising and quite successful.

“Since I was twelve years old I wanted to work in advertising.”
From your experience would you say that there is a feminine factor in creativity? What are the creative keys that best connect?

Of course we have a feminine factor, but sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn’t. In my experience, I try to listen a lot, be comprehensive with my teams, and motivate them. I believe in healthy competition, not carnivore competition. Sharing and building are the best ways to connect.

How do women influence creative teams?

As women we might have a different approach than men, but at the end of the day the influence should be the same: find good staff, good ideas. That is what this is all about.

Do you think you contribute something special as a woman when creating the narrative space of female characters in an advert? And in the case of the male characters?

As a woman I try to be honest. As a woman you know the answers so perhaps it’s an advantage. With male characters, I try not to stereotype them!

Why do you think that “female oriented” advertising categories are creatively poor?

Everything in life restricted to only one area or target at the end is poor.
Give us the name of three creatives worth looking out for and the reasons why you think they will be a reference in the near future.

Belen Coca from La Despensa is very hard working. She believes in ideas and is very multidisciplinary. I think she represents the future of the ad agencies very well.

Nuria Martinez of Remo D6. Nuria loves creating in interactive spaces. I worked with her at DoubleYou and she taught me how to write for the internet.

Marga Castaño of Wisygyg, a great interactive creative.

“I believe in the healthy competition. Not carnivore competition.”
The incorporation of women into creative teams is said to be a slow process. Tell us about this process in your region.

For a long time now in Spain, there have been women in the creative departments, but it’s not until recently that women have reached higher level positions.

There tend to be more women in interactive agencies.

What about the rest of departments in the agencies?

I believe that nowadays there are still more women in the account department than in the other departments.

At festivals, men still seem to be in charge. This is shown in the members of the juries and in the target of the campaigns awarded. What do you think are the reasons for this?

As in the rest of the areas of society, women are slowly receiving more power and more recognition. Hopefully in the near future we will see changes in this area.
“It’s not until recently that women have reached higher level positions.”
Young people are more and more qualified for the professional world. What qualities does a young woman need to be a good creative?

You have to have good ideas. That’s what it’s all about in advertising. It doesn’t matter if you are a man or a women. Bring good ideas and be passionate. You have to bring out the best of you.

What will be required of young creatives in the new creative landscapes of social networks, web 2.0, 3.0 and so on? How are they are expected to develop creative strategies and ideas?

I believe that a creative now has to be multidisciplinary. It is not a option, it is a must. You have to be a storyteller, using everything that you have. And now with technology on our side, we have to take advantage of the moment. We live in liquid times. Everything changes everyday New staff appears almost daily, so we have to be prepare for that. The “old times” are gone.

Reinvent yourself every day. Elvis was Elvis because he was the curious boy in town.

What advice would you give to young female creatives with hopes of becoming great advertisers?

If you don’t surprise yourself first, forget it, you will not impress anybody else. Interesting is more important than being right. Be brave.
“Interesting is more important than being right.”
Tiffany got her creative start during the Internet boom in the late nineties. By selling shares of her Internet start-up and a handful of prized domain names (soap.com among them), she had earned enough money to pay her way through Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. After graduating in 2002, she went straight to Crispin Porter + Bogusky and has been there ever since.

While at CPB, Tiffany has been a part of the agency’s growth from 115 to over 1100 people worldwide, and has created iconic work for MINI, ‘truth’, Virgin Atlantic Airwarys, Burger King, Volkswagen, and many others. She helped launch PINK by Victoria’s Secret, and served as Creative Director on ‘truth,’ and American Express OPEN. She currently is the Executive Creative Director of CPB’s LA office, and Group Creative Director on Old Navy and Bolthouse Farms.
Tiffany’s work has received top awards at every major creative competition in the industry, including The One Show, Communication Arts, D&AD, Clios, The Andy’s, The Effies, and Cannes Lions, where she was awarded a Grand Prix and the first Titanium Lion ever given.

In her first year at CPB, Tiffany was featured in AdAge’s “Twenty Five Twenty-Something’s.” She has since been recognized in AdWeek’s “Young Ones,” in 2009 as one of AdAge’s “Women to Watch,” and in 2010 was named one of the Top 10 Creatives of the Decade by the Young Guns Awards.
What have you learned in your long and successful career?

This question makes it sound like I’m about to retire! I’ve only been in advertising for eight years, even though I think CPB years are like dog years since we produce so much work. I still have a long career left, and I still have much to learn. I’ve had the benefit of learning from some of the best creative minds in the world, like Alex Bogusky, Andrew Keller and hundreds of others at CPB. It’s never easy, because we’re never solving the same problem. There isn’t a formula to creating great work, but we have a good process to help us get there.

The one main thing I learned is it’s never just about me. I can’t go somewhere else and expect to have the same success as I’ve had at Crispin. It’s our culture, our creative process and our people that make it possible. If everyone isn’t working together on the same goal it simply won’t work. One broken cog can bring down the whole machine. It’s why I can’t imagine ever going anywhere else. I feel privileged to work at a place that has so many passionate people. I can’t let these people down. Ultimately they are my true clients. I work for my traffic person. I work for my interns, my account people. I work to make them all outrageously successful.

You are the only woman of the few creative directors at Crispin Porter + Bogusky. What advantages and disadvantages does this imply?

I get to be an example for other female creatives. It also means I partake in award shows, and try to represent a woman’s perspective. I also have the power to hire and promote other female creatives. I recently promoted two women as Associate Creative Directors and both happen to be new moms. Which is really inspiring.

The disadvantage is I have to listen to a lot of sports talk and laugh at a lot of stupid guy jokes. But that’s kinda the same as in my personal life too, so I’m used to it.
What is your most successful campaign? Can you briefly explain your creative strategy?

I’ve been lucky to have a few campaigns that I consider pretty successful, all for very different reasons. One of the first campaigns I worked on was Truth, the teen anti-smoking campaign. It was a brilliant strategy in that it created a brand of rebellion for teens that replaced their need to smoke as an act of rebellion. It focused the rebellion against tobacco execs. They were smart enough to get that tobacco companies were deceiving and using them, and it gave the teens the power. It was creative, meaningful and it worked. Millions of teens stopped and didn’t start smoking because of it.

