NEXEC ARTS & CREATIVE COUNCIL
NARC

NEXEC
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE ECONOMIC COLLECTIVE

CULTURAL-ECONOMIC

CONCLAVE REPORT

27 AUGUST 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Creative-Economic Conclave (NARC Tank), convened by the National Executive Economic Collective (NEXEC) in partnership with the NEXEC Arts and Creative Council (NARC) on 27 August 2025 at EmpowaWorx House, brought together leaders from government, business, labour, academia, and the creative sector to shape a shared vision for South Africa's cultural economy.

The session was not a conventional conference but a participatory dialogue, designed to ensure that the lived experiences of artists and creatives directly informed institutional agendas. Its outcome — this Cultural Economy Compact — reflects both the discussions held and the commitments made, offering a framework for collective reform and growth.

Core themes included:

- Labour and Rights: Urgent need for stronger contractual protections, fair pay structures, and enforcement mechanisms in line with South African labour law.
- Public Funding & Infrastructure: Recognition of gaps in equitable access to grants, institutional support, and the need for sustainable funding models.
- Education Pipelines: Strengthening access to training, mentorship, and institutional pathways for emerging talent.
- Intellectual Property & Trade: Addressing South Africa's cultural trade deficit, developing fair IP frameworks, and positioning creatives for global markets.
- Innovation & AI: Balancing opportunities and risks of new technologies to ensure cultural ownership, representation, and economic benefit for South Africans.

From government officials like Mr Shane Maja (Gauteng DSAC) to industry experts such as Aadil Patel (CDH) and Hungani Ndlovu (SAGA), contributions converged on a simple truth: the creative economy is an industry in its own right, requiring deliberate policy, investment, and structural support.

This report captures the proposals, policy gaps, and actionable commitments identified in the Conclave. It is intended as a living document — to guide future engagement between government, industry, and practitioners, and to hold all stakeholders accountable for implementation.

In closing the session, NEXEC Group CEO & Chairperson Matoti Buthelezi reminded participants: "The creative economy is not a side project — it is an economy, a science, and a force. To neglect it is to undermine our nation's future."

The Conclave and this Compact together mark the beginning of a coordinated, sector-wide effort to position South Africa's creative economy as a driver of employment, innovation, and cultural sovereignty.

MS GINA GALALETSANG KOFFMAN

EXECUTIVE HEAD: NEXEC ARTS AND CREATIVE COUNCIL

"BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE. HAVE A BACKBONE. NEGOTIATE. DON'T GRAVEL ON YOUR KNEES."

Gina Galaletsang Koffman is a South African producer, actress, and voice-over artist with a focus on creative innovation within the cultural industry. She promotes self-care, yoga, and mindfulness, while also being an advocate for the representation of black narratives in media. Her content often highlights personal growth, family, and community, engaging audiences through a blend of artistic expression and cultural commentary.

As Executive Head of the NEXEC Arts and Creative Council (NARC), Koffman's leadership was central to the success of the Cultural-Economic Conclave. Serving as Programme Director, she set the rhythm of the evening — not simply coordinating proceedings, but shaping the tone of dialogue, sparking conversations, and ensuring that the event became more than a conference: it became a space of connection, honesty, and shared vision.

Much of her impact was felt behind the scenes. From securing the distinguished contribution of George and Manana Wines to bringing her network and creative expertise into the fold, Koffman was instrumental in weaving together the practical and symbolic elements that made the gathering possible. Her attention to detail and commitment to authenticity allowed the Conclave to carry both rigour and intimacy, creating a setting where difficult truths could be spoken, but in an atmosphere of generosity and trust.

Her dual perspective — as both artist and organiser — gave the event its distinctive character. She brought not only her logistical skill, but also her lived experience as a cultural practitioner, ensuring that policy discussions remained anchored in the realities of creative workers. Under her stewardship, the Conclave struck a rare balance: bold in ambition, grounded in community, and animated by the conviction that culture is not ornamental, but infrastructural.

In every sense, Gina Galaletsang Koffman embodied the spirit of the Conclave: creative yet disciplined, personal yet collective, visionary yet practical. The evening bore her imprint — a testament to leadership that is both seen and unseen, but always decisive in shaping the outcome.

