

# Turning retail space into art space: Elevating the SA narrative at store level

By  Leigh Andrews

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Retroviral's Mike Sharman explains how an emotional campaign manifesto and associated collaboration with some of the continent's most cutting-edge artists make the new Russell Hobbs 'Art of Living' campaign a long-term win for Boardmans and a first in SA's luxury appliance category.

Russell Hobbs is no newcomer to the concept of co-branding as a "brand leverage instrument", a committed partnership intended to bring about change in consumers' behaviour and perceptions, with your brand at the forefront:

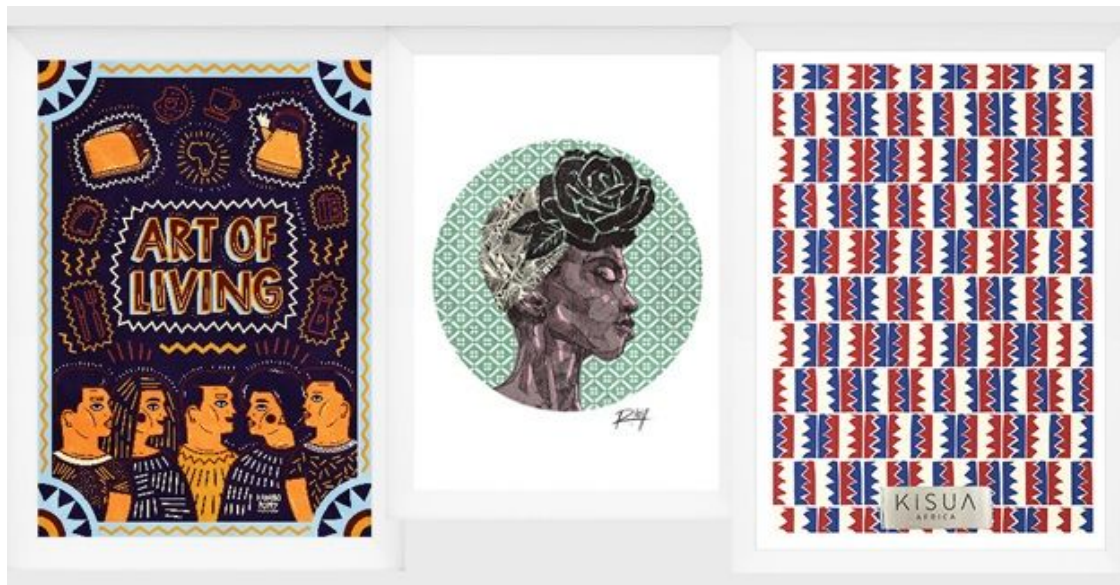


Retailers perceive co-branding as effective

Johan Schwartz 16 Jan 2008



This time around it's not a product they're partnering with, it's the concept of 'Art of Living' with strong splashes of African brand connection that's behind their latest campaign, with influential creatives, Karabo Poppy, Sindiso Nyoni and Kisua Africa collaborating to "fashion conversations in and around the importance of African identity and aesthetics through design, illustration and fashion."



Prints by Moletsane, Nyoni and Kisua Africa.

A comprehensive collaborative strategy like this is no quick fix though, needing to gain momentum as different elements play out and resonate with consumers. Sharman shares insights into the campaign manifesto, how they initially brought the big idea to life and what you can expect over the coming months, below...

■ **What was the campaign brief from Russell Hobbs, how did you bring the big idea to life and how does it tie in with the brand's existing design beliefs?**

The brief was to revert with a positioning for the brand that epitomised the brand tenets of 'premium', 'innovation' and 'quality' and something that was able to evolve, should the chosen path require a medium- to longer-term lifespan.

This campaign therefore brings art into the heart of your home as the Art of Living is about the way in which our homes mirror our taste, our experiences and the memories we make in them. This commitment to consumers is further established by bringing a point of conversation and differentiation; highlighting African creativity and the engagement with the world of functional art through a series of high-profile collaborations. In the desire to meet the needs of the evolving South African consumer, we are creating new ways for the public to experience how it views appliances through the Art of Living campaign.

So in order to encourage sales and drive online entries – especially in these challenging economic times – consumers also have the chance to win limited-edition Art of Living prints created by the artists, limited-edition vinyl-wrapped appliance collections, styled by the artists themselves, as well as a R100,000 cash prize.

■ **Interesting. Talk us through the Art of Living campaign manifesto inspiration.**

We want the copy to emotionally connect with consumers and to bring the Art of Living to life. The manifesto was a collaborative process internally, which debated what art actually means to each of us involved in the project.

“ How do we take art out of the gallery space and make it more accessible through the functional objects that people choose to add to their homes? ”

