



CONVERSE OPTIMISTIC REBELS

CELEBRATION OF THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE REBELLIOUS

Converse, the iconic sneakerbrand that adorns the feet of musicians, actors, and celebrities alike, pulled out all the stops with their innovative Optimistic Rebels campaign, aimed at discovering and showcasing the creative talents of young South Africans.

The campaign is part of a global drive by Converse to engender and support creativity, which stems from the brand's heritage of seeing things differently, loving people who want to change the world and celebrating the spirit of rebellion and originality. A rebellious spirit was instilled in the Converse brand from the very beginning, with founder Marquis Mills Converse defying convention and bypassing a rubber trust, which allowed him to bring his unique rubber shoes directly to retailers.

Throughout the 20th century, Converse's popularity continued to grow within a number of influential countercultures, including greasers in the '50s, hippies in the '60s and punk-rockers in the

'70s. By the '80s, these legendary sneakers proved irresistible to a whole generation of rockers, skaters and rebellious souls, cementing Converse's status as the brand for those who question the status quo and refuses to blindly follow the mainstream.

Currently in its second century of production, Converse's classic shoes continue to be a hit. In order to keep up with the trends of the times, these classic sneakers are available in their original form as well as a variety of new materials, prints, and special features. Although the original All Star remains the star of Converse, nowadays there is a vast selection of other styles, including the Chuck Taylor All Star, the Jack Purcell, the One Star and the Star Chevron.

Whether you call them *Cons*, *Connies*, *Convics*, *Convos* or *Verses*, the fact remains that Converse is, and always will be, more than a shoe. It's a statement of individuality, originality and rebellion.

MEET OUR CAMPAIGN AMBASSADORS

In August, Converse introduced six talented ambassadors to grow and expand the Optimistic Rebels Campaign. Representing the different categories in which the Campaign aims to identify creative individuals (Art, Music and Dance, Comedy, Life and Learn) these inspiring individuals were tasked with engaging the youth and creating interest in the campaign, while showcasing their own talents in their respective fields.



FABULOUS POETESS

Thato Nhlapo

Thato started writing poetry at 14 and has grown significantly over the past seven years. Inspired by life in general, she applies her gift and love for words in a number of arenas, describing the challenges people face every day as individuals and as a country.

MASTER GRAFFITI WRITER

Dave Coxall

Dave, aka Curio One, does not consider himself a graffiti artist, preferring the term graffiti writer, which better describes his original use of lettering and colour combinations to make conscious statements in derelict places.



BEATBOX KING

Sipho Ludonga

Sipho is a singing, rapping, beat-boxing machine who brings a fresh, vocal percussionist twist to a set whether he performs solo or in a group.



PARKOUR STUNTMAN

Jacky Kwan Tai Ho

Named after the legendary Jackie Chan, Jacky is a professional stunt coordinator, who also uses his agility, body coordination and mind-over-matter mentality to practise parkour, the art of movement that involves fluidly jumping, vaulting or climbing over obstacles without any external help.



FUNNY MAN

Phaswane 'Pass' Motshana

At only 22 years old, Phaswane is making waves as an up-and-coming comedic performer and actor. He developed his love for comedy from an early age, attending gigs with his comedian older brother.



DANCER EXTRAORDINAIRE

Thabiso Lekuba

Also known as 'Mzansi's Lord of the Dance', Thabiso's career flourished in 2008 after being named the 1st runner-up in South Africa's very first season of *So You Think You Can Dance*.



INSPIRED ARTIST

Bonolo Ratshidi

After customising a friend's pair of old Converse All Stars, the passionate Bonolo now paints whatever she likes, whenever she likes, on anything from sneakers and skateboards to walls and canvases. She starts out by sketching and creating designs to reflect a desired mood and then uses characters, fonts and colours to bring them to life.



