

# Behind the scenes with SA All-Star Lisa Black

 By [Emily Stander](#)

2 Aug 2022

On 2 June, Suhana Gordhan and the Duke Group hosted the fourth South African Portfolio Night at the agency's Cape Town office. 40 students from various advertising and creativity colleges in Cape Town attended and met with 11 local creative directors, with two All-Stars announced.



Image supplied: South African All-Star Lisa Black

Lisa Black from Red and Yellow Creative School for Business was one of the selected All-Stars. From here, she will be attending a Virtual All-Star Bootcamp which will include workshops with global creative talent and the opportunity to learn from other All-Stars from around the world while working on a client brief.

We spoke with her about her work, her studies and her inspiration...

## 📌 ***Congratulations on being selected as a South African All-Star! How are you feeling about it?***

Thank you so much for your kind words. I feel honoured to have been selected as an All-Star. I'm currently looking forward to the huge opportunity that is the Virtual Bootcamp and feeling very privileged to have gained the experience and contacts from Portfolio Night.

## 📌 ***Tell us a bit more about yourself?***

I have always been passionate about drawing and crafting and for the most part, this passion has steered me on my life's path. I chose my high school (Parel Vallei High) for their amazing design department, but to my dismay, I almost failed my very first design brief there.

However, with extreme dedication, I matriculated with the Visser Award for best design portfolio. After that, I took a gap year overseas to decide on my next steps. In that year – just like every coming-of-age movie - I travelled between many places, met numerous inspiring people, and thoroughly questioned many things about myself and what I wanted from my life.



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By the end of this topsy-turvy experience, I still felt that strong pull toward being a creative and in a series of decisions I can barely remember making, ended up at Red and Yellow Creative School of Business studying Visual Communications and have never been happier.

Other than that, I'm an avid gardener and cat lover. I have also always loved literature and spent most of my childhood with my nose buried in a book and my imagination running wild.

### What led you to majoring in illustration?

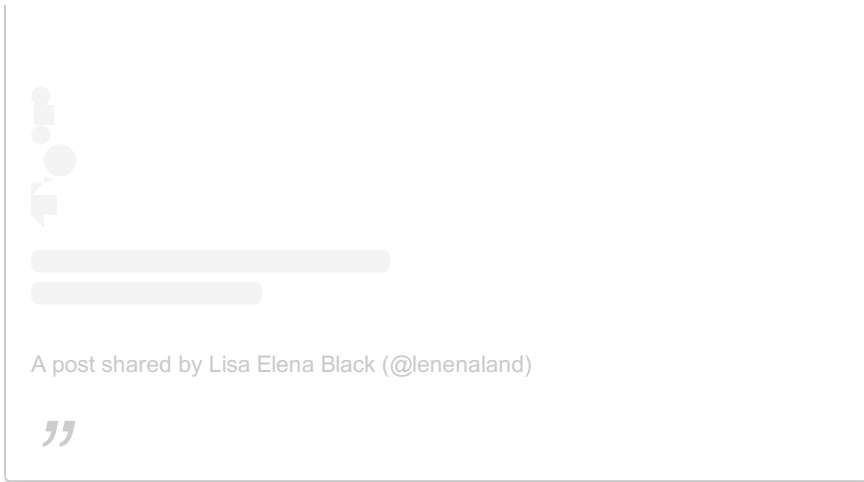
I had planned to major in graphic design when I first started my degree, but after my first year, it became evident that illustration was the discipline which made my heart happy. I cannot describe it other than a feeling of absolute absorption in the craft and knowing that there is nowhere else I would rather be than behind a sketchbook with the power to bring to life whatever I please.

I also truly believe that illustration is the perfect tool to speak to a variety of people in endless ways without barriers. Learning and educating are two passions of mine, and I cannot help but admire illustration as a tool through which these two things are made so accessible and enjoyable.

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■ **What are your plans for after you graduate?**

In the future, I hope to leverage my craft in as many ways as possible to reach out to others. It is my intention to never stop evolving and I see myself growing into many different spaces.

