

# Behind the scenes of The Bowery Awards with Scott Rose, David Sable and Carol H. Williams

New York Festivals caught up with David Sable, WPP senior advisor; Advertising Hall of Famer, Carol H. Williams of Carol H. Williams Advertising and The Bowery Awards executive director, Scott Rose as The Bowery Awards first round of Grand Jury judging gets underway.



Scott Rose, David Sable and Carol H. Williams

Here, industry icons Williams and Sable share their thoughts on honoring creative freelancers. New York Festivals finds out insider information on The Bowery Awards, the inspiration behind the launch of the competition and why Williams is lending her name to the inaugural Carol H. Williams "Together for Better" Award.

## ■ *Why launch The Bowery Awards in the middle of a pandemic?*

**Rose:** As Neil Gaiman said in that famous commencement speech, "When things get tough, this is what you should do. Make good art."

Our "art" is facilitating a great competition that puts the work of talented creatives in front of a jury of their peers. In these tough times, as a small independent company, we didn't want to sit back. With all proceeds being donated to charity, The Bowery Awards was born out of the pandemic and our desire to help creatives and NYC.

## ■ *What was the inspiration for The Bowery Awards?*

**Rose:** Lauren Murray, the associate director of advertising, having come from the world of freelance artisans, brought up how that community was not only struggling but would be growing with all of the unfortunate layoffs and furloughs that were happening. She thought we should set up a competition for freelance work where it wasn't competing in the same lanes as

work done with the incredible budgets of huge companies and brands.

We are an international business, but we are New Yorkers, and we pride ourselves on that fact. Ellen Smyth, our CEO, decided that we would not only tap our network and facilitate the competition, but we would donate all proceeds to Feed the Frontlines NYC.

■ ***Why are The Bowery Awards an important way to give freelance creatives a seat at the table?***

**Williams:** As a creative and a leader, I have seen through the years the contribution freelance creatives bring to the table. Often, they are not recognised for their truly authentic work. Freelancers are some of the most innovative creative people. To have them at the table and acknowledge their work that often goes unnoticed is a wonderful empowering feeling.

“ The curtain is pulled back. ”

■ ***Why are independent creatives important within the agency mix?***

**Sable:** Independent creatives, also known as freelancers, have always been a mainstay of our business. I doubt there is an agency large or small who hasn't or doesn't work with independents/freelancers. Some of the larger agencies even have an infrastructure to manage a full roster of them, specialists in specific verticals: Pharma; Auto; B2B; CPG; Banks; Service: Retail, whatever.

They make us powerful by giving us variable staffing power. Yet often they remain anonymous behind the scenes contributing to the wins, often the key idea but not always central to the client or industry.

It's time for us to celebrate this critical mainstay of our industry. The creatives who don't always see the glory but help make it shine.

■ ***Your jury panels are world-class. Talk about the multi-disciplinary roster and how you were able to recruit such a prominent executive jury and grand jury?***

**Rose:** We needed a name and "voice" for the competition that would encapsulate the bootstrapping, DIY aesthetic of Freelancers. We racked our brains for that almost sigil-like name that would immediately tell you what you needed to know about the competition.

The Bowery is NYC's oldest street and has been home to decades of innovative, multi-disciplinary artists. Once we settled on aligning the competition with this iconic area, things started "popping" almost instantly.

With top professionals from Google, Verizon, Goldman Sachs, Cardinal Health, and Jason Sosnoff, producer of multiple Robert De Niro and Al Pacino movies, among many, many more, I think we achieved our goal of putting together a world-class, multi-disciplinary jury. We have even had top CCOs reaching out asking to participate.

I would be remiss not to give a ton of credit to David Sable who has been instrumental in assembling our two world-class juries. He graciously opened his contact list and invited his legendary friends and colleagues including Carol H. Williams, Keith Reinhard, Helayne Spivak, Daisy Esposito, Martin Puris and Marvin Waldman. We're thrilled David's at the helm of The Bowery Awards Executive Jury.



New Bowery Awards for independent creatives announces its executive jury

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■ **How did you come up with the diverse categories within The Bowery Awards?**

**Rose:** We looked at the work that is being promoted online and tried to create fair and competitive lanes for it. We have groups of categories that judge purely the craft behind the work and groups that judge the totality of the piece. We also have some new categories that I'm excited about.

■ **The Carol H. Williams 'Together For Better' Award will showcase the "Together for Better" category that accepts work in each category group that promotes unity and diversity. Carol, what inspired you to lend your name to a special award within The Bowery Awards that honours campaigns that promote unity and diversity?**

**Williams:** Bowery is infamous for being a hotbed of creativity and culture. A place where mavericks and free thinkers met, collaborated, and developed work that would eventually escape the city streets and influence the world.

“ Honoring that spirit, The Bowery Awards is a competition for today's creatives working independently in the commercial landscape. ”

Because of the Bowery statement, I was honoured to lend my name to such a special award "Together for Better". This award describes my journey in life.

Many organisations are good at hiring for diversity, but they have not yet figured out how to make the environment inclusive that is, create an atmosphere in which all people feel valued and respected and have access to the same opportunities.

At our best, our work is a social force, we desperately need new narratives that will provide alternatives to the older, more confining narratives. These new narratives must embrace the fragmentation and change that gives us and our communities more agency, acceptance, esteem, choice, and options while helping to orient us and calling us to more fully realise the potential that we all have.

Together we can gain superpower by embracing our similarities, difference, and creative integration.

■ **What specific criteria will you be looking for when selecting an award-winning campaign within the "Together for Better" categories?**

**Williams:**

- Empathy- fuels connection, it's the ability to understand another perspective so well that you are "feeling with people" rather than simply feeling for them, which is sympathy, and that drives them apart.
- How are they looking at things? Is there a change to seek to understand the other person?
- Creative abilities.

■ **What changes are we seeing within the advertising industry that are a source of inspiration to you?**

**Williams:** The industry is changing the way they look at things. A higher emphasis is being placed on African-Americans and people of color in general. No longer do they see people of colour as a dollar sign but recognise their value.

“ Today my agency is full of Hispanic, Asian, African-American, and Caucasian people because I realised that subtle biases persist and lead to exclusion. ”

It's about clueing into the in-group vs. out-group dynamics. And resetting the in-group. My hope is the industry

will use us as an example to follow. I'm inspired to see the industry ask the question; whose eyes are you looking through when you see the world?

▣ *What has the response been to the competition?*

**Rose:** Overall, the industry has embraced The Bowery Awards. The team has heard positive feedback from all around the globe. I think this positive endorsement from Gaëtan du Peloux, ECD, Marcel Paris says it all, "I truly think that this festival is a great idea because you can discover great ideas that you can only discover here. It's different, fresh, not with an "agency" taste, so it's definitely positive for everybody... This festival is a fantastic idea. You will have all my support for the years to come."

▣ *How has the competition expanded globally?*

**Rose:** All of our competitions have international judges and entrants, but what has been surprising is the amount of entries we've received from countries who haven't typically entered. In these divisive times, it's been great to see a global community coming together.

▣ *What is on the horizon for The Bowery Awards 2021?*

**Rose:** Based on the response to 2020's Bowery, the sophomore year will be bigger and better. I'll let you know how and why once we finish 2020s competition. Medallists will be announced at the end of November!

To learn more about the 2020 New York Festivals Bowery Awards, click [here](#). For entry information and categories click [here](#).

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