

What's on at the 2019 Fak'ugesi Digital Innovation Festival

The 2019 Fak'ugesi Digital Innovation Festival will be held at Wits University's Tshimologong Innovation Precinct in Braamfontein, Johannesburg from 30 August to 8 September 2019. The 2019 festival has cast its central theme as 'Own Your Force', which invites digital makers in Africa to stake their claim on their talent, industry and creative economy.

Now in its sixth successful year, Fak'ugesi returns in 2019 after programme directors took a break from annual programming, producing a smaller programme last year to focus on the festival's vision and development. Dr Tegan Bristow, Fak'ugesi African Digital Innovation Festival director, says attendees can expect a fresh and energised lineup that explores screen-based digital creativity in gaming, virtual reality, mixed reality cinema and animation – with special focus on cross-sector collaboration in the region for Southern and East Africa, addressing blockchain, artificial intelligence, protection of intellectual and creative property and much more.



“Fak'ugesi acts as a platform that brings together diverse digital and technology sectors to collaborate and share skills in digital media and technology innovation. This year's theme 'Own Your Force' centres on an African vision of the future of digital creativity by asking; who owns our digital value chain? How do we protect our creative and cultural equity in the digital world? How do we value our contributions to digital culture in an African economy? Where are the threats and the opportunities for culture and technology in Africa in a world driven by market interests?” explains Bristow.

2019 highlights

A highlight in this year's Fak'ugesi African Digital Innovation Festival programme is a conference developed in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut's Creative Entrepreneurship office, which will bring attention to the challenges of creative and digital entrepreneurship within the 4th Industrial Revolution in Africa. In preparation, Goethe will host a forum of select contributions on 4 July 2019 at Goethe Johannesburg.

Another highlight of the 2019 programme is the annual Fak’ugesi Digital Africa Residency, which will bring together aspiring young digital artists from the SADC region. This year, the project expands as young Swiss artists collaborate with their SADC counterparts. Working with Pro Helvetia and the ANT Fund for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the residency serves to highlight and develop incredible young digital talent in Southern Africa and boost their careers as important digital creatives.



Along with supporting young up-and-coming digital arts via the annual Residency, Fak’ugesi African Digital Innovation Festival will be hosting a large contingent of African Digital makers to both present and attend. In 2019 Fak’ugesi Festival will be working with the British Council Southern African Arts to bring up to 15 digital artists and storytellers from across the continent in the ColabNowNow project, a shared encounter with Fak’ugesi Festival’s sister festival [Maputo Fast Forward](#) in Mozambique.

Additionally, in partnership with the Tshimologong Precinct, Fak’ugesi Festival will also host the recent Digital Lab Africa competition winners who hail from Ghana, Mali, Zimbabwe, Kenya and South Africa to represent five creative digital startups in Gaming, Animation, VR, Web Creation and Digital Media.

After its launch in 2018, the Fak’ugesi Arcade programme will run in full force this year with an emphasis on gaming in sub-Saharan Africa. “Fak’ugesi Arcade is a project within Fak’ugesi Festival, a partnership with the Wits Digital Arts Department and various gaming industry partners that acts to present new work both from the region and internationally and develop a critical agenda for the development of the gaming industry in Southern Africa,” says Bristow. Fak’ugesi Arcade will feature a special cross-sector game-jam (scriptwriting, music, UX and Animation in gaming) and workshops to build collaboration between sectors. The Fak’ugesi Arcade team will also shine a light on indigenous and urban games, which will include a participatory game in a WhatsApp chatbot by Dutch Artist Klassien van de Zandschulp titled “OutSpace”.

Among the array of exciting exhibitions at this year’s festival will be the Fak’ugesi Digital Africa Residency Exhibition, work by Swiss Artists Andrea Gysin and Sidi Vanetti, a VR exhibition, an animation screening in collaboration with AnimationSA, a games arcade and an online residency with Floating Reverie.

“The Fak’ugesi African Digital Innovation Festival is the only one of its kind in Africa and the only digital arts-focused festival in sub-Saharan Africa. It has risen to prominence as a platform through which many young digital makers have launched their careers and developed skills in digital media and technology innovation,” adds Bristow.

For more information on the 2019 Fak’ugesi African Digital Innovation Festival visit www.fakugesi.co.za.

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