

Monica Newton named new National Arts Festival CEO

Monica Newton has been named the new National Arts Festival CEO. She will take up her new role on 1 January 2020.

Newton was previously the head of the Gauteng department of sport, arts, culture and recreation and before that was deputy director-general: arts and culture promotion and development at the national department of arts and culture.

Prior to this, she was the CEO of the National Arts Council, a statutory body reporting to the department of arts and culture and established to support and develop the arts in South Africa.



Monica Newton

Arts experience and institutional, business insight

Ayanda Mjekula, chairperson of the National Arts Festival board, says: “We are very pleased that Monica has accepted the position of CEO. Not only is her experience of working in the arts sector extensive but she also brings institutional and business insight that is an absolute asset to us. We look forward to having her lead the festival forward.”

Newton expressed her gratitude to the board and remarked on the task ahead: “The National Arts Festival makes a major contribution to the arts ecosystem in South Africa, and like all things in the current cultural, economic and social climate must adapt to prevailing conditions. The festival and, in fact, all the activities initiated by the Grahamstown Foundation, are also fundamental to the economic and social fabric of the city of Makhanda and the surrounding areas.

“The task of ensuring that the festival and all activities contribute meaningfully, sustainably and responsibly to the life of the city thus is of equal importance. I am looking forward to taking on this challenging role and its enormous responsibilities and to working with the current and new members of the team and, of course, the numerous partners that make this extraordinary programme possible.”



National Arts Festival appoints Rucera Seethal as its new artistic director

2 Oct 2019



A broader contribution to South Africa

She will be working with a strong creative and executive team members including the newly-appointed artistic director Rucera Seethal; executive producer Nobesuthu Rayi; and long-time administrative director Kate Davies, alongside fringe manager Zikhona Monaheng and technical director Nicci Spalding.

The board of the National Arts Festival has also enjoyed some recent appointments. These include well-known arts advocate Michelle Constant; former Market Theatre CEO and current CEO of Ditsong Museums, Annabell Lebethe; and award-winning author Dr Siphiwo Mahala, who also works in the presidency. The most recent board appointment is multi-award-winning writer, professional director, lecturer, curator and artist Mandla Mbothwe.

The festival was pleased to announce that former CEO of the National Arts Festival, Tony Lankester, also remains as a board member which will facilitate continuity.

Newton will also be the CEO of the Grahamstown Foundation, an organisation that works in tandem with the National Arts Festival to produce Scifest Africa, the English Olympiad, South African Schools' Festivals and the Monument Movie Club – which aims to further the cultural and creative life of Makhanda and make a broader contribution to South Africa.

The 2020 National Arts Festival takes place in Makhanda from 25 June to 5 July.

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