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Speaker Abstracts

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Author: Sibusiso Mnyanda (Head of Curatorial Research, Victory of The Word, South Africa)

Keywords: National Book Policy, South African Cultural Observatory, Publishing Landscape, Fair Access, Digital Economy

Title: The Importance & Relevance of a Revised National Book Policy in a Changing Publishing Landscape

Abstract: Argues for renewing Lovedale Press as part of a revised National Book Policy to preserve South Africa's literary heritage and adapt publishing to the digital era. Lovedale Press has played a foundational role in South Africa's literary and cultural history. However, shifts in the publishing industry, financial challenges, and broader socio-political changes have threatened its survival. A revised National Book Policy is crucial in addressing issues such as funding, accessibility, and digital transformation in the publishing sector. The **objectives** of this study are to examine the historical role of Lovedale Press, assess the impact of the changing publishing landscape, evaluate the need for a revised National Book Policy, highlight the role of liturgical publishing, and propose strategies for renewing Lovedale Press. The **method** includes a literature review, historical analysis, policy evaluation, interviews and surveys, comparative case studies, and the development of recommendations and future directions. The **results** demonstrate an enhanced understanding of Lovedale Press's role, the identification of policy gaps, strategic recommendations for renewal, preservation of cultural and religious heritage, and a policy framework for sustainable publishing. The **conclusion** emphasises that the renewal of Lovedale Press is more than just a revival of a historic publishing house—it represents an opportunity to reinforce South Africa's literary heritage and address the evolving challenges of the publishing industry. A strategic approach to policy reform, funding mechanisms, and digital transformation can ensure that Lovedale Press remains a vital institution for African storytelling, intellectual discourse, and faith-based publishing.

Category: Rewriting Cultural Policy: From Global to Local Realities

Author: Traver Mudzonga (Sessional Academic, Interdisciplinary Arts & Culture Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa)

Keywords: Copyright, Responsive, African, Jurisprudence

Title: Copyright for the Current & Future: Responsive Copyright Jurisprudence Drawn from Local Sociopolitical Economic Contexts

Abstract: Argues for a responsive copyright framework rooted in Southern Africa's informal–formal creative practices to optimise copyright registration, management, and

commercialisation. The ongoing South African Copyright Amendment Bill (2017) processes and conversations lift a lid on the socioeconomic and political contexts those who author creative works find themselves in. South Africa, and by extension the Southern Africa region, must rethink the copyright framework that optimises the present and curates future favourable conditions. The conversation is beyond the creatives versus those who commission; this is about investing in an institutional economic framework that nudges the whole ecosystem towards realising maximum potential.

Objectives: To make a case for responsive copyright jurisprudence that considers the informality and formality nature of local practice within the broader CCIs. **Method:** Mixed data collection and analysis methods were employed for this Pecha Kucha presentation.

Results: The Southern Africa context is a combination of informal and formal practice where copyright frameworks have to account for both. With the majority of copyright authors practising in the small to medium businesses (SMBs) and informal sectors, there is a need to bring them into the fold traditionally enjoyed by big businesses. Registration of copyright will contribute towards efficiency and effectiveness of copyright management organisations. It will also contribute towards optimisation of digital copyright management systems. **Conclusion:** The invitation is to reset how we think about the ideas framing copyright for the current and the future. The informality and formality nature of creative work calls for a responsive copyright framework that starts with the registration of copyright, and focuses on the objective, efficiency, and optimisation of copyright commercialisation.

Category: The Future of Copyright: Sustainability, Equity, and Fair Use

Author: Rapelang Antony (Seodin Youth in Art Service Centre NPC, South Africa)

Title: Bridging Heritage And Innovation – Sustainable Cultural Policy And AI Integration In Cultural Creatives Economy.

Abstract: Explores fusing AI with heritage to sustain cultural economies. As the global creative economy evolves, the intersection of tradition, policy, and technology presents both challenges and opportunities for cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in South Africa. This paper explores how grassroots arts initiatives contribute to national cultural policy objectives, fostering sustainable development in rural and historically marginalized communities. Using case studies from the Seodin Arts Alive Heritage Fair and Heritage Guardians: Empowering Youth through Heritage Conservation, the research examines how community-driven projects preserve indigenous knowledge while embracing contemporary technological advancements, particularly artificial intelligence (AI).

Objectives: A key focus of this paper is the innovative funding models that sustain CCIs in underserved regions. Many rural creative projects struggle with financial sustainability due to limited government support and corporate sponsorship. This study explores hybrid investment models, public-private partnerships, and community-led funding approaches that empower local artists and cultural practitioners. It further assesses how

strategic collaborations between the government, private sector, and grassroots organizations can create long-term economic viability for CCLs. **Method:** Beyond funding, the integration of AI in heritage conservation is gaining traction. Digital storytelling, virtual heritage experiences, and AI-powered archival systems are transforming how cultural narratives are documented and shared. However, this shift raises critical questions about ownership, authenticity, and fair use within the evolving copyright landscape. This paper explores the ethical and legal considerations surrounding AI-generated cultural content and its implications for South African creatives. **Results:** Additionally, the research positions South Africa within the broader African and BRICS cultural discourse. As South Africa seeks to strengthen its role in the global creative economy, fostering regional collaborations and cultural exchange programs will be pivotal. This paper examines how heritage conservation and digital innovation can serve as catalysts for cross-border partnerships and economic growth within the creative sector. **Conclusion:** By bridging cultural policy, creative entrepreneurship, and technological innovation, this paper offers a forward-thinking perspective on the future of South Africa's CCLs. The findings provide actionable insights for policymakers, industry professionals, and cultural practitioners striving to balance heritage preservation with digital transformation. Ultimately, this paper advocates for a holistic approach to cultural sustainability—one that leverages both traditional knowledge systems and emerging technologies to drive inclusive economic development.

Category: Creative Futures: Rethinking the Cultural and Creative Industries of Tomorrow

Author: Andrea Vonny Lee (Founder & CEO Cultural Links Global Education Institute / Laney College- CA, United States)

Co-Author: Thabang Queench (Program Director, EziNgcanjini Project)

Keywords: Pantsula Culture, Youth Subjectivities, Global Dance, Creative Economy

Title: *Dlala Pantsula!: Intersections of Resistance, Cultural Pedagogy & Africa's Creative Futures*

Abstract: Youth culture offers a critical lens for examining the intersections of social, political, and economic forces in urban spaces. This study explores the South African Pantsula Youth Movement as a dynamic cultural expression shaped by resistance, creativity, and identity formation. Using interdisciplinary conceptual frameworks of African ontology, Critical Dance Pedagogy, Gramscian counter-hegemony, and Afrofuturism, this study shows how Pantsula dance emerged as a strategy of resistance against historical and contemporary oppression. Much like the dances of Yanvalou and Petwo, which are symbols of the Haitian revolution, Pantsula dance embodies counter-hegemonic practices forged under apartheid conditions. Drawing on interviews, participant reflections, and secondary sources, the study demonstrates that Pantsula functions as a living archive of resistance and transformation, affirming the role of cultural production in sustaining African creative economies. Findings indicate that: (1) Dance and music permeate multiple aspects of South African life and thrive in both formal and

informal cultural and economic settings; (2) The Pantsula Youth Movement persists in contemporary South African youth culture, despite the challenges of its origins; (3) Pantsula dance education can bridge historical and contemporary experiences, fostering intergenerational understanding in post-1994 South Africa; and (4) Gaps in formal arts education restrict access to indigenous knowledge and culture, revealing opportunities to build inclusive creative economies. Ultimately, the paper argues that embracing indigenous cultural ontologies and community-driven pedagogies offers pathways for creating sustainable, inclusive, and future-facing artistic ecosystems across Africa and beyond.

Category: Creative Futures: Rethinking the Cultural and Creative Industries of Tomorrow

Author: Jen Snowball (Rhodes University/SACO, South Africa)

Co-Author 1: Fiona Drummond (Rhodes University/SACO, South Africa)

Co-Author 2: Nkululeko Sibanda (Rhodes University/SACO, South Africa)

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Title: Economic, Social, Cultural And Environmental Festival Sustainability: A Case Study Of The South African National Arts Festival

Abstract: Festivals play a vital role in the cultural ecosystem, since they connect audiences, artists, arts managers, and public and private industry funders. However, sustainability studies in the creative industries and the related field of cultural tourism are often focused on environmental or ecological sustainability. The practicalities of managing the creative economy, however, demand a multifaceted approach to sustainability. In the post-COVID-19 era, sustainability for cultural festivals needs to consider environmental, social, cultural, and economic aspects. **Objectives:** While many cultural festivals attract public and private sector sponsorship, they still need to remain financially viable, not only in terms of balancing their own books, but also through providing economic and social benefits to the host towns and cities on whose goodwill and cooperation they rely. Festivals need to continue to attract audiences, for whom cultural festivals can be a way to explore new cultural forms and build their cultural and social capital. For creative producers, festivals can offer an important platform on which to showcase their work and develop their reputation, interact with other producers, and generate new ideas for future work. **Method:** Using the updated South African Festivals Economic Impact Calculator (SACO 2024) and related valuation framework, the research takes a mixed methods approach by combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to investigate the economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts of the National Arts Festival. This includes an audience survey (1028 responses), focus group discussions and an online survey with artistic producers, and interviews with Festival organisers. **Results:** Findings indicate that the NAF continues to play a key role in expanding access to the arts and supporting audience development. The demographic profile of attendees includes a good mix of older returning visitors and new festinos. A challenge will be continuing to attract new audiences and reverse the trend for lower visitor spending and

shorter stays, which is also putting downward pressure on the economic impact of the NAF on its host city, Makhanda. The analysis of the online artistic producer survey and FGDs highlights that NAF is an important institution in the training, development, and networking for artistic producers, although there are challenges related to programming and limited financial benefits to artists during and after the Festival. The NAF has also embarked on a number of measures to ensure environmental sustainability. **Conclusion:** The paper provides a case study of ways in which festivals can track and report on all the aspects of their sustainability.

Category: Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth

Author: Fiona Drummond (Rhodes University, South Africa)

Keywords: Freelance, Creative Work, Career Path, Precarity, COVID-19

Title: Creative Freelance Career Paths: A Stylised Framework

Abstract: Employment in the creative industries is predominantly project-based, resulting in a high proportion of freelance workers. This form of non-standard employment is often linked with precarity—marked by instability, limited benefits, and personal risk—thus placing it within the secondary labour market. Yet freelancing is not uniformly negative; for many, it provides autonomy, flexibility, and job satisfaction. This duality reflects broader perceptions of creative work, as captured in the "starving artist" versus "superstar" artist dichotomy (Bille et al., 2017) and Caves' (2000) "A list/B list" classification. **Objectives:** This paper seeks to conceptualise career trajectories among freelance creative workers in South Africa, proposing a stylised framework that reflects variations in precarity, skill, and opportunity across different career stages. **Method:** Drawing on qualitative interviews with key stakeholders in South Africa's creative economy and a review of creative labour market theory, the study synthesises insights to construct a stylised pyramid framework that categorises freelance career progression into tiers, associating each with differing levels of precarity, success, and challenges. **Results:** At the base of the pyramid is a large cohort of freelancers experiencing acute precarity, reflecting observations about oversupply in creative labour markets. The apex comprises a small elite of creatives who have navigated the risks and now enjoy significant professional and financial rewards, while the middle tiers include mid-career creatives who have gained experience and networks but continue to encounter vulnerability and limited upward mobility. **Conclusion:** The stylised framework illustrates that freelance creative work exists along a continuum, not all of which is precarious. It suggests the potential for career development and good work; however, progression is hindered in South Africa by the limited capacity of small and micro creative enterprises to scale and offer stable, high-level work opportunities to freelancers. Policy and industry support aimed at strengthening these businesses could enhance career prospects in the middle tiers, reduce systemic precarity, and contribute to more resilient freelance careers in the creative economy.

Author: James Drummond (North West University, South Africa)

Keywords: Festivals, Economic Impact, Social Impact, Government Funding, Development

Title: Culture Beyond The Metropole: Evaluating The Socio-Economic Impact Of Mahika Mahikeng And Mapungubwe Arts Festivals

Abstract: Cultural festivals have become increasingly prominent as instruments for local economic development, place branding, and social cohesion across South Africa. In smaller urban centres, festivals serve as celebrations of local heritage as well as targeted interventions to boost tourism and economic activity. This paper presents a comparative analysis of two festivals held in provincial capitals: the 2024 Mahika Mahikeng Cultural Music Festival (Mahikeng, North West) and the 2022 Mapungubwe Arts Festival (Polokwane, Limpopo). The festivals share similarities in programming, objectives, funding structures, organisation and audience composition—resulting in comparable socio-economic outcomes and challenges. **Objectives:** The paper aims to analyse the socio-economic impacts of the two festivals to identify the opportunities and challenges experienced by festivals in secondary cities. In so doing, the paper highlights broader patterns in secondary city festival dynamics relating to sustainability and growth.

Method: The analysis draws on primary data collected through audience surveys conducted during each festival (580 responses at Mahika and 363 responses at Mapungubwe), supplemented by financial data provided by festival organisers. The updated South African Festival Economic Impact Calculator (SACO, 2024) was used to estimate economic impact. Social impacts were assessed through audience attitudinal measures, including perceptions of cultural value, social cohesion, and place identity.

Results: Findings reveal that both events are primarily government-driven, featuring music-focused programming that foregrounds local talent. This has resulted in a sense of local cultural pride amongst audiences and has contributed to strong feelings that the festivals enhance local identity, cultural pride, social cohesion, and place-making.

Additionally, audiences expressed a strong desire for more cultural events, underscoring the role of festivals in expanding cultural access in underserved regions. However, while it is important to have local buy-in for festival sustainability, it also presents a financial challenge. Both festivals attract a largely local audience, which reduces the economic impact on the local economy and raises concerns about long-term financial sustainability.

Conclusion: The social impacts of the festivals, as well as the cultural impacts of providing a platform to local artists, are valuable contributions to local populations and the creative economy. The festivals also extend cultural activity to underserved regions. However, the financial sustainability of the events is more uncertain due to the localised impact. The reliance on provincial governments as the main funders also makes the festivals financially dependent on one type of funding, which can be fickle. Continued government support is thus vital for the growth and resilience of these cultural

events.

Category: Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth

Author: Gerard Ralphs (Senior Research Manager, Centre for Science, Technology & Innovation Indicators, South Africa's Human Sciences Research Council)

Keywords: Innovation, Measurement, Directionality, Policy Monitoring, Cultural and Creative Industries, South Africa

Title: An Innovation Measurement Framework for the South African Cultural & Creative Industries

Abstract: There is increased scrutiny on the directionality of innovation systems in advancing critical global sustainability and development objectives. Equally, innovation policy mixes require complimentary measurement agendas to track activity and outcomes and inform public investment decisions. South Africa has a clear innovation policy mix for its arts, culture and heritage (ACH) dispensation. However, innovation indicators are not yet integrated within the monitoring and evaluation framework of the ACH dispensation. **Objectives:** In this paper, a directionality-sensitive innovation measurement framework for the CCI is proposed with indicator categories addressing a fuller variety of system actors than typically assessed in innovation surveys. **Method:** Key results reported include participatory elaboration of survey instruments from existing question banks; using snowballing, establishment of a purposive stratified sampling frame created in accordance with established measurement criteria in the 2009 System of National Accounts, 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics, and Statistics South Africa's 2012 standard industrial classifications; and piloting of survey instruments in five institutional sectors. The framework was piloted in South Africa's Western Cape province. **Results:** Piloting yielded several methodological insights and data. Key among these is the value of survey interviews for data enumeration that bridges respondent understanding of the concept of innovation, as well as combining the object and subject-based approaches to mitigate against measurement error. **Conclusion:** By adopting this framework data comprising a richer cross-sectional view of innovation in the CCI can be compared and analysed, in-country and across countries, enabling several potential research and policy monitoring use cases.

Category: Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth

Author: Bongani Nicholas Ngomane (Dramaturge, South African State Theatre & PhD student, Drama, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa)

Keywords: Public Performance Ethnography Creative Economy Township Theatre Applied Drama Cultural Policy Informal Creative Practices Arts-Based Research

Title: Illogical ≥ Logical: Reimagining Creative Economies Through Public Performance Ethnography In South African Townships

Abstract: South Africa's creative economy remains unevenly developed, with township-based artists often excluded from formal structures of support and recognition. While national policies increasingly acknowledge the cultural sector's economic potential, they seldom integrate informal, hyperlocal, and protest-driven practices. This paper draws from ongoing PhD research in Ivory Park to argue for the critical role of public performance ethnography in shaping future creative economies from the margins. **Objectives:** Investigate how township-based theatre practitioners contribute to creative economies through alternative models of artistic production. Explore the metaphor "Illogical ≥ Logical" as a conceptual tool to reframe cultural value and policy thinking. Offer recommendations for inclusive cultural governance and funding frameworks that reflect embodied knowledge and grassroots innovation. **Method:** This is a practice-led, arts-based study using public performance ethnography as both a research method and a form of creative intervention. The research centers on the Mr. President theatre series, community workshops, and reflexive dialogue with artists, audiences, and policymakers. It integrates qualitative methods, including interviews, performance analysis, and critical reflection, within the broader framework of applied drama and cultural studies. **Results:** The findings reveal that township artists actively create hybrid cultural economies that merge activism, storytelling, and survival strategies. These ecosystems challenge dominant metrics of success and highlight the limitations of top-down funding models. Projects like Mr. President demonstrates the power of performance to generate civic dialogue, social critique, and alternative visions of economic participation rooted in the lived realities of the township. **Conclusion:** Creative economy policies must move beyond formal market indicators to embrace the logics of resistance, community, and informality embedded in township arts. Public performance ethnography offers a generative model for understanding and supporting creative work that is both critical and future-oriented. The South African creative economy's resilience and innovation lie not only in institutions, but also in the cultural labor of those who remain structurally invisible.

