Fak'ugesi Digital Africa Residency expanded

'Tap your Africa Source Code' is the theme of the Fak'ugesi African Digital Innovation Festival this year and will focus on bringing important African visions and futures, by tapping into the sources of African tradition and culture alongside technology, creativity and innovation.

In 2018, the Fak'ugesi Festival calls on you to explore the algorithms, patterns and fractals of Africa in digital art, music, games, VR, digital makers or the way you braid your hair. The festival, held in September in Johannesburg, explores how local culture can move and change the future of technology: 'What would you call a vernacular algorithm? What is algorithm in IsiZulu?'

This year's Fak'ugesi Residency artists include: Nkhensani Mkhari (Johannesburg), Joshua Chiundiza (Harare), Yara Mekawei (Cairo), Abhiyan Humane (New Delhi), Anoop Saxena (New Delhi), and Mathilde Buenerd (Geneva).

This is the fifth and most expansive artist's residency and this year includes artists from Cairo, New Delhi and Geneva, together with an artist from South Africa and another from Zimbabwe, supporting regional connection and networks in the digital arts. The residency is currently underway, taking place from 8 August to 9 September 2018.

> " *Meet our Fak'ugesi Digital Africa Residents for 2018! These creative digital artists will dive deep into the algorithms, patterns and fractals of their indigenous cultures in response to the 2018 Fak'ugesi Festival theme #AfroSourceCode Supported by Pro Helvetia pic.twitter.com/EtBp3DGYWV— Fak'ugesi Festival (@fakugesi) August 9, 2018* "

Tegan Bristow, Fak'ugesi Festival director, says that this extended Residency is an exciting one: "This year we will see creative technologists dive deep into the algorithms, patterns and fractals of their indigenous cultures. Each will endeavour to respond to the 2018 Fak'ugesi Festival theme, in which we explore the role that vernacular and traditional cultures have in digital culture and practices."

Bristow says the Residency will receive ongoing (since 2016) support from Pro Helvetia and the ANT Fund via the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC): "We are excited to be collaborating with Pro Helvetia again and to be extending the Residency with them. The 2018 inclusion of North Africa, South Asia and Switzerland, alongside our annual SADC focus is part of a 2018 programme by Pro Helvetia to celebrate the anniversaries of their offices, in Cairo (30 years), Johannesburg (20 years) and New Delhi (10 years)."

The head of Pro Helvetia's Johannesburg office, Joseph Gaylard, outlines the motive force behind Pro Helvetia's investment: "The residency brings a new generation of aspirant practitioners from these cities together with more experienced artists from India, Switzerland and Johannesburg, in order to plant new furrows of transnational connection and collaboration in the digital arts field beyond its traditional home in the Anglo-American-European world. We do so in the belief that this alternate geography will be an important source of new thinking and practice at the intersection of culture, art and technology in the coming years."

The Residents will be hosted by the brand new Tshimologong Maker Space and the Wits School of Arts Point of Order Gallery. There will also be a final exhibition that will open on 4 September 2018 at Point of Order Gallery.

The Residency will incorporate a special project by Swiss artist, Marc Lee, which focuses on language diversity in online media. Lee will act as mentor for the residents.

Fak'ugesi, which means "Switch it on" or "add power" in urban Zulu, is focused on making young adults aware of digital innovation. It is an opportunity for young adults, with or without formal education, to learn or engage with tomorrow's technology.

 Fak'ugesi African Digital Innovation Festival in Braamfontein in August
21 Jul 2016

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