

National Arts Festival to present in-person, virtual and nationwide programme in 2021

The 2021 edition of the National Arts Festival (NAF) will include an in-person, virtual and countrywide programme.

The arts festival will revive its live 11-day programme in its home city of Makhanda in the Eastern Cape from 8-18 July (Makhanda Live) and stage a National Arts Festival Online, which will be entirely online in July.



Birthing Nureyev at the 2019 National Arts Festival in Makhanda

Additionally, for the first time, the National Arts Festival will present a series of shows, in partnership with Standard Bank, in cities across the country. The collection, called Standard Bank Presents, will give audiences across the country a taste of what the festival has to offer from 17 June to 4 July 2021.

Says National Arts Festival CEO, Monica Newton:

“ The National Arts Festival has adapted its festival experience to bring the arts to audiences where they are and at a time when we still need to be very careful about where we go and what we do to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. ”

The gathering of artists is an important catalyst to reignite the industry and the festival remains committed to presenting the best and safest possible space for artists and audiences to come together, experience and appreciate the arts. “We are curating a tighter, more intimate festival in Makhanda and we do have to work very carefully around the Covid protocols, but we think it will be an opportunity to feel the pulse of a Covid-impacted arts world and to hear artists speak from live stages. We invite audiences to come and share this important moment with us.”

“ The National Arts Festival Experience is coming! One Festival experienced many ways. [#NAF2021](#)
[#beyond11daysofamazing pic.twitter.com/Ymn10DvS1f](#)— NationalArtsFestival (@artsfestival) [May 10, 2021](#) ”

The NAF successfully transitioned into an online festival in 2020, drawing a global audience of over 83,000 visitors and

breaking new ground for the South African arts sector. "Online experiences are here to stay and we are excited about further integrating this element into our offering," says Newton.



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Ruth Cooper 31 Mar 2020



From Makhanda to the rest of the nation

The National Arts Festival’s decision to present work in other cities was founded on the realisation that some audiences may not be willing or able to travel far and that many artists would struggle to afford the costs of travel to Makhanda as a result of the impact of the pandemic. “Our new showcase, Standard Bank Presents will give people a taste of the National Arts Festival and a window into what our artists are thinking and doing. As we adapt to our ever-shifting Covid reality, we need to try new things and imagine new ways for the arts to speak to audiences,” says Newton.



The Rebirth of Iqawe, one of the shows at the 2020 Virtual National Arts Festival

Newton said the festival was realistic about the capacity of audiences and artists to travel to the festival in Makhanda but pointed out that the festival’s Eastern Cape visitors accounted for 55 % of their pre-Covid attendance figures in 2019*. This points to the likelihood of the live event in Makhanda largely attracting day-trippers and weekenders and, of course, the super fans; the ardent group of festival-goers who have already signalled their intention to support the live performances, no matter where they are.



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The 2021 National Arts Festival Experience’s Makhanda Live will showcase the works of the 2020 Standard Bank Young Artists and will also be the stage on which the 2021 Standard Bank Young Artists will be announced. The Standard Bank Jazz Festival will take place live and online; reaching a jazz-loving audience locally, on the continent and across the world.

The festival programme will be announced on 7 June 2021. Find out more on nationalartsfestival.co.za

**Source: The Social, Cultural and Economic Impact of the 2019 National Arts Festival by J Snowball and G Antrobus*

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>