Category: Creative Futures: Rethinking the Cultural and Creative Industries of Tomorrow

Author: Amanda Espag (Team Leader: Brand and Creative, Working on Fire – Kishugu Joint Venture, South Africa)

Keywords: Design, Creative Economy, AI, Sustainability

Title: Not Built to Scale: The Designer in a Political Economy of Extraction and Automation

Abstract: Designers in South Africa and across Africa face increasing precarity amid

rapid technological, ecological, and socio-economic shifts. Automation, AI, climate change, and rising inequality are reshaping creative labour, disproportionately affecting marginalized groups such as women, racialized, and neurodivergent practitioners.

Objectives: This paper aims to critically explore how these intersecting crises impact the sustainability and well-being of designers. It investigates the role of governance, institutional power, and policy neglect in perpetuating inequalities within the creative economy. **Method:** Using a multidisciplinary approach informed by political economic theories, this study analyses regional and international data on gender disparities, mental health challenges, neurodivergence, and environmental vulnerabilities affecting design labour. **Results:** Findings reveal heightened job insecurity, psychological burnout, and systemic exploitation of marginalized designers. Institutional and policy frameworks largely fail to address these vulnerabilities, exacerbating precarity and limiting long-term sustainability for creative workers. **Conclusion:** To build a more inclusive and resilient creative economy, this paper advocates for targeted policy interventions, equitable governance structures, and practices that recognize and support diverse design labour, especially for historically marginalized groups.

Category: Creative Work and Human Capital in the Creative Economy

Author: Vicki Fourie (Independent Writer & Filmmaker, South Africa)

Keywords: Deaf Representation, Inclusive Storytelling, Disability and Media, Onscreen Diversity, Cultural Representation, Creative industries

Title: A Forgotten Audience: Responses of d/Deaf Audiences to Films Depicting d/Deafness

Abstract: Media representation of d/Deaf individuals has historically been limited, stereotypical, or inaccurate, contributing to misconceptions and reinforcing marginalisation. In South Africa, research on d/Deaf onscreen characters remains scarce despite the growing importance of inclusive storytelling in the creative industries. This study addresses this gap by analysing film and television portrayals of d/Deaf characters and their impact on both d/Deaf and hearing audiences. **Objectives:** The study aimed to examine the dominant representations of Deaf characters in selected films and TV series, explore how these portrayals influence perceptions and attitudes among Deaf and hearing audiences and identify strategies to improve the authenticity and diversity of Deaf representation in screen media. **Method:** The research used a qualitative, interpretative approach combining content analysis and focus group discussions. Four films and television shows featuring d/Deaf characters were analysed to identify recurring themes, stereotypes, and narrative patterns. Additionally, focus groups with d/Deaf and hearing participants were conducted to explore audience interpretations and emotional responses. Data were thematically coded to synthesise patterns and insights. **Results:** Findings revealed that while some productions have progressed towards more nuanced portrayals, d/Deaf characters are still frequently framed through stereotypes—such as being portrayed as helpless, dependent, or inspirational solely because of their deafness.

d/Deaf focus group participants expressed frustration with reductive depictions and a desire for stories reflecting everyday realities, complex identities, and agency. Hearing participants often relied on these portrayals to inform their understanding of d/Deaf culture, underscoring the importance of accurate representation. **Conclusion:** Authentic and diverse portrayals of d/Deaf characters are critical to fostering understanding, reducing stigma, and supporting inclusive creative futures. This research demonstrates that the South African film and television industry has both the opportunity and responsibility to rethink how d/Deaf experiences are depicted on screen. By prioritising collaboration with d/Deaf creatives, consulting culturally informed perspectives, and challenging stereotypes, the creative industries can contribute to a richer and more equitable media landscape.

Category: Creative Futures: Rethinking the Cultural and Creative Industries of Tomorrow

Author: Tumelo Moloi (Art Advisor & Sessional Lecturer, University of Witswatersrand, South Africa)

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Fine Arts, Visual Studies, South Africa, Youth Unemployment, Creative Economy, Economic Self-Reliance

Title: Developing An Entrepreneurship Course For Fine And Visual Arts Studies

Abstract: This paper proposes the development of a specialised entrepreneurship course for Fine Arts and Visual Studies students in South Africa. Given the high youth unemployment rate, unstable funding for the arts, and shifting global cultural markets, it is increasingly urgent for art graduates to become economically self-reliant and adaptable. Although South African universities have made significant strides in producing critically engaged artists, there remains a critical gap in training students to strategically and sustainably navigate the creative economy. **Objectives:** To propose the development of a specialised entrepreneurship course tailored for Fine Arts and Visual Studies students in South Africa. To address the gap in entrepreneurial training within arts education, aiming to help art graduates become economically self-reliant and adaptable. To explore how entrepreneurship can be integrated into visual arts education using a narrative and observational ontological approach. To analyse the skills and knowledge required for Fine Arts students to navigate the creative economy strategically and sustainably. To examine the challenges faced by artists and cultural workers, particularly the lack of entrepreneurship knowledge. **Method:** This study employed a narrative approach, using an observational ontological orientation to explore the integration of entrepreneurship within visual art studies in South Africa. The writer observes and provides an in-depth analysis of the entrepreneurship skills and knowledge necessary for art studies, drawing from personal experiences as an art curator, scholar, and cultural manager. Qualitative data were generated through document analysis, narrative inquiry, and observation to highlight the lack of entrepreneurship knowledge among artists and cultural workers. **Results:** The collected data was analysed using thematic, narrative, and document

analysis revealing several key themes: arts education reform, economic empowerment, decolonial and culturally responsive education, hybrid and informal economies, experiential learning, industry collaboration, transformation, and economic justice.

Conclusion: This study underscores the urgent need for a specialised entrepreneurship curriculum within Fine Arts and Visual Studies programs in South Africa. By integrating entrepreneurial training with culturally responsive and decolonial approaches, higher education institutions can equip art students with the practical skills and strategic insight necessary to thrive in the evolving creative economy. Ultimately, such reform can empower graduates to become self-sufficient, innovative contributors to both the cultural and economic development of the country.

Category: Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth (only accepted for this theme)

Author: George Gabriel (Founder ILALI, South Africa)

Title: ILALI: A Cooperative Platform for Building Inclusive and Sustainable Creative Economies through Extramural Learning

Abstract: Background: The cultural and creative economy is typically associated with large-scale industries such as media, film, and cultural institutions. Yet its foundations also lie in everyday community practices that nurture talent and participation. In South Africa, the extracurricular (extramural) landscape — arts, sport, and cultural activities outside of formal schooling — is fragmented, inequitable, and underdeveloped. This has especially negative consequences for disabled youth, low-income families, and small creative service providers, who face barriers of access, visibility, and sustainability.

Objectives: This presentation asks: How can cooperative digital platforms transform access, sustainability, and inclusion within the cultural and creative economy by restructuring the way extracurricular activities are organised and valued? The aim is to show how ILALI, a Cape Town-based cooperative platform, repositions the extramural sector as an essential entry point into the cultural and creative industries — while fostering inclusive participation and sustainable livelihoods for providers. **Method:** ILALI was developed through participatory design research involving parents, youth, service providers, and disability-focused organisations. The process combined stakeholder interviews, user-journey mapping, and case studies of local creative entrepreneurs, alongside prototype testing of an online marketplace. This multi-method approach identified systemic barriers (limited reliable information, poor coordination, and financial exclusion) and tested cooperative and digital responses to these challenges. **Results:** Findings show that ILALI's cooperative model: Increases visibility for small and disability-focused providers; Provides families with accessible tools to search, book, and afford inclusive activities; Creates new partnership and funding opportunities through aggregated demand and cooperative ownership; Reduces financial barriers via an Ubuntu-inspired rewards system; Enables data-driven insights for policymakers and

cultural institutions. **Conclusion:** ILALI demonstrates how embedding cooperative principles, inclusive design, and participatory reward systems into a local platform can reshape creative economies from the ground up. By strengthening micro-enterprises, nurturing talent pipelines, and fostering inclusion, ILALI offers a replicable model for sustainable creative economy management across African and global contexts.

Category: Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth

Author : Jen Snowball (Rhodes University & SACO, South Africa)

Co-Author 1: Andre Gouws (Independent Economist, South Africa)

Co-Author 2: Fiona Drummond (Rhodes University, South Africa)

Co-Author 3: Richard Haines (Nelson Mandela University & SACO, South Africa)

Title: The Changing Economics Of Creativity: Economic Trends And Implications For South African CCI

Abstract: The creative economy is increasingly recognised not only for its intrinsic cultural value but also for its significant contributions to economic growth, employment creation, and poverty reduction. Over the past decade, the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) have been shaped by a complex interplay of economic, technological, and labour market trends—globally and within South Africa. These include rapid digitisation, the rise of generative artificial intelligence (AI), evolving work structures, new models of governance and funding, and the growing prominence of international trade in cultural services. **Objectives:** This paper identifies and evaluates five key global economic trends that are affecting CCIs: (1) Techno-economic transformations, such as blockchain, NFTs, digital platforms, and generative AI; (2) Labour market changes, including the growth of freelance and gig work, hybrid working models, and the role of industry associations; (3) Trends in international trade, notably the dematerialisation of cultural products, services-led trade, and increasing South–South exchange; (4) Governance and policy shifts, encompassing intellectual property reform, cultural policy, public funding, and cultural leadership; and (5) Demand-side trends, including digital consumption, user-generated content, and sustainability-driven consumer preferences. **Method:** Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combines quantitative analysis (drawing on UNESCO, UNCTAD, and national datasets) with qualitative insights from an online focus group of South African CCI stakeholders. A partial equilibrium model, based on a Cultural and Creative Industries Satellite Account, supports a forward-looking assessment of recovery and projected growth (2025–2029) across creative domains. **Results:** Findings reveal a post-pandemic rebound in most CCI domains in South Africa, with significant growth in the Audio-Visual and Interactive Media sector, driven by new technologies and distribution methods. In contrast, sectors such as Visual Arts and Crafts, and Books and Press, show declining economic performance despite partial recovery. **Conclusion:** The paper concludes by identifying practical opportunities and policy recommendations to strengthen South Africa's CCIs in response to these trends. These include: investing in digital infrastructure; supporting access to emerging technologies through targeted funding and training; strengthening intellectual property frameworks to enable sustainable monetisation; and improving protections for freelance and hybrid workers. Ultimately, the ability of South African CCIs to benefit from global economic shifts will depend on responsive policy, inclusive governance, and strategic investments in education and infrastructure.

Category: Creative Futures: Rethinking the Cultural and Creative Industries of Tomorrow

Author: Willie Chinyamurindi (Professor, Department of Business Management, University of Fort Hare, South Africa)

Keywords: Decent Work, Creative Sector, South Africa, Narratives

Title: Between a Rock & a Hard Place: Narratives of Decent Work Within the Creative Sector

Abstract: The creative sector is argued as an important context of work with potential social and economic returns in South Africa. More research is needed to understand not just the creative sector as a context of work but also decent work experiences. From this inquiry, interventions can be proposed that inform stakeholders in the creative sector.

Objectives: The study explores decent work experiences amongst a sample of creative workers within the South African context. **Method:** This study adopted a qualitative research approach. This approach was based on the ideals espoused in phenomenology and aimed at understanding subjective lived experiences of a sample of 35 creatives based in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. Narrative inquiry was used to not only understand but also explore the experience of decent work in the creative sector. Further, the aim was to understand the response to the experience of decent work within the creative sector amongst the participants. Narrative analysis using the three levels of meaning-making was used to analyse the data. **Results:** Findings highlight persistent challenges to achieving decent work in the creative sector, including precarious employment conditions and limited social protections. However, the study also identifies opportunities for improvement through strategic policy interventions, enhanced social protection measures, and better alignment of the sector with technological advancements. **Conclusion:** The study emphasizes the need for a more supportive environment for creative workers, underpinned by improved legislation and socio-economic support mechanisms.

Category: Creative Work and Human Capital in the Creative Economy

Author: William Fourie (Senior Lecturer, Rhodes University, South Africa)

Keywords: Machine Learning, Datasets, Creativity, Music

Title: Accommodating Aesthetics: AI, Dataset Politics, And The Reshaping Of Human Creativity

Abstract: Artificial Intelligence is fundamentally reshaping the landscape of human creativity. Machine learning models, now integral to curating the world's digital information, increasingly mediate how we engage with creative works. The datasets used

to train these models are not neutral; they significantly influence AI system behaviour, thereby shaping information availability and introducing bias into the accommodation between humans and AI. This bias is determined not only by existing datasets but also by their absence, which is particularly evident in the case of indigenous music, where suitable datasets for machine learning are scarce. **Objectives:** This paper aims to: 1.) Explore the politics of the human-AI accommodation by examining how AI reshapes creativity through the inclusion and exclusion of data. 2.) Analyse the dual challenge posed by indigenous music datasets, where their absence causes erasure while their creation risks imposing colonial logics. 3.) Propose a new theoretical framework for understanding and challenging how AI orders and limits creative expression. **Method:** The paper develops a conceptual framework by drawing on the political philosophy of Jacques Rancière. It applies his notion of the 'distribution of the sensible' to theorise how machine learning constitutes and negates what is creatively perceptible within computational systems. This perspective reframes dataset bias as a political ordering of creativity. Subsequently, Rancière's concept of 'dissensus' is proposed as a critical strategy to disclose and contest this ordering. **Results:** The analysis argues that the primary way AI reshapes human creativity is by enforcing a new 'distribution of the sensible,' which politically determines the boundaries of what can be seen and heard. The case of indigenous music reveals a 'double bind': these creative forms are negated by their absence in datasets, yet their inclusion risks conforming to limiting taxonomies. The paper finds that reframing bias as a distributed sensory order allows for new strategies of resistance. **Conclusion:** The paper concludes that 'dissensus' offers a critical modality for creators and cultural practitioners to challenge AI-imposed creative hierarchies. By actively disclosing the politics embedded in datasets, this approach fosters a more equitable and conscious accommodation between human creativity and artificial intelligence, moving beyond passive acceptance of technological bias.

Category: The Human and AI Accommodation: How Artificial Intelligence is Reshaping the Human Creativity within and without the CCI.

Author: Caryn Green (CEO, Sibikwa Arts Centre, South Africa)

Keywords: Decolonial Cultural Cooperation, Africa, International Partnerships, Cultural Diplomacy, Cultural Sovereignty, African Cultural Policy, Postcolonial Theory

Title: Beyond Borders: Reimagining Cultural Co-operation With Africa In A Postcolonial Present

Abstract: Despite growing global recognition of Africa's creative sectors, international cultural cooperation often remains shaped by colonial legacies and donor-driven models. These frameworks risk reinforcing structural inequalities and developmentalist narratives that marginalise African agency, aesthetics, and knowledge systems. There is an urgent need to reimagine cooperation through frameworks that are led by, and accountable to, African priorities, ethics, and worldviews. **Objectives:** This panel explores what a decolonised, African-centred approach to international cultural cooperation could look

like. It asks how cultural actors on the continent can lead in designing new models of engagement that affirm cultural sovereignty, shift global narratives, and build reciprocal, ethical, and future-facing partnerships. **Method:** Combining postcolonial theory with grounded case studies, the panel brings together African scholars, practitioners, and cultural policymakers. Through critical dialogue and lived experience, panellists will examine how decolonial principles are operationalised in practice – across funding models, institutional frameworks, and cultural exchange mechanisms. **Results:** The session reveals tangible strategies emerging across Africa: locally rooted policy development, reconfigured funding and governance structures, and equitable collaborations that centre African epistemologies. These efforts challenge extractive norms and reposition African cultural actors as drivers – rather than subjects – of international cultural discourse and diplomacy. **Conclusion:** This panel calls for a shift from donor-led engagement to African-led cooperation that is just, inclusive, and sustainable. By centering African voices and leadership, it offers critical tools and frameworks for policymakers, funders, and institutions seeking to build partnerships that dismantle colonial legacies and reflect Africa's diverse cultural realities and global influence.

Category: Rewriting Cultural Policy: From Global to Local Realities

Author: Mokgadi Matuludi (Trade and Industrial Policy Strategies, South Africa)

Keywords: Multiplier, Spillover, Economic Impact, Livelihood Development

Title: Analyzing The Multiplier And Spillover Impacts Of The PESp In The Creative And Cultural Sector

Abstract: In the creative sector, the PESp mainly supports self-employment and small businesses, reflecting the sector's nature. While its immediate aim is job and income creation, it also generates broader multipliers through local spending and spillover effects in social and human capital. However, the wider economic impact beyond direct grant recipients remains unclear. Cultural and creative spillovers refer to arts activities that have wider societal or economic impacts through the overflow of ideas, knowledge, or capital, enabling long-term livelihood development. **Objectives:** The main purpose of the PESp is to provide work opportunities in the creative sector that (a) increase the scale of opportunities and (b) generate new creative work, thereby supporting livelihoods during times of crisis and economic hardship. The research hypothesis is that this support creates multipliers beyond the immediate grant impact, positioning PESp as a stimulus investment rather than merely relief. **Method:** The study drew on statistics from Stats SA, SACO, and Quantec on the economic downturn in the creative sector to justify continued PES funding. Respondents were drawn from NAC and NFVF grant recipients under PESp 3 and 4. Secondary data provided the sampling frame, and from a population of 1,611, a random sample of 420 was selected to avoid bias. A national survey yielded 260 completed responses, representative of the target population. Focus groups were also conducted to capture qualitative insights and in-depth experiences. **Results:** Preliminary

findings show that most beneficiaries were self-employed (42%), followed by small enterprises (36%) and NGOs (26%). The majority (73%) used PESP funds to create new jobs. Most (62%) supplemented funds with other grants, 43% with family/friends, and 19% with loans. Spillover effects were notable: 89% supported activities beyond the creative sector, 59% unlocked new revenue streams, 98% deepened skills, 96% developed transferable tools/knowledge, and 83% applied learning elsewhere. Networking was strong, with 88% forming new partnerships, 87% of which lasted beyond the programme. Finally, 65% highlighted a need for marketing and visibility support. **Conclusion:** The PESP for the creative sector was designed to stimulate job creation and sustain livelihoods in arts and culture. Findings show the sector embraced this opportunity, generating employment and supporting incomes directly and indirectly through multiplier and spillover effects. The stimulus extended into broader value chains, benefiting both the formal and informal economy, including small enterprises in townships and rural areas. Additional income from PESP-funded work further boosted the creative sector's overall output.

