



THE

ARTS

SAN

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | ISSUE #1

National
Arts Council **NAC**
an Agency of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture

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CEO'S FOR WORD

Mr Lebogang Mogoera

I am pleased to present the first issue of the financial year 2025/26 Artisan Quarterly Newsletter in my capacity as the new Interim Chief Executive Officer for the National Arts Council of South Africa.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture, the **Honourable Gayton McKenzie** and the **NAC Council** for entrusting me with this important role of ensuring continuity for the organisation whilst the Council is finalising the process to appoint a permanent Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer. I am honoured by this opportunity and commit to serving the arts community with excellence and integrity.

A warm Greeting

Having served in the public sector for many years, including my recent time at the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC), I am well-acquainted with the mandate and impact of the National Arts Council and the vital role it plays in supporting the creative sector. I joined the NAC from my current role as Chief Director: Infrastructure Support, and I bring with me extensive experience in infrastructure development and institutional support. I am thus confident that my expertise will be invaluable in maintaining the momentum of the organisation's key initiatives and upholding our mandate to support South Africa's arts sector.

This issue is published at a time when the 2024/2025 audit is underway, and as an entity that remains steadfast in our commitment to serving the arts and culture sector, the NAC continues to prioritise transparency, integrity, and good governance in all that we do. From the basis of what I have observed thus far, I am confident that the results of the current audit taking place will reflect the good governance that is embedded in our values.

During the 2024/25 financial year, the NAC continued to play a pivotal role in providing support and fostering collaboration between artists, international organisations, cultural institutions, and other stakeholders in the arts community. This is evident through the number of projects and bursaries that have been funded throughout the last financial year.

I am pleased to confirm that a total of **888 PROJECTS** were supported through a range of funding programmes, including the *Annual Funding Call, Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme (PESP5), Arts Organisation Support Funding (AOSF), Block Bursaries, Individual Postgraduate Bursaries, and International Bursaries.*

Despite this success, we continue to note that the NAC's funding allocation has steadily declined, while the demand for support has continued to grow. The arts sector remains critically underfunded, with contributions from both government and private sources often falling short of what is needed to meet the sector's diverse and expanding needs. This not only limits innovation and production but also hinders the sector's ability to contribute meaningfully to the economy and national identity.

As part of the solution, the NAC is actively engaging in advocacy to secure more funding from both the government and other strategic partners. To supplement this, the NAC will also embark on fundraising initiatives to raise more funds for the sector in this new financial year.

This Financial year started on a positive note, which saw the National Arts Council of South Africa (NAC) **entering a ground-breaking partnership with the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).** This strategic collaboration aims to roll out a structured capacity-building programme in arts business skills, specifically designed to benefit arts organisations within the sector.

We are also thrilled to announce that in the coming months, **the second instalment of the co-creation project between South African and Hong Kong musical artists will be showcased in South Africa at the Market Theatre in Newtown.** This project is a continuation of the powerful collaboration first showcased at the inaugural event during the Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo (HKPAX) in 2024.

This upcoming event promises to elevate the music scene, celebrate the richness of cross-cultural creativity, and shine a spotlight on the fruits of our artists' labour and the transformative power of global partnerships. As I conclude, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Council for their invaluable leadership and strategic guidance, as well as to the Management and Staff of the NAC for their dedication, hard work, and unwavering commitment. Your collective efforts have been essential in ensuring that the NAC continues to provide exceptional service to our stakeholders and remains a vibrant organisation responsive to the changing needs of the arts and culture sector.

As the CEO, I look forward to ensuring that the organisation continues to deliver on its mandate and planned projects.

As we look ahead to the year, we remain committed to our mission to serve the sector with excellence and integrity, ensuring a significant impact on our artists. I am confident that, with the capable and passionate team we have, we are well placed to achieve our goals and seize new opportunities. We look forward to continuing this exciting journey alongside our stakeholders, partners, and the wider creative community.

We hope this edition inspires you to take the next step, work passionately, and make the most of all the funding opportunities currently available from the National Arts Council (NAC). Together, let's continue to shape and grow our vibrant arts sector! **Happy Reading!**



Welcome

To the first edition of the Artisan newsletter. As we kick off the new fiscal year, the NAC continues to drive forward its mission to strategically lead a sustainable arts sector to improve socio-economic conditions in South Africa.

