

Machine_67 x Blackboard Mandela Day campaign develops new creative talent

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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To celebrate Mandela Day, Machine_ will be donating its time to host Blackboard learners. In the lead-up to Mandela Day, the agency is raising funds by selling Mandela-inspired designs by its staff, with all proceeds going to Blackboard.



Supplied. *Synchronicity* an illustration by Vuyani Masango

[Blackboard](#) is an initiative that exposes underprivileged high school learners to the creative industry, to make them aware of careers within the discipline - filmmaker, art director, animator or anything that they haven't even heard of yet.

The aim is to identify young black people with creative potential to ensure South Africa's creative field becomes more demographically representative. Basically, it works to democratise creativity.

New ways of giving 67 minutes

Robyn Campbell, Machine_ MD in Cape Town says that Machine_ has always been a keen supporter of Mandela Day.

"In the past Machine_, would donate 67 minutes of its collective time to good causes, but when the pandemic hit, we had to think of new ways to make sure everyone could participate, no matter where they were working or living, to support those in

need.”

This led them to the Blackboard initiative. “We asked key creative team members at Machine_, who are well-known in the industry, to donate their time to create artworks to be auctioned off for a good cause, that is Blackboard,” she explains.

Last year the agency raised just over R10,000 through its online art raffle. After the raffle closed and the donations were tallied, it also invited Blackboard schoolgoers to spend the [day in office with them](#), learning about the world of advertising and interacting with key players in the industry.



Supplied. *One Street At A Time* a photograph by Roderick Laka

A great alignment

“It was a great success. So, we are thrilled to be launching our 2022 Machine_67 x Blackboard Mandela Day campaign and hope to raise even more funds this year for this amazing community of young people,” says Campbell.

In keeping with the aim of the Blackboard initiative, Campbell says as an agency they understand just how important it is to develop young talent. “We have an internal programme, The Forge, that finds and shapes undiscovered talent, with a view to making our industry more accessible.

“Blackboard’s slogan is *democratising creativity* – so it’s a great alignment for us to be working with them on this campaign,” she says.



Finding and developing diverse talent

She emphasises that it is important to be working with high-school goers to showcase that the advertising industry is a variable career path before these talented young people choose what to study after school.

“It’s vital to support a cause which unearths diverse talent in the South African advertising landscape. Because we know we need it,” states Campbell.

Jabulani Sigege, Machine_’s executive creative director says the initiative is not only the opportunity for their staff members to showcase their creativity, but also create a pipeline to untapped talent - “Talent that can be mentored and exposed to advertising as a career opportunity from high school”.

The artworks

“This year, nine of our Machine_ 67 talented staff members donated their time to create a unique piece of art inspired by Nelson Mandela,” says Campbell.

The pieces are titled:

- *Reconciling Truth* a charcoal and pastel drawing by Marnus Nieuwoudt
- *Synchronicity* an illustration by Vuyani Masango
- *I Never Lose* an illustration by Katya Wagner
- *Rising* an acrylic painting by Marissa Steyn
- *I pretended to be a drone* a photograph by Celeste Jacobs
- *One Street At A Time* a photograph by Roderick Laka
- *Elephant - Wisdom* a photograph by Louw Strydom
- *Ubuntu* an illustration by Riyaaz Freeman
- *End of silence* a drawing by Francois Coetzee



Supplied. *Ubuntu* an illustration by Riyaaz Freeman

Supporting the initiative

Campbell explains that supporting the initiative is easy - and by doing so you can win one of the artworks. “Simply donate R50, or more, via [Quicket](#).”

The competition closes on Mandela Day, 18 July, at midnight. Winners are then randomly chosen, and the artwork will be sent to them.

“All the funds raised will then get donated to Blackboard along with another day of creativity, learning and exploration hosted at the agency for the Blackboard students,” adds Campbell.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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