

Lights up - 2022 Basa Award winners announced

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Determination, imagination and cooperation - this was the grit that kept this year's Basa Award winners on the road through a tough 2021, the year during which the awarded projects took place. From social innovation to education, cultural exploration to artist development and community upliftment, partnerships were formed between artists and businesses that showed leadership and innovation and saw tangible benefits, often setting the foundation for deeper collaboration.



A win for Rich Mlisi at the Basa Awards partnered by Hollard

The 25th Annual Basa Awards, partnered by Hollard, returned to live format on 29 August for the first time in three years. The ceremony was streamed live online as the winners were announced from the stage at Hollard's Villa Arcadia in Parktown, Johannesburg. The event, hosted by Roshina Ratnam and Rorisang Thandekiso, featured performances from Zoë Modiga and Moving into Dance.

Each of the winners received an original limited edition Mariapaola McGurk paper-cut artwork, created especially for the 25th Basa Awards. Each artwork is unique and signed by the artist.

Speaking at the awards, Basa CEO Ashraf Johaardien said: "Since its inception 25 years ago, Basa has lit fires beneath the notion of cross-sector partnerships. Advocating for the value of arts, culture and creativity in society goes hand in hand with engendering a broader understanding of the role the arts can play within the socio-economic framework. Encouragement is the fuel that lights the fire, and we continuously strive to light a spark when energy is low. These Basa Awards mirror the brightest sparks of energy, those whose determination and collaboration are making a real difference."

Hollard's brand executive Heidi Brauer said: "In keeping with the theme, we hope that it is truly 'Lights up – time to shine' and that the arts will flourish again after two years of dark stages and empty venues. And we hope that it's also 'Lights up' on many new partnerships between businesses and arts projects and organisations that, like so many partnerships before them, contribute towards better futures for all South Africans."





The winners of the 25th Basa Awards are:

Beyond Borders Partnership Award

Cooperative Innovations, Baz-Art and GreenPop for The Museum of Plastic

Community Development Award

Urban Space Management and MojaNation for the Newtown Improvement District Revitalisation Project

Corporate Social Investment Award

Nando's, Spier Arts Trust, Bridges for Music Academy and Clout/SA for the Basha Uhuru Freedom Festival 2021

First-time Sponsor Award

Jaguar South Africa and #GiveHerACrown for #GiveHerACrown

Innovation Award

BMW Group South Africa and Southern Guild for *Rich* magazine

Long-term Partnership Award

Nando's and Spier Arts Trust for Nando's Creative Exchange

SMME Award

Urban Space Management and MojaNation for the Newtown Improvement District Revitalization Project

Sponsorship In-kind Award

Gearhouse Splitbeam and The National School of the Arts for The Dome@NSA – Outdoor Venue

Chairperson's Award

Tshimologong Digital Innovation Precinct for Fak'ugesi African Digital Innovation Festival

A recording of the 2022 Basa Awards is available to watch on basa.co.za/awards/.





Basa CEO Ashraf Johaardien at the 25th Basa Awards. Image by Theana Breugem

About the winners

Beyond Borders Partnership Award

Cooperative Innovations, Baz-Art and GreenPop for **The Museum of Plastic**

The Beyond Borders Partnership Award recognises a partnership that builds brand reputation and audience for both partners across borders, through a project showcasing South Africa to the rest of the continent and/or overseas, or bringing international or intercontinental arts projects to South Africa.

The Museum of Plastic virtually showcases artworks developed in different media to educate and motivate the public to change their behaviour around the use and disposal of plastic. Together, Baz-Art and Cooperative Innovations, a British tech innovation company, supported by GreenPop and the British Council, successfully created and curated The Museum of Plastic.

Through Baz-Art's creative direction, real-world artworks were merged into the virtual platform. Six South African mural artists – Cheeky Observer, Ellena Lourens, Dirty Native, Silas Ras Moetse, Wayne BKS and Mernette Swartz – participated in the project, painting real-world plastic-pollution-themed murals in Cape Town. Baz-Art also trained these artists to sculpt and paint for virtual reality to create unique, immersive experiences.

