

Please let there be kittens...



By [Louise Marsland](#)

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My calendar highlights every year are firstly, Design Indaba - the uber-inspiration station which sets the tone for the working year; and secondly, The Loerie Awards, which heralds summer, self-tan, highlights, fabulous shoes, great advertising of course - and also the busiest time of the year in the media, marketing and advertising industry!

Some of the richer agencies in the industry can count the Cannes experience mid-year as their highlight, but for us lesser mortals, the media, we at least get to share the shade with such creative deities at the annual Loerie Awards, which is when the local industry can hang out, catch up and have fun.

And after this extremely bad news year, we need to laugh - some of the best advertising uses humour or poignant commentary on the reality of real life. And in South Africa we do local humour so well, as we have such rich context to draw from. Personally, I would like to see more kittens, if that's not too much to ask.

After last year's appalling scam ad debacle which made international news and saw advertising agency [Metropolitan Republic](#) stripped of its Loeries awards last year and banned for two years, you can bet that there won't be even a whiff of scandal or bad behaviour for a while.

This year's Loerie judges are emphatic about that. "I expect they'll all be legit," was the response from Justin Gomes, FoxP2 executive creative director, when asked what he expects of Loeries 2014 entries this year. Gomes is judging the Radio, Television, Film and Video category.

Mike Schalit, chief creative officer of BBDO SA, who is the chair of this year's Ubuntu Award judging panel, had this to say in response to the same question: "That enough good 'uns turn up. And then please let them be in the right category. For a real client. Especially as concerns Ubuntu, that creativity makes a difference, not cheating."



Ulric Charteris

International showcase

I've been covering The Loerie Awards since the glammed up days at Sun City, when the air was thick with Caribbean spray tan and nervous expectation, dresses were long and dressy, body glitter was in and Mike Schalit was young.

It was also a time when the awards were about six hours too long and those who didn't crack a seat at the tables in the Superbowl had to watch the rest of us having dinner during the breaks between MC Michelle McLean's wardrobe changes.

Thank goodness the Creative Circle wrestled control of The Loerie Awards from the then imploding Marketing Federation with the vision of a continental creative awards showcase. And while I do miss the Margate years - our very own 'Zombie Apocalypse-by-the-sea' ...a bit of a 'Postcards from the Edge' scene - Cape Town has been fun. There were a few glitches at first (cue uncomfortable seats and dubious entertainment at the Good Hope Centre, although the drag queen in hot pants was brilliant copy), The Loerie Awards has certainly graduated to a true professional, international standards awards show at the CTICC.

As international Loeries judge, Ulric Charteris, the CEO of Roots255 in Tanzania, comments: "South Africa has always set the bar in Africa regarding creative, effective advertising. Much of that is thanks to the Loeries pushing the South African industry to reach greater heights.

"From an African perspective it's very exciting to be involved. Not only for the exposure to what is going on 'out there' during Creative Week, but for the massive incentive for the awards themselves to raise our game across the continent. Let's hope that in the future, what the Loeries did for South African advertising will spread to the rest of Africa."

It's probably almost time to head back to Sun City with the choreographed new show...?!

'I see drunk people'. NOT.

We don't see enough drunk people anymore. What goes on at Loeries stays at Loeries. After all the negative press at the goings-on in Margate (streakers, red underpant protests, vandalism, lost in action...) Loeries cleaned up its act to a point, becoming a professional awards show as stiff as the Emmys.

Which is good for the industry to elevate the importance of creative awards and the industry in the eyes of clients and consumers - but bad for media copy. At least we still have the after parties and the fashion.

So, this weekend, please wear sexy, be outrageous, traffic-stopping strange. Give us the 'MTV-Awards', not the 'Oscars'. Be ravishing Rihanna, not Botox-bland Nicole Kidman. It's been a bloody terrible year for tragedy and war and the death of beloved icons, the world over. Give us a laugh, amaze us, show your bits, be beautiful, be brave, be wonderful. And GOOD LUCK!

(And if there aren't any kittens, here's some purrfect references to bookmark/follow/like [Mashable's top 20 cat sites](#), [Good Morning Kitten...](#))

ABOUT LOUISE MARS LAND

Louise Burgers (previously Marsland) is Founder/Content Director: SOURCE Content Marketing Agency. Louise is a Writer, Publisher, Editor, Content Strategist, Content/Media Trainer. She has written about consumer trends, brands, branding, media, marketing and the advertising communications industry in SA and across Africa, for over 20 years, notably, as previous Africa Editor: Bizcommunity.com; Editor: Bizcommunity Media/Marketing SA; Editor-in-Chief: AdVantage magazine; Editor: Marketing Mx magazine; Editor: Progressive Retailing magazine; Editor: BusinessBrief magazine; Editor: FMOG Files newsletter. Web: www.sourceagency.co.za.

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