

Favourite African adverts - Wes Phelan

Creative director Wes Phelan picks SABC1 'PFJones' as his favourite African ad on Africa.film.



PF Jones/SABC1.

Africa.film is a new site showcasing Africa's best videos, as curated by Africa's best filmmakers and the world's best film festivals and websites.

Since moving to New York to join Johannes Leonardo agency in 2013, Phelan has worked across a number of the agency's accounts, most notably on adidas Originals and TripAdvisor.

His work on these brands has resulted in significant business growth and impact, as well as a successful international awards tally with multiple Cannes Lions, including the first Grand Prix awarded in the new Music Entertainment category in 2017 for the Adidas Strikethru campaign.

Most recently he has focused his efforts on the adidas Originals business, where he currently oversees all global creative communication for the brand. In Adweek's 2017 top 100, Phelan was recognised as one of the top 22 creative directors "who is completely reimagining what's possible". He has also been featured in the Cannes Game Changers book and exhibition, celebrating 60 years of advertising that has transformed the landscape of the creative industries.

Asked to pick his favourite African ad, Phelan chose the controversial *PF Jones* spot that relaunched SABC1 in 2004.

Written by Festus Masekwameng, the TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris spot reversed racial stereotypes as it followed a day in the life of a white South African – who lives in a township and is the victim of racism.

“It’s an old one but still a great one in my opinion,” said Phelan. “A very simple story with an amazing twist. If advertising is meant to open our minds to a new perspective, then this ad is a true benchmark.”

He hailed the craft of the ad, directed by Goodcop’s Laurence Hamburger, then at Egg Films. “This is truly one of the ads that made me fall in love with the medium of film. The storytelling is captured in the most cinematic way: real, raw and edgy. Such a simple insight coupled with finely-crafted visual storytelling makes this one of the all-time greats.”

He also praised the soundtrack. “The tension built through the evocative idea is paired with an amazing soundtrack by Mapaputsi titled *Kleva*, which really drives home the thought-provoking subject material.”

While the internet claims *PF Jones* was banned, this is actually just more fake news. In reality, while the ad certainly generated heated debates, it was pulled off screens when the larger SABC1 brand campaign of *Ya Mampela* was quietly removed after the Zulu king Goodwill Zwelithini complained publicly that the campaign was lowering the status of Zulu as it was slang, since the official phrasing is apparently ‘*Yangempela*’.

PF Jones won a Grand Prix and three Craft Golds at the Loeries in 2004, as well as Best Casting Director at the Dogstar Awards. “It may not have won all the international awards but it certainly won many hearts,” says Phelan. “I like that.”

As impressively, the spot went viral nine years after it was first aired, racking up nearly 1 million views on YouTube as it re-sparked debates over race in South Africa.

Watch the spot at <https://vimeo.com/48579515> or read Phelan’s full recommendation at <https://africa.film/pf-jones-sabc1-ya-mampela-ad/>.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>