We also launched MINI cooper in the US, and one of the campaigns I worked on was called MINI Counterfeit. It was one of my most awarded campaigns and it worked for the brand. The idea was formed around the MINI being iconic. It was one of the key brand pillars. The white roof, the small shape, the bulldog stance, the history. So the insight was that most iconic things are counterfeited. People try to replicate them and sell them for cheaper. In the campaign we showed people making and selling counterfeit MINIs on the black market, but these knock-offs didn’t come close. They were actually oversized sedans and gas guzzlers that used tricks like a big logo to make it look smaller, or bonnet stripes to try to get the look of it. Put simply, other cars can’t come close to being a real MINI. It was a great way to show all the trademark features of the car, but in a fun way. And it used inexpensive media, Direct Response TV, in a way that totally made sense for the idea and got national exposure on TV for the brand when they otherwise couldn’t afford television.

“I have to listen to a lot of sports talk and laugh at a lot of stupid guy jokes.”
One of my longest running campaigns, and one that managed to totally get a beloved brand back to its strategic roots was Old Navy. We pitched the account by bringing back the Old Navy that people remembered. We brought their old logo back and created a family of talking mannequins called the SuperModelquins that are now more iconic to the brand than the work that launched the company in 1994. These SuperModelquins lived in-store and throughout all mediums and have been running successfully for almost two years now. It was a complete turnaround for the brand that had once been the lowest performer of Gap Inc. There were double digit increases in sales immediately, and positive sales and traffic for the year. And it’s now firmly in the mindset of the right customer.

I have one more campaign that I have recently launched and even though it’s only been out a few months, and was only tested in two cities in the US, it has been the most PR driven idea I’ve ever done. We strive to make all our work truly press worthy, when the idea has that baked in you don’t need to have to spend a lot of money to make it successful.

We were tasked with doing a campaign to get sales of baby carrots up. It had some challenges, but it was an opportunity to do advertising where it hadn’t ever really been done for a vegetable.

Baby carrots were loved, but not exciting. But they are also bright orange, crunchy, and ‘dipable’ — just like some of our favorite crunchy snack foods. So that insight lead us to a campaign that was about giving baby carrots a junk food marketing makeover. We created chip bag type packaging, put them in vending machines, gave them some great junk food type commercials and a tagline that was simply “Eat ‘Em Like Junk Food.” With the cultural conversation being about obesity and healthy eating, it is becoming a prominent figure in the fight to get people to eat healthier. And we actually didn’t even say they were healthy. Quite the opposite. But in just a few months it’s had international exposure. The work made the cover of The New York Times, featured stories in USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, and segments on NPR and Saturday Night Live. And it’s still buzzing all over the world and web. We’re on our way to go national with it now.
“It was a complete turnaround for the brand that had once been the lowest performer of Gap Inc.”
From your experience would you say that there is a feminine factor in creativity? What are the creative keys that best connect with women?

I think women are inherently more empathetic, which can be a great thing when we’re trying to understand who we’re talking to and how. It can get us to a more real place, to make the work more true and meaningful.

How do women influence creative teams?

I think women have to influence creative teams just as all great leaders should. You have to be confident so they trust you, inclusive so they feel like they are learning and part of a team, and decisive so they trust your strategic and creative vision. I think women as leaders can especially convey the inclusiveness piece. Women generally want people to feel loved and want to nurture, which is a great thing for mentoring and learning. I just think we have to make sure that it doesn’t make decisiveness happen for the wrong reasons. In the end, doing the things that will make the work better, even if feelings are hurt, will benefit everyone.
Do you think you contribute something special as a woman when creating the narrative space of female characters in an advert? And in the case of the male characters?

In my experience, most women are better at creating work for men’s and women’s products rather than vice versa. Men seem to have a much harder time writing for women. Women have grown up in “a man’s world” and have become quite acclimated. We enjoy sports that are only played by men. We support politicians that are mostly male. We’re entertained by shows and movies directed and written by men. Culturally it is less acceptable for men to embrace the female side of things. And mostly they’ve accepted that. Romantic comedies are still chick movies. Women’s softball is not something guys will sit around watching with their buddies and some cold beers. So I’ve found more resistance to working on my current account, Old Navy. Some men don’t want to work on it. As a female creative I’ve never turned down an assignment because it was too “manly” for me. I take on all types of advertising challenges, and like them.

But because of those same challenges, I think often it’s easier for us to create work for both men and women that skews more for a male perspective, especially for broader mediums like TV. Men won’t buy a chick car, but women will by a man’s car. But as we can become really targeted with mediums, that will change.

“Doing the things that will make the work better, even if feelings are hurt, will benefit everyone.”
Why do you think that “female oriented” advertising categories are creatively poor?

That’s a pretty general statement. I’ll assume you mean that female oriented categories of products have not been the most iconic and awarded advertising categories.

I think overtly female-targeted advertising has been trapped in this terrible stereotype, that it has to be heartfelt and cheesy and lacking humor. There is a big opportunity for work to talk to a woman in a real way. She’s got a sense of humor, she’s smart, she’s got a lot of different sides to her.

We’re starting to see work that gets this. The latest Kotex campaign poked fun at their past ads to say ‘why is it that ads for tampons have been so lame? We’re real. And sometimes we’re bitchy. Our periods aren’t blue liquid and we don’t dance on the beaches in white jeans. Instead we’re bloated and eating chocolate.’ And luckily, we’re also seeing work like the Old Spice Body Wash advertising that can target men and women. It’s shows that work can be smart and edgy and still work for men AND women. We all have a sense of humor and will connect with smart work.

Give us the name of three creatives worth looking out for and the reasons why you think they will be a reference in the near future.

Meghan Deroma:
Meghan is an inspiring woman. And proof that you can balance family and work. I recently promoted her to an Associate Creative Director on Old Navy and that was just a few months after she had her first kid. Her attitude is great and she is smart and passionate. I’ve never heard a complaint leave her lips. She balances being a brilliant creative with being a great new mom and makes it look effortless.
Cerra Buckholz:
I just started working with Cerra and damn this girl’s got some passion. She’s a force of a personality and not afraid to speak her mind. When you combine creativity with that kind of confidence, as long as you listen and stay humble, you’ll go far.

