

# KKNK postpones 2021 festival in light of Covid-19

The Klein Karoo National Arts Festival (KKNK) has postponed its 2021 outing as the Covid-19 pandemic rages on.

“Although we were looking forward to returning to Oudtshoorn for the festival at the start of April 2021, the health risks and the uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 pandemic remain a concern,” said Hugo Theart, the festival’s artistic director. “Rising infection rates throughout the country necessitated this decision.”



The decision wasn’t taken lightly or unilaterally, says Crispin Sonn, chairperson of Kunste Onbeperk, the organisation that presents the KKNK. “After consultations with our partners, sponsors, the Oudtshoorn municipality and the Western Cape government, the consensus was that a festival around the Easter Weekend posed too much risk to all the parties concerned – residents, visitors and artists. Postponement is the responsible decision, but it doesn’t call into question our commitment to and support for the artists and communities,” Sonn says.

“ The board, management and all our partners have been in discussions about all possibilities for some time, and we are constantly evaluating the situation. We simply must take the statistics and the global trajectory of the pandemic into account to take considered decisions. We will discuss the situation again in January and explore new dates for a festival. ”

The KKNK has provided a significant economic boost to Oudtshoorn and the surrounding towns since 1995. The Covid-19 pandemic has severely damaged the local economy. The KKNK will, therefore, work closely with among others the Western Cape government, Oudtshoorn municipality, the Oudtshoorn Chamber of Commerce, other partners in the region, sponsors, and donors to explore initiatives that will not only support the town and its residents in 2021, but also the community of artists who come from all over the country to entertain festival-goers year after year.

The KKNK will also work closely with other festivals and theatres throughout the country to find ways to support the wellbeing of all the role players in the performing arts, a sector that was profoundly affected this past year.

“It is in the nature of the arts industry to always think creatively, and progressive plans are especially important now,” says Theart. “The KKNK already embarked on a variety of projects and initiatives in 2020 to support creative communities during lockdown. In 2021, we will continue to build on the wealth of online content and activities that have already been created, with the first projects being launched in January. As an organisation, we are committed to supporting the arts community, the community of Oudtshoorn as well as our other partners. The KKNK has long-standing relationships with sponsors and donors who support us and believe in the festival, and we are grateful that they are working with us to unlock new possibilities.”

## **Year long festival**

A year-long festival programme is being planned for 2021, which will include several online music concerts and theatre performances, conversation series, masterclasses, documentaries, development projects and more. Special music concerts and theatre productions are also envisaged for Oudtshoorn and elsewhere in the country and will be devised around the necessary safety measures and health protocols.

Chris Macpherson, executive mayor of Oudtshoorn, says the postponement of the KKNK was inevitable given the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. “We must use this as an opportunity to showcase our own products and with the assistance of the organisation’s directors and sponsors we intend to continue with various projects to keep Oudtshoorn on the arts and entertainment map.”

Proposals from artists who have already applied to the 2021 festival will still be considered in the coming year, and application forms for further proposals remain available on the [KKNK website](#).

“Any and every suggestion is welcome – think outside the box,” says Theart. “Because that is what 2020 taught us – new ways of thinking and doing.”

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