

Arts conference aims to address divide between parties

The inaugural ACT and UJ Arts & Culture Conference, to be held on 24 and 25 May 2012, will explore 'The Art of the Creative Economy.' The conference will be held at the University of Johannesburg's Arts Centre Theatre on the UJ's Kingsway Campus.

With a programme that features top role-players in government, national funding bodies and the creative sector, conference organisers hope to promote conversation between these stakeholders, and thus begin to address the divide that exists between policy makers and practitioners, and chart a way forward for sustainability in the sector.

Representatives from the major funding bodies will present their positions, including a look at the details and impact of the National Department of Arts and Culture's Mzansi's Golden Economy policy. The first findings from the latest Business Arts South Africa (BASA) Artstrack sector research into the state of arts sponsorship in the country will be presented, as well as best practice input from both continental and international perspectives. A sector overview will help to set the stage from the arts standpoint, looking at industry successes and current challenges, and setting the scene for in-depth sector scenario planning.

Presenters are experts in their fields

Confirmed presenters include writer and activist Dr. Wally Mongane Serote; cultural policy and governance specialist Avril Joffé; new CEO of the National Arts Council, Monica Newton; head of Business and Arts South Africa, Michelle Constant; Generations mastermind, Mfundu Vundla; playwright and producer Deon Opperman; arts and culture policy advisor, professor Andries Oliphant; director of the Grahamstown National Arts Festival, Ismail Mahomed; Sershan Naidoo from the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund; Erika Elk from the Cape Craft and Design Institute; Mandie van der Spuy, head of arts and jazz sponsorship at Standard Bank; Janet Watts, manager of the Arts, Culture and Heritage programme at Tshikululu Corporate Social Investments; Katharina von Ruckterschell-Katte from the Goethe Institut, and theatre practitioner Themí Ventúras.

In an effort to encourage participation from all stakeholder industries, including the arts and culture, education, government and business sectors, conference registrations fees are heavily subsidised. "We have deliberately kept the conference registration fee as low as possible - the R500 conference fee includes the conference pack, all catering and the conference cocktail event," says Brenda Devar, ACT chairperson.

Recognising the value of organisation participation, further discounts will be facilitated for group registrations. There will be a 10% discount on ten or more registrations, while larger groups can obtain 20% discount on registrations of groups that number more than fifty participants.

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