Category: Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth

Author: Rene Derrocks (South African Cultural Observatory)

Title: Creative Futures Leveraging Cultural Cooperation For Youth Development In Africa And Europe

Abstract: Cultural cooperation between Africa and Europe – exemplified through the South African experience – has travelled a complex journey from apartheid-era cultural boycotts through post-liberation 'capacity building' to today's rhetoric of 'partnership.' Yet fundamental asymmetries in resources, mobility, and decision-making power persist. While geopolitical crises reshape global priorities, rising nationalisms, funding cuts and visa restrictions threaten to reverse even limited progress. Against this backdrop, the cultural and creative industries offer a powerful crucible for youth development, innovation, and transcontinental collaboration that explicitly addresses rather than sidesteps these challenges. This report, commissioned by the Africa-Europe Foundation, investigates how cultural cooperation can better support skills development among creative youth. Using South Africa as a case study – the world's most unequal country where sophisticated creative industries operate alongside survivalist informal economies—the research employs surveys, interviews, and foresight analysis to uncover immediate challenges and future possibilities. Cultural cooperation stands at an inflection point amid seismic geopolitical shifts. Digital transformation will either deepen existing inequalities or catalyze new possibilities for African creative futures. The choice lies with how stakeholders – from youth to policymakers in Addis and Brussels – shape implementation. The creative youth whose voices thread through these pages deserve cooperation that enables them to author their own futures, building creative economies both locally rooted and globally connected. The window for transformation is narrowing, but within it lies an unprecedented opportunity to reimagine cultural cooperation serving both African creative potential and European creative renewal, building solidarity

economies that transform both continents.

Category: Creative Futures: Rethinking the Cultural and Creative Industries of Tomorrow

Author: Sibane Nxumalo (Co-Founder and Chief Creative Officer TORI Branding Ltd, Rwanda)

Title: Building Memory Infrastructure Through Storytelling in Rwanda's Sport & Creative Economy

Abstract: This presentation shows how sport-anchored spaces and events in Rwanda shape inclusive creative-economy futures through intentional storytelling, audience design, and local partnerships. Using practitioner-led case studies from three hero projects: BK Arena with the 2023 FIFA Congress as a continental anchor; Giants of Africa Festival as a youth pipeline and community catalyst; and IRONMAN as an endurance platform that blends city branding, tourism, and creative work, I frame "memory infrastructure" as a practical approach in which narratives, archives, commissioning, and programming operate as real infrastructure for market growth, identity building, and sustainable development in post-colonial contexts. **Objectives:** The objectives are to show that treating events as cultural ecosystems creates durable opportunities across content, design, music, hospitality, and community programming; to distill transferable lessons that other African cities can adapt without losing local specificity; and to situate these lessons within current disruptions in digital transformation and policy with clear, actionable responses. **Method:** Methods combine practitioner-led qualitative case studies with lived project experience, coordination notes, and observable outcomes captured in program documents. Indicators include audience participation and repeat engagement, for example Giants of Africa 2025 mobilising 320 youth from 20 nations, partner retention rates, and content outputs. Regional policy practice, including guidance from Rwanda's Ministry of Youth and Culture on venue commercialization and creative labor, provides context. Comparative assessment across the three hero projects is paired with replication checks using supporting cases from the Basketball Africa League, FIA events, and Zaria Court to test transferability across formats and audiences. Evidence is descriptive and practice based, aimed at concise lessons for decision makers and operators. **Results:** Three results stand out. First, narrative intent amplifies long-term value: capturing, archiving, and circulating stories across digital and on-site channels extends economic activity beyond event days while strengthening cultural memory and innovation pipelines. Second, collaboration outperforms siloed delivery: partnerships among venues, public bodies, private sponsors, and creatives create more equitable opportunities and improve talent retention, countering precarity. Third, inclusion is catalytic: programming and spatial choices that welcome families, women, and youth expand who benefits and who returns. **Conclusion:** The presentation concludes with scalable recommendations: treat content capture and archiving as core infrastructure; allocate budgets transparently for local creatives through clear commissioning; synchronize sports calendars with year-round cultural programming; track success with

people-centered metrics such as repeat attendance, youth participation rates, partner renewals, and creative job days. These steps offer policymakers and practitioners practical pathways to resilient, equitable African creative futures.

Category: Crossroads: Sport, Recreation, and Culture in the Creative Economy

Author: Laura Nkula (African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town, South Africa)

Co-Author 1: Polo Moji (English Literary Studies, University of Cape Town, South Africa)

Keywords: African literature, Literary Festivals, Book Culture, Publishing

Title: Emerging African Literary Cities Through The Lens Of Book Festivals

Abstract: This presentation reflects on the NRF-funded 'African Literary Cities– Maps, Hubs and Literary Urban Ecologies', a collaborative research project between the Department of English Literary Studies and the African Centre for Cities at the University of Cape Town. It addresses the “absenting” of African literary cities –a complex engagement with cityness and literariness – in both globally authoritative cultural policy discourses and the emerging scholarly field of Literary Urban Studies. **Objectives:** Does the city, conceived as a literary form that traces modernist and imperialist pathways, deny the possibility of literary cities existing in the global south, and particularly on the African continent? Perusing the list of UNESCO’s creative cities, a glaring absence becomes visible: in the creative field of literature, only two African cities – Durban and Buffalo City, both in South Africa – have managed to be included in the list of 42 Cities of Literature globally. The dearth of African cities and over-representation of UNESCO Cities of Literature in Europe and North America belies an African literary scene that remains invisible when seen solely through the developmentalist lens of ‘hard literary infrastructures’, (e.g. publishing houses, libraries, bookstores). This traps the African city in a moment of ‘unfinished development’ and does not account for the dynamic and diverse literary and urban encounters that produce the African literary city. As a form of urbanity, the literary city can be considered a narrative that (re) produces itself in both material and imaginative forms. Located at the intersection of urban and literary studies, Literary Urban Studies casts literary fiction as a form of urban materiality and literary narratives as “social investigations” of the material city (Ameel, Finch, Laine and Dennis 2019). However, Sassen (2010) observes, that “the term cityness suggests the possibility that there are kinds of urbanity that do not fit into the definition developed in the West” (14). **Method:** This presentation will elucidate the multi-pronged qualitative research approach we have pursued in this project over the past three years. In particular, it will focus on the role of African literary festivals and their critical place in literary place-making and Pan-African publishing circuits.

Category: The Future of Creative Economies Across Geographies

Author: Sascha Polkey (Business and Arts South Africa)

Presenter: Beth Arendse (Business and Arts South Africa)

Keywords: Financing, Gig Economy

Title: Unlocking Africa's Creative Gig Economy: From Precarity To Prosperity Through Strategic Investment And Cross-Sector Collaboration

Abstract: Africa's creative economy is driven largely by informal gig work, where 84% of employment exists outside formal frameworks. While this decentralised, culturally embedded labour sustains millions, it remains chronically undervalued in economic discourse—despite contributing an estimated 1.1% to continental GDP, with far greater growth potential. This research and presentation explore how Africa's creative gig workers—both pioneers and vulnerable actors in the global gig economy—can move from precarity to prosperity through targeted investment and innovative models. **Objectives:** To establish Creative Venture Funds and Accelerator Hubs that move beyond grant dependency and unlock investment-led growth; to foster Cross-Sector Collaboration that leverages cultural capital for wider economic development; and to develop New Valuation Frameworks that recognise cultural as well as economic contributions. **Method:** The study draws on a mixed-method approach combining global literature on gig economies, analysis of African Development Bank data, case studies such as Business and Arts South Africa's Cultural Producers Programme, and an examination of emerging financing tools ranging from music royalty securitisation to cryptocurrency applications in informal markets. **Results:** The research highlights critical gaps: lack of institutional visibility, limited access to tailored financial products, skills deficits in business management, and the absence of regionally responsive digital platforms. Yet opportunities are emerging—from AI's democratisation of creative tools and growing international recognition of African cultural assets to innovative financing mechanisms that treat creativity as an investable asset class. **Conclusion:** *The Investment Case*—This shift requires unprecedented private sector engagement. Creativity must be reframed not as a philanthropic cause but as a legitimate asset class—worthy of institutional investment and capable of delivering measurable returns. *The Path Forward*—Through targeted capacity building, infrastructure development, and financial innovation, Africa's creative gig economy can evolve into a resilient ecosystem of empowered entrepreneurs. Achieving this vision demands collaboration between policymakers, investors, and creative communities to build a sector that is both culturally grounded and structurally robust.

Category: New Directions for Funding: The Future of CCI Support

Author: Elise Cuny (Chair, Culture Solutions Europe, France)

Title: Rethinking Africa–Europe Cultural Relations

Abstract: From preserving and promoting cultural heritage, developing tourism and creative media, boosting the events' economy, to supporting cultural and creative industries to be resilient in the face of digital transformations through key digital, legal, and policy skills—opportunities for meaningful partnerships and successful cooperation programmes supporting sustainable development are abundant. To unlock the full potential of CCI, the AU and EU must adopt a pragmatic approach. This means moving away from ideological debates and instead focusing on concrete sector needs—education, skills, employment, and income generation—especially for youth and women. All of this must be done with sensitivity to diverse local contexts on both continents. Among the emerging trends impacting CCI and cultural relations, the report examines new geopolitical shifts partly driven by the rise of nationalism on both continents, the reshaping of international cooperation in response to changing economic realities, the de-Europeanisation of foreign policy, and the decolonisation of international cultural relations. It also highlights the digital transformation of the CCI. Key common threats and challenges addressed in the report include youth unemployment, disillusionment with democracies in place and regime changes, threats to freedom of speech and artistic expression, the spread of disinformation, and increasing inequality and global polarisation—all of which contribute to the growing fragility of societies. Artists and creatives, institutions, civil societies from both continents have started to engage in meaningful exchanges concerning their shared histories. From politicised and divisive discourse around the acquisition and restitution of artefacts, Africa and Europe are trying to embrace a more constructive and reconciliatory approach—driven by the cultural sphere—to reflect together on the past. This shift highlights the growing influence of concepts such as co-creation, co-ownership, people-to-people relations, and international cultural relations, which have been developed over time and strongly advocated by cultural and creative communities. That shift is not simple nor linear, and cultural relations are marked by a multiplicity of actors, contexts, and backlashes. Today, debates about the role and place of culture and the arts in society are not only occurring between continents, but also within them—shaped by schools of thought that transcend borders.

Category: Creative Futures: Rethinking the Cultural and Creative Industries of Tomorrow

Author: Gcinibandla Mtukela (Advisor to the Executive Mayor, Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, South Africa)

Keywords: ACH, Policy, Practice, GNU

Title: Stellenbosch or Kwazakhele: Whither the ACH Policy vs Practice Train Under the GNU?

Abstract: The researcher hypothesises that the point at which the individual parties in the GNU 'coalesce ideologically' is bound to manifest in the policy choices of the

government of national unity. The researcher sets out to answer the question on whether there are emerging indications of ideological shift in the policy of government as it has been known. This question is then applied to the policies on Arts, Culture and Heritage as they impact the space of Cultural Creative Industries (CCIs). Stellenbosch or KwaZakhele: wither the ACH policy vs practice train? KwaZakhele is one of the biggest and oldest townships in Port Elizabeth. The topic uses the two areas for their contracting class position fortunes. The GNU celebrated its first anniversary in June earlier this year, 2025. There is yet no significant literature on the policy impact of the GNU in society and in spaces like arts, culture and heritage, in the context of this paper. The research is therefore a contribution to the developing literature on the subject. The researcher will use the case study method. Interviews will be the primary method of data collection with literature review being the secondary method. The question will be explored from a phenomenological qualitative research approach. The limitation of the study is that the GNU has been in existence for well under 18 months which may not be an adequate time for definite patterns of policy practice and implementation to have emerged. The **objectives** are to investigate whether there are emerging ACH ideological policy shifts under the GNU, and to establish whether there are policy vs practice tensions in the ACH space under the GNU and whether these, if found, signal anti-transformation, right wing oriented ideological shifts. The **method** includes a case study, qualitative phenomenological study, primary data collection through interviews and secondary method of literature review. The **results** point to evidence of decisions, pronouncements and policy directives which indicate right of centre or 'right of ANC' ideological shifts, and tensions between transformative policies and 'right inclined' emerging policy trends. The **conclusion** is that the transformative, progressive and redress policies and/or practices of the past 30 years within the ACH space face being reversed in favour of anti-transformation neoliberal policies etc.

Category: The Political Economy of the Creative Economy; Institutions, Power, and Policy Shifts

Author: Thoriso Dlomo (Customer Care Consultant, Insurance Industry, South Africa)

Keywords: Soft Power, Creative Economy, Policies

Title: Harnessing Our Creative Soft Powers: Power, Policies And Institutions

Abstract: The global political landscape is constantly evolving and countries need to maintain a healthy social, political and economic position in order to thrive both on a local/national level and international level. In a fiercely competitive global economy, we see how different states exert influence and power to ensure their national interests are advanced and their objectives are achieved. **Objectives:** We aim at observing how some countries have used soft power skills to influence their sociopolitical and economic status in the international arena. We aim to see the effects of creativity, innovation, and

digital transformation on the sustainability of a nation's social and economic development. Lastly we look at how these soft skill powers can be harnessed through policymakers and decision making mechanisms. **Method:** We take a look at how other countries have used media and culture as an international economic, social and political power tool. We specifically focus on how countries like Japan, The United States of America and South Korea have harnessed the power of the media as part of their bargaining power in the international political arena. **Results:** The promotion of culture and the creative economy in a country is crucial for building the country's global recognition. The focus on soft power can assist a national in building its social and economic capabilities in order to advance on a national and international scale. **Conclusion:** A careful consideration of a country's creative economy in policy and national decision making plays a vital role in the socioeconomic development and advancement/transformation of a nation. We are able to see how creative exposure on an international level can contribute to a nation's bargaining power and positioning in international politics. In order to harness the power of our creative economies in South Africa we will need policies and institutions that enforce these strategies.

Category: The Political Economy of the Creative Economy; Institutions, Power, and Policy Shifts

Author: Adwoa Ankoma (Director of Policy & Research, Electric South, South Africa)

Title: Artists at the Centre: African Immersive Voices Shaping AI Futures

Abstract: (AI) is now firmly on the African policy agenda, with national strategies, (AI Policy), and continental initiatives (AU Strategy) shaping the region's digital futures. Global instruments also filter into African contexts through platforms and funding conditions. Yet (CCIs), and especially the immersive arts and creative technology sector, remain under-consulted in these debates, despite being among the most active experimenters with AI. This absence represents a critical policy gap, given immersive artists' capacity to surface ethical, cultural, and practical considerations of AI use in situated, practice-driven contexts. **Objectives:** Recognising immersive artists and producers, creative technologists and other tech based creative industries, as a "missing stakeholder" in African AI governance. It seeks to: Map how existing African and global AI policy frameworks engage (or fail to engage) with CCI Demonstrate the role of immersive arts (and other tech based creative industries) as a bridge between cultural, creative practice and frontier, emerging technology, like AI. Propose methodologies of artist-led policy deliberation and decentralised advocacy as scalable tools to insert creative voices into governance processes without overburdening artists as policy specialists. **Method:** The research combines: A policy scan of key African AI frameworks (national strategies, AU-level initiatives,) and their intersections with global instruments. Case study analysis of Electric South's AI and immersive media programmes, including toolkits, conversation starters, and convenings, as examples of artist-centred advocacy tools. **Results:** The analysis reveals three insights: Existing AI policy frameworks reference creative industries

primarily in narrow terms (e.g., copyright), neglecting wider questions of cultural rights, labour, sustainability, and creative use cases. Immersive practice, operationalises AI in embodied and localised ways, surfacing risks (consent in capture, cultural IP in scans, audience data in installations) and opportunities (low-cost prototyping, new storytelling modes) that static policy frameworks miss. Artist-led advocacy tools (e.g., guidelines, toolkits, convenings) can act as decentralised reference points for policymakers and self-regulation frameworks for platforms, offering a realistic African-grounded route for influence in contexts where “hard” regulation of global platforms is limited. **Conclusion:** Creatives at the centre of AI policy offers not just representation, but a methodology for bridging the gap between policy and practice. By institutionalising artist-centred consultation, decentralised advocacy tools, and framing immersive arts as a test case for wider creative industries, African AI governance can become more inclusive, Electric South’s work is a model of how creative economies can generate reference frameworks that influence both policy and industry practice, without demanding that artists become policymakers themselves.

Category: Rewriting Cultural Policy: From Global to Local Realities

Author: Joseph Gaylard (Independent Researcher, South Africa)

Keywords: Philanthropy, Funding, Cultural, Infrastructure, Diaspora

Title: Artists as Infrastructure: Philanthropy as Creative Practice in Africa

Abstract: The landscape of cultural and creative industries (CCI) funding in Africa is undergoing significant transformation as traditional public funding remains limited and international donor priorities shift. An emerging phenomenon sees commercially successful African and diasporic artists establishing permanent cultural institutions through personal investment, creating hybrid funding models that challenge conventional CCI financing approaches. These artist-led initiatives – from Goddy Leye’s Art Bakery (Cameroon) to Yinka Shonibare’s GAS Foundation (Nigeria) and William Kentridge’s Centre for the Less Good Idea (South Africa) – represent a new and significant approach to the financing and sustainability of cultural infrastructure on the continent. Drawing conceptually on AbdouMaliq Simone’s notion of “people as infrastructure” – which recognises how social relationships and improvised collaborations constitute a functional infrastructure in resource-constrained urban African contexts – this research extends this framework to consider how individual artists drawn on their market success to develop new infrastructure in contexts of limited public investment. **Objectives:** This research aims to analyse how artist-led philanthropic models function as alternative CCI financing mechanisms in African contexts. Key objectives include: examining how these initiatives differ from traditional philanthropic and public funding approaches; assessing their sustainability mechanisms and community engagement strategies; investigating the tension between global market participation and local cultural development; and

evaluating their potential as scalable models for endogenous creative economy development in resource-constrained environments. **Method:** The study will employ qualitative research methods including semi-structured interviews with founding artists, institutional management, and independent cultural observers across multiple African contexts. Comparative case study analysis will examine publicly available institutional documents, mission statements, and programming strategies. The research will also incorporate perspectives from local arts communities and cultural policy experts to provide contextual insights into each institution's positioning and perceived impact within their respective creative ecosystems. **Results:** The research anticipates revealing complex dynamics around cultural ownership, sustainability, and the balance between exclusive global networks and inclusive local engagement. Findings will likely identify distinct typologies of artist-philanthropist models and illuminate both opportunities and limitations of this funding approach, including questions of equity, accessibility, and potential bypassing of existing community-based cultural initiatives. **Conclusion:** This research will contribute to understanding how creative industries can adapt financing strategies in contexts where traditional funding sources are insufficient. The implications extend beyond individual institutions to broader questions about future CCI financing in Africa, offering insights into culturally responsive approaches to creative economy development while critically examining the risks and benefits of artist-led philanthropic infrastructure.

