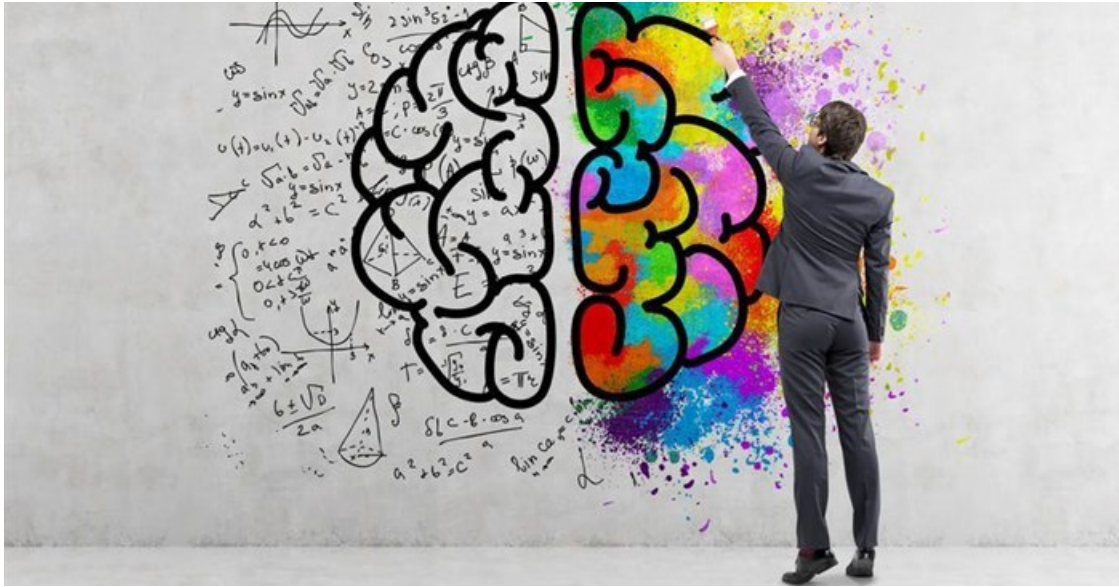


# UN World Creativity Day: What is creativity today?

By  Danette Breitenbach

21 Apr 2023

There may be no universal understanding of creativity, says the United Nations (UN). "The concept is open to interpretation from artistic expression to problem-solving in the context of economic, social and sustainable development."



Source © Ismagilov [123rf](#) The 21 April is the UN World Creativity Day

To raise the awareness of the role of creativity and innovation in all aspects of human development, the UN designated 21 April as World Creativity and Innovation Day.

So what does creativity mean in our world today? *Bizcommunity* asked some of South Africa's creatives for their opinion.

## A healthy dose of 'Wow, I wish we'd done that!'

*Pete Case, CEO & creative chairman, The Ogilvy South Africa Group*

"Great creativity in our industry today, needs to be impactful. And we believe that impact increasingly takes place at the intersections of things.

"By example, where technology seamlessly intersects with real-world experiences, or where brand storytelling intersects

with data and personalised media – all with people and the end audience at the core.

“Signals and measures of impact and creative success today, are less about impressions, but more about how many people choose to truly engage and then take action with the brand - or to proactively share positively with their peers. The added layer of impact assessment when we see another agency’s work in market, is always healthy dose of ‘Wow, I wish we’d done that!’”



21 April: Celebrating World Creativity and Innovation Day

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## An exciting era of endless creative opportunities

*Roanna Williams, chief creative officer at Net#workBBDO & Creative Circle chairperson*

“Creativity is a force that inspires. In today’s modern and pretty messed up world, it’s the one skill we still have to effect businesses, economies and culture.

“With tech evolving so rapidly, we are moving into a creative revolution. The dinosaur way is being challenged with faster, more effective ways of doing things.

“This more efficient way of working, ultimately should aid creative thinkers, giving them more time to focus on what they’re good at. So many new doors are opening every day and we are definitely heading into an exciting era of endless creative opportunities.”

## Still about interesting observations, intuition and courage

*Nkanyezi Masango, group executive creative director at Accenture Song/ founder at Blackboard*

“For the most part, creativity today is not any different from creativity a century ago. It’s still about interesting observations, intuition and courage.

“The only thing that keeps changing is the tools we use to apply our creativity. Let’s keep the fundamentals alive and have fun with all the new tools at our disposal.”

