



THE ARTS SAND

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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

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**"NO GREAT ARTIST EVER SEES THINGS AS
THEY REALLY ARE. IF HE DID, HE WOULD
CEASE TO BE AN ARTIST"**

- Oscar Wilde -

CEO'S FOR WORD

Mr. Vincent Mashale
Acting Chief Executive Officer

“ It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the first issue of Artisan for the 2026/27 financial year. This publication serves as an important platform through which the National Arts Council of South Africa (NAC) shares its work, impact, opportunities, partnerships, and developments within South Africa’s vibrant arts and culture sector.

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This period marks an important moment of reflection, renewal, and strategic focus as we continue to advance our mandate in service of South Africa’s diverse and evolving creative community. As the NAC, we remain committed to championing artistic excellence, supporting innovation, preserving cultural heritage, and contributing meaningfully to the growth of South Africa’s creative economy.

The NAC is especially pleased that, once again, The Presidency has entrusted the organisation with the implementation of the Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme (PESP 7). This continued confidence affirms the NAC’s proven capability and effective systems in administering one of the country’s most impactful interventions within the creative and cultural industries.

The Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme remains a vital catalyst for job creation, economic participation, skills development, and sector recovery. Beyond funding, PESP continues to provide hope and opportunity to thousands of artists, technical professionals, performers, cultural workers, and creative entrepreneurs whose livelihoods depend on a thriving arts sector. The programme has become an important instrument in sustaining the creative economy while ensuring that the arts continue to play a meaningful role in social cohesion, nation-building, and economic development.

We hope that the successful beneficiaries of this project will implement impactful projects that will create sustainable employment opportunities and contribute meaningfully to the growth of the sector.

Partnerships and collaboration remain central to the NAC’s strategic vision. We continue to forge meaningful relationships that strengthen the sustainability of the arts sector and unlock new opportunities for artists and cultural practitioners.

In this regard, the National Arts Council is proud to announce a pilot partnership with RMB Latitudes Art Fair for INDEX 2026, taking place from 22 May 2026 to 24 May 2026. In a significant move for the creative economy, the two organisations have formalised this collaboration to establish a high-profile platform dedicated to the growth and development of independent and emerging visual artists in South Africa.





This initiative seeks to enhance visibility, expand market access, and create meaningful opportunities for artists while reinforcing a shared commitment to building a more sustainable and inclusive visual arts sector. RMB Latitudes Art Fair INDEX 2026 represents a strategic step forward in positioning South African visual artists within a strengthened creative and commercial ecosystem, while opening pathways for professional growth and long-term sector participation.

Still on partnerships and collaboration, the National Arts Council (NAC) and the National Heritage Council (NHC) recently renewed their partnership to strengthen South Africa's arts and cultural heritage sectors through a renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

As part of this collaboration, both entities will develop a unified resource mobilisation plan aimed at supporting large-scale heritage conservation and artistic development initiatives. This partnership will help streamline funding mechanisms, strengthen institutional cooperation, and ensure that resources are distributed more equitably and effectively across the sector.

As we move through the 2026/27 financial year, the NAC remains committed to building a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable creative sector that reflects the diversity, innovation, and spirit of South Africa. We recognise both the opportunities and challenges facing the sector, and we remain inspired by the resilience, passion, and creativity of South African artists and cultural practitioners.

On behalf of the National Arts Council, I extend my sincere gratitude to our stakeholders, partners, government, artists, and the broader creative community for their continued support and collaboration. Together, we will continue to create opportunities, empower communities, stimulate economic growth, and ensure that the arts remain at the heart of South Africa's development journey.

Let us continue to create, collaborate, inspire, and shape a brighter future for the arts sector.

