

What's on at the 2018 Fak'ugesi Fest

The 2018 Fak'ugesi African Digital Innovation is on at the Tshimologong Precinct in Johannesburg from 18 August-29 September 2018. This year's theme of 'Tap Your Afro Source Code' is a celebration of technology, creativity, and innovation from across the African continent.

Fak'ugesi African Digital Innovation Festival director Dr Tegan Bristow says that the 2018 theme centres on African visions of technology: "This year, we are exploring how local culture can move and change the future of technology. How would you understand and unpack the source code of your African identity?"



Bristow says that the 2018 festival will explore the algorithms, patterns, and fractals of Africa in digital art, music, games, virtual reality, digital makers, or the way you braid your hair: "Fak'ugesi acts as a platform that brings together diverse digital and technology sectors to collaborate and share skills in digital media and technology innovation."

Collaborations

A highlight in this year's programme is the collaboration with the Wits Art Museum in an exhibition project titled *Digital Imaginaries: Premonition*, the second leg of a three-city project, which started with Kër Thiossane and Afropixel Festival in Dakar, Senegal in May and will conclude at ZKM | Centre for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Germany in November 2018. The project, an initiative between social scientists and artists, imagines and critiques how globalised digital technology and systems have already, and will continue, to shape and shift African futures. The exhibition, which is on at the Wits Art Museum from the 24 July to 23 September 2018, was co-curated by Bristow.

Another highlight of the 2018 programme is the expanded Fak'ugesi Digital Africa Residency. Initially focused on bringing young aspiring digital artists together from the SADC region, this year includes further collaboration with Pro Helvetia Johannesburg to include digital artists from North Africa, South Asia, and Switzerland. This extended approach will enable students to do a deep dive into the algorithms, patterns, and fractals of their indigenous cultures.

Digital arts

Along with supporting young up-and-coming digital arts, Fak'ugesi African Digital Innovation Festival will be hosting two international media artists: Marc Lee, a Swiss artist supported by Pro Helvetia, and Brain House, a North American artist supported by the Watershed project. Lee will act as a resident mentor, offering open master classes and will be installing new interactive live work at the Tshimologong Precinct, while Brain House will be joining Fak'ugesi to install new work at Tshimologong Precinct and conduct master classes.

House explores the interdependent rhythms of the body, technology, and the environment. His background in both computer science and performance informs his research-based practice. Recent interests include artificial intelligence, extractive industries, and urban rats. Collaboration between Fak'ugesi Festival and Watershed, this art/science programme, is brought to the festival by the Centre for Water Research and Development, Wits, Brown University and Providence RI.



Fak'ugesi Digital Africa Residency expanded

15 Aug 2018



Games and beats

2018 will also see the launch of the Fak'ugesi Arcade concept, announcing the start of a new era in supporting African games and gaming developers. Bristow invites the regional gaming community to discuss how the festival can better support and help develop the game development community: "We want to better understand the needs and requirements, both as a platform and as a location for skills exchange and networking. The Fak'ugesi Arcade is partnering this year with Redbull Basement and Trace TV and will be rolled out in 2019."

For a second year running, in partnership with Weheartbeat via Fak'ugesi Beats, a six-day beats lab residency will be running from 24-28 September 2018. Curated by Weheartbeat, participants will embrace the 2018 Fak'ugesi theme, combining tradition with futurism. Bristow is excited about the programme and says that the outcome from these sessions will result in an EP release, available both digitally and on limited edition vinyl. The artists featured include Potatohead People (Canada), S Fidelity (Switzerland), Zikomo (USA), Morena Leraba (Lesotho), and South African artists Bonj Mpanza and Hlasko.

Fak'ugesi Beats will open to the public through a series of workshops and master sessions on 27 September 2018. This will culminate in the Fak'ugesi Beats Bloc Party and the closing event on 29 September 2018.

For more information on the 2018 Fak'ugesi African Digital Innovation Festival visit www.fakugesi.co.za.

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