

Going to extremes

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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Mesmerising: visual feast from award-winning filmmaker; Hollard helps 12 businesses by giving them R12m of its advertising budget.



In these Covid-straitened times, when there is, seemingly, little money for marketing beyond the basics, it makes me quite nostalgic to see a really big-bucks, throw the kitchen sink at this thing, production for a major brand.

I make no apologies as a dyed-in the-wool car fan (can't really call myself a petrolhead because I do love diesel and find electric cars interesting, but overhyped) I was mesmerised by Porsche's latest global film for its Taycan Turismo electric sort-of SUV, sort-of sports car.

To make the point about Taycan's ability to cope with extremes, the car company put it through its paces in the hands of a driver known only as Johnny FPV (no, I haven't heard of him, either) in the Arctic wastes of Finland and the blistering desert of the United Arab Emirates.

The conditions go from minus 30 degrees Celsius to plus 30 degrees Celsius, effectively the ends of the temperature scale on earth (at least where humans go regularly).

Directed by Emmy Award-winning film-maker Nick Schrunk, the piece is a visual feast, segueing seamlessly from snow and ice to sand and dust.

There are even little vignettes - like the nomad tent in the desert and its counterpart on the ice, while we see reindeer contrasting with camels on sand dunes.

Even if you're not a car fan, it's a great piece of cinematography – although it is also a superb way to showcase this Taycan model.

Orchids to Porsche and to Schrunk.

Companies giving back

The jury is still out on whether consumers want their brands to be doing good works or whether they just want good products and good value.

However, there are companies which have chosen to put something back in genuinely trying to help people survive.

In this country, it is small business which has been hardest hit by the lockdown restrictions and, recognising this, Hollard Insurance, in partnership with its creative agency VMLY&R, decided to redirect R12m of its own advertising budget to 12 small businesses.

In addition, the startups were offered business advice. The businesses got billboards, TV and radio spots, as well as digital exposure – and the helping hand not only helped them stay afloat, it saw them prosper.

Hollard, in the process, positioned itself as one of the good guys and, personally, I wouldn't mind knowing a company I did business with was doing the right thing.

At this time in this country, too, many businesses are, quite venally, gouging both their customers and their own workers, with the pandemic as an excuse.

Businesses have to make money, they will tell you. But they also have a moral duty to help improve the lives of everyone, both customers and employees – which, in turn, will uplift a country.

So, well done to Hollard for doing the right thing. Orchids to you and to VMLY&R.

Stranger than politics

From a marketing perspective, I still don't know what to make of the campaign launched by Herman Mashaba's Action SA party.

As many have pointed out, it seems bizarre that a political party should appeal to voters based on the slogan which asks if you are "Gatvol with politics?"

It doesn't say everyday politics or the normal politics of this country, it just says politics. And that is exactly what you're going to get from Action SA. Go figure.

However, that's not why they're getting an Onion.

In the party's zeal to get its posters up everywhere and "paint the town green", it has been breaking the law.

As Democratic Alliance (DA) Johannesburg councillor Leah Knott correctly pointed out, it is illegal to put anything on a street sign. Action SA did this in a number of places, including on stop signs and outside a school.

And I'm gatvol of people breaking the law when it comes to advertising – almost as much as I am with politicians (and this includes the DA when they ran Johannesburg, Cllr Knott) not enforcing the law.

So, a very green Onion for Action SA.

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ABOUT BRENDAN SEERY

Brendan Seery has been in the news business for most of his life, covering coups, wars, famines - and some funny stories - across Africa. Brendan Seery's *Orchids and Onions* column ran each week in the *Saturday Star* in Johannesburg and the *Weekend Argus* in Cape Town.

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