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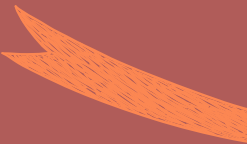
**"Coming together is a
beginning; keeping together
is progress; working together
is success."**

- Henry Ford -

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EDI- TOR'S NOTE



Welcome to the first issue of Artisan for the 2026/27 financial year, a celebration of creativity, collaboration, resilience, and the people who continue to shape South Africa's vibrant arts and culture landscape. This edition is themed Creative Voices, Shared Futures, reflecting the collective spirit of a sector that continues to inspire, innovate, and create meaningful impact within communities across the country.

CREATIVE VOICES. SHARED FUTURES!

Through this publication, the National Arts Council of South Africa (NAC) seeks to create a space that not only informs, but also connects, uplifts, and celebrates the creative sector. Inside this issue, readers will find updates on key NAC programmes and initiatives currently shaping the arts landscape. We spotlight the 2026/27 Annual Project Funding process and the continued implementation of the Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme (PESP 7), an initiative that continues to play a critical role in creating employment opportunities and sustaining livelihoods within the cultural and creative industries.

This edition also highlights exciting partnerships and collaborations aimed at strengthening the creative economy and expanding opportunities for artists. Among these is the NAC's pilot partnership with RMB Latitudes Art Fair for INDEX 2026, which seeks to elevate independent and emerging visual artists through increased visibility, access, and professional development opportunities. We also reflect on renewed institutional collaborations focused on advancing arts, culture, and heritage development in South Africa.

At the heart of Artisan are the stories of people. This issue proudly features inspiring success stories from artists, creatives, and cultural practitioners whose journeys demonstrate the transformative power of the arts. These stories celebrate excellence, perseverance, innovation, and the real impact of investment in the creative sector.

Readers can also explore our Gig Guide, which showcases upcoming cultural events, performances, exhibitions, festivals, and creative opportunities from across the country. Through this feature, we hope to encourage audiences to discover, support, and engage with local talent and creative spaces.



Importantly, this issue takes readers behind the scenes of the National Arts Council itself by profiling some of the dedicated staff members who work tirelessly every day to serve the sector. Often working quietly in the background, these individuals play a vital role in ensuring that funding processes, stakeholder engagements, governance systems, and developmental programmes continue to support artists and organisations nationwide.

