

#Basa25 Celebration Programme announced

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True to its unique DNA, Business and Arts South Africa (Basa) has unveiled an innovative, year-long programme to mark its quarter of a century anniversary year. The compelling line-up of new initiatives, intermingled with Basa staples, aims to extend the organisation's indelible legacy as a nexus for business, culture and creativity for a further 25 years and beyond.



From top left: Basa Chairperson Zingisa Mottoba, Basa CEO Ashraf Johaardien

Bottom left: Head of Research and Grants Madeleine Lambert, Head of Marketing Savannah Feeke-Fortune and Head of Programmes and Development Boitumelo 'Tummy' Motsoatsoe

Says Basa CEO, Ashraf Johaardien, “Advocating for the value of the arts in society goes hand in hand with engendering a broader understanding of the role that the creative sector can play within our socio-economic framework.” They explain that, in curating this 25th anniversary programme, the aim was not only celebrating Basa’s past but also to play a leading role in shaping the future of artistic endeavour on the continent.

“Our team has developed a range of new offerings that drill deeper into our purpose as an organisation. We stand on the shoulders of an illustrious roll call of Basa members, board directors, chairs, CEOs, managers and staff whose passion and commitment has brought us to this moment where the next 25 years now beckons. We acknowledge and applaud their contribution!”

Since inception, Basa has lit fires beneath the notion of cross-sector partnerships and business investment, by leading research that enhances commercial confidence, building capacity through its programmes, and shifting the paradigm for the future of partnerships between diverse stakeholders.

Founded in 1997, Basa aptly began life as a partnership between government and the private sector, to encourage greater involvement in the arts from businesses operating in South Africa. Long recognised for its transformational value towards social change and infusing inspiration into the fabric of life, the creative sector plays a critical role in nurturing an emerging South African identity.

Current Basa chairperson, Zingisa Motloba shares: "I am thrilled to be at the helm of this dynamic organisation during such an exciting time. Over the years, Basa has been exceptional at identifying those inter-connectors in the spaces that connect people, spaces, culture and business – weaving its thread through the tapestry of South Africa's unfolding story – the very essence of social cohesion."

Impact isn't always big – sometimes it starts small – but still reflects on the whole and ripples out into the wider picture, with the impact on one artist's journey powerful enough to bring a generation of people along, through mentorship and leadership. One of the key projects that Basa will launch in its 25th year speaks to the power of this principle. Supported by the British Council Creative Economy programme and partnered by Common Purpose South Africa and the Manchester International Festival, Basa is facilitating the inaugural Cultural Producers Programme. Aimed at empowering young mid-career South African cultural producers, this intensive programme will take participants through an accelerated skills development and practical learning journey via hybrid online and in-person engagements, focused on cultural leadership, cultural production and creative business skills, equipping them to plan, resource and sustain projects and contribute to the sector's growth more successfully.

Madeleine Lambert, head of Research and Grants, is very excited about the potential of the programme to fully integrate new skills. "A core challenge in the creative sector is that these skills are seldom taught or mentored to creatives, so they become an obstacle to expanding a sustainable, cohesive creative sector," she explains. "The Cultural Producers Programme will also explore personal leadership skills and enable participants to form networks with other producers globally, while forging deeper ties between the United Kingdom and South African creative industries. The SOCreative Hubs Summit will be the hybrid event to cap this programme, with a series of discussions, talks, networking events, showcasing of creative work, and opportunities to work on exciting new projects and ideas. The 25 producers who will engage in this experience will likely experience a significant shift in perspective and increased exposure to real opportunities for creating important partnerships. We truly believe this programme will have significant reverberations."

Another programme that is changing lives is the Basa Debut Programme, partnered by the Department of Sport, Arts & Culture and supported by Yoco. This three-year programme builds entrepreneurial capacity for creatives to plan, launch, market and grow their own small business. Starting with 450 course participants, the programme ends in a year-long intensive Catalyst Phase that will effectively incubate and support the selected 25 participants to grow their newly launched ventures into profitable enterprises. According to head of Programmes, Boitumelo 'Tumy' Motsoatsoe, "The Debut Programme is focused particularly on rural and peri-urban areas where creative entrepreneurs are often left behind. It is also a dynamic space that aims to inspire the participants to become resourceful, opportunistic, agile, and confident enough to make a profitable livelihood from their artistic talent.