As we have recently announced the opening of two funding calls; Annual Project Funding and the International Bursary Funding which are to run concurrently from the 2nd of June 2025, the NAC is further reaffirming its commitment to consistently and transparently administer funding calls that support the development, preservation, and promotion of the arts in South Africa.

During the publishing of this issue, the *National Arts Festival Programme* had just closed and was dedicated specifically for arts practitioners registered for the fringe programme to apply for funding.

This issue is themed Rising Together, reflecting a unified vision expressed through diverse efforts, all aimed at providing ongoing support to the sector. We anticipate many positive and transformative experiences as artists and arts practitioners engage with the application process and benefit from the funding opportunities.

To the entire team internally and externally, we look forward to the dedication towards the success of these calls. Together, we strive for collaborative effort that will be meaningful to those we support.

Please continue to send opinion pieces and contributions for features in our quarterly newsletters, as we share common goals in initiatives that are of significant value in the arts sector.

2025 FUNDING CALLS

It's that exciting time of the year again! The National Arts Council (NAC) is pleased to announce the opening of new funding calls, offering valuable opportunities for South African artists and arts organisations to bring their creative visions to life.

This year, multiple funding calls are running concurrently to support a wide range of disciplines and initiatives.

National Arts Festival (NAF) Fringe Programme

The NAC successfully administered applications for the 2025 NAF Fringe Programme which closed on 16 June 2025. This funding opportunity invited active arts practitioners to apply for project support in the following disciplines: Craft, Dance, Literature, Music, Theatre, Musical Theatre, Visual Arts, and Multidisciplinary. We are pleased to share that twenty (20) individual artists and seven (7) organisations were awarded funding as part of this initiative, with outcomes officially released on 14 June 2025.

Particular and special encouragement was given to projects presenting content in South African Indigenous art forms and capacity-building initiatives, including those focusing on intellectual property and the development of the creative sector.

Since the National Arts Festival is South Africa's largest and most influential multi-arts festival and serves as a critical platform for artistic expression, experimentation, and market access, the NAC hopes that the artists awarded the NAF Fringe Funding will continue, through their artist work and contributions, to foster and develop the arts sector.

“The NAC remains committed to fostering artistic excellence, supporting cultural heritage, and enabling meaningful participation in the arts.”

Annual Project Funding & International Bursary Funding

Opening date: 2 June 2025
Closing date: Friday, 11 July 2025

- **Annual Project Funding** supports innovative projects that promote artistic excellence, access, and development within South Africa.
- **International Bursary Funding** assists South African arts students wishing to pursue postgraduate studies at recognised international institutions.

Outcome announcement dates:

- International Bursaries: 26 August 2025
- Annual Project Funding: 17 October 2025

How to Apply:

Applicants are encouraged to apply on time to avoid last-minute challenges and to participate in our physical and online funding workshops for guidance and support. Details of these workshops are shared across all NAC social media platforms.

For full guidelines and application forms, visit our official website to access the GMS portal or contact our offices directly.

Look out for upcoming workshops, which will be promoted across all our social media platforms. During these sessions, our arts development officers will be available to unpack the funding guidelines and provide guidance on how to submit a strong application.



EVENTS



Cross-Cultural Music Showcase: South Africa and Hong Kong in Concert

From **24 to 25 October 2025**, in association with the Market Theatre, the National Arts Council is proud and excited to present a spectacular collaborative concert between South African and Hong Kong artists.

This marks the second instalment of an extraordinary cultural exchange, following the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed on 2 February 2024 between the NAC and the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC). That agreement ignited a groundbreaking partnership dedicated to cultural and creative collaboration.

The initial fruits of this partnership were showcased at the Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo (HKPAX), held from 14 to 18 October 2024, where a co-creation project saw musicians from both countries deliver a mesmerising and unique musical performance.

