

commercials 30

Budgets are down, deliverables are up, AI and in-housing are accelerating, and change is now a constant. For commercials producers, all that change is bringing new opportunities too. Jon Creamer reports

The UK commercials production sector isn't dead," says RSA Films, "but it's operating in a leaner, more competitive, more volatile environment."

Commercials producers reporting back to the 32nd annual *Telesvisual Commercials 30* survey are voicing that volatility. Agency consolidation, the rise of boutique independents, the land grab of in-house production, the increased implementation of AI is all set

against a backdrop of economic and geopolitical instability. Even companies reporting "good years" describe a climate of fragility beneath the surface.

"A year of two halves," says Blink. "The first six months of 2025 were terribly quiet and difficult with a return to a more steady flow of work in the last six months."

At Knucklehead, there was "a palpable sense of optimism that had been absent from the previous

years" through much of the year - bigger budgets, braver clients - before pre-budget speculation stalled activity again in Q3. "Once the budget was out it felt like things got back in the groove."

Others experienced the same stop-start rhythm. "Twists and turns probably sums it up best," says Quiet Storm. "Client budgets are being squeezed, but there's definitely still business out there."

What has changed most is predictability. "The tricky thing now is how hard it is to plan for the few months ahead," says Biscuit. "The year seems to balance out but it is less predictable when certain types of projects and pitches will happen. Busy periods used to follow more of a pattern."

"The industry has continued to evolve rapidly," says Stink, "with shifts in how work is commissioned and produced. Key factors include ongoing conversations around AI, increased competition as A-list directors take on smaller or traditionally B-list projects, changing pitching dynamics, and greater diversification within agencies. At the same time, market saturation has increased, making differentiation, relationships and adaptability more important than ever."

More for less

Across the board, producers describe a widening gap between

client expectations and the budgets available.

"It feels like budgets have tightened significantly again, yet the ask and expectation from brands has never been higher," says Iconoclast.

"Budgets remain under pressure, but expectations have not softened," adds Arts & Sciences. "Producers are being asked to deliver work of the same creative and cultural standard with fewer layers and less margin for error."

Blue Zoo says the current situation is "very similar to the past couple of years in that budgets are decreasing whilst expectations are not."

"We're seeing a much longer list of deliverables alongside reduced budgets and shorter timelines," says Somesuch. And there's been a "shift towards smaller crews and being clever with the number of shoot days and B units."

Production companies have to be nimble: "Budgets have remained tight while client expectations continue to rise, requiring producers to be increasingly strategic and efficient in how work is delivered," says Object & Animal. Merman too says that "compressed timelines, limited budgets, a growing list of deliverables and a protracted award processes mean that it remains a challenging climate for

how it works

For a place in the Top 30, a commercials production outfit is ranked by its showing at award shows (Cannes Lions, Clios, Ciclope, Kinsale Sharks, D&ADs, British Arrows, AICP, Creative Circle Awards, APA Collection and Campaign and Shots best ofs), its standing among its peers, its turnover and the number of votes its directors and its work received in the survey.



Waitrose *The Perfect Gift* by Biscuit



KFC *Believe- Part 2* by Business Club

producers who are having to work smarter, for longer and for less."

The old deal has shifted: "Over the past year, the commercial production industry has continued to shift away from traditional, agency-led TV advertising towards more fragmented, digital-first and direct-to-brand content, with clients demanding faster turnaround, more formats, and tighter budgets," says Park Village. Prodco says that now "a lot of money is going into performance-driven media, social-first campaigns and fast-turn content. The result is more output, but often smaller budgets per deliverable." For Kode Media: "there's a clear shift towards social-first and influencer-led content. That work needs a different production mindset than traditional TVCs."

Spindle says the economics have changed drastically. "Instead of steady pipelines, you're building momentum job by job. The highs still exist, but the gaps between them are longer."

£458K

The average budget for a commercials project reported by respondents

It's cold outside

If budget compression is the daily operational pressure, in-housing is the existential one.

From WPP's production consolidation to similar moves within Publicis Groupe, holding companies are aggressively capturing production revenue.

But producers are still trying to hold on to quality.

Says Rogue: "There are more occasions where holding the line feels like the only diligent thing to do, to protect the creative from being blown apart by a woefully inadequate budget. Craft must always come first." Outsider too says there's sometimes a need for "difficult conversations so as producers we know when to say

no and when we need to dig our heels in because of unrealistic requests that will jeopardise the integrity of the creative and idea."

And while budgets are falling, the cost

of pitching has increased. "Pitches are increasingly competitive and costly. The demands of the pitch are extremely high. We often have budgets change (reduce) mid-pitch," says Drool.

"Budgets have tightened significantly again, yet the ask and expectation from brands has never been higher"

The launch of vertically integrated models such as WPP Production signals a structural shift.

"We're seeing holding company consolidation impact agency structures, with more production being centralised and internalised with agencies under pressure to capture more production revenue and protect margin," says Magna Studios.

Rogue describes "blockages in the pipeline" as mergers bed in. Others speak more bluntly. "Agency in-housing has been the number one threat," says Vigilante.

"The constant issue of in-house productions at agencies hasn't gone away. This isn't necessarily anything new but with the big mergers going on, it's not slowing down but rather accelerating. They claim to be able to do it without production companies and yet ask for loan outs and really pile the pressure on which puts us all in a very uncomfortable situation. We want our directors to work but we also want to protect our business model and integrity of the industry," says Outsider.

Smuggler too says there is "more in house and more regular

production companies loaning out to agencies and calling it "White Labelling."

Iconoclast adds that "there is even more of a surge in requests for loan-outs." Love Song is another bemoaning "increasingly aggressive requests for loan outs."

The problems extend into pitching too "There is growing frustration over non transparent bidding processes. Producers are frequently finding themselves in "shadow pitches" where the criteria for winning are unclear, or where agencies use external bids simply to benchmark costs for their own in-house production arms," says Iconoclast. But there is a fight back beginning. "The past year has seen solidarity between production companies. There is a collective push to demand fairer pitching rights—including more transparent feedback, pitching fees to cover rising treatment costs, and a refusal to pitch against in-house."

£15.2M

The mean average turnover of a commercials production company in this year's survey (it was £14.9m last time)

creative trends

What have been the major creative trends of the last year?

Anonymous Content AI! We are working to figure out how we best use AI creatively and productively for us as producers.

Blue Zoo Stylised and painterly feels to work...or integrating animation into live action.

Business Club AI is slowly creeping in. It's still in the 'tool' phase, but we are on the cusp on it having a material impact on the industry.

Chief Beyond the traditional TVC, 2025 saw a big increase in requests for content to be utilised on social first basis.

Dark Energy Over the past year there's been a shift towards simpler, more direct creative ideas, with an emphasis on authenticity, strong performances and clarity over scale.

DROOL There's been a renewed emphasis on craft and in-camera effects, with brands responding to the charm and authenticity they bring.

ELEANOR Simplicity, strong storytelling, and distinctive visual language are increasingly valued over excess.

Iconoclast Creative trends have been driven by advancements in technology like virtual production and AI.

Jelly As an animation company, we have definitely seen a swing back to texture, feel and craft from clients.

Knucklehead We've seen a return of emotionally exhilarating, super visual scripts, which has suited some of our more established directors. Comedy continues to

be in demand, often with a very surreal element.

KODE MEDIA Virtual production, Unreal Engine and other game engines have moved far from novelty to credible storytelling tools.

Magna Most commercial shoots now deliver TV, social, stills and cut downs in one production. Efficiency and multi-format thinking are essential.

Merman London Some brands have certainly cottoned on to the benefits when it comes to economies of scale and have started to put together what they call super shoots.

MindsEye The list of deliverables on each production gets longer and longer!

MJZ Virtual production is becoming more prevalent, and with the decrease in budgets, agencies are asking for nimble crews to execute in production.

Nexus Studios Once again, AI sits at the centre of many conversations but is maturing beyond novelty and increasingly embedded as part of content production.

OBJECT & ANIMAL Clients are still looking to companies to deliver a full 360 campaign.

Outsider Working with younger, fresher producers and crew who aren't tied into the traditional way of working enables us to navigate different briefs and be ready for anything that comes in.

Partizan We've noticed an uptick in quietly comedic absurdist

commercial concepts, which potentially reflects a general feeling that our sociopolitical climate can be quite surreal at times, too.

ProCo There has been a significant change in crafted authenticity and real advertising.

Quiet Storm Short-form, less polished work has been a dominant force.

RadicalMedia Brand Documentaries and storytelling analogue events and experiential will be a returning trend.