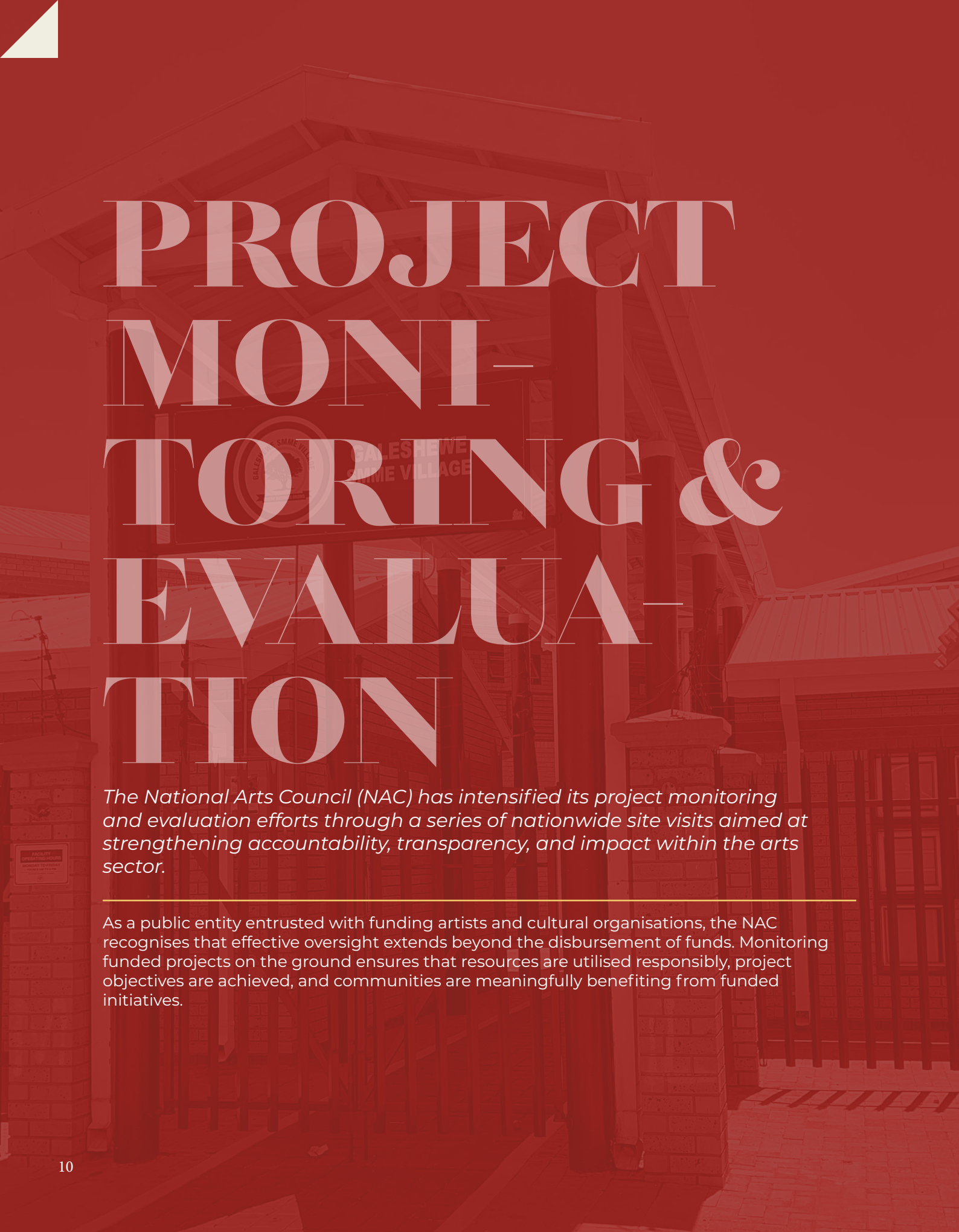
As we launch this edition of Artisan, we do so with excitement and optimism for the future of the sector. The creative industry remains a powerful driver of social cohesion, economic participation, storytelling, and cultural expression, and through this newsletter, we hope to continue amplifying the voices, achievements, and opportunities that shape our creative nation.

At the NAC, we value the voice of the sector and believe that meaningful engagement and collaboration are essential in shaping a thriving creative industry. We therefore encourage artists, organisations, practitioners, and stakeholders to share their stories, achievements, upcoming events, contributions, and feedback with us for future editions of Artisan.

Submissions and contributions can be sent to communication1@nac.org.za.

We thank you for joining us on this journey and invite you to continue creating, collaborating, and inspiring with us.

Happy reading!



PROJECT MONI- TORING & EVALUA- TION

The National Arts Council (NAC) has intensified its project monitoring and evaluation efforts through a series of nationwide site visits aimed at strengthening accountability, transparency, and impact within the arts sector.

As a public entity entrusted with funding artists and cultural organisations, the NAC recognises that effective oversight extends beyond the disbursement of funds. Monitoring funded projects on the ground ensures that resources are utilised responsibly, project objectives are achieved, and communities are meaningfully benefiting from funded initiatives.



These engagements further create a platform for constructive dialogue between the NAC and practitioners.

Beneficiaries are able to share achievements, challenges, and lessons learned, enabling the Council to continuously refine its funding frameworks and improve service delivery.

Among the projects recently visited is the Amandla Entsha Programme based in Kimberly, a dynamic arts development initiative focused on empowering young creatives through structured training, mentorship and performance opportunities.

During the site visit, the NAC team engaged directly with participants and project leaders to assess implementation progress, review financial compliance, and evaluate the programme's community impact. The visit provided valuable insight into how the initiative is nurturing emerging talent while contributing to local creative economic activity.

