

"How creativity can save lives when put to good use" - Annie Raman

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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Here's how Fort Review is changing perceptions and giving a voice to issues of industry equality, like the welcome rise of purpose-driven marketing, and advertising that goes beyond just punting a product to actually solving a societal issue.

"Diverse topics, polarising discussion, differing opinions, and beautifully-crafted and well thought-out pieces." That's how Auryn Hiscock, Fort's senior copywriter and Fort Review editor, describes the second edition of Fort Review, which went live at a VIP launch event at Rockets' rooftop in Bryanston on 16 February.



Fort Review launches second edition, a video series

Jessica Tennant 16 Feb 2018



Fort Review is a nine-part video series this time around, covering unfiltered views on thought-provoking topics like 'the black voice in advertising' and 'women in business', from a diverse group of contributors.



Raman at the Fort Review launch event.



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As human rights activist Annie Raman is one of those contributors, and also Fort's own advertising heavyweight creative director and founder and editor of *Starved Magazine*, I caught up with with her for a temperature check on the industry, particularly with the rise of purpose-driven marketing, and advertising that goes beyond just punting a product to actually solving a societal issue, and the role of Fort Review in this.

Raman wrote last year, in an article titled '[On the contrary, we are saving lives](#),' that most of creatives feel overworked and underpaid, to what end as the work they do doesn't actually change lives or save the world. And yet, when channelled the right way, creativity in the form of art, music and social media can and should be used to create awareness and support to encourage a more positive landscape. So it can actually save lives and make the world a better place.

When I asked her how the Fort Review series helps address these issues for the industry as a whole, Raman responded that Fort Review gives contributors such as herself the opportunity to change perceptions within the industry and allow issues to be voiced by the people actually working to overcome what they face every day.

And so, they're taking advantage of their skills and resources to create thought-provoking content and beautifully crafted film through this online platform.

“ *As creatives, our passion lies in the work we do and being able to use this to create an impact doesn't only fulfill our dreams of creating beautiful things, but more importantly, it fulfills a vital role in contributing to a more positive society.* ”

Over time, as the series grows and gains momentum, Fort believes it will drive the necessary conversations and send out the messages that people truly need to hear.

Here, Raman shares her personal passion for bringing serious global topics to light and 'saving lives' while doing her day job.

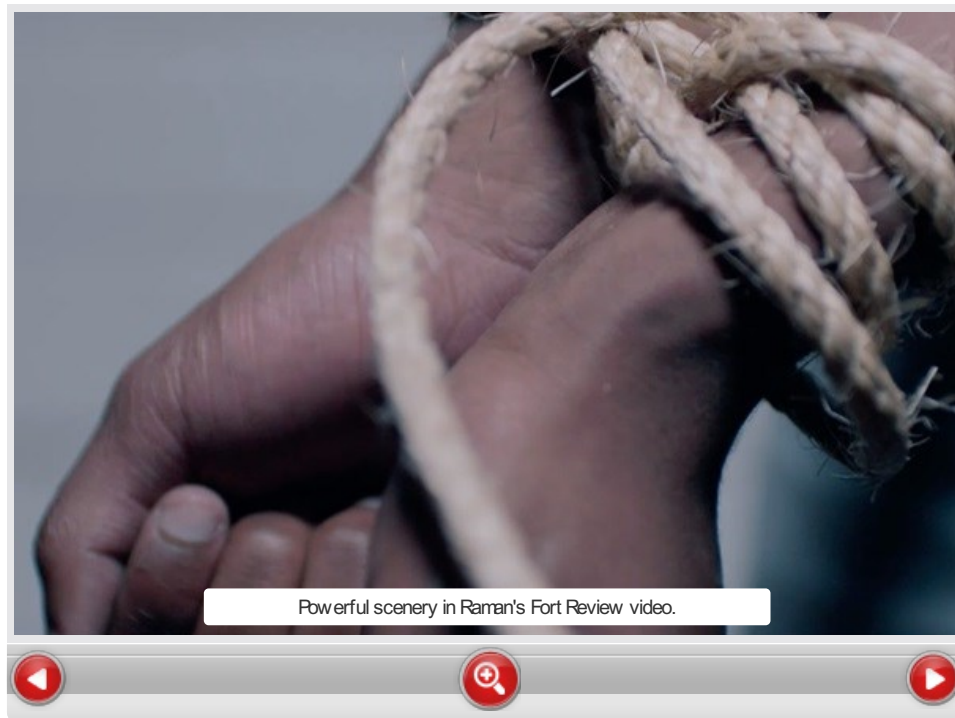
■ ***Talk us through your personal passion for bringing these serious global topics to light.***