OPENING REMARKS: MS SOLAMI BUTHELEZI

OPEN REMARKS BY THE SPOKESPERSON

"THE POLITICAL LIBERATION DISPENSATION WE ENJOY TODAY WAS DELIVERED TO US THROUGH THE WOMB OF THE ARTS"

The Conclave was formally opened by the National Spokesperson of NEXEC, Ms Solami Khethiwe Buthelezi, who set the tone with remarks that were both rallying and deeply reflective.

In paying tribute to the leadership of Matoti Buthelezi, Group CEO and Chairman of NEXEC, and Gina Koffman, Executive Head of NARC, the Spokesperson highlighted the vision and courage that had created this platform. The remarks framed the Conclave not as ceremony, but as work: a working dialogue where honesty is valued over diplomacy, and where every voice matters.

The opening also honoured the late veteran actress Nandi Nyembe, whose passing was invoked as a symbol of the systemic neglect endured by many South African artists. Her story was described as emblematic of an industry that celebrates artists in public but abandons them in life, prompting a moment of silence in her memory.

Crucially, the Spokesperson emphasised that art is not entertainment alone. Art is infrastructure, economy, and liberation. Artists are cultural innovators, documenters of history, and builders of community. Drawing on the legacy of resistance art during apartheid, the remarks underscored how creative workers were the conscience of the nation, yet have been economically marginalised in the democratic era.

The Spokesperson called for a cultural revolution to restore dignity to artists, unify fragmented voices, and secure fair contracts, royalties, and protections. The mission of NARC was outlined as:

- Unifying voices across the arts and creative sector.
- Demanding fair and dignified treatment of artists as workers.
- Embedding art as a recognised driver of economic growth and social cohesion.
- Ensuring that no artist dies in poverty while others profit from their labour.

Finally, delegates were urged not to spectate, but to contribute courageously. The Conclave was framed as a commitment and a compact — a starting point for building a future where creative workers are indispensable, honoured, and empowered.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS: MR SHANE MAJA

CHIEF DIRECTOR: ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE, GAUTENG PROVINCE

“IF WE ARE SERIOUS ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA’S REINDUSTRIALISATION, ABOUT CONFRONTING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT, AND ABOUT BUILDING A NATION WHOSE IDENTITY IS ITS EXPORT — THEN WE MUST TREAT THE CULTURAL ECONOMY AS INFRASTRUCTURE, NOT ENTERTAINMENT. CULTURE IS CAPITAL. CREATIVITY IS INFRASTRUCTURE. ARTISTS ARE WORKERS.”

Mr Shane Maja delivered an address that grounded the Conclave in both urgency and vision, reminding participants that South Africa’s creative and cultural industries are far more than symbolic pursuits – they are a core driver of growth, employment, and national identity. He framed the gathering as a “moment of convergence,” a deliberate space where reflection must lead to collective action, particularly in the context of youth unemployment and the province’s broader reindustrialisation agenda.

Maja situated Gauteng at the forefront of this effort, pointing to the Gauteng Creative Industries Growth Strategy 2030 (GCIGS) as a provincial blueprint for transformation. He elaborated on the strategy’s six pillars:

- Transformation & Ownership: Expanding Black ownership across the creative value chain and leveraging procurement for empowerment.
- Infrastructure & Institutions: A three-year infrastructure programme and incubation hubs for young creative entrepreneurs.
- Policy & Governance: Strengthening copyright, performer’s rights, anti-piracy measures, and provincial regulatory structures.
- Funding & Financing: Reforming funding models to prioritise transformation and attract private capital.
- Collaboration & Coordination: Regular sectoral engagements and the establishment of the Gauteng Cultural and Creative Industries Unit.
- Technology & Digital Futures: Accelerating digital literacy, digitisation of content, and equipping creatives to thrive in global digital markets.

Crucially, he stressed that the creative economy must be recognised as economic infrastructure, not a discretionary luxury. He linked cultural work directly to national development, noting that without deliberate investment and coordination, the country would continue to undercut its own growth potential.

