

Basa Assembly draws creative and business sectors together

Issued by [Business and Arts South Africa](#)

30 Mar 2021

Complex conversations and the stirrings of systemic change were the hallmarks of the inaugural Business and Arts South Africa (Basa) Assembly held from 24-26 March 2021 and presented in partnership with British Council Southern Africa Arts. The fully digital, free event comprised a series of discussions, podcasts, presentations and live panels to address the urgent challenges facing a beleaguered arts sector. It remains online for further exploration at <https://basa.co.za>

Running across three streams (or topic groups) – Business + Research, Artists + Grants and Marketing and Cultural Policy – the programme was focused on defining the current context, identifying the urgent and long-term needs of the creative sector, and understanding how the arts and business could better work together.

A highlight of the Assembly was Basa board chairperson Charmaine Soobramoney's welcome address to attendees, where she rallied for the continued sector-wide financial support for creatives who continue to need assistance as a result of the pandemic's impact on their income streams. Reflecting Assembly's primary theme of promoting actionable outcomes, Soobramoney took the opportunity to launch Basa's [Chairman's Fund](#).

"The last year has seen unmatched challenges, but it has also been a year when our community has demonstrated equally unrivalled levels of benefaction to our peers. As Basa continues our own efforts to offer relief, we encourage you to do the same. There are several options available to you, whether you're considering supporting our ongoing Artist Relief efforts or contributing to the new Basa Chairman's Fund, which I am proud to launch today. The purpose of this fund is to raise support for a worthy cause, identified by the Basa chairman on an annual basis. You can help me by donating as little as R20, when you log on to Assembly, via the Basa website."

Basa's biennial research publication ArtsTrack No. 9 was also released at the event. The findings are made available to members of Basa but Madeleine Lambert, Basa's Head of research conducted a [presentation](#) on the outcomes.

Across the board, the event acknowledged that cross-sector collaboration could add up to much more than merely CSI initiatives, rewarding all parties through a process of mutual respect, a fundamental condition of engagement between the arts and business.

Research was identified as a vital component of success, both in terms of measuring risk and audience appetite, and to enable corporates to evaluate the impact of their investment in the arts. Currently, only a small number of corporate companies in South Africa have consistently invested in the arts space, although those who have were clear about the mutual benefits – and did forge partnerships with businesses that were willing to work alongside their objectives while allowing for freedom of expression. Companies needed to interrogate their intent when working with the arts.

A common theme across the conversations was the need for artists to find ways to be more business-minded without sacrificing their integrity and creativity. Funders were also identified as important partners towards enabling the arts to do their own research, making their offering more tangible and apparent, and successful case studies of ‘fundable’ projects illustrate the need to manage the business end of any creative endeavour. Many systemic challenges prevail in South Africa and access remains challenging in this environment. Upskilling and mentoring artists in this context becomes a priority if the country is to leverage true transformation in the arts. Basa Assembly also presents a collection of [resources](#) for artists, which includes an economic impact calculator and reports from various investment and research partners.

Says Basa CEO Ashraf Johaardien: “It was evident that the freedom of an artist to form their own unique expression, critique and question, challenge and surprise remains imperative but, as big brands face a market that is highly sensitised to ethics and authenticity, the arts – and indeed the processes used by artists – becomes a valuable asset to assist businesses in developing more honest and interesting brands and finding new approaches to connecting with their own audiences.”

The programme for Basa Assembly was co-curated by Savannah Feeke-Fortune (Basa head of marketing), Boitumelo ‘Tummy’ Motsoatsoe (Basa head of programmes) and Madeleine Lambert (Basa head of research). The full programme can be viewed [here](#), but highlights of the event include:

The [keynote address](#) from youth and African cultural trends navigator Dali Tembo, and a presentation by researcher and independent cultural/media worker Johanna Mavhungu, [Between The State And The Market](#), which explored cultural policy, marketing and creative ideation.

A recording of the webinar [Bula Sekele: Make The Circle Bigger](#), explores navigating access, inclusion and diversity in the South African creative sector funding landscape. Another webinar, [Data-Driven](#), is a webinar on research and investment in the creative sector; and Basa revealed its ArtsTrack No. 9 research findings in [The Inside Track](#), presented by Madeleine Lambert.

Artist Lee-Ann van Rooi put an artist’s perspective forward in [Now We’re Talking](#), and Sylvia Akach was in conversation with international marketing leader Les Green about entrepreneurial marketing leadership. [In Conversation: Jumpstarting Impact Investment in the Creative Economy](#), saw Kate Gardner interview Fran Sanderson, who leads the arts and culture investments and programmes team at the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (Nesta), a UK-based innovation foundation.

Basa CEO Ashraf Johaardien held a conversation with Professor Andrea Rurale (Università Bocconi) about [cultural intelligence](#) in the current context and how data and research can assist businesses in building an arts funding strategy.

The models and realities of business and creative sector engagements were discussed in a panel called [Cross-Sector Creative Collaborations](#), and for those who’ve been in the trenches with that elusive balance between brand and creativity paid witness to some of these [Burning Issues](#).



Assembly exclusive preview of "Onda" by HAN SÚN Gathering/The People United ASBL and hannahmadance in collaboration with Sebastian Purfürst

The event was enriched by the experience of works from artists and performers like musical performance "Just Kids", performed by Kiruna-Lind Devar and composed by Stephen Anthony Haiden, and Kiruna-Lind Devar; dance piece "Onda", choreographed by Hannah Ma and performed by Christin Reinartz, Hannah Ma and Sergio Mel, and a ["poetic provocation"](#) by vangile gantsho.

- " **SoCreative Summit returns to Johannesburg for a free exploration of creativity** 29 Apr 2024
- " **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

Business and Arts South Africa



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.
[Profile](#) | [News](#) | [Contact](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [RSS Feed](#)

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