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Media Release 27 June 2018

Book Now for PACE 2018 - The Pan-African Creative Exchange

July 6 - 9, 2018

Bloemfontein, Mangaung, South Africa



The Chibok Girls, 2017. Wole Oguntokun

The Vrystaat Arts Festival is delighted to announce the first cohort of curated and open-call, competitively selected participants for the inaugural *Pan-African Creative Exchange (PACE)*.

Cornelia Faasen, CEO, National Afrikaans Theatre Initiative (NATi) says: *NATi is very proud to be the founding sponsor of PACE. When very few understood the importance of a Pan-African interdisciplinary performing arts market, NATi was the first to put up its hands and fully support this significant initiative. We look forward to seeing how PACE grows over the next few years to embrace all performing arts languages of Africa, including Afrikaans.*

PACE, as a 4-day biennial interdisciplinary (performing) arts provocation from the African continent, was created in partnership with the Vrystaat Arts Festival, to serve as a business-to-business arts showcase and exchange for African artists to network and share their work with national and international arts presenters and producers. This unique initiative offers a significant snapshot of Africa's culturally diverse arts scene to arts professionals.

Rosemary Mangope, CEO of the National Arts Council of South Africa comments: *"KE NAKO" IT IS TIME* was the rallying call for the 2010 world cup which saw South Africans and the world unite across all colours, creed and religion for the soccer world cup featured for the first time on the African continent. It time to repeat "KE NAKO" to usher in PACE, an initiative which will undoubtedly unite Africa and the world and give Africa a step up in showcasing her superior talent.

30+ inter-disciplinary artists and companies in multilingual productions spanning from west, north, east and southern Africa will convene in Mangaung, central South Africa to be part of full-productions, debates, showcases, networking and seminars on critical issues facing the arts in Africa.



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Some of the topics to be discussed include First Nations cultural engagement; Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA); multi-lingual productions; and contextualising work from the continent for international (including intra-African) audiences.

Ismail Mahomed, CEO, Market Theatre Foundation suggests: *As African identity and representation is a dominant discourse in South Africa, the first PACE event is a welcomed initiative. It will provide a dynamic platform to engage with cultural counterparts from across the continent and the African diaspora; and to set the framework alive for cross border exchanges and collaboration. That PACE is led by the Vrystaat Arts Festival is a powerful indicator of how this Afrikaans-originated Festival is transforming itself and filling the vacuum locally for an important facilitative & leadership role to build and strengthen continental networks.*

The aim is to increase the global reach of the interdisciplinary creative arts industries in Africa and contribute to the development of future work from the continent.

For this inaugural exchange, over 30 productions and presentations have been curated and selected from countries such as Egypt, Namibia, Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Zimbabwe (amongst others). With the theme of mobility in, with and from Africa, we also travel from Lagos to Johannesburg with a collection of specific works from these two cities highlighted in our curated programme.

Yvette Hardie, President of Assitej International comments: *Being part of the selection process for PACE was a journey of discovery into artists from a range of disciplines across the continent. It was fascinating to be introduced to diverse and exciting work, and to work together on building a programme which would captivate audiences, promoters and presenters, while creating opportunities for valuable conversations. The final programme will allow for a superb networking and showcasing opportunity for African artists and anyone wanting to engage with arts on the continent.*

From the bustling megatropolis of Lagos we welcome Qudus Onikeku's *Spirit Child*; Paw Productions' experimental devised theatre *Esther's Revenge*; and Thespian Family Theatre and Comic Republic ÌTÀN telling stories with characters from a comic book. So far Comic Republic ÌTÀN has developed over 50 comic books and is one of Africa's fastest growing comic book companies. Renegade Theatre's *Winter's Tale Shakespeare in 37 languages* and Wole Oguntokun's *Chibok Girls*, verbatim theatre based on the testimonies of several of the Chibok (Boko Haram) survivors, will also be showcased.

From southern Africa we have Gregory Maqoma and Vuyani Dance Theatre's spectacular, internationally acclaimed *Cion*; and the Market Theatre Laboratory's new works *Hani: the Legacy*, a musical theatre piece based on the life of anti-Apartheid activist Chris Hani, and *The Little Prince* – an African reworking of this popular children's novel.

The Vrystaat Kunstefees also presents *Alpha*, an example of a new international co-production debut between South African and international directors and designers Erwin Maas, Stef de Paepe, Guy de Lancey and Bram de Goeij, supported by the National Afrikaans Theatre Initiative (NATI), the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Flemish Government (Belgium).



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In addition to PACE, delegates are invited to participate in the exciting work programmed for the Vrystaat Art Festival itself from 8-14 July 2018. The full program can be downloaded here: <http://bit.ly/VSKunstefees2018>

PACE is the first of its kind, showcasing interdisciplinary African art works. It is of crucial importance to programmers, producers, artistic directors, arts venues, academics, cultural policy makers and creative organizations nationally and internationally who want to engage, collaborate with and learn about arts made by artists from the African continent.

Programme: <http://bit.ly/PanAfricanCreativeExchange2018>

Schedule details: <http://bit.ly/PACESchedule2018>

Delegate registration details: <http://bit.ly/PACE2018Registration>

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Cion, 2017. Gregory Maqoma, Vuyani Dance Theatre.