Through these site visits, the NAC engages with beneficiaries across disciplines including craft, dance, literature, music, theatre, multidiscipline, and visual arts. The visits enable the Council to verify project delivery against approved proposals, identify areas requiring support, and provide guidance to strengthen sustainability and governance practices.

Importantly, the monitoring process also allows the NAC to witness firsthand the tangible social and economic outcomes of its investments.

From skills development and job creation to audience development and community participation, funded projects continue to demonstrate the transformative power of the arts.



In an environment where funding applications far exceed the available budget, the NAC remains committed to ensuring that every rand disbursed delivers measurable impact. Strengthened monitoring and evaluation practices reaffirm the Council's dedication to excellence, equity and empowerment within South Africa's creative sector.

Through this intensified oversight approach, the NAC continues to build a credible, accountable and impact driven arts funding system that supports the sustainability and growth of the country's vibrant cultural landscape.



FUND- ING NEWS

The National Arts Council (NAC) continues to reaffirm its commitment to advancing South Africa's arts and culture sector through strategic funding initiatives that empower artists, cultural practitioners, and creative organisations across the country. Through its various funding programmes, the NAC remains dedicated to supporting artistic excellence, preserving cultural heritage, stimulating economic participation, and creating sustainable opportunities within the creative sector.



The NAC officially opened the 7th Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme (PESP 7) funding call on 04 May 2026. **The NAC expects to announce successful applicants on 14 August 2026.**

PESP 7 represents more than a funding intervention. It is a continued investment in the livelihoods, resilience, and future of South Africa's creative community. The programme is expected to contribute meaningfully towards employment creation, skills development, artistic production, and economic stimulation within the arts and culture sector. Through this initiative, artists and organisations are provided with an opportunity to create impactful work while contributing to community development and social cohesion.

The NAC expresses its deep appreciation to the Presidency and the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC) for their continued trust and confidence in the Council's administration of the programme. Their ongoing support continues to strengthen the role of the arts as a catalyst for economic growth, empowerment, and nation building.

The Council further acknowledges the significant impact previous stimulus programmes have had on the sector. During the 2025 PESP 6 cycle, the NAC successfully funded **424 beneficiaries** across various artistic disciplines. These funded initiatives not only created employment opportunities for artists and creative workers, but also enabled the production of artistic works, community outreach programmes, training initiatives, and cultural preservation projects that positively impacted communities across South Africa.

The success of previous PESP interventions continues to demonstrate the transformative power of investing in the creative economy and reinforces the importance of sustained support for the arts sector.

The background is a complex, abstract composition of various colors and textures. It features large, irregular shapes in shades of blue, green, yellow, and brown, some with a mottled or polka-dot pattern. The overall effect is a rich, layered visual field.

COL- LAB- ORA- TIONS

STRATEGIC COLLABORATIONS



NAC & RMB LATITUDES ART FAIR CHAMPIONING CREATIVE LONGEVITY AT INDEX 2026

In a significant move for the creative economy, the National Arts Council (NAC) and RMB Latitudes Art Fair have formalised a collaboration to debut INDEX 2026. This initiative establishes a high-profile platform focused on the growth of independent and emerging visual artists in South Africa.

The initiative was showcased at the RMB Latitudes Art Fair, that took place from 22 May to 24 May 2026, positioning participating artists within a high-profile platform that connects local talent to continental and global opportunities.

This partnership acts as a vital bridge between artistic creation and commercial exhibition. By showcasing NAC-supported artists at the RMB Latitudes Art Fair and Latitudes Online, we are offering creators direct access to global collectors and major institutions. Beyond just exhibition space, this initiative focuses on professional growth and networking, equipping artists with the visibility and industry connections needed to elevate their careers globally.

Moving beyond the scope of traditional funding, this collaboration introduces a sophisticated curatorial model managed by the Latitudes team. By applying a cohesive strategy to the project, the organisers ensure that the art presented is both narratively strong and commercially viable. This shift creates a more resilient ecosystem where artists are equipped to move past temporary funding and find permanent, sustainable success within the competitive art market. Beyond exhibition opportunities, the initiative provides meaningful exposure, professional development, and industry networking.

