

'Female creatives are badass, brilliant and persistent' - Nicole Ravenscroft, Rapt Creative



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

25 Aug 2021

Nicole Ravenscroft is described as an absolute powerhouse at Rapt Creative where she guides a strong, mostly female creative team and is no stranger to late nights and personal sacrifice to ensure that work gets out and is of a world-class quality. She is fiercely protective over her team and always goes the extra mile to deliver work that would rival anything on the global stage, and win.



Nicole Ravenscroft, executive creative director at Rapt Creative

As we approach the end of our annual [Women's Month](#) feature, we find out more from Nicole Ravenscroft, executive creative director at Rapt Creative.

■ **Can you tell us a bit about yourself?**

The easy way to describe me would be to say that I am completely in love with ideas, new thoughts, undiscovered businesses and opportunities.

“ I have an insatiable appetite to forge new and better paths for our collective future and create things that make me happy. ”

My entrepreneurial spirit has played a vital role in how I interact with the world and jobs at hand and has driven me to places many others wouldn't easily venture.

From an early age, I have been involved in the arts, which in turn lead me to work on some magnificent culture, fashion and decor brands. My main goal and intention are to move the needle even if it's ever so slightly on how the creative community is valued, handled and help create a value-based environment for creatives to flourish and see their dreams and ideas come to fruition.

■ ***You're the executive creative director at Rapt Creative. Tell us more about your role here.***

Garreth Van Vuuren, the managing director of Rapt invited me for coffee a few years ago and nonchalantly asked if I would be interested in pitching on some business with him. I have always liked Garreth's work and believe he and I are cut from the same "ride-or-die" cloth, so I couldn't pass up the opportunity to see where this would go.

We pitched on a few Heineken group brands and won them and the rest is really history. My role at Rapt has been to grow the creative studio and mentor the maverick creatives that have been acquired within the agency, as well as acquire new business and deliver top-notch creative work.

Some would say I am the lioness of Rapt Creative, fiercely protective of my team and always in the trenches with them to see each job through.

■ ***Could you briefly tell us about your career?***

I have worn many hats and don't come from a traditional advertising background, which I believe has given me a unique approach to brand problems and new marketing solutions. I studied Fine Arts and was a dancer after school. I then joined a small publication called *Women's Inc.* specifically geared towards women in business that my sister founded.

At *Women's Inc.*, I art directed and wrote for the publication. From there I moved into the music scene where I founded a business with Darryl Torr called Rockwell Marketing at the SABC which was built to support record labels with a more tailored and disruptive approach to marketing musicians. From there I joined the wonderful team at *Elle Decor* where I was lucky enough to be mentored by Karen Roos, a powerful female force in SA.

From this point, I did a lot of international and local styling jobs in fashion and decor as well as worked for a sea of different agencies both locally and abroad. I have collaborated and co-founded the creation of food markets in Melville, design shops in Johannesburg, restaurants, bars and even tried a hand in a seaside guesthouse in Simons Town.

I also co-founded The Kraal which is a freelance collective in which we pull together project-based teams specifically tailored for the right project versus a force fit and Gung-ho a production company focusing on content creation and film-making. These businesses work closely alongside Rapt and have also allowed us to be agile and fluid with our clients in how we approach jobs and budgets.

I am currently building a photographic studio, with some great humans, focusing on product stills and a state-of-the-art editing suite, called Workshop no.1. And then just to really add some spice to the portfolio, a fishing boat restoration and rental business called Boathunters which I founded with my life partner.

■ ***Have you faced any challenges in the industry? If so, how did you overcome them?***

The industry is challenging. There is burnout, hitting brick walls or dead ends on projects, the never-ending briefs alongside

rather unrealistic expectations and sometimes underwhelming budgets.

“ I think the most important thing is in the power of the collective, harnessing this power to help each other move forward together in positivity and value is everything. ”

I stand by the saying, "when the tide rises so do all the boats." If the team is strong and collectively feel valued and inspired, all challenges can be overcome.

The next most important thing is the environment, our studio in Cape Town is based in St James on the mountain across from the sea, we pride ourselves in spaces that fuel creativity and become a home away from home. We change it up often, work in coffee shops, go away together to scenic spots across the country and keep it fluid and not a typical 9-6. If your work environment is inspired, soft, and agile, challenges become easier to face and industry blows simpler to swallow.

❏ Can you comment on the transformation (or lack of) of how women are represented in the creative industries?

There was definitely a time where the advertising industry felt like a boys' club but now that has changed and there are many female powerhouses leading the creative fields. The majority of my team are female, and this is not something that was ever planned but just naturally fell into place.

“ All I can say is female creatives are badass, brilliant and persistent to the end and it's a privilege to lead and walk with them on this crazy ride. ”

❏ What can governments do to help drive female leadership in South Africa?

We need to create more networking opportunities for women in the country. I think the biggest problem is the access to work resources, suppliers and other people within that industry. If the government could help facilitate access to entrepreneurial resources that could facilitate and grow female businesses.

❏ How do you think South Africa can help in the fight against GBV?

It all needs to happen through education. Education will unlock a more conscious society which in turn will disseminate GBV. We also need to have zero-tolerance police against GBV, too many cases have gotten off with no implication or a very light sentence that does not meet the crime.

❏ What advice do you have to share with the future generation of businesswomen?

Hold fast, take chances. This might sound a bit arrogant but I don't believe anything is that hard, it's just what you are willing to believe you can do and then putting the work in. If you love what you do, and surround yourself with people that inspire and push you to new heights the world is your playground.

❏ As a female creative, is there anything else you would like to share with those entering the creative world?

Interview your employers as much as they interview you. As much as you might need a job, remember you are a valuable and worthwhile resource. You should interrogate and really consider whether a company or industry is right for you. By doing this you find yourself in more places that should be than the ones you shouldn't.

❏ As we celebrate Women's Month in South Africa. Do you have any words of encouragement for all the women out there?

I read this the other day and I believe it is something all women hear, "You are a feat of physics and complex molecules, a spirit magnificent in magnitudes, a precious and invaluable treasure to be cherished - you are the only one of your kind. There has never been another you to work this planet, there will never be another you again. You are bigger than your

body and your soul is rare." Kirsten Robinson.

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