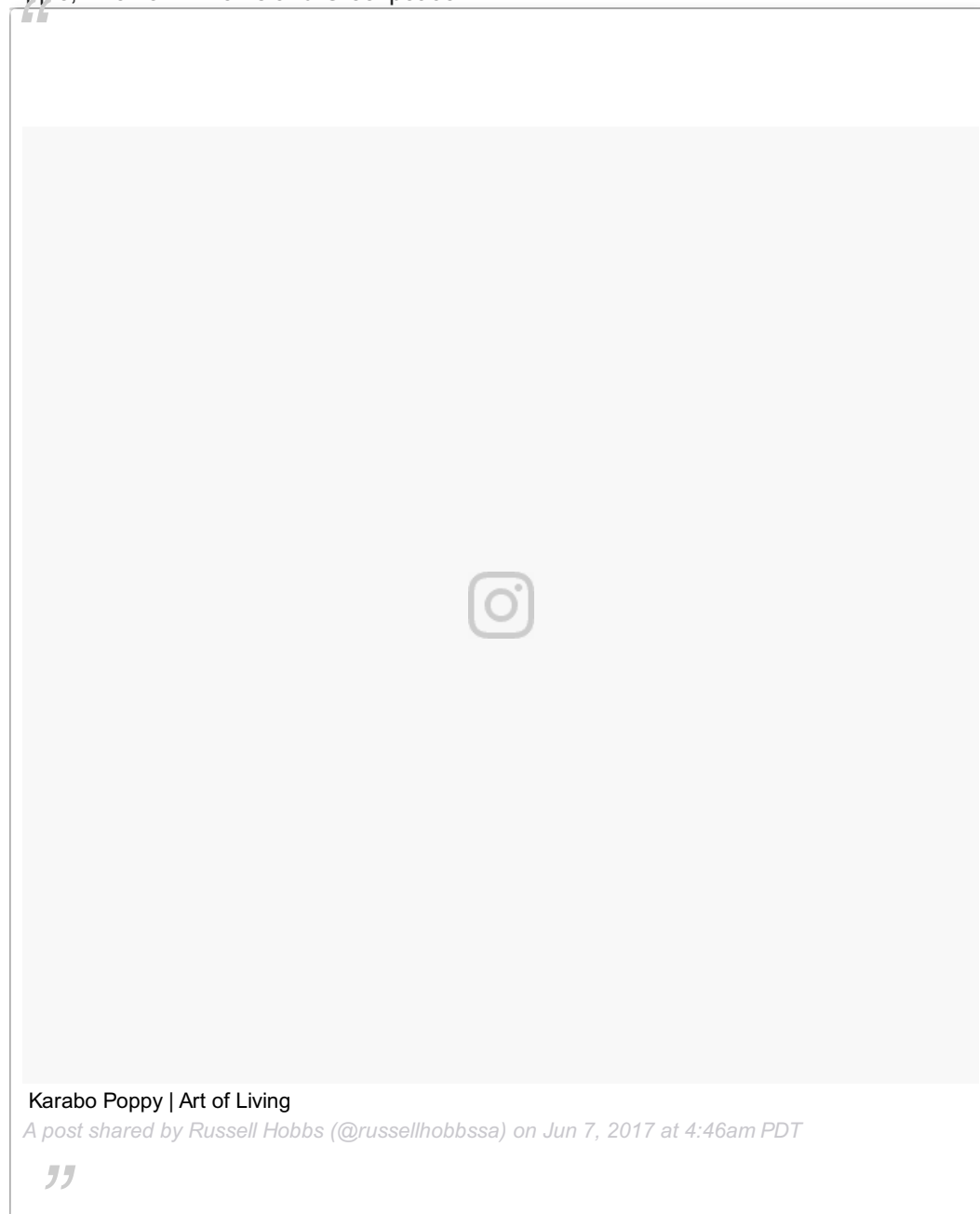
Based on previous in-store campaigns and customer feedback, there's a clear connection between matching colour and style ranges and the consumer's individual personality and taste that they want to be reflected within their living spaces. To take this observation even further with the manifesto. This is art, after all. This inspired us – in collaboration with client –

It's a powerful piece of writing and I am so excited how the team has captured these insights with this prose!

■ **Explain what the external collaboration with African fashion artists brings to the overall campaign and how were they each selected.**

Moletsane is a Joburg-based artist using vibrant, functional design to tell South Africa's story, regularly combining elements of engineering and architecture in her work in digital art and murals. She has previously collaborated with such brands as

Apple, Pharrell Williams and Greenpeace.



Karabo Poppy | Art of Living

A post shared by Russell Hobbs (@russellhobbssa) on Jun 7, 2017 at 4:46am PDT

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his bold illustrations and sharp social commentary that does not shy away from stereotypes of our society. He has recently commissioned to create artwork for the blockbuster film *Get Out*.

Lastly, Kisua Africa is an African-based international fashion brand whose success has come from showcasing the best local talent in exclusive collections. It operates on three continents, with outlets in Africa, North America and Europe. Due to Kisua's reach, they have been central to putting African ready-to-wear fashion on the international map through its bold, incomparable design.

### 📺 **Wow! What can we expect from their experiential art installations this July?**

It will be a surprise, but expect to see retail space become an art space, in particular at major Boardmans' stores around SA from mid-July, where consumers will want to capture and share these distinctive, immersive and experiential layouts on social media.

The artists will marry their unique approach to art with appliances for a country-first.

We were inspired by New York's 5th Avenue and London's Oxford Street and the fanfare of big brand displays that capture the consumer imagination in these markets.

Now it's time for the South African narrative to be elevated at store level with this campaign

### 📺 **Sounds like a win – does the general public concur?**

Yes, the campaign has only recently gone live on social media and already fans and followers are voicing their support and love for this approach. In particular, the manifesto video has been viewed 41,000 times on Facebook alone. The response has been universally positive and it's always exciting to bring something completely different to consumers. We look forward to their responses as we are just getting started!

Follow Russell Hobbs SA on Facebook, [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#) for the latest updates and share your thoughts below as the campaign is further rolled out. You can also [click here](#) to find out more about your chance to win either R100,000 in cash or one of three exclusive Art of Living appliance collections styled in collaboration with the creatives when you purchase any Russell Hobbs appliance from any retailer nationwide from now until 30 September 2017...

## ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh\_Andrews.

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