Each and every person has a duty to the world we live in, but few endeavour to take on that role in creating a positive impact.

“ Every day we are exposed to issues surrounding the deterioration of the earth and its roaming beasts, economic warfare and poverty, racial inequality, gender inequality, gender-based violence, child abuse, modern-day slavery, and war — so much war. ”

There are people that say that changing the world is a monumental task, and almost impossible. They lack the resolve because of the overwhelming responsibility that saving a life truly entails, and understandably so – they may crumble under the pressure of adversity.

Then there are people that agree but cannot avoid the burning desire to somehow commit themselves to creating positive social change. Saving just one life in any way, big or small, is an innate purpose that cannot be ignored.



Over the years, my awareness of broken systems and broken lives has kept me up at night. I see the faces of people I've never met and hear their voiceless pleas for help. I could not ignore it and the determination in me becomes stronger every day.

“ For myself, as a woman and even more so, a woman of colour, I have had to overcome personal and societal issues that built me instead of breaking me. ”

It is because of these life experiences that I have a heightened sensitivity to the world around me and makes every waking hour a new chance to create change.

■ **That's a supremely powerful statement. How do these issues differ in SA over the rest of the world?**

South Africa is a country unique unto itself, but we are not alone in our history of oppression, political downfalls, crime and violence. We have all been impacted by it in some way and although it has ignited change, we still remain stagnant.

“ The creative industry has possibly been the slowest to absorb some of the change happening around us. Advertising agencies, in particular, have come under scrutiny for the lack of diversity and empowerment. ”

Still so many fall under the 'white monopoly capital banner' and the opportunities to empower women and people of colour is a slow process, but one that we must certainly never give up on.

Young creatives today have a louder voice and are more aware of the need for change. It is us who will rectify the downfalls of past bureaucracies and move each other towards a more supportive and ever-growing industry.

■ **Fantastic. Explain the rise of purpose-driven marketing and advertising that goes beyond just punting a product to actually solving a societal issue.**

In recent years, modern-day advertising is lost on new world views and smarter audiences — its messages tainted by pretentiousness and false appeal. Because of this, it's easy for us to dismiss the vital role creativity has to play in creating awareness and changing perceptions in and around the world we live in.

As creatives and creative agencies, our role becomes imperative, as artists and creatives are using their skills and tools to send important messages.

“ *In between our campaigning for toothpaste and cars, creatives are driving our passions to create and recreate, conjure and influence, in ways big and small, on our way towards creative excellence.* ”

Our ability to produce images that evoke emotion or pen words that champion awareness offers us the chance to find more creative ways to break borders and challenge our societies. Across the globe, creative industries are taking advantage of our unique access to brands, budgets – or lack thereof – and media to go beyond the reach of traditional advertising and develop campaigns that give people a voice and tell the stories the world needs to hear.

■ **Who do you feel is getting this right locally, and why?**

In South Africa, we still have a long way to go in impacting the change we want to see. Not enough is being pushed towards campaigns for good. Budgets are small and the desire in brands and marketers is even smaller.

That said, there have been a few great campaigns and initiatives that have stood out and changed mindsets.

I highlighted some in my [Fort Review article](#) last year:

The Slave Calendar for Iziko Slave Lodge Museum by Geometry Global Cape Town

I am Muslim for the People Against Suffering, Oppression and Poverty (Passop) initiative by Native VML

Seems there's lots more we should all do. Keep an eye out for more on the Fort Review series, which will be made available on [Fort's website](#) and across its social media platforms in the coming months. Also follow them on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Vimeo](#) or [YouTube](#) to be notified as and when these are released.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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