

Karien Cherry, director at Giant Films

 By Jessica Tennant

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Karien Cherry, director at Giant Films, recently ranked number one director at the Loeries Rankings for 2020. She's the first female ever to hold this position, and this year, also the only female to be featured within the top 20 Loeries Directors rankings.



Cherry won a Gold for Direction Craft at the Loerie Awards for her Chicken Licken 'Everyone's talking about it' campaign with Joe Public, which, was recently awarded a first Integrated and second Digital for the Creative Circle Annual Awards's Ad of The Year 2020.

"I've been incredibly lucky to have my career championed by a loooooong list of people who have seen potential in me. They have supported me, taught me, listened to me, guided me, believed in me, and paved the way for me. And it fills me with hope to reflect on the diversity of this group of people - they're men and women from a variety of backgrounds, across different races, ages and positions. It makes me living proof that our industry can and does hold space for different voices.

"I am also cognisant of how incredibly fortunate I have been to have received the opportunities that led to my career evolving as it has - the work that I'm privileged to be doing is a result of these opportunities as well as the collaborators on both the crewing and agency sides that I'm fortunate to work alongside."



Everyone's talking about it. Even Kentucky

Joe Public 26 Mar 2020



It's therefore not surprising that she is highly regarded as a mentor for woman in a male-dominated industry, having worked on big local and international brands such as KFC, Chicken Licken, Heineken, New Balance, Cell C, Sanlam and FNB.

Her upward trajectory was only amplified when she was approached by London-based film production company Outsider in April last year, who now represent her in the UK. Commenting on this, she said it was a welcome ray of light to be

headhunted during the uncertainty of lockdown. “Again, an incredibly fortunate and serendipitous meeting that I can’t take credit for. Outsider are some of the best in the UK business, and it’s exciting to grow through them.”



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Giant Films 7 Apr 2021



■ ***Karien, tell us more about your role and what it is you do exactly on a day-to-day basis.***

Every day is different depending on the phase of production we’re in. It’s part of what I love about what I do. I could be on location, in a casting studio, at the office, in a boardroom, dreaming up things with crew or quietly thinking about the job by myself somewhere (most probably underwater or in the ocean).

■ ***Growing up, what did you want to be?***

Everything under the sun! From a neurosurgeon to an artist to a marine biologist. A filmmaker was never on the list as a child!

■ ***What is your ‘secret’ to success?***

I don’t know if I’ve found the secret, but I like to keep my head down and do the work. A little elbow grease never hurt anyone.

■ ***How has the pandemic and subsequent national lockdowns affected your work?***

More ‘zooms’ and less flights! Can’t say I’m a huge fan of directing remotely, but I do like the innovation it’s forcing into our industry. Hopefully it’ll mean a more efficient process and a clearer focus on what contributes directly to better storytelling.

■ ***What do you love most about the film / creative industry?***

I love the collaboration. The excitement of always working on something new, constantly meeting new people and consistently being challenged with new ideas. I feel like I just keep learning - and have so much more to learn!

■ ***What’s your typical workday routine?***

Always different, but I try my best to swim in the freezing ocean every morning. It’s a mental and emotional high that kickstarts my day and reminds me of how little I need to be happy.

■ ***When you’re not busy working, what do you do? How do you socialise these days?***

I spend time with my family and get into nature as much as possible. We have a nine-year-old son and our little tribe of three is home to me.

■ ***What are you reading/listening to/watching at the moment?***

When I’m busy I end to read a few books simultaneously and depending on my mood I’ll pick up a different one. When I’m on holiday I’ll dig into one at a time! *Humankind: A Hopeful History* by Rutger Bregman has been a pretty fascinating read. I am addicted to podcasts and fascinated by the form of audio series storytelling that’s evolving. I watch anything I can and love to discover fascinating stories or people through online rabbit holes.

■ ***What’s the first thing you plan to do when things go back to normal?***

Travel travel travel!

To view some of Cherry's work, have a look [here](#).

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