

Legendary SA creative, John Hunt inducted into Creative Hall of Fame

Announced at the end of August, John Hunt of TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris' was inducted into the One Club Creative Hall of Fame at the black-tie Creative Hall of Fame induction ceremony at Tisch Skylights at The Shed in Hudson Yards last week.



Image supplied. John Hunt accepting his award at the black-tie Creative Hall of Fame induction ceremony at Tisch Skylights at The Shed in Hudson Yards

This is the first time since the award's inception in 1961 that a South African has received this honour.

Life's too short to be mediocre

Hunt's mantra has always been 'life's too short to be mediocre' and this award is an acknowledgment that he has lived and breathed these words throughout his 40-year career as co-founder of TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris in South Africa, and as global creative chair of TBWA\Worldwide.

It's these words, and the award-winning creativity they've inspired, that led to Hunt to being recognised by The One Club Board of Directors for the prestigious Hall of Fame accolade.

The awards have a rich heritage of honouring the lifetime achievements of creative luminaries in all forms of advertising and design, starting with the induction of Leo Burnett in 1961.

“Only those who have had a measurable, positive effect on the next generation of creative leaders, and are known industry-wide as mentors, door-openers, and opportunity-creators, are considered. Inductees also needed to have delivered a celebratory body of work and advanced the industry for the greater good,” says Troy Ruhanen, president and CEO, TBWA\Worldwide.

“Hunt ticks these boxes easily and we are very proud that one of our own has received such high recognition. He continues to be our creative north star, and has given so much to our company, industry and society. His integrity, generosity and talent are matched only by his enormous heart. We are immensely proud to see him join the Creative Hall of Fame.”

Luca Gallarelli, Group CEO of TBWA\South Africa says: “This is the greatest honour for someone who has placed the industry and its people first and laid such a solid foundation for us all. John’s biggest legacy is what lives on beyond his active engagement with this industry through the people he has influenced so fundamentally and the role those people fulfil in the industry globally will ensure his legacy lives on almost indefinitely”.



John Hunt to be inducted into One Club Creative Hall of Fame

Danette Breitenbach 26 Aug 2022



The campaigns

Together with Reg Lascaris, Hunt built up TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris in South Africa from 1983 into an advertising powerhouse.

In 2000 it won Agency of the Century and in 2010 was named Agency of the Decade. Work for the Zimbabwean Newspaper was also the most awarded campaign of all time in the same year, winning at Cannes, The One Show, Clio’s, ADC and D&AD.

The famous and award-winning “BMW mouse” may be one his most talked about ads, but others like Nando’s brilliant tongue-in-cheek work, “Sam” for the Reach for a Dream Foundation, and Nelson Mandela’s 1993 election campaign have also left an indelible mark.

The same is true of the peace campaign in South Africa prior to the 1994 elections.

“When we did the Peace Campaign before the arrival of democracy, South Africa was in a state of chaos. The campaign helped calm the situation and offered a sense of hope. We are proud to have played a small part in the transition and to usher a battered SA into the warm light of democracy,” says Hunt.

Hunt adds that his “Trillion Dollar” campaign for The Zimbabwean Newspaper was among his most rewarding work due to the sheer scale of its impact.

Apart from driving sales for the newspaper, the campaign highlighted growing problems of hyperinflation in Zimbabwe and targeted increased restrictions on free speech by the government. The Zimbabwean Dollar had reached the point where the face value of many banknotes was less than the value of the paper itself.

“We had to work off a very low budget for this campaign, but sometimes the size of the idea is more important than the amount of money you have to spend. We used Zimbabwean banknotes, repurposing them as printing paper for handouts, billboards, and poster advertisements, and were thrilled when the campaign became a global phenomenon creating unprecedented amounts of attention for the plight of the average Zimbabwean,” explains Hunt.

Hunt was born in Livingstone, Zambia before moving to South Africa at the age of 10. In 2003, he transferred to TBWA’s New York headquarters to assume the role of worldwide creative director. Hunt returned to his native South Africa in 2006

to continue his worldwide role from Johannesburg, at all times trying to ensure a creative output that avoided the mediocre and strived for the iconic.

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