

UKZN Centre for Creative Arts, Netherlands Embassy to present inaugural Artfluence Human Rights Arts Fest

In partnership with the Embassy of the Netherlands, the University of Kwazulu-Natal's (UKZN) Centre for Creative Arts will present the inaugural Artfluence Human Rights Arts Festival from Wednesday, 5 May to Saturday, 8 May 2021. The festival will be held online and focus on arts, constitution and democracy.

Voices of Hope, Courage and Resilience will be the theme for the inaugural festival. It will mark the 25th anniversary of the Centre for Creative Arts as a creative enabler and advocate for social justice and democracy, as well as the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the South African Constitution.



Strengthening the link between arts and civil society, active citizenship and politics

The Artfluence Festival will also highlight the solidarity between South African and Dutch artists - past and present - whose contributions have been vital to advancing South African democracy.

“ We want to strengthen the link with the arts and civil society, active citizenship and politics through a series of arts events and arts-based webinars, featuring South African and international artists by creating a dedicated virtual space to share, celebrate, remember, explore, provoke and promote how the arts contribute to a culture of human rights,” said Ismail

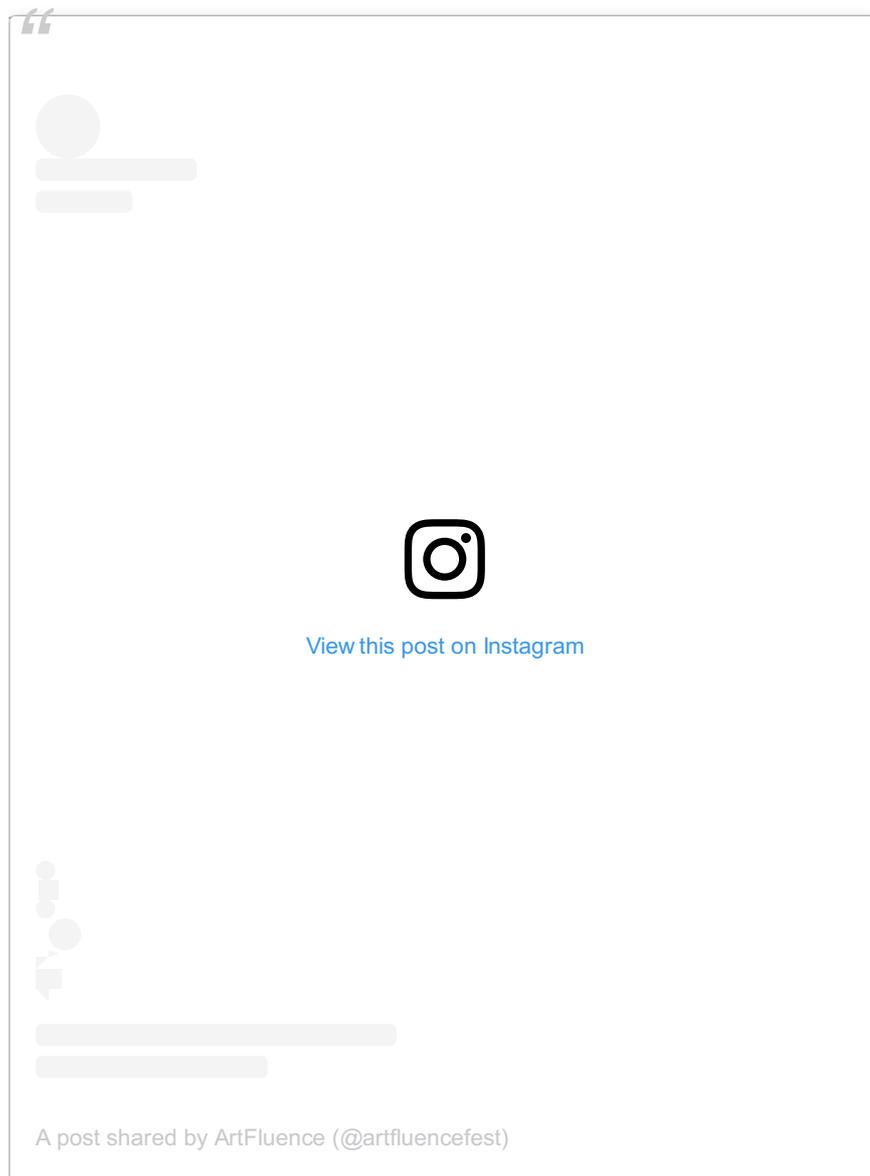
Mahomed, the director of the Centre for Creative Arts ”

Mahomed is a multi-award winning arts administrator and former artistic director of the National Arts Festival and board member of the KKNK Festival and Aardklop Festivals. His experience in festival design and management combined with his track record for social justice, which includes invoking the Protective Disclosures Act to win a case in which he exposed corruption in a public-funded institution, makes him ideally suited to conceptualise, direct and oversee the inaugural festival.

“As the Netherlands we are extremely thankful for the opportunity provided to us by the Centre for Creative Arts at the University of Kwazulu-Natal, to support and promote a festival that uses Arts and Culture as the medium to question, discuss and explore issues of human rights.

“ *The Covid-19 Pandemic has forced a reset on our global society in all its facets. Apart from enormous challenges, it also provided us with the opportunity to correct shortcomings in our society; and to actually start to live and breathe the values as enshrined in our respective constitutions,*” said Jan Huesken, the deputy ambassador at the Embassy of the Netherlands. ”

“We cannot meet in person for this festival, but online presentation offers the possibility for an extended participation in our two countries and beyond. This festival will hopefully embed itself in the challenging bouquet of annual festivals already provided by the Centre for Creative Arts at the University of Kwazulu-Natal and create a permanent impact on our societies,” he added.



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One of the more significant clauses in the South African Constitution pertaining to the cultural and creative communities is Section 16 of the Constitution, i.e. Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Creativity. The inaugural ACD Festival will be a valuable opportunity to reflect on these freedoms critically and to engage meaningfully with issues of censorship and the infringement of expressions through a violation of human rights and discriminatory practices,” said Mahomed.

Mahomed will co-curate the inaugural festival with cultural and gender activist Yusrah Bardien. Her experience includes working on the 30th anniversary of the Culture In Another South Africa Festival that reflected on Dutch solidarity with the South African cultural sector. Bardien also worked as the coordinator of the EU-funded Festival Atelier presented on the African continent for the first time in 2017. Her other credits include working on the cultural programme for Nelson Mandela's funeral.

“Each day at the festival will be catalysed by an arts event and will be supported by a moderated discussion with informed activists for human rights composed of South African, a Dutch speaker and participants from other states on the African continent. We will invite artists and organisations whose artistic reputations are anchored on advocating for human rights to participate in the inaugural Artfluence Festival,” explained Bardien.

Due to the ongoing lockdowns resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, the inaugural festival shall be presented as an online event. Each of the events and panel discussions shall be livestreamed on the festival's social media pages and the [CCA YouTube channel](#). Programme coming soon. Follow [@artfluencefest](#) on Twitter for further details.

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