

#BehindtheSelfie with... Ahmed Tilly

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

24 Apr 2019

This week, we go behind the selfie with Ahmed Tilly, chief creative officer (CCO) at FCB Joburg.



Tilly captions this: "Never finished."

1. Where do you live, work and play?

I live in the south, I work in the north and I play in midfield.

2. What's your claim to fame?

Wearing Converse All Stars to work for 23 years. Not the same pair, though.

3. Describe your career so far.

I'm a writer by trade. I've written everything from infomercials to ads and from brochures to tweets.

My career has been very good to me in that it has exposed me to some of the most interesting, most fearless brands and people. It has taught me how to think, “unthink”, persuade and create. My career has afforded me the opportunity to meet the smartest, most open and powerful minds in the country.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

Saleha, Riyaadh, Mohammed, Taskeen, ideas, coffee and football.

5. What do you love about your industry?

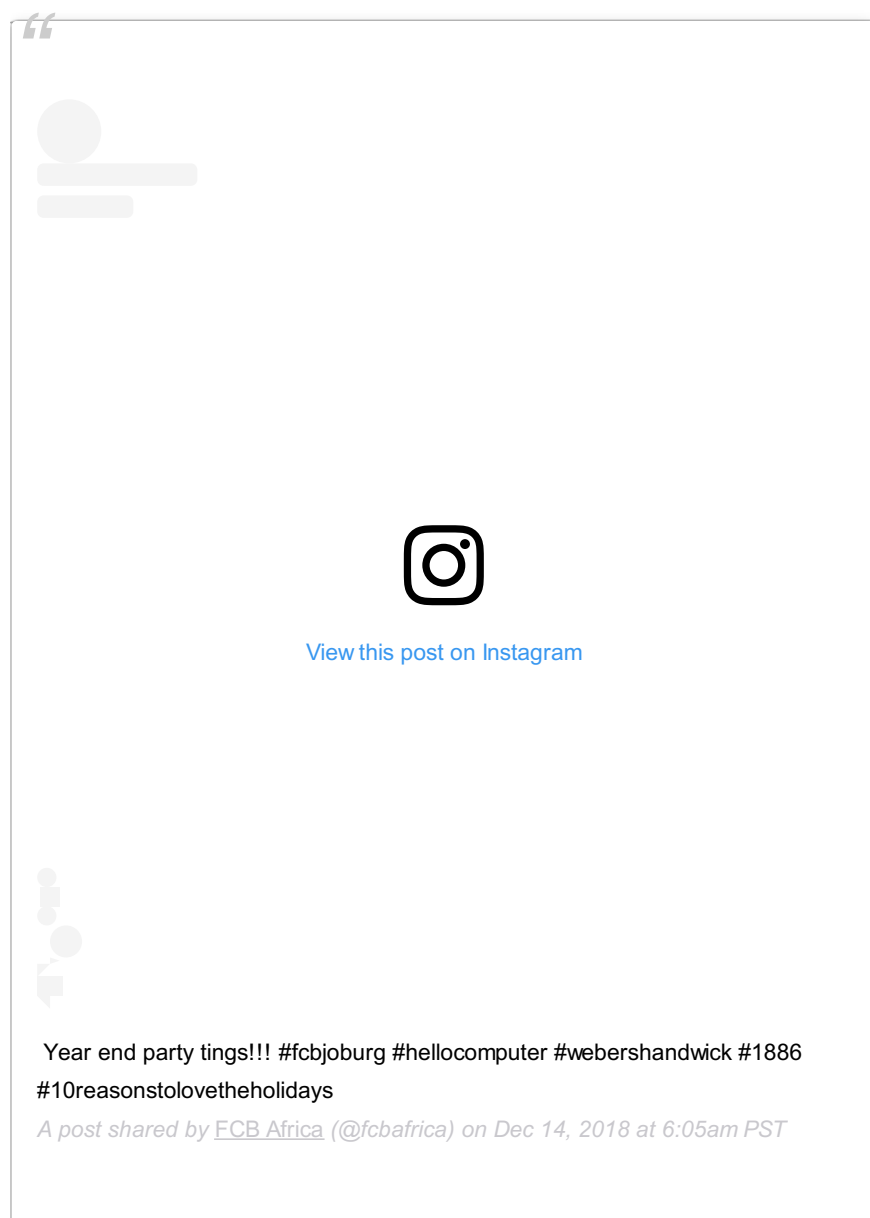
It is the one industry in South Africa where anything is possible.

“ You can feature five of the most notorious dictators in the world in an ad, reverse a car from Johannesburg to Cape Town, persuade the entire country to put the South African flag on the mirrors of their cars and create a 10-minute short film that shows the world how beautiful our country is. ”

Which other industry will let you do that?

6. Describe your average workday, if such a thing exists.

There's nothing average about a day in advertising, but a great work day is a day spent with brave ideas.



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The best days are the days when clients trust your experience and your opinion, recognise a great idea put in front of them and help make it happen.

7. What are the tools of your trade?

My curiosity, my experiences and my unrelenting nature to never be satisfied.
I also can't do without a pen and paper.

8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

The ones having the most fun at work. It shows in the ads they produce. And the ones winning awards on real work.

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9. List a few pain points the industry can improve on.

The pace of transformation in historically white agencies is too slow.

Lack of support for black-owned agencies and suppliers.



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Jessica Tennant 11 Apr 2019



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Brett Morris 25 Jan 2019



Creativity has become undervalued. Braveness and big ideas have been scientifically proven to make brands more profitable, yet creativity does not get the respect it deserves.

And finally, the biggest pain in the ass are the cheaters, who win awards for work that was designed exclusively for the award shows.

10. What are you working on right now?

People. Helping people find their creative voices.

11. Tell us some of the buzzwords floating around in your industry at the moment, and some of the catchphrases you utter yourself.

I think our industry hears things like “It’s too risqué”, “Will the market get it?”, “Research says...” and “Our target market is quite literal” too often.

These are the things that are killing creativity and driving scores of talented people out of advertising.

12. Where and when do you have your best ideas?

When I’m not thinking about them.

13. What’s your secret talent/party trick?

Disappearing.

14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

I love gadgets.

15. What would we find if we scrolled through your phone?

“To do” lists.

16. What advice would you give to newbies hoping to crack into the industry?

There’s no empire for you, unless you work harder than your parents did.

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**Interviewed by [Leigh Andrews](#).*

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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