RSA Films Authentic and human led stories are back and I can't help but feel that's a reaction to AI poorly executed emotionless generative content that fails to connect emotionally.

SOMESUCH A desire for 'real life' and storytelling (perhaps a pushback against the use of AI)

Spindle The work that's cutting through tends to feel human again; less synthetic polish, more character and emotion.

Stink In response to the growth of AI, we're seeing some brands and creatives going the other way and embracing an analogue approach to filmmaking.

Unit9 AI is increasingly playing a huge role in our everyday, and this has been echoed in the briefs we're seeing and the enquiries from clients.

Vigilante Incorporating AI into both our post and production workflows has been huge! On set, with unreal Engine and certainly from a design point, online AI software too.

Quality control

In-housing may work for the agency balance sheet, but it isn't in the best interest of clients and creativity.

"Holding companies have pushed more aggressively to capture production revenue, often at the expense of client interests. Yet a basic structural truth remains unchanged: the directing talent that high-level production depends on continues to sit overwhelmingly within the independent sector," says Arts & Sciences.

Mindseye argues that "a key threat remains agencies increasingly producing work themselves and limiting client access to independent production partners. The industry knows this doesn't deliver the strongest creative outcome, but everybody is trying to hold on to revenue where they can."

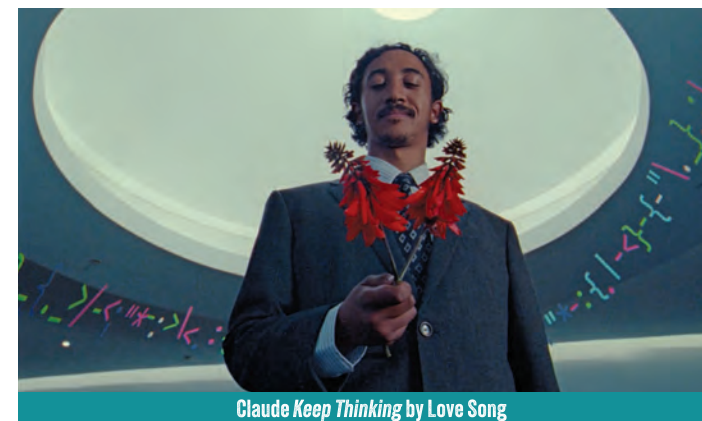
Partizan points out that "the increasing volume of work going in house and the clients need for volume and speed means that craft is less considered for a lot."

New ideas

In-housing also hampers the development of new directing talent. Talent development, so long the preserve of the production company, is becoming strained. And that will one day be everyone's problem.

"The challenge in this environment is developing young emerging talent," says Merman. "Traditionally we would use underfunded opportunities to invest in and over deliver for emerging talent. Those opportunities have disappeared to the agency in-house model, so we have had to look at and engineer alternative ways in which to nurture and develop them."

Knucklehead too says "the pipeline of new talent, and our role in developing the next generation's careers and talents, is increasingly



Claude Keep Thinking by Love Song

under threat as more work goes in-house to agencies. It is very difficult now to get new directors into the market, and that will soon become an industry problem, not just a small production company problem. If fresh talent doesn't get allowed in to the market to disrupt and push the status quo, we will see more and more of the same style of work with less and less creative result."

MJZ is another pointing to in-housing "removing opportunities for younger talent and preventing the nurturing of new talent." And tougher times in general also means less focus on new talent. "With less stability, it's also harder to invest time and effort into developing talent, which may potentially lead to a future talent gap," says Spindle. "When you do see great work, it's been done by a select few time and time again. We need to change this and provide a pathway for emerging talent to build a reel and compete like they were pre COVID," says Outsider.

73%

The average percentage of a company's turnover derived from making commercials

Says Iconoclast "High level directors often fill the mid and lower-level pitches, that would traditionally go to young or mid-level directors."

There has been less work to go around, so it's much more competitive, says Anonymous Content. "Bigger directors are doing smaller work so it's harder for the younger talent to break out." Chief too says, "There seemed to be fewer smaller budget scripts around in 2025 (which can be ideal for nurturing young director talent)."

Playing safe

Caution is everywhere. Says Object & Animal: "Clients appear to exert greater influence, while agencies are taking fewer risks. This has made it more important than ever to deliver work that balances innovation with efficiency and impact."

ProCo says that "a lot of brands have been playing it safe: tighter decision-making, heavier sign-off processes, and shorter timelines. In real terms that usually means more jobs going to competitive pitches, fewer "big, brave" productions getting greenlit, and a push toward simpler ideas that are easier to execute."

AI: From Panic to Practicality

Last year, AI dominated conversation. This year, it has moved into implementation.



John Lewis Where Love Lives by Iconoclast

But as the buzzword du jour, AI still often enters the chat for little reason. Says Somesuch, there's been "a big shift towards the use of AI - sometimes without a genuine reason or need to use it."

"There seems to be a lot of uneducated confusion around where it can and should be used and, at some levels, over what it is," says Biscuit. "I might be showing my age here, but it reminds me of when everyone just wanted to talk about digital, or viral, without really knowing what it meant. It is an incredible tool with incredible power. With that power comes the ability to make terrible work. But it can also be helpful and good when used in the 'right' way."

The idea that AI equals inexpensive, quick and good is still hanging around like a bad smell.

"The biggest opportunity is that AI is unlocking more creative iteration upfront," says Quiet Storm. "On the flip side, one of the main threats is the growing assumption that AI automatically means cheaper and faster."

ProCo says that "AI continues to be touted as a near costless, unlimited and instantaneous solution/ potential replacement for traditional production models." And Spindle adds that "it's changing expectations around speed, cost and output, often before the industry has fully worked out how to use it meaningfully."

But some sort of sense is

beginning to prevail.

"The fear that it would replace everything has softened," says Magna Studios. Instead, the focus has shifted to hybrid workflows and practical integration, particularly in post.

Early anxiety is giving way to pragmatism, says Nexus Studios: "Rather than a wholesale disruption, we're seeing a more nuanced integration: AI as a tool within creative pipelines while not replacing taste or craft."

"The risk isn't AI itself - it's how quickly and thoughtfully it's adopted," says Kode Media. "Used well, AI can be a powerful tool for development, planning and efficiency. Used badly, it risks devaluing craft and eroding trust with audiences."

There are also legal worries. "Whilst everyone wants to be seen at the forefront of these new technological advances, anxieties still exist around the exposure they might bring in the absence of a clear legal framework,"

46%

The average percentage of a commercials production's work that was shot in the UK



Morrisons Fresh From Market Street - Fish by MJZ

says Merman. Rogue too sees a responsibility in "protecting the agency and client from any copyright issues down the line. The challenge is to then share that knowledge so the clear framework of how to use it best is defined and understood by all parties."

And then there is audience reaction. Several companies note a growing backlash to purely AI-generated work - a renewed appetite for tactile, in-camera craft. "There's a lack of truth to AI created films and brands are beginning to see that," says RSA Films and, says MJZ, "the quality of output is being called into question."

Blink observes that craft has become a powerful promotional tool in itself. "In-camera techniques and hand-crafted production seem to be celebrated more - with BTS content of these jobs being a great marketing tool for brands on social media etc."

Connection is key. And whether AI is a threat or not, "comes down

to what the client wants and what they want their audience to feel about them," says Biscuit. "If the client wants an authentic connection between their audience and the client/product then that will come from great storytelling and craft." Jelly too says, "we can now see clients winding back and yearning for real craft - something tangible and tactile. Keep the faith everyone!"

Direct action

Network consolidation has reshaped agency dynamics. Mergers have disrupted pipelines. Senior talent has been made redundant.

Decision-making has slowed. But consolidation has also catalysed a counter-movement with boutique agencies springing up.

And then production companies are moving closer to brands themselves. "Independent production companies are being pushed to evolve beyond pure delivery partners, encroaching back into territory once owned by agencies: shaping creative ideas earlier, offering strategic thinking, and building direct relationships with brands themselves," says Partizan.

Direct-to-client work is rising. Brands are building internal creative teams and seeking partners who can think strategically. "More clients are moving to an in-house model which means we need to remain connected to those brands," says Academy.

Some producers now act as de facto agencies. "Over the coming year, there are good opportunities to build direct-to-brand production and events, where clients are increasingly looking for trusted partners who can deliver creatively and move quickly. There is also a gradual shift away from purely agency-led commissioning, which creates more room for production companies that can form direct relationships with brands and offer a broader range of services," says Park Village.

