

Up Close & Personal.

Derek Lockwood

As the Worldwide Director of Design for Saatchi and Saatchi, Lockwood is one of the world's most influential creatives. **Nicole Stock** gets an insight into how he thinks about creativity, and why 'design' is meaningless.

PHOTOGRAPHY — PHILLIP SIMPSON.

URBIS: In a nutshell, how did you get to your position?

DEREK LOCKWOOD: I did a university degree in Business, then worked for a number of years in Wellington, then I came up to Auckland. Primarily my serious part of a career started when I joined Campaign Palace. I was one of the founding members and we had built it up to be quite a substantial business. I was working closely with a guy Geoff Vuleta and then we came to Saatchi to help re-establish Saatchi's.

I always had an interest in how art is presented, sold, delivered. It's only been in the last seven to eight years I've flipped from the business side to the more creative side.

Kevin Roberts [Saatchi's Worldwide CEO] suggested, why don't I find out what design should be for the network.

The task of my job is to build design, capability in design. Actually the task is to fill the void of anything we don't do in the integrated market place. There are lots of things now that the market place demands. My job was to bring expertise to the group and bring it to life. I hold an inspirational role rather than production-based role.

U: Do you think about design in a different way to designers because of your business background?

DL: Absolutely. I think an education in general narrows you down and gives you a very tight focus on a specific area. I think the future is about generalists. A 'jack of all trades' is a great thing to be these days, because the thing that inspires greater outputs is our ideas.

Your ability to be able to draw out ideas, which is a creative thinking thing, is relevant across all aspects of business and all disciplines of the traditional creative industries.

Right.

Derek Lockwood photographed in the Auckland offices of Saatchi and Saatchi.

I don't want to dis design as a discipline – I'm just not sure what it means; it's an ambiguous term for an industry that's supposed to be focused on detail. Design has become so overused as a term – I mean, what is it? Design what? Well design everything. Design has become such a catchall for creative expression.

U: Saatchi is moving towards being an ideas company rather than an ad agency. How are they different?

DL: I think ad agencies, no matter how big they are, are output focussed. Clients come in with an output in mind; I think an ideas company are stuck with a challenge. If you walk into an ad agency looking for an ad, you'll walk away with an ad. If you walk into an ideas company you will walk away with some amazing things that will change your dimension and your view of the world.

U: You're involved with a wide range of different design types for different projects. Do you have to approach them in different ways?

DL: They're all born from the same heart. The thing is people engage with ideas, because they have meaning and emotional value and I think the challenge is to find the idea first. Advertising used to be clients coming in with a brief; we close the doors and go away and create something – *ta da* – there's your solution. It's more collaborative these days.

You have to output something that resonates, engages and makes people feel something. Otherwise you end up comparing products: 'well, that is as good as that one and that's cheaper so I'll take that one'.

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Left to right.

A reminder hanging above Lockwood's desk; jean rack in the Trelise Cooper Kids Store; the Saatchi cube turns inside out to promote their network philosophy.



U: What most people would call brand, or branding, Saatchi calls Lovemarks. How is that term significant for Saatchi?

DL: The idea of 'love' as a concept puts the recipient at the heart of it. 'Brand' kind of falls into the same concept as 'design'. You talk to different people and you get a different definition for every person you talk to. Love is irrefutable. You know what it means, and it puts emotion into the equation as well. I think when this was developed a good number of years ago now, the world was a little lost in the commercial engagement and delivery of stuff and not enough in the juice and the intimacy and the sensuality that drives our relationships. So, I think it forces you to think about consumers from a consumer point of view. It allows you to be emotional, and more instinctive and intuitive. There's a spontaneity and depth of understanding that's really important. And actually, Kevin's genius was that when it was established it was a time when talking about love in the corporate boardroom was not done. But now, look around, everyone's about 'love my product' - the McDonalds catch phrase ['I'm loving it...']. You see it popping up in the literal sense all the time.

I got disillusioned with advertising when everyone was trying to make a science of it. I think Lovemarks suggests a real connection, a depth. It goes back to storytelling.

U: How has advertising changed with the proliferation of media and technology?

DL: It's put the consumer in charge. There is much more choice now. Because you are you used to sit down to watch TV, and it would come at you and you'd hit the ads. And that was the way you got your entertainment. And now I have nephews and kids who are spending their time scanning through YouTube and the internet and finding their own sources of entertainment rather than having it presented to them. It's a

**Above.**

An artwork in Lockwood's home inspired by a visit to the Penny Guggenheim Museum in Venice.

Facing Page.

Lockwood in Auckland's urban jungle.

lot more participatory where the consumer has to navigate for themselves. It has fragmented everything.

But I also think it's blurred everything. Kids are really savvy. And they know when they are being sold to, being told what to do. The internet has formed a much more honest and open and collaborative form of communication which has influenced everything. You see the kids that join organisations now, they want a completely different model to what I expected when I started work. They want a lot more out of their relationships than what we ever used to.

It's changed the way we digest information. How do you make a succinct short sound bite? Kids are living in a visual world now. We talk about a Generation V, using their visual stimulus. You watch a kid talk about his weekend, and he'll say, 'oh let me show you, here's my iphone, or here's my camera'. They can't tell a story without having pictures around and that's the same with board members with wads of board papers, they want something visual, something more engaging.

U: So what makes a good design?

DL: I think that a great design is something that feels amazing. And I think it's something that emotionally engages people, that is instinctive and intuitive, at the broader level of design. I also think beauty is a big part, I totally believe we have in our DNA, the ability to spot or be attracted to things that are beautiful. I think everyone has that. I'm not sure everyone can create it, but everyone can appreciate it.

It also depends on the brief. This is a fine line between art and commercialism. As soon as you put the audience in the picture you have a responsibility to produce something that the audience responds to. I think on the whole, the audience is a very important aspect of what design is really about. It is more about the receiver than the sender. **U**

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