

Vacancy: Host - Loeries 2014

 By Dylan Balkind

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A deep sadness fills me as I write this Dear Jonathan to the advertising industry, announcing my withdrawal as host of the [Loerie Awards 2014](#) in Cape Town. (video)

I was going to ride in doing the splits between two oversized teddy bears, brandishing my bedazzled foam finger before surprising my High School Drama teacher, my conservative ex colleagues at an agency I worked at this one time, and my Dad by slipping Khanyi Mbau and Nonhle Thema the tongue.

Alas, the intrepid decay of man's moral fibre has forced my decision. Along with some other celebrities in my slipstream - Jennifer Lawrence, Kate Upton and McKayla Maroney - my snaps were hacked and my nekkid's have been shared across the interwebs. Yes, I took them and yes I emailed them to that man from Orania who promised to SMS me a R120 airtime top-up pin. Doesn't matter! Having them bandied about so freely has done something to my confidence and now the epicness of my hosting can no longer be.



A frame grab from the last rehearsal before the devastating news broke.

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I have no doubt that my efforts would have evoked an emotional response from my audience which, not by mistake I might add, fits with the McCann created campaign for this year's awards: Create. Affect. A connection made. An emotion felt. It takes confidence to interpret, create, craft and produce something you believe to be worthy of its brief, your client, your colleagues and your competition, and is something that the liturgy of the Loeries is supposed to celebrate, confidently. But... *sound of gong* - posers abound! The cagey cools from some industry doyennes who were contacted for comment here made me *deeply* suspicious. One of them is sitting with an unused R120 airtime top-up voucher - I just know it!

Create > Cagey

Sidebar: We have these awards that many are gung-ho to enter, but not so gung-ho to talk about. Until they win of course, where that connection will make them very emotional, and they'll regale without flinching for years and years and years and years to come. That makes you basic - and sad. Because unless a new category called "Work Wrongly Entered by a Team of Juniors" was created in your dishonour, you have no reason to duck and dive any dialogue whatsoever. And with all the sweat, tears, promotions, demystifications, break-ups and make-ups that played a part in the work that was produced in the last year, 'cagey' is a bad call to make. Because, when you look back and remind yourself of all the juniors around you - who look to learn how to lead from you - you'll see why 'cagey' is not doing a very good job of it.

Out of sidebar: Anyone who says 'you should never look back' is either: a) not trying to parallel park, b) 14 years old, or c) has a new category called "Work Wrongly Entered by a team of Juniors" named after them. Plus it's a cliché and ain't nobody got time for that. Some of the greatest stories involve looking back and recognising how things were in order to inspire versions for how they could be. There lies the right track for connections made and emotions felt.

Not everyone was silent about the telling of their stories. Here are three TVC examples from the year gone by that stood out for me:

'The Reader' for Bells by King James.

Of their current approach to work, Founding Creative Partner Alistair King says that it all starts with a good idea - somewhere in the company. "We then explode that good idea across the various divisions - without force-fitting mediums in order to create mixed media or integrated campaigns - in ways that nurture it into something even stronger and more effective. This collaboration of work within our various companies is behind some of the really strong work we've produced (and entered) this year."

Storytelling

How the Holy Grail of that good idea is brought to life across the ever-growing channels and mediums today comes down to 1) how solid your creative army is at storytelling, and then 2) who you trust to effect that.

'Big John' for Chicken Licken, by Net#work.

Directed by Trevor Clarence from Your Girlfriend.

"Storytelling is everything," says commercials Executive Producer, Linda Bogle. "Dazzling visuals and hilarious performances are only entertaining and engaging to an audience that can be hooked by a well-told story. At Your Girlfriend, our goal is to create these connections through the short and simple stories of our commercials. If we produce work that connects with our audience in memorable and effective ways, then we've had a good day at the office."

Beggars can be choosers

The Street Store for The Haven by M&C Saatchi Abel

Connections and emotions are magnified when the storytelling has been 'unscripted' - like Loeries entry The Street Store. The strength of this concept is its brutal simplicity, while the storytelling is what happens long after the audience has engaged with its communication. Created by M&C Saatchi Abel's Max Pazak and Kayli Levitan, this rent-free, premises-free, pop-up clothing store makes free clothes available for the homeless to choose from - something they aren't normally afforded the dignity of doing.

The poster is the campaign really, and communicates clearly to donors and seekers respectively: hang it, or have it. In keeping with the spirit of giving, the concept and artwork is open-source and can be downloaded at www.thestreetstore.org. So what began as an idea for execution in Cape Town in March, has since been recreated in Johannesburg, Brussels, Vancouver, Brazil, Kentucky, Sao Paulo, San Diego, Colombia - and counting.

You feel me?

Robin Williams - the poster child for all the light and dark that comes with being a creative - made it hard to shortlist his contributions as an artiste... But for context, I'll have a shot at it: In Dead Poets Society, he jumps on a desk in front of his students and asks: "Why do I stand up here?"

"To feel taller," comes an answer.

"No. To remind myself that we must constantly look at things in a different way."

Indeed. We must. And coming home with an award isn't because you're a little 'taller' than your peers, it's because you were behind a connection made and an emotion felt, and you got the opportunity to do it because you look at things in a different way. As an industry creative (winner or not), for all the time spent on the bullsh*t and the brilliance, and the pain and the pride - this is your one real responsibility.

Now ya'll make merry without me. I have a ton of admin to undo. I was so amped for this gig that I'd commissioned my own, personalised Rube Goldberg machine - a strategically-creative masterpiece that would respond to every email my inbox received over festival weekend. Upon receipt, our receptionist's mother's neighbour - who used to do wardrobe on Bonnie's Best Buys but is now unemployed - would write the email out twice in her best cursive, fold one and hide it as a surprise for

when I got back, and put the other in our PA's out tray. He would then enter "The Making Of" video at next year's Loeries under "Work Wrongly Entered by a Team of Juniors".

Wish me luck [@dylanbalkind](#). And best of it to all this year's finalists!

ABOUT DYLAN BALKIND

Even the person who can sell ice to Eskimos needs have a way of letting the world know. Words. They're wonderful warriors with the potential for worry. Use a writer who takes his passion seriously. Here's more about me and mine: <http://goo.gl/68Rsse> | Twitter [@DylanBalkind](#)

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