Magna too says, "an increased number of brands continue to come to us directly looking to embrace an entertainment mindset in what they make and how they make it." Chief too has "seen an increase in the number of clients with

in-house creative looking to partner directly with production companies."

"Producers who can offer flexibility, clarity, and problem-solving - not just execution - are faring better than those reliant on legacy models," says Eleanor. "Clients expect production companies to be more consultative - contributing strategic thinking, production innovation, and creative solutions earlier in the process."

Drool says its focus "is on creative output and collaboration which will be an exciting offering

for smaller agencies and clients wanting to have more meaningful relationships with their creative production house." Others see entertainment, live experience and sport as growth areas.

Nexus points to large-scale experiential storytelling - from stadiums to immersive screens - as a frontier where production companies can lead technically and creatively.

Blue Zoo sees opportunity in digital-first IP growth, leveraging long-form storytelling skills into commercial contexts. "Relying on the traditional routes to market is recipe for failure that all too many are still following," says Jelly.

Adapt and survive

Change, and opportunity, is in the air. "The production industry is drastically changing, I'd say at a faster rate than it's ever done before...but as history has shown us, with change comes huge opportunity for those who embrace it," says Unit9.

For Radical Media, "2026 will prove to be a pivotal year," but "storytelling is here to stay - brands telling stories, brand entertainment, events and experiences are exciting areas we expect to thrive in."

Because despite all the changes, "there is still a strong appetite for distinctive, culturally resonant work. Talent is king in the work that truly resonates, while the work that plays safe gets lost in the noise," says Magna.

"There's a lack of truth to AI created films and brands are beginning to see that"

24
The average number of directors on a commercials production company's roster, down from 26 last year

25%
The average amount of its work that a production company made directly for a client without agency involvement

YOUR GLOBAL MUSIC-FOR-MEDIA SOLUTION.



DELL Alienware - Space Marine



No Secret

How Covert scaled up with Escape Technology

For Olly Knapp, Sales Manager at Escape Technology, one of the most rewarding aspects of being a reseller is supporting a diverse mix of studios tackling similar technical challenges.

“That cross-sector experience allows us to bring valuable insight and best practice to every customer we work with to enable them to make confident decisions,” he adds.

This was particularly pertinent in the case of Covert, a remote-first VFX and post-production studio founded on the principle that a world-class post house could operate without a Soho postcode. Now run by Simon Dewey and Max Murphy, Covert has grown from a garage operation into a 45-strong studio with credits including DELL Alienware - *Space Marine* and BBC’s *Lord of the Flies*, as well as a place in *Televisual*’s top ten commercials post houses.



Managing Partner, Max Murphy and Founder, Simon Dewey

Dewey and Co-founder, Toby Wheeler built Covert around a distributed freelance model from the start, drawing on talent from across the UK and Europe. The studio was already operating this way years before COVID forced the rest of the industry to rethink how artists accessed infrastructure.

“The big post production houses we competed with all had their equipment and file servers in-house,” says Technical Operations Manager Simon Russell. “They had no way to get stuff out to their artists. We already had that set up.” While rivals scrambled to adapt, Covert was busier than ever.

In the VFX world, however, great success is often accompanied by greater complexity. In the early days, when project files ran to a few hundred megabytes, Dropbox was adequate. As Covert grew and took on more ambitious work, the media files they worked on also increased. For example, Amazon’s *Jungle* was about 8TB in total with some shots reaching up to 400GB. Dropbox requires project files to be fully downloaded before work can begin, and remote artists were losing days to that process alone. In effect, Covert was paying freelance rates for idle time.

The solution came from Escape Technology. A chance encounter on a VFX subreddit led to a conversation with Knapp and CTO Lee Danskin. “Being able

to speak to someone like Lee with years of experience in the VFX industry has been a great help to make sure we get the services we actually need,” says Russell.

Danskin advised that the on-demand cloud file-streaming service LucidLink better matched Covert’s needs.

LucidLink also guarantees that every artist always views the latest version of a file. There’s no throttling, and crucially, no waiting.

Scaling the heights

Solving the file-sharing problem was only the start. As Covert moved from Adobe tools for jobs requiring motion graphics to heavyweight VFX on packages such as Nuke and Autodesk Flame, the studio required significant compute power to support a distributed team. The answer to such ‘heavy lifting’ was Sherpa, Escape’s own resource management platform built on AWS cloud. Running as infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS), it can spin up and down preconfigured virtual GPU-based workstations at short notice, rather than Covert continually investing in physical hardware.

“Sherpa gives me the ability to turn ten machines on and be up and running by Monday with no drama,” Russell says. “When we don’t need them anymore, we shut them down.”

LucidLink and Sherpa work in tandem: artists based across Europe – from

“If someone is starting up a studio, Escape are the only people I’d recommend.”

Simon Russell,
Technical Operations Manager

COVERT

Scotland and Ireland to studios in Germany and Romania – log into Sherpa virtual machines and access project files instantly via LucidLink.

With Flame more central to Covert’s offering, the studio made a significant hardware investment: two Autodesk Flame workstations, co-located in Escape’s data centre. The move showed immediate performance gains. Files saved on the Flame boxes sync automatically via LucidLink to the wider team in near real time. “Click render, and you can almost see the file being created on the server as you’re working,” says Russell. “No need to package things up, no need to send things.”

A further shift towards IaaS is Covert’s recent adoption of Escape’s Private Cloud. Rather than pushing data across multiple connections to multiple artists, everything is centralised, and artists dial in. Five dedicated render nodes on flat-rate pricing have replaced pay-as-you-go rendering for day-to-day work.

“The package Escape put together was a bit of a no-brainer,” says Russell. “Once we worked out the rentals, it just made more sense.

“We’re looking forward to offloading 90% of our Nuke renders onto dedicated nodes. And when the bigger projects come in, we can always lean on Sherpa again.”

Partnership power

Monthly calls with Knapp and Danskin have shaped Covert’s infrastructure decisions at every stage, acting as both supplier and technical sounding board.

“It would have been very different if I’d just walked into PC World and tried to figure it out myself,” Russell reflects. “Lee will very quickly say: I see what you want to do, and what you’re suggesting is completely wrong – let’s do it this way instead.”

Not that Russell is complaining. “If someone is starting up a studio, Escape are the only people I’d recommend.

“What sets the team at Escape apart is their breadth of experience - Olly guides the purchase, and Lee’s understanding and expertise brings it to life.”

wearecovert.com

Escape's Private Cloud: Powering VFX Workflows

Growing Pains of a Creative Powerhouse

As creative studios like Covert grow, so do their challenges. From managing remote teams to handling complex 4K/8K renders, the need for a faster, more collaborative, and scalable solution becomes critical.



Escape's Private Cloud: A Game-Changer

Designed for creative studios, Escape's Private Cloud centralises workflows, scales power on demand, and ensures robust security.

<p>Flexible Short-Term Rentals Rent high-performance workstations, including Flame, when you need them.</p>	<p>Scalable Compute Power Handle surging workloads with ease, whether it's 10 new artists or a heavy render.</p>
<p>Rapid Deployment Get machines up and running in no time to meet tight deadlines.</p>	<p>Cost-Effective Pay only for what you use, avoiding hefty upfront investments.</p>
<p>Enterprise-Grade Security Your data stays protected in our high-performance private cloud.</p>	<p>Expert Setup & Support Our specialists handle everything from setup to ongoing support.</p>

How Covert Scaled Seamlessly

Escape's Private Cloud empowered Covert to:

- Seamlessly collaborate across Europe with centralised data access.
- Tackle complex 4K/8K renders with ease and efficiency.
- Transition Nuke workflows to a powerful, centralised location.
- Stay agile with Sherpa, scaling up instantly for demanding projects.

More Than Just a Service

Escape Technology isn't just a provider; we're a partner. From pipeline advice to hardware setup, our team of VFX and gaming experts ensures you're always supported.

Ready to Power Up?

Escape's Private Cloud is your gateway to agile, high-performance computing without the hassle of managing hardware.

escape-technology.com

the best in show

As part of the Commercials 30, ad producers also get to vote for their favourite rival companies, directors, ads, agencies, post houses, editors and colourists. Here are the results



KFC All Hail Gravy by Business Club

In last year's poll of the commercials production companies' favourite ads, Business Club director Vedran Rupic's *Believe in Chicken* for KFC hit the number one spot. This year, his follow up, *All Hail Gravy*, takes the same place. It's an ad that "balances humour, confidence, and distinctive craft while remaining unmistakably KFC," says one admirer. Others call it "such an eye-grabber from a brave agency and a great director" with other voters saying the spot was "weird and memorable," "fresh and brave with an unmistakable tone and humour" and "bold, confident, weird and wonderful."

