

WHY
THE TIME
IS RIGHT FOR
**CREATIVE
COMMERCE
LIONS**



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The Creative Commerce Lions are making their debut at Cannes, it was announced last month. For brands and agencies, this is powerful acknowledgement of the disruptive creative power in commerce channels – which while including digital, extend way beyond it – and commerce’s position today at the very center of brand and customer experience.

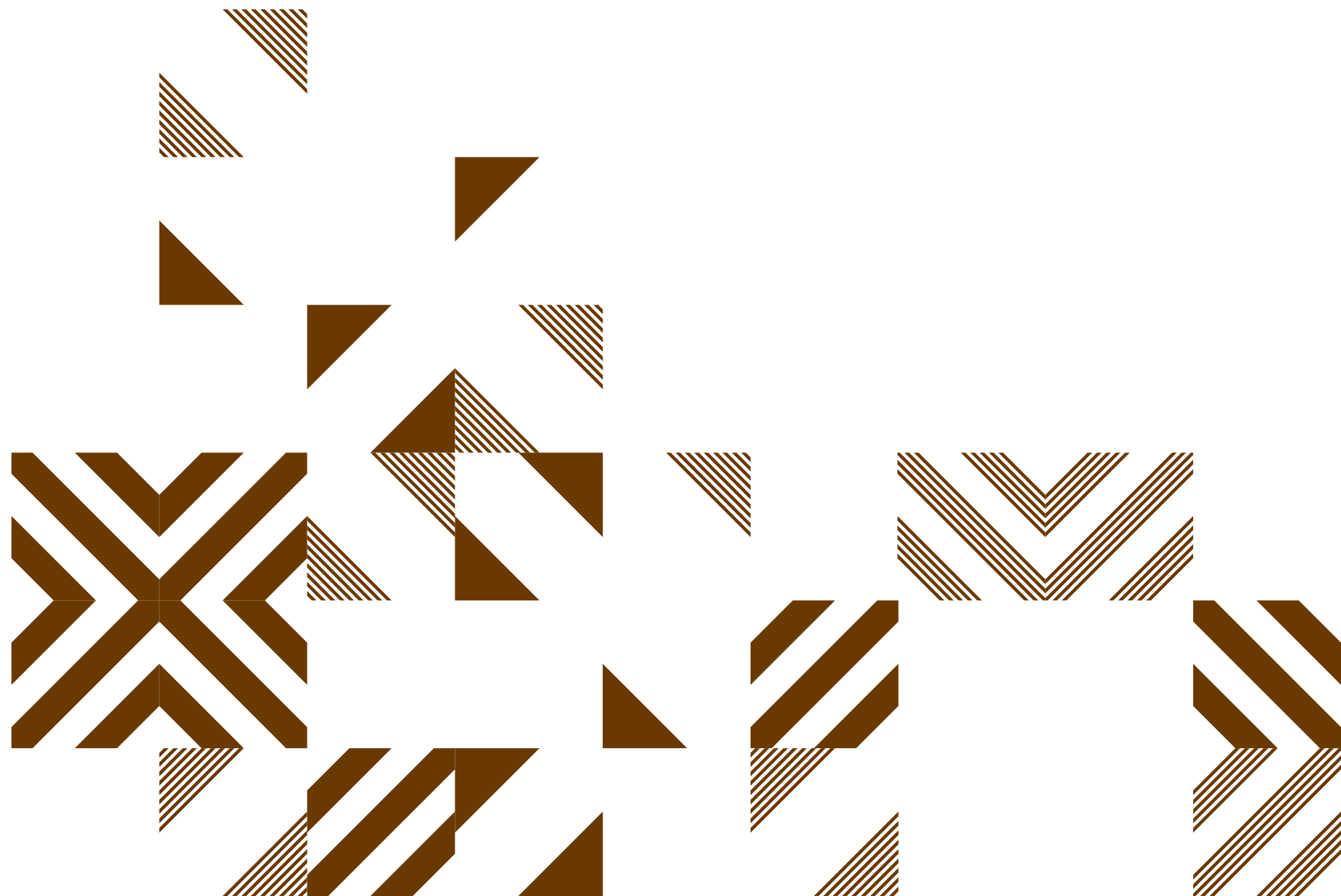
So, for any sceptics out there: the news is way bigger than a mere syntactic tweak.

For all of us, it’s a pivotal moment. The Cannes International Festival of Creativity is broadening the canvas of creativity for business and talent for years to come.

