

Where art meets engineering

Five months after being awarded the prestigious BMW advertising account, fledgling creative hotshop Ireland/Davenport launched its first TV commercial for the brand on 15 May 2006. Shot in the Netherlands using the moving sculptures of world-renowned artist Theo Jansen, the commercial, entitled "Kinetic Sculptures", forms part of a broader campaign which serves to highlight BMW's market leadership in the fields of technology and innovation.



[Click Here to view the ad \(2MB\)](#)

Comments Ireland/Davenport MD, Susan Ferguson, "The new TV commercial is intended to illustrate BMW's commitment to innovation and our interpretation thereof is based upon the area of innovation in relation to aesthetics - where art meets engineering."

Emphasising the strategic background behind the creative execution, newly appointed strategic director at Ireland/Davenport, Priniven Pillay, adds, "BMW is so passionate about innovation, from their design elements to their pioneering engineering concepts, and it was this passion that we wanted to capture through our TV commercial."

Creative duo

Conceptualised by the creative duo of Philip Ireland and John Davenport, "Kinetic Sculptures" features artist Theo Jansen's giant sculptures, being powered by the wind across Ijmuiden beach in the Netherlands, where Jansen regularly develops and tests his sculptures. The dramatic background of the rainy beach is accompanied by a voice-over - the voice of Theo himself - talking about his sculptures, questioning where engineering ends and art begins. The ad ends with the strap-line, "The walls between art and engineering exist only in our minds."

Theo Jansen's sculptures are housed in museums and private collections throughout the world and his exhibits take place in the likes of London's Trafalgar Square and Shanghai. Commenting on their decision to use the artist and his work to illustrate their concept of the interaction between art and technology, Ireland feels they could not have found a better match for the BMW brand, "Theo is a kindred spirit. He has grounding as an engineer and uses that engineering background to make his beautiful sculptures, which not only look impressive but are fully functioning, moving works of art. In the same way BMW, through their combination of technology and aesthetics, strives to drive the progress of mobility."

Adds Davenport, "Theo uses movement as an art form, to redefine mobility and give life to art."

Maintaining integrity and authenticity

The decision to shoot the commercial in the Netherlands was taken based upon the creative team's desire to capture the sculptures in the environment in which Theo Jansen creates them. Says Ireland, "The setting of IJmuiden beach provides a truly magnificent backdrop for these sculptures and we wanted to maintain the integrity and authenticity of these works of art by filming them in the environment in which they have been designed and perfected."

Whilst Ireland/Davenport originally briefed two Dutch production companies to assist in filming the ad, it was South African director Kim Geldenhuys from Egg Productions and lighting cameraman Paul Gilpin who were finally selected to execute their creative concept.

"Kim's treatment of the script resonated most strongly with the concept and he was the natural choice for us," says Davenport.

Local production team in foreign country

Despite having a local production team on board, filming in a foreign country was not without its challenges, however: the group employed foreign crews for the first time and their way of getting things done took some getting used to. In addition to this, there were plenty of logistical issues surrounding the transporting of the valuable sculptures and, of course, no-one in the South African team was fully prepared for the freezing cold, rainy weather that is characteristic of the Netherlands in April.

Client thrilled

Despite these difficulties, both the agency and client are thrilled with the final product. Comments General Manager of the BMW Brand, Kelly Leishman, "We love the approach the agency has taken with this new TV commercial as it captures perfectly the essence of BMW's commitment to defining technology and innovation, as well as our passion for aesthetics and creating the world's most beautiful vehicles."

Focusing on the milestone of creating the Ireland/Davenport's first TV commercial, Ferguson says, "Our first TV commercial for our new agency certainly is a special achievement and we are incredibly fortunate to have been able to create the first TV ad for a world-class brand like BMW. It's a fantastic start for us."

The BMW "Kinetic Sculptures" TV commercial is currently flying on DStv, M-Net and SABC 2 and 3.

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