

Speaking of things yet to come



By [Sizakele Marutlulle](#)

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Whilst it is exciting to think of the future and to guess what may or may not come to pass, it is also an undertaking that requires deep reflection.

I am a creative practitioner who tends to steer clear of 'futurists' hence I do not read horoscopes. However, there are waves in culture that may be looked upon as indicators of what may unfold.

As 2018 draws to a close and we cast our eyes forward, I am persuaded that some key shifts will occur along the following realms.

1. Ad agency shapes and forms

We will continue to see the proliferation of small creative hot-shops, many as a result of frustrations experienced in larger shops. The owners of these will be increasingly black creative talent as the gripe of being 'ignored' and 'undervalued' continues without cease. A counter-move from the big shops will be the creation of creative off-shoots or creative collaborations (Avatar & M&C Saatchi Abel) to help infuse these white elephants with some much-needed contemporary resonance.



Sizakele Marutlulle



Avatar and M&C Saatchi Abel mark SA agency landscape's first share swop

19 Jan 2017



2. The search for new horizons

We will see enterprises continue to play outside their 'regular' fields in search of magic and money. Whether that be:

- management consulting firms buying up creative shops (Accenture);
- creative talent crossing genres (Virgil Abloh with LV);
- luxury brands fusing with out-of-field players to emerge a new wave of magic (Burberry x Gosha Rubchinskiy – a photographer);
- lifestyle brand association rather than category (Rimowa and Roger Federer);
- media owners creating ecosystems of content (Monocle);
- opportunistic collaborations (LeSportsac and Hersheys);
- established brands and high-street (Dr Scholl and Urban Outfitters), old brands given new relevance (Green Cross shoes).

All these mutations are about seeking the holy grail of brand building, which is commercial success matched with reputational uplift.

3. The death of saccharine Afro-futurism

“ After a year bombarded by deep African male voices presented against technicolour backgrounds, littered with African market shots and graffiti, we are hopefully seeing the end of this fake pro-Africa drive. ”

From Absa, Absolut, Castle Milk Stout and Nando's (that spoofed the rest), it is time to give up the charade. Afrocentricity has been commoditised and it is time to return to authentic endeavours that do more than project a pseudo-African aesthete.

4. The rise of the 'Fentrepreneur'

This is a term coined by Marutulle + Co and it references a special breed of female entrepreneur – one who in addition to being ambitious and goal-orientated, is refined, resourceful, resilient, kind and generous. She is deliberate about uplifting others and has set high standards of excellence for herself and all she engages with. She will continue to effect discernible shifts on the enterprise landscape and will collaborate beyond borders, categories, industries and generations.

5. The rise of the moral human

The changes that unfolded in SA and resulted (in large part) in the removal of past-President Zuma, were fuelled in large part by moral humans who acted in favour of the greater good at great personal expense. An insurgency of these humans (incorrectly called whistle-blowers in my view) will continue to propel the cleaning up of corporate, product, personal, destination and service brands throughout the land.

6. Beyond diversity

This moves beyond the concept of diversity, which to date has given many unreformed people cover. When challenged about gender diversity, they have been able to show stats that account for female employees, etc. However, inclusion on the other hand is a deepening of diversity – it insists that more than just having 12 colour crayons (as it were) that you grant all crayons equal chance of inclusion and participation.

“ This will also foster a new-age feminism – one that is all embracing of all who support gender equity. It will challenge the yester-year anti-men stance, instead embrace into the fold, all who promote gender equity regardless of gender. ”

This will unfold against the much-wider and more pressing aspect of gender-fluidity. The changing definitions and constructs of gender will impact not only how we engage but also how we address each other. It will impact identity-honing, image creation and challenge the boundaries of diversity as we have applied them and presented them in communication to date.

ABOUT SIZAKELE MARUTLULLE

For this multi-nationally anchored citizen, strategist and brand building expert, creative problem-solving is her *raison d'être*...

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