

David Tshabalala, illustrator and graphic designer

 By [Emily Stander](#)

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This week, we spoke with David Tshabalala, aka Slaying Goliath.



David Tshabalala/Slaying Goliath

Tshabalala's work has captured the hearts of South Africans - most notably through projects such as his popular *Davetionary* series, which illustrates prominent figures and moments in popular culture in words. His work landed him on the *Mail & Guardian* 200 Young South Africans list in 2015. Not long after graduating from the Central University of Technology in Bloemfontein, Tshabalala started his own branding and design company, Suketchi, with his former employer, Sarah-Jane Boden.

Tshabalala also recently served as a judge for the Wild Bean Cafe's Design-A-Cup competition. Here, we find out more about his work, his life, and what we can expect from him in future...

Could you tell us a bit more about your work?

My work is a kaleidoscope of crafted content that speaks and resonates with anyone interested in current events. I use my illustrations to create meaningful pieces of digital art that can capture moments in time. I can't just make pretty pictures anymore. I was recently a judge for Wild Bean Cafe's Design-A-Cup competition, and it was an honour to curate the best young talent in SA.

What's behind your mask - literally and figuratively speaking?

What you see is what you get. I'm a laidback person with a strongly opinionated view of the world we live in. Perhaps you could say my mask is transparent - you can still see who I really am even if it's on.

▣ *Growing up, what did you want to be?*

Definitely an artist, in the traditional sense. I discovered graphic design though and my love for computers and drawing evolved into a new passion for digital art.

▣ *How did you end up on your career path?*

I started working at a newspaper as a layout designer but what I really loved was digital illustration. I knew back then, in 2012 - that I'll use my career as a launchpad to fuel my passion. I've been lucky to earn a living while doing this.



Wild Bean Café Design-A-Cup competition winners announced

18 Nov 2021



▣ *What excites you most about your career?*

What excites me the most is brands like Wild Bean giving me an opportunity to give up and coming artists a chance to launch their careers. Judging the work really inspired me further and I was privileged to have access to so much talent.

▣ *What advice would you give to youth trying to enter the industry?*

I'd advise the youth to take opportunities like the WBC competition as a launchpad to greater things. It's always good to test yourself against other creatives because the job market is so competitive. The talent I found while judging the Design-A-Cup is a testament to how competitions can help boost your career.

▣ *Where are you based during lockdown?*

I'm currently working from home - which doubles up my home studio, and I'm privileged to be earning a living during this time.

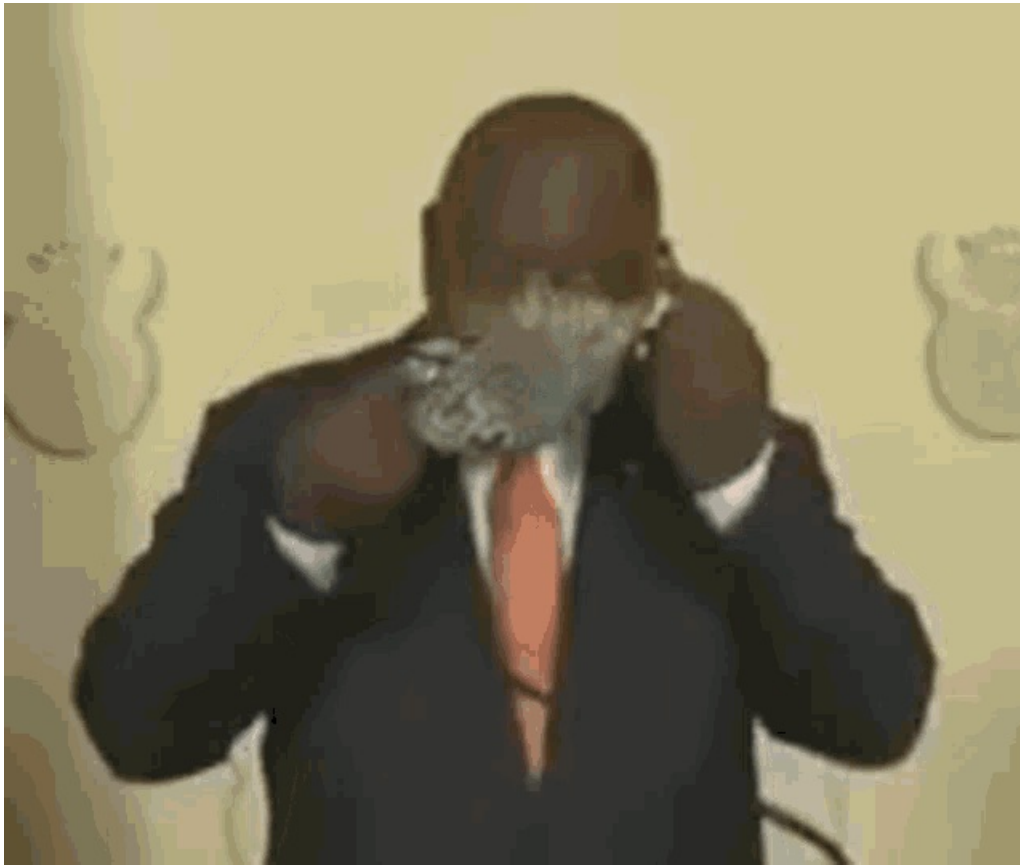
▣ *When you're not busy working, what do you do? How do you socialise these days?*

I consume a lot of content on Netflix and YouTube - I'm a homebody and I also conceptualise self-driven work at my workspace. I socialise by going out to events that interest me and that can spark new ideas for my work - I don't do this often though.

▣ *What's one thing not many people know about you, but should?*

I'm an avid judge on quite a few projects. It is weird being on the other side of created work, but I enjoy sifting through the talent of Mzansi's young creatives. I enjoyed the responsibility.

▣ *What's your favourite meme/gif of all time?*



■ **What are you watching/reading/listening to at the moment?**

I've just started reading Kojo Baffoe's *Listen to your footsteps*, I love consuming local content - in whatever format it comes in.

■ **What's next for you?**

I'll definitely look for more opportunities to give young talent a chance in their careers, just like how Wild Bean gave me a chance to judge the Design-A-Cup competition.

I'm also looking at presenting my work in physical spaces and having my content live beyond digital. Collaborations with amazing brands are always in the pipeline for me.

ABOUT EMILY STANDER

Freelancer specialising in games and entertainment | My first loves are writing, music and video games

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