"Partnership is deeply embedded in Basa's DNA," says Savannah Feeke-Fortune, head of Marketing. "We advocate for mutually beneficial partnerships because we know that's where the magic happens. Our annual Basa Awards (also in its 25th year this year), in partnership with Hollard, is the ultimate roll call for businesses whose investment has enormous impact in the arts, and for the arts projects that have an impact on business. With over 300 business and arts partnerships recognised by the Basa Awards to date, and the number of entrants into the Awards increasing during the past two Covid years, this is a clear signal that collaboration has become a necessity, not a nice-to-have."

Basa also contributes financially to artists whose requirements fit within certain criteria. As of December 2021, Basa has disbursed almost R42m to over 1,700 projects through the Basa Supporting Grants Programme. These grants are allocated

to projects that already qualify for sponsorship, further endorsing and leveraging specific development related areas of the work. These grants have in turn leveraged over R547m in sponsorship from the business sector – that equates to R13m of corporate support for every R1m of Basa Supporting Grant funding. During 2020 and 2021, Basa's Artist Relief Fund also raised over R600,000. This, supplemented by funds redirected from Supporting Grants and other areas of operation, enabled Basa to disburse over R1.7m to 195 individual artists who were severely impacted by Covid and the associated lockdowns. In addition, Basa assisted local and national government in disbursing over R50 million in relief payments to thousands more creatives.

Working with partners such as British Council and BMi, Basa is committed to continued research in the sector. Basa assists in extracting evidence and opportunity from the numbers. This not only contributes to a strategic approach to projects, but also serves as a valuable tool to help businesses key in on the areas where they can add value to partnerships within the creative sector.

As a paid membership organisation, members receive additional benefits, such as research reports and analysis, and Basa is able to advise on best practice for constructing successful arts-business partnerships. Long-term members, including Standard Bank, Nando's, Rand Merchant Bank and Hollard are leaders in the integration of arts partnerships that have been extraordinarily beneficial over the years. Basa's overall goal is to realise more mutually beneficial partnerships with the arts. Pre-pandemic, the cultural and creative sector provided 30 million jobs in South Africa and, while the dust is still settling on the devastation of an industry, Basa is rolling up its sleeves to reignite this potential.

Bigger issues are emerging in the wake of Covid-19, but so is the opportunity to reorientate towards things that matter now. As genres and traditions collapse and new ways of working and living unfold, Basa is leaning into the complexity of flux. Issues such as climate change, unemployment and high food costs are forming a mirror to which the arts and business must respond. Doing it together makes sense.

Johaardien sums it up: "At the nexus of it all, is a simple idea: connection. As Basa passes this important 25-year milestone, we have renewed our commitment to this purpose – and continue to hold ourselves accountable to our relevance and role. How can we support, where can we lead and how will we master the complexity of the context? Big questions for our next 25 years!"

Highlights of the #BASA25 line-up are as follows:

Celebrate #BASA25

Online Event

25 February

Log on to your favourite social media platform and join #TEAMBASA celebrating 25 years of business and arts partnerships. Debate diva, Rorisang Thandekiso interviews current Basa Chairperson, Zingisa Motloba alongside former chairs, Charmaine Soobramoney and Sikkie Kajee.

The cohort of 25 for Basa's all-new Cultural Producers Programme will be announced, as will the Debut Catalyst Top 25.

This event will feature music by uKhoiKhoi, with musician/composer Yogin Sullaphen and vocalist and performing artist Anelisa Stuurman, as well as Hannah Ma's ONDA, courtesy of JOMBA! Contemporary Experience.