Andy Pearson:
Not a woman, even though he is a bit of a metrosexual, but he’s a guy that is so secure in himself that he’s not afraid to do a tampon ad or a clothing commercial for moms. He sees it as a creative problem to solve. He is a new breed of creative that doesn’t have any of the admen mentality in his blood. He is passionate about all the types of creative work especially new technologies.

“I think overtly female-targeted advertising has been trapped in this terrible stereotype.”
The incorporation of women into creative teams is said to be a slow process. Tell us about this process in your region.

I just seek them out and then hire them. I also think that women have to look out for each other. I think there can be competitiveness among women in this business, and it’s instigated, even if unintentionally. Like if another woman gets into a position of power, that would somehow knock us out of our place — that there isn’t enough room at the top for too many women. Maybe it’s fear. And so, unknowingly they can become defensive of their roles. So it’s important we remember that the more women in roles of leadership, the better. And it’s in our hands to encourage and support young women.

When you studied advertising, what percentage of men and women was there in your classroom? Do you think this percentage is reflected in the creative departments? And what about the rest of departments in the agencies?

I had an almost equal amount because my ad program was small. Maybe if I’d known it was so hard to make it as a woman I wouldn’t have made it this far. Ha! My naivety helped me!
At festivals, men still seem to be in charge. This is shown in the members of the juries and in the target of the campaigns awarded. What do you think are the reasons for this?

Senior level creatives are still mostly men, and senior level creatives are who get chosen to award shows. It’s pretty homogenous. Often I’m the only woman on judging panels. It’s important that we have a mix of men and women on juries. The best work will still win, but we will see that awarding a variety of styles of work will help get the industry’s work to a better place.

“It’s in our hands to encourage and support young women.”
Young people are more and more qualified for the professional world. What qualities does a young woman need to be a good creative?

All the same things any good creative has. Strategic thinking, a cultural awareness, good instincts, design sensibilities, a sense of humor, and passion for doing good work.

What will be required of young creatives in the new creative landscapes of social networks, web 2.0, 3.0 and so on? How are they are expected to develop creative strategies and ideas?

There are so many opportunities for all young creatives. Younger creatives can have an advantage with an understanding of technology and an openness to it. It’s an area where I’ve seen many come in new and quickly flourish and get promoted. I advise all creatives to continue to be students of all new mediums and ways to create.

What advice would you give to young female creatives with hopes of becoming great advertisers?

Have confidence in yourself. Do work that is you. It’s what will give you an edge. Be powerful but charming. Tough but nice. Men get away with being dicks a whole lot easier than women can.
“Men get away with being dicks a whole lot easier than women can.”
Fernanda started on the business side, running several internet companies in Sao Paulo, and hated the job she held briefly at an ad agency as an account supervisor.

Increasingly drawn to content creation in her internet career, Fernanda was coaxed into joining top Sao Paulo creative agency DM9 DDB, which won nine Lions and Agency of the Year at the Cannes Lions. She ended up as head of interactive and nontraditional media.

She also has received awards such as One Show, Clio, Fiap, New York Festivals, Clube de Criação, Ojo de Iberoamérica. Ad Age’s Woman to Watch 2007.

She has been the Executive Creative Director at Lowe Worldwide’s in New York and Global Creative Director en Lola Lowe Madrid. Nowadays she is the Global Creative Director Digital and Experiential at Euro RSCG.
How were you first introduced to the advertising industry? What made you decide to take this career?

I grew up very close to two fantastic creatives; Claudio Carillo and Luiz Toledo, two men who were incredibly successful as creatives and then, later, as agency owners. Luiz was somebody I met through the parents of a childhood friend, and Claudio was my neighbour and, I am sure, my inspiration to go ahead and give it a try. I saw his lifestyle, his personality, his love for what he did and I really wanted to do that. When I was going to university, the two of them advised me to go to Business School rather than Advertising School. They were crucial in how I educated myself to enter this world.

Do you think you have reached the top of the advertising industry worldwide?

I don’t think I have reached the top, and I hope I never do. I think 2005, when my team at DM9DDB in Brasil won loads of awards in Cannes, the Cyber Grand Prix and the Agency of the Year, was when I became known globally. I think when I became ECD at Lowe in New York was when this was solidified. But even after that I am always learning. I am learning.

Is there any person that you thank for trusting in you and helping your career develop?

Claudio Carillo and Luiz Toledo, for sure. Sergio Valente, the president of DM9DDB, who really truly trusted me and taught me a lot. Paulo Queiroz, who is now president of ABC Holdings, but was at DM9 while I was there and also taught me a lot. Erh Ray, who hired me at DM9. I told him I didn’t belong and he said to me “that’s why we want you!”
Daniel Chalfon, who is now Media Director and partner at Loducca MPM, convinced me to go meet Erh. Mark Wnek, who was the chairman of Lowe in New York and was crazy enough to make me ECD there. Patrizia Magni, the headhunter who put me in front of Mark. Greg Andersen, who is now CEO of BBH North America and was my planning partner when I joined Lowe and with whom I won our first pitch there. Serge DelGrosso, now at Sapient Nitro and who was our Media Director at Lowe and was also a fantastic partner while I was there and in that decisive first pitch. Gerardo Rozanski, who was my client at Unilever and always respected and trusted me. Carol Soriano, my client at Nokia, who also believed in me and gave me a chance to do an amazing content project. Fernando Vega Olmos, who is an inspiration, always and asked me to join Lola by saying: “Come home, Fefa”. Tex Gunning, Kerris Bright and Laila Skipper-Nordby, who were the clients at Akzo Nobel when we pitched for the Dulux cluster of brands and who not only chose our team at Euro RSCG when we pitched, but also bought and supported the work we presented at the pitch and which is some of the best work I have ever been involved with. Craig Davis and Russell Ramsey, who invited me to join JWT in London. David Jones, for waiting for me while I figured out where I could fit in Euro RSCG. Honestly, everyone I have worked with, everyone who joined my different teams in different agencies, I owe it to them to have trusted me and believed in me and given me the opportunity of working with them and learning from them.

