

Kagiso Lediga on storytelling in entertainment

 By [Angie White](#)

1 Mar 2019

To close day 2, multiple award-winning and celebrated stand-up comedian, actor, writer and film director, Kagiso Lediga, took to the stage.

Lediga is the creator of the pioneering South African comedy sketch show *The Pure Monate Show (PMS)*, and co-creator and show-runner of the two-time International Emmy nominated *Late Nite News with Loyiso Gola (LNN)*. Lediga has also probably mentored most comedians in South Africa at some point or another.

“ To close day 2 we have Emmy nominated [@kagisolediga](#). The South African comedian, actor, writer, filmmaker, and director is one of the pioneers of the country's entertainment industry. [#designindaba pic.twitter.com/jB7N2Saz5t](#)— Design Indaba (@designindaba) [February 28, 2019](#) ”

How storytelling was ingrained in him

During his presentation at Design Indaba 2019, Lediga talked about a show he performed in Finland, referring to the host's inability to pronounce his name correctly. He says that, although the Finnish speak English well enough, the host struggled with pronunciation and ended up introducing him as 'Zakirto Zakiti'!

This got him thinking about his name and what it means to him. He says his name is part of his story and in itself tells a story about where he's from and his family. He describes himself as a storyteller, saying it's what he does for a living, after all.

Comedy and entertainment as storytelling tools

He began his career in stand-up comedy in Cape Town 20 years ago, referring to a time when he was always introduced as 'the black guy' in a time when he was a 'dark orange' man telling his story to 'light orange' people (referring to Cyborg's colour references from a previous presentation).

“ He's been listening to faces for the last 15 years and he's found that humans aren't black and white, we're all orange! [#designindaba pic.twitter.com/VWHHmuUktJ](#)— Design Indaba (@designindaba) [February 28, 2019](#) ”

The comedian says he had to figure out how to tell his story through comedy, and that it was a crazy place to navigate and weave together a story about who he is.

This is when he had the idea to get a group of actors and comedians together to create PMS, and together they managed to convince a TV network to give them a show. He says that soon after he started to notice a trend – that his show had influenced many creatives to use the show's concept in ads and creative work.

Telling stories through film that resonate

Next, Lediga decided to take his career into film. He says one of the lessons he has learned during his career is that there has to be a truth to your story, and it needs to feel real.

He says his first film didn't work, instead *Wizard* left him owing the bank! Then, when his second film release, which took two years to complete, coincided with that of *Black Panther's*, it also didn't receive the response they expected. To his delight though, his passion project *Catching Feelings* was snatched up by Netflix and released in May 2018 to a global audience as a Netflix Original.

Lediga says that people have asked him in the past why he didn't just get a normal job, but he says he just couldn't because he was addicted to storytelling!

Onto his third film – for this one, Lediga says he (and his partner DJ Black Coffee) used their own money for the production. He says that there was an entirely different vibe when creating *Matwetwe*, as they felt like they could just do 'their own thing' without owing anybody or having to worry about the film doing well.

Basically, Lediga says, the idea to make a movie that would resonate with people and show the reality of our cities. He explains that the movie, shot in only eight days, it is about weed-smoking township kids and their quest to successfully complete the biggest hustle of their lives.

Matwetwe debuted in cinemas last night, 28 February 2019, at 7.30pm.



Lediga ended his presentation off advising creators that they should not attempt to go too far when telling their story; people want to hear what's real.

“ “Don't go too far when telling your story. You are your story. You are your truth. ” @KagisoLediga #designindaba—
Design Indaba (@designindaba) [February 28, 2019](#) ”

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