

Creative Currencies the theme of the forthcoming ACT/UJ Conference

The second ACT/UJ Arts & Culture Conference will be held in Joburg from 6 to 8 August, 2013. Entitled *Creative Currencies: Accessing Opportunities in an Expanding Marketplace*, conference organisers have compiled a programme that includes input from local, continental and international leaders in the fields of economics, policy making, the arts and culture sector; and those exploring new frontiers, particularly in the digital terrain.

The conference will begin by considering what the creative economy is and how it's evolving and transforming. UK Culture Strategist John Newbigin's keynote address will unpack the history of data collection and measurement of the creative industries, as well as how this has successfully been used in various countries. Newbigin will also interrogate how the creative industries have benefitted sections of society and why it offers a unique and sustainable way forward for the global economy.

Experts from Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana

Continental perspectives concerning aspects of cultural entrepreneurship will be presented by experts from Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana, who will also interrogate how governments support, or undermine, the development of the creative industries. The focus on the creative economy in the South African context aims to develop a better understanding of the local creative economies and the challenges associated with implementing policy.

Representatives from the Department of Trade and Industry, the Industrial Development Corporation, the Department of Arts and Culture and other statutory bodies will discuss their interactions with the creative sector.

A report on a recent research project funded by the EU and undertaken by the Visual Arts Network of South Africa, the British Council and Arterial Network South Africa, will give insight into trends in the trade and exchange of South African cultural and creative goods and services.

A panel including Avril Joffe, Alice Cabaret, Dorelle Sapere, Zayd Minty and Nicky du Plessis will take a look at how the creative sector can support the development of a city and vice versa, interrogating practical examples of initiatives that have been successful and those that have failed, in a session on cities and creative capitals, and their intersection with the arts. These outlooks will be extrapolated to consider the global economic shifts from The West to The East and resultant impact on the cultural industries. Personalities such as Design Indaba's Ravi Naidoo, Claudia Kaiser from the Frankfurt Book Fair and the National Arts Festival's Tony Lankester (on the African Festival Network, the Venice Biennale, and the World Fringe Alliance); will present their perspectives on the opportunities and challenges of trade events and festivals, considering the cultural industries as well as rural and urban centres, and the global environment. Yvette Hardie, current president of ASSITEJ International, will lead a breakaway session that delves more specifically into residencies and exchanges.

Copyright and creative commons licensing

Looking at a different form of exchange, Dr Tobias Schonwetter, Prof Owen Dean and McDonald Netshitenzhe from the Department of Trade and Industry will share their views on copyright and creative commons licensing, chaired in their discussion by Gérard Robinson, chairman of the Dramatic and Literary Rights Organisation.

Perhaps one of the most pertinent topics under consideration is the intersection of the arts sector with business and society. CEO of Business and Arts South Africa, Michelle Constant, will chair a discussion panel in which practical examples will feature under the spotlight, looking especially at how to improve market penetration and expanding client and audience bases, exploring new ways to understand audiences and clients and how this knowledge could be used to extend these relationships. Prof Elaine Rumboll will provide insight into selling your art without selling your soul, in a presentation on *Business Acumen for Artists*.

The surge of technology is not diminishing culture and art, in fact we're exploding into an unparalleled age of creativity, an richer understanding of what it means to be human. A digital focus hones in on innovative uses of digital, social media, and technology in terms of creative endeavours; considering global developments in the online space; and some of the worldwide trends impacting on creative digital work in South Africa, and innovation that is happening in the local market. Challenges and prospects of stimulating local content development strategies will be discussed by Aifheli Makhwanya from the National Film and Video Foundation, Nick Motatse, formerly of South African Music Rights Organisation, and Themba Wakashe from the task team on local content. Tech-guru Dave Duarte will provide tools to assist with online marketing of the arts.

Looking forward, the educator, entrepreneur and activist Max Kaizen explains why infusing science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) with the animating power of art is our best option for the future.

Breakaway sessions

The conference will be tied together by arts activist and playwright Mike van Graan. A number of breakaway sessions will allow delegates a chance to interrogate opportunities and areas of concern more deeply, and constructively engage with leaders in various fields. In addition to the formal proceedings and networking opportunities, the personal interaction with both presenters and other delegates often proves to be one of the most valuable and inspiring results of all.

A second edition of the SA Arts and Culture Listing, an up-to-date national database of industry stakeholders, will be released at this year's conference. Media partners SAFM, Mail & Guardian and Classicfeel magazine and Pink Room enable strategic communications and marketing of the event.

The Conference will take place 6 to 8 August, 2013, at UJ Arts Centre, Kingsway Campus, University of Johannesburg. R750 per delegate includes access to all presentations, entertainment and refreshments. For more information, go to www.act.org.za.

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