

Business of Design speaker Q&A: Mduduzi Simelane

 By Jessica Tennant

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Business of Design (BoD) is back with a [speaker lineup](#) of note. The two-day seminar is held annually in Cape Town and Johannesburg during October and doesn't just focus on design in itself but has a much broader vision for the field in all areas of business. Delegates include everyone from business owners and creative entrepreneurs to retailers, marketing and brand executives, trend analysts, design students and other employees from various industries.



Tracy Lynn Chemaly on Business of Design and other things

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New to the conference is 'Open Sessions', a platform for delegates to ask the BoD founders (Trevyn and Julian McGowan of The Guild Group, and Laurence Brick and Cathy O'Clery of 100% Design South Africa and Platform Creative Agency) as well as fellow delegates any questions they may have, and together overcome any barriers to growth and challenge new ways of doing business.



Mduduzi Simelane

I asked Mduduzi Simelane, co-founder of [BlackNation Media](#), what he loves most about being in the 'business of design' and to let us in on what he'll be sharing during his Cape Town and Johannesburg sessions.

■ **Why are you excited for Business of Design this year?**

Besides participating in it, I really want to share some of the film/content industry insights that we have gathered over the years. We truly believe that the information we have will change the industry for the better and create more jobs or revenue opportunities.

■ ***Comment on the importance of events such as this that recognise the role design plays in (and the impact it can have on) various industries?***

Events such as Business of Design allow creative practitioners from various backgrounds to share some really important knowledge on how to improve the status quo and explore new or possible opportunities. Above all else, this is a platform that enables us as creators to action some of the ideas that we have, network and possibly collaborate on projects that will change the creative industry forever.



Business of Design speaker Q&A: Nicola Cooper

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■ ***Comment on the current state of design in South Africa (and internationally).***

South Africa is doing great in terms of design. I've seen some of my peers doing amazing creative works for local and global clients. However, I still feel that we need to see more diversity or 'intentional' inclusion within the industry, particularly of black practitioners at a higher or strategic level. I believe the latter will also influence how we approach design in South Africa/Africa and ensure sustainability for black design companies or agencies, therefore allowing the whole industry to flourish.

■ ***What is your/your company's involvement in/contribution to the local design scene?***

As YouthContent Communications or BlackNation Media, we've collaborated with a lot of budding designers in Johannesburg and Cape Town through our annual internship programme. We've seen some of the designers/creative practitioners either go work for big agencies because of all the skills acquired during our internship programme (sustaining their jobs and elevating within the industry) or taking the entrepreneurship route and establishing their own agencies/companies.

■ ***What do you love most about being in the 'business of design'?***

The opportunity to learn, sell and present our (BlackNation Media) ideas, and make new business and personal contacts that will allow us to grow as a business or company.

■ ***What is the title/subject of your talk and/or what are you going to be sharing?***

Based on my experience and travels, I'll be focusing on how collaboration can enhance the South African film/content industry through using platforms like film/creative schools and the impact this approach can have on the whole SADC region.

■ ***What's the key takeout?***

I'd like the audience or industry to grasp the missed and lucrative opportunity that's at South African tertiary institutions. I believe that final year students, at any institution, have a lot to teach and contribute towards various industries in the country.

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