

26th Basa Awards celebrates symbiotic partnerships

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Now in its 26th year, the Business and Arts South Africa (Basa) Awards, recognised projects that fuse the yin and yang of business and the arts to set a programme or project in motion. Celebrating 342 winning business and arts partnerships since its inception, the 2023 Basa Awards made a break from tradition and held its signature event in Cape Town for the first time. The ceremony saw finalists and guests entertained by South African dance legend and 2023 Basa Awards featured artist, Gregory Maqoma, jazz sensation Mandla Mlangeni, and electric violinist Kirsty Bows at the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa.



The Awards are endorsed and supported by a host of partners who celebrate the concept of mutually beneficial partnerships and the inclusion of creativity in their own strategies. Commenting on the profound impact that partnership can bring, Basa CEO Ashraf Johaardien said: "Collaboration is more than a buzzword, it requires a specific approach; trust, transparency, and a common goal are key elements."

Partnerships who get this right harness a certain kind of momentum that truly benefits both parties and more importantly, the communities and public they are creating for. From climate awareness projects to platforms for the extraordinary talent in our country, the results are amplified with good partners in the room. Whether transforming communities, shaping lives, or shifting the social and cultural narrative; the winning projects for the 26th Basa Awards are all examples of the powerful impact creativity can have when the right partnership delivers."

Said chairperson of the awards adjudication panel, Khanyi Mamba: "Every submission we received represents a unique journey, a labour of love, and a bold step towards pushing boundaries and creating something extraordinary. So to all the finalists, I want to convey my heartfelt congratulations. Your work has captured the attention of our discerning judges, and you have earned your place among the best of the best. Your creativity, dedication, and passion serve as an inspiration to all those who aspire to make a meaningful impact in the world of arts and business."

Awarding partnerships in multiple categories, this year saw the Basa Awards confer a new Green Award (partnered by Twyg). This special award was selected to recognise an organisation that uses creativity to advance awareness and impact around climate and sustainability. The finalists were selected from Basa's Climate/Culture programme that profiled projects at the intersection of these two streams. Well Worn Theatre was honoured for their tenacious commitment to using radical protest theatre and public art performances, utilising masks, puppets and street theatre, to highlight environmental injustices.

The Basa Chairperson's Award, supported by Zeitz Mocaa, awarded at the discretion of Basa's board chairperson, was presented to FNB Art Joburg and BMW for the BMW Young Collectors Co. The programme brings CEOs, founders, and entrepreneurs under 40, into a closer relationship with the country's leading artists, galleries and art patrons through first-hand social experiences, creating a new generation of art collectors and stimulating the arts economy.



Gregory Maqoma presented the keynote speech



Gregory Maqoma performing in the silo of the Zeitz Mbcaa at the Basa Awards

Demonstrating that the successful fusion of creativity and strategy can yield extraordinary outcomes, the winning partnerships of this year's Basa Awards are as follows:

IDC Community Development Award

Winner: *ATKV & Klein Karoo National Arts Festival (KKNK) for Karoo Kaarte*

The impact of this project on the community of Oudtshoorn is profound and demonstrates how the KKNK and ATKV have made a meaningful difference, using the arts as a vehicle. Karoo Kaarte focuses on community development by actively involving the local community of Oudtshoorn through various disciplines in the arts, research and documentation of oral history and empowering community members to share their stories and experiences, thereby giving them a voice and a platform to express their cultural heritage. This aspect of the project is crucial in fostering a sense of pride, ownership, and connection within the community.

The project importantly contributes to job creation and skills development by involving local artists, performers, and historians and this helps to stimulate the local economy and improve the livelihoods of community members. The emphasis on the arts as a means of community development is also noteworthy with a visual arts exhibition, theatre production, talks, zines, and other public engagements at the KKNK Festival, showcasing the transformative power of the arts in fostering dialogue, understanding, and connection. Karoo Kaarte aims to leave a lasting legacy in terms of preserving oral history and cultural heritage by documenting and archiving the oral history of Oudtshoorn.

