

Comic Con Africa: It's about more than pop culture

By [Emily Stander](#)

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From 22-25 September, Comic Con Africa made its triumphant return after three years.



Image by BlackSmith: Ross Butler on the Comic Con Africa main stage

The four-day experience was a tribute to all things pop culture; from gaming to street art, this year's Comic Con had it all in one place at the Joburg Expo Centre.

This year, the event also hosted *Stranger Things* actor Jamie Campbell Bower, *Riverdale*'s Ross Butler and a myriad of other international artists and cosplayers that joined for the festivities and celebrations of everything we love.

We were also able to see who would represent South Africa in the international cosplay competition in the US and who were the winners in multiple national gaming competitions at the VS Gaming stage.



Comic Con Africa heads to Cape Town in 2023

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Fans were able to get photo ops and autographs from their favourite celebrities, experience cosplaying to the highest degree, enjoy esports events, connect with their favourite streamers and even get a tattoo.

However, beyond all the competitions, activities and overall festivity - Comic Con is about one big thing: Connecting with others who have the same passions.

The business of Comic Con

This connection unequivocally applies to the exhibitors and businesses that were at the event. Often, especially with small businesses that deal with niche products, it can be a little difficult to find and connect with customers who are looking for exactly what you deal in. When you have a ton of shops altogether, all looking to share the creative and wonderful products they make, it's impossible not to find something you love.

And from a brand perspective, it would be impossible not to find something inspiring.

“ [#ComicConAfrica](#) Day 3 looking INSANE! 🎉🎉🎉🎉 pic.twitter.com/zaN8SETrMD— Comic Con Africa (@ComicConAfrica) [September 24, 2022](#) ”

Each and every one of the exhibitors *Bizcommunity* spoke with at the event said the same thing: That the networking was doing incredible things for their business and awareness of what they have to offer.

And, considering that on one of the sold-out days at Comic Con the event saw over 20,000 people, it's safe to say that massive collaboration makes for successful business and brand marketing.

Understanding content creation

Comic Con also brought forward an opportunity for an array of different content creators to showcase their work.

Streamercon, for example, gave streamers the opportunity to expand their reach and show attendees how they promote and create their video content. From a brand perspective, this is invaluable - as we were given the opportunity to see exactly how streamers maintain their own personal brand and how they can fit into collaborative opportunities with other brands and streamers as well.

“ Everybody getting pumped to see [@Jamiebower](#) at [@ComicConAfrica](#) 🎉🎉 pic.twitter.com/yXcNHhthaC— BizLifestyle (@Biz_Lounge) [September 23, 2022](#) ”

More than video content, we also saw the inception of StreetCon, where urban culture and pop culture collided. Here, we had an opportunity to see the work of street artists, tattoo artists, special activations that showcased incredible artwork and be immersed in South African street culture.

It's really about opportunity

Since its first edition in 2018, Comic Con has grown exponentially into a festival that not only celebrates popular culture in all its forms but an opportunity for people from all walks of life to see and understand the work that goes into all these forms of popular culture.

Covid-19 saw many businesses and brands suffer from not having proper networking opportunities and the difficulty of trying to make connections online. Events like Comic Con Africa bring what we knew before the pandemic back.

“ One of the most insane cosplays at [@ComicConAfrica](#) so far! [#ComicConAfrica](#) pic.twitter.com/gQntFk5wGZ— GLITCHED (@_GLITCHED_) [September 22, 2022](#) ”

Of course, being able to see people like Bower and Butler was a treat, but the real speciality of Comic Con lies in connectivity, collaboration and the opportunity to learn more about what others outside of our personal niches and interests do - providing more exploration than anything else.

It is my opinion that brands and business-minded people should be attending events like this, purely for this reason. Even if it's just for inspiration.

ABOUT EMILY STANDER

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