

TAXI

Two gold Lions for Canada at Cannes

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It was three Lions, two of them Gold, for Canadians at Cannes on the third day of competition at the 55th annual International Advertising Festival.

A Gold and a Silver went to Taxi's two Toronto offices: a Gold to Taxi 2 for its "Minimalism" website for BMW Mini in the Cyber competition, while Taxi will add a Silver Design Lion to its trophy cabinet for a poster that was part of its 15 Below initiative. Also in Design, Toronto agency GJP won a Gold Lion for a brochure designed for Down Below, the female waxing studio at Gee Beauty in Toronto.

This is the first year that design has been part of the competition at Cannes.

Winners in the Press competition were also announced today, though Canadian agencies came away empty handed (see "Canada shut out of Press awards," in today's Daily).

GJP's Down Below brochure attempts to put at ease women who may feel uncomfortable about waxing their "most sensitive of private area."

The brochure used "delicate lace patterns" to illustrate the finished look of the treatment to demystify the "once taboo experience." Women can simply point to the pattern they want.

"I thought it was really beautiful," said Derek Lockwood, Design juror and Saatchi & Saatchi worldwide director of design. "You try to evaluate [the Design entries] for the ability to connect with the consumer," said Lockwood. Unable to talk from experience himself, laughed Lockwood, he was sure the brochure would do a great job of relaxing women going to Down Below for the first time.

Taxi's Silver Lion was for its "15 Below emergency blanket poster." The oversized 40" by 60" newsprint poster went with each 15 Below jacket—newspaper-insulated jackets designed and developed by Taxi for the homeless. While explaining the coat, the poster was intended to be used as insulation.

The Grand Prix in the competition went to Turner Duckworth: London & San Francisco for its Coca-Cola brand identity.

"It was simply the best piece of work that does what designer should," said Design jury president Rodney Fitch, chair and CEO of design firm Fitch. "They make things simple, they answer problems, and they make the unclear clear."

Asked about the roughly equal split between work submitted by design and advertising agencies, Fitch said that will change next year. "Most designers in the world have never heard of Cannes," he said. "I guarantee the worldwide design community will be running to submit work."

In all, the competition received about 1,200 entries. Canada made 54 entries and 10 made the short list.

After its Montreal sister agency won two Gold Cyber Lions, Taxi 2 has one of its own for the Mini website “Minimalism.”

The site allows consumers to get a Mini sales pitch that lasts as long the visitor wants—from a few seconds to a few minutes.

There was no debate about whether or not Minimalism deserved a Gold, said Australian juror Ashley Ringrose, co-founder and director of Soap Creative.

“In the automotive category, it stood out,” he said. “There was no question, it was very unanimous.”

Sam Ball, creative partner at Lean Mean Fighting Machine, agreed. A lot of the car sites were big, expensive sites, heavy on 3D and long loading times. But they never captured the spirit of the product they were selling. “You could swap one car for another,” he said.

Minimalism connects with people on an emotional level by staying true to the “cheekiness” and “irreverence” of the brand.

Ball also praised the agency for the writing on the site. “It was amazing, brilliant copywriting,” he said.

“The thing that everybody liked, that everybody talked about was the playfulness,” said Dominique Trudeau, Taxi Montreal interactive and design creative director and Cyber juror.

Everyone associated buying a car with a sales pitch, but with Minimalism, “it is always perfect,” said Trudeau.

In Cyber Competition, three Grands Prix were awarded: one to Projector Tokyo for Uniqlo’s “Uniqlock,” another to Mediafront Oslo for Scandinavia Online’s “Sol Comments” and a third to 42 Entertainment Pasadena for “Year Zero” created for Trent Reznor/Nine Inch Nails.

However, much of the talk at the press conference with the Cyber jury focused on how this was what jury president Colleen DeCourcy called a “transitional year.”

Two or three years ago the focus in digital advertising was on technically sound executions, but, increasingly, advertisers and agencies are looking to make an emotional connection with consumers through, for example, better interfaces.

Improvements will come when advertisers stop thinking of digital as an “add on” to their campaigns, she said. “I will be very happy when the word digital is irrelevant.”

Ball, too, spoke of the growing importance of digital, but said he has no sympathy for marketers that have been slow to catch on.

“If clients don’t get it, screw them. It’s their loss,” he said.

-By David Brown