“I don’t think I have reached the top, and I hope I never do.”
What is your most successful campaign? Can you briefly explain your creative strategy?

It depends on the definition of success. I will define it as the campaign that really delivered on all my objectives for it. That would be Blockbuster in Brasil for DM9DDB. Several years ago, when people still rented DVDs, the mission was to tell them about the new releases. That was what drove results for the client: it generated traffic in the stores.

The creative idea was a media idea: Blockbuster needed to create a splash with very little money every week in a medium where we could “easily” replace the creative and where we’d get attention. Newspapers? Too expensive. OOH? Too expensive. TV? Way too expensive. The Internet? Perfect. We became the biggest advertiser online every Friday, the couch potato day.

I can’t say we had award winning executions every week, but we did a good job. And this was the account that changed everything for me and my team at DM9. All of the creatives worked on it, so no more only digital people working for the web. And this work got so much attention, that all the clients understood that it was possible to get results from the Internet. To me, that was success, because it was the beginning of the rest of the story.
“This was the account that changed everything for me and my team. All the creatives worked on it.”
From your experience would you say that there is a feminine factor in creativity? What are the creative keys that best connect with women? Are there any differences with the creative keys that work with men?

I don’t believe in gender in creativity. I have worked with some amazing women and have worked with some amazing men. The gender is not part of it. What may happen is that women have a bit more insight into how women think, so when a woman works on a feminine brand, many times, it is more natural for her to think of it than it is for the man. Same way if you are talking about very masculine brands — say cars, for instance — it just “clicks” quicker for the boys. But that doesn’t mean both can’t work on all sort of brands and products. It’s just a matter of getting your information right and putting your mind and heart to it.

How do women influence creative teams?

I think women are more motherly and nurture more. I guess it’s instinct, and that makes for a work environment where creatives feel a bit more protected. and more relaxed. That’s good for creativity.

I also think women talk more. They discuss the work, they discuss the relationship within the teams, they tend to moderate conflicts more and this makes for a collaborative environment that is very good and very productive, especially nowadays.
Do you think you contribute something special as a woman when creating the narrative space of female characters in an advert? And in the case of the male characters?

Yes, for sure. I worked on Kellogg’s Special K and I remember writing ads as a consumer, rather than as a creative. That girl was me. That vocabulary was a bit mine. I really related to the insight, it didn’t have to be explained to me. In the case of male characters, I actually need to build them more. They are more distant from me, but not much more. I have lots of men friends and I also read a lot. I try to be sensitive about the male psyche, although I don’t think I’ll ever understand them, anyway.

“I don’t believe in gender in creativity.”

Why do you think that “female oriented” advertising categories are creatively poor?

Because a lot of marketers are men. They think the work is done to sell something to them, and nobody has the guts to remind them they are not the target. They judge according to what they like and/or relate to and with all due respect to all of them, when a man tells me they understand having a period, I cannot believe it. Now, if they say they know what a woman feels when they have their period, then I might believe it. But understand it? They never will.
Give us the name of three creatives worth looking out for and the reasons why you think they will be a reference in the near future.

Alessandra Lariu, Creative Director at McCann Erickson in New York. She is fantastic. She is bright, she is talented and she is a fighter. She joined McCann coming from a pure digital shop and has been working on some tough clients doing some amazing work.

Will McGuinness, ECD at Venables Bell & Partners. He is one of the nicest people I know and probably one of the most talented too. He is fun to be around, he is a dad, he is an artist and he has already done some amazing work. He just became ECD. I am sure he will make that agency even better.

Miguel Bemfica, ECD at JWT Madrid. We worked together at DM9 in Brazil. He used to drive me insane. Very stubborn, Miguel has a rather dry sense of humour. He and I became good friends and worked together again several years later, at Lola. He then went to JWT in Madrid. In one year and the year of the worst crisis ever, he has already changed the creative level of that agency. And he’s only just started.
“That girl was me. That vocabulary was a bit mine. I really related to the insight; it didn’t have to be explained to me.”
The incorporation of women into creative teams is said to be a slow process. Tell us about this process in your region.

I don't think it is a slow process, but I haven't been in one specific region for some time. Globally, there are less women in creative than men. That’s not due to their arrival being slow, I think it’s more to do with there not being as much space for women. That is changing, though. As more and more women gain space, they give space too. And that’s positive.

When you studied advertising, what percentage of men and women was there in your classroom? Do you think this percentage is reflected in the creative departments? And what about the rest of departments in the agencies?

I didn’t study advertising. I went to Business School. We were 50 students and only four women. In creative departments, it depends. In the US it’s maybe 30-40%. In England it’s the same. In Brazil, it’s probably more like 20-30%.

At festivals, men still seem to be in charge. This is shown in the members of the juries and in the target of the campaigns awarded. What do you think are the reasons for this?

I think this is a reflection of the above. But I disagree men are the target of award winning work. I eat Cadbury, I buy Sony, Apple and Nike. My mother drives a Honda. I love Guinness and Bud. I actually prefer Bud Light. I love UNIQLO. And Coca-Cola — trying to give it up, though!
“As more and more women gain space, they give space too.”
Young people are more and more qualified for the professional world. What qualities does a young woman need to be a good creative?

I think the opposite. Young people are not as qualified anymore. They don’t study enough, they don’t spend enough time on the craft.

A young woman needs the same qualities of men and one more. So they need to be well read, have culture, be observant and curious. They need to be entrepreneurial and ingenious. They must express themselves creatively without a brief. The extra quality: they need to be tough. Tougher than the boys. It is still a boys club — not everywhere, but mostly — and she doesn’t ever want to get the “you are too emotional” BS that justifies men disagreeing with us when we make a point.

What will be required of young creatives in the new creative landscapes of social networks, web 2.0, 3.0 and so on? How are they are expected to develop creative strategies and ideas?

More study. More of a business mind. More curiosity. Wanting to look beyond the brief. They are digital natives, so we won’t need to teach them about it, but they’ll need to make more sense of it. That means a lot of homework is required.
What advice would you give to young female creatives with hopes of becoming great advertisers?

Go to Business School, take the subway and sit in a corner of a busy street as much as you can to watch people. Go to Japan and do all that there. Except for Business School. Watch the kids. Play videogames. Read. Read more. Read everything. Don’t negate your femininity but don’t abuse it. And stay stupid.

