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NATIONAL  
ARTS FESTIVAL

# UITKAMPTEATER

Smaller is the new Bigger

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## **Introduction**

Kunste Onbeperk, the company that presents the KKNK, is very passionate about development and we have various programmes that are presented in Oudtshoorn on a 12 month basis. Part of our success in transforming and diversifying audiences at the KKNK, has been to be a very active and compassionate citizen of our town.

**Uitkampteater**, the project that I will be focusing on, has at its heart, the creation of economic opportunities for especially young performing artists.

Uitkampteater made its South African debut at the KKNK, an annual festival for the visual and performing arts, presented in the rural Western-Cape town of Oudtshoorn during the March/April school holidays.

Oudtshoorn is, apart for the KKNK, also known for ostriches and the Cango Caves.

Read more about the KKNK: [www.kknk.co.za](http://www.kknk.co.za)



What is Uitkampteater?



Shown here is the KKNK set-up at the Oudtshoorn Civic Centre, early on the first day of the KKNK, with everything rigged and ready to go.

**Uitkampteater** refers to a **group of short productions, each presented in a dedicated small tent, each with a unique facade**. We used 9 tents of 25 square metres each, and just for fun, also a shipping container.

We created a market square atmosphere with the placement of the Uitkampteater venues, in relation to the indoor venues in the Civic Centre, and the licensed festival restaurant.



The facades of the venues were an important marketing tool, communicating show titles and performance times. The facades also served as backdrops, giving the audience a visual feel of the content they could expect in the different shows.

As part of the look and feel of the project, all productions were provided with a similar facade, which they had to decorate.

**Klara Maas se Hart is Gebreek**, written and performed by Wessel Pretorius and David Viviers, went on to win the Kanna for Best Debut Production at the 2016 KKNK, proving that artistic merit was not comprised in the process of going smaller.





The shipping container hosted conversations between cello-music and ink-drawings, called **Ivory Tower**.

Part of this experience, that came to us from Holland, was climbing the stairs, entering a chamber isolated from the festival outside and having the audience decide who took the lead: cello player Jacqueline Hamelink or artist Miesjel van Gerwen.

The shipping container could accommodate only 15 audience members.

The 25 square meter tents had a capacity of 20 to 25, depending on how much performance space the companies required. Ticket prices were set at R20 and the duration of productions were capped at 20 minutes.



Why makes Uitkampteater  
relevant?

# Production



**Affie Klein-plaas** was included in the Uitkampteater as the winner of the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport's Regional Drama Competition. Previously the winners of the Eden Drama Competition would have been scheduled in one of the indoor venues and would enjoy very poor attendance. Presented as Uitkampteater, **Affie Klein-plaas** had 35 performances, many of which were sold out. The performers earned income.

Listing the advantages of Uitkampteater for productions:

- Better access to audiences, resulting in better attendance.
- Less costly way of performing.
- Complete experience: from conceptualising a production to selling the tickets and performing.
- Great sense of community between participants, learning from and supporting each other.
- Direct feedback from your audience: you will know immediately if your content is liked or not.

# Audience



Moving to the audience's point of view:

- Affordability – R20
- Intimate experience. You are very close to the performers.
- Spur of the moment decision making – you do not have to plan ahead or buy tickets in advance, as tickets are only sold immediately before performances.

# Platform



For a platform, such as the KKNK, this project enabled us to:

- Put new bums on seats and increase ticket sales.
- Craft meaningful collaboration with an international partner.



# Based on Dutch innovation



Inspiration for Uitkampteater came from two Dutch festivals: De Parade, a travelling summer festival and Theaterfestival Boulevard, presented annually in August in Den Bosch.

When visiting Den Bosch, I realised that their Tentjestheater holds many advantages for our South African environment.

The Dutch Embassy enabled us to bring two Tentjesteater productions to Oudtshoorn, as well as the director of Theaterfestival Boulevard. As part of the collaboration, everybody shared their knowledge with the South African participants.

Read more about De Parade: [www.deparade.nl](http://www.deparade.nl)

Read more about Theaterfestival Boulevard: [www.festivalboulevard.nl](http://www.festivalboulevard.nl)



# Future applications

At the KKNK we will continue to encourage theatre makers to participate in this project. We will expand content to also include Children's theatre and we are envisaging a competition for tertiary drama schools and young professionals.

We are looking into the possibilities of presenting Uitkampteater at the Cango Caves during December, unlocking opportunities for community groups from our area.

Thinking about other applications, can you imagine how successful this concept would be on the Village Green at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown? Or how many tickets could be sold at the artisanal food markets that are so popular all over South Africa?