

Dance Umbrella 2018 celebrates 30th anniversary

The Dance Umbrella festival, which celebrates its 30th anniversary, presents new and exciting contemporary works from 6 to 8 March 2018 at UJ Centre for the Arts, Wits Theatre Complex, Dance Factory, Joburg Fringe Theatre and the Hillbrow Theatre.

Sunday, 11 March sees the festival's New Dance Programme taking place as of 10am and will feature new work from various dance training programmes and young artists at the Wits Theatre.

Included in the New Dance Programme are company members from the Vuyani Dance Theatre - Otto Nhlapo with *Interpretation*, which investigates how we exist within the confines of an endless force that has evolved over time - it prospers through tightening its grip on us and we loyally obey its demands; Roseline Keppler with *Inside Insight* which reflects on how life challenges us and Julia Burnham presents *Matlou*, a work inspired by questioning the addiction of endurance, when seeking for the fairytale ending.



Curvature by Ashley Kim Wakefield examines the complicated relationship between 21st-century women and our bodies, as we all thirst to realise our unrealistic expectations of beauty. The work uses contemporary dance and pole dancing to explore the idea of the new strong female body in a time taken over by #StrongIsTheNewSkinny.

Unsteady by Zoe Peters from the National School of the Arts is about how much people rely on one another. Throughout the piece, there is a constant display of support. One is always holding, catching or reaching for others, never letting them fall, as they need and are drawn to each other. Leela Devar, another National School of the Arts student, presents *Confinement* - a work about the limits we put on ourselves even when we desire something greater. It portrays that freedom is within reach if we break out of our self-imposed boundaries, erase all notions of limitation and take the hat (that is confining our minds) off.

The Walk Up by Nadine Buys from Cape Town is a work that premiered at the Baxter Dance Festival in 2016 and has been extended for future performances; it explores the patterns of life – life revolves around journeys; we deal with inescapable truths, circumstances we either run away from or deal with. Inevitably a pattern forms, contentedness, the fall and the recovery.

Teresa Phuti will present an excerpt from the work BAPA and the outcome of the Durban Dance Exchange, funded by the National Lotteries Commission and the National Arts Council; Landscaping the Seasons with my Zulu Dance (Rain), facilitated by Musa Hlatshwayo with the students who attended the workshop.

Other choreographers presenting work on New Dance include students from Moving into Dance Mophatong and Adriana Jamisse from Cape Town.

Dance Umbrella 2018 will also be hosting a series of masterclasses in partnership with Drama for Life/Wits School of Arts, which will be held at the Studio UC9.

Vincent Mantsoe and Gregory Maqoma will facilitate the first masterclass on 7 March at 10am at the Wits School of Arts, 9th floor studio. The class will be followed by a discussion titled *Conversation* with Vincent Mantsoe and Gregory Maqoma, facilitated by Warren Nebe from 12pm to 1.30pm.

Exploring contradictory circumstances of arts and culture in South Africa

In South Africa, where dance holds a particular place in history and socio-cultural identity, the significant lack of support in building communities, practitioners and the profession within the dance industry has been severely criticised. The argument is that while the spectrum of dance forms allow for inclusivity and individual expression of identity, there is limited support, resources, and space for this diversity.



In response, this conversation questions the implication on rights to access, experience and engage with traditions and cultures of dance. Furthermore, considering the exodus of South African performers to places abroad, where their work is better valued and more opportunities to grow and sustain their careers are afforded, what does this mean for the enhancement of the discipline from a local perspective? This conversation aims to explore the contradictory circumstances of arts and culture in South Africa through the concerns and criticisms of the dance industry; asking: how do we create more space, access, and resources for the retention and sustainability of this important art form?

On 9 March, from 12pm to 1.30pm, a discussion regarding Dance: Local and Global: a conversation with Moya Michael and Steven Cohen, facilitated by Nondumiso Msimanga will take place.

Industry building through training, workshops and conversations

Performing arts festivals such as the Dance Umbrella seek to promote contemporary dance, showcase the work of national and international artists, introduce innovative forms of dance; build capacity in the industry through training, workshops, conversations and the programmed work.

Questioning the space for development and practice of the profession, both locally and abroad, this conversation considers the exodus of South African performers to places where their work appears better valued and more opportunities to grow and sustain their careers are afforded. It asks: what does this mean for the enhancement of the discipline from a local perspective?

On 10 March, a masterclass by Gerard Bester and Alan Parker from 10am to 11.30am. This will be followed by a face-to-face discussion looking at Dance as Activism from 12pm to 13.30pm, facilitated by Lireka Qhobela.

Looking at the increasing value being placed on site-specific, participatory performance and experiential, experimental and innovative work with communities and across disciplines; this conversation considers the affordances and challenges of developing dance in alternative, peri-urban and rural areas for the industry and purposes of social transformation. What does the opportunity to engage with artistic expression and excellence contribute to principles of social cohesion and inclusivity, in relation to the socio-political and economic challenges faced by marginalised communities, and the difficulties of access and entry into dance education, training and professional practice?

Fana Tshabalala will host the masterclass on 11 March from 10am which will be followed by a conversation with Tshabalala

and Robyn Orlin about *Dance in Contemporary Society* from 12pm to 1.30pm, facilitated by Kwanele Thusi.

Dance culture, enhancements and collaboration

Over the past 30 years, the Dance Umbrella has provided young, innovative and contemporary dancers a platform to present their work, and a critical opportunity to launch their professional careers. More often, however, in the global landscape, we are seeing dance practitioners explore alternative art spaces and professional practices, expanding dance into and across various disciplines.

This conversation explores new histories that are being shaped through the innovative integration of dance, multimedia, education, and community-based performance. It asks whether the South African dance industry has fully recognised and considered the opportunity of interdisciplinary collaboration for the enhancement of perspectives and expressions of local and international issues of relevance in society.

On 14 March, masterclasses will be held at 10am (Louise Coetzer) and 12pm (Musa Hlatshwayo), followed by the final Arts in Conversation which will take place from 2pm to 3.30pm.

Speaking to Coetzer and Hlatshwayo, Dr Ricardo Peach will reflect on, and review the position, sustainability and future of performing arts festivals such as the Dance Umbrella which has run annually for the past 30 years in South Africa. With the increasingly challenging economic climate, indiscriminate political agenda and the growth of a globalised culture, the lack of local support for festivals of this nature is increasingly concerning.

Considering this reality, this conversation questions the significance and contribution of the Dance Umbrella to South Africa's dance industry, society and national policy drivers; and the implication of current realities to the continued advancement of, and investment in the dance industry.

Masterclass, discussion ticket bookings

To book a place for the masterclasses and/or discussions, please call the hotline - 076 162 3999. Tickets range from R50 to R150 - book at [Webtickets](#). Block bookings of 10 or more offer a 30% discount and school block bookings of 10 or more will get 50% discount. For block booking discounts and programme updates, please call the hotline - 076 162 3999 or 011 673 0035 or email .

For the Dance Umbrella 2018 programme, updates on the masterclasses and face-to-face interviews, please visit www.danceforumsouthafrica.co.za.

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