

# National Arts Festival appoints Rucera Seethal as its new artistic director

The National Arts Festival (NAF) has appointed Rucera Seethal as its new artistic director. She will officially take up the position in January 2020 but will be engaging in festival curation processes in the interim.

In her new role, Seethal will work closely with NAF executive producer Nobesuthu Rayi, who not only works on the festival's programming but is also responsible for its arts education projects.



Rucera Seethal

Seethal's appointment is a key move in the recent restructuring of NAF's artistic team, which is responsible for formulating the artistic vision of the festival, bringing the exciting programme to life.

## Strong and steady vision

Speaking on the announcement of her appointment, Rucera said, "It's a dynamic time for the arts in South Africa and continentally, and I am excited to be joining the artistic team at this pivotal moment in the National Arts Festival's history. I look forward to working with the artistic committee, the board, and engaging with the community of Makhanda, towards building the festival's artistic vision for our emerging future."

Ayanda Mjekula, the chair of the NAF board, said: “I’m delighted that Rucera will be taking the artistic reins of the festival and leading our already strong artistic team. Under her guidance, the team will be responsible for defining and leading our artistic vision – creating multiple platforms for our artists to tell their stories and opportunities for audiences to share those. She brings with her a strong and steady vision of continent-wide and global collaboration, and a deep commitment to forging the partnerships and networks we need.”

The National Arts Festival’s artistic director works closely with the artistic committee to curate a vision for the festival’s programme. “Our team is looking forward to working with an artistic director with a strong vision to reshape the Festival programme,” says NAF artistic committee chair Brett Bailey.

Seethal is currently programme manager at Pro Helvetia Johannesburg, where she is responsible for the performing arts portfolio across Switzerland and SADC, and for co-adjudicating its Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation regional grant programme.

She was art director and production manager at Chimurenga, the award-winning arts, culture and politics magazine, between 2004 to 2011. In 2016, Seethal was on the jury of the ZKB prize at Theatre Spektakel, Zurich; and she is currently negotiating curatorial responsibilities with SPIELART Theatre Festival, Munich.

Other members of the artistic team include fringe manager Zikhona Monaheng and fringe assistant manager Sisanda Mankayi.

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