In at joint second in our poll of the best ads of the year is

Blink director, Dougal Wilson's, joyous one-shot spectacular for Channel 4's *Educating Yorkshire*. Voters call the spot "charming and timeless," "immersive, inspiring" and "excellent, inventive, fresh." Another voter says of the spot: "Perfect execution. Very British, very nostalgic, so well choreographed and just a brilliantly done piece of work that any director and production company would have bitten your arm off to have a crack at."

Also sharing second place in our poll of the best ads of the year is Biscuit director Andreas Nilsson's spot for Andrex, *First School Poo*. Its voters say the ad is "smart, brilliantly observed. Humour was given time to breath and so it made it land even harder."



Channel 4 Educating Yorkshire by Blink

Business Club director Vedran Rupic takes the top spot in our poll of commercials producers' favourite directors after placing joint second last time.

Rupic, who directed this report's highest rated ad with *All Hail Gravy* for KFC, is praised for his "distinct voice and tonal confidence" with voters saying he is "fresh and bold and shows people that its worth taking risks." Other voters say Rupic is "endless inventive" and that "everything he makes is a lot of fun to watch." Second place in our favourite directors poll goes to Biscuit's Steve Rogers on the back of standout spots for Coinbase, Cadbury and Squarespace. "Just so

consistently funny and cinematic" says one production company admirer. "His work is emotionally intelligent, controlled, and story-first," says another. Other voters say he "stands out for his distinctive visual style and his ability to blend humour, character and strong art direction. His work often feels playful and memorable, but still beautifully made."

Another Biscuit director, Andreas Nilsson, takes third place in the poll this year. Nilsson, responsible for work including *First School Poo* for Andrex, is praised for "finding comedy in behaviour that feels totally his own" and for bringing "genuine originality to commercial work in a way very few directors can."



Britbox See It Differently by Blinkink



Andrex First School Poo by Biscuit



Apple I'm Not Remarkable by Somesuch



Uber Eats When You've Done Enough by O Positive

best commercials

top 10

- 01 KFC *Believe Pt2: All Hail Gravy* Business Club
- 02= Channel 4 *Educating Yorkshire* Blink
Andrex *First School Poo* Biscuit Filmworks
- 04 Waitrose *The Perfect Gift* Biscuit Filmworks
- 05= Apple *I'm Not Remarkable* Somesuch
Britbox *See It Differently* Blinkink
Cadbury *Memory* Biscuit Filmworks
Tesco *That's What Makes it Christmas* Biscuit Filmworks
Coinbase *Everything is Fine* Biscuit Filmworks
- 10= Uber Eats *When You've Done Enough* O Positive;
Morrisons *Fresh From Market Street* MJZ

best directors

top 10

- 01 Vedran Rupic Business Club
- 02 Steve Rogers Biscuit Filmworks
- 03 Andreas Nilsson Biscuit Filmworks
- 04= Daniel Wolfe Love Song
Dougal Wilson Blink
Jeff Low Biscuit Filmworks
Leigh Powis Prodco
- 08 Kim Gehrig Somesuch
- 09= Elliott Power Love Song; *Megaforce* Riff Raff;
Molly Manners Biscuit Filmworks



John Lewis *Where Love Lives* by Iconoclast



Waitrose *The Perfect Gift* by Biscuit

Trim's Tom Lindsay moves up to first position in this year's poll of commercials producers' favourite editors. In recent times, Lindsay has cut stand out spots including John Lewis's Christmas tearjerker, *Where Love Lives*, directed by Jonathan Alric at Iconoclast as well handling the edit on other favourites including Kim Gehrig of Somesuch's *I'm Not Remarkable* musical for Apple along with her Super Bowl work for Nike, *So Win*. Yorgos Lanthimos' Emma Stone Squarespace ad, was also cut by Lindsay.

Three editors share second place in our poll of producers' favourite editors. Dominic Leung at Marsheen has cut spots including travel brand Away's *Travel Changed Me* directed by Jordan Hemingway and FKA twigs out of Object &

Animal. Leung also teamed with Love Song's Daniel Wolfe again on Anthropic's *Keep Thinking* spot for its Claude AI model and for EE again on its *Safer Sims* spot.

Ellie Johnson at Tenthree also shares second place in the best editors poll. Recent ads include Gatorade's *Stranger Things* tie-in ad directed by Henry Sholfield; Maltesers *Put on a Happy Face* ad directed by Partizan's Ali Pankiw and Academy's Jack Driscoll's *Don't Put Drugs In The Driving Seat* for Department for Transport.

Sharing second this time too is Tenthree's Eve Ashwell who has been on the cut for Magna director John Madden's Olivia Colman Burberry work and Tom Speers at Smuggler's latest for Waitrose, *Gastronaut*, along with Autumn de Wilde's *Love Departed* for BA.

Time Based Arts' Simone Grattarola rises to the top of our poll of commercials producers' favourite colourists this year.

Alongside his long form work for shows and films including the *Peaky Blinders* movie, *The Immortal Man*, and *The Night Manager S2*, Grattarola has provided the grade on a number of standout spots in recent times. These include Waitrose's much-fancied romcom from Molly manners – *The Perfect Gift* as well as Uber Eats *Evil'd Enough* from O Positive. Grattarola was also on the grade for Steve Rogers at Biscuit's *Memory* spot for Cadbury and the Coinbase musical ad, *Everything is Fine*.

Jean-Clément Soret at Company 3 takes second place in

our poll of commercial producers' top colourists. Soret has graded a host of long form projects of late from *28 Years Later* to *Goodbye June*, *Andor* and *The Agency*. His commercials work of recent times takes in Taika Waititi's Christmas ad for Disney, *Best Christmas Ever*, produced through Hungry Man and Tim Bullock at Rogue's *Harmonizer* for Twix. There were also spots for Doordash directed by Nick Ball and MJZ director, Fredrik Bond's playful campaign for Hornbach.

Voted third best colourist this year is Rascal's Tim Smith who provided the grade on Biscuit director Angelo Cerisara's piece for Comic Relief's 40th anniversary and BBC Creative and Somesuch director Dan Emmerson's *Made of Here* for the BBC.

best editors

top 10

- 01 Tom Lindsay **Trim**
- 02= Dominic Leung **Marsheen**
Ellie Johnson **Tenthree**
Eve Ashwell **Tenthree**
- 05= Amanda James **Final Cut**
Ben Campbell **The Quarry**
Fouad Gaber **Cabin**
Paul Watts **The Quarry**
- 09= Leo King **Stitch**
Sam Bould **Tenthree**
Joe Guest **Final Cut** Rich Orrick **Work**

best colourists

top 10

- 01 Simone Grattarola **Time Based Arts**
- 02 Jean-Clément Soret **Company 3**
- 03 Tim Smith **Rascal**
- 04= George K **Black Kite Studios**
Luke Morrison **ETC**
- 06= Hannibal Lang **Selected Works**
Jason Wallis **ETC**
Simon Bourne **Company 3**
- 09= James Bamford **Rascal**
Rich Fearon **Black Kite Studios**
Tom Mangham **Black Kite Studios**

best agencies

top 10

- 01 Mother
- 02 Uncommon
- 03 Saatchi and Saatchi
- 04 W+K
- 05 VCCP
- 06= Pablo
adam&eveDDB
- 08 Wonderhood
- 09 BBH
- 10= Ark;
Leo Burnett

In this year's poll of commercials producers' favourite agencies to work with, it's Mother that once again takes the top position.

Producers say "the work that has come out from there the last year has been exceptional. They have clients who trust them and take big risks." Others say that "Mother continued to stand out for bold, idea-led creativity and campaigns that have real cultural stickiness, reinforcing their reputation as one of the most talked about and influential creative agencies in our industry."

Mother is also praised for being "A joy to work with as a production partner." Says one producer: "Their work continues to balance originality, emotional intelligence, and cultural relevance, often setting the tone for the wider industry. They have an enduring ability to make brands feel human, distinctive, and creatively brave."

Just behind Mother in this year's vote is Uncommon. Uncommon is "always the agency everyone wants to beat - and rarely does." Producer voters say Uncommon is "willing to push the

work, experiment and support the creative" and is "the clearest example of a UK agency with a bold, distinctive creative identity. They've become a genuine benchmark for brave commercial creativity."

It's third spot again for Saatchi & Saatchi. Voters say "there's a clear appetite for new voices, and a respect for authorship and the work feels more creative, contemporary and culturally meaningful as a result." It's also described as "going from strength to strength with best-in-class work for John Lewis and EE."

best post houses

We ask commercials producers two questions about post houses in our annual survey. Who do you rate most highly and who do you use the most?