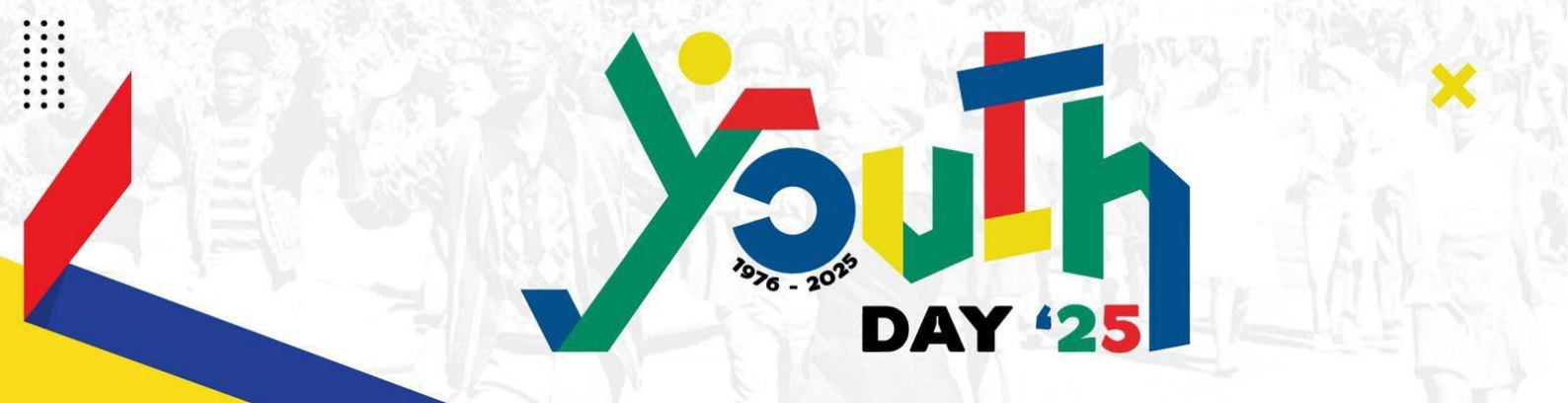
As part of this ongoing initiative to promote indigenous music and cultural identity, the NAC is delighted to announce the return of the five South African musicians and their Hong Kong counterparts who performed at the 2024 Expo. They will once again take to the stage in October 2025 for an even more immersive and dynamic musical experience.

These award-winning musicians will once again represent the richness and diversity of South Africa's musical heritage, engaging in a bold, innovative cross-cultural performance with exceptional musicians from Hong Kong.

This is more than just a concert; it is a celebration of shared humanity, a musical dialogue, and a creative expression that transcends borders. Through this continued collaboration, the NAC reaffirms its commitment to cultural diplomacy, creative exchange, and global visibility for South African talent.

Featured South African Artists:

- Mr Mbuzeni Mkhize – renowned Maskandi guitarist
- Ms Thandeka Mfinyongo – master of the Uhadi (gourd/calabash bow) and Umrhubhe (mouth-bow)
- Ms Ayanda Jiya – celebrated voice artist
- Dr Natalie Rungan – accomplished voice artist
- Ms Sibahle Dladla – specialist in African indigenous instruments.



SKILLS FOR THE CHANGING WORLD: Empowering the Youth for Meaningful Participation

Young art practitioners are pivotal in the development and progression of South Africa's arts and culture sector. Every year, the month of June is acknowledged and celebrated as Youth Month to honor the role young people played in the fight against apartheid and the historic Soweto Uprising of 1976.

The Soweto Uprising was a turning point in the struggle for liberation in South Africa. After democracy was established in 1994, June 16 was declared National Youth Day. This year marks the 49th national commemoration of Youth Day, with the national theme being: *"Skills for the Changing World: Empowering Youth for Meaningful Economic Participation"*.

To celebrate this year's Youth Month, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture held **two (2) exhibitions** in the **Northwest province**, where agencies under the department and its partners were invited to exhibit the services and opportunities offered to the youth. The commemorations began with the following exhibitions:

THE CULTURAL & CREATIVE YOUTH CAREER EXPO Sunday, 15 June at the Artillery Regiment in Potchefstroom:

The expo aimed to introduce and promote all available opportunities for young people, for empowerment, to create visibility of cultural and creative industries and other platforms within government, create awareness on all available career opportunities for young people, in and out of school, and to create a platform that will engage learners, job creators and job seekers. The Expo showcased a variety of entrepreneurial works within the Cultural and Creative Industries to further inspire the youth.

THE 2025 NATIONAL YOUTH DAY EXHIBITION Monday, 16 June at the Northwest University Rec. Farm Stadium in Potchefstroom:

The expo aimed at showcasing a variety of entrepreneurial works within South Africa's Cultural and Creative Industries to further inspire the youth. Public and private institutions, national agencies targeting the youth, and other organisations alike were invited to participate. The expo was a great success, with hundreds of young South Africans in attendance. *South Africa's Deputy President, Paul Mashatile*, delivered the keynote address, highlighting the role that the youth play in developing a greater South Africa. The department's *honourable minister, Gayton McKenzie*, was also in attendance to welcome the public and guide the program of events.

