

# Suhana Gordhan, "Stay... we need you."

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

24 Aug 2020

*As part of our Women's Month content feature and in the build-up to our panel discussion with some of this year's Gerety Awards all-female South African executive jury members, taking place in September, Jessica Tennant, senior editor: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity, interviews this year's jury to find out what a woman has to do to get onto an advertising jury, what the opportunity means to them and the significance of these Awards given the current state of gender equality...*



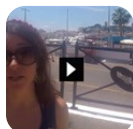
Suhana Gordhan, ECD at Duke

The Gerety Awards, founded by Joe Brooks and Lucia Ongay is relatively new, having launched in 2019. It brings together all-female juries from across the globe to shortlist the best in advertising – all advertising, not just advertising made for women – through the female lens.

The Awards was named after Frances Gerety, the copywriter who coined the slogan 'a diamond is forever'. So, instead of categories, the Awards are judged by cuts (as in diamond cuts), of which there are 10.

This year, there are a total of 180 new jury members from 30 different countries. Pre-Covid-19, judging sessions were hosted in each host city and the shortlists submitted to the international grand jury of creative experts for final evaluation, but of course this year's judging sessions are having to take a different format. Joe Brooks explains that "the judging would have taken place at the VMLY&R offices, with Jacquie as the ambassador. The date had been set for Monday, 1 June and we would have judged and discussed a number of categories of entries from around the world. The same week judging sessions would have taken place in London, New York, Buenos Aires, Bangkok, Melbourne, Milan, Istanbul, Helsinki and Berlin. Due to the 'Corona', all judging is taking place remotely and online over a four-week period with group calls in the middle of the judging to discuss favorite pieces."

This year's South African executive jury includes: Jacquie Mullany, ECD, VMLY&R; Mpume Ngobese, MD, Joe Public; Sanche Jansen van Rensburg, ECD, Avatar; Simone Bosman, founder and creative, Osu & Kumalo; Neo Segola, ECD, FCB Africa; Sarah Dexter, CEO, Mullen Lowe; Nadia Mohamed, marketing director, McCain; Emma Strydom, head of design, Network BBDO; Juliet Honey, creative, Freelance; Suhana Gordhan, ECD, FCB; Linda Notelovitz, director/producer and founder, Life Design; Liezel Bygate, marketing director, Bliss Brands; Monalisa Zwambila, CEO, Riverbed; Loli Bishop, producer, Freelance; and Fiona O'Connor, creative director, Havas. Look out for our online panel discussion featuring some of these remarkable women in advertising in September after the shortlists have been announced.



#### #CannesLions2019: Lucía Ongay on starting the Gerety Awards to elevate female voices

21 Jun 2019



Here, Suhana Gordhan, ECD at Duke, believes that the Gerety Awards is opening up a space traditionally held predominantly by men and allowing women a fresh perspective from which to view the world...

■ ***The Awards recognise the best advertising (not just advertising made for women) through the female lens. Comment on the significance of this given the current state of feminism / gender equality / women's empowerment.***

**Gordhan:** For aeons we've been forced to look at the world through the male gaze, and of course, this must have had some effect on us and instilled layers of unconscious bias. So, I believe that what the Gerety Awards is doing is creating the space for unlearning and reconditioning. We all know that there are just not enough women in advertising, and certainly not enough in leadership roles so to be able to shine a light on women and invite them to view work and discuss work together is not only necessary but something to celebrate. Some may see it as the exclusion of men or male voices, but for me it's not really about that, but rather about bookmarking or saluting the opening up of a space traditionally held predominantly by men.



#### #Newsmaker: Suhana Gordhan, newly appointed ECD at Duke

Jessica Tennant 14 Aug 2020



■ ***As part of its call for entries campaign, the Awards sent purple moustaches to prominent female leaders in the advertising industry, and asked them to pose for a picture with the question: What does a woman have to do to get onto an advertising jury? How would you answer that question – what does a woman have to do to get onto an advertising jury?***

**Gordhan:**

“ I don't think it's the job of women to do any persuading, convincing or rallying to get more women onto advertising juries. It's the job of men to create space and identify women that are equally deserving to take up that space. It is the job of award shows to make sure that their juries are not just diverse but representative, and that is an important distinction. ”

Comedian Riz Ahmed says, “I don't like to talk about diversity, I feel like it sounds like an added extra. It sounds like the fries, not the burger. You know? It sounds like something on the side – you got your main thing going on – and yeah let's

sprinkle a little bit of diversity on top of that. That's not what it's about for me. It's about representation. Representation is absolutely fundamental in terms of what we expect from our culture, and from our politics. We all want to feel represented. We all want to feel seen and heard and valued."

I like what he says and to me it relates to being a woman on an awards' panel or in a leadership role – it should not feel like salad dressing or a consolation prize. It should be the norm and it's as simple as that.

■ ***What are you most looking forward to or excited about with regards to taking part in this year's Gerety Awards judging?***

**Gordhan:** The Gerety Awards has curated an incredible panel of women. I think it's super exciting and I feel honoured to be in such brilliant company. It's strange, but there are very few events or opportunities for women like this to gather, share notes and have meaningful discussion. It shouldn't feel like a treat because we should have more of this but for now, it's a fantastic start. Also, you never know what might come of the bonds formed from one judging session, as the relationships very rarely end once the sessions are done. And so, I'm really looking forward to it.

■ ***What is your hope for the next or future generations of women in advertising / the advertising industry?***

**Gordhan:** My hope and dream for the future generations of women in advertising is this: stay. This is an incredibly rewarding career path, and if you let advertising show you its charms, you'll have great stories to tell. Bear the storms, bear the trying moments, cry ugly tears and dry them up with proud smiles. Stand up to the assh\*les and prejudicial fools and stay. We need you.

■ ***And what is your key message to fellow women in advertising this Women's Month?***

**Gordhan:** We need to have each other's backs now, more than ever. Transformation means investment. Invest your time and energy in other young women coming up. Let's see each other and let our voices carry. We can whisper strong words or shout them from corner offices. Be authentically who you are and while the negative voices may arrive in your mind, don't entertain them and let them stay for tea.

Today, advertising is not an old, smoky room filled with Chesterfields and white men in dark suits. I'm so bored with glass ceilings and so much more interested with the view through the window, where we can see what the world really looks like, and the way we can influence and inspire the way we want it to look.

For more info, visit the Gerety Awards' [website](#) and follow them on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and/or [Instagram](#), and follow Gordhan on [Twitter](#) and/or [Instagram](#) or visit [Duke](#).

## ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

Jess is Senior Editor: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com. She is also a contributing writer. [marketingnews@bizcommunity.com](mailto:marketingnews@bizcommunity.com)

- Have You Heard's in\_Broadcasting launches conference series - 23 Nov 2021
- Kantar study looks at changing media consumption - 22 Nov 2021
- #Loeries2021: Grand Prix winner Joe Public United's 'Unity Laces' for Converse - 19 Nov 2021
- #Loeries2021: Grand Prix winner Havas Creative Middle East's 'Liquid Billboard' for Adidas - 18 Nov 2021
- Carl Willoughby comments on TBWA and Toasted Samish's Pendorong Umpetha win - 16 Nov 2021

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>