MAGNIFICENT MUSOS

Spitmunky

This three-man 'electro-rap' gang is a South African calypso of sounds, combining the unique talents of Liam Magner (DJ Veranda-Panda) on machines, beats and vocals; Jacobus Van Heerden (Benson 3000) on guitar, keys, vocals and percussion; and word artist DJ Ewok (Iain Robinson, aka Creamy Ewok Baggends) on lead vox. Incorporating genres from hip-hop and kwaito to drum 'n bass they're turning heads all over the country.

The talents of these amazing and inspiring Ambassadors were showcased through their awesome in-action videos on the website optimisticrebels.co.za and South African television stations throughout September and October 2010.



THREE CITIES, THREE PARTIES, ONE NIGHT

Building on the success of the launch parties, and in order to give everyone the chance to experience the world of an Optimistic Rebel, on Saturday 18 September Converse hosted a three-city exclusive 'underground' party in partnership with 5FM, Channel O and Vuzu. The events were held in Johannesburg at Arts on Main, in Durban at The Wavehouse and in Cape Town at the old Bijou Theatre.

The parties were by invitation only and guests (that included celebrities from the entertainment industry) were treated to top-notch performances by a jam-packed lineup of popular South

African disc jockeys. The Cape Town leg of the event hosted the acclaimed DJs Roger Goode, Shaun Duvet, Dean Fuel and DJ Lloyd; DJs Kent, Milkshake, Household Funk, Romz and Lloyd brought the house down in Johannesburg; and the Durban party featured DJs C-Live, Funky G, Coco-LoCo and Cndo.

In the spirit of Optimistic Rebellion, Converse took real-time partying to a whole new level. A live link enabled one DJ to play for three different crowds simultaneously at three different venues (in three different cities!) – creating an experience like no other.



THESE BOOTS WERE MADE FOR PAINTING

The Campaign continued to grow throughout the month of October, as Converse and Optimistic Rebels hosted a series of 'Art Parties'. They offered participants the opportunity to share their iconoclastic ideas by leaving their positively disruptive mark on larger-than-life Converse Chuck Taylor replicas. Positioning the giant shoes at traditional youth hangouts such as carwashes, *shisa nyama*, cafés and restaurants over weekends, patrons were invited to engage with the Chuck Taylors by tagging them with their signatures.

Participants stood to win great Converse prizes at the events and had an opportunity to be part of a team to create an artwork that would be converted into a mobile billboard.



CONVERSE COMEDY SESSIONS

November 2010 saw the Comedy pillar of the Converse Optimistic Rebels campaign commence. Hosted by Converse Optimistic Rebel Ambassador 'Pass' Motshana, stand-up comedy sessions were held around Johannesburg. Once again, Converse prizes were up for grabs. Converse also sponsored the popular Comedy Minute on The Fresh Drive show on 5FM radio station, hosted by the much-loved DJ Fresh.

REBELS WITH A CAUSE

In September 2010, Converse got students from all over the country involved with Optimistic Rebels through a series of Campus Activations, which included flash mobs, graffiti boards and campus radio stations encouraging students to participate.

Converse placed Gigantic Converse Chuck Taylors at university campuses all across South Africa, with the aim of getting the Optimistic Rebels to express themselves creatively while creating a better place of the world. Converse asked young South Africans to express their views on social change and tag the shoes with causes that they were passionate about. The most commonly recurring would be chosen for activation.

The response was overwhelming, with over 2 500 students penning their thoughts on a wide range of issues. It surfaced that the cause closest to the hearts of these young South Africans is education. Consequently, the next leg of the Converse Optimistic Rebels Campaign for Social Change (Life and Learn) focussed on improving education in our country.

In order to execute this cause, Converse enlisted the help of student volunteers who, together with media and social influencers, helped to improve conditions at various crèches and high schools in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town.



The Converse Optimistic Rebels Campaign was launched with the goal of igniting a conversation among our country's youth and discovering gifted young artists who epitomise the spirit of an optimistic rebel.

The success of the Campaign's parties, together with extensive coverage across all mainstream and social media platforms, has enabled Converse to unearth and celebrate some incredibly gifted young rebels, who have the potential to make South Africa one of the greatest countries in the world.

www.optimisticrebels.co.za | www.converse.com