In addition to the department's commemorative events, the National Arts Council of South Africa ran a social media campaign to celebrate Youth Month. The campaign included a virtual roundtable discussion, which was held on Zoom and streamed on the NAC Facebook page.

The discussion focused on the developments of digital innovation in the arts and the societal/cultural significance it holds. The discussion further focused on the role and contributions of young art practitioners in digitally innovative art forms, as well as the benefits and challenges that the youth face with digital innovation, the skills and tools required to develop and sustain a career in an era of digital innovation. The discussion was facilitated by Shalate Sekhabi, a talented actor and artists, and the panel speakers were Ruzy Rusike, Keanu Vergie, Kopano Maroga and Michael Balkind.

DISCUSSING POSSIBLE COLLABORATIONS: University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) & the National Arts Council (NAC)

In a significant step towards advancing the arts and culture sector, the National Arts Council's Interim CEO Ms Julie Diphofa recently held a productive meeting with the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), to explore avenues for strategic partnership and collaboration.

This engagement provided the NAC with a comprehensive understanding of Wits University's profound capabilities and strengths in driving development within the vibrant arts and culture landscape.

A key highlight of the meeting was the focus on the esteemed Wits School of the Arts and its diverse and impactful departments. Discussions during the meeting included insightful presentations from both institutions, outlining their respective opportunities and challenges, and crucially, identifying critical areas for future strategic partnership.

With an impressive array of nine (9) distinct programmes within the School of the Arts, including *Cultural Policy and Management, Digital Arts, Drama for Life (Applied Theatre and Drama Therapies), Film and Television, Fine Arts, History of Art, Interdisciplinary Arts and Culture Studies, Music, Theatre, and Performance*, Wits University undeniably plays a pivotal role in ensuring excellence and fostering development across the sector. The NAC expressed its enthusiasm for the meeting and eagerly anticipates advancing these initial discussions into concrete partnership and collaboration initiatives.

The NAC is even more proud to have funded the University of the Witwatersrand, School of the Arts, as one of the beneficiaries of our 2024/25 Block Institutional Bursary Funding to support students who are pursuing a career in the Arts.

This vital support is specifically designed to assist undergraduate students who are passionately pursuing careers in the arts. The Block Institutional Bursary is a unique NAC funding programme that allocates bursaries directly to higher education and training institutions, which then administer the funds to support their deserving undergraduate arts students.

This collaboration underscores a shared commitment to nurturing the next generation of artistic talent and strengthening the cultural fabric of the nation. Both the NAC and Wits University look forward to a fruitful partnership that will undoubtedly contribute significantly to the growth and sustainability of South Africa's arts and culture sector.

SOUTH AFRICAN BALLET SHINES AT THE 2025 Benois de la Danse Awards

The National Arts Council (NAC) wishes to honour and celebrate choreographer Mthuthuzeli November and dancer Joshua Williams for their remarkable achievements at the 2025 Benois de la Danse Awards. Their success not only showcases their individual brilliance but also highlights the extraordinary talent emerging from South Africa's arts sector. We applaud their contributions to elevating South African ballet on the global stage.

In a momentous night for South African ballet, **Mthuthuzeli November** and **Joshua Williams** etched their names in history at the **2025 Benois de la Danse Awards, held on 17 June 2025, at the prestigious Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, Russia.** November received the *Prize for Best Choreography for his acclaimed work Chapter 2*, while Williams was jointly awarded the *Prize for Best Male Dancer* for his standout performance in the same piece. Williams shared this honour with Dmitry Smilevskiy, Principal Dancer at the Bolshoi Theatre.

Chapter 2 was commissioned by Cape Ballet Africa for its inaugural triple bill, SALT, last year, marking a significant moment for the company and for South African ballet. The production also garnered international recognition for Camille Bracher, who was nominated for Best Female Dancer for her performance in the piece. Chapter 2 is set to an original, commissioned score by composer Peter Johnson.

Speaking on this historic achievement, Debbie Turner, artistic director and founder of Cape Ballet Africa, expressed immense pride and said: *"The Benois de la Danse Awards are considered the Oscars of the ballet world. The recognition of Mthuthuzeli, Joshua, and Camille highlights the extraordinary talent and artistry that South Africa contributes to the global stage."*

The Benois de la Danse Awards are among the most prestigious honours in the world of ballet, celebrating excellence in choreography, performance, and artistic innovation. This achievement underscores the rising influence and exceptional calibre of South African dancers and choreographers in the international arena.