Category: New Directions for Funding: The Future of CCI Support

Author: Ashraf Patel (Senior Research Associate, Institute for Global Dialogue, South Africa)

Keywords: AI and Copyright, Content and Livelihoods, Africa, Global South

Title: AI And Copyright – Between Rights, Innovation And Equity

Abstract: The advent of AI has created significant disruptions in the creative sector, forming the rationale for this study. From Hollywood workers' strikes to South African creatives living—and dying—in poverty, and journalists facing challenges with generative AI, copyright and creative works are confronting severe headwinds affecting daily livelihoods. Generative AI poses major challenges for the creative community, particularly in the Global South, where copyright and labour laws are weak. The objectives of this study are to examine the impact of generative AI on copyright and the creative community, explore Big Tech business models regarding copyright as “fair game” for training LLMs and selling content to third parties, engage with ILO Gig Worker rights guidelines, and draw lessons from Global South contexts including the EU, India, Brazil, Indonesia, and Kenya. The method involves documentary analysis, engagement with artists, review of news clippings, and interviews with policymakers. The results highlight widespread anxiety among artists and creators about the future, evidence of generative AI scraping local content without monetary compensation, and unresolved questions

about the role and duties of collecting societies. The conclusion and recommendations point to urgent policy and regulatory reform for Gig workers, including clearer rules on content and IP ownership, sustainable earning models for African content producers, and new compensation systems to ensure the livelihoods of creatives in the digital age.

Category: The Future of Copyright: Sustainability, Equity, and Fair Use

Author: Likhona Nqunqa (Research Associate)

Co-Author: Odwa Mtati (Chief Executive Officer, South African International Maritime Institute)

Keywords: Artistic Expressions, Maritime Awareness, Oceans Economy, Blue Economy, Art and Sustainability, Cultural Heritage, Creative Economy

Title: The Role Of Creative Expressions In Advancing Oceans Economy

Abstract: The oceans economy and the creative economy such as the other sectors of the economy contribute to South Africa's sustainable development agenda, yet there is limited exploration on the potential relationship between the two. Creative expressions, including visual, performative, and literary arts, offer an under explored path for translating complex maritime science and policy into accessible and culturally relevant narratives. **Aim:** This study situates the arts at the intersection of the creative and oceans economy, highlighting their potential to enhance ocean literacy, preserve cultural heritage, adoptive behavioural change, and stimulate socio-economic development.

Objectives: The paper investigates four contributions of the use of arts in the context of the oceans economy: (1) simplifying and humanising maritime science and policy to improve public understanding; (2) preserving and communicating indigenous knowledge and maritime traditions; (3) inspiring behavioural change through creative environmental campaigns and community engagement; and (4) contributing to economic diversification through creative industries, maritime festivals, and cultural tourism. **Methodology:** A qualitative, exploratory research design is employed, combining literature review, policy analysis and case study evidence. Examples include coastal mural projects, maritime-themed festivals, and collaborations between artists and scientists. These are analysed against indicators of knowledge transfer, cultural preservation, behavioural outcomes, and economic participation. 1 Research Associate, South African International Maritime Institute. 2 CEO, South African International Maritime Institute. 3 Nelson Mandela University (Business School). **Results:** Findings show that creative expressions serve as an important bridge between policy, science, and society while also demonstrating the interdependent relationship between the oceans and the creative economies. Creative expressions enable communities to engage with issues such as climate change, marine pollution, and biodiversity loss while sustaining cultural identities and contributing to local economies. **Conclusion and Recommendations:** The study concludes that arts are not peripheral to the ocean activities but can advance maritime related initiatives and contribute to sustainability. Policy recommendations include targeted funding,

institutional support for artist–scientist collaborations, and integration of creative methodologies into ocean economy curricula. Through embedding arts into maritime strategies, South Africa can pioneer a holistic, transdisciplinary approach in pursuit of ocean sustainability.

Category: The Future of Creative Economies Across Geographies

Author: Annette Loubser (Independent Visual Arts Educator & Project Manager, South Africa)

Title: Rooted Futures: Reimagining Craft, Culture, And Community In Rural South Africa

Abstract: Reflecting on previous experiences often reveals powerful lessons as well as new opportunities for growth which this presentation about rural craft development between 2001 – 2008 provides. It is about an early and over ambitious CreateSA and department of Labour skills pilot programme that I implemented in the village of Bathurst.

Objectives: This presentation offers a longitudinal view of craft development in South Africa's Eastern Cape. Based on over five decades of observation, practice, and community engagement, it reveals how policy frameworks, market forces, and local realities intersect —sometimes harmoniously, and often in tension. **Method:** The session interrogates the gap between industrial policy aspirations and grassroots capacity using case studies and it reflects on the unintended consequences of top-down strategies: the loss of cultural authenticity, limited rural reach, and uneven access to resources, particularly for black artisans and indigenous craft traditions. **Results:** The narrative distils lessons on leadership, policy alignment, and the necessity of embedding craft development within place-based cultural ecosystems. It also surfaces strategies for reconciling growth with sustainability: strengthening local leadership structures, leveraging tourism linkages without commodifying heritage, and restoring dignity to existing artisans through equitable market access. **Conclusion:** By weaving memory, critique, and practical insight, this contribution invites policymakers, practitioners, and artists to envision a Creative Economy that honours heritage, fosters resilience, and ensures that the crafts of tomorrow remain deeply rooted in the communities that give them life.

Category: The Political Economy of the Creative Economy; Institutions, Power, and Policy Shifts

Author: Raymond Ndhlovu (PhD Candidate, Cultural Economics, Rhodes University, South Africa)

Co-Author 1: Jen Snowball (Rhodes University, South Africa)

Co-Author 2: Noel Pearse (Rhodes University, South Africa)

Keywords: Organisational Resilience, Microenterprises, Technical Efficiency

Title: Comparative Economic Analysis of the Organisational Resilience of Microenterprises in the Cultural & Creative Industries

Abstract: The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent Level 5 lockdowns in South Africa and Zimbabwe severely disrupted the functioning of cultural and creative industries (CCIs), which are predominantly micro, small and medium-sized enterprises reliant on in-person production and consumption. These restrictions affected vulnerable subsectors such as the performing arts and exacerbated precarity among early-career creatives lacking industry ties. Organisational resilience, understood as the capacity to recover from disruptions and generate new opportunities, provides a valuable framework to analyse how CCIs survived and adapted. Given the potential of CCIs to drive employment and economic growth in contexts of high unemployment and poverty, this study compares resilience strategies of microenterprises in South Africa, a relatively well-resourced economy, and Zimbabwe, a less-resourced country. **Objectives:** The paper comparatively investigates the organisational resilience of CCI microenterprises in South Africa and Zimbabwe, focusing on how they adapt to external shocks and whether access to resources sustains efficiency. It further examines whether resource availability buffers disruptions, analyses the drivers and dimensions of resilience in efficient enterprises, and offers recommendations to mitigate precarity in the face of future shocks. **Method:** A quantitative analysis was conducted using Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) to measure efficiency across a sample of CCI microenterprises. Efficiency was treated as a proxy for organisational resilience. To complement this, a qualitative study employed pattern matching and deductive thematic analysis to explore the drivers and dimensions of resilience among efficient enterprises. Together, these methods enabled an integrated understanding of how CCIs sustain performance during crises. **Results:** Findings indicate that formal legal status, post-matric education, formal training, a higher share of contract staff, and access to broader markets significantly enhance efficiency and resilience. Innovation—both technological and structural—emerged as a critical determinant, with innovative firms displaying greater adaptability and efficiency in response to shocks. **Conclusion:** The study highlights that organisational resilience is context-dependent. In well-resourced economies, human capital, education, and training strongly support efficiency and resilience, while in less-resourced settings, institutional developments play a more central role. By identifying these drivers, the study contributes to strategies aimed at reducing the vulnerability of CCI microenterprises when confronted with external shocks. These findings also speak directly to managing the creative economy; they highlight the importance of institutional partnerships, supportive policies, and access to regional markets as pathways to building sustainable creative clusters and corridors. More broadly, the insights enrich international debates on organisational resilience and provide transferable lessons for creative economies across diverse developing contexts.

Category: Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth

Author: Boitumelo Poee (Fashion Business Consultant & Researcher, Durban University of Technology, South Africa)

Co-Author 1: Karen M. Corbishley (Independent)

Co-Author 2: Veena P. Rawjee (Durban University of Technology)

Keywords: Fashion Entrepreneurship, Business Support Organisations, Retail Mix, 3Ps – Place, Product and Price, South Africa

Title: Fashion Focus: Designers' Needs from Business Support Organisations (BSOs)

Abstract: This paper is based on a preliminary quantitative study conducted by the primary researcher among consumers, which identified three critical success factors within the retail mix for the success of retailing fashion design entrepreneurs: retail place, slow fashion products, and a strategic refocusing of price. While the traditional retail mix comprises six elements (commonly referred to as the 6Ps), these three factors emerged as particularly salient, and were subsequently conceptualised as the critical 3Ps.

Objectives: The objectives of this paper are to: 1.) Explore the types of place-related support that retailing fashion design entrepreneurs require from BSOs. 2.) Examine the types of product-related support that retailing fashion design entrepreneurs require from BSOs. 3.) Investigate the pricing-related support needs of retailing fashion design entrepreneurs from BSOs. **Method:** Qualitative exploratory design with semi-structured interviews conducted with fashion design entrepreneurs and thematic analysis applied.

Results: Fashion retail place aggregated the greatest number of codes, indicating it was the most important in discussions with retailing fashion design entrepreneurs. Pricing support, was the second most discussed topic in this context, but with far lower mentions than retail place, while product support, in terms of sales reports and sales forecasting, closely trailed behind pricing support as the least mentioned. **Conclusion:** In conclusion, by aligning support structures with the critical success factors of the 3Ps (Place, Product and Price), BSOs can play a catalytic role in strengthening entrepreneurial resilience, enhancing market positioning, and promoting ethical and inclusive fashion practices. Moreover, the conceptual framework developed in this study offers a scalable blueprint for other resource-constrained and culturally rich environments across the Global South.

Category: New Directions for Funding: The Future of CCI Support

Author: Tshepo Motsaapheko (Founder, Culture Code Gig Guide, South Africa)

Title: Culture Code Hub: A Digital, Creative & Sustainable Ecosystem For Africa's Next Creative Economy

Abstract: Africa's creative economy is rapidly expanding, yet creatives often face barriers such as lack of visibility, limited access to funding, and fragmented markets. The

tourism, sports, arts, and fashion industries hold immense potential for economic growth, cultural preservation, and youth employment. Culture Code Hub was established as an innovative response, positioning itself as a digital-first, community-driven ecosystem that integrates content creation, sustainable design, cultural tourism, and entrepreneurial development. **Objectives:** Empower Creatives – Provide tools, platforms, and mentorship for emerging models, designers, storytellers, and content creators. Promote Sustainability – Highlight eco-conscious practices such as sustainable fashion, green event design, and container-based hub architecture. Leverage Technology – Use apps, digital gig guides, and online platforms to connect communities, tourists, and industries. Foster Partnerships – Collaborate with governments, tourism boards, and international partners to grow market access and create impactful events. Cultural Exchange & Economic Growth – Position African creativity as a global export while strengthening local economies. **Method:** Digital Gig Guide: Developed Culture Code Gig Guide, a mobile-first platform mapping cultural events, heritage sites, and creative gigs across South Africa. Creative Hubs: Designed container-based workspaces and studios furnished with sustainable wooden furniture, enabling affordable, flexible creative environments. Talent Development: Rolled out a model succession plan integrating fashion, sports presenting, and brand ambassadorship as pathways for youth employment. Content Ecosystem: Created a pipeline for multimedia content (text, infographics, podcasts, and videos) to tell Africa's stories digitally. Strategic Partnerships: Engaged tourism boards, industry leaders, and global creative networks for co-hosted events, funding access, and training. **Results:** Recognition & Awards: Winner of the Youth-Led Tourism Initiatives Competition 2025, affirming Culture Code's role in shaping tourism innovation. Growing Network: Built partnerships with local creatives, sustainable designers, and early-stage international collaborators. Youth Empowerment: Trained and onboarded models, creatives, and storytellers, integrating them into the Culture Code identity. Industry Influence: Positioned as a thought leader at tourism conferences and dialogues (e.g., TBCSA Tourism Leadership Conference 2025). Sustainable Innovation: Introduced eco-friendly approaches that showcase Africa's creative economy as both profitable and environmentally conscious. **Conclusion:** Culture Code Hub is more than a project — it's a movement redefining how Africa's creative economy is built and sustained. By merging technology, tourism, culture, and sustainability, it creates pathways for youth employment, economic growth, and global visibility. With strategic partnerships, scaling infrastructure, and continuous innovation, Culture Code Hub stands ready to be a leading driver of Africa's next creative economy.

Category: Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth

Author: Mawuko Gyan (PhD Student & Research Assistant, Economics Department, Rhodes University, South Africa)

Keywords: Creative Industries, International Trade, Cultural Trade

Title: Trade & Value Chain Dynamics in the CCI & the Role of Regional Integration

Abstract: Creative industry mapping studies have shown an increase in African intra-industry trade in the creative sectors indicating the possibility of improving South-South value-added manufacturing trade. The visual arts and crafts sector is important in African creative exports. Jewellery in particular has received policy focus in South Africa and other parts of the continent for its beneficiation opportunities. There are also new potential opportunities in the demand for ethically sourced and unique jewellery designs available to local artisans and crafts-people along the jewellery value-chain.

Objectives: This study therefore aims to investigate trade and value chain dynamics in the CCIs with a focus on the contribution of the jewellery value chain to South Africa's cultural economy and the role of regional integration in the development of regional jewellery manufacturing hubs. **Method:** As a background to the empirical analysis of the study, the literature review chapter of this thesis examines theoretical frameworks relevant for the topic, namely cultural goods trade theory, value chain analysis, industrial ecosystems and industrial hubs. This presentation highlights key theoretical frameworks within cultural trade theory and value chain analysis and their application to South-South value-added trade in cultural goods. The literature reviewed is based on the evolution of trade theory and its application to cultural goods trade, the debate on cultural exception and trade liberalisation in the context of the 2005 UNESCO convention. **Results:** This section finds that new trade theory is useful in explaining increased cultural trade between high-income countries and the dominant cultural export flows from the North to the South. However, it falls short when considering cultural products as largely non-economic goods that represent cultural identity, giving rise to alternative frameworks that better explain cultural trade. It also finds that contrary to the predictions of world systems and dependency theory, countries in the South can leverage cultural hybridisation in conjunction with public and private support in industrial policy to grow CCI industries in the South particularly in the context of the AfCFTA using South Korea and Nigerian entertainment industries as case studies. **Conclusion:** Finally, it finds that mainstream global value chain literature fails to account for the existence of and upgrading opportunities within value chains in the South thus calling for more research analysing regional value chains involving developing countries.

Category: Creative Africa

Author: Karina Beatriz Scherer & Carolina Gruffat (Co-Director, Master's Degree in Cultural & Creative Sector Management, Faculty of Economic Sciences, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina)

Co-Author 1: Carolina Gruffat (Faculty of Economic Sciences, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina)

Keywords: Professional Education, Cultural and Creative Sector, Cultural Management, Virtual Education, Sustainability, Inter-Institutional Networks

Title: Professional Education As A Contribution To The Sustainability Of The Cultural Sector: The Case Of The Master's Degree In Cultural And Creative Sector Management (2015–2025)

Abstract: This paper explores the contribution to sustainability made by the Master's Degree in Cultural and Creative Sector Management, a distance learning program offered by the Faculty of Economic Sciences at the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, during its first decade of operation. This analysis is based on the hypothesis that these contributions to sustainability are linked to the training of professionals in the region who can create conditions for the continuity and development of organizations in the sector, taking into account its multiple dimensions, focusing on opportunities in the digital environment (MONDIACULT, 2022). **Objectives:** The study examines the ways in which the Master's degree contributes to developing the skills required for administration, marketing and production in the cultural and creative sector in the context of rapid change driven by digital transformation and the new business models associated. Additionally, the study seeks to identify problems concerning professional development based on the projects generated by master's students linked to their places of origin. Among these are the environmental impact within the value chain of sector organizations; the creation of models that address the respect for diversity, minorities, and inequalities; and the development of human talent through collaborative, co-creative, and interdisciplinary models. Finally, the research investigates the role of inter-institutional networks and interest groups that comprise the regional educational community surrounding the master's program, which support its integration and growth. The study focuses on the Experience Laboratory, developed in collaboration with various organizations, expanding the course experience through hands-on practice. Also it examines seminars that address new trends and challenges in the sector through exchanges with professionals. **Method:** The research method applied is a case study. It includes in-depth interviews, documentary analysis of study programs, projects, and other materials. **Results:** The study of the program identifies management tools and skills specific to the cultural and creative sector that address contemporary challenges and opportunities. Additionally, emerging issues such as environmental impact and diversity, contributing to professional development in their local areas are identified. Finally, the integration of inter-institutional networks and practical spaces strengthen the program's growth and the construction of current knowledge in cultural management. **Conclusion:** The Master's Degree effectively contributes to the sustainability of the cultural sector by training professionals equipped to face sector challenges, fostering collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches, and supporting knowledge exchange through networks and practical experiences. This strengthens the sector's continuity and development in a rapidly changing digital and cultural policy environment.

