

TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris and the Joburg Ballet launch series of little ballets inspired by big social stories

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

6 Oct 2017

TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris and the Joburg Ballet recently launched a campaign to grow its existing audience and ensure a sustainable and ongoing reconsideration of ballet as a relevant art form amongst the youth.

“We needed to become relevant and interesting to a younger audience who spend a lot of time on social media,” explains Rui Alves, ECD at TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris. “Many news stories, social events, memes, animated gifs, songs and videos become trending topics and get shared and inspire people to get involved. These bigger stories are the triggers we use to create bite-size ballets. Hitching a ride on these stories enables the ballet to move at the speed of culture.”

In essence, #BiteSizeBallet is an ongoing series of little ballets inspired by today’s big stories.

Here, Alves goes on to explain the big idea...

■ ***Short ballet skits can often have more of an impact than longer performances. Comment on the craft that’s required to achieve the desired effect in a minute or two.***

All the ballets are different lengths, but we know that people have short attention spans and are generally time-starved, so they tend to be shorter. The length is also determined by how long the story needs in order to make sense. This requires a collaboration between the agency creative team, the choreographer and the dancers.

■ ***Comment on your use of traditional advertising (product demonstration) and more innovative/disruptive methods (content, entertainment, art, film and social commentary) and why you think the combination worked well in this case.***

The integrated approach is working very well to present the Joburg Ballet across its ever-expanding audience demographic. The disruptive nature of the bite size ballets on social media is



Rui Alves

exactly what we need in order to get the attention of a younger, edgier audience. They can sample ballet quickly. We have to be able to compete with all the entertainment options that are available online and offline and this new ballet format is working very well for us.

■ ***How do you come up with the themes/subjects for each episode? Where do you draw your inspiration from?***

This process is a fast-moving collaboration between the agency and the Joburg Ballet. The agency creative team scans social media and also daily D-live triggers for stories that have the potential to become big stories. The agency picks a direction and sends a thought-starter storyline and a few music options to the Joburg Ballet. The choreographers will take the concept and develop it further and finally create a ballet concept that tells the story with movement. The dancers rehearse the moves and sequences while the agency works with the production house (Darling Films) behind the scenes on a treatment, location and wardrobe.

■ ***These ads showcase the Joburg Ballet and its ballerinas' skill. Comment on the Ballet's physical involvement in the campaign and the credibility it demonstrates.***

Joburg Ballet is demonstrating that ballet has the agility and speed to respond to culture in this fast-moving creative process. Our physical presence in the campaign is challenging the notions that ballet is stiff, slow and irrelevant. We are able to showcase the dancers' skills and the dance company's depth with each bite-size ballet that we produce. The discipline and integrity of the art form needs to remain intact and the dance movements need to be impeccable and accurate.



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■ ***Why are you proud of this campaign?***

We feel energised by the ongoing collaboration. There is a tangible lag when the intervals between bite size ballets are too spaced out. The quick expressive nature of these ballets allows the dancers to experience spikes of energy and inspiration during the long-haul rehearsals that are required for much bigger productions throughout the year.

■ ***What do you love most about it?***

The quick release of expressive energy that is made possible by these stories.

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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