

Meet young judge Nontobeko Vilakati

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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In the run-up to the 21st Prism Awards taking place on Sunday, 22 April, we chatted to this year's cohort of young judges about their fresh approach to the judging process.

In this series of interviews, we find out what they've learnt working alongside the cluster judges and what their young minds bring to the table.

"What has made judging even more exciting this year is for the second time, we invited young communication enthusiasts from across the country to participate in the judging process, and selected 11 of the coolest, brightest minds who brought some really fresh insight to the process," says judge and founder of the Prisms Young Judges initiative, Palesa Madumo, executive director of strategy at Vuma Reputation Management.



Nontobeko Vilakati, third-year student UJ.

Here, our interview with Nontobeko Vilakati, a third-year student at the University of Johannesburg...

 ***What does this recognition and opportunity mean to you?***

This opportunity for me as a student means exposure to the industry and knowing what is expected of me once I am done with my diploma, and it is a great addition for my WIL (Working Integrated Learning) module. I get to meet a lot of experienced people who inspire and motivate me as I get to have an experience of judging with amazing leaders before I even graduate.

▣ ***Briefly tell us about your experience in the industry.***

I do not have much experience in the industry as yet, though the Prisms has been a great experience for me working alongside people who have much experience in the industry. It has given me a taste of what is out there and it is exciting.

▣ ***Comment on the judging process.***

The judging was tough as competition was tough as is. There were a lot of amazing campaigns with agencies thinking out of the box and bringing in their creativity and best work forward. So it was not very easy to pick the best of all because they were just that good. At the end of the day, I had to follow the judging brief and judge according to it.

▣ ***What has the response been to this year's entries?***

The response has been incredibly amazing this year in my cluster with a total of 28 entries and all so creative as compared to the previous year. Companies are taking advantage of being part of the Prisms, adding value to the industry with their work being recognised.

▣ ***What makes the winning work stand out?***

What was very appealing and worth winning was the creativity and fun I saw as I read through the different campaigns, if the multimedia corresponded with what was written down.

▣ ***Prisa also introduced the Student Campaign of the Year in 2016. Why do you think it's important that students and the next generation of PR professionals are included in such initiatives?***

Well just like I am a student, involving us in such initiatives gives us the exposure of the real world than that we know from class and tutorials. With these kind of opportunities, we are stretched to think and be creative seeing things in a different light and understanding the importance of various qualities, like consistency and teamwork.

▣ ***What do you think young minds bring to the table?***

Young minds bring new, fresh ideas, fun, creativity and more importantly the different art of communicating with young people via different platforms in a language only they understand. Young minds also emphasise the joy of simplicity.

▣ ***What would the title of Prisms Young Judge for the 2018 awards mean to you?***

For me the title of Prisms Young Judge means being a professional and dominant in the career I have chosen.

▣ ***What are you most looking forward to in terms of this year's Awards?***

I look forward to meeting some of the entrant representatives.

As mentioned, the Awards take place this Sunday, 22 April. Follow us on [Twitter](#) for live updates on the night and visit our [Prism Awards special section](#) for other related content and of course all the winners following the announcement. Here's the link to our other [social media](#) pages, as well as the Prism Awards' [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts.

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