Joshua Williams was initially discovered by dance teacher Tasmin Williams as a 6-year-old dancing in a post office in Cape Town while his mother waited in a queue. By the time he was a teenager, Joshua entered the South African International Ballet Competition. He trained under Jenny Beck and Tamsin's Dance studio for seven years, before being awarded a scholarship to train at Tanz Akademi in Zurich, Switzerland.

Whereas November, hailing from Zolani township in the town of Ashton (Western Cape) started attending Dance for All classes from age 15. Dance For All, which teaches dance to children in underprivileged communities, has been funded by the National Arts Council (NAC) of South Africa.

In 2011 he was awarded a scholarship to attend the Cape Academy of Performing Arts (CAPA), where he graduated with Distinction in 2014. In 2017, November was commissioned by the Cape Dance Company to create two new works (Visceral and The Rite of Passage), funded by Food Lover's Market, which premiered at Artscape Theatre in Cape Town. Cape Dance Company was also a recipient of funding from the NAC.

"The National Arts Council extends its heartfelt congratulations to Mthuthuzeli November and Joshua Williams. Their remarkable achievements not only reflect their personal excellence but also demonstrate the world-class calibre of South African arts and culture. They inspire emerging artists and reaffirm our nation's rich creative legacy."

PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS: Reflecting Three Decades of Freedom



HUMAN RIGHTS MONTH ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION Wednesday, 19 March 2025

Human Rights Day, observed annually on March 21st in South Africa, serves as a poignant reminder of the nation's journey to democratic freedom. It honors those who fought for liberation and pays tribute to the 69 anti-apartheid protesters killed in the tragic Sharpeville Massacre of March 21, 1960.

To celebrate Human Rights Day, the Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture hosted a series of events under the theme *"Three Decades of Respect for and Promotion of Human Rights"*, aiming for collective reflection and to celebrate the constitutional rights that underpin a united, inclusive, non-racial, non-sexist, and prosperous society. In line with this objective, the National Arts Council of South Africa hosted a virtual round-table discussion as part of the Department's Human Rights Day celebration.

The NAC Human Rights Day round table discussion was held on the 19th of March 2025 and was live streamed on Zoom and Facebook Live. The theme of the discussion was *"Exploring the Significance of Art and Culture throughout the History of Human Rights Liberation in South Africa"*.

The discussion was facilitated by Gail Smith, an accomplished *feminist writer, journalist and media strategist*. The panel speakers included Professor Pitika Ntuli (*a South African sculptor, poet, writer, academic professor and activist*), Vas Putter (*a South African artist, philanthropist, and avid upcycling and vintage enthusiast*), and Ramadan Suleman, *renowned South African figure in arts and activism*.

The discussion highlighted the significance of arts and culture in South Africa's human rights and liberation history, emphasizing the importance of preserving human rights artworks for national development. It also addressed challenges to free artistic expression, exploring innovative approaches to sector transformation and prioritizing artists' rights. Audiences were allowed to interact with the speakers by leaving comments and through an audience Q&A towards the end of the session. The discussion received positive feedback and was engaged with over 1400 views on the NAC Facebook page.

It is through discussions such as this that art practitioners can explore strategies and processes that assist in the development of South Africa's art and culture sector. The National Arts Council remains committed to fostering such vital dialogues, serving as a crucial platform that actively initiates and supports the practice, promotion, and development of the arts, thereby contributing directly to the nation's cultural growth.

FREEDOM DAY 2025:
Honouring the Past, Building the Future

Freedom Day carries deep historical significance for communities across South Africa. Since the country's first democratic elections on 27 April 1994, this day has been commemorated annually as a symbol of liberation, unity, and the right of all citizens, regardless of race or background. After 31 years, all are able to participate equally in shaping the nation's future. In modern South Africa, Freedom Day is not only a celebration of democracy but also a call for healing, reconciliation, and collective nation-building.

The 2025 Freedom Day event, held in Ermelo, Mpumalanga, on 27 April, served as a platform to reflect on the country's journey and recommit to addressing the injustices of the past. Under the theme “United in Resilience for the Defence of Our Freedom and Democracy,” the event brought together community members from in and around the Gert Sibande District Municipality.

