

## Essence Festival Durban offers ARTiculate Africa Exhibition

The Essence Festival Durban offers the ARTiculate Africa Exhibition, taking place from 10-11 November at the Durban ICC, with events open to the public from 9am-6pm.

The programme aims to engage professionals, the public, traders as well as literature and visual arts enthusiasts on industry best practices through informative conversations around its positioning as the leading hub for the development of Africa's knowledge production industries, which include visual arts, books and new media.



Gcina Mhlophe

This project joins a bouquet of literary initiatives supported by eThekweni's Parks, Recreation and Culture, including Time of the Writer, Poetry Africa and One City, One Book in addition to numerous other projects driven by grassroots organisations in the City. The event will follow the tradition and highlight the importance of the market as the heart of the African city, the pivotal hub that connects those who make goods with those who are seeking them.

"As the City of eThekweni, we always strive to ensure that all citizens are able to access as well as enjoy the rich cultural offerings and facilities available to them through private and government partnerships such as the one with the Essence Festival. Platforms such as the ARTiculate Africa Exhibition enable us to include communities on the outskirts while expanding the circle of people given the opportunity to experience the richness of our country's literature and arts culture", commented head of parks, Thembinkosi Ngcobo.

The book component of ARTiculate Africa will feature business meetings, industry talks and networking opportunities for professionals in the book trade, panel discussions, book launches, book signings, spoken word, storytelling and new media demos for the public as well as retail opportunities for book sellers and other traders.

Writers already confirmed for this inaugural edition include Songeziwe Mahlangu, Shafinaaz Hassim, NoViolet Bulawayo, Shubnum Khan, Bongani Mavuso, Elana Bregin, Futhi Ntshingila and Yewande Omoto.

### Free accreditation

"Book and visual art lovers are invited to register at the venue for free accreditation," added the GM of the Essence Festival, Joy Profet.

Also part of the programme is international performance artist Nathalie Anguezomo Mba Bikoro who joins

Festival as part of Durban's Sister City's programme with Libreville.

The visual arts component will feature artists from KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and the rest of the continent. The art programme will feature talks on art appreciation, buying and collecting. There are also panel discussions on identity politics in response to the theme of "Beyond Binaries" with critical thinkers in the visual arts discipline.

"In addition to the Gospel ID competition as well as the Health and Wellness programme, ARTiculate Africa is eThekweni Municipality's cultural contribution to the Essence Festival Durban experience and a reason for Durban residents to celebrate our City's strides in becoming a hub for Pan-African cultural exchange", said eThekweni City manager, Sibusiso Sithole.

Previews of the selected works will be possible at the opening on Thursday 10 November, where activist, performer, director and writer Gcina Mhlophe will kick off the evening with a keynote address reflecting on the contributions of African women in addressing the challenges of the 21st century.

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