These are just a few pointers, and there’s so much more we can be doing, but I really encourage you to pay attention to what you’re consuming, listening to, and reading. Remember that the media too often makes us think about LGBTQ+ issues as talking points, culture wars, equal debates - but they’re not.

I have the pleasure of working with WPP Unite, who bought a campaign called ‘LGBTQ+ HisStory, HerStory, TheirStory and more’ to our screens during February to tell the real stories behind our history, present and future through Instagram. It’s been awesome content, and well worth a read, but now as the month comes to an end, I recognize these stories shouldn’t have an expiration on 28th of February.

Every single headline, bad policy, and strongly worded ‘opinion’ focuses on the topics, not the people they effect, but it’s the people that will change the world. Like you, and me, and my mum.





And here's why...

We are witnessing the rapid emergence of new areas of commerce and new means to conduct it. Think Instagram Live Shopping and the Twitter community fundamentally shifting how people experience commerce. Think Tesco's just-launched checkout-free store, which follows in the footsteps of Amazon Go.

Or take a page from one of the world's biggest brands: Nike, who looked ahead to take advantage of opportunities to serve customers where they want to be served – pushing the boundaries of digital transformation in store. Nike's House of Innovation 000, located at 650 Fifth Avenue, covers 68,000 square feet in the heart of New York City. Showcased by Metropolis as “the temple of shopping” and “the edge of retail transformation” by Forbes, personal, smart, and responsive experiences as well as instant checkout are powered by modern apps and smart devices help ensure “the promise of living retail comes to life.”

“As stores moved from transaction to experience, we are also moving from transaction to relationship,”

Nike noted. And we couldn't agree more.

Consumers no longer distinguish between the digital and physical worlds. Neither do marketers, who crave instead to deliver, regardless of channel, creative in-the-moment conversion.

In fact, Gen Z is living proof that we're not going to be a mobile-and digital-only world. There's nobody who wants to be in physical stores and wants physical experiences more than this generation. Inspired brands and companies are stepping up to this game, just as they did in terms of transitioning to e-commerce.

This has led us to a powerful new creativity, Creative Commerce. By which we mean integrated, all-worlds creativity that merges brand equity and conversion coalescing into a creative whole and opening a world of possibility. It's more than a transaction. It's an interaction, that can be gamified, socialized, live streamed on digital or experienced with all the senses.



Today's customer, for instance, may toss items into their virtual cart based on a TikTok video. Days later, they may visit a store and take cues from both the eye-catching display and reviews read on their smartphone while browsing aisles.

As channels collide around shopping and buying, as sales converges with marketing, creativity in commerce has become essential to delivering consumer experience, brand promise, and memorable engagement. And what used to be considered below-the-line or thought of as lower-funnel has become creativity's next great canvas, a space to devour new creative thinking and showcase beautiful new work that converts.

BUT DON'T JUST TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT.

TikTok is building an experience where brands can showcase creativity and personalities and where people easily move from discovery to purchase. Sofia Hernandez, Global Head of Business Marketing, talks of creativity in advertising having "never been more important" for connecting brands and people, participating in trends, and creating moments that translate into commerce.

"People are taking control of what they want to see and when they see it. This has fueled an entirely new way to discover products," she says. "A new shopping culture has emerged rooted in community, creativity and most importantly entertainment."



Meanwhile back at Cannes Lions, commerce-related Cannes entries were up 18% in 2021 year on year, and the judges noted many interesting emerging trends – notably, around distributed commerce and equitable commerce.

No wonder “betting big on creative-commerce” is a major trend tipped by Forrester for next year. “In 2022, commerce practices will embrace creative differentiation or risk falling victim to digital sameness,” it predicts, “just as digital experiences have in the past .”

WPP’s Global Chief Creative Officer Rob Reilly believes, **“nothing matters more than being able to tie our creativity to wildly successful outcomes. The talent that masters this broad new canvas at the intersection of brand and customer experience, will help to redefine the future of commerce.”**

As we see it, successful companies are reimagining how they deliver commerce to drive growth. And that’s an exciting place to be.

For too long, commerce as a space has been approached and viewed as purely transactional. Yet, commerce is every bit as creative, as emotional and as engaging as each piece of work we create.

We’ve long believed that we’re stepping into a new era and a wealth of opportunity for the industry. Thank you, Cannes Lions for leading the way.