

Celebrating women at the Loeries

 By [Josephine Buys](#), issued by [IAB South Africa](#)

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It was great to see this year's Loeries Awards celebrating women! There was a strong line-up of talented and accomplished female speakers at the DStv Seminar of Creativity and women featured prominently in the Loeries judges and award-winners, not to mention illuminating the red carpet with brains and beauty!

My Loeries experience began when I checked into the Garden Court Marine Parade where the Umlazi Comtech Jazz Ensemble (still in their school uniform), played a selection of the best in jazz, past and present, including several tributes to the late, legendary Miriam Makeba. Each member of the band was talented but the vocalist, Zinhle Msane, was extraordinary. I got the distinct feeling that we were in the presence of greatness and I predict this remarkable young lady will enjoy global fame and recognition.

At the DStv Seminar of Creativity, the lineup was predominantly female. This was led by Sarah Personette, VP of Global Business Marketing for Facebook, NYC, who shared mobile and video first insights predicting that the next billion online will be on mobile. Sarah reminded us that in Africa, our mobile-first continent, WiFi is a luxury so creators should understand the spectrum and challenges of bandwidth and always keep in mind that this audience is not as much multi-device as multi-access, with several people using one device to access the internet, often for the first time. Thumb-stopping content is key when creating for this audience and contextual relevancy has become personal relevancy.

Debra Mallowah, VP Personal Care Unilever, Kenya, challenged the industry to #unstereotype. This Unilever initiative, launched in July 2016, aims to break gender stereotypes in advertising. She believes advertising is perfectly positioned to help shift stereotypes and that creating better advertising that is more progressive will not only challenge stereotypes, it will have better talkability and brand impact, with 'progressive' ads showing a 12% greater impact in terms of consumers actively enjoying and feeling involved with the ads. She illustrated her presentation with several Unilever examples over recent years, with my favourite being the Knorr #LoveatFirstTaste.

Co-founder of SheSays: Laura Jordan Bambach (global mentorship program encouraging young women to take up careers in digital) and Creative Partner of Mr President - London, asked where are all the women in our industry and called for training, mentoring and celebrating women in creative. Laura shared the compelling Le Club Goose campaign, the new symbol of luxury using CRM vs advertising, to get Grey Goose back into the hearts and hands of the super wealthy after the brand's former exclusivity fell from grace with the advent of social media. Close to her own heart, Laura showcased several successful projects for social good, proving that being empathetic and connecting on a human level works; my favourite was The Coins of Hope.

Bridget Jung, Digital Creative Director - Marcel Sydney, Australia, compared advertising to science fiction movies, plotting a timeline from as far back as the 1950s and highlighting storylines that imagined the media of the future and (often) how close they came to the reality that we know today. She mentioned that McCann Japan is the first agency to appoint an artificial intelligence Creative Director! Bridget applauded tech making real-world solutions and shared several fascinating case studies including the real-world example of taking raw soot from highly polluted air to create Tiger Air Ink in Asia and challenged the industry to use their skill, passion and craft to make an impact.

Sarah Crede, Global Chief Creative Officer, FCB NYC, hailed the era of branded content vs advertising and forecasts the rise of episodic series of short form communication as a solution to time being more precious than ever to capture your audience's attention. She did a retrospective to advertising from when she was a girl/teenager that could still resonate today, like the original 'Share the Fantasy' Chanel No. 5 advert. She has been a Chanel customer ever since and pointed out there is absolutely no measurement tool that will ever be able to calculate the value of her lifetime of custom since that ad flighted. She referred much of her content to 50+ year-old quotes from Howard Luck Gossage (1917-1969) and how

relevant his thinking still is today. She urged the advertising industry to stop doing too much that is liked versus much less that is loved and declared it is our responsibility to use advertising for good.

One common thread from all the speakers who were also judges was the sheer admiration of the creativity at Loeries 2016. There was a deep respect and praise for the sometimes bold, often unique and always brilliant work from our creative industry.

The awards themselves also celebrated women in our industry, with many females stepping up to receive the highly coveted Loerie Awards. Suhana Gordhan was announced as the new Loeries Chairperson and Nunu Ntshingila-Njeke was the first female to be inducted into the Loeries Hall of Fame.

The Loeries Awards daily Callsheet quoted these two gorgeous, accomplished, leading lady luminaries:

Suhana Gordhan - FCB Africa Creative Director: "As a woman, I consider it a privilege to use my own experiences and that of my esteemed peers to invest, and to inspire other young women coming up in the industry to unleash their own power of creativity."

Nunu Ntshingila-Njeke dedicated her award to her daughter: "It is an incredible honour and career highlight to receive this award from the creative fraternity. I hope this award continues to inspire young women to find their voice and to ensure opportunities for them to thrive in the creative community.

"I am excited about the journey that Facebook and Loeries are taking to invest in and grow the next generation of creatives in a world that is more open and connected. I believe in the power of technology to enable and drive creative ideas that will ultimately change humanity for the better."

The atmosphere throughout the festival of creativity was one of delicious anticipation. Now, as the celebrations subside and we get back the business of doing business, I firmly believe that the promise of inclusion and diversity will yield some of the greatest talents we have ever seen and I have an overwhelming sense that the best is yet to come...

As head of the IAB SA, I am deeply committed to working with members who are willing to champion youth programs to fill the talent gap that exists in South Africa, especially in digital, and pledge to ensure that it includes training and mentoring for girls and young women, to inspire many Loeries and Bookmarks speakers and winners of the future.

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