

## 2021 International Public Art Fest to focus on being 100% sustainable

Baz-Art will host the fifth International Public Art Festival (IPAF) in Salt River, Cape Town from 10-14 February 2021. The theme, '100% sustainable', will focus on art as a mechanism for inclusion and activism.



Synonymous with empowerment, IPAF will examine how we can answer the needs of today without compromising the world our future generations will inherit.

"With the support of the city, we are excited to see events such as IPAF position Cape Town as a global street art hub in Africa, while showcasing local talent and culture on an international platform. IPAF 2021 will be a testament to how public art can activate social change and cohesion within our communities," says festival manager Lauren Fletcher.

"Art pushes and reflects the current thoughts of society. And as an arts festival, we act as a vehicle to represent and reflect on these moments. Sustainability is incredibly relevant and important," she adds.

IPAF will feature diverse art installations, talks and workshops from artists around the world. Participating individuals went through a rigorous selection process that saw them propose creative, 100% sustainable public art interventions. Myriad applications were received and the most innovative and community-driven solutions will be showcased at the event. The finalised artists will be announced shortly.

Some of the artistic proposals included sculptures made from recycled material; artworks in biodegradable paint that washes away to create a whole new work over time; temporary works that fade into nature; and installations that bring people together through shared spaces.

"The soft power of visuals is often underestimated, but our environments have a vast impact on our mindsets, ideals and inspirations. Through a public art festival platform, artists have an opportunity to create beautiful public works that can make us question and rethink. Let's move away from the get rich quick schemes, dog-eat-dog worlds and single-use plastic packed lunches, and get inspired by the long term," says Fletcher.

## Looking forward to the future

A future-gazing ethos will guide the IPAF's strong sustainability agenda. The five-day festival makes every effort to minimise its environmental footprint while fostering social and economic inclusion. "The goal for IPAF 2021 is to show that sustainability refers not just to the environment, but also to economically and socially sound practices. The world is made up of those three aspects and, to make it a better place, we need to respect each of them. By working with local residents and creating a leading example out of our city on how art can benefit its citizens, we believe that we can contribute to a faster recovery from the pandemic" explains Baz-Art co-founder Alexandre Tilmans.

He adds that the sustainable development practices IPAF exhibits will likely be an integral part of the arts festival of the future and respects the city's agenda. He foresees the following as remaining key:

### Social sustainability

- **Positive impact on the neighbourhood:** Going forward, festivals will continue to be key platforms to bring people together. IPAF does this through the immersive experience of art in public spaces. While also fostering a stronger sense of belonging within the community. Diverse people get together, share knowledge, bounce ideas off each other and learn from one another's culture, experiences and backgrounds. "During 2020, I'll always remember the exchange and learning that happened between local and international artists. A wealth of knowledge and skills were exchanged during the 10 days that everyone left learning something new," says Tilmans.
- **Knowledge exchange:** The festival of the future will continue to catalyse communities. IPAF brings together networks of artists who not only support one another but also have long standing relationships with their own communities and Salt River residents.

"This year we partnered with the Salt River Heritage Community, which will assist in giving all participating artists a solid understanding of the nuances and history of the area. This serves as inspiration for the IPAF 2021 murals. A feature of next year's festival will be a large-scale mural dedicated to the 300-year history of Salt River and painted by local children who are currently learning about street art in their curriculum.

Many of the murals directly involve the engagement of community members in the creations of the work, providing an extra space for people to get involved and experiment," adds Tilmans.

### Economic sustainability

- **Broadening economic inclusion and impact.** Festivals by their very nature serve as economic boosters in the regions that they are hosted in. An example of this is the direct spend by IPAF for goods and services rendered. "We are very proud to be part of the Salt River community and we work directly with Salt River businesses. This ensures that the economic spend is going to the community that the festival is hosted in," says Fletcher.

- **Creating employment:** Another pivotal pillar for the festival of the future. IPAF employs a host of Salt River residents during the festival period. "We strive to ensure that Salt River is the first beneficiary of what is being created, with the aim of making it a stronger and more cohesive neighbourhood," says Tilmans.
- **Championing growth:** As IPAF expands, the idea is to host a local market with goods produced within Salt River, Woodstock, Observatory and surrounds. This will empower locals to sell their goods to the public, encouraging a sense of entrepreneurship.

### Environmental sustainability

- **Using environmentally friendly resources smartly:** IPAF's most heavily utilised resource is paint. It tries to use water-soluble PVA as much as possible, and PVA paint cans are cleaned and reused. Used spray cans are collected and turned into beautiful sculptures of cars and aeroplanes by a local artist.
- **Using waste responsibly:** Community members are about to start a compost production business in the Salt River Nature Garden, so any biodegradable waste created during the festival will go towards this composting programme.
- **Partnering to go green:** IPAF is partnering with green NGOs to conduct educational tours on foot, skateboard and bike. There'll also be exciting workshops and talks on topics like 'guerrilla gardening' and propagation and composting.

"The City of Cape Town is once again thrilled to be partnering with Baz-Art for the International Public Arts Festival. This is an initiative that not only provides a platform for local emerging talented artists but also beautifies some of Cape Town's communities with amazing street art murals. In a year that has been challenging, we are looking forward to the messaging these artists will convey to the world and as the City of Cape Town we are inspired by the focus on sustainability for the 2021 edition of the public art festival," said Mayoral Committee Member for Safety and Security JP Smith.

*Read more about IPAF 2021 [here](#).*

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