

What does the future hold for women of colour in the advertising industry?

Through her journey from a junior designer in a big agency to the founder and managing partner of her very own bespoke full-service agency, Curious & Creative, Zumurrud Rinqest has thrown herself into sharpening a hugely important skill: to find the gap, make a move, and build others up in the process.



Zumurrud Rinqest, MD of Curious & Creative

“As I received my first opportunity to lead as a woman of colour,” says Rinqest, “I quickly realised that more voices were needed. Dynamic perspectives, backgrounds and cultures, all coming together to represent our nation’s true diversity of narratives, opinions and truths.”

This evolution in Rinqest’s outlook occurred during a time when women were only beginning to flex their skills in the advertising industry, and women of colour were by far the minority in ad-land. Today, we know that matters have improved only marginally.

Aside from the glass ceiling that women across all industries are acutely aware of, women of colour have had to contend with an added layer of hoop jumping in the workplace: racism, lack of access to entry, discrimination, profiling, silencing, and the list goes on.

In the last few years, companies around the globe have become more sensitive towards matters of equality, now fortified by the added pressure to not merely claim diversity, but to take action to make room for women – and women of colour – among the key stakeholders, decision makers and leading thinkers within every organisation.

Rinquest has experienced the plight of creative professionals of colour in the ad industry from many different perspectives. But the most striking experience has been that of searching for new talent for her growing creative agency and receiving an abundance of applications in response – yet only a handful from women of colour.

With full knowledge of the fact that the talent is out there, and that the jobs exist, how can advertising agencies achieve meaningful transformation when they don't have the trust of young, talented creatives of colour?

The vision is set: an incubator for talented young women of colour

A leader by nature and a businesswoman with a flair for seeking out – and creating – opportunities to grow her agency, it has become Rinquest's mission to not only hold space for young women of colour in the ad industry, but to expand it.

Rinquest has leveraged her wealth of industry experience, keen intuition and her conviction of building a business on sturdy relationships to build a true 'power team'. As she continues to grow Curious & Creative one brief at a time while adapting to the ever-evolving digital landscape, she has now set out to put this ability to good use by creating an incubator for creative talent – predominantly women of colour – in the next few years.

"This incubator will open the door for those who are not by the financial means to empower themselves through formal education, and will include a bursary programme to focus on the upliftment of women of colour in the Western Cape. My dream has always been to build a network of strong women with an immense love of creativity in business. We have worked hard to achieve this at Curious & Creative, and now it's time to extend our knowledge and passion to the greater community," says Rinquest. 'It's up to us, as women and creatives of colour, to carve out a space for success and build the creative landscape we've always dreamed of working in – one that is fair, equal and well-primed for the innovation and creativity we can offer brands of every shape and form.'

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