## "I once used a blow-up doll to solve a security challenge"

*Dale Hefer, CEO Integrated Marketing Council (IMC)*

“Creativity doesn’t begin and end in the studio! Innovation must apply to broader business challenges and opportunities, and it is the job of everyone in the business – from the top down, in every department, to think creatively.

“I once used a blow-up doll to solve a security challenge. I blew it up and strapped it into my passenger seat. Duly named Percy, he looked like a burly colleague who helped prevent traffic light attacks while I was delivering advertising material alone at night.

“It was back then that I realised there is no rule book for problem-solving. Out-of-the-Box thinking is always in fashion!”

## The most creative ideas are the simplest

*Baxolise Mfidi, VMLY&R content director*

“Creativity is the process of mining ideas and turning them into something that exists in the world. I don’t think it solely relates to art, in fact, any role where you can solve a problem using creative thinking is the mark of creativity. At its best, creativity yields innovation and solutions to our problems.

“The most “creative” of ideas that have impacted society have often also been the simplest; think Apple and its approach to their operating system. In this example, you could almost easily trace the opportunity to solve a problem that would make using the mobile phone easier for people, and how that resulted in the innovation of smartphone that has since dominated its category and continued to innovate into other related gadgets.

“While we may not all create a Macintosh in our lifetime, it doesn’t mean we can’t access a level of creativity that makes our day-to-day job and life easier. From creating a new system of doing things to pitching an idea that addresses a human truth, creativity is available to us all.”

## **Have a gorilla drumming out ‘In the Air Tonight’**

*Rory MacRobert, digital partner M&C Saatchi Abel*

"Creativity today means what it did when the printing press was invented, or when live TV rolled into homes across the globe for the first time: It’s the single most powerful point of distinction.

“Each development in mass communication makes the world a smaller place, and with that comes a sea of mediocracy. How many teen vampire romance novels can you read? How many amateur cooking shows can you really watch?

“Use the internet for a day and you know all about the thousands of copy-paste brands echoing identical messages in tried-and-tested ways, and ironically, every one of them are hoping it’s their message that magically catches your prized three-second attention.

“So how do you do it? Have a gorilla drumming out ‘In the Air Tonight’. Have a Geico pre-roller ad that collapses the longer you watch it. Have a man parachute from space for the first time.

“That’s how.”

## **On the cusp of an extremely creative period**

*Dan Berkowitz, group executive creative director: HaveYouHeard*

“Creativity is the process of bringing new ideas into the world. At its best, what comes out of that pursuit is an ability to connect on an emotional level with people and inspire thoughts and actions that create ripples in culture.

“Historically, the most powerful creative movements have come as a response to the time and context in which they were born - necessity is the mother of invention.

“In the world we are living in today, there’s a myriad of never-before-seen drivers, from the global climate crisis to AI’s new-found and as yet unknown abilities to change the way we create and even create autonomously in its own right.

“I think we are on the cusp of an extremely creative period in human history and one that has the potential to change the world in significant ways - perhaps the most drastic shift since the birth of the internet.”



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Danette Breitenbach 29 Jul 2022



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## A new and open artistic age

*Jesse Sharkie, design director – Boomtown*

"As a result of how fast we live our lives nowadays, levels of creativity are constantly changing and consistently improving. There are always new tools, new tricks and new mindsets being thrown into how and what we do as creatives.

"The once-closed circle of creatively educated people doing this as a career has fallen away and given rise to a multitude of easy-access tutorials and tools to get you into the game.

"Greater access has lifted the level of excellence and experimentation from many different creative avenues, allowing for more creative collaborations and fresh perspectives on possible solutions.

"Creatives who are self-motivated and possess the ability to adapt will benefit most in this new and open artistic age."

## An ever-evolving technological landscape

*Chat GPT & Chris Fouché, executive creative director, Rapt Creative*

"As a creative individual in today's world, I'm continually inspired by the ever-evolving technological landscape, which grants me access to cutting-edge tools and platforms for self-expression and creation.

"This expansion of creativity now encompasses digital and virtual domains, enabling me to explore computer-generated art, virtual reality, and even the fascinating world of AI intelligence."

## Creating meaningful connections

*Thibedi Meso, CCO, Brave Group*

"Brand creativity in the African context involves developing innovative and culturally relevant strategies, messages, and experiences that resonate with the local market; consider the unique media landscape and consumer behaviour, and contribute positively to local communities and societies.

“It is about creating meaningful connections building brand loyalty and driving business success while being mindful of the cultural, social, and economic context.”

## ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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