

#SayYesToLove with Cosmo SA's Laverne Cox cover exclusive!

By Leigh Andrews

5 Feb 2018

Topics for inclusion, equality and diversity in the media sphere itself remained under the media spotlight this week as social media netizens celebrated *Cosmopolitan South Africa's* decision to place Laverne Cox on the cover, with their logo suitably rainbow-hued to show support of the LGBTQI+ community.



Cox of the February 2018 cover of *Cosmo SA* - now trending everywhere!

The 45-year old activist, Emmy-winning producer and *Orange is the new Black* actress made history as the first transgender woman ever to appear on a *Cosmo* cover – and for the **South African** edition of *Cosmo*, no less!

“ [@CosmopolitanSA](#) is making headlines in the likes of - [E!Online](#), [@HuffPost](#), [@TeenVogue](#) , <https://t.co/5V5jJ2Mbcb> - with their historic Feb 2018 [#SayYesToLove](#) issue. COSMO SA flew to NY to shoot trans activist and Emmy-nominated actress [@Lavernecox](#) . [#COSMOxLaverne](#) [#COSMOFebruary](#) pic.twitter.com/rkHFzjNspa— Associated Media ([@Assoc_Media](#)) [January 25, 2018](#) ”

Of course some had misgivings over using an international star instead of a South African one (though there's plenty of SA-based content between the covers), and also over *Cosmo US* missing the boat on this, but the response has been overwhelmingly supportive.

“ The current [@CosmopolitanSA](#) issue is my fave and I love Laverne Cox.

Pls call me out if I'm wrong. I just feel like *Cosmo* could've featured and asked SA Trans Womxn to be the cover. Pls check out the [@_BraveBeauties](#) [@MuholiProjects](#). [#TransIsBeautiful](#) [#RepresentationMatters](#)— Bronwen with an 'E' ([@bitxqueenbee](#)) [January 29, 2018](#) ”

[Hollywood Reporter](#) adds that Beverly Johnson became the first black woman to appear on the cover of US *Cosmo* in February 1976 – 42 years ago this month. [Cosmopolitan](#) adds that Johnson was the first black model to appear on the cover of *Vogue* two years prior. Cox thanked Johnson on Instagram for “...paving the way for all of the black women who have followed you over the years on *Cosmo* covers.”

“ Cosmo US hasn't featured Laverne Cox? In her own home country? They need to get over the white-beauty obsession! <https://t.co/SUwXrO4OK>— Hiraku (@_Hiraku_) [January 22, 2018](#) ”

[Mashable reports](#) that the issue also includes the voice of 19-year-old SA trans model and activist 'Princess of Darkness' Elle van der Burg, who identifies as pansexual and explains that “trans rights aren't adequately taken into consideration in regards to legal, structural and social development in South Africa.”



Somewhere over the rainbow...

Louise Marsland 29 Jun 2015



So while it's legal to be openly transgender here, thanks to South Africa's 'new' constitution, which made discrimination based on sexual orientation illegal in 1996, followed a decade later by becoming the first African nation to legalise same-sex marriage and the fifth country in the world to do so, change takes time and there's still discrimination and misunderstanding and lack of education out there, especially in terms of the difference between gender and sexuality.

Trans-forming traditional definitions of love

Van der Burg explains this in her behind-the-scenes beauty Q&A for the magazine shoot:

That's why [Channel24](#) celebrates this move, stating: “Along with making history, *Cosmo* SA's #SayYesToLove edition is

also celebrating Valentine's Day by embracing queer, gay, lesbian, non-binary, trans, and non-conforming love."

[Paper](#) quotes *Cosmo SA*'s editor-in-chief Holly Meadows on describing Cox as follows: "[She's] the world's most vocal trans poster girl and an activist for the intersection of race, class and gender identities, challenging toxic masculinity, white supremacy and the misrepresentation of trans people."



#Newsmaker: Holly Meadows, the new face of *Cosmopolitan South Africa*

Jessica Tennant 4 Jul 2017



[The Daily Beast](#) explains Meadows decided to focus the Valentine's issue on the LGBTQI+ community in particular by looking at "...love in 2018—including acceptance of self, others, and non-binary relationships".

Watch the *Cosmopolitan* #SayYesToLove campaign video below:



#FairnessFirst: Amplifying the female voice

Leigh Andrews 15 Jan 2018



It gives new meaning to the magazine's tagline of 'fun, fearless female', especially as it's a gorgeous, groundbreaking first in terms of race, age, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Viva equality!

“ I'm hoping this amazing new issue of [@CosmopolitanSA](#) signals a turning point for magazines, especially here.

Inclusivity and understanding should always be in season 💎💎 — POST MALUME (👤) (@iamDasKapital) [January 22, 2018](#) ”

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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