Cultural Producers Programme

Partnered by Common Purpose South Africa and Manchester International Festival, supported by the British Council Creative Economy Programme

Hybrid format

25 February (Announcement of the 25 cultural producers)

March–July (Programme)

This partnership between Basa, Common Purpose South Africa and the Manchester International Festival, aims to create a network of emerging leaders who can propel the sector with renewed vigour beyond the current challenges. The programme aims to accelerate growth in skills development, capacitate global networks and drive innovative new work in ever-changing markets. Knowledge sharing in cultural intelligence, working in multi-sectoral/disciplinary cultural and creative environments, and subsequent brokering and partnership on a national and international scale will be harnessed.

This intensive five-month programme will bring together 25 mid-career creative and cultural producers, aged 18–35, and already working in South Africa, to upskill and unite them as a single network that enables innovative work practice. The project aims to capacitate the creative economy ecosystem within Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and the United Kingdom (UK).

Debut Catalyst Top 25

Partnered by the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture

Hybrid format

25 February (Announcement)

March–July (Roll-out)

The Catalyst Phase of the Debut Programme offers ongoing support for mentorship for 25 participants (Catalysts) who have made it through to this phase of the programme. The participants will be placed with a mentor/coach for one-on-one sessions based on the mentee's/coaches' skills requirement, art discipline, and identify areas for development to help them build and grow the creative business ventures they launched in the Hlanganisa Phase.

Culture & Climate Programme

Partnered by Rand Merchant Bank

Hybrid format

25 February (Announcement)

March–July (Roll-out)

The Culture and Climate Programme is a new collaborative space that aims to proactively build sector leadership on issues of climate action and environmental sustainability from an African perspective. It also aims to build climate literacy in an effort to further accelerate the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability into cultural policies, strategies and practice. The programme will encourage sectoral partnerships between culture, climate and business, and will be a platform for cultural organisations, arts managers, arts administrators, and creative practitioners to access practical guidance and support towards the development of new projects. Other activities will include a think tank, creative hacks, funding opportunities, project development, mentorship and community support.

Socreative Hubs Summit

Partnered by Manchester International Festival and Common Purpose South Africa, supported by the British Council Creative Economy Programme

Hybrid format

April–June

The purpose of this forum is to bring together young creative hub managers and creatives in South Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and the UK to connect, share and network towards building a stronger ecosystem and telling their stories. Specific aims include strengthening connections and interactions, building new networks, which can be used to leverage future opportunities, insight gathering, skills exchange and strengthening partnerships, as well as co-curating projects that share common goals. The 25 Cultural Producers Programme participants will contribute to the summit curation.

Bizart_ZA: The Socreative Edition

#BASA25 Commemorative Publication

Interactive digital flipbook

July

Launched in 2019 as a platform for plural voices and points of view, Bizart_ZA is a publication that articulates the role, place and purpose of Basa in the African cultural landscape. This commemorative issue features articles, anecdotes and reflections by key business and arts personalities who have helped shape the organisation over the last 25 years.

Debut Alumni Network Fund Launch

Partnered by Department of Sport, Arts and Culture

Hybrid format

July

The Alumni Network Fund is a platform that provides the Debut Alumni and Basa stakeholders with an opportunity to contribute towards the sustainability of the network. These contributions can be financial or in-kind support and must align with the five key pillars of the network, namely: Networking, Leveraging Opportunities, Knowledge Expansion, Network Management and Pay-It-Forward.

- **450 emerging creatives shortlisted for the Debut Programme** 12 Apr 2024
- **14 SA creatives join Cultural Producers Programme** 12 Mar 2024
- **Cultural Producers called to become the creative leaders of tomorrow** 22 Jan 2024
- **Basa hosts 'My Debut Story' panel discussion: Celebrating the success of emerging creative entrepreneurs** 27 Oct 2023
- **26th Basa Awards celebrates symbiotic partnerships** 17 Oct 2023

Business and Arts South Africa

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Business and Arts South Africa (BASA) is an internationally recognised South African development agency which integrates the Arts into, and contributes to, Corporate's commercial success. With a suite of integrated programmes BASA encourages mutually beneficial partnerships between business and the arts.

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