

Infesting the City 2009 to turn city's public spaces into a theatre for all

“INFESTING THE CITY” (ITC) The Spier Performing Arts Festival, is a festival of provocative new site-specific performance works, presented by The Africa Centre, which will take place in the Cape Town CBD from 21-27 February 2009.



Previously held at Spier, The Spier Performing Arts Festival was relocated to the City in 2008 and is now named Infesting the City. This year, ITC will continue to push the boundaries of performance and festival programming, turning the Cape Town CBD into an edgy theatre venue to exhibit diverse, thought-provoking, well-crafted works that also forge important links with international performing arts networks.

About half of the productions on the programme will be presented free to the public in communal spaces within walking distance of one another in the Cape Town city during the daytime, allowing audiences to take an historical and creative tour of the City and the spaces in-between. The rest of the programme events are reasonably ticketed at various non-theatre venues during the day and in the evening.

Infesting the City is curated by award-winning writer, director and designer Brett Bailey (his Third World Bunfight has produced iMumbo Jumbo, Ipi Zombi? and Big Dada). The broad theme that underlies the 2009 festival is “home affairs”, which investigates issues of immigrant vs citizen, insider vs outsider, inclusion and exclusion, with unavoidable reference to the xenophobic tensions that constantly simmer in southern Africa.

Commenting on the theme and format of the festival, Bailey says, “The arts have transformative power, the ability to widen our perceptions, open our imagination, and show us the world from different perspectives: they belong in the centre of society. Confined in galleries and theatres they are often beyond the bounds of most people in our unequal society. ITC is a festival of groundbreaking works accessible to people from all walks of life.”

An innovative component of Infesting the City 2009 is the creation of collaborative works made by teams of artists from Europe, South Africa and some SADC countries.

The collaborative process begins well before the festival, with a five week residency in Cape Town, during which the collaborators will be exposed to an intense pressure cooker course of situations and circumstances to stimulate thought and creativity. The rest of the festival programme also reflects both local and international performance works, with a visual highlight being Tuning the Void; an aerial performance by French company, Retouramont.

Taking this one step further, the organisers have launched an important project to ensure that Infesting the City is seen by Cape Town's youth. Take a Child to Art plays on the idea of the incredibly successful Take a Girl Child to Work campaign. Please see more about this in the dedicated release in your media pack.

The festival is a significant event both for the performing arts in South Africa and for Cape Town as a creative, iconic city. Many European visitors, so familiar with the notion of site-specific performance, will instantly relate to Infesting the City, whilst Capetonians will be intrigued to discover the hidden spaces and unexpected perspectives on their hometown.

The timing of the festival is well placed to mirror other significant creative events for Cape Town; Design Indaba and the Spier Harvest Festival. ITC will also coincide with the Cape Town on Sale promotion, encouraging the people of Cape Town and its visitors to explore the city and the spaces in between.

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