The sustainability-themed murals that focused on plastic were translated into digital versions by the artists and then transformed into interactive installations in multiple online museum wings, each curated around the individual artists' creative visions. Digital masters from Cooperative Innovations lifted elements of these artworks to create the digital experiences in the museum.

The Museum of Plastic was so effective that it was included at the 2021 COP26 in Glasgow, exposing South African artists to an international audience.

See cura.tours/mop2121

Community Development Award and SMME Award

Urban Space Management and MojaNation for the **Newtown Improvement District Revitalization Project**

The Community Development Award recognises NPO/NGO/CBO/PBO support for arts and culture projects enhancing their communities, whether through education, skills development, contributing to livelihoods or employment, tourism, or other growth opportunities at a grass-roots level.

The SMME Award recognises vital support given to the arts by a micro, small or medium enterprise, with up to 250 full-time employees and an annual turnover of no more than R100m.

In the 1970s and '80s, Newtown in Johannesburg became a hub of creativity, attracting actors, musicians and artists. It was one of the few places in the city where people could come together across racial lines, whether at the Market Theatre or nearby iconic jazz clubs, and it quickly became an area strongly associated with music. The area was later designated as the Newtown Cultural Precinct, with further investment in the arts such as the creation of the Museum Africa. The area soon fell into decay, however, and a partnership between Urban Space Management and MojaNation aimed to visually revitalise the Newtown area to attract new visitors, both local and international, and restore Newtown to its rightful position as an attraction. The scope of the project ranged from repainting dilapidated infrastructure, such as the façade of Museum Africa, to restoring the iconic Heads of Africa sculptures, to creating and curating brand-new public artwork.

In May and June 2021, local artists were commissioned to create striking pieces that brought the area's history to life for the passing visitor. The final roster of artists contributing to this project included Dbongz Mahlati, Tshepo Kekae, Tetteh Cudjoe, Americo Guambe and James Delaney. MojaNation acted as middleman between Urban Space Management and the artists, creating open lines of communication to facilitate the project's successful roll-out. Over the course of the project, Urban Space Management liaised with key Newtown stakeholders, including Mary Fitzgerald Square, Newtown Junction and Museum Africa, to secure the chosen locations for the artworks and provide logistical support.

The public artworks were created to last for many years, continuing to evoke Newtown's musical legacy in the future. Public art helps to raise the profile of the area that it is placed in, especially when there is a unifying theme connecting artworks that gives visitors a narrative thread to follow. It is also a boon to the tour industry, as the many street art and graffiti tours that have sprung up in recent years attest. This project can be used as a case study to show the impact public art can have on an area.

See urbanspace.org.za.

Corporate Social Investment Award

Nando's, Spier Arts Trust, Bridges for Music Academy and Clout/SA for the **Basha Uhuru Freedom Festival 2021**

Acknowledging vital support for arts and culture projects enhancing their communities, from medium to large businesses (i.e., with more than 50 full-time employees and over R40 million annual turnover) as part of their wider CSI/CSR strategy.

The Basha Uhuru Freedom Festival Fired Up by Nando's is an annual celebration of creative expression held at Constitution Hill in Johannesburg. The three-day event is packed with workshops, talks and industry pitch sessions for design artists. The Sounds of Freedom Music Festival is held on the last day. Nando's has sponsored Basha Uhuru since 2017 across three key creative elements:

1. A visual arts partnership with Spier Art Trust, which runs a development programme and has grown Nando's collection of artworks by emerging local artists to more than 24,500 pieces.
2. A design partnership in the form of the Nando's Hot Young Design (HYD) talent search facilitated by Clout/SA. Winning work is listed on The Portal to Africa, Nando's online marketplace where Nando's interior designers can browse and order pieces.
3. A music partnership with Bridges For Music, an NPO that aims to connect the global music industry and its resources to at-risk communities in South Africa. A three-day boot camp event, called BridgeFire, empowered 10 young up-and-coming musicians through targeted mentorship. Eight of the 10 artists performed at the Basha Uhuru Freedom Festival – two of them on the main stage.