This year, Electric Theatre Collective again takes the highest rated prize with Selected Works chosen as the post house used most often by commercials producers. ETC is described by producers as "consistent, deeply supportive, and a company you just trust with your vision. Everything feels bespoke and

closely curated and cared for." Other producer clients say ETC is "still top of their game, they have maintained a level that everyone aspires to." And is "killing it in UK and US." ETC "Never falter" say producers, "always the ones to beat! Incredible team."

The second highest rated post house this year is Selected Works. Commercials producer clients say the company "combines technical expertise with strong artistic judgement and close collaboration. In 2025, they were a key partner on several high-visibility campaigns.

I'm in awe of their abilities."

Others say Selected Works "creativity and taste is far and above the other post houses in London" and is "versatile," "excellent" and "remarkable."

Time Based Arts is voted the third highest rated post house by commercials producers. "Slick, creative and their output is extremely strong," says one producer client, "incredible output and creativity unlike any other post house. I would even dare say than some creative agencies." "Truly remarkable post house," says another. Many mention TBA's "quality control" that is "second to none" saying the company is "creatively excellent and never take on too much work."

Two take fourth place. Black Kite whose "strength lies in subtle, craft-focused effects and integrated design that elevate performance and tone." and Rascal, described as "incredibly nimble but superbly high-end and 'creative first', innovative and pro-active."

highest rated post houses

top 10

- 01 Electric Theatre Collective
- 02 Selected Works
- 03 Tim Based Arts
- 04= Black Kite
Rascal
- 06= 1920
Untold Studios
- 08 No.8
- 09 Covert
- 10= Absolute; Final Cut;
Framestore; Stray

most used post houses

top 10

- 01 Selected Works
- 02 Black Kite
- 03 Electric Theatre Collective
- 04 Rascal
- 05 Time Based Arts
- 06= 1920
No.8
- 08 Absolute
- 09= ELMNTL
Stray
Untold Studios



ETC worked on Rogue's *The Unexpected Guest* for Sainsbury's

peer poll top 10

Who are the rival commercials production companies you most respect?

01 Biscuit

Biscuit rises to the top of the Peer Poll this time from second place last year. The poll asks producers to vote for their favourite rival companies and Biscuit is lauded for "the way they support and protect directors" and for "retaining a high level of creative control" to make "smart, character-driven storytelling across a wide range of categories." Fellow producers say Biscuit has a "lovely team of people that help fellow production companies. They aim to set good industry practice, lead by example and seem to treat their people well."

02 Love Song

Second place in the Peer Poll this year goes to Love Song. Love Song is praised by producers for its "director led model with a strong talent development culture" and because "there's a creative confidence to their output and the work feels like it comes from a point of view, rather than just being 'well made'". Love Song, say producers, is "small but mighty" and produces "beautifully crafted films and with such authenticity."

03 Business Club

Business Club moves into third place in the Poll, with producers calling it "one of the most interesting and influential companies of recent years" that produces "confident, culturally attuned work with a clear creative point of view." It has a "strong tonal identity and clarity

of voice" and is "set to be a major player for years to come."

04 Magna Studios

It's fourth place in the Peer Poll this time for Magna. "Everything about Magna is classy, from their social media presence to their gradual acquisition of a killer global directing roster" says one producer admirer. "They've come out swinging and really carved a niche and position out for themselves," says another. It's been "a fantastic year creatively and I am excited to see how they continue to develop for such a young company."

05= Academy

An equal fifth position in the Peer Poll for Academy. "A consistent and long-established production company that continues to forge new talent whilst maintaining well established creative talent" is one producer take on the company. Others say, "you can trust Academy from all angles - brilliant crafted work, brilliant production values and lovely humans to boot" and "they're very good at delivering technically ambitious projects without losing sight of the creative or the storytelling."

05= Smuggler

Smuggler also takes fifth in this year's Poll with producers praising its "bold, grown-up work" and its "scale, craft and ambition. They consistently deliver massive, cinematic work that sets the benchmark

globally not just in production value, but in execution and direction." Others praise the company for "always uncovering exciting young talent."

07= Object & Animal

Equal seventh for Object & Animal, praised for making "interesting work and obviously expanding laterally to adjust to new climes" while being "cross disciplinary, hardworking and still managing to make cool music videos with up-and-coming talent."

07= Prodco

Seventh spot too for Prodco, with producers praising its "excellent roster, excellent bold, creative output" and its "ability to grow budding directors so quickly under Ian."

07= Rogue

Rogue also shares seventh place. "Under the leadership of Kate Taylor, Rogue has built a company defined by strong taste, ambition, and trust in directors," says one fan. Others say "they're very strong on big, complex jobs and reliably deliver at a high level. They're a company we really rate."

10= Mindseye, Blink

Two companies share tenth. Mindseye, for "producing nice work in comedy with a well curated, small roster which we admire and respect." And Blink and Blinkink: "The gold standard for any UK-based animation business. Always winning - and for a reason."

top 10

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commercials

30

01 Biscuit Filmworks

biscuitfilmworks.com 13 Holywell Rd, London EC2A 4JF t 020 7240 9955
md Rupert Reynolds-MacLean
eps Hanna Bayatti, Daisy Mellors
credits *The Perfect Gift* by Molly Manners for Wonderhood/Waitrose; *Bring a Book to Life* by Steve Rogers for Droga5/Amazon Books

Biscuit has been behind some of the most fancied ads of the past year including the Waitrose Christmas spot, *First School Poo* for Andrex, Cadbury *Memory* and *Everything is Fine* for Coinbase. Biscuit says highlights were "the continued development of our in house team and bringing younger directors up within

the company," developing Florence Poppy Deary, Stanley Brock, Jackie Bao, Lucie Bourdeu, Damien Shatford, Ben Strebel, Dan DiFelice, Bine Bach and Angelo Cerisara. And, in addition to that, "established talent like Steve Rogers, Jeff Low, Molly Manners, Glue Society, Andreas Nilsson, Aaron Stoller and Los Perez making some of the best work of their careers." Biscuit also says its recent work with Street Doctors and British heart Foundation and Saatchi & Saatchis "was particularly fulfilling. Both were an incredible partnership between our production team and Saatchis and both have the potential to make a huge impact in the real world."



Waitrose *The Perfect Gift*

02 Blink/Blinkink

blinkprods.com 2nd Floor 77 Dean St/ Tramways House 377 Camden Road, London t 020 7494 0747
managing partner Blink Paul Weston
managing partner Blink Industries Bart Yates
ceo Blink Industries James Bretton
credits *School's Back* by Dougal Wilson for Channel 4; *See it Differently* by Nicos Livesey for Uncommon/Britbox

Blink says that a "return to notable UK ads as part of our output" was a highlight in the past year. And there was some stand out work, including a welcome return for Dougal Wilson for his joyous *Educating Yorkshire* promo for 4Creative and Blinkink's stunning one-shot piece for Britbox.

Blink also points to the completion of several TV shows (*Goblin Solutions* for Channel 4 being one) as a highlight as was "our first feature film released to critical acclaim in cinemas worldwide" (that was *Peter Hujar's Day* directed by Ira Sachs starring Ben Whishaw and Rebecca Hall). There was also Blink's "expansion into fashion work for major fashion brands." Blink says that in commercials, it has been "a year of two halves. The first 6 months of 2025 were terribly quiet and difficult with a return to a more steady flow of work in the last six months."



Britbox *See it Differently*

03 Smuggler

smugglersite.com 2-3 Bourlet Close, London W1W 7BQ
 t 020 7636 7665
md Fergus Brown
md Lucy Kelly **ep** Tom Knight
credits *Engineered for Whatever* by Henry-Alex Rubin for adam&eveDDB/Columbia; *The Longest Run* by Tom Speers for Uncommon/Oban

There was a massive haul of awards for Smuggler in the past twelve months. The company won the British Arrows Production Company of the Year 2025, "with a pretty unusual and

quite overwhelming haul of 14 Gold, 7 Silver, and 4 Bronze arrows." Lucy Forbes took Director of the Year, with Libresse winning Commercial of the Year. Smuggler's home-grown Luca Chapman won the Young Arrows Producer of the Year and the company was AICP Most Awarded for the third time and AdAge Production Company of the Year for the second year running.



