

Suhana Gordhan to share Africa's diversity as One Club Board member

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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Suhana Gordhan, Duke Group ECD, was recently appointed to the One Club for Creativity's International Board of Directors. The only representative from Africa on this year's Board, she follows in the footsteps of local creatives Xolisa Dyeshana, CCO of Joe Public, who was a Board member in 2016 and Ross Chowles in 2014, then ECD/founder at Jupiter Drawing Room in Cape Town. (Chowles is now in the US and serves on The One Club National Board of Directors.)



Suhana Gordhan, Duke Group ECD, and member of The One Club for Creativity's International Board of Directors

■ ***As one of 22 creative leaders across the globe, you are the sole member from Africa. What unique perspective will you bring to the table as an African creative?***

I think what is fantastic about the One Club board is that it ensures that there is representation from different regions. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, one of my favourite writers, talks about the dangers of “the single story”. She says that when people think of Africa, they think of it through the single lens of poverty, tragedy and hopelessness. What excites me is that we have far better stories to share with the world – stories about our creativity that are different, rich and fascinating.

I believe that the notion of diversity is inherent to us on this continent. We're native to it, and so it shapes who we are. We do things so differently here. We have unique problems and unique ways of solving them. I feel proud to be able to use my voice to bring that unique perspective and diversity to the board.



Duke Group's Suhana Gordhan appointed to One Club International Board

24 Mar 2022



■ ***Of the 21 other creatives from across the world, who (can be one person or more) are you especially looking forward to connecting and working with and why?***

There are so many rockstars on the Board that I truly respect and am dying to meet. These are people that I've been admiring from afar, like Chaka Sobhani and Björn Stahl – he produced one of my favourite campaigns of all time – The

Swedish Number.

I'm looking to reconnect with people I've met before like Richard Yu and Fadi Yaish and then, of course, I'm going to fangirl hard over Swati Bhattacharya because she's hugely inspiring, poetic and has made some incredibly powerful culture-shifting work.

■ ***The duties of the board members range from providing input and feedback on the club's ongoing global programming, elevating The One Show and ADC Annual Awards in rankings in their regions, connecting the club with advertising and design universities and schools, and recommending outstanding candidates to serve as awards judges. Is there a particular duty that you find very exciting or are very passionate about, and why?***

I've always been passionate about developing local, young creative talent. One of my main goals is to reinstate the One Club boot camps, which had unfortunately ground to a halt during the pandemic. Historically, these boot camps have been very effective at educating and mentoring young, previously disadvantaged creatives. They also provide an amazing arena for talent spotting. This allows us to harness and further develop young creative minds, to ensure longevity for our industry and a future that is transformed and vibrant.



Duke's Suhana Gordhan named mentor for The One Club Elevate programme

16 Feb 2022



■ ***What benefit do you see your membership of the Board bringing to the SA creative industry?***

I see the membership allowing me to share my voice to the ongoing mission of transformation, but now with international support. I believe that the combined brains trust on this board can give us access to new ideas and fresh perspectives. Through the relationships I will build, I hope to continue to uplift our industry, generate more interest in our brand of creativity, and ultimately attract investment into our creative economy.

■ ***It has often been said that the South African creative industry packs a punch above its weight. Why do you think this is?***

I think it's because we know struggle, we know how to defy the odds, and we know how to triumph despite difficulty. These qualities are inherent in our DNA and alive in our work. We are exceptionally resilient people, we take nothing for granted and we have the most endearing ability to find humour, even in chaos. I believe that this gives us an edge and a tone of creativity that is fearless and full of ingenuity and flavour.

■ ***Given the pandemic and the changes that are affecting the industry, what is the most important thing(s) driving the creative industry - and agencies - currently?***

Resilience. Adaptability. Kindness. We are still in unusual times, and so we must continue to adjust and find ways to uphold creativity because it is more relevant than ever before. True creativity is what gives us hope and the power to persist. But we need to be more human than ever before because it is what makes us a stronger collective force.

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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