Category: Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth

Author: Yvette Hardie (Honorary President, ASSITEJ, South Africa)

Title: Arts4Youth And The Social Employment Fund — Strategies for Sustainability in the Creative Economy

Abstract: The Arts4Youth programme, led by ASSITEJ SA and supported by the Social Employment Fund (SEF), has been implemented nationally over three cycles since 2022. It addresses the urgent need for sustainable livelihoods in the creative economy while simultaneously strengthening access to arts education for children and young people. Within the broader discourse on managing the creative economy, Arts4Youth demonstrates how public–private partnerships, multi-level collaboration, and creative clustering can drive both social and economic impact. **Objectives:** The project aims to: Provide meaningful part-time work opportunities for unemployed artists/cultural workers, or those working in the gig economy. Expand equitable access to quality arts education for children/youth. Build institutional capacity, partnerships, and pathways into employment, enterprise, and further education, especially for women, young people, and persons with disabilities. Test and refine sustainable models for embedding creative work within local communities, while contributing to national development goals. **Method:** A multi-layered approach combines direct part-time employment of artists with on-going training and mentorship for organisational and personal development. Implementation spans all nine provinces, coordinated through a national network of ASSITEJ SA members. This strengthens arts education delivery, increases community arts engagement and empowers advocacy campaigns. Evidence generated through trend analysis of three SEF cycles (2022–2025), including quantitative indicators (participation, events, audiences, job placements, new enterprises) and qualitative reflections from partners/communities. **Results:** Over three cycles, participation has more than doubled, reaching 2,690 creative workers in SEF3, 55% female and 74% youth. Arts4Youth has consistently engaged over 2,300 annual events with average audiences of 101 per activation, reaching 241,450 children and young people. Partnerships have expanded to 590 organisations, while training workshops grew by 63%. Employment outcomes include 495 job placements and 820 enterprises supported. Digital inclusion was advanced through hybrid training, computer labs, and online marketplaces. While absolute livelihood outcomes improved, transition rates into jobs, enterprises, and studies softened as scale increased, highlighting the need for deeper placement pipelines. **Conclusion:** Arts4Youth demonstrates a viable model for scaling creative sector employment and education, combining national coordination with local partnerships, ongoing skills enhancement and equity-driven inclusion. However, sustainability requires diversifying funding streams, embedding institutional partnerships and strengthening post-programme pathways into work/enterprise. The project underscores the importance of collaborative, systemic problem-solving, dynamic creative clusters and grass-roots cultural leadership in managing the creative economy for long-term impact.

Category: Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth

Author: Devandre Boonzaaier (Lecturer, Music Education, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa)

Keywords: Preservice Teacher, Music, Arts Administration, Service-Learning, Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

Title: Bridging The Gap: Preparing Pre-Service Music Teachers For Arts Administration Through Service-Learning

Abstract: Service-Learning integrates community engagement with academic learning to deepen understanding and foster civic responsibility. This pedagogical approach is explored in a study on a program for pre-service music teachers in the Western Cape, South Africa. The study investigates how this program contributes to the professional development of these future educators, focusing specifically on their roles as arts administrators. While teachers are often expected to manage extra-curricular arts, this administrative training is frequently neglected. This research addresses this critical gap, examining the Service-Learning experience as a potential solution to better prepare pre-service teachers for the full scope of their professional responsibilities. **Objectives:** The study has the following objectives: 1.) To investigate how a Service-Learning programme contributes to the professional development of pre-service music teachers in their capacity as arts administrators. 2.) To identify and analyse the motivations and perceptions of pre-service music teachers who volunteer for arts organisations. 3.) To determine the specific gaps in the current teacher education framework regarding the preparation of future teachers for arts administration roles. **Method:** Drawing on Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes learning through the interaction of personal, behavioural, and environmental factors, this study uses a qualitative research design. It employs semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to collect in-depth data. The narratives are analysed thematically to identify patterns and shared experiences among participants. This approach allows for a nuanced exploration of how volunteer work shapes their understanding and readiness for a future arts administration role. **Results:** Thematic analysis revealed that students' primary motivations for volunteering were intrinsic, driven by a passion for the arts and a desire for community impact. However, the findings also highlighted significant gaps in their professional preparation. Participants felt they needed more structured guidance in administrative tasks such as project management, fundraising, and event coordination, suggesting a need to formally integrate arts administration training into the music education curriculum. **Conclusion:** Findings indicate that while Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and extracurricular activities provide valuable experience, they don't fully prepare future teachers for the complex role of an arts administrator. The informal nature of this involvement lacks the formal skill development necessary for effective administration. The study concludes by advocating for the strategic integration of arts administration skills into teacher education curricula. This would bridge the gap between practical experience and professional competence, empowering future educators to assume leadership roles in community arts initiatives.

Category: Creative Futures: Rethinking the Cultural and Creative Industries of Tomorrow

Author: Leonardo Costa (UFBA, Brazil)

Keywords: Creative Economy, Research Methodology, Cultural Policy

Title: Research Methodologies In Creative Economy And Cultural Policy: The Urgency Of Systematic Data And Information

Abstract: The creative economy sector presents unique challenges for researchers and policymakers due to its heterogeneous nature, limited historical data, and the complex interplay between cultural production, economic dynamics, and public policy. This panel will explore methodological approaches developed by the Creative Economy Observatory of Bahia (OBEC-BA) in Brazil, demonstrating how interdisciplinary research can generate evidence-based insights for cultural policy development and implementation.

Objectives: The panel aims to contribute to the global discussion on research methodologies in cultural policy and creative economy studies, offering practical insights for researchers, policymakers, and cultural managers working to strengthen evidence-based decision-making in the cultural sector. **Method:** Drawing from a comprehensive portfolio of studies conducted between 2020–2025, this discussion will examine diverse methodological frameworks employed in creative economy research, including mixed-methods approaches, social network analysis, web surveys, document analysis, and the integration of artificial intelligence tools. The panel will address critical methodological challenges such as measuring economic impacts in heterogeneous sectors, capturing informal cultural production, evaluating public policy effectiveness, and adapting research methods during crisis situations like the COVID-19 pandemic. **Results:** Key topics will include: the development of national surveys on COVID-19 impacts in creative sectors; methodological innovations in cultural policy evaluation (particularly the Lei Aldir Blanc emergency cultural law); the application of Social Network Analysis (SNA) to audiovisual production chains; the use of AI and large language models for data extraction in cultural funding analysis; and the creation of interactive data panels for continuous monitoring of cultural public investment.

Author: Mustafa Gül (Istanbul Bilgi University and Culture Unleashed, Turkey)

Co-Author 1: Emre Erbirer (Espas & Culture Unleashed, Turkey)

Keywords: Cultural and Creative Industries, Polycrisis, Policymaking, Sustainability

Title: A Place In Policy: Cultural And Creative Industries In An Era Of Polycrisis

Abstract: We are living through an era of polycrisis—characterised by climate breakdown, gender inequality, forced migration, war, precarity, and rapid digital transformation—which profoundly affects both society and the cultural and creative industries (CCIs). Despite

their relevance to these urgent challenges, CCI are often either instrumentalized as tools for addressing broader crises or absorbed into other policy agendas such as innovation or green growth. Meanwhile, their own systemic vulnerabilities—precarity, spatial inequality, policy fragmentation—are underexplored. This paper addresses this gap by offering a multi-level perspective to understand how CCI are positioned within—and affected by—complex, overlapping disruptions. **Objectives:** Investigate the relationship between systemic global crises and the internal dynamics of CCI. Examine how market consolidation, freelance labour models, and policy instrumentalization shape creative work. Identify spatial inequalities within CCI, especially between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. Propose values and principles for positioning CCI as autonomous policy domains capable of contributing to inclusive, resilient futures.

Method: Our methodology combines critical theoretical analysis with empirical review. We apply Frankfurt School thought to explore political and cultural dimensions of CCI, complemented by a review of global secondary available datasets on labour, income distribution, and market share across creative sectors. We also analyze cultural policy documents at national and international levels to trace trends in instrumentalization and integration. Finally, we incorporate the authors' fieldwork and comparative insights from creative initiatives in smaller cities and rural regions to highlight spatial disparities.

Results: Theoretical framing suggests an ideological shift in the role of CCI, yet economic structures remain deeply consolidated. Platform monopolies and conglomerates dominate value chains, contributing to income inequality and deepening precarity. Policy frameworks rarely address CCI as autonomous sectors; instead, they are fragmented or subordinated to other policy goals. The creative economy remains concentrated in major urban centers, sidelining smaller cities and limiting local creative development. The disconnect between CCI's potential and their structural support mechanisms leads to underinvestment in their long-term sustainability and resilience.

Conclusion: We argue for a reframing of CCI not as passive instruments for solving polycrisis, but as fields requiring targeted support, autonomy, and long-term policy vision. The causality between external disruptions and internal sector fragilities must be better understood to address chronic issues such as precarity, uneven development, and dependency on large platforms. A values-based policy framework—grounded in resilience, recognition, and territorial equity—is essential for enabling CCI to contribute meaningfully to just and sustainable futures.

Category: The Political Economy of the Creative Economy; Institutions, Power, and Policy Shifts

Author: Geoffrey Kimotho (University of Nairobi, Kenya)

Keywords: Creative economy, human capital, creative work, youth, Africa, policy innovation.

Title: Nurturing The Roots: Investing In Human Capital For Africa's Creative Work Futures

Abstract: Africa's creative economy is rapidly gaining recognition as a driver of inclusive development. However, the sustainability of this sector is hindered by limited investment in human capital and inadequate support systems for creative workers. Young artists and cultural practitioners often navigate informal and precarious labour conditions without access to training, funding, or social protections. **Objectives:** This paper aims to examine how human capital development can strengthen creative work in Africa. It seeks to identify the key barriers faced by creative workers and propose policy interventions that can support skill development, decent work, and sustainable livelihoods in the cultural and creative industries. **Method:** The study employs a mixed-method approach, combining literature review with qualitative insights from interviews, focus group discussions, and case studies across Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa. Emphasis is placed on youth-led initiatives, community art hubs, and digital learning platforms. **Results:** Findings reveal a mismatch between formal education systems and the practical needs of creative workers. Informal networks and grassroots solutions have emerged as vital spaces for training and collaboration. However, these remain under-resourced and lack institutional support. **Conclusion:** Strengthening creative human capital requires integrated policies that recognise creative work as economic work. Investment in education, mentorship, social protection, and digital infrastructure is essential to unlock the full potential of Africa's creative workforce.

Category: Creative Work and Human Capital in the Creative Economy

Author: Khetho Tshipala (Taxation Lecturer, Nelson Mandela University, South Africa)

Co-Author 1: Dr Elsie Mbua (UNISA, South Africa)

Keywords: Creative Economy, Entertainment Sector, Tax Compliance, Tax Education Policy, Frameworks, South Africa

Title: Creative Economy Futures: Building A Tax Education Framework To Enhance Tax Compliance Among South African Entertainers

Abstract: The South African entertainment sector is experiencing significant growth, contributing substantially to the country's GDP and expected to expand further over the next five years. Despite this positive trajectory, the sector continues to face persistent challenges related to tax compliance. Media reports have highlighted widespread non-compliance among entertainers in music, fashion, culinary arts, and other creative fields. The South African Revenue Service (SARS) has intensified enforcement efforts in response to these issues, making it clear that compliance can no longer be overlooked. In light of the rapid growth of the creative economy, addressing these challenges is essential to safeguard the sector's sustainability, inclusivity, and contribution to national

economic development. **Objectives:** This study aims to develop a tailored tax education framework for South African entertainers that enhances voluntary tax compliance. It focuses on addressing knowledge gaps and practical challenges faced by entertainers in meeting their tax obligations, thereby contributing to the long-term growth and stability of the sector. **Method:** This conceptual paper applies a thematic analysis of legislation, policy documents, industry reports, and academic literature to explore the political economy of taxation in the creative sector. Using political economy theory and creative economy sustainability models, the study examines the institutional and policy barriers to tax compliance for entertainers and considers strategies for reform. **Results:** The analysis reveals that taxpayer education in South Africa has lacked specificity for the entertainment sector, which faces unique challenges such as irregular income, multiple revenue streams, and informal contracts. With income diversification set to accelerate through digitalisation, entertainers cannot avoid their tax obligations; education therefore becomes the critical bridge between the realities of creative work and the requirements of the tax system. Many instances of non-compliance arise from limited awareness rather than deliberate evasion. While SARS has issued guidelines on the taxation of entertainers, these remain outdated and fragmented. **Conclusion:** This paper aligns primarily with the conference sub-theme “Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth”, by proposing targeted interventions to strengthen tax compliance and ensure the long-term viability of the entertainment sector. It also engages with the sub-theme “Political Economy of the Creative Economy: Institutions, Power, and Policy Shifts” by examining how institutional frameworks and policy gaps influence entertainers’ ability to participate fully and equitably in the formal economy.

Category: Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth

Author: Bridget Rennie-Salonen (Senior Lecturer & Head of Woodwinds, Music Department, Stellenbosch University, South Africa)

Title: ‘Artist, Heal Thyself’ – Myth, Mandate, Or Movement? Transdisciplinary Research Applications And Provocations On The Artists’ Health Advocacy Imperative

Abstract: The positive impacts of creative and performing arts practices on individuals, communities, and society; and their important, innovative, and vibrant role in therapeutic, educational, spiritual, medical, and cultural domains are proven, and are applied and studied from multiple disciplinary perspectives. Yet research globally shows that artists are a high-risk group for occupational health challenges, due to the demands of their work which incorporates multiple risk factors. These interactive risk factors contribute to well-documented high prevalence of occupation-related mental and physical health problems among artists. In South Africa (SA) however, research on artists’ occupational health and well-being is a new field. Literature on SA artists’ occupational health, acknowledging the social determinants of health in SA artists’ lives and work, utilising African perspectives and conceptual frameworks, is scant. In order to cultivate and

maintain cultural and creative capital, the topic of SA artists' sustainable occupational health and well-being must be addressed. **Objectives:** This paper will explore diverse cultural and theoretical perspectives on SA artists' occupational health advocacy: the biopsychosocial-artistic influences on artists' health and well-being; the social determinants of health (such as socio-economic factors, healthcare and education access, and cultural capital); and the need to promote and better understand reciprocal well-being and care processes both IN and THROUGH the creative and performing arts. The aim is to integrate African and global perspectives, foster awareness, initiate debate, and advance a (South) African conceptual lens for the field of artists' health advocacy. **Method:** Recent and current research projects conducted at Stellenbosch University will be reported and discussed as case study examples of investigations and applications on the topic of health promotion IN and THROUGH the creative and performing arts, including the development of an interdisciplinary initiative in health, arts, and performance. ResultsThe SA higher education setting, through teaching, learning, and translational, practical research applications, plays a pivotal role. As higher education institutions respond to changing 21st Century performing and creative arts landscapes, engaging with relevant topics such as graduate employability, stylistic/genre diversity, cultural identities, portfolio careers, and digital technologies, promoting artists' occupational well-being is an imperative. **Conclusion:** Artists' occupational health is not just an individual responsibility but shaped by broader structural, cultural, and systemic factors. The paper will conclude with provocations to stimulate discussion on transdisciplinary applications of artists' health advocacy in practice, education, and research, driving change towards collective responsibility for artists' sustainable futures in the SA creative economy.

Category: Creative Work and Human Capital in the Creative Economy

Author: Johanna Mavhungu (PhD Candidate, Digital Knowledge Economy Studies & Lecturer, Cultural Policy & Management, Wits School of Arts, South Africa)

Keywords: Convergence Cultures, Cultural Policy, Audio-Visual Content Services, Distribution, Creative Economy, Cultural and Creative Industries in Africa

Title: Digital Transformation in Audio-visual Media

Abstract: Distribution in South Africa and globally is a key driver of multi-platforms in digitally converged environments in film and television. The changes in nomenclature from film and television to audio-visual content services are due to changes in the practices of curating and distributing content using modalities that are shaped by technology. How content is produced, and the types of content circulated using digital technology is subject to new conventions that are shaped by how audiences consume content. On the other hand, the importance of government policies cannot be overlooked, particularly the coherence of government policies across different departments, as well as the coordination of policy initiatives and their implementation. How government policies such as the Draft White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) (2018), Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (2017), Draft White Paper on Audio and

Audio-visual Content Services (2020) are shaping digital transformation in the film and television sector requires a close political economic reading. **Objectives:** The objective of this paper is to focus on factors that are changing and shaping the distribution of audiovisual content services within a digitally converged environment, post-COVID-19 that are giving rise to new formal and informal practices for distribution organisations. **Method:** The research uses an interpretive qualitative research method, and the factors presented in this paper are drawn from in-depth qualitative interviews conducted with local distributors who distribute content locally and internationally, as well as from broadcasters and satellite networks. The research uses research software tools that are suitable for analysing qualitative data to generate themes and the results/ findings of the research. **Results:** The findings of the research focus on emerging new media technologies that are changing the film and television sectors for cultural entrepreneurs. As cultural entrepreneurs, distributors are also cultural intermediaries, mediating and curating what content is seen or is not seen by audiences. The results/ findings of the research raise key issues around skills development, institutional capabilities in government and the private sector, copyright, access to audiences and commercialisation. **Conclusion:** In conclusion, this analysis will contribute to understanding current practices, and policy directions, while exploring opportunities for new perspectives on the future of audio-visual content services in South Africa.

Category: Creative Futures: Rethinking the Cultural and Creative Industries of Tomorrow

Author: Luzuko Makhuluma (Founder, Fanlinka (Pty) Ltd, South Africa)

Title: Fanlinka: Reimagining Direct-to-Fan Platforms

Abstract: The traditional music industry has long placed financial and creative constraints on independent artists, particularly within emerging markets such as Africa. While digital streaming platforms provide exposure, they often fail to offer fair financial returns or meaningful fan-artist engagement. This gap has become more pressing as cultural and creative industries adapt to digital disruption and global shifts in technology.