First-time Sponsorship Award supported by Radisson Red

Winner: *Anna Pure Organic & Latitudes Online for The Anna Award*

Latitudes Online strongly believes that collaboration is key to growth and sustainability in the creative sector. The Anna Award is proof of how a strong partnership can yield huge results, albeit with a limited budget. While Latitudes does not earn revenue directly from a campaign such as this, they identify talent for the platform, and earn revenue for both partners through the sale of artworks, which is both a smart and sustainable deployment of marketing spend and supports the development of a sales pipeline for talented creatives; one that keeps on giving long after the campaign has ended.

Anna Pure Organic has committed to sponsoring the award for an additional five years and in 2023 the reach of the award broadened through accepting entries from across the continent. This year 702 entries from 28 countries were received, offering Anna Pure Organic a meaningful and impactful way to promote their brand whilst it empowers creatives and changes the lives of women, for the better.

Heineken Beverages SMME Award and Sunglass Hut Sponsorship In-Kind Award

Winner: *Avalon Cinema Group: Suncoast CineCentre and Centre for Creative Arts, University of KwaZulu-Natal for Durban International Film Festival*

The 44-year-old Durban International Film Festival (Diff) is South Africa's longest-running film festival. It is one of the leading festivals on the African continent and sits amongst other major festivals on the international calendar. The Festival is considered a premier space for the debut of South Africa films, as well as films from abroad that intend to premier on the African continent. The Diff award is considered a prestigious accolade. The winner of the documentary and shorts categories is automatically entered for consideration for the Oscars.

The Diff runs an extensive outreach and development programme for new and emerging filmmakers. In addition to screening films at the Suncoast CineCentre, the Festival also screens films at five community art centres in the broader eThekweni Municipality. Located within the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the Festival, with its archive content, contributes to the University's objectives of teaching and learning, and research and community engagement. The Festival also supports innovation in filmmaking, free expression, leadership, film administration, and internationalisation through its extensive network.

Like all arts institutions in South Africa, the Festival is dependent on funding resources for its sustainability. The partnership with Avalon Cinema Group is a mutually beneficial partnership. The Festival benefits from having a professionally managed

cinema complex as a hub for the Festival. The Festival also benefits through the Cinema's marketing and audience development strategies. The Cinema benefits through association with a reputable South African film festival with international gravitas.

Innovation Award partnered by Samsung and British Council Beyond Borders Award

Winner: *E Squared Investments and Sunshine Cinema for Spark Impact Programme*

Launched in 2021, the Spark Impact Programme has trained more than 40 young South Africans aged 21 to 34 from all nine provinces with the skills to use film as a tool for promoting dialogue and creating community-level impact on pressing issues such as gender-based violence, conservation, mental health, teenage pregnancy and substance abuse. Moreover, the skills development component has provided the Spark Impact ambassadors, or Sparks, with the necessary digital marketing knowledge and equipment to earn a monthly income from gig work (freelance digital marketing and media production work, such as photography or facilitation).

The funding from E Squared Investments facilitated the training of 20 Sparks, who received certificates from a University of Cape Town (UCT) course alongside 30+ graduates from the 2021 cohort who worked on paid impact campaigns. Going forward, the partnership's legacy lies in the establishment of a successful model for social change through job creation, film screenings and community engagement. The programme recently launched in Kenya, and it's been operating in Zimbabwe for the last five years. Sunshine Cinema and E Squared Investments hope that by highlighting these achievements and emphasising the potential for further growth and impact, they can attract other like-minded organisations and investors to join their cause.

IDC CSI Award

Winner: *The Sanlam Foundation Trust and Zip Zap Circus School Trust for Zappers Programme*

The Sanlam Foundation's support of the Zip Zap Youth programmes, contributes significantly to the skills development, growth opportunities, and employment of their talented young performers. This fruitful collaboration resulted in a noteworthy achievement when Zip Zap proudly included six jugglers from their youth programme, Zappers, in the production of 'Rhapsody'. The production was staged at the Artscape Opera House in 2022 and building on its success, their troupe embarked on an extraordinary journey, securing a three-month contract to perform 'Rhapsody' at Cirque Phénix, a grand dome-style circus tent in France.

