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Ad of the Day: Canon Ron Howard asks for your photos to inspire a short film

By Noreen O'Leary

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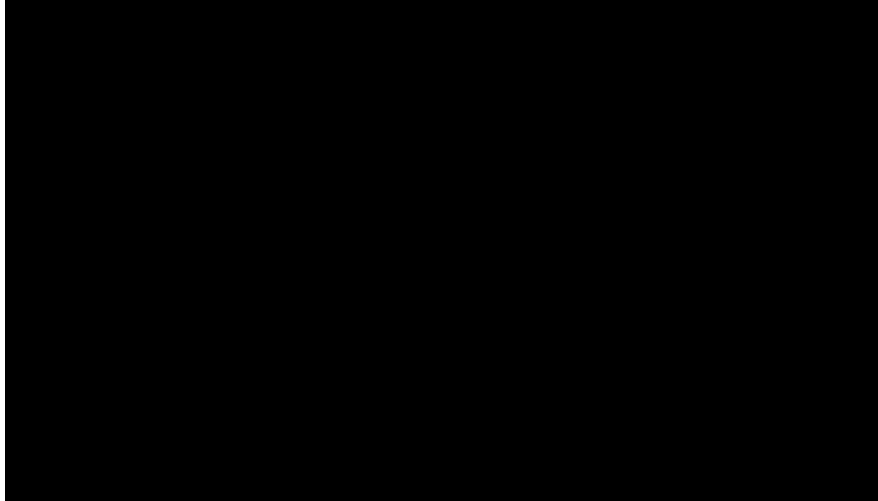
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Film director Ron Howard supposedly hasn't appeared in a TV ad since he was 18 and has never associated himself strongly with any brand. He's not one of those big-name directors who shoot lucrative commercials on the sly. So, why is he now fronting for Canon? Turns out the Oscar winner is curious about how consumers can help create art, the idea at the center of Canon's new "Project Imagin8ion" initiative, which launched on May 22. The site invites people to submit their photos, of which a handful will be selected to suggest eight film elements—setting, time, character, mood, relationship, goal, obstacle and the unknown. Using the eight images as inspiration, Howard will create a short film that will debut in New York next November, where Howard's photographic muses will meet

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the director. (In the first two days alone, Canon received more than 9,000 submissions. Consumers have until June 14 to provide images.) The campaign also has a strong social/photo-sharing component that includes YouTube, Flickr, Facebook and Twitter. While the underlying message supports Canon's digital SLR cameras, the execution takes the focus off the marketer and shifts it to user creativity. Not a bad idea to engender that product goodwill in an era where most consumers already carry a phone camera in their pockets.



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