Columbia *Engineered for Whatever*

05 Love Song

lovesong.tv 1a Old Nichol St, London E5 0EX
md Shirley O'Connor **ep** Sara Wallace
HoP Lana Henry
credits *Master of Speed and Stability* by Daniel Wolfe for Mirimar/Beats; *Life Delivered* by Louis McCourt for Uncommon/Ocado

Love Song says that a highlight was Daniel Wolfe "making the epic Claude *Keep Thinking* work, as well as Beats *Master of Speed and Stability*." Another was launching Louis McCourt as a director with Ocado and "watching him go on to win almost

every pitch he's been on since." Love Song has continued to "mentor and grow talent from the ground up," which "remains a rewarding way to be in the business as we expand into longform, with films in development with BFI and Film 4 in 2025." Love Song says 2025 was often a "slog" But there was "some incredibly creative work out there" where it was "brought in earlier in the writing process."



Beats *Master of Speed and Stability*

04 Academy

academyfilms.com 16 West Central St, London WC1A 1JJ
 t 020 7395 4155
co-owners/eps Medb Riordan, Simon Cooper
director new business George Floyd
credits *Some Glide* by GRANDMAS for Homeground/Beats; *Did Somebody Say* by Romain Chassaing for McCanns/Just Eat

Academy celebrated its 40th Birthday in 2025 "with a party, an event at the ICA and the launch of 'Short Form: 40 Years of Music Videos, Ads and The Art of Moving Images.'" The APA Show

marked 25 years too and "we were delighted to be named the most awarded production company in their history, with 69 films selected over the years, far beyond our competitors." At Cannes, the Saatchi and Saatchi New Creators Showcase revealed "more Academy directors have featured in the show on its 35th anniversary than any other production company."



Beats *Some Glide*

06 = Magna Studios

magnastudios.com 1 Surrey Street London WC2R 2ND
Founder/ceo Davud Karbassioun
ep Joel Spencer
HoP Alistair Payne-James
credits *Burberry Autumn Wear* by John Madden for Burberry; *EE Christmas Brand Film* by Phoebe Arnstein for Saatchi & Saatchi/EE

2025 was only Magna Studios' second year in operation "but already we have scaled to a global, profitable business with tent-pole projects across commercials (Burberry to Burger King), music videos

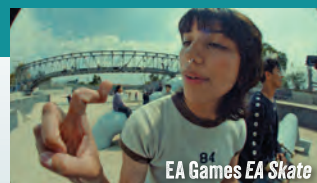
(A\$AP Rocky), documentary (Oasis) and scripted (Straight Circle) Film & TV." Says Magna, "if 2024 was about arrival, 2025 was about impact." Over the past 12 months, Magna "delivered work for 51 brands, 38 agencies (including Wieden+Kennedy, Saatchi & Saatchi, BBH, Mother, Leo Burnett, Fold7 and VCCP) and 11 music artists, created by 27 different filmmakers across our roster."



Burberry *Autumn Wear*

06 = Riff Raff

riffrafffilms.tv 33 Boundary Street, London E2 7JQ
t 0203 383 0193
global managing partners Tracey Cooper, Natalie Arnett, Jane Tredget
credits *EA Skate* by The Sacred Egg for Uncommon NY/EA Games; *Marks & Spencer Autumn Let's Go* by Tanu Muino for Mother/M&S



EA Games *EA Skate*

talent and keeping the roster fresh with directors such as Leve Kuhl, Ehsan and Holly Hunter." Animation output grew "with the wonderful stop frame film for The Sacred Egg for Kaiser Permanente and collaborating on the ambitious *Clash Royale* film with Mischa Rozema."

Highlights for Riff Raff this time include "signing new

08 Business Club

businessclub.tv
ep Tom Berendsen **credits** *Gravy* by Vedran Rupic for Mother/KFC; *Better Your Story* by Tom Noakes for BBH/Experian



KFC *Gravy*

Business Club picked up the Campaign director of the year for Vedran Rupic along with commercial of the year for his *Gravy* spot for KFC and won second best production company of the year too. Business Club also produced

its first US commercials with Tom Emmerson's Depop, and Jim Hosking's Super Bowl commercial for Skittles. Business Club says it's been "focusing on developing relationships with new agencies outside of our circle, and also looking into opportunities with creative brands."

09 MJZ

mjz.com 45A Brewer Street, London W1F 9UE **t** 020 7434 4000
md Lindsay Turnham
HoP Lucy Jones
head of sales/ep Clive Olamiju
credits *EA The Club is Yours* by Gary Freedman for Uncommon/Electronic Arts; *Playstation It All Happens on PS5* by Nicolai Fuglsig for Adam & Eve DDB/Playstation



EA *The Club is Yours*

brilliant people and creating award winning spots," as well as extending the customer base and "strengthening relationships with brands directly." But this past year, says MJZ, "continues to be a tough and competitive market with creative ambition, timelines and budgets not always aligning."

For MJZ, highlights this year have included "working with

10 Rogue

roguefilms.co.uk 19, 20 Great Sutton St, London EC1V 0DR **t** 020 3879 8000
md/ep/co owner Kate Taylor **ep/co owner** James Howland **head of talent/REBEL ep** Charlie Roberson **credits** *Harmoniser* by Tim Bullock for Adam & Eve DDB/Twix; *The Unexpected Guest* by Sam Brown for NCA/Sainsbury's



Twix *Harmoniser*

Rogue started out 2025 with its planned change of ownership, as co-founder Charlie Crompton, put his succession plan into place, and handed the ownership of

Rogue over to his business partners of five years, Kate Taylor and James Howland. New signings this year include Danny Sangra, Andrew De Zen and Thomas Cervenca and Sam Brown again got the Sainsbury's Christmas spot. Seeing Georgi Banks-Davies direct *The Night Manager 2* was another highlight.

11 Prodco

prodco.xyz 148-150 Curtain Road London EC2A 3AT
md Jon Adams **HoP** Sam Levene
credits *Be the Problem* by Leigh Powis for Uncommon/Under Armour; *Scary Good* by Ian Pons Jewell for W+K London/Nike



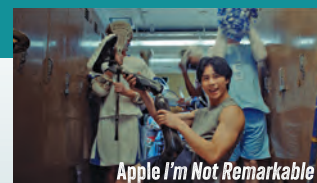
Nike *Scary Good*

to create remarkable and fresh output." Prodco says the "biggest overall highlight has been the rise and success of our young and talented roster. Believing in the talent is what drives us as a company, but seeing them level up and succeed, directing major campaigns means we are doing the right thing."

Nike's major global campaign *Scary Good* was entrusted to Prodco "a hugely fulfilling experience, and an opportunity for brand, agency and production company to embrace new talent

12 Somesuch

somesuch.co 4 Wilkes St, London E1 6QF **t** 020 3487 1270
co founders Sally Campbell, Tim Nash **md/ep** Tash Tan **credits** *I'm Not Remarkable* by Kim Gehrig for Apple; *Made of Here* by Dan Emmerson for BBC Creative/BBC



Apple *I'm Not Remarkable*

An award winning year for Somesuch including a second Emmy nod, a #4 on AdAge's Production A-List, four Cannes Lions (plus eight more nominations) and a UKMVA.

Somesuch's second feature, Harris Dickinson's *Urchin*, was a critical hit and a stills division and a publishing arm were launched. New directors joined and Tash Tan was upped to md. Kim Gehrig had another standout year with work for Apple, Burberry, John Lewis and Nike's first Super Bowl ad in 27 years.

13 Iconoclast

iconoclast.tv 25 Woodseer St, London E1 5HA **t** 020 3141 9107
md Jean Mougins **md** Guy Rolfe
ep Kaiya Taffel **credits** *Where Love Lives* by Jonathan Alric for Saatchi & Saatchi/John Lewis; *Manchild* by Vania & Muggia for volaramgmt/Sabrina Carpenter



Sabrina Carpenter *Manchild*

There were "major wins across film, advertising, and music videos," says Iconoclast, with the year's "most sought-after brief," the John Lewis

Christmas ad, directed by Jonathan Alric. Iconoclast "continued to drive the cultural conversation," in music video with Vania & Muggia for Sabrina Carpenter, which got both a Grammy nod and Best Pop Video at the MVAs and A\$AP Rocky's "Tailor Swif" was named Video of the Year.

15 Stink

stinkfilms.com 64-66 Redchurch St, London E2 7DP **t** 020 7462 4000
president Daniel Bergmann
global head of film Blake Powell
md Andrew Levene
credits *A Lovely Day* by Tom Green for AMV/Guinness; *There's No Place Like ITV* by Felix Brady for ITV Creative/ITV



ITV *There's No Place Like ITV*

It was a year of "strong creative, commercial and cultural momentum," says Stink. The company deepened its "long-

term relationship with LEGO" and Jack Hilton was upped to Head of New Business "driving increased sales." New faces joined the roster in India Rose Harris, Claryn Chong, Ayappa, Ramez Silyan and Anna Van Der Velde "broadening both our stylistic range and our capacity to deliver diverse creative work."

