

Publicis Groupe Africa is flying the flag high for Africa at Cannes

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Publicis Groupe Africa is proud to have the largest African representation by a group at the 2024 Cannes Lion International Festival of Creativity. Here, we speak to the judges about the upcoming awards, what they look for in the work and what being on their panels means to them.



Publicis Groupe Africa – part of Publicis Groupe globally – is proud of its record-high representation at Cannes this year, with its CEO Koo Govender, ECD, Neo Segola and ECD, Chima Okenimkpe representing the group. Koo has been selected to be a judge on the “Lion for Change” jury, which recognises work that addresses issues of gender inequality or prejudice, through the conscious representation of gender in advertising. Neo, who has already been selected as the jury chairperson for radio at D&AD, has also been selected to be a jury member on the Cannes Lions ‘Audio & Radio’ panel. This category celebrates creativity that is wired for sound – work that communicates a brand message through audio excellence, sonic innovation or superior aural storytelling across the airwaves and digital streams. And Chima will be judging on the ‘Direct’ panel. The Direct Lions celebrate targeted and response-driven creativity.

“The 2024 Cannes jury appointments are testament to both the quality of talent we have in the Publicis Groupe across the African continent and the commitment we have to continually elevate our innovation and creativity to meet our ambitions”, says Publicis Senior Vice President, Jonty Fisher. “We look forward to the learnings and feedback our jurors will bring back from Cannes, paying their experiences forward to the next generation of African creative communications leaders.”

When asked about judging the ‘Lion for Change’ category, Koo says: “It’s such an honour to be selected to be a part of this incredible jury that focuses on issues of such importance not only in our industry, but in our society as a whole. I passionately strive to create impact in my daily life as CEO of Publicis Groupe in Africa. This is part of my personal legacy and giving back,” says Koo. “These topics are very close to my heart and I’m excited about the opportunity to share insights and learnings from others on the jury panel as well as being exposed to groundbreaking, thought-provoking work that can literally change the world,” she says.

Chima, who currently works and lives between Lagos and Accra says: “I’m truly passionate and curious about human behaviour and understanding insights.” He is the leading ECD of Publicis West Africa, bringing a Ghanaian perspective to Cannes for the first time. His creative career spans more than two decades and he is widely recognised for bringing his unique African perspective to global juries and panels for multiple awards bodies. He was also the first representative to speak from a Nigerian perspective at Cannes Lions back in 2016.

“It’s an honour to be asked to judge on the Direct panel at the Cannes Lions,” says Chima. This panel looks for work that truly demonstrates how insights and data were used to strategise and engage specific target audience groups to develop customer relationships, inspire action and produce measurable results. Speaking to Cannes Lion as a whole, Chima says: “An award bestowed by a jury of your peers embodies the sincerest form of honour, proclaiming, in essence, that you stand as the pinnacle among us.”

Neo – who, like Chima, has a creative career spanning more than two decades – says: “I look forward to connecting with incredibly talented creatives and marketers from around the globe, and to see – and hear – some of the best work coming out of the creative industry this year. I have a particularly deep love for this medium, so I’m really looking forward to bringing my unique perspective to the category and to represent South Africa and Africa in these prestigious awards.” Neo is based in Johannesburg.

“Being a copywriter, I’ve always been obsessed with the skill and craft required to master radio. There are no visuals to hide behind; no video to help you say what you think you’re maybe trying to say; it’s just stark audio in a vacuum that has to be so brilliantly executed,” adds Neo.

Koo, Neo and Chima will be judging at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, which runs from 17 to 21 June 2024.

To see the full list of jurors for this year’s Cannes Lion, click here: <https://www.canneslions.com/news/cannes-lions-announces-2024-awarding-jury-members>

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