This ensures that participating artists are not only showcased but are also equipped with the tools and relationships needed to grow sustainable, long-term careers.

A joint panel from the National Arts Council and RMB Latitudes Art Fair selected six NAC-funded artists through a rigorous closed call, ensuring curatorial integrity and alignment with strategic goals. This partnership advances the NAC's mandate to develop South Africa's vibrant arts sector. By utilising the INDEX 2026 platform to break down barriers, the collaboration connects diverse voices with new audiences, curators, and investors while driving artistic innovation and sustainable careers.

NAC and NHC UNITE TO REWRITE SOUTH AFRICA'S CULTURAL NARRATIVE

The rich tapestry of South African culture is undergoing a radical transformation as the National Arts Council (NAC) and the National Heritage Council (NHC) lock hands to renew their institutional partnership. By penning a revitalised Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), they have committed to safeguarding the nation's ancestral roots while simultaneously fuelling the flames of modern artistic expression.



nhc

National Heritage Council
SOUTH AFRICA

an agency of the
Department of Sport, Arts and Culture

At the heart of this landmark agreement is a determination to break down institutional silos and streamline financial support. The National Arts Council (NAC) and the NHC are set to co-develop a unified resource mobilisation plan. This joint strategy will fuel large-scale heritage conservation and artistic development, establishing an equitable funding mechanism that ensures grass-roots creators and historic conservation projects alike receive balanced, transparent resource distribution.

This agreement marks a monumental shift toward a deeply integrated approach to national cultural development. By harmonising their strategic frameworks, both councils plan to aggressively expand the footprint of their educational initiatives and community outreach programmes. Realising this vision will require a collaborative ecosystem, actively drawing in structural and financial support from government departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and private sector stakeholders.

This collaboration reflects the profound grassroots impact this integrated network will unlock, highlighting that heritage and expression must coexist seamlessly to create a lasting socio-economic footprint. Furthermore, it leverages reciprocal advancement and a heightened countrywide presence, guaranteeing that both entities persistently merge their distinct capabilities to pinpoint shared ventures that maximize their combined institutional efficacy.



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STORIES



A JOURNEY OF RESILIENCE, AWARENESS AND COLLECTIVE HEALING

Gontse, a groundbreaking 90-minute contemporary dance choreographic work that founded on true stories of South African women survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The project incorporated young professional dancers that narrated their experiences through powerful, original composition supported by a live band and newly composed music and poetry. The production took place in Johannesburg, with rehearsals at the iconic Market Theatre and public performances at the Soweto Theatre, while partnerships with anti-GBV organisations such as POWA and the Frida Hartley Shelter.

Funded by National Arts Council as part of the Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme, the initiative was created to confront GBV in the South African communities connecting the arts as a tool for awareness, education, and social change, and was executed through a collaborative process led by artistic director **Disemelo Makhanda**, working closely with jazz legend **Tlale Makhene** and acclaimed choreographer **Thandiwe Mqokeli**, resulting in a multi-layered performance that blended movement, sound, and lived testimony to spark conversations.



To prioritize emerging artists, seven of the eight dancers in the project were recent graduates from MIDM. This gave them valuable opportunities to work alongside seasoned professionals and gain meaningful industry exposure. In addition, the production created jobs for an artistic director, live band musicians, composers, poets, technical crew, and panel contributors. Gontse, left a lasting imprint on the community by using dance and storytelling to humanise the realities of GBV, reaching **250 engaged audience members** and igniting ongoing public dialogue about abuse, rights, and healing in townships and beyond.

If you would like to support Gontse, please feel free to send an email to: sqoproductions@gmail.com





THREADS OF INCLUSION: HOW ARTISTS WOVE CHANGE ACROSS KIMBERLEY AND BEYOND

In the heart of Northern Cape, across Kimberley at the Frances Baard district, the Disability Arts League quietly set in motion a powerful story of access, creativity, and belonging. What began as a determined effort to open arts to people that are often excluded soon became a vibrant movement of workshops, mentorship, performances, and public celebration. Under the guidance of dedicated facilitators, including Kele Bosman's innovative and highly accessible workshop designs, the team offered specialised training, choreography, beadwork, and stage performance.

