

#OrchidsandOnions - At last... a brave ad

By  [Brendan Seery](#)

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The Hyundai guys get an Orchid for a feel-good ad - just a love story about two people, and about a car.



Screen grab from the ad.

Those in the marketing and advertising business to a large extent pay lip service to the idea of 'brave'. They talk about it at slick ad conferences, they write about it on their blogs, they tell clients about it... but few of them actually do it.



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That's because, at its base level, being brave – read 'controversial', or outside the normal parameters of life – can damage, or even kill, your brand. And these days, most marketers obsessively shoot for mediocrity. It's safer that way.

At the moment, Carlsberg Beer is generating quite a debate overseas, with its more than self-deprecating – it's self-criticism – campaign, which says: perhaps we were wrong all these years we've been telling you that we are "probably" the world's best beer.

“ *Is This Brave Advertising? Carlsberg's honest new ad campaign leaves a funny aftertaste* [#Advertising #Creative #Carlsberg](#) <https://t.co/sp97NWOZpE> — Chris De Abreu (@chrisdeabreu) April 22, 2019 ”

The admission of failure, or mediocrity, goes hand-in-hand with a pledge to do better, with a new formulation.

It's not only got the ad-land people talking, but the beer guys and gals are getting in a froth about it on social media. End result: huge exposure for Carlsberg.

In this country, we used to be brave in our advertising – and I'm not just talking about Nando's, which has turned causing *kak* into a marketing art form.

“ Remember how much controversy there was in the early years of the “rainbownation”, when Vodacom came up with the “Yebo, Gogo” concept and managed to annoy many people on all sides? The vast majority of South Africans loved it, though, and it became a part of our advertising history. ”

That rainbow nation idealism has long since disappeared – something to think about around Freedom Day, of all days – and the gulf between races has widened, not narrowed. The bigotry comes from both sides.

So, it was brave of Hyundai to use the motif of a multiracial couple to promote their Tucson SUV. The latest execution, though, is much more in your face as far as ‘love across the colour line’ is concerned. Even though we have highly visible couples like the Maimanes and the Kolisis, this type of integration is still not commonplace.

We see two young professionals – one white and one black – having that quintessential “across a crowded room” moment, when the chemistry between them fizzles. Ships pass in the night, but clearly they are on each other's minds. Then they meet again and the attraction is confirmed... but they drift away during the party.

When they meet up, it is by accident, because they both drive the same, red Hyundai Tucson and she tries to unlock his car. Smiles all around and the sound track leaves you in no doubt that she's the one he would like to have his babies.

For the old guard apartheid nostalgics, as well as the new guard “don't pollute our race” extremists, the ad will be painful.

But for the vast majority of South Africans, those of us who genuinely believe in live and let live, this is a love story... about two people and about a car.

I also like that, even though they are the prized marketing millennials, they are at least ones who look as though they could

actually buy the car being advertised – unlike the B-Boys and graffiti artists BMW used to punt its new Three Series.



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Brendan Seery 2 Apr 2019



But, for me, the real appeal and the sweetness (nice without being cloying) – is the Hyundai Tucson tagline, “Life is beautiful”.

It is, actually, once we get beyond our prejudices. We’re all the same and we all fall in love. (It was my anniversary at the time of writing.)

So, an Orchid to Hyundai and one to its agency Fox P2, for not only showcasing their product, but for reminding us that, perhaps one day, we will be the nation Madiba wanted us to be.



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I also got a sneak preview of an equally brave, but possibly more controversial, campaign about to be launched by Grid agency in Joburg.

It’s related to democracy and the elections... but it isn’t for any party. It’s a “make you sit up and think” type of idea and will, no doubt, rub some people up the wrong way (because we tend to get upset, don’t we?)



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All I can say now is: watch the newspapers and other marketing platforms next week...

ABOUT BRENDAN SEERY

Brendan Seery has been in the news business for most of his life, covering coups, wars, famines - and some funny stories - across Africa. Brendan Seery's *Orchids and Onions* column ran each week in the *Saturday Star* in Johannesburg and the *Weekend Argus* in Cape Town.

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