“Young people are not as qualified anymore.”
Since co-founding digital media and entertainment studio Tronic with Jesse Seppi in 2001, Vivian Rosenthal has been widely praised for her groundbreaking work with Fortune 500 clients such as AT&T, Nike, Microsoft, Samsung, Target and GE.

Tronic have been called “visual futurists” for their uncanny ability to tap into our collective futures and create new realities of form and experience. Their vision of the world forces us to re-examine what we know to be true, as we are pulled into their synthetic manipulations of reality that push and pull on our senses.

Vivian was named one of Creativity Magazine’s top 50 global creative’s in 2010. She has lectured extensively on the intersection of advertising, technology and design and has appeared in numerous publications including Wired, Fast Company and Ad Critic.
Vivian has an M.A. in Architecture from Columbia University and a B.A. in Art History from Brown University. Eyeing a unique opportunity to establish a new media buy in the virtual space, Vivian founded GoldRun, a mobile platform launched in October 2010 that uses augmented reality to capitalize on shifts in the multi-billion dollar advertising industry that are seeing digital and mobile media rise to prominence.
You were named one of Creativity’s top 50 global creatives in 2010. Did you ever expect to make it this far in the industry?

Being named one of the top 50 global creatives was certainly exciting and a real honor. I founded Tronic in 2001 with Jesse Seppi, a good friend from graduate school who shared the same vision and passion that I had. We worked together in architecture school on a joint thesis on the intersection of digital and physical space, and Tronic was the organic extension of that thesis. At the time, we were filled with excitement and momentum and a desire to create something new, but we certainly didn’t know where it would lead us. Ten years ago, we were fascinated by anime, cyborgs, architecture, technology and animation and we brought those different interests together into what we started calling Convergence. It was almost coincidental that the ad world realized nearly five years later that they too wanted to embrace this notion of Convergence. We never expected to work in advertising. When we started Tronic we were creating video installations for gallery shows. It was only later that the advertising world started recognizing the value of design and art and began commissioning Tronic to create work that not only helped them communicate to the outside world but also helped them articulate who they wanted to be as a company and what their values were.

You recently founded GoldRun. How is it going? How did it come to be?

It’s a bit too early for me to say how it will be received and whether it will work or not. I certainly believe in it, but the success of an idea depends on many factors, some of which are completely out on one’s control, such as whether the mainstream market is ready to adopt a new technology. If they are, then I think GoldRun, as a platform, certainly has a chance to be unique and to define a new kind of advertising in the virtual space. I’ve been obsessed with virtual reality since I can remember. It’s even my initials, VR. I have a poem that my grandmother wrote about me just before she passed away that talks about my desire to see our digital space and selves collapse and collide. She was a really unusual and amazing person. That is not to say I’m not terrified of technology and our collective future as humans, I am, but I’m still fascinated by it.
O Vivian, galactic traveller in space,
I am spaced out
in a world of deconstruction abstraction and disorientation,
new frontiers for the fearless pioneers
of the 21st century.
setting out on wings of poetry, fragments of emotion
to capture the reality of space
or get caught in the Labyrinth Trap
between the lived space of the body and the conceptual space of the mind.
enlightenment or unity
but beware of the logic police.

Chorus:
there is no matter without space
no space without matter

Help, I am lost in space, eyeless in Gaza.

“It was only later that the advertising world started recognizing the value of design and art.”
What has been the highlight of your entire career?

GE hired us to put together a 30 minute interactive experience that Jeff Immelt, their CEO, presented to the Premier of China, in order to help sell through a multi-billion dollar contract. It was a great challenge to distill such a diversified and global company like GE into a 30 minute experience. But Jesse and I pulled it off, and it was quiet exhilarating.

What is your most successful campaign? Can you briefly explain your creative strategy?

It’s hard to define successful, but certainly the campaign we did for Target, called Art for All, was one of my favorite campaigns. It brought together Art and Commerce in a meaningful and authentic way that both benefited the client and the consumer. As part of their campaign, Target began sponsoring free days at museums across the country, which I think is a fantastic initiative.
“GE hired us to put together a 30 minute interactive experience that they, presented to the Premier of China.”
From your experience would you say that there is a feminine factor in creativity? What are the creative keys that best connect with women? Are there any differences with the creative keys that work with men?

I can’t speak for all women, I can only speak for myself. I don’t think there’s a specific feminine factor in creativity. I think creativity is universal and some people are more creative than others, but it doesn’t break down along gender lines.

Do you think you contribute something special as a woman when creating the narrative space of female characters in an advert? And in the case of the male characters?

The best fiction writers can write from the point of view of a man, woman, child, animal, robot, etc….I think a good creative is no different. In my opinion, and again, this is just one person’s opinion, but I think someone who’s creative should be able to create any narrative, real or imagined, and bring to it a unique insight and vision, but not one that’s necessarily defined by their gender. That could be the point of differentiation, depending on the person, but I don’t believe it is by default.

Why do you think that “female oriented” advertising categories are creatively poor?

Exactly for the same reasons as why you’re asking the question above. Because society places an idea of what it means to be a woman, what it means to be a creative woman, and so on and so forth. So already a construct has been created that’s limiting.
Give us the name of three creatives worth looking out for and the reasons why you think they will be a reference in the near future.

Unfortunately I barely know anyone in this industry so I really can’t name three names. I can give you one. Alessandra Lariu. She’s smart, different, funny and sees the world her own way.

“The best fiction writers can write from the point of view of a man, woman, child, animal, robot, etc. I think a good creative is no different.”
The incorporation of women into creative teams is said to be a slow process. Tell us about this process in your region.

I run a digital media and design studio, and I do know that I see far fewer resumes from women than men. Which of course makes incorporating women harder if there are fewer to choose from. So I think it stems from education process and what women are being told they should pursue.

When you studied advertising, what percentage of men and women was there in your classroom? Do you think this percentage is reflected in the creative departments? And what about the rest of departments in the agencies?

I studied architecture rather than advertising, and our architecture class was pretty evenly split 50/50.