Disability for Arts League reached out to 3 special schools and introduced young learners to arts, identified emerging talent, and provided one-on-one mentorship. This initiative, funded by the National Arts Council (NAC) as part of its Annual Project Funding, created ripple effects that extended far beyond the workshop spaces and created employment opportunities to 55 participants, which consisted of 30 women and 25 men, 45 of whom are living with disabilities, allowing genuine collaboration that challenged old assumptions and created space for mutual learning and respect.



Furthermore, they received a stipend for their roles within the creative process, while the broader arts ecosystem benefited from new skilled practitioners ready to contribute to future productions.

The transformation ran even deeper for the wider community and the arts scene. Through this project persons living with disabilities and young learners from special school finally stepped forward into the light. Their intricate beadwork, freshly reinterpreted versions of traditional Northern Cape indigenous dances, and bold contemporary choreography came alive in a vibrant public exhibition that drew curious crowds including parents, teachers and neighbours that witnessed artistic brilliance of sharing the same space so powerfully. In doing so, the project not only challenged entrenched stereotypes but also added rich new layers to the region's cultural tapestry, sowing the early seeds of authentic social cohesion.

If you would like to support Disability Arts League, you can contact them via email at: oemothelesi@gmail.com



IGNITING YOUNG MINDS

In the sun-drenched province of KwaZulu-Natal, where the rhythm of daily life pulses to the beat of survival rather than sonnets, a quiet revolution has been brewing one page at a time. The Ekukhanyeni Literature Club is a grassroots beacon of literacy and creativity that's rewriting the narrative for an entire community.

This NAC-funded project under the Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme (PESP 5) emerged from the shadows of low literacy rates, proving that stories are not only for school desks but for sparking dreams.

EMPOWERING YOUNG VOICES THROUGH POETRY

Poetry has emerged as one of the most powerful and beloved elements of the club. The Ekukhanyeni Literature Club met every Sunday with members ranging from grade 4 to 7 participated in dedicated poetry reading and writing classes where they were taught to appreciate poetry as a beautiful and powerful way of telling stories. They also learnt to analyse published poems closely, write their own original pieces, and then perform them confidently in front of the group, building both literary understanding and public speaking skills.

This initiative created 7 employment opportunities which incorporated English Poetry Instructor, IsiZulu Poetry Instructor, Photographer, Social Media Manager, Social Media Intern, Club Administrator, and Meal Prepper.

PROMOTING GROWTH AND SOCIAL COHESION

This project brought genuine joy to children in the area, since it provided them with a meaningful, creative hobby in a community where recreational programmes for young people are scarce. It has also inspired local creatives who demonstrated that with determination, effective collaboration, and a shared vision, it is possible to build something valuable and within the community.

Furthermore, parents expressed heartfelt appreciation for this initiative and described it as a programme that promoted social cohesion among children, kept them positively engaged and supported their overall growth.

If you would like to support, you can contact Ekukhanyeni Literature Club them via email at: uzanokukhanya@gmail.com



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**"Unity is strength...
when there is teamwork
and collaboration,
wonderful things can
be achieved."**

- Mattie Stepanek -

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GIG GUIDE



your GIG GUIDE

Because music is therapy, moves & connects people in ways no other medium can. It pulls heart strings & acts as medicine.

Medieval Fayre

Date: Saturday, 6 June 2026

Place: Krugersdorp

Info: A themed market at Greensleeves Medieval Kingdom with performers and merchants.

Basha Uhuru 2026 Festival

Date: 24-27 June 2026

Place: Johannesburg

Info: Features the 54 African Mamas Summit & Concert at Constitution Hill.