Objectives: The aim of this presentation is to explore Fanlinka, a South African-born direct-to-fan platform, as an innovative model that empowers independent artists by providing holistic monetization, audience building, and community engagement tools. The objective is to present Fanlinka as a case study for reimagining sustainable creative economies in Africa and beyond, leveraging digital technology to democratize access and revenue for creators. **Method:** The presentation will provide an overview of Fanlinka's features, including built-in fan listing and email marketing tools, streaming integration, playlist curation, event creation, merchandising with digital mockups, and direct artist booking functionalities. We will analyse the operational design, technology stack, and business model behind Fanlinka, and discuss how these components address structural challenges in the creative economy. Insights will be drawn from practical implementation data, artist feedback, and market response. **Results:** Initial data and artist adoption indicate strong interest and early success in bridging the gap between creators and fans. Artists are able to monetize directly, build their own engaged communities, and diversify

income streams beyond standard streaming royalties. The platform shows potential to create localized ecosystems of sustainability for independent artists, while fostering more inclusive economic opportunities within the African cultural industries. **Conclusion:** Fanlinka demonstrates a scalable and adaptable model for creative economies facing the challenges of digital disruption. As cultural industries move into a hybrid era of physical and digital interaction, platforms like Fanlinka offer a practical, creator-first approach that supports equitable growth, empowers human creativity, and leverages technology to sustain cultural production in underrepresented regions.

Category: Creative Futures: Rethinking the Cultural and Creative Industries of Tomorrow

Author: Sheldon Rocha Leal (Academy of Sound Engineering, South Africa)

Keywords: Music, Creative, Creative Industries, Creativity, Entertainment, Entertainment Industry

Title: Preparing Creatives And Creative Education To Respond To The Needs Of The Fourth Industrial Revolution

Abstract: The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is reshaping the nature of work, placing creativity and innovation among the most highly valued soft skills (EV Search, 2024). Yet, the creative process is delicate and requires an environment that values and nurtures creative output. Suppressive conditions can demoralise creatives and make them risk-averse, limiting innovation (Harvard Business Review & Amabile, 1998; O'Hara, 2014). In South Africa, the creative industries have been identified as key to economic recovery, particularly as many creatives are self-employed and positioned to become future employers (UCT Graduate School of Business, 2013). The cultural economy also underpins national identity and tourism. The music sector in particular is experiencing significant growth, with South Africa leading Africa's music economy at a 14.4% annual growth rate, contributing 74.6% of regional revenues (IFPI, 2025). The rise of creative hubs and the "DIY Musician" (Oliver, 2024) further reflects shifts in how creatives engage with their industries and with each other. **Objectives:** This presentation explores: 1.) How to create environments that support creative motivation and innovation; 2.) The economic and cultural significance of the creative sector; 3.) The urgent need for curriculum reform that prepares students for 4IR realities; 4. The value of decolonised and "triplized" education—localised, globalised, and individualised (Cheng, 2001). **Method:** Using a theoretical and interdisciplinary lens, this study draws on motivational theory (Amabile, 1998), economic data (IFPI, 2025), and social theory on creative clusters (Mellander & Florida, 2012). It applies Cheng's "triplization" framework (2001) and analyses examples from the South African music sector to formulate responsive education strategies. **Results:** Findings show that creatives thrive in environments where their work is valued and autonomy is respected. Traditional curricula often neglect the realities creatives face, while industry shifts—like the rise of DIY musicianship—demand flexible, entrepreneurial education models. Existing structures fail to fully prepare students for the self-driven, hybrid workspaces of the future. **Conclusion:** To meet the needs of the 4IR, creative

education must be reimagined. Decolonised and triplized curricula that value local knowledge, global relevance, and individual pathways will better equip graduates to contribute meaningfully to the evolving creative economy. This presentation offers strategies for building sustainable, inclusive, and innovative creative education models.

Category: Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth

Author: Dr Matolwandile Mtotywa (Senior Lecturer, Rhodes Business School, South Africa)

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Efficiency and Productivity, Staged Adoption, Literacy and Skills, Integrative Thinking

Title: Enhancing Productivity And Efficiency With Artificial Intelligence In Creative Industry: Insights For Design And Creative Services

Abstract: Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the creative industry by acting as both an input and an output, influencing demand, supply, and value generation. While it drives efficiency and productivity, it also disrupts traditional practices and widens the digital divide. **Objectives:** This SACO-commissioned study investigates approaches to improving productivity and efficiency with AI in the creative industry, with an emphasis on design and creative services. **Method:** Using systematic review and meta-analysis, the study draws on multiple studies and cases to analyse AI adoption and its effects.

Results: The findings suggest that AI adoption should be staged: entry-level tools to provide quick wins, intermediate systems to enhance professional workflows, and advanced platforms to support enterprise integration. Novices benefit most from accessible, low-friction tools, while professionals prefer systems that foster ideation and offer creative control. Central to the decision for adoption is effective mitigation of literacy and skills deficiency. Effective adoption programmes should combine practical workshops, scaffolded modules, and co-creation labs, promoting experiential learning, gamification, and interactivity to build self-efficacy and confidence. Emerging evidence underscores the role of gamified and interactive approaches in upskilling. Interactive methods, such as simulations based on scenarios, role-play, and sandbox experimentation, enable artists to practice in low-risk environments, supporting confidence and long-term use. When integrated into training, these approaches normalise AI within workflows, reduce resistance, and strengthen adoption. As AI use deepens, legal, ethical, and security concerns become critical. The study identified risks around privacy, cybersecurity, copyright, bias, and accountability, highlighting the need for risk management skills and regulatory oversight. Successful long-term integration requires coordinated support at the organisational, educational, and policy levels, addressing financial resources, skills development, and risk governance. **Conclusion:** The implication for creatives is an informed adoption of AI and leveraging it for productivity and growth. The key determinants of adoption include perceived usefulness, control, and enabling conditions. Policymakers are encouraged to fund infrastructure and training

initiatives that embed gamification, co-creation labs, and interactive modules into wider AI readiness strategies. Such programmes can democratise access, reduce inequalities, and encourage equitable participation. At the same time, regulatory mechanisms must protect against risks without hindering innovation. Future research should explore the longitudinal impact of AI in the creative industry, focusing on its impact on creativity, productivity, and professional growth. Cross-sectoral research could also reveal how lessons from other sectors that have adopted AI can inform and strengthen AI adoption in the creative industry.

Category: The Human and AI Accommodation: How Artificial Intelligence is Reshaping the Human Creativity within and without the CCI.

Author: Avril Louise Joffe (UNESCO Chair, Cultural Entrepreneurship & Policy, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa)

Co-Author 1: Karen Brodie (Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, Newcastle University, UK)

Co-Author 2: Omar Nagati (CLUSTER)

Co-Author 3: Pearl Wang (Jiao Tong University, Shanghai)

Co-Author 4: Mirella Arcidiacono (British Council)

Title: Intermediaries In The Cultural And Creative Economy: Evidence Of Excellence And Inclusion Or Indicator Of Cultural Policy Gap?

Abstract: Intermediaries in the creative economy are organisations – and at times individuals – that are seen as facilitators, buffers, mediators and supporters of small businesses, fragmented workers, marginalised creatives and informal freelancers across multiple sectors of the cultural and creative industries (Jakob and Van Heur, 2014; Towse, 2013, Joule, et al, 2015, Banks and O'Neill, 2018). Many have become essential to the development of a robust cultural and creative ecosystem by providing access to infrastructure, information, training, local and international networks and finance and other resources. **Objectives:** This presentation will reflect on this research to understand the role of intermediaries as supporting links between institutional systems and creative practices in the wider set of economic and administrative contexts of each country.

Method: In this Global Creative Economy Council research, members conducted a rapid appraisal of 10 such intermediaries through interviews and document analysis, located in their respective countries ranging from those in established economies (USA, UK), to newer economies in China and Eastern Europe (Czechia) and the global South (Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, Honduras, India and South Africa). **Results:** The first insight from this research is the important role that intermediaries play in developing the creative economy ecosystem, acting as buffer, mediator or lobbyist between individual or fragmented actors (atypical, precarious, unorganised, informal) and those in power or with access to power whether they are private or those in government or from government agencies. The second insight relates to why these intermediaries are

necessary and the prevalent gap that these intermediaries highlight between the policy and legislative processes and the realities of the creative sector. This gap particularly affects small, financially constrained startups and creative practitioners operating outside the formal economy who, as individual entities, are often unable to access the training, education, infrastructure or networks needed to enjoy sustainable livelihoods.

Conclusion: The strategies for sustainability and growth that these intermediaries – from state led, private sector, civil society and academia – play in the development of robust creative economies opens up questions about the explicit and implicit reasons they exist in relation to the socio-economic contexts in which they emerge and whether public policies are needed to facilitate the work of these intermediaries.

Category: Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth

Author: Natalie Kowalik (Researcher, Visual & Digital Cultures Research Center (ViDi), University of Antwerp, Belgium)

Co-Author 1: Philippe Meers (Professor in Film and Media Studies, University of Antwerp, Belgium)

Keywords: Cultural Economy, Globalisation, Domestic Film Industries, Film Policy, South Africa, Global South

Title: Globalisation and Domestic Film Industries in the Global South: Framing South Africa's Film Policy through a Cultural Economy Lens

Abstract: South Africa's film industry has witnessed increased international interest by streaming giants and production companies due to its locations, competitive production costs and (South) African stories. However, recent disruptions (i.e., COVID-19, the Hollywood strikes, proposed US tariffs, incentive delays) have shed light on how fragile and unregulated South Africa's film industry is, highlighting the risks associated with a reliance on an industry built on foreign investment. During the launch of UNESCO's (2022) global report, 'Reshaping Policies for Creativity,' it was clear that the cultural and creative sectors, including film, have an important part to play in the global economy (e.g., jobs), and that governments can play a larger role in regulating policies for these industries. Despite their contribution, it was highlighted that while public investment in culture and creativity differs among countries, it has been declining over the past decade (UNESCO, 2022). **Objectives:** South Africa offers several film policy mechanisms (e.g., co-production treaties, rebates and incentives) to attract foreign investment. However, the recently signed co-production agreements with Brazil (2018), Nigeria (2021) and Kenya (2022), have opened new opportunities for collaborations beyond the existing partnerships with the Global North. Previous trading patterns have also been pushed aside with the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement and streaming platforms. The potential for African collaboration that extends to the Global South, provides opportunities for South Africa to play a larger role as a majority co-producing partner,

thereby allowing for cultural development and transformation for South Africa's cinema. Framed within the field of film policy studies (Hill & Kawashima, 2016; Mingant & Tirtaine, 2017), this paper examines South Africa's film policy through a cultural economy lens. **Method:** Using an interpretive policy analysis, this study combines information from in-depth interviews with over 50 South African policy actors and industry stakeholders with an extensive analysis of published material (i.e., industry, commercial and government media). **Results:** Exploring whether and how these new African and Global South collaborations can foster cultural development to fit Africa's contemporary cinema needs, we ask whether a more local cultural economy approach (O'Connor, 2016, 2024), that considers African realities, would be a more feasible option for South Africa's film policy. **Conclusion:** Furthermore, this study highlights the need to balance globalisation and domestic film industries and to rethink 'film policy' as a tool for both national development and to promote culture, not only in its respective countries but also within the context of Africa and the Global South.

Category: Creative Africa

Author: Madalitso Chambukira (National Planning Commission, Malawi)

Presenter: Prof. Jonathan Makuwira (Malawi University of Science and Technology)

Keywords: Creative Corridors, Creative Clusters, Creative Economy, Malawi

Title: Unlocking The Creative Economy: Exploring The Role Of Creative Corridors And Clusters In Malawi's Development Trajectory

Abstract: Malawi's economy remains heavily reliant on the agriculture sector, which employs 62% of the workforce and contributes 21.7% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, this dependence has rendered the country economically unstable over the years, as the agricultural sector is vulnerable to climate-related shocks, high input costs, and negative fluctuations in global agricultural commodity prices. This underscores the pressing need for diversification of economic sectors. The creative economy, including crafts and visual arts, music, fashion, film, cultural tourism, eco-tourism, and agritourism, offers a promising yet underexploited avenue for inclusive growth, youth employment, and cultural heritage revitalization. Despite its potential, the creative industry is hindered by fragmentation, weak coordination, and limited integration into national development strategies. **Objectives:** The purpose of this paper is to explore how the development of creative corridors and clusters can promote more balanced and sustainable economic growth across Malawi. In this paper, we delve deep into examining existing and emerging creative hubs, cultural heritage landmarks, eco-tourism and agritourism initiatives. **Method:** We propose a radical framework that can be used to develop and strengthen creative corridors and clusters while ensuring evidence-based decision-making in the process. **Conclusion:** We argue that Malawi holds immense potential in unlocking the creative economy, but doing so requires a solid foundation in

understanding the basics of the creative economy buttressed by committed investment and support from both the government and the private sector.

Category: Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth

Author: Linda Stone (Lecturer, Economics, UNISA, South Africa)

Keywords: South African Film Exports, Cultural Distance, International Box Office Performance, Cultural Discount, Audiovisual Trade, Creative Economy

Title: Crossing Borders: Crossing Borders: An Exploratory Analysis of Cultural Distance and the International Performance of South African Films

Abstract: Despite growing global interest in culturally diverse content, South African films face challenges in achieving sustained international visibility and commercial traction. The relationship between cultural distance and film exports remains underexplored in African and global creative economy literature. Cultural distance, measuring the dissimilarity in values and norms between countries, shapes trade in cultural goods. Grounded in the theory of cultural discount (Hoskins and Mirus, 1988) and the cultural distance index by Kogut and Singh (1988), the study builds on recent work suggesting a U-shaped relationship between cultural distance and international film performance (Moon et al., 2016; Jane, 2021; Liao et al., 2023). Audiences often respond more positively to films from either culturally similar or highly dissimilar contexts, while those from moderately distant cultures may struggle to resonate. **Objectives:** This paper explores how cultural distance and film-specific characteristics influence the global performance of South African cinema, with box office outcomes serving as a proxy for cross-cultural audience response. This paper is part of a large project that examines whether this U-shaped pattern holds for South African films and how factors such as genre, star power, and release timing shape international outcomes. **Method:** The analysis draws on an exploratory sample of 10 South African films released internationally between 2019 and 2024. This timeframe captures post-COVID-19 recovery and the rise of Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD), offering diverse titles with accessible data. The aim is to generate preliminary descriptive insights into how cultural distance may relate to South African film performance abroad. International performance is proxied by box office earnings, offering a sign of audience reception across markets. Data are sourced from industry databases like the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) and Box Office Mojo. Cultural distance is calculated using the Kogut and Singh (1988) index, based on Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions. While the full PhD applies Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions to a broader dataset, this paper focuses on a smaller sample to allow for early observation and reflection. **Results:** The study generates preliminary descriptive insights into how cultural distance may relate to South African film performance abroad. The aim is to observe early patterns across a small international sample that may inform the next phase of the broader PhD project. **Conclusion:** The analysis offers early insight into the

global pathways of South African cinema, identifying conditions that may strengthen the international reach of African cultural products.

Category: The Future of Creative Economies Across Geographies

Author: Obett Motaung (Artist & Filmmaker, Emela Films, South Africa)

Keywords: Creative Economy, South African Theatre, Cultural Sustainability, Arts Entrepreneurship, Theatre Funding

Title: Toward A Rich Theatre

Abstract: Since 1994, South African theatre has transformed from a tool of resistance into a space for diverse cultural, social, and personal storytelling. This evolution has enriched the creative sector but exposed ongoing challenges: unstable funding, short-term project cycles, limited infrastructure, and weak financial planning. Many theatre practitioners operate without reliable income or long-term opportunities. The 2023 Theatre & Dance Policy recognizes theatre's dual role as a cultural and economic driver. However, realising this vision requires strategic action rooted in economic sustainability, access, and innovation. **Objectives:** Identify economic barriers in the post-apartheid theatre sector. Assess the impact of short-term funding and institutional gaps. Explore sustainable models for artistic and economic continuity. Align recommendations with national policy and creative economy goals. **Method:** Policy analysis: Review of the 2023 Theatre and Dance Policy (DSAC). Literature review: Insights from academic research, reports, and artist feedback. Case studies: Models like Magnet Theatre and Well Worn Theatre; international references such as the Theatre Green Book. **Results:** Short-term funding limits growth: One-off productions often lack long-term impact. Freelance precarity: Many creatives work without contracts or job security. Incubators show promise: Though effective, they remain concentrated in urban areas. Diversified income is key: Touring, education, and digital platforms offer new revenue streams. Policy gaps persist: While frameworks exist, artists report poor access to resources and implementation support. **Conclusion:** To build a "rich theatre" that is both artistically vibrant and economically viable, the sector must transition from fragmented, project-based work to enterprise-driven models. Key strategies include: Strengthening regional infrastructure and support hubs. Diversifying revenue through online content, workshops, and school partnerships. Equipping artists with entrepreneurial and financial skills. Ensuring national policies translate into tangible, on-the-ground support. With these measures, South African theatre can thrive as a sustainable pillar of the country's creative economy.