In 2021, after the Covid hiatus of 2020, the Basha Uhuru Creative Uprising Fired Up by Nando's was presented as a hybrid event that brought creatives and audiences back together at Constitution Hill and delivered inspiration, networking, creative collaborations and hands-on creativity.

See www.instagram.com/bashauhuru/.

First-time Sponsor Award

Jaguar South Africa and #GiveHerACrown for **#GiveHerACrown**

The First-time Sponsor Award is for a sponsor supporting the arts for the first time, irrespective of size, budget, and whether it is through corporate social investment, marketing, human resources, B-BBEE, or other.

Launched on Women's Day in 2020, #GiveHerACrown is a women's empowerment platform that uses the power of storytelling and the arts to raise awareness and funds for the fight against gender-based violence. Jaguar South Africa joined the initiative as brand partner in the lead-up to 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence in November 2020. Jaguar and #GiveHerACrown share an ethos of empowering women and celebrating their fearless spirits and creativity.

Creative expression can be used to communicate our individual and collective values, and this campaign fosters creativity in a positive way, helping to give voice to new ideas. The 2020 Crown Collection was a series of bespoke fine art crowns, dedicated to inspiring South Africa's women, successfully raising funding for an innovative schools' education campaign that uses the arts to empower learners on issues of gender equality.

The theme for the 2021 campaign was #YouGotThePower – harnessing the arts and creativity to connect, inspire and empower women throughout South Africa. Six artists were empowered to create a unique digital art piece as part of The Crown Collection. These were sold online to raise money for the Crown Collection Bursary Fund for young female creatives.



Hollard's Executive Brand, Heidi Brauer at the 25th Basa Awards. Image by Theana Breugem



Zoe Modiga

Innovation Award

BMW Group South Africa and Southern Guild for **Rich magazine**

The Innovation Award celebrates the most innovative, cutting-edge and progressive partnerships that served all partners' purposes effectively. These breakthrough projects and partnerships demonstrate great creativity, originality, reinvention, new methodologies, or technological/digital innovation.

With a partnership that began in May 2018, BMW Group South Africa and Southern Guild gallery share mutual values of design excellence, innovation and creative courage. This is expressed through a programme of exhibitions that the gallery holds and comprises four major activations a year that pair an artist or exhibition with a specific luxury-class vehicle being launched in the local market.

In 2021, a print and multimedia project was produced to promote fashion designer Rich Mnisi's first solo exhibition of art

and furniture, titled Nyoka, at Southern Guild Gallery in Cape Town. Its main component was a once-off, limited-edition magazine published by Southern Guild and the 750 copies were distributed to BMW clients and dealerships, to Southern Guild collectors, as well as at galleries and exhibitions internationally. It went on sale directly to the public through the gallery. The entire publication was also made available free online on Southern Guild's website. Four short videos highlighting aspects of the exhibition and the magazine were produced to promote the project on social media.

Simply titled *Rich*, the magazine consisted of 132 pages of specially commissioned photography, writing and illustrations by many of South Africa's leading Black creatives including Trevor Stuurman, Bradley Bdllovu, Kholeka Kumalo, Khensani Mohlatlole and Thando Ndabezitha. *Rich* used the traditional format of a glossy fashion magazine in an innovative way: to showcase the artworks of Nyoka, document their making and highlight Mnisi's unique creative vision. In an audacious acknowledgement of his 'influencer' status, Mnisi was both the editor and subject.

Rich is a vibrant vehicle for storytelling, an authentic engagement with Mnisi's Tsonga heritage and a catalyst for creative production (commissioning original content by photographers, writers, stylists and other creatives). Notably, the project led to a longer-term collaboration between Mnisi and BMW, which consulted with the designer to help the brand engage with a younger, Black market. This fed into BMW's evolution towards more conscious consumerism and forward-looking, progressive mode of electro-mobility.

See [Rich magazine](#).

Long-term Partnership Award

Nando's and Spier Arts Trust for **Nando's Creative Exchange**

The Long-term Partnership Award recognises outstanding initiative and commitment to the arts over a period of at least three years as an integral part of the sponsor's strategy. The value to the arts project, the broader community, and the sponsor must be apparent.

