

Dr Liezel Bygate, "We have women talking to other women via men. What's wrong with this picture?"

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

30 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...



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.



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Here, Dr Liezel Bygate, marketing director at Bliss Brands, says that although marketing is probably relatively ahead of the rest in terms of female representation, it's ironic that in the world of advertising, which is the mouthpiece we use to connect with our consumers, women are so poorly represented...

■ ***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.***

Bygate: Women's voices need to be heard. Having their own gig is good way to kickstart this, and hopefully one day it won't be necessary.

■ ***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?***

Bygate: The lack of women in leadership has been an issue forever with solutions for this being remarkably slow to the boardroom. As far as corporate functions go, marketing is probably relatively ahead of the rest in terms of female representation. It is then ironic that in the world of advertising, which is the mouthpiece we use to connect with our consumers (also largely women), women are so poorly represented. So, we have women talking to other women via men. What's wrong with this picture?

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

Bygate: Connecting with other women in the industry and sharing perspectives on what makes great work.

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

Bygate: Advertising has the power to effect social change. My hope is that the women of the future can create work that is authentic and true to women, and not pander to the status quo.

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

Bygate: Be brave and dare to do things differently.

Men are part of the solution too. We need more men that recognise the value women bring to the table.

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

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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

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