In his keynote address, the Honourable Minister of Mineral and Petroleum Resources, Mr. Gwede Mantashe, acknowledged South Africa’s painful legacy of colonialism and apartheid, describing it as a history forged through struggle, courage, and resilience.

The Minister emphasized the Government of National Unity's key priorities: driving inclusive growth and job creation, reducing poverty and the high cost of living, and building a capable, ethical, and developmental state.

He also reminded attendees that while the country has made strides in expanding access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and housing, these efforts must continue and intensify to combat poverty, unemployment, and inequality, which still affect millions of South Africans.

The National Arts Council actively participated in the national celebration, engaging directly with the community to highlight its role as a supportive and accessible funding agency for the arts and culture sector. With upcoming funding calls, the NAC seized this opportunity to share crucial information on opportunities, application requirements, and compliance expectations.

The NAC's involvement was in alignment with broader national priorities of contributing to economic development, cultural preservation, and the empowerment of creatives across the country. Such events powerfully affirm the arts as a crucial tool for fostering social cohesion, healing, and transformation within a democratic South Africa.



STORIES



CRAFTERS SHOWCASE: Empowering Creativity, Celebrating Heritage

The **Crafters Showcase** recently brought together local talent, fostering creativity and promoting cultural expression through a vibrant, community-driven initiative. This event powerfully demonstrated how craft markets can drive economic upliftment, strengthen social cohesion, and preserve heritage, serving as a dynamic platform for artisans to connect with broader audiences.

Held in an accessible and festive environment, the event provided local crafters and artisans an opportunity to exhibit and sell a diverse range of handmade products including beadwork, textiles, ceramics, and woodwork. Beyond commerce, the Showcase actively celebrated and preserved the region's rich craft traditions, fostering deep community pride through interactive experiences like live demonstrations and creative workshops.

A cornerstone of the initiative was youth empowerment, particularly the strategic inclusion of young women from Kimberley. These young leaders played vital roles in event organization, community outreach, and audience engagement. Their intimate local knowledge ensured effective communication and optimal targeting, fostering a strong sense of community ownership. Beyond gaining valuable work experience, these young women served as powerful cultural ambassadors, significantly deepening the event's impact.

To ensure inclusivity and diversity, crafters from across the Northern Cape and neighbouring provinces were invited to apply online, submitting their work via a digital platform. A careful curation process followed, designed to showcase a balanced range of products, minimize vendor competition, and enhance the overall visitor experience.

Ultimately, the Crafters Showcase successfully wove together heritage, enterprise, and innovation, providing meaningful support to local economies, elevating diverse creative voices, and inspiring lasting cultural pride across communities.



KWAZULU-NATAL POETRY FESTIVAL: Empowering Voices, Building Futures

The **KwaZulu-Natal Poetry Festival** was designed to celebrate the power of poetry, empower local talent, and engage with pressing social issues, all while fostering the professional development of emerging poets in the province. By providing a dynamic platform for expression and growth, the festival successfully spotlighted local voices and strengthened the region's cultural landscape.

Preceding the main festival, Development Poetry Workshops were held in Pietermaritzburg, hosted by Ubuntu Arts and attended by pre-selected poets from neighbouring municipalities across KZN. These workshops focused on leadership, creative and critical writing, social media management, and personal brand building. Conducted in both in-person and livestream formats, the workshops ensured broad accessibility and inclusion.

This hybrid model proved to be a powerful enabler, supporting a diverse group of poets in honing their skills and cultivating a sense of community and shared purpose.

The training modules extended beyond poetry, equipping participants with valuable tools for academic advancement, entrepreneurial ventures, and career growth. Sessions on book publishing and self-promotion inspired a proactive mindset and helped poets develop sustainable artistic careers.

The culmination of the festival took place at the Durban ICC, where the top five poets selected from the workshops performed alongside established artists. This high-profile exposure significantly raised their visibility, opened doors to mentorship and collaboration, and accelerated their professional journeys.

Ultimately, the KZN Poetry Festival achieved its mission: nurturing talent, fostering artistic excellence, and building bridges between creativity and opportunity for poets across KwaZulu-Natal.





STREET CULTURE REPRESENTING POSITIVE CHANGE

The art of dance is more than a practice of physical movement; it is a universal language, a source of expression, and it serves as a powerful cultural and societal tool. Without words, dance can convey complex emotions and tell a story. Whether you prefer classical ballet or modern contemporary, every style of dance gives us a unique view of the human experience.