At festivals, men still seem to be in charge. This is shown in the members of the juries and in the target of the campaigns awarded. What do you think are the reasons for this?

Ideally this should change, and there should be more of a balance. But since there are far fewer creatives working in the industry who are women, then I don’t think the numbers should be artificially inflated just for festivals. The good creatives, men or women, should be at the festivals.
“Since there are far fewer creatives working in the industry who are women, then I don’t think the numbers should be artificially inflated just for festivals.”
Young people are more and more qualified for the professional world. What qualities does a young woman need to be a good creative?

Well, assuming this woman is creative, she also needs to be a good listener and good with people in order to galvanize those around her. She needs strength and confidence, and the ability to make people believe in her and follow her.

What will be required of young creatives in the new creative landscapes of social networks, web 2.0, 3.0 and so on? How are they are expected to develop creative strategies and ideas?

They will need to think like entrepreneurs, creating businesses and products, not just developing good creative.

What advice would you give to young female creatives with hopes of becoming great advertisers?

Find a great mentor who you can trust and learn from.
“She needs strength and confidence, and the ability to make people believe in her and follow her.”
Most recently, Joyce King Thomas was Chief Creative Officer at McCann Erickson New York and chaired the agency’s global creative council, working alongside talents like Prasoon Joshi of India, Milka Pogliani of Italy and Adriana Cury of Brazil.

Joyce began her career as a writer and is best known for the MasterCard Priceless campaign she wrote in 1997 and shepherded through hundreds of executions in 90 countries. The campaign led to numerous awards and has been spoofed by everyone from The Simpsons to Ralph Nader. Joyce and the campaign were also included in a Fortune article titled “Six Teams that Changed the World”, right there alongside the team that invented the light bulb.
Joyce was the creative director behind numerous award-winning commercials, print ads and digital programs, including the Picturetown campaign for Nikon.

Joyce has both won and judged at major award shows such as Cannes Lions, the One Show and the Clios. Somehow along the way, Joyce, along with her husband, managed to raise two lovely sons. She lives in Brooklyn and is currently searching for a new way to change the world.
Can you describe your career path? How have you evolved as a creative? How did you get this far? What instruments did you use?

I went to college to become a journalist. I loved asking questions, getting to the heart of an event or an issue, then translating it into a story that others could understand intellectually and feel viscerally. I was offered an internship at an advertising agency one summer and advertising seemed to use those same skills. I worked in advertising every day since then.

I’m driven by a curiosity about life and what motivates human beings. Wherever I’ve worked, I made sure I was one of the hardest working people in the building. The best ideas don’t come easy.

What does creativity mean to you?

Creativity is combining concepts that have never been combined before. For example, Warhol combined everyday objects and art, so that you’d see those objects in a completely new way.

In the context of advertising, creativity is bringing concepts together in a way that gets attention and moves people — makes them laugh, cry, get inspired, and ultimately, causes them to change their behavior.
In your entire career, what would you consider has been the most gratifying part and which has been the hardest?

The most gratifying part of my career was working with talented people and doing work that I believed was outstanding.

The least gratifying part of the business is the complex process by which a lot of advertising is created. I hate meetings and I hate process.

“Wherever I’ve worked, I made sure I was one of the hardest working people in the building.”

How do you work? What is your work philosophy?

I believe in experimentation, trying everything before settling on an idea.
What motivates you to keep going?

I want to make a difference.

What is your most successful campaign? Can you briefly explain your creative strategy?

My most successful work was probably the MasterCard Priceless campaign. It’s certainly most successful in terms of how many people know it and “borrow” it around the world. The idea behind the campaign was to take a contrarian position: have a credit card say that money can’t buy everything. In our world, experiences are more valuable than things. The Priceless campaign celebrates that.

You became creative director at McCann Erickson in October, 2004. How has your work changed since then? What did all that responsibility imply for you?

I loved being Chief Creative Officer. I loved building a department, hiring people who were talented and great human beings. I loved bringing in people who are technology aces. I loved pushing teams to ideas that they may not have known they could come up with.

It was an all-consuming job and for most of those six years I loved it.
You recently left your job at McCann Erickson. What drove you to do that?

I needed a new experience. After years of output, I felt as though I needed input and inspiration. I’m interested in lots of things: books, film, food, improving education, travel. It’s time for me to spend more time doing those things for a while.

“I loved pushing teams to ideas that they may not have known they could come up with.”

What would you highlight about your career at McCann Erickson?

For several years, we turned McCann’s reputation upside down. We were agency of the year for three years. We won tons of new business. Lots of great people wanted to work at McCann.

My toughest years at McCann were during the economic meltdown from 2008 to early 2010. It was a challenging time for many clients, which made it a challenging time for us and me, as creative director.

What are your plans for the future?

I’m going to travel, work with a non-profit focused on education, cook a lot, learn more about social media, and go to my first TED conference. I intend to experiment.
From your experience would you say that there is a feminine factor in creativity? What are the creative keys that best connect with women? Are there any differences with the creative keys that work with men?

I really do not think there is a consistent difference in the way women create or in the kind of work they create. Different women have different voices, just as men do.

The advertising world is said to be too demanding for women who want to have a healthy family life. Is this sacrifice necessary to reach a position of responsibility as a creative? Is this why women work mainly in the accounts and public relations departments in advertising agencies?

It is pure nonsense to say that women cannot deal with the demands of being a creative director in advertising. I raised two sons while working my way up; it can and is being done.

Creative departments have typically been boys clubs, but I think that is changing. There are some very talented young women out there and they will be ready to move up to the role of creative director if the business allows them to.
Now that we know that there are significant neurological differences between men and women, that the differences between the sexes are even more important than the differences between races, how do you think that will affect creativity and the advertising industry?

Advertising is changing so much already because of technology, new media channels, and what people expect from brands. The more voices in the business, the better.

“It is pure nonsense to say that women cannot deal with the demands of being a creative director in advertising.”

Do you think you contribute something special as a woman when creating the narrative space of female characters in an advert? And in the case of the male characters?

I think each of us contribute “something special”. I don’t really think it’s a male/female thing.
Why do you think that “female oriented” advertising categories are so bad?

