

Local artist Chris Slabber wins big at international A' Design Award and Competition

 By Jessica Tennant

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Commercial artist Chris Slabber recently won Platinum for his work on the '[Doom Insects](#)' campaign, in the 'Photography and Photo Manipulation' category, and was named Designer of the Year at the [A' Design Award and Competition](#) in Como, Italy.

Commenting on these wins, Slabber says that in both cases he was stunned, especially winning the title. "It was something I didn't even consider to begin with so when it was announced I got the surprise of my life. It's still sinking in."

He was commissioned by TBWA Africa to create the visuals for the new digital and print campaign for Doom insecticide. The insect sculptures were created out of the environments they thrive in and also the things that they feed on, and this was applied to the ant, cockroach, flea, fishmoth, fly and mosquito.

Slabber explains the idea was to create different insects using elements from their environment and food they eat. "I spent some time researching dirty homes and environments (scrapyards, dumpsites, supermarkets and riverbeds) in order to identify each insect's characteristics. This enabled me to create the right tone of voice for each piece," he explains. "From there I proceeded to build each insect as a real-life sculpture, then photographing them and finally I did some retouching in Photoshop. The final visuals were given to TBWA to use for the different executions



Chris Slabber at the A' Design Award and Competition in Como, Italy.



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The handmade aspect is what makes this project unique, he believes. "Instead of just creating the work on the computer, I started building sculptures by hand and afterwards I retouched them digitally. This always gives work a very unique quality.

" I had a long chat with a friend in Como about the handmade aspect. I found that stepping away from the digital medium gave the entire project a very unique tone of voice. I think it's important to still use the old-school techniques and not rely only on apps to generate your artwork. It keeps the work from feeling generic... I think building the sculptures by hand gave the entire project a life of its own. "



Chris Slabber

Here, Slabber tells us more about his time in Como, what he learnt through this experience and what's next...

📌 **Briefly tell us about your experience, attending the A's Design Awards in Como, Italy. How was Como?**

It was quite mind-blowing, to say the least. The venue was the Como Opera house, which is so rich with history. It was a visual overload.

The Awards are still very young in existence so there is room for improvement, but for a *laaitie* from the Klein Karoo, it was amazing. Plus, I was fortunate enough to have my mom there.



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The city is a mix of the old original town surrounded by the more modern additions as it grew over the years. Super-friendly people who take their Siesta time very seriously. The only thing to keep in mind when visiting is that English is not very big, so it's a good idea to do your research about where you're going, but I'll go back in a heartbeat.

📌 **What did you learn?**

It's the same thing as always: keep working until you find the solution. Every project has that one little thing you need to find that helps everything make sense. And because I used garbage and rotten food to create the sculptures, I learned that vanilla essence helps with the smell. Haha!



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▣ **What's next?**

I'm in the process of collaborating with the guys from TBWA on a new project, but it's still early days so I can't say too much about it yet. It's also one that will be testing all my skills from model building to photography and some serious Photoshopping.

Besides that, I will also be developing a few [exhibition](#) pieces with the guys from Eleven Eleven Studios in Gardens Cape Town as soon as we get funding as the production costs are pretty steep, so if anyone would like to find out more, please feel free to contact me at chrisslabber@gmail.com.

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Website: ChrisSlabber.com

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