

"Brands: Get ahead of a problem that matters to consumers" - Pete Khoury

By  Leigh Andrews

29 Jun 2018

With the successes of the global #CannesLions2018 celebrated and the local creative gaze now firmly focused on the Loeries in Durban in just 7 weeks' time, I caught up with Pete Khoury of TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris and the Creative Circle, for insights into what it takes for brands in the 21st century to get ahead.



Team TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris with their Gold Lion at Cannes Lions 2018.

SA ad agencies did well at the 65th Cannes Lions, with 21 wins overall.



#CannesLions2018: All the SA winners!

22 Jun 2018



TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris was key among those stellar local creatives, responsible for five of those SA Cannes Lions for two pieces of work - #BreakingBallet for the Joburg Ballet Company and the Flight Centre Youth & Adventure radio spots 'Date', 'Swim' and 'Festival'.

This comes hot after the agency's successes at the other top global creative award shows – D&AD and the One Show – with the annual Loeries Creative Week next on the creative recognition calendar.



TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris excels at the Creative Circle and One Show awards

TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris 4 Jun 2018



Here Khoury, in his role as both CCO at TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris and current chairperson at the Creative Circle, shares insights into creating campaign ideas that live for a long time and the secrets to successful brands' advertising in future...

■ **Talk us through the Cannes Lions 2018 experience from a South African perspective.**

Firstly, what a great year for South Africa! As expected, TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris did extremely well in the radio category; however, we also had a lot of great work that showed up in other interesting categories, such as the Social and Influencer Lions, Entertainment Lions, and Creative Data Lions.



#CannesLions2018: Entertainment Lions winners!

20 Jun 2018



Some great local work, from King James' *Uk'shona Kwelanga* WhatsApp drama series for Sanlam and Ogilvy Cape Town's 'Soccer Song for Change' for Carling Black Label picked up metal in numerous categories.

“ It's awesome to see this kind of work celebrated on a global stage. I hope the younger peeps out there get inspired by this and go on to create iconic, relevant, and local work of their own for some of our biggest brands. ”

■ **TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris was one of the country's most awarded ad agencies at Cannes Lions, bringing home Gold, campaign Gold, Silver, and campaign Silver. What does this level of global recognition mean to the agency and to your work going forward?**

In our industry, our competition is everything in culture. At TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris, we try to involve our brands in culture every day, through different techniques. Our work for Joburg Ballet's 'Breaking Ballet Series,' for example, linked them to the biggest stories of the day, while our Flight Centre Youth & Adventure radio spots imagine the world of the near future.

“ The work on Joburg Ballet is exactly the kind of work we strive to do brilliantly every day. It's engaging, contemporary, local, and 'never been done before'. To have it celebrated on an international stage gives massive encouragement to our team here. It shows that the more we play and experiment, the more disruptive our work will be. ”

Both of these campaigns are **authentic** and have a **very specific brand point of view**. This was a big trend at Cannes this year: Brands that have a clear purpose, which are playing around in culture, and are using tech in opportunistic ways – these are the brands that are succeeding and gaining momentum in their markets.

■ **Explain the creative work that went into your big winners last week. How do you approach work to ensure the end result is truly entertaining so it goes beyond just embedding the client's brand name in consumers' minds?**

For Joburg Ballet, young South Africans weren't coming to the ballet to be entertained. So we created entertainment specifically for them and placed it where they already were: the biggest trending conversations on social media.

By infiltrating popular culture, Joburg Ballet became part of that culture. They are being spoken about in conversations they

had never previously dreamed of. They have attracted a brand new audience, by taking ballet where it has never been before.

All this, whilst still staying true to the ballet art form and telling stories through dance.

The big difference this time is that these ballets lived on the platforms that their younger audience engages with, and not on a stage. And they were about the stories that everyone was interested in and not a traditional ballet story.



#NewCampaign: TBWA, Joburg Ballet launch series of little ballets inspired by big social stories

Jessica Tennant 6 Oct 2017



The campaign is 100% shaped by real-time data mined from social media. This is then artistically reinterpreted as a brand new ballet. This data also shapes the short film, in terms of mood, location, cinematography, and art direction.

The series has responded to a range of topics, from social issues such as gun control, LGBTQI+ rights in Africa, women abuse, and the Cape Town drought, to sport and blockbuster films such as *Black Panther*.



How has the advertising industry responded to serving the needs of the LGBTQ community?

Iza Grek 30 Jan 2018



Our work for Student Flights leverages the creative organising principle, 'Travel before it's not fun anymore', which we have nurtured for them over the years.

“ These particular radio commercials imagine a futuristic world. It's a world that is so highly regulated, legislated, and politically correct that doing even the simplest things, which we take for granted today, have become incredibly complicated and devoid of fun. ”

The commercials conclude with a message from Flight Centre Youth & Adventure, reminding young people to travel now, before it's not fun anymore.

We all want to create campaign ideas that live for a long period of time, that many different creatives can add onto, whilst still keeping integrity and remaining relevant.

■ **The Entertainment Lions in particular is a special category to win at Cannes. Share your views on the intersection between entertainment, branding, and advertising.**

The Entertainment Lions celebrates creativity that turns content into culture: Work that captivates in order to cut through, or communicates a brand message, or connects with consumers in a new way.

In the future, I believe that the 30" TV ad will still exist, but everything else will be some form of branded content.



"Transformation is a layered word that we need to use to its full potential" - new Creative Circle chair, Pete Khoury

Leigh Andrews 15 Mar 2018



The successful brands will be the ones who find fresh ways to create content that draws people in rather than creating ads that interrupt an experience.

This way of producing content provides endless opportunities to remain relevant, current, and appropriate because the channel and purpose is forever changing with culture.

“ In this hyper-connected society, consumers have access to brands at every touch point so consistent brand behaviour is needed. ”

This category of communication is in its infant stages and the future is filled with opportunity.

■ **What can brave clients/brands, such as these, teach others when it comes to allowing creative freedom?**

Marc Pritchard, chief brand officer at Procter & Gamble or P&G – the world's biggest ad spender, as well as a speaker at Cannes Lions 2018 – summed up the marketers' concerns at the moment:

“ ...I would say the biggest trend is mass disruption and the need to completely reinvent how we build our brands...

Seventy percent of consumers say ads are annoying, and they don't believe what ads say. Retail is being disrupted by e-commerce, direct to consumer start-ups are attacking every big company, as well as retailers... ”

Cannes Lions 2018 Entertainment jury president, Debbi Vandeven, says:

“ I think the industry is blurry. You used to know exactly who your competitor set was, and now I would say you have no idea. The competition is absolutely everywhere – clients are bringing stuff in-house, publishing companies have their own staff, directors are taking a lot direct to client. It can be really exciting to be able to do a lot of different things, but at the same time, really challenging for clients too, because they aren't exactly sure where they should be spending their money. It gets confusing in the market – how do they reach consumers? It can be very exciting for an agency that wants to do a lot of different things, it can also be challenging for an agency that hasn't evolved to do a lot of different things. ”

We are in uncharted territory here, and the brands that are **experimental, human**, and have an **iterative way of working** are seeing the results.

Brands in the 21st century must try to pick a lane, to have a point of view, and must try to get ahead of a problem that matters to their consumers. Their ethics can become currency. Many brands need to find their distinctive voice, and then create compelling, relevant content that draws people in for more.

Seems we're in for a real creative smorgasbord as we head into the final half of the year. Check in on our [Loeries Creative Week](#) special section and be sure to follow [Khoury](#), [TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris](#) and the [Creative Circle](#) on Twitter for the latest updates.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at [@Leigh_Andrews](#).

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