A lot of advertising is bad, but advertising to “Moms” has always been particularly dull and demeaning. Maybe the creators of that advertising simply underestimate women? Maybe they don’t see the value of those products so they create advertising that is insipid and silly, or plain dull?

Give us the name of three creatives worth looking out for and the reasons why you think they will be a reference in the near future.

Two women who worked for me really stand out: Leslie Sims, an executive creative director, has a style that’s both edgy and charming at the same time.

Alessandra Lariu is a fantastic designer and a real geek in a world with too few women geeks. She runs a group calls “SheSays” in the U.S. that supports up and coming creative women, especially in the tech area.

Matt O’Rourke, a GCD at Crispin, is another creative to watch out for. He has an off-the-wall exuberance that makes his work fearless.
“Advertising to ‘Moms’ has always been particularly dull and demeaning. Maybe the creators of that advertising simply underestimate women?”
The incorporation of women into creative teams is said to be a slow process. Tell us about this process in your region.

Women have been working in many creative departments in the US since the sixties. There have been a handful of terrific role models like Mary Wells Lawrence, but percentage wise, most US creative departments probably have fewer than 25% women.

One of your tasks as creative director is to recruit talent. What do you think of the people who join your profession in your country? In particular, what do you think of young creatives? What do you look for in a professional creative?

Young creatives are more important than ever in a creative department. They’re the ones who’ve never lived in a world without the internet. Traditional and digital advertising merge for them.

When I’m hiring, I look for talent and ambition. I’m also looking for a unique perspective. That can come from the person’s background or their personal passions. Also, no jerks.
Festivals are still male territory, as far as the number of jury members is concerned. Why do you think there is such a small percentage of women juries at festivals? How do you think we could get past this situation?

The creative business is a boys club. There’s no other explanation for this.

Juries should insist on representing the world they are in. For example, global juries should have APPROPRIATE representation from different regions, different races, and both sexes. No excuses. The problem is that in many cases, the heads of the juries feel most comfortable judging with the people they know best.

Where do you think this problem is more evident, in the case of prizes in your country or in the case of the large festivals?

I’d say U.S. advertising shows are worse than the large global festivals.

“I look for talent and ambition. I’m also looking for a unique perspective... Also, no jerks.”
In your opinion, what is the advertising field like for young women who wish to enter it and are ambitious? What is required of them?

Young women have a huge opportunity right now. Many clients are asking for women to work on their business. The business is hungry for talented women.

What qualities does a young woman need to be a good creative?

Resilience is probably as important as raw talent. This is a tough business and anyone who wants to work in it needs to be able to bounce back, and come back with even better ideas.

Young people are more and more qualified for the professional world. What will make them stand out?

Young people need to leverage what’s unique about them: their personal passions or skills, their personal style. Anything that sets them apart.
What advice would you give to young female creatives with hopes of becoming great advertisers?

Be bold and brave and don’t give up. Find your voice and use it.

“Young women have a huge opportunity right now. Many clients are asking for women to work on their business.”

What is the creative level among young women in your country?

One of the youngest women in my department won a Bronze Lion at Cannes last year. She’s working at Crispin now. I’d say the talent level of today’s young women is high, as are my hopes.
Nancy Vonk has been the Co-Chief Creative Officer of Ogilvy Toronto since 1998 with partner Janet Kestin. They have won Cannes Lions, One Show Pencils, Clios and Communication Arts. They are the creative directors behind Dove “Evolution”, winner of two Grand Prix at Cannes, and Grand Clio winner for “Diamond Shreddies.”

Nancy has judged awards shows including The One Show, Cannes Lions, Clios and D&AD, and has chaired shows in the U.S. and Canada including the 2008 Art Director’s Club of New York, where she was the first female chair in their history.

Nancy was included in Creativity’s Top 50 creative people of 2008 list and ‘boards Magazine’s “It List” in 2006 and 2007. Nancy and Janet were named advertising women of the year by the WIN Awards in Los Angeles and by the AWNY Awards in New York. They appeared in the AlwaysOn 2009 Madison Avenue IT list.
Nancy and Janet have a widely read advice column,"Ask Jancy" on industry site ihaveanidea. They penned a critically acclaimed Adweek Book, “Pick Me” in 2005, which has become a staple in advertising schools. They were the keynote speakers at “Women of Influence”. HarperCollins has commissioned a business book based on that speech.

Nancy speaks frequently, most recently at the 2010 One Club “Unconference”. She is a member of the National Speakers Bureau.

In 2006, Nancy co-founded “Been There”, a group of top North American female creative directors that offer online mentoring on creativeskirts.com.

She is on the advisory board of the Ontario College of Art and Design and a mentor and lecturer at VCU Brandcenter. Nancy was elected to the board of the One Club in 2009.
You joined up with Janet Kestin in 1991. Can you tell us how you met and how you decided to work in partnership?

I was a young art director at Ogilvy when Janet came in as a freelancer to help me on a Kotex project (could it be any more of a cliche?) over a holiday weekend. It was a brutal assignment but we hit it off immediately as both friends and creative partners. We felt an instant connection; we had the same take on what “good” is, we felt comfortable challenging each other on the search for great ideas, and we had a lot of fun finding them. Finding the right creative partner is not unlike finding a romantic partner. When you really click you know you’ve found “the one”. We have obviously been inseparable ever since; together we’re better and we’re still loving the ride.

After working so long with Janet, what strikes you most about her as a person and a professional?

Janet is a huge talent as a writer and creative director. She is so smart. She is curious and easily bored, always looking for the unconventional way to solve a problem. What you’d take in very quickly about Janet is her authenticity. She is a warm and collaborative leader who speaks her truth at all times. She’s thoughtful and fearless, and wonderful human being with a huge heart. Janet is well-loved.
Two of your most successful campaigns, Dove and Diamond Shreddies, have changed women’s perception of brands. What do we have to do to get other brands to change their approach to women and have them change their perception of these brands?

It’s interesting that most of advertising has a fundamentally male sensibility, considering women have something like 80% of purchasing power. In an industry that’s of course been dominated by men from the beginning it’s no real surprise that our industry has approached women through a male lens. I grew up enjoying the male tone that permeated all the awards annuals. But when communications really resonate with women, there’s greater opportunity for the brand to be appreciated. More women leading the way would be an excellent development, and it’s discouraging to note that the number of women in the CD job has remained very small over my whole career.