Creativity is an integral part of the Nando's brand, and the Nando's Creative Exchange was established in 2011 to recognise emerging Southern African fine artists who demonstrate exceptional ability. The programme offers selected visual artists exhibition and mentorship opportunities, as well as sponsorship for art materials. All of this is aimed at developing artists' professional practice.

The programme is part of the larger Nando's Art Initiative, a partnership between Nando's and Spier Arts Trust that was first formed in 2001. In the two decades of working together, Nando's art collection has grown to include more than 24,500 pieces, making Nando's the largest private collector of contemporary Southern African art in the world and helping to support hundreds of artists in their careers. They run four programmes together and support more than 150 artists, with artworks showcased in more than 1,200 Nando's restaurants worldwide.

As part of the programme, an experienced mentor provides curatorial and professional presentation advice to artists while they are working towards the exhibition to enable future independence in approaching galleries professionally and to plan successful art exhibitions.

Nando's partnership with Spier Arts Trust's experts ensures their time, money and effort invested in supporting the visual arts makes the most significant possible impact.

See nandoscreativity.co.za.

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See nandoscreativity.co.za.

Sponsorship In-kind Award

Gearhouse Splitbeam and The National School of the Arts for **The Dome@NSA – Outdoor Venue**

The Sponsorship In-kind Award acknowledges a sponsor giving quantifiable and impactful non-monetary support to the arts. This may be through in-kind provision of equipment, materials, media or PR support, space, transportation or travel, or any other products or services, as opposed to monetary sponsorship.

The partnership between the National School of the Arts (NSA) and Gearhouse Splitbeam was formed in February 2021 when the NSA was looking for a safe venue where their learners could perform at reduced risk during the Covid pandemic. An outdoor stage was the dream solution because, as evidence showed at the time, humans are safest when outdoors during a pandemic. In early 2021, Covid regulations were still gazetted at 250 people outdoors with all physical distancing measures in place.

After an appeal to Gearhouse Splitbeam, a partnership was formed which made a non-permanent outdoor dome available to the NSA for 10 months (which was extended to 13 months). What should have cost between R100,000 and R160,000 per night, cost the NSA just R20,000 in total thanks to Gearhouse Splitbeam's generous in-kind sponsorship. A closing grant from RMB was used to fund this rental.

The partnership also showed the NSA how an outdoor dome could be a perfect permanent NSA theatre, which the school is currently fundraising for.

See artschool.co.za.

Chairperson's Award

Tshimologong Digital Innovation Precinct for **Fak'ugesi African Digital Innovation Festival**

Each year, The Basa Chairperson's Award is presented in recognition of sustained and extraordinary commitment to the arts in South Africa, in the form of advocacy and awareness initiatives or direct support for the arts, whether in a personal or professional capacity at a local, national or international level. The Award was given at the discretion of Zingisa Motloba, Basa's current board chairperson.

The Fak'ugesi African Digital Innovation Festival has been supporting and celebrating the crossover of art, culture and technology in Africa since 2014. It's an annual festival that strives to support growth and development in the digital creative sectors in Africa and the African creatives and entrepreneurs that work within them. The festival is passionate about uniquely African perspectives and solutions in the spaces where art, culture and technology meet, and works to support the sector through the programming of exhibitions, workshops, conferences, and events.

It is rooted in the sector and is programmed annually in response to development needs identified by sector practitioners. In 2021, Fak'ugesi was awarded the NSTF-South32 Awards Special Annual Theme Award: Creative economy for sustainable development, honouring the project as a flagship on the continent, serving as a model and reference for regional and international organisations that support and develop the digital creative sector.

The thematic guide for the festival each year channels contextualised and varied articulations of Fak'ugesi's foundation. The themes demonstrate year-on-year how the festival and the creative and tech industry as a whole have evolved, simultaneously feeding off each other for creativity and critical reflection.

Fak'ugesi has reached an annual audience of 6,000 participants, with the majority being young innovators, artists and digital practitioners.

See fakugesi.co.za.

- **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
- **26th Basa Awards celebrates symbiotic partnerships** 17 Oct 2023

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