

Top student nominee: Keagan Clack

 By [Juanita Pienaar](#)

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Keagan Clack, an art direction student at the Stellenbosch Academy, was recently announced as one of three finalists in the student category of the 2017 AdFocus Awards. I caught up with Clack and his lecturer, Caroline Piotrowski to find out what they're expecting from the gala evening taking place on Wednesday, 22 November 2017 in Johannesburg.

Clack says being named as one of the 2017 AdFocus Student Award finalists is something he has been working towards since he started at the Stellenbosch Academy of Design and Photography and every year since his enrolment, the top third-year student has been named a finalist. "It's a huge honour. Of all the awards out there, this is definitely the most prestigious and I couldn't be happier."

He says he tries to bring some fresh thinking to every brief and really challenges himself to find unique and sometimes unconventional approaches, for brands to use in solving problems. "I wanted to embrace the blue-sky-thinking being a student affords me and look beyond the traditional advertising we're being taught. As visual communicators, I think it's important to be agents of change."



Keagan Clack, an art direction student at the Stellenbosch Academy.

“Brands give us a powerful platform to send a message to the world and with great power comes great social responsibility!”

As to who he admires most in the industry, Clack shares that he looks up to "partners in crime", Michelle van Sittert and Mimi van der Walt. Although they have graduated from The Stellenbosch Academy just last year, they have already started their own creative agency, Jumpin' The Gun. "They have tons of fun with every project they get and it really shines through in the quality of work they deliver."

Stellenbosch Academy of Design and Photography students shine

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Clack says if he wins, he would love it if the accolade could lead to a job opportunity and shares that his muse is his girlfriend, who he claims can make a pretty inspirational cup of coffee in the morning.

Blood, sweat and beers

Piotrowski, HOD of art and direction at Stellenbosch Academy of Design and Photography says it's a huge deal for the institution that the industry

recognises great ideas and the "blood, sweat and beers" that go into finding creative solutions. "Even if it is student's work, the problems are very real, the ideas fresh and we like to think, very relevant," she says.

She adds that Clack's work represents many things. "Apart from visual creative excellence, his responses to briefs make the world a better place. In particular, his "Piece for Peace," the world food programme/pizza chain initiative and "Burst My Bubble" is an app we could all do with, to ensure we are getting the real facts and news of world we live in. These are just lovely ideas that literally entertain you, like his work, "All the greats in one place," a brilliant concept for the online curated movie platform, Mubi.



Caroline Piotrowski, HOD of Art and Direction at Stellenbosch Academy of Design and Photography.

Piotrowski also mentions little local enterprises that she says could do with some spin to bring in locals and tourists alike, but have no budget, like Butterfly World in Franschhoek. She says Clack's Pendoring finalist entry about the apartheid museum adds yet another dimension to a very versatile portfolio.



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21 Sep 2017



"I think awards such as the AdFocus Awards are extremely important because it elevates and recognises what we do as an institution and champions and promotes excellence in the future of advertising. It inspires students and those embarking on a career in advertising and visual communications to make a difference in people's lives. It is no longer enough to just flog a product. Young creatives have an incredible social, political and environmental media platform at their disposal and awards can raise the bar in the way they use it," she adds.

ABOUT JUANITA PIENAAR

Juanita is the editor of the marketing & media portal on the Bizcommunity website. She is also a contributing writer.

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