“We felt an instant connection.”

What is your most successful campaign? Can you briefly explain your creative strategy?

It’s a tough call, but for pure pleasure my favorite is the Diamond Shreddies campaign. Shreddies was a plain, old cereal brand that Canadians had forgotten about. Research told us people still liked the cereal and they wouldn’t change a thing, but clearly the brand needed to have a disruptive moment to get back on the radar. Our very ambitious strategy was to make people talk about Shreddies. A summer intern had the idea to turn it on its side and create a fake line extension. Sales went through the roof, and it won the Grand Clio for best integrated campaign.
From your experience would you say that there is a feminine factor in creativity? What are the creative keys that best connect with women? Are there any differences with the creative keys that work with men?

Women are different than men, of course, and we approach everything differently including creativity. There is a myth that men are more creative, as they point to the art world and note the overwhelming majority of famous work was created by men. Women have simply not had the same opportunities historically to compete, and in our industry that is so short on big female names I believe there have always been factors that have limited senior women's success.

Women, like men, will respond most strongly to creative that resonates with them. When we speak their language, when we show we “get” them, we get further. That doesn't mean communications to them should be overtly feminine, simply insightful of their realities.

How do women influence creative teams?

If you mean women creative directors, the female management style tends to be more intuitive and naturally collaborative. Women CDs are more likely to value teamwork and there is often less ego at play. They are more nurturing as leaders and less likely to foster the shark tank environment so famous in our business. We find creatives respond very well to a positive approach.
Do you think you contribute something special as a woman when creating the narrative space of female characters in an advert? And in the case of the male characters?

To be honest, some of the most sensitive work our agency has made for women was created by men. Dove “Evolution”, “Daughters” and “Onslaught” were all made by a male team, Tim Piper and Mike Kirkland. I’d love to say there is a uniquely feminine approach to our most successful work targeted at women, but it’s been both genders in equal parts.

Having said that, would I generally prefer to see at least one female on the team when we’re talking to women? Yes. Who understands the target best?

“Some of the most sensitive work our agency has made for women was created by men.”
Why do you think that “female oriented” advertising categories are creatively poor?

When there is a lazy default to female cliches bad things happen. I have to blame the obvious culprits: clients who are happiest to buy tired old work, and the agencies who don't work hard enough to sell something better.

Give us the name of three creatives worth looking out for and the reasons why you think they will be a reference in the near future.

Let me sort of answer that: the future belongs to the youngest in our industry. People right out of school have always been undervalued. They are paid very poorly and often have to get a foot in the door through internships. Once they have the job they are often underutilized and not trained properly. The tide is turning. Today’s landscape means the freshest talent that was raised digital is perfectly poised to make the big difference in the creative department.
“I have to blame the obvious culprits: clients, who are happiest to buy tired old work, and the agencies, who don’t work hard enough to sell something better.”
The incorporation of women into creative teams is said to be a slow process. Tell us about this process in your region.

There are just too few women at a senior level available. Women drop out of our industry just as they're hitting their stride. The irony is every CD wants great female talent. “Where are they?” is a common question. Until our industry figures out how to retain women who want to have a job and a family too, this will be an ongoing dilemma. The business just doesn't accommodate the needs of that person who is trying to take on two full time jobs. At the junior level there are women galore. We have no problem finding them. They are the majority in schools, usually by a wide margin.

When you studied advertising, what percentage of men and women was there in your classroom? Do you think this percentage is reflected in the creative departments? And what about the rest of departments in the agencies?

My class was probably about 50-50. Today women dominate advertising programs and there is no problem finding that female junior. However, as mentioned earlier, they drop out in big numbers as they approach a more senior level. Women have a slight majority of the creative slots at our office. Elsewhere men usually dominate. In account services and planning, women are very dominant at our place and elsewhere.
At festivals, men still seem to be in charge. This is shown in the members of the juries and in the target of the campaigns awarded. What do you think are the reasons for this?

I have had the pleasure of judging almost every major show. I am a strong jury member I’m told, but I know I am also one of the few women in a CD position and that plays its part in all those nice invitations. I think the shows could be doing better getting more women onto their juries, but the fact remains there are very few of us.

“Women drop out of our industry just as they’re hitting their stride. The irony is every CD wants great female talent.”
Young people are more and more qualified for the professional world. What qualities does a young woman need to be a good creative?

Talent is price of entry, and beyond that we look for young women to be assertive and good with team work. A strong work ethic is a must, and confidence and resilience are also important factors in doing well. Women need to fight their upbringing to be the ‘good girl’. You have to be prepared to take your share of the spotlight in your partnership, and demand what you want to be happy. Women tend to wait for good things to come to them, quietly and patiently. The ones who are successful and happy will be proactive and go after the accounts they really want to work on, the partner they really want to work with, and the pay check they want.

What will be required of young creatives in the new creative landscapes of social networks, web 2.0, 3.0 and so on? How are they are expected to develop creative strategies and ideas?

Young creatives grew up digital and have the great advantage of being familiar and comfortable in the digital space. They are better poised to think strategically and creatively about how to reach and engage people effectively. It’s us old people who need to worry about this one.
“Talent is price of entry, and beyond that we look for young women to be assertive and good with team work.”
“If the great advancement of the 20th century was the inclusion of women as equals in society, then an even greater advancement in the 21st century will be the incorporation of women’s thinking.”

WE WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE ALL CREATIVE WOMEN FOR THEIR VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE ADVERTISING INDUSTRY, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO HAVE SHARED THEIR THOUGHTS WITH US THROUGH THIS BOOK. YOU HAVE BROUGHT ENRICHMENT TO AN INDUSTRY WHICH WE BELIEVE IS IN NEED OF A MUCH WIDER POINT OF VIEW.

TO CREATE MORE BALANCED COMMUNICATION, WE NEED THE OPINIONS OF BOTH MEN AND WOMEN. THIS WILL ALLOW US TO BUILD A MORE ATTRACTIVE PERSPECTIVE FOR BRANDS SO THAT THEY MAY CONTINUE TO ENGAGE AND EXCITE US.

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