Category: Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth

Author: Cornelia Faasen (CEO NATi & Chair Festival Enterprise Catalyst, South Africa The Festival Enterprise Catalyst)

Presenter: Cornelia Faasen (CEO NATi & Chair Festival Enterprise Catalyst, South Africa The Festival Enterprise Catalyst)

Co-Presenter 1: Monica Newton (National Arts Festival (NAF) and Festival Enterprise Catalyst, South Africa)

Co-Presenter 2: Andre Le Roux (IKS Consulting and Festival Enterprise Catalyst, South Africa)

Title: The Festival Enterprise Catalyst: A Public-Private Partnership Model For Creative Economy Sustainability And Growth

Abstract: The Festival Enterprise Catalyst (FEC) represents a groundbreaking approach to managing creative economy sustainability in South Africa, offering critical insights into effective models and policies for nurturing growth within creative sectors. This panel examines how the FEC addresses key challenges in sub-theme 9, particularly evolving relationships between public and private sectors in the creative and cultural sector, and practical implementation of partnerships and inter-institutional collaboration. Launched in 2024 as a two-year, R20 million initiative, the FEC demonstrates innovative partnership structures by uniting South Africa's premier arts festivals—National Arts Festival, Woordfees, Aardklop, Suidoosterfees, KKNK, and NATi—with Concerts SA and the Tribuo Fund, supported by National Treasury's Jobs Fund. This collaboration exemplifies the "increased recourse to partnerships and inter-institutional collaboration" highlighted in the conference sub-theme, while addressing the critical need for sustainable touring circuits. The FEC directly responds to key areas in sub-theme 9, demonstrating how public-private sector relationships can leverage creative economy growth, with partner contributions matched by Jobs Fund public funding. It illustrates strategic use of public infrastructure, transforming existing festival networks into a coordinated national touring circuit while emphasizing the entrepreneurial dimension of creative organizations through enterprise support tools and training. The model addresses fundamental challenges in creative economy management, including artist precarity, limited market access, and fragmented opportunities. By supporting co-production funding, the FEC enables works to tour across multiple festivals, creating consistent income streams and broader audience reach. This approach demonstrates how coordinated festival programming can transform isolated events into a unified economic ecosystem. The panel will explore how the FEC's curatorial body identifies works with co-presentation potential, examining the balance between artistic merit and commercial viability. Speakers will discuss practical implementation of cross-festival collaboration, including logistical challenges, funding mechanisms, and impact measurement across diverse artistic disciplines. The FEC model offers insights into creative economy job creation, supporting sector-wide growth through night-time economies and international producer engagement. Its focus on young people and women aligns with broader economic development goals while addressing historical inequities in creative sector access. The panel will feature key stakeholders from FEC partner organizations, including festival directors, funding body representatives, and participating artists. Through case studies of successful co-productions and touring works, speakers will demonstrate how the FEC model can be

adapted and scaled across different contexts, contributing valuable lessons for policymakers, cultural institutions, and creative economy practitioners nationally and internationally.

Category: Creative Futures: Rethinking the Cultural and Creative Industries of Tomorrow

Author: Kehinde Adepegba (Rhodes University, South Africa)

Keywords: National Arts Festival, Visual Creative Economy, Emerging Artists, Economic Inclusion, South Africa

Title: The National Arts Festival And The Visual Creative Economy: Opportunities And Challenges For Local And Emerging Artists In South Africa

Abstract: The National Arts Festival (NAF), held annually in Makhanda, Eastern Cape, is South Africa's largest and most influential arts event, playing a significant role in the visual creative economy. The festival offers critical exposure, networking, and commercial opportunities for artists, contributing substantially to the local economy. However, emerging artists face challenges such as limited funding, market saturation, and infrastructural constraints. **Objectives:** This study aims to examine the opportunities and challenges that local and emerging artists encounter at the NAF and to explore how the festival can evolve beyond a seasonal showcase into a sustained driver of economic inclusion and creative empowerment. **Method:** Through qualitative research involving interviews with artists, festival organizers, and key stakeholders, the study gathers diverse perspectives on the festival's impact and potential for growth within South Africa's creative economy. **Results:** Findings reveal that while the NAF acts as a vital cultural incubator fostering innovation and sustaining livelihoods, factors such as low ticket prices and reliance on sponsorship create financial vulnerabilities. Emerging artists often struggle to fully capitalize on the festival's platform due to funding limitations and infrastructural challenges. **Conclusion:** The research underscores the NAF's potential to transform into a year-round platform that supports emerging talent and drives inclusive economic growth. Strategic policies and practices are needed to enhance equitable participation and leverage the festival's role in addressing unemployment and inequality through the visual creative economy in South Africa.

Category: Creative Work and Human Capital in the Creative Economy

Author: Akhona Ndzuta (Head of Department & Lecturer, Department of Cultural Policy & Management, Wits School of Arts, South Africa)

Co-Author 1: Pumzile Manikela (University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa)

Co-Author 2: Ofentse Montshiwa (Founder & Creative Director, Mjojo Finance Play (MJP), South Africa)

Keywords: Music Business, Women, Arts Management, Leadership, Invisibility, Visibility, Representation, South Africa

Title: An Invisible Visibility: Contesting The Absence Of Female Arts Managers In South African Music Business Discourse

Abstract: In mainstream discourses of the music industry and the business of music, there is a prevalence of men in positions of management, the executive, decision-making, and leadership. Much global literature also speaks of the dominance of men in this sector, and renders female management or leadership absent in this sphere. **Objectives:** This paper aims to challenge this representation of a prevalent absence of women in the management of music in South Africa. It presents different experiences on the manifestations of arts management in the business of music. **Method:** Using the framework of an invisible visibility within feminist discourses, this qualitative research paper asks how arts management takes shape in its full spectrum in South Africa to recognise the sectoral contributions and labour of women. Two of the co-authors of this paper are female arts managers who bring their lived experience to the texture of its proposals through autoethnography. **Results:** The paper proposes that women have been a constant part of the business of music in various influential decision-making, managerial, and leadership roles that have not been acknowledged as legitimate contributions due to patriarchal and institutional norms. It also proposes that women have been made anomalous to this environment even though they consistently participate in the management of the business of music beyond their traditional representation in roles of performance. **Conclusion:** Their management nous has been made invisible. The paper contributes to narratives on the diversity of the music business sector, arts management, inclusion and development in cultural policy studies.

Category: Creative Futures: Rethinking the Cultural and Creative Industries of Tomorrow

Author: Sethu Nzimande (CEO, CoLab, South Africa)

Keywords: Creative Economy, Collaboration, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Platforms, Creative Industries, Project Management, Inclusivity, South Africa, CoLab

Title: AI-Enabled Collaboration Platforms: Managing The Creative Economy Through CoLab

Abstract: The cultural and creative industries (CCIs) are valued at R161 billion in South Africa, contributing nearly 3% to GDP, and are comparable in size to agriculture. Yet the sector remains fragmented, with freelancers and emerging creatives facing challenges around collaboration, fair compensation, and access to formal structures. Globally, technological transformation is reshaping these industries. Artificial intelligence (AI) and

digital platforms are increasingly central in how creative content is produced, distributed, and consumed. While these tools lower barriers for creators, they also raise challenges around sustainability, equity, and policy. **Objectives:** To explore how AI-enabled platforms like CoLab can strengthen creative collaboration and project management. To examine how digital platforms can support inclusive growth by connecting creatives across geographies, disciplines, and industries. To assess how tools like CoLab can contribute to managing the creative economy, fostering new models such as digital creative corridors and hybrid creative clusters. To identify opportunities and risks (e.g., copyright, fair use, precarity) in embedding AI into collaborative creative work. **Method:** Literature Review: Analysis of creative economy policy and global trends in AI and digital platforms. Platform Analysis: A conceptual review of CoLab's design, features (AI-assisted project planning, skill-matching, and collaboration boards), and current user flows. Stakeholder Feedback: Qualitative insights from creatives who participated in CoLab Sessions and/or use the platform to manage projects. Comparative Mapping: Positioning CoLab alongside policy concepts like "creative clusters" and "creative corridors" to evaluate its potential impact. **Results:** Platforms like CoLab replicate the benefits of creative clusters in virtual form, enabling collaboration beyond geographic limits. AI-assisted tools simplify project planning, improve accountability, and reduce friction in collaboration – addressing common pain points in the creative workforce. Case study evidence from CoLab Sessions shows high demand: 80 creatives joined within 18 hours of launch, with 200+ on the waitlist, underscoring the appetite for structured collaboration spaces. Emerging risks include overreliance on digital intermediaries, data governance, and equitable distribution of revenue, which require deliberate policy frameworks. **Conclusion:** AI-enabled platforms like CoLab can play a transformative role in managing the future of the creative economy. By bridging fragmented creative communities, streamlining collaboration, and providing equitable access to opportunities, such platforms embody inclusive growth and innovation. At the same time, sustainable policy and ethical frameworks are essential to ensure that the benefits of technology are broadly shared. CoLab offers a case study in how Africa's creative economy can build the infrastructure, tools, and networks needed to thrive in a digital-first future.

Category: Creative Futures: Rethinking the Cultural and Creative Industries of Tomorrow

Author: Canda Kincses (Creative Industries Development Consultant, South Africa)

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Artificial General Intelligence, Large Language Models, Labour Economics, Development Economic Models, Future Skills Requirements

Title: Leveraging Technology To Create A Future We Want – An Examination Of Post Labour Economics And Its Implications For The Cultural And Creative Industries.

Abstract: Having researched and designed skills development programs for the animation and gaming industries for over twenty years, I have been particularly interested

in new developments in artificial intelligence and questions around how we should look at the future of skills development. **Objectives:** While AI tools have shown compelling results, we cannot ignore LLMs that are scraping data and creative content without acknowledgement or compensation. I intended to find out what happens when AI equals or surpasses human intelligence, what happens to labour markets, what new economics models will emerge and how this will influence how we look at development models and how we prepare future generations to participate in the economies of the future.

Method: Desktop research as well as learnings from the design, implementation and participation in various creative industries development initiatives. **Results:** Based on expert discussions around what is known as the economic agency paradox. The model I have explored is one that diversifies sources of income for individuals, communities and nations. It decouples growth from what we currently acknowledge as progress and explores new models of deriving income from creative works and aligning skills development initiatives to take advantage of new technologies in order to create value and derive income. **Conclusion:** First, we need to address the digital divide. Second, we have an opportunity to create strategy from the ground up and encourage sustainable community ownership of creative enterprises. Third, we must be able to legally protect culture, heritage and intellectual property and find a way to support the development of accessible, fit for purpose distributed ledger technology based platforms that support the enforcement of IP law for the benefit of future generations of Africans.

Category: Creative Futures: Rethinking the Cultural and Creative Industries of Tomorrow

Author: Nontokozo Mokoena (PhD Candidate, Applied Data Science, University of Johannesburg, South Africa)

Co-Author 1: Prof Ibidun Christiana Obagbuwa (Sol Plaatje University, South Africa)

Keywords: AI, Automation, Music Streaming Platforms, Consumer Subscriptions

Title: AI Automation In Digital Music Streaming Platforms

Abstract: AI has become a key player in transforming the digital music streaming industry, particularly in enhancing user experiences and driving subscription growth. This article reviews the role of AI in driving consumer subscription behaviours on digital music streaming platforms (DMSP), with a focus on recommendation algorithms, dynamic pricing models, marketing automation, and the future of AI in the music industry. Potential challenges related to privacy, ethics, and algorithmic biases are also discussed, showcasing how AI is revolutionizing the music streaming industry. **Objectives:** How does AI automation in digital music streaming platforms improve consumer subscription.

Method: Literature review methodology. **Results:** Results showcased projections for the future of music streaming platforms & AI to significantly grow across various domains in the following ways: – Generative AI for music creation will gradually increase as more DMSPs explore AI driven production and collaboration. – Enhanced Personalization will gradually grow in sophistication as AI constantly refines user experience. – The music streaming industry will experience a rising focus on Fairness and Artist Centric Models

that promote fair royalty distribution and exposure for all artists on DMSPs. – Future extensions will include immersive music experiences through augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) integration. – The role of AI in digital music streaming will likely expand, with emerging technologies such as augmented reality and virtual reality creating collective metaverses offering new opportunities for immersive music experiences. – A gradual adoption of Dynamic Pricing Models will be steadily adopted by more e-commerce and music streaming platforms focusing on real time pricing strategies utilising AI. – Through AI Driven Accessibility, the music streaming industry will see more growth in tools and techniques deployed to promote music inclusivity across diverse users on DMSPs. **Conclusion:** AI has fundamentally reshaped the digital music streaming industry, particularly in enhancing user experiences and driving subscription growth. Through AI-driven automation, platforms can deliver highly personalized music recommendations, optimize pricing strategies, and streamline customer service, all of which play pivotal roles in influencing consumer subscription responses. Despite its many advantages, AI in digital music streaming also presents significant challenges. Privacy concerns, stemming from the vast amount of personal data collected, and the potential for algorithmic bias, which can limit users' exposure to diverse music, are issues that platforms must address. As AI continues to evolve, music streaming platforms will need to balance the drive for hyper-personalization with ethical considerations around data security and fairness in recommendation systems.

Category: The Human and AI Accommodation: How Artificial Intelligence is Reshaping the Human Creativity within and without the CCI.

Author: Isabelle Rorke (Founder, Dreamforge Creative, South Africa) (V)

Keywords: Hearing

Title: Managing The Creative Economy: Strategies For Sustainability And Growth In Animation Film & TV

Abstract: The global creative economy is experiencing significant transformation driven by technological advancements and a critical reassessment of existing operational paradigms. This paper addresses these shifts by introducing 'moconomy,' a concept rooted in construction management, as a robust framework for achieving efficiency, productivity, and sustainability within the creative industries. Moconomy is defined as the strategic pursuit of optimal systems that minimize waste and cost while maximizing return on investment and employee impact. **Objectives:** This paper aims to propose and examine the application of moconomy, specifically through the integration of (AI), as a transformative model for the animation, film, and TV sectors. A core objective is to advocate for a proactive and strategic embrace of AI, repositioning human resources as integral to training bespoke AI systems, thereby fostering increased productivity, reduced costs, and the liberation of time for human-centric initiatives. Furthermore, the paper seeks to explore how economy-driven AI strategies can enhance industry resilience, promote inclusive growth, and navigate the evolving dynamics between public and

private sectors, emphasizing collaborative inter-institutional efforts and the role of creative leadership. **Method:** This paper employs a multi-faceted approach, incorporating scenario planning, ethical reflections, and theory of change models. It also considers transmedia and policy implications. Practical insights are drawn from the author's experience in conducting value chain analysis on the animation production pipeline, which led to the development of the 'inverted value chain' model. This model was subsequently piloted through Africa's first animation incubator. **Results:** The analysis reveals that a strategic adoption of moconomy, powered by AI, can lead to improvements in productivity and cost reduction within the creative industries, particularly animation. By repositioning human resources to train AI systems, organizations can unlock opportunities for human-centered advancements such as reduced workweeks, extended parental leave, intrapreneurship, innovation, and redefined value chains. The paper demonstrates how the piloted 'inverted value chain' model offers a tangible roadmap for structural reformation and sustainable development of the industry. **Conclusion:** The paper concludes by affirming that embedding moconomy-driven AI systems sustainably across the creative industry presents a viable pathway to future-proof its growth. The central finding is that technological dominance, when strategically implemented through moconomy and human-centered AI integration, can significantly enhance human creativity, cultural diversity, and economic viability, rather than undermining them. This approach necessitates ongoing collaboration between public and private sectors and strong creative leadership to ensure a resilient and inclusive industry future.

Category: Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth

Author: Amilcar Patel (Founder, Kamva Collective, South Africa)

Keywords: African Agenda, Cultural Diplomacy, African Values and Narratives, Soft Power

Title: "CCIs Beyond Cash: Building Unity, Identity, And Global Influence "

Abstract: The cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in South Africa are often framed primarily in terms of their economic contribution, with growing evidence of their value as a productive and exportable sector. However, their true distinctiveness lies in functions no other industry can replicate: fostering social cohesion, shaping national identity, and advancing South Africa's global profile through cultural diplomacy. These roles are especially critical in a society marked by internal fragmentation and in a world where cultural influence and soft power increasingly determine international standing.

Objectives: This paper examines the multidimensional role of South Africa's CCIs, arguing that their significance extends beyond economic impact to include social cohesion, national identity formation, and global influence. It also explores how CCIs can support the advancement of the African Agenda by reasserting African values, narratives, and identities. **Method:** The study undertakes a conceptual and policy analysis, drawing on literature from cultural economics, social policy, and international relations. It examines case studies and existing evidence on the social and diplomatic functions of CCIs to

articulate a comprehensive understanding of their role. **Results:** The analysis indicates that CCIs contribute uniquely to social stability, national identity, and global presence. By fostering pride in Africa's cultural heritage and lived histories, they help citizens reimagine collective self-perception and reinforce the continent's capacity for global leadership.

Conclusion: A multidimensional understanding of CCIs—recognising them as both economic drivers and pillars of social and international influence—underscores the need for sustained investment and strategic integration of CCIs into national policy and planning. Such a reframing strengthens the rationale for their long-term support and development.

Category: The Political Economy of the Creative Economy; Institutions, Power, and Policy Shifts

Author: Richard Haines (Nelson Mandela University, South Africa)

Keywords: Cultural Leadership, Cultural Policy, CCI Management, Chloene Cultural Leaders Programme, Creative Economy, and Cultural and Creative Leadership

Title: The 'Quiet Revolution': The Rise And Development Of Cultural Leadership

Abstract: This paper explores the rise and development of Cultural Leadership, and its variants, in a context of the restructuring of cultural policy at national and international levels, and the global imperative of effectively managing the creative economy. The early 2000s saw the formal emergence of cultural leadership primarily in the UK. Cultural leadership was seen as encompassing the traditional and public arts and culture sectors, as well as the emerging cultural and creative economy. While Cultural Leadership remained the focus in the 2010s, increased academic and policy attention on the creative industries saw a diversification of emphasis. **Objectives:** 1.) Examine the rise of Cultural Leadership in the UK and the related shift to more market-oriented and professional leadership of public cultural enterprises. 2.) Discuss compactly the international growth of cultural leadership. 3.) Discuss the diversification of the field of cultural leadership. 4.) Provide a short overview of select examples of the expansion of associated educational programmes and initiatives globally. 5.) Outline the policy and education implications for South Africa. **Method:** The study is essentially a desktop and literature study utilizing a variety of printed and published sources. The approach is inter-disciplinary in scope, drawing from relevant writings in the social and economic sciences. The UK History + Policy network, and the emerging field of development history, are among the methodological touchstones. **Results:** The paper engages particularly with two shaping themes of the Conference, namely 'Rewriting Cultural Policy: From Global to Local Realities' and 'Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth'. A multi-faceted discourse and practice, the rise of Cultural Leadership has been something of a 'quiet revolution' within Cultural and Creative sectors, particularly in developed and certain high performing economies and in certain international circles. However, the increased recourse to 'Cultural and Creative Leadership' in tertiary

programmes is indicative of processes of diversification and broadening appeal. There is thus a need for South Africa to take more cognizance of the trend. **Conclusion:** The study contextualizes and assesses the nature, scope and significance of Cultural Leadership and its variants, and considers the policy relevance for cultural policy and CCI management.