This incredible opportunity allowed 17 Zip Zap performers, including the talented young Zappers who have progressed through Zip Zap's pyramid of programmes, to showcase their skills on an international stage. They astounded audiences with a total of 90 shows over three months, spending two months in Paris and one month touring, captivating an audience of over 350,000 individuals. The support provided has not only enabled the development and growth of talented performers but has also fostered their personal growth.

Heineken Beverages Long-term Partnership Award

Winner: *Eyesizwe Mining Development Trust and Market Theatre Foundation for Ditshomo Mentorship Programme*

The Ditshomo Mentorship Programme is a multi-pronged arts programme that, in part, creates and stages two exciting new South African plays annually, but this is also used as an opportunity to mentor young theatre practitioners in various theatre disciplines. In addition, a Schools Outreach Programme engages with Grades 11 and 12 learners to appraise them of the possibilities of 'behind the scenes' careers in the performing arts industries (not involving performance on stage).

The Schools Outreach Programme engages with 60 students each year who show an interest in the creative arts, educating them about the social relevance of the performing arts as they contribute to social cohesion and at the same time introducing them to the different career opportunities that the performing arts can offer. The students attend weekly

workshops in different theatre disciplines over six months – writing, directing, theatre design and producing – conducted by theatre professionals and held at the Market Theatre in Newtown.

Green Award partnered by Twyg

*Winner: **Well Worn Theatre Company***

The Basa Green Award is a new 'branch' or 'shoot' of this year's Awards, linked to Basa's Climate Culture Programme, launched in partnership with Rand Merchant Bank (RMB). This category – like the programme – is linked to Sustainable Development Goal 13: to limit and adapt to climate change. The Green Award was a special award selection from the projects featured in the Climate Culture Programme. The winner, Well Worn Theatre Company, creates fresh, homegrown productions for young audiences across South Africa focusing on ecological themes.

Well Worn Theatre Co has been at the coalface of theatre for sustainability for more than a decade, translating eco-socialism, climate justice and Earth-consciousness into theatre that is imaginative, entertaining, and accessible. The company of several young artists is headed up by artistic director Kyla Davis.

Basa Chairperson's Award supported by Zeitz Mocaa

*Winner: **FNB Art Joburg and BMW for BMW Young Collectors Co.***

For centuries, patrons of the arts have remained far removed from the artists whose work they endorse. Interested in the artists' work and practice but disconnected from the artists' lived experience, the relationship centred around the material. The winning partners of this year's award developed an initiative to champion Africa's art market by cultivating a new patronage; a patronage that would grow the support systems artists have. A further objective of this initiative is to forge a culture that makes engaging with the local Creative Economy second nature for its members. This is achieved through facilitating organic encounters with key players in the arts throughout the year.

Aimed at CEOs, founders, and entrepreneurs under 40, the initiative exists to develop a new generation of art collectors by affording them access to first-hand social experiences with the country's leading artists, galleries, and art patrons. Looking to protect and serve the arts as much as they collect, this generation of imminent collectors have the opportunity to participate in the arts with a depth that comes from having first-hand insider knowledge.

Find out more about all the finalists in this year's Basa Awards at <https://bit.ly/3QbSHp6>. For more information about each award and the winning partnerships, please visit Basa's website at <https://Basa.co.za/>.

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▮ **450 emerging creatives shortlisted for the Debut Programme** 12 Apr 2024

▮ **14 SA creatives join Cultural Producers Programme** 12 Mar 2024

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▮ **Basa hosts 'My Debut Story' panel discussion: Celebrating the success of emerging creative entrepreneurs** 27 Oct 2023

Business and Arts South Africa



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