

# "You have to be pretty damn disruptive to grab anyone's attention in 2018" - Karabo Denalane

By Leigh Andrews

2 Jul 2018

With the successes of the global #CannesLions2018 celebrated and the local creative gaze now firmly focused on the Loeries in Durban in just 6 weeks' time, I caught up with Karabo Denalane, CEO of TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris and board member of the ACA, for insights into why 'being safe' is no longer an option when managing brands.



Team TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris representing SA 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 Denalane, in his role as CEO at TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris and ACA board member, shares insights into what it takes to navigate this new world, where the successful creatives are those working at the speed of culture to co-create brand stories...



ACA announces board of directors for 2018/2019

15 Jun 2018



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

The Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity is something every person in the creative industry should try attend, at least once in their lives.

It truly is special, and I'm not only talking about seeing the work but from an inspiration point of view, very few platforms come close to this.

**Karabo Denalane**  
about 6 years ago

A few pieces that have stood out for me here at Cannes!

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Cannes puts you among the best in the world, in every field imaginable, and no cost is spared in ensuring that the experience lives up to its promise.

As a member of team SA, it was even more special to be recognised on this world stage.

“ It was amazing to reconnect with old friends who have made tremendous strides in their respective fields, across the globe. It was so surreal listening to Manthe Ribane performing in Setswana at the Cannes official closing party, and then to hear a bunch of South Africans singing ‘Shosholoz’ at the South Africa party on the same night. We were definitely making Mzansi proud! ”

■ **Spine chills! 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?**  
Our Cannes performance was the validation of a vision that we set for ourselves in 2016. This vision, to be the cultural engine of 21st century business, forced us to rethink, unlearn, and actively build a business geared for a time where you have to be pretty damn disruptive to grab anyone’s attention.



#Newsmaker: Karabo Denalane on advertising in such a time as this

Jessica Tennant 14 Nov 2017



The phrase, ‘our competition is everything in culture’, is the perfect summation of the landscape we find ourselves operating in. That’s what makes these wins so special, as they are culturally relevant, engaging, entertaining, and had a massive influence on the audiences for which they were intended.

■ **That’s for sure! 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?**

I think Khoury said it all here. The only thing I would add is that its clear that more and more of this type of work is impacting consumers as it naturally fits in with their interests, passions, likes, and puts a smile on their faces when it pops up on their timelines.



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

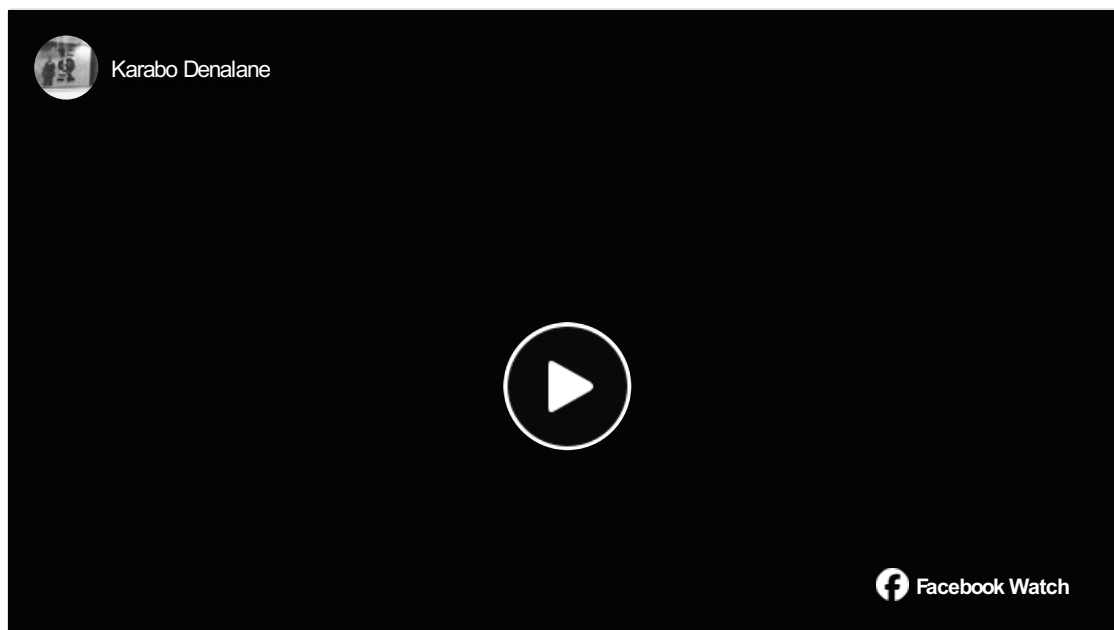
Leigh Andrews 29 Jun 2018



All we are doing here is listening to their views through social listening, scrubbing the internet, and working at the speed of culture to co-create these brand stories and platforms.

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

**Advertising is entertainment.** Think about it, when you ask someone in South Africa about their favourite ads, more often than not it's the ones that made them laugh or put a smile on their face that they will always remember.



So entertainment for me has always been rooted in advertising, come to think of it, my memorable ads are the ones that entertained me.

“ Today, we see people making their own content and making the internet a pretty funny place to visit, essentially creating the need for entertainment in branding and advertising even greater in order to make a meaningful connection with consumers. ”

■ **Spot on. What can brave clients and brands then teach others when it comes to allowing creative freedom?**  
I don't think it's about being brave anymore, as being brave implies that you are taking a risk and, nowadays, with the data we have at our fingertips, we can take the anxiety out of the work we create as the data.

D-Live, as we call it, gives us a clear view of where, how, and what to serve, and combining that with powerful storytelling will have a defining impact on brand performance.

“ The Samsung CMO mentioned that 48 brands have dropped off of the top 100 brands list in the past 10 years. Who would've thought that some of the brands that replaced them didn't even exist 10 years ago? ”

So there you have it, being safe is no longer an option when managing brands as we are constantly disrupted as people, brands, and businesses.



Disruption philosophy and what makes it meaningful

TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris 13 Dec 2017



With regard to creative freedom, I believe that it essentially has to be a partnership between clients, agencies, and now consumers. We have a saying at TBWA that 'we are a radically open creative collective', which means we have to embrace other views, talent, partnerships, and more in order to navigate this new world.



TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris Johannesburg celebrates the Loeries success

TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris 20 Aug 2017



*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 [Denalane](#), [TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris](#) and the [ACA](#) 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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