17 Knucklehead

knucklehead.tv 28 Cowper St London EC2A 4AS **t** 020 7292 7950
managing partners Tim Katz, Matthew Brown **HoP** Francis Mildmay-White **credits** *Two Left Feet* by Martin de Thurah for VCCP/Allwyn; *No Taste Like Home* by Maceo Frost for BBH/Ribena



Ribena *No Taste Like Home*

Knucklehead says "launching our director-led AI division AIRHEAD and picking up new contracts immediately, whilst simultaneously increasing

the number of traditional film shoots across both the Knucklehead and Epoch rosters was very encouraging. We see the two worlds complimenting each other as we move forward into a new era." Awards came in too including D&AD, Shots, British Arrows, Creative Circle APA and SXSW.

14 Merman London

hellomerman.com 32 Rathbone Place London W1T 1JJ **t** 0208 079 0140
partner/md/eps Spencer Dodd, Siobhan Murphy **HoP** Alicia Farren
credits *The Inspection* by Declan Lowney for Joyful & Triumphant/Warburtons; *Van Wife* by Rachel Stubbings for Women's Aid



Women's Aid *Van Wife*

Rachel Stubbings' work for Women's Aid was "a particular highlight," says Merman "having swept up at all the award shows throughout the year. Not only is

it particularly satisfying to see a great new female comedy talent emerging on our roster and for everyone's collective efforts to be rewarded; it's amazing to see how effective branded entertainment can be as a vehicle for brands." Merman's long form continued to thrive with *Amandaland*, *Bad Sisters*, *Youth* and *Vladimir*.

16 Object & Animal

objectanimal.com 1 Helmsley Place London E8 5SB
t 020 3633 7665
ep / Partners Dominic Thomas, Morgan Clement
credits *Underdogs: Blue Screen of Death* by Bertie Ellwood for Apple; *Cash App* by Aidan Zamiri for Cash App



Apple *Underdogs: BSOD*

This year saw Object & Animal building on its direct to client partnerships with Apple, Netflix, Cash App, Nike and Balenciaga

from directors including Bertie Ellwood, Amber Grace Johnson, Mark Jenkinson and Aidan Zamiri. That produced "work defined by deep creative alignment and collaboration rather than transactional production" and demonstrated its "ability to deliver fully co-authored, culturally resonant work."

18 Arts and Sciences

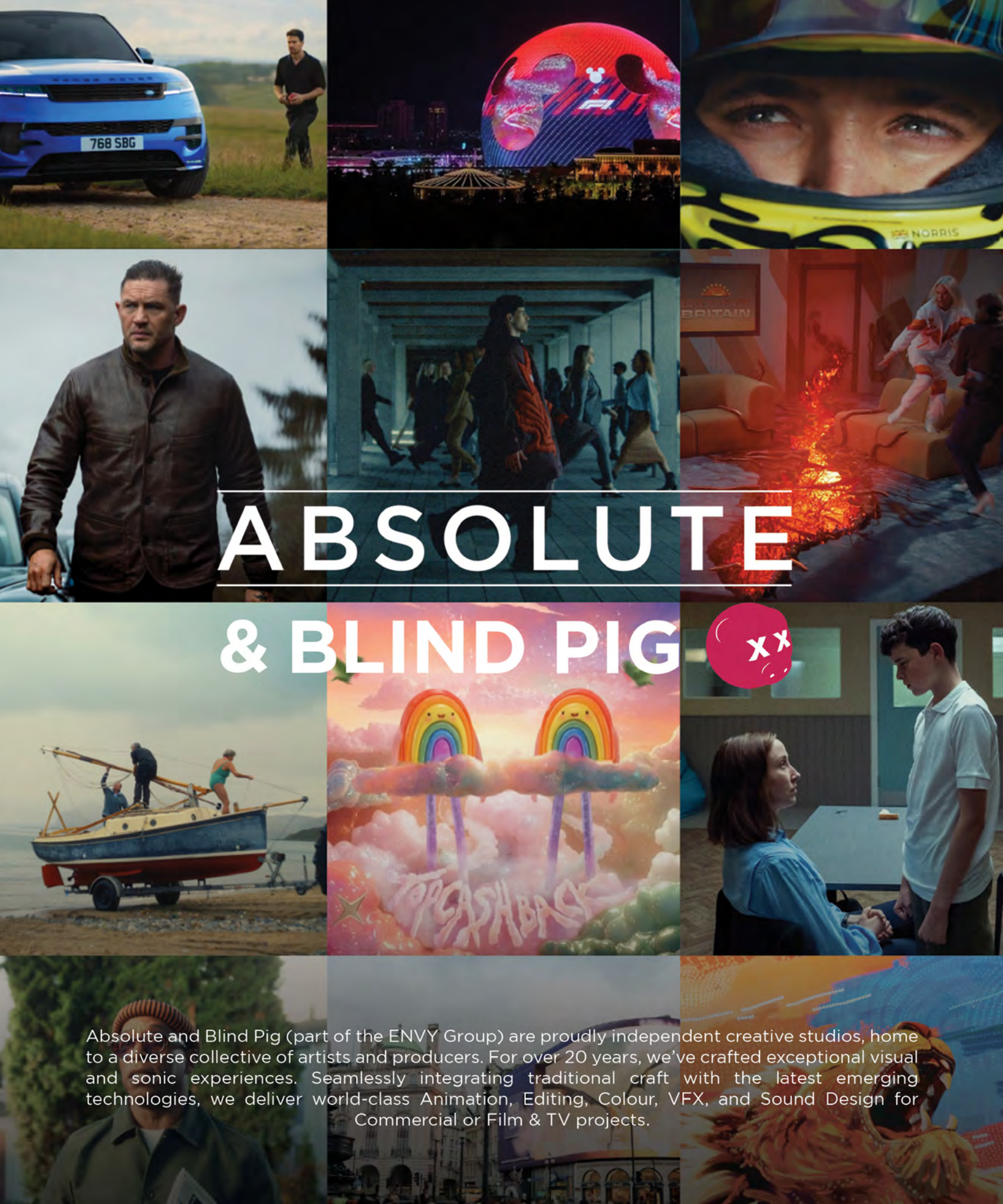
artsandsciences.com 5 Windmill St, London W1T 2JA **t** 020 8087 2966
md/ep James Bland **ep** Sadie Ward
head of sales/senior producer Megan Wright **credits** *Style it Out* by Alex Prager for BBH/F&F; *Love Actually / Pixel Actually* by Mike Warzin for Ogilvy/Google



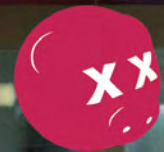
Google *Pixel Actually*

2025 was a "landmark year" for Arts & Sciences and "the strongest since the London office was founded in 2020. We delivered our highest

billings to date alongside an exceptional level of creative output across multiple global brands." Beyond commercials, Arts and Sciences expanded its long-form footprint too. "Our feature film *Lurker* premiered at Sundance and sold to MUBI following a competitive bidding process."



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19 Nexus Studios

nexusstudios.com 25 Chart St London N1 6FA **co-founder/coo** Chris O'Reilly **co-founder/ceo** Charlotte Bavasso **md** James Tomkinson **credits** *Upside Down* by Fx Goby for Pablo London/King; *App O'Clock* by Laurie Rowan for +61 and *Bear Meets Eagle* on Fire/Telstra

This "was the year storytelling expanded," says Nexus. "Our work moved across TV, cinema, playable films, architectural screens, multi-format character worlds and emerging production tools, each project opening a new space for how stories can be made and experienced."



20 Mindseye

mindseye.co 52-54 Rosebery Ave, London EC1R 4RP **t** 0203 007 3600 **md** Hughie Phillips **eps** Charlie Phillips, Debbie Ninnis **credits** *Unexpected Guests* by Carl Sundemo for Pablo/Deliveroo; *Come Out And Play* by Andrew Gaynord for BBH/Paddy Power

We had a best year ever in 2025," says Mindseye, "building on the momentum from 2024. Over the past year, we've doubled down on what we're known for; comedy and performance-led storytelling, rather than trying to be everything to everyone."



