

TBWA's top tactics

 By Ann Nurock

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I met with Chris Garbutt, global creative president of TBWA, to talk about the success of TBWA SA at the One Show Awards held in New York City last week



Chris Garbutt © – [Campaign magazine](#)

The TBWA Group came out [tops of all the SA group agencies](#) with the following pencil wins for TBWA/Hunt/Lascaris Johannesburg, OpenCo and GRID Worldwide:

- **Two gold** – for OpenCo's client Apartheid Museum's "Make Sense of the Present" work in the design – photography category as well as TBWA/Hunt/Lascaris Johannesburg's "Travel before it's not fun anymore" radio campaign for client Flight Centre/Student Flights;
- **Two silver** – one for OpenCo's "Make sense of the Present" print/outdoor – publication work for client Apartheid Museum and TBWA/Hunt/Lascaris Johannesburg for their "Sexy Times" radio campaign for client Tiger Brands; and
- **<Two bronze** – for OpenCo's print/outdoor – collateral "Make sense of the Present" work for client Apartheid Museum and TBWA/Hunt/Lascaris Johannesburg's "Beer Festival" radio – music sound work for client Flight Centre/Student Flights.
- six merit awards – three to GRID Worldwide, for their design – typography "Noise" work for client Anti-Establishment, as well as for their design work on "All For One" for client Past – one for brand identity and another for collateral; as well as two to OpenCo for their design – collateral and print/outdoor – art direction for Apartheid Museum's "Make sense of the Present"; and one to TBWA/Hunt/Lascaris Johannesburg for Flight Centre/Student Flights "Beach Party" in the radio – music sound category.

This resulted in a total of 36 points according to the Creative Circle's official ranking, putting them top of the South African group agencies.

As a South African himself, Garbutt couldn't be prouder. And as global creative president of the TBWA group, [Campaign magazine](#) explains Garbutt's career has spanned the likes of Ogilvy & Mather New York, as well as Ogilvy & Mather France and TBWA\Paris, with such clients as Nissan, Sony Playstation and Absolut Vodka.

Here, he exclusively shares his views on the TBWA group's local success and the importance of disruption for the future of creativity...

Nurock: TBWA SA performed exceptionally at the One Show Awards this year and came out as the top performing SA agency. It must make you feel very proud.

Garbutt: Being South African, it really does make me proud. The DNA of TBWA has always been a creatively led agency, a disruptive agency. John Hunt has always attracted some of the very best talent for the group, and he keeps a very close eye on the talent in the agency. That's why you've seen people like [Jenny Glover](#), [Rui Alves](#), [Peter Khoury](#) and Robert Rutherford join, people who are driven to deliver top-drawer creative product.

Nurock: Why do you think they are doing so well?

Garbutt: TBWA in South Africa has long been a proving ground for talent. They always punch above their weight creatively and have an unmatched drive to make iconic work. As John Hunt says, "Let's be the best agency in the world that happens to be in South Africa."

Nurock: What is happening in the TBWA Group globally that is contributing to this success?

Garbutt: Ever since Troy Ruhanen arrived, there has been a very clear focus of us being a creative company, and reclaiming our disruption philosophy. He has also really shifted the emphasis back to the product. We recently had a leadership conference in Cape Town and spent an intensive five days building the forward plan to get to iconic work. The momentum is there and the results are starting to come through.

Nurock: What are your views on creativity in the industry at the moment, and the One Show?

Garbutt: There has never been a better time to work in this industry. As media options explode, digital becomes a pipeline of new creative opportunities. There's been a huge shift of media becoming more relevant in people's lives. But it becomes incumbent upon us to add value, to be as compelling as traditional entertainment, as content shared by friends and family.

You see this reflected in the fragmentation of work. At the One Show, there were so many categories and sub categories. It's hard to put the cursor on what is the most "important" or relevant category. And that's exciting. It's a white space for creative and an opportunity for new ways of storytelling.

Nurock: And what on the future of creativity?

Garbutt: We are working at the speed of culture -- not just making "advertising" and putting it out there, hoping people find it. Data, culture and current events are the lifeblood of working for a creative company like ours. At TBWA we are using Disruption Live, a process that allows us to embrace ideas from anywhere, every day, to ensure our ideas are culturally relevant, time relevant and audience relevant.

Their recent award wins show TBWA is certainly proving effective at disrupting the industry. [Click here](#) for a reminder of my interview with OpenCo on the first awards night last week.

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