The 'Street Culture Representing Positive Change (SCRPC)' dance festival project was established by the Siyavaya Contemporary Dance Company in the town of Kimberley, Northern Cape. Siyavaya Production specialises in 'edutainment' that focuses on live performance training and development.

In addition, the company offers administration and management training as well as the exhibition of local and national performance initiatives. Siyavaya Production seeks to provide and encourage the provision of opportunities and resources for art practitioners with

historically disadvantaged backgrounds, creating employment opportunities, a platform for engagement, and networking opportunities within the Northern Cape's cultural and creative sector.

The 'SCRPC' project was aimed at celebrating and promoting South Africa's unique cultural heritage through the art of dance. The project was also aimed at facilitating national liaison between individuals and institutions across South Africa and initiating the development of Northern Cape tourism through urban 'street' dance, music, and fashion culture.

The project was executed in two-fold, beginning with a live introductory screening that was aired on 'My Northern Cape TV', a popular platform in the Northern Cape. The screening was a showcase of urban 'street' culture, fusing different forms of dance, music, food and fashion.

Popular modern dance styles like "Pantsula" were complemented with traditional African instrumental music, highlighting South Africa's urban 'street' culture. The festival then continued and ended with a series of live dance performances that celebrated and honoured the emergence of the 'Pantsula' dance style in the late 90s.

A member of Siyavaya Contemporary Dance Company wrote, "Our current 'street' dance style is an important component in the promotion of Northern Cape's cultural identity and the development of tourism and employment opportunities. It has attracted national and international attention, and Northern Cape's market space has increased".

In preparation for the dance festival, the Siyavaya Contemporary Dance Company's implementation process included strategy and logistics planning, talent/crew recruiting, rehearsals, and marketing/promoting the festival. Following this process, the 'SCRPC' project was successfully held in December 2024 in Verwoertpark, Kimberley.

With the financial support of the National Arts Council (NAC), the 'Street Culture Representing Positive Change' dance festival project was able to provide employment and training opportunities for over 20 art practitioners. The project made a valuable contribution to the development of local community art centres and the support of marginalised groups, such as the youth of the Northern Cape. The NAC is proud to support initiatives that so closely align with the mandate of promoting the appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the arts.





The South African government continues to intensify its fight against gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), which President Cyril Ramaphosa has described as the country's 'second pandemic'.

In February 2021, the GBVF Response Fund was launched by President Cyril Ramaphosa together with the International Women's Forum of South Africa to address the high levels of GBVF in South Africa.

Since then, around R162 million has been pledged to the fund, with 75% of this amount already collected. For more information and support on gender-based violence in South Africa, visit www.saferspaces.org.za



HEALING CLAY

The art of craft is more than the creation of pieces and products. For artists and audiences alike, it is therapeutic. So much so that therapists across the world incorporate art media like craft in a practice called 'art therapy'. Art therapy is a form of psychotherapy involving the encouragement of free self-expression through painting, drawing, or crafting. It aims to reduce distress and improve social, emotional and mental health by promoting insight, self-compassion and a sense of agency and self-worth.

The 'Healing Clay' project, established by Andiswa Dlamini, is a training and development workshop held in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. The workshop focuses on female sculptors and survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa, and is aimed at providing skill development training, professional mentorship, mental health support, and a platform to both produce and exhibit their art pieces.

Andiswa further explains, "Healing Clay is more than just a workshop; it's a sanctuary where female sculptors and survivors of gender-based violence come together, shaping their experiences into expressions of resilience and healing. Gender-based violence casts a long shadow, its victims often shrouded in silence. Healing Clay breaks this silence, offering a safe space for expression and empowerment.

Here, accomplished female sculptors act as compassionate mentors, sharing their skills and artistic wisdom with survivors. This collaboration fosters dialogue, understanding, and a powerful message: survivors are not defined by their trauma, but by their courage and creativity".

The 'Healing Clay' project programme began with a series of training, development, and mentorship workshops, which were facilitated by two professional female crafters. In December 2024, the participants and facilitators of the workshops showcased their art pieces at an exhibition.

Many relevant stakeholders were invited to the workshops and exhibition, which provided the participants and project team members with valuable networking opportunities as well as an opportunity to better understand and reach South Africa's art and craft market spaces.

