

CITY OF JOHANNESBURG'S ARTS ALIVE MEDIA LAUNCH

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There are moments in our lives, moments in the City's life-span, and moment's in the year when we pause and reflect on where we have been and where we are going.

Last year when we launched the long-term 2040 vision for the City was one such moment. We, along with you, and all the citizens of Johannesburg reviewed where we have come from, and used our skills and experience, as well as our human powers of imagination to agree on how we would like our City to be in the future.

Together we confirmed that ***Johannesburg will become a World Class African City of the Future – a vibrant, equitable African city, strengthened through its diversity; a city that provides real quality of life; a city that provides sustainability for all its citizens; a resilient and adaptive society.***

And it is only together that we can make this imagining a reality. Each of us, in our different sectors has a contribution to make.

And none more so than the arts sector. Arts, culture and heritage have a critical role to play in changing the course of the City. A critical role to play in ensuring that our dreams for the future become the real existence of our children. The arts should be centre stage in contributing to ***a vibrant and equitable future that celebrates diversity and provides real quality of life for all citizens of the City.***

The arts sharpen our consciousness, hold up mirrors of reality (sometimes harsh), but give a voice to hope and dreams.

As we stand here this evening, we are presented with another moment to pause and reflect. We are here to launch the 2012 programme for the City's Arts Alive International Festival. A programme designed to contribute to economic growth, develop our society and individuals and foster democracy, non-racialism and non-sexism. A programme designed to celebrate our talent, our people, our culture and heritage.

And let me pause right now, while I share some hard facts and figures about this contribution.

- **At least 30% of the Arts Alive budget is spent on Emerging Business** – these businesses, if supported properly, are part of the future economic growth of the City. Behind the stages, and the curtains, are the unseen suppliers that make a festival work. From caterers to printers, from suppliers of fences and ablution facilities to sound technicians and scaffolding emerging businesses, create jobs, apprentice skills and become the economic leaders of tomorrow.

- The City has put in place a supplier registration process, which ensures that our on-going commitment to transformation through procurement is honoured. While the process may be arduous, it provides the City with assurances that the financial resources of the project are shared. It also means, that once all the forms are complete, and the documents compiled, these suppliers are now regularised in a way that they can bid for future work in other public sector opportunities.
- The City also recognises that a direct spend on artists fosters an economic community. It injects financial resources into a sector that has huge potential to become part of 'Mzansi's Golden Economy'. **Because of this Arts Alive spends approximately 40% of its budget directly on local musicians, actors, dancers, poets, and artists.**
- The stages, exhibition spaces and microphones of Arts Alive are also the training ground for home grown future artists. Joburg has so much talent to celebrate, but it also has so much new talent to nurture. Again Arts Alive 2012 programme, has made a deliberate commitment to ensuring that **at least 10% of artists procured are from those who have not had an opportunity before.** So expect to see new names at Jazz on the Lake., Expect dazzling performances at the Newtown Music Festival from regional winners from across the City.
- Youth as creative participants and as audiences are also important to the City. To this end, the City has ensured that young Joburgers perform on our stages, but that there are elements of the programme which inspire the young. Art is there to inspire, and inspiration leads to change, and change is what will take our City to the next level. From youth theatre to youth visual arts, from youth music to young poets – the youth stand firmly on our programme.

The Arts Alive programme is bursting with enthusiasm for what it means to be quintessentially Joburg. Dance, theatre, music which bring people from across the city together – from the fruit sellers in Ivory Park to the coffee shops in Hyde Park, from the learners in Orange Farm to the traders on the Sandton Stock Exchange. When its Arts Alive time, we are all just Joburgers – young and old - enjoying the warmth of the spring air, the wonderful sounds at Jazz on the Lake, the inspiring performances of dance and theatre, puppetry, and poetry, engaging in discussion and debate that grapple with current issues, and revel in art that speaks to the soul.

Once again, the Arts Alive International Festival reminds us, that the City is not just about bricks and mortar, it is not just about roads and buses, it is not just about service delivery; it is about us the people; it is about real people living real lives, and striving to do the best they can for themselves and their children. Arts Alive is about people.

So my challenge to you in the media, you in the arts community is: take this festival as another opportunity to pause and reflect. Take these ten days in September as the marker of recommitment to being active citizens, engaged in your communities and using the tools of your trade to make Johannesburg a truly world class African city for ALL its citizens.