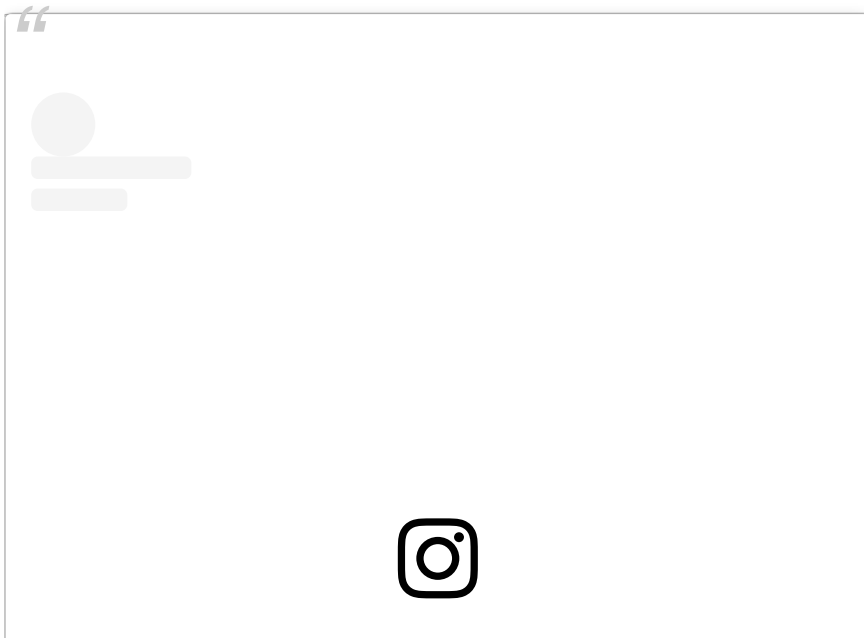
Currently, I'm drawn to publishing and picture books, as I think that stories have historically brought people together and will always hold great power to educate, entertain and shape our world.

One of my picture books, *Dress Like a Girl*, is in the process of being published in a multimedia book titled *Is My Queer Body Not Strong Enough? Pan African Writings and Artwork*, edited by Dr Layla Cassim. This multimedia project will hopefully be available by November. My picture book was a response to the #DressLikeAWoman movement which happened in 2017 and uses satire to make commentary on political figures who try to monitor women's bodies

■ **Could you tell us more about the work you showcased at Portfolio Night? What was your inspiration?**

At Portfolio Night, the work that I showcased was work from briefs I felt a personal connection to. I think that we create the most powerful work when we can speak from our hearts. I am very passionate about social issues and most of my work is rooted in my feminist beliefs. I always try to make sure that the work I produce is as welcoming and inclusive as possible, as I want to be accessible to as many people as I can.

One of my favourite projects which I showcased is a picture book about struggling with mental health, where I personified the harshness of life as a small pocket monster who follows the protagonist around. The monster grows or shrinks depending on how it is treated, thus becoming either more or less manageable.



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A post shared by Lisa Elena Black (@leneland)

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Another is a range of merchandise following the consumer journey of purchasing fresh fish. I grew up along the coast and fishing has been a part of my family's livelihood in the generations before me, so the ocean has always been very close to my heart. The goal of this merchandise was to encourage consumers to purchase from small-scale fisheries and educate them on the benefits that supporting local, small-scale fisheries has for not only the communities but also the well-being of our oceans. The merchandise uses a range of illustrations inspired by local fishers from three South African fishing villages. They are each illustrated using traditional fishing techniques specific to that village and the fishing lines form halos around their heads.

#### ■ ***What are you hoping to gain from your experience at the Virtual Bootcamp?***

I think I'm most looking forward to the opportunity to meet other like-minded creatives and be able to learn from each other. I am also very excited about the opportunity to connect with creative directors who I would otherwise not have the opportunity to meet. Portfolio night was such an incredible experience considering the phenomenal feedback I received, and I can't wait to build on that experience at the Bootcamp.

You can see Black's portfolio [here](#).

## ABOUT EMILY STANDER

Freelancer specialising in games and entertainment | My first loves are writing, music and video games

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