21 RSA Films

rsafilms.com/uk 42-44 Beak Street London W1F 9RH **t** 020 7437 7426 **ceo** Luke Scott **UK md** Josie Juneau **US md** Luke Ricci **credits** *Pikapocalypse* by Marie Schuller for Pika; *Action Hero* by Jake Scott for All State

Change at RSA as Global MD Kai Hsiung retired after 34 years with the company "ushering in a new chapter" under UK md, Josie Juneau. Alongside ads, there was the BFI x Ridley Scott season at the Southbank, a Sundance premiere for the Billie Jean King doc, a graphic novel and *Alien: Earth* was a Disney hit.



22 Spindle

spindle.co 46 Charlotte Road London EC2A 3PD **md/ep/partner** Stitch Richardson **ep** Adam Javes **credits** *The Best of Rivals* by Molly Burdett for The Midnight Club/Adidas; *Our House Is Not A Home* by Milo Blake for Dude/Shelter

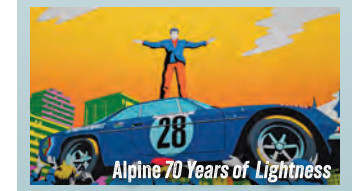
In 2025 Spindle became B Corp certified. "It feels incredible to be able to say that. It's taken us the best part of three years to get here, but the journey has been just as important as the end result in terms of what we've learned. We wanted the business to reflect our personal values more closely."



23 Partizan

partizan.com 5 Long St London E2 8GS **md** Jenny Beckett **coo** Rob Appleyard **HoP** Ella More O'Ferrall **credits** *Métiers D'art 2026* by Michel Gondry for Chanel; *70 Years of Lightness* by Antoine Bardou-Jacquet for BETC/Alpine

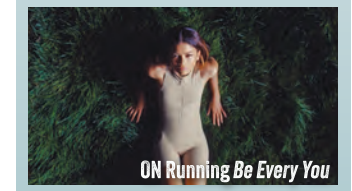
The focus this year has been on "strengthening the roster and expanding the scope of what we produce and support." New directors came in "broadening the range of work we can offer" and there's been more longer-form and TV development, as well as long form music content and tour visuals.



24 Anonymous Content UK

anonymouscontent.com 16 Southam St London W10 5PH **md** Tor Fitzwilliams **ep** Shion Hayasaka **HoP** Sophie Hubble **credits** *Essential for Living* by thirty two for VCCP/O2; *Be Every You* by Bardia Zeinali for ON running

Anonymous Content added to the UK roster with Frances O'Sullivan and Samba and saw The Reids video for RAYE up for best video at the MOBOs. There was all the videos (Autumn de Wilde) and artwork for Florence and the Machine's new album. And Dylan of thirty two's first feature, *The Thing with Feathers*, was released.



25 Kode Media

kodemedia.com 41 Mitchell St London EC1V 3QD **t** 020 8133 5633 **ceo** Alex Harman **ep** Jack Goodwin **head new business** Dan Mallerman **credits** *Control Your World* by Jon E Price for Nothing; *The Mix* by Peter Franklyn Banks for HexClad

Kode says the past year "saw us further solidify our position as a creative and production partner for direct-to-client work, with client-led projects accounting for 50% of all jobs booked. This shift reflects growing trust in KODE's ability to support brands from early creative thinking through to final delivery."



26 Outsider

outsider.tv 12 Swan Yard London N1 1SD **t** 020 7636 6666 **ep** Otis Denison **partner** Bella Murray **credits** *Gift Happily Ever After* by DOM&NIC for VML/Hogarth/Boots; *Paperboy* by J Marlow for Thirty6/The Week

Outsider brought in new talent including CODA & Tara O'Callaghan "a step in the right direction for more content driven briefs, working in a less traditional, nimble and agile way but championing great creative and over delivering nonetheless." There was DOM&NIC's Xmas ad too, showing "they are still top of their game."



27 Radical Media

radicalmedia.com 22-24 Club Row London E2 7EY t 020 3319 6900
md/ep Ben Schneider **ep/sales** Jodie Brooks **credits** *Harman Kardon* by Dave Meyers for Havas London/Harman Kardon; *Boots Christmas 2024* by Dave Meyers for Hogarth/Boots UK

A big highlight was producing F1 doc *The Seat* for Netflix and WhatsApp, says Radical Media, and "2026 will prove to be a pivotal year, yet storytelling is here to stay - brands telling stories, brand entertainment, events and experiences are exciting areas we expect to thrive in."



28 Chief Productions

chief.tv MediaCity M50 2GY t 0161 832 6001 **ceo** Colin Offland **HoP** Tessa Hamilton **ep** Cris Mudge **credits** *A Place That Stays With You* by Yoni Weisberg for TBWA Manchester/Merlin - Gardaland; *The Power To Do* by Nicholas Schrunk for McCann IPG/Bentley

Chief hit its highest ever turnover "after a quarter of a century in business" while maintaining long-term client relationships and saw an "increase in the number of clients with in-house creative looking to partner directly with production companies."



29 Park Village

parkvillage.co.uk 1 Park Village East London NW1 7PX t 020 7387 8077
md Tom Webb **managing partner** Adam Booth **head new business** Chris Baker **credits** *There's No Message Heavier Than the One We Don't Send* by Harry Bradbeer for Ogilvy Berlin/Deutsche Telekom; *Turning Points* by Tom Gorst for Anomaly/Revolut

Park Village achieved B Corp status "which was the culmination of some serious efforts over the past 18 months and beyond that too." It made its first Christmas campaign too for Harry Bradbeer for T Mobile.



30 Drool Productions

droolprods.com 2 Leman St London E1W 9US **ep/founder** Genevieve Sheppard **director/founder** Freddie Powell **credits** *Don't Mask It, Mando It* by Jasper Cable Alexander for Mirimar US/ Mammoth Brands Mando; *Commute* by Freddie Powell for Mojo Supermarket/Chime

Highlights for Drool this time include strengthening the roster with Jasper Cable-Alexander and Oli Beale, "and promoting Tiffany Whitney Chang to director after years of assisting Freddie Powell, reflecting Drool's long-term commitment to nurturing talent."



just outside the top 30

A big thanks to the following companies who contributed to this year's survey but were just outside the top 30

34 Unit9

unit9.com 12 Swan Yard London N1 1SD t 020 7613 3330
head of talent Joe Meadows **ep** Andrew Davies **md** Adam Dolman **credits** *Gen 4* by Henrik Alm for Formula E; *Thirsty for More* by Virgil Ferragut for Pepsi co

31 ELEANOR

eleanor.co 10-11 Lower John Street, 2nd Floor London W1F 9EB
president Sophie Gold **HoP** Ayanna Hart **credits** *Kun Gets a New Phone* by Ariel Danziger for Verizon; *Every Point Counts* by Kelsey Taylor for Earnify; *Robot* by Clan for Cinemark

32 Dark Energy Films

darkenergyfilms.com 74 Margaret Street London W1W 8SU **md** Matt Brown **managing partner/head of finance** Lucy Brown **ep** Lauraine Bhuglah **credits** *A Racing Certainty* by Ben Tonge for Entain/Ladbroke's; *The Open Line* by David Stoddart for The Elephant Room/Vodafone

33 Jelly

thisisjelly.com 77 Dean St London W1D 3SH t 020 7323 3307
mds Charlie Sells, Nicki Field **co founder** Chris Page **credits** *Mental Health Is Health* by Leanne Rule for Paramount; *Snapsolutely Refreshing* by Matte Cooper for Deutsche LA/ Snapple

35 Vigilante

vigilante.group Balfour House, Great Titchfield St London W1W 7QA **md** Joe Elliott **ep** Cal Gordon **producer** Ash Whyte **credits** *In Darkness We Dare* by Chris Ranson for The & Partnership/Tottenham Hotspur; *Christmas Delivered* by That Jam for Exposure/ Debenhams

36 Quiet Storm

quietstorm.co.uk 8.G, The Leather Market, 11-13 Weston St London SE1 3ER
ceo/partner Rania Robinson **founder/ecd** Trevor Robinson OBE **HoP/partner** Emily Wolley **credits** *Seaside* by Seb Jamous for Haribo; *On the Beach x Paddy McGuinness* by Trevor Robinson OBE for On the Beach

37 Blue Zoo

blue-zoo.co.uk 10 Parkway, London NW1 7AA **head of short form and advertising** Damian Hook **head of short form and advertising production** Lizzie Hicks **new business ep** Nicky Flemming **credits** *Subway Surfers x Brawl Stars | Brawl Stars Showdown* by Dane Winn for SYBO Games; *Cans: The Machine* by Joe Kinch for Cans

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