Category: Rewriting Cultural Policy: From Global to Local Realities

Author: Lauren England (Senior Lecturer, King's College London, United Kingdom)

Keywords: Fashion, Textiles, Manufacturing, Sustainability, Innovation

Title: Sustainable Fashion And Textiles: The Maker–Manufacturing Nexus As Development Pathway

Abstract: This pilot research project explores how connections between fashion designers and textile and garment manufacturers in Kenya and South Africa can support sustainable fashion, industrial innovation, and inclusive economic development in Africa. The study is grounded in the concept of the maker–manufacturing nexus (Lowe & Vinodrai, 2020), which emphasises the potential for mutual benefit and value creation through collaboration between makers and manufacturers. By focusing on Kenya and South Africa – two countries with rich but distinct textile heritages, policy landscapes, and levels of industrial development – the project identifies both opportunities and barriers to developing localised, sustainable textile and fashion value chains. **Objectives:** The main research questions are: How can a 'maker–manufacturing' nexus support innovations in sustainable fashion and textile production and economic development opportunities in Africa? a) how can a maker–manufacturing nexus support domestic creative economy development? b) how can a maker–manufacturing nexus support sustainable textile and fashion production? **Method:** The pilot project was conducted between January–April 2025, during which 20 (7 Kenya, 13 South Africa) qualitative interviews were conducted with fashion designers, textiles manufacturers (yarn, textile, and garment construction) and representatives from industry associations. Additional site visits and observations of retail and manufacturing spaces were also conducted. **Results:** Findings highlight both opportunities and challenges in local sourcing and production and key infrastructure gaps in small-to-medium batch production are identified alongside a shortage of skilled labour in fashion and textile production beyond basic CMT. The findings underscore the importance of networks and relationships in supporting local production and highlight the mutual benefits of a maker–manufacturing nexus. The project also emphasises the value of local markets, alongside the importance of international export opportunities. Several key opportunities to support economic development through sustainable fashion and textile production in Africa are identified: fostering maker–manufacturer collaboration through R&D investment and industry networks; enhancing training in higher-value fashion production and sustainable manufacturing; supporting small business development through finance, knowledge-sharing platforms and accessible resources for start-ups; and building

synergies between creative economy and industrial policy at both national and regional levels. **Conclusion:** This pilot lays the groundwork for continued research and policy engagement, underscoring the potential of the maker–manufacturing nexus as a sustainable development pathway for fashion and textiles industries in Africa. Further research should expand geographically and incorporate multidirectional rural–urban linkages. Greater attention should also be paid to the interaction between formal and informal economies, and to identifying and supporting alternative infrastructures that sustain production ecosystems.

Category: Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth

Author: Moeletsi Ntshimane (Founding Director, MaSechaba Cultural Village & Institute, South Africa)

Title: Building Inclusive Pathways for African Creative Economies: The MaSechaba Model of Cultural Innovation and Empowerment

Abstract: Many rural regions face persistent unemployment, inequality, and limited creative opportunities despite rich cultural assets. Situated in the Northern Cape, the MaSechaba Cultural Village & Institute aims to convert heritage, innovation, and social enterprise into inclusive growth. This paper positions MaSechaba as a catalytic hub that links culture with skills, entrepreneurship, and place–based development, drawing lessons from successful African hubs in Lagos and Nairobi. **Objectives:** 1) Demonstrate how a rural cultural village can become a pivotal node in an inclusive creative economy; (2) Define practical pathways heritage–led tourism, targeted skills development, SME incubation, and community–based enterprise; (3) Propose a governance and measurement framework that embeds structural equity for women, youth, and marginalized groups; (4) Develop a scalable model applicable to other African regions. MethodA comprehensive situational analysis of the Northern Cape’s creative landscape is combined with literature on inclusive growth models. Comparative case insights from Lagos and Nairobi identify transferable strategies. Early–stage stakeholder engagements with universities, schools, community groups, cultural practitioners, and local businesses surface demand, capabilities, and partnership potential. **Methods** include document review, key–informant dialogues, and participatory planning sessions focusing on skills pipelines, heritage tourism routes, and SME support. A preliminary equity metrics framework (access, participation, outcomes) is outlined to track inclusion. **Results:** Preliminary findings show that inclusive growth hinges on investing in rural creative ecosystems that integrate training, enterprise support, and market access. MaSechaba’s approach reframes a “cultural village” as a talent and SME incubator: discovery programs for youth, maker–spaces and micro–grants for creatives, and curated tourism products that channel revenue to local producers. Early engagements indicate strong community interest and higher–education willingness to co–deliver curricula and internships. Embedding equity in governance, transparent decision rules, participatory budgeting, and

ring-fenced opportunities for target groups emerges as essential to fair access and durable outcomes. **Conclusion:** The MaSechaba model demonstrates how heritage , innovation , enterprise can turn rural localities into inclusive growth engines. By formalizing talent pipelines, SME development, and equitable governance, the initiative supports intergenerational wealth creation and social cohesion. The framework is replicable, offering policymakers and practitioners a concrete pathway to transform under-served regions into resilient creative economies across Africa

Category: Managing the Creative Economy: Strategies for Sustainability and Growth

Author : Avril Mafemba (Senior Researcher, Andani.Africa, South Africa)

Co-Author 1: Molemo Moiloa (Andani.Africa, South Africa)

Keywords: Creative Economy, Africa, Monitoring and Evaluation, Data Systems, Cultural Industries, Innovation, Dashboards, Policy Impact, Real-Time Data, Sustainable Development

Title: Automating Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) for Africa's creative sector: A case study for data enhancement in the creative sector

Abstract: Africa's creative economy holds immense potential but is constrained by inadequate data systems and limited investment in research infrastructure. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9.5 emphasises the need to enhance research and innovation, with timely and relevant data being central to evidence-based policy and planning. UNESCO highlights the importance of robust cultural statistics, while global studies demonstrate that strong data infrastructure yields significant economic and social returns. However, South Africa's R&D expenditure, at 0.61% of GDP, reflects a wider continental under-investment in learning and innovation. **Objectives:** This research examines how technological innovation in Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) systems can strengthen evidence generation, improve efficiency, and transform decision-making within Africa's cultural and creative industries (CCIs). Specifically, it investigates how Malaika, a digital MEAL platform developed by Andani.Africa with support from Amazon Web Services can address data gaps and empower creative sector stakeholders to own and utilise their data. **Method:** A mixed-methods approach was adopted, including: –A sector-wide needs analysis informed by desktop research and stakeholder discovery sessions. –User testing with strategic creative economy stakeholders. –Iterative improvements through agile piloting of the Malaika platform. –The platform integrates mobile data capture tools, cloud-based databases, automated validation, and real-time dashboards. **Results:** Initial findings indicate that despite persistent barriers to data access, practical digital solutions are possible. Malaika strengthens evidence generation, reduces reporting delays and error rates, and supports adaptive learning. It provides a framework for research standardisation, comparability, and inclusivity, enabling cultural organisations and

creative programmes to actively shape policy and funding conversations. **Conclusion:** Malaika demonstrates how digital MEAL platforms can overcome resource and infrastructure constraints to transform data management in Africa's creative sector. By raising awareness of inequalities in current reporting systems and equipping stakeholders with ownership of their data processes, this framework contributes to systemic change. Ultimately, it positions creativity not only as an engine of cultural expression but as a driver of sustainable development, innovation, and inclusive growth.

Category: Creative Futures: Rethinking the Cultural and Creative Industries of Tomorrow

Author: Mphikeleli Mnguni (Researcher & Policy Advisor, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa)

Author Institute: Wits University

Title: Public Participation In Socio-economic Impact Assessment For The Revised White Paper On Arts, Culture And Heritage

Abstract: Public participation is a cornerstone of democratic policy making in South Africa, particularly in the arts, culture and heritage sectors where historical inequalities and cultural inequalities and cultural exclusion remain pressing. The 2020 Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (WP2) was subject to the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment System (SEIAS), a process intended to enhance inclusivity and evidence-based decision-making. However, questions persist regarding whether SEIAS meaningfully facilitated public engagement or reproduced symbolic participation.

Objectives: This study investigates how public participation was incorporated in the SEIAS process for the WP2, examining the extent to which it enabled diverse cultural stakeholders, especially marginalised communities, to shape the policy's development. The research seeks to assess both the democratic intent and practical outcomes of the process. **Method:** A qualitative research design was employed, combining document analysis of National Policy Development Framework, SEIAS guidelines, the WP2, and related policy texts with semi-structured interviews and focus groups involving cultural practitioners, policymakers, and community-based organisations. The data was analysed thematically to identify patterns of inclusion, exclusion, and power dynamics within the participatory process. **Results:** The findings reveal significant gaps between the participatory ethos of SEIAS and its practical implementation. While the framework positioned participation as central, many stakeholders were unaware of SEIAS or excluded due to barriers such as bureaucratic complexity, inaccessible policy language, and digital divides. Marginalised groups reported experiences of tokenism, epistemic injustice, and structural exclusion, while established institutions were better positioned to influence outcomes. The policy's increasing alignment with creative economy discourse further prioritised economic imperatives over cultural democracy and grassroots voices. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that SEIAS, in the case of the Revised White Paper, largely reproduced technocratic and elite-driven modes of engagement, falling short of its transformative potential. For participatory policymaking in the cultural sector to be

substantive, institutional reforms are needed to ensure accessibility, feedback mechanisms, and recognition of diverse knowledge systems. The paper contributes to debates on participatory governance by highlighting how procedural tools like SEIAS can entrench or disrupt historical exclusions in South Africa's cultural policy landscape.

Category: Rewriting Cultural Policy: From Global to Local Realities

Author: Mariapaola McGurk (Programme Lead & Lecturer, Master of Business Innovation & Leadership, Faculty of Art and Design, Whitecliffe College, New Zealand)

Co-Author 1: Natanya Meyer (University of Johannesburg, South Africa)

Keywords: Creative Cities, Systems Thinking, Decentralised Network, Cultural and Creative Industries

Title: A Systems Thinking Approach to Growing the Cultural and Creative Industries of Johannesburg

Abstract: The creative economy is a growing global driver of economic, social, and cultural development. In Johannesburg—South Africa's economic hub—it holds strong potential for local economic development (LED), job creation, and advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, fragmentation and a lack of coordination among key stakeholders hinder its growth. A systems thinking approach offers a way to better understand and address this complexity. This research, conducted by Mariapaola McGurk as part of her PhD in Digital Transformation at the Johannesburg Business School, explores this potential. Her thesis is titled *A Systems Thinking Approach to the Growth of the Creative Economy in Johannesburg*. **Objectives:** The study investigates whether systems thinking can support the growth of Johannesburg's creative economy and inform the development of a shared framework. Specific objectives include: Mapping organisations that support creative practitioners; Understanding practitioner perceptions; Examining case studies of key initiatives; Developing visual frameworks for sectoral growth. **Method:** A mixed-method approach was used. The qualitative component featured two case studies: (1) Contra Fair Johannesburg, showing systems thinking in action, and (2) the role of tertiary art and design institutions in fostering entrepreneurship. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with stakeholders. The quantitative component included a city-wide survey using three metrics: a 20-item systems thinking scale, an eight-factor creative economy success framework, and an entrepreneurial orientation scale. Data were analysed through descriptive statistics and factor analysis. **Results:** This presentation focuses on the role of systems thinking in developing Johannesburg's creative economy as a distributed and interdependent network. Key findings include: Identification of 179 enabling organisations through an open-source map; Survey results showing strong entrepreneurial orientation and systems thinking among practitioners, but low confidence in Johannesburg as a successful creative city; Recognition of the critical role of tertiary art and design institutions and how systems thinking is already being applied in parts of the sector. **Conclusion:** Systems

thinking provides a valuable lens for understanding and developing Johannesburg's creative economy. Recommendations include creating a coordinated policy framework, investing in infrastructure and education, and fostering partnerships between government, academia, and the creative sector. This research offers both practical strategies and academic insights and can inform similar work in other South African cities.

Category: Creative Futures: Rethinking the Cultural and Creative Industries of Tomorrow

Author: Tasmiya Chandlay (Architect & Lecturer, Department of Architecture, University of Johannesburg, South Africa)

Keywords: Institutionalisation, Postcolonial identity, Cultural policy, Creative industries, South Africa, Mother metaphor, Creative futures

Title: MOTHERing the Nation: Institutional Power, the Mother Metaphor & South Africa's Creative Futures

Abstract: This paper explores how institutionalisation as an agent of political and power systems operates through architectural, cultural, and educational means to influence, control, and design designated South African identities. By expanding on a completed research project titled *The Making of the Mother*, this paper situates this inquiry within broader debates about postcolonial identity, culture, and sustainable creative futures.

Objectives: In the context of Southern Africa, institutionalisation has functioned as a colonial tool of control and the creation of the "other" through engraining the ideologies of imperial agendas into the political economy (land, resources, education), cultural constructs (entertainment and identity), and policy structures (legality). This layering has left a lasting impact of colonial legacies on South Africa's physical and cultural landscapes. **Method:** In attempting to understand the complexities of institutionalisation on various scales, the use of metaphor allowed for an understanding of institutional systems and their engagement with architecture and cultural policies through the concept of the "Mother" as a lens for critique and creative strategies. This lens allowed critique of legislative, architectural and cultural policies, generating creative strategies of subversion. To materialise this metaphor, the project employed design-based research methods, using play and gaming as critical tools of engagement. The project culminated in the development of a series of instructional and educational play objects for children aged 5 to 10, aimed at fostering critical awareness of spatial and institutional biases through five institutional tools: dislocation and migration, rescripted histories and archives, economic disenfranchisement, restricted curricula, and the enforcement of religion. These artefacts not only engage children critically but also function as early interventions in cultivating empathy, creative skills, and cultural and social literacy relevant to South African futures. **Results:** By situating these gamified artefacts within institutional contexts, the work demonstrates pathways for fostering resilient and inclusive creative economies of resistance, memory, and cultural transmission.

Conclusion: The impartation of systems of knowledge and culture through bonds of Motherhood holds immense value when beginning to interpret the relationship of association and assimilation. Saudi Arabian Islamic Scholar, Shaykh Ahmed An-Najmi stated, "The mother is the first school. If she is righteous, the progeny becomes righteous" (An-Najmi n.d., 256). This perspective highlights how our connection to the "Mother" (whether birth or nation) influences what is imparted through the institutional frameworks that have developed around this relationship. This work contributes to ongoing doctoral research on institutional power, identity, architecture, and creative practice in South Africa.

Category: The Political Economy of the Creative Economy; Institutions, Power, and Policy Shifts

Author: Karimi Ngeera (HEVA Fund LLP, Kenya)

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Format: Paper

Keywords: Job Creation, Creative Industries, Youth, Youth Employment

Title: Creative Industries As Catalysts For Inclusive Job Growth In Africa: Focusing On Youth

Abstract: The creative industries are among the fastest-growing sectors globally, valued at USD 2.3 trillion annually and contributing 3.1% to global GDP while accounting for 6.2% of total employment. Africa's creative economy, although representing a modest 1.5% share globally, generates approximately 2 million jobs, equating to 8.2% of total employment on the continent—the highest regional employment share worldwide.

Objectives: This study explores the role of young people in unlocking employment opportunities within creative sectors such as film, music, fashion, and crafts. **Method:** The study synthesizes open-source data, stakeholder insights, and value chain analyses to map sector dynamics, challenges, and job profiles. **Results:** The findings underscore the sector's potential to harness Africa's demographic dividend, where over 60% of the population is under 25, by providing scalable, dignified employment and inclusive economic development. The African creative economy leverages rich cultural heritage and digital innovation to drive economic growth, with notable contributions like Nigeria's Nollywood industry, the second largest globally, employing 300,000 people and generating 2% of national GDP. **Conclusion:** Strategic recommendations emphasize policy support, skills development, and targeted investments to bolster job creation, especially for youth and women, affirming the creative industries as a critical vector for sustainable economic transformation in Africa.

Category: Creative Work and Human Capital in the Creative Economy

Authors: Moses Rasekele & Mammatli Thakhuli-Nzuza (Founders, Creative Industries Marketing Stockvel, South Africa)

Keywords: Stokvel,independent Arts,resource mobilisation model,decoloniality,South Africa,post-COVID recovery.

Title: Stokvel in Arts – Exploring an African Resource Mobilisation Model for Independent Arts Producers in Post-COVID South Africa

Abstract: Background - In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, South Africa's cultural and creative sectors—particularly independent Arts practitioners—have faced intensified economic precarity due to disruptions in institutional funding, reduced audiences, and limited access to digital and infrastructural resources. The pandemic exposed and exacerbated systemic vulnerabilities within the sector, prompting urgent rethinking of sustainable support mechanisms. **Objectives:** In response, some Arts practitioners have turned to culturally embedded models such as the traditional stokvel—a community-based savings and support scheme—as an alternative means of resource mobilisation. This panel discussion uses the lens of decoloniality and informality to explore the Creative Industries Marketing Stokvel Africa (CIMS) as a case study that illustrates and critique how the stokvel model offers economic resilience, fosters collective ownership, promotes artistic autonomy, and strengthens community engagement. **Method:** Our panel discussion is based on the Creative Industries Marketing Stokvel Africa (CIMS) case study with specific focus on three stokvel cycles namely; the Emfuleni Theatre Stockvel (2022) and the Emfuleni Film Screening Stockvel (2023) and the Sedibeng Dance Stockvel (2025). The Panel Discussion will be facilitated by Dr Munyaradzi Chatikobo who will use open-ended and conversational questions to get insights the stokvel model offers economic resilience, fosters collective ownership, promotes artistic autonomy, and strengthens community engagement. **Results:** The panel discussion argues that by grounding funding strategies in culturally resonant practices, the stokvel model serves as a form of economic resistance and innovation aligned with post-COVID recovery, decolonial values, and inclusive transformation. **Conclusion:** The Panel Discussion positions the stokvel as a vital, Afrocentric tool for rebuilding and reimagining the creative economies of the Global South in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Category: New Directions for Funding: The Future of CCI Support