

Africa's first shorts come to life

By  Danette Breitenbach

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The first collaboration between an international content creator, a local animation studio and creators from across Africa has seen three uniquely African stories being brought to life in the form of three-minute shorts.

The three winning in *Cartoon Network Africa's* Creative Lab are from South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya and were announced at Discop Johannesburg 2019 recently, where Mark Kinuthia from Kenya, one of the winning short creators, was present.



Talking about his winning short, *Majitu*, he says: "I wanted to produce a story that resonates with all Africans," he says.

His short, together with the two other selected shorts, was selected from over 200 entries by creators from across the continent as part of *Cartoon Network's* push to produce more local content to make the channels more represented and welcoming to audiences.

Kinuthia says the process to produce the short was a process of collaboration. "I worked with other talents from other countries. It was a great learning experience and what made it so rewarding was that I was involved in all aspects of the production."

The collaboration with the three creatives, who are all in three countries, with the South Africa-based studio - Mind's Eye

Creative - was challenging, says Ariane Suveg, programming director and head of Kids Content. "We had a very short time to produce the shorts and each one was totally different. Producing a three-minute short was also challenging because there were so many adventures we could tell," she says.

She adds that what made it easier was that the story creators were very sure of their characters and stories.

Mind's Eye Creative's MD, Nick Cloete says it was about picking the creators' brains. "It was important to extract the idea from the creator, but then ensure that idea was still in line with the network philosophy."

The short also had to have the potential to become a longer series.

He adds that the creators all had a different area of expertise. "Sharing this and bringing it to the projects made it a truly collaborative effort."

Suveg believes there is a boom coming in animation in Africa. "Animation in Africa is producing unique stories that are refreshing and we want to invest in this. This project was created to provide an entry point for creators to send us their projects, but it was led us to discover a wealth of talent across the continent and we have a number of African projects we want to develop and produce," she says.

She adds that they are also exploring producing content in local African languages and not just English.

The other two shorts are *Garbage Boy and Trash Can* by Nigerian, Ridwan Moshood, and *Intergalactic Ice Cream* by South African, Andrew John Phillips. The shorts will be screened on *Cartoon Network* on 11 January at 17:15 CAT.



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Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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