UB40 Feat Ali Campbell

Date: Friday, 5 June 2026

Place: Durban

Info: Live music performances at the Durban ICC

An Audience With Pieter-Dirk Eish!

Date: Sunday, 14 June 2026

Place: Darling

Info: Satirical live show at Evita se Perron.

The Ultimate RNB & Jazz Festival

Date: Sunday, 28 June 2026

Place: George

Info: Live performances at Outeniqua Park Rugby Stadium



STAFF FEA- TURE

DRIVING SOUTH AFRICA'S ARTS LANDSCAPE

The National Arts Council of South Africa (NAC) boasts a dedicated team of 46 internal staff members, working across departments including administration, arts development, finance, marketing, and communications.

Every individual plays a critical role in sustaining the NAC as an accessible and effective funding agency for the arts.



ROOTED IN THE MOTHER CITY, RISING IN THE ARTS

In the heart of the Mother City, irrepressible creative energy finds one of its cheerful ambassadors in **Rosca van Rooyen**.

As Arts Development Officer in the Arts Development Unit at the National Arts Council, an accomplished professional that channels deep-rooted passion and expertise into nurturing and advancing South Africa's arts landscape.

Born and raised in Bellville South, Rosca carries the vibrant spirit of her hometown wherever she goes, infusing every initiative with the same dynamic, soulful rhythm that has always defined the Cape.

Her academic journey spans from a Master of Philosophy in Southern Urbanism, an Honours degree in Curatorship, and a Bachelor's degree in Social Anthropology, Film, and Media Studies from the University of Cape Town.

THE FAMILY CONSTELLATION THAT SHAPED A GAZE

From the tender age of five, when the curtain rose on her grandfather's theatre production, Rosca was irrevocably enchanted. The alchemy of words on the page transforming into living, breathing rehearsals and finally exploding onto the stage left an indelible mark on her young heart. Her mother, a talented singer whose voice graced countless events, embodied the fierce dedication and soulful tenacity that artistry demands. Rosca watched in awe as melodies became moments of magic. Meanwhile, her uncle was an extraordinary painter that turned quiet hours into vivid family portraits, each brushstroke revealing layers of emotion and history.

Surrounded by this constellation of creative spirits, Rosca grew up not just observing art, but absorbing it as a fundamental way of being and early immersion naturally blossomed into her own vibrant practice.

Reflecting on her role at the NAC, Rosca shares how she finds constant inspiration in the bold visions and exceptional craft laid out in the proposals that cross her desk, each one a testament to the vitality thriving within this country's creative community.

Through her role, Rosca has gained an insider's clarity on the length and rigor of NAC processes and what once seemed opaque now reveals itself as thoughtful stewardship, ensuring a lasting impact to the arts sector.

Furthermore, highlights how she draws strength from a dedicated team she works alongside and describe them as fierce advocates and true champions who pour their hearts into supporting South African artists through funding opportunities.

LIGHTING THE WAY FOR SOUTH AFRICA'S NEXT GENERATION

Rosca channels her lifelong love for arts with beauty through three powerful mediums such as poetry that captures the unspoken rhythms of the human experience, painting that translates feeling into colour and form, and black-and-white photography that strips away distraction to reveal the quiet, luminous essence within every subject. Outside her role as an Arts Development Officer at the National Arts Council, she makes herself a willing guide for fellow creatives, helping them build confidence in their unique voices and establish their presence in the industry.

Coming from humble beginnings, Rosca understands how daunting it can be to carve out space as an artist and the daily grind of making a name for yourself. Consequently, every day she pays that forward to strengthen South Africa's artist community.



We'd like to hear from you!

What we have just laid out is a start - our start - to keep the arts alive, moving and growing. But we know that every venture in the arts sector's circumstances are different, and we want to know more about your stories, and the challenges facing you.

Please share your questions, feedback, and suggestions with us by emailing: communication1@nac.org.za.

We wish you the best and look forward to sharing with you.

See you in the next issue!

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