

Why Design Indaba always 'fills my cup'

By  Brad Reilly

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Design Indaba happened to me two weeks ago... An overload of seminars, art and design installations, music, and film; a celebration and an examination of creativity and beauty.

And, as always, I went back to the office with my head opened up to the possibility of new collaborations and new ways of doing things for both our clients and ourselves. Foremost, it struck me that the overarching trend seems to have shifted from sustainability to humanity. Generally, I think that the explosion of intolerance, prejudice and nationalism across the world, coupled with a kickback against impersonal tech and data, has shifted the global focus to people.

As creativity typically maps the mood of the world and society, this was reflected at the indaba as an exploration of how we use creativity (including technology and data) to create acceptance and security for individuals and groups, particularly marginalised ones. This came through strongly, particularly from the more fringe artists and creators like [Robin Rhode](#) and [Jabu Nadia Newman](#) to global behemoths like [Airbnb](#) and even data people like [Giorgia Lupi](#).

But this isn't to say that sustainability isn't still there. It definitely still features; and so it should. Being the obvious pressure that our planet is under, sustainability underpins everything.

I tend to react emotionally to speakers rather than cerebrally. So, even the ones that I don't get a clear message from affect me with their attitude, talent, presentation and work, and that 'fills my cup'.



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But I really enjoyed listening to Kate Moross from [Studio Moross](#), who spoke sincerely and with a maturity that belies her years. It impressed me that her work, which is incredible, is based on some very basic fundamental principles: 'Share work early'; 'Hire people not skills'; 'Failure is cool'; and 'Create don't copy' as a few examples. And, while these resonate with the [Net#work BBDO](#) agency culture, her words brought home that in the madness of the day-to-day, we can easily forget what we're about. So, her simple, yet profound reminders made me nod a lot. If anything, these basic, practical reminders were my most important take-home.

Indaba is like a refresher course for me every year. I don't think we're doing anything fundamentally wrong as an agency, but we can always do better, so seeing how (and what) other creatives are doing always nudges us to be a little braver, a little smarter, a little crazier even. It's a full-colour, high-energy reminder of why we do what we do and why we love doing what we do. I'll be back next year.

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