

Abstract

This critical investigation of the relationship between animation and advertising in South Africa provides both a historic overview and analysis of Vodacom's *Mo the Meerkat* campaign. This campaign is documented as extensively as possible, by investigating all relevant aspects and decisions made by Vodacom, their advertising agency, Drafftcb, as well as the creative influence and participation by the animation studios and film companies involved in the campaign. A textual and stylistic analysis of all six advertisements produced as part of this campaign is conducted and explores issues of personality, performance and brand identity relating to the *Mo the Meerkat* character. This documentation and analysis establishes that a major South African advertiser chose to use an animated character in their campaign to act as a "spectacle" (as the term is defined by Andrew Darley in his text *Visual Digital Culture. Surface Play and Spectacle in New Media Genres*).