With the support of the National Arts Council, the 'Healing Clay' project was able to provide over 18 job opportunities in KwaZulu-Natal. Andiswa writes, "The project team intends to roll out numerous other mentoring sessions in the [near future] and build additional partnerships to ensure that the project's impact is felt beyond the Province of KwaZulu-Natal". As mandated, the NAC remains committed to providing the support needed to give the historically disadvantaged such additional help and resources as required to give them greater access to the arts.

GIG GUIDE

THE GO-TO GIG GUIDE FOR ARTS FANS

Everybody enjoys a live performance! If you're looking for something new to see, here's where you should be!

GAUTENG



1. The Career Expo: 13 August 2025

Faculty of Arts and Design
Tshwane University of Technology, Tshwane



2. Kippies Fringe: 26 June - 06 December 2025

Just Run The Show



3. The Moon Looks Delicious From Here 09 July - 27 July 2025

Market Theatre



4. Hey Neighbour: 30 - 31 August 2025

Legends Adventure Farm, Pretoria



5. Breakfast with Mugabe Play: 17 July - 10 August 2025

Market Theatre

WESTERN CAPE

- 1. **LA RONDE: 20 June - 12 July 2025**
The Baxter Studio



- 2. **THE 5 ARTS WEEKEND: 18-20 July 2025**
KAROO ART HOTEL,
30 Van Riebeeck Street, Barrydale



KWAZULU NATAL

- 2. **ELVIS ON TOUR THE ULTIMATE TRIBUTE SHOW: 26 July 2025**
Durban
- 3. **INDUMEZULU MASKANDI FESTIVAL: 16-17 August 2025**
Newcastle



LIMPOPO

- 1. **MTAITO LEKOMPO FESTIVAL 30 - 31 August 2025**
Burgersfort



NORTH-WEST

- 1. **RUSTY ROCKS ALL FOR WOMEN 09 - 10 August 2025**
Sun City



MEET & GREET

The NAC organisation has over 45 internal staff members, departmentally structured in administration, art development, finance, marketing, communications, etc. Each individual within the organisation plays a role in fulfilling the NAC's vision and mandate. So, who are these individuals working towards sustaining an accessible and responsive funding agency in the arts sector.



From the vibrant streets of Soweto to the bustling energy of Durban, **Kgomotso Le Roux** embodies a rich tapestry of South African culture. As an Art Development Officer in the theatre discipline at the NAC, her life has always been deeply intertwined with the arts – a passion she seamlessly blends with her professional journey. With a colourful SeTswana and IsiZulu heritage, Kgomotso's lifelong love for the arts is evident; she finds joy and purpose in both creating and supporting artistic endeavors. Whether it's starting her day with music or unwinding with a comedy show, her connection to art is constant, though her favorite form might change with the day.

Kgomotso's academic journey reflects her diverse interests. She holds an Ethnomusicology degree from Wits University, a research-oriented field focused on studying music within its cultural context. Her studies included immersive research into Tshivenda culture, involving travel to Hamakura and Mburimburi to observe traditional performers. She further strengthened her expertise with an Advanced Diploma in Business Project Management from the University of Cape Town.

Kgomotso brings extensive professional experience to the arts. A talented artist herself, she began singing at a young age and plays the piano, djembe, and mbira. *She also writes and produces music, notably for the popular children's television show "Takalane."* Her behind-the-scenes work spans event management, project research, and promotion. Additionally, Kgomotso is the author of a children's book and a musical.

Kgomotso joined the National Arts Council in May 2022 as an Art Development Officer in the music discipline, transitioning to theatre in 2024. When discussing the challenges faced by South African artists, she highlights financial instability as a primary concern: *"I think one of the biggest challenges artists face is financial stability. It's difficult because we are considered freelancers, so when you don't get a gig, you can't put food on the table. It's a labour of love, but it's still very difficult."*

Beyond NAC funding, Kgomotso strongly advises artists to diversify their income and acquire varied skills. She initially believed her project management qualification would signal a departure from the arts, but it proved to be the opposite. Instead, these additional skills empowered her to navigate the business complexities of the arts sector, opening new avenues for creative growth. *"I'm a fan of education that can lead to new opportunities," she states, recalling research into international artists with multiple career streams, much like her own grandmother, who was both a teacher and a singer. "While it's unfortunate that it's often necessary, these artists were able to sustain their artistry much better. Diversifying our skill set can be incredibly valuable. And if education were free, it would significantly boost our economy."*

Working at the NAC, Kgomotso enjoys most when applicants write to her to thank her for her assistance in their projects, as it makes her work feel valuable and seeing the results of her service is very rewarding.



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