

D&AD Shift with Google creative programme develops new talent

The New York four-month night school programme, D&AD Shift with Google, concluded this week with an in-person showcase at the Caelum Gallery where the class of 2021 self-made creatives presented their portfolios as well as responses to real client briefs set by adidas, Spotify and Diageo.



In 2021, over 18 agencies, 30+ industry instructors and 21 mentors participated and contributed to the programme, and, as a result, 67% of the graduates from the Shift programme went on to secure placements and jobs at leading creative companies such as Droga5, The Mill, McCann and Design Bridge.

“Creativity thrives from diverse minds and perspectives, and Shift excels in inspiring, establishing and developing talented individuals from outside the traditional education system,” says Kwame Taylor Hayford, resident ECD for Shift NYC 2021, D&AD trustee.

Saskia Owens, strategy and special projects at Google, comments: “We’re constantly inspired by the innovative projects we come across during Shift, and are very proud to continue to support the night school.

“It is a vital programme that cultivates already brimming talent, builds creative community in cities like New York, and provides value not just to the Shifters but to the industry and the world.”

Nurturing emerging creatives

D&AD Shift with Google challenges the assumption that talent can only be found within a small number of colleges by nurturing emerging creatives from all backgrounds.

Also taking place in London and Sydney, the programme consists of industry set briefs, talks and mentorship, and provides a supportive and educational space for creative talent without an academic degree to hone their skills, build a network and develop their portfolios.

Now in its sixth year, the programme continues to work towards a better equipped and culturally nuanced creative sector which is both reflective and relevant to a changing creative landscape, offering industry professionals access to an exceptional pool of diverse talent outside of the college system.

The event also represents a unique chance for 'shifTERS' who are now seeking employment opportunities to build important industry connections through networking sessions.

Video shows last year's (2020/21) Shift NYC programme

Developing creative briefs

As a final exercise, the 2021 cohorts develop creative responses to four industry set briefs.

adidas tasked the class with a campaign to connect the brand's digital and social media presence to its retail stores, positioning local communities at the centre.

Spotify focused on launching audiobooks on the platform whilst authentically connecting with Gen Z.

Diageo briefed the cohort with two tasks: the first, to raise awareness and cultural relevance of Seedlip within a diverse group of consumers. The second, to make Smirnoff 21 culturally relevant for legal drinking age "Influential Voices".

All four activities are inspired by real client briefs, giving the work the relevancy it needs to stand out to employers.

Innovative thinking

Amongst the solutions presented by students, one particularly stood out. In response to the brief set by adidas, Leigh

Schuyler passionately landed the idea that gardening is a sport and that the sports brand could – and should – activate around the burgeoning community gardens in New York. The innovative thinking behind her concept granted her the winner title against other groups.

Ayesha Martin, director, Global Purpose at adidas, commented: “It is part of our mission at adidas to look at and support initiatives that create a lasting impact on our industry. Shift provides amazing opportunities and, consequently, great impact. It is a community-first programme that nurtures creatives from all backgrounds.”

The showcase, attended by industry professionals from leading New York creative agencies, offered the shifters the opportunity to celebrate the completion of the demanding programme as well as build a valuable network, show off their portfolios and seek employment opportunities.

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