Maja also called for bold partnerships, affirming Gauteng’s readiness to collaborate with NEXEC and NARC and other stakeholders in shaping a Cultural Economy Compact that delivers jobs, enterprises, and a more inclusive economy. His remarks challenged the sector to move beyond fragmented advocacy toward coordinated, systemic action.

He placed this within a global frame, pointing out that UNESCO recognises cultural and creative industries as contributing 3.1% of global GDP and 6.2% of employment – evidence of their structural importance. For Gauteng, he argued, the opportunity lies in becoming Africa’s cultural capital: a hub of innovation, trade, and creative excellence.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS: MR AADIL PATEL

PRACTICE HEAD: EMPLOYMENT LAW PRACTICE AT CDH AND HEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT & STATE-OWNED ENTITIES SECTOR AT CDH

"THE LAWS ARE THERE. BUT REFLECT ON WHETHER YOU WOULD HAVE THE COURAGE TO LODGE THE COMPLAINT WHEN YOUR CAREER COULD BE FINISHED. NINE OUT OF TEN TIMES, YOU WON'T — NOT BECAUSE YOU'RE WEAK, BUT BECAUSE THE SYSTEM MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE. THAT IS WHY WE CANNOT INDIVIDUALISE COLLECTIVE OPPRESSION. WHAT AFFECTS ONE, AFFECTS ALL. IT DOESN'T MATTER... UNTIL IT DOES."

Mr Aadil Patel's intervention was one of the most sobering contributions of the evening, grounding the dialogue in both the legal frameworks that exist to protect artists and workers, and the painful realities of how harassment and exploitation persist despite those protections.

Patel unpacked the labour law dimensions of the creative industries, cautioning against loose terminology and urging practitioners to understand their position in law — not merely as "freelancers" but often as independent contractors with defined rights and obligations. He stressed that clarity in legal status is essential for negotiating contracts, asserting protections, and resisting exploitation.

However, beyond the technical framing, Patel turned to the soft but devastating human ramifications of harassment in the workplace. He described the power imbalances faced by young women — often first- or second-generation graduates — who enter industries idolising figures they studied at university, only to encounter harassment at the hands of those very mentors and decision-makers. The challenge, he explained, is that while the law provides recourse, reporting often comes at an unbearable cost: reputational damage, career derailment, and the trauma of reliving abuse through repeated testimony.

Patel noted that this repeated retraumatisation means that, despite laws like the Employment Equity Act and Harassment Act, nine out of ten women in such situations do not formally lodge complaints. The silence is not because the law is absent, but because the personal and professional cost is too high. This reality, he argued, underscores the necessity of collective action and representative bodies that can shield individuals from isolation, negotiate fairly with broadcasters and corporates, and ensure that industry standards are set and enforced.

At its heart, his message was twofold: the industry must stop individualising collective oppression, and creatives must build strong vehicles of representation that combine legal expertise, mentorship, and collective bargaining power. Without this, each case of harassment, exploitation, or unfair treatment will continue to be absorbed by individuals rather than confronted as systemic injustice.

FRAMING AND FINDINGS

Problem Statement and Framing – Hungani Ndlovu: EXCO Member at SAGA

Hungani Ndlovu, speaking on behalf of the South African Guild of Actors (SAGA), highlighted the precarious state of South Africa's creative sector, where artists are routinely denied fair contracts, royalties, and protections. He framed the core issue as systemic invisibility: artists are celebrated in public but excluded from formal labour protections, trapped in cycles of exploitation, and left vulnerable to harassment, underpayment, and informal working arrangements.

Ndlovu emphasised that this is not an isolated crisis but a structural one: the creative economy, despite being a multi-billion rand contributor to GDP and employing nearly a million South Africans, is treated as peripheral and fragmented. Without collective organisation and enforceable rights, creatives remain disempowered. He called for a shift away from individual survival tactics and 'noncholant actors' toward collective solidarity, framing the challenge as one of dignity, economic justice, and national recognition.

NARC findings presented by Lembe Ndlovu- Head of Clothing and Textile

Building on this framing, NARC presented its consolidated findings on the state of South Africa's arts and creative economy

Economic Value but Precarious Conditions
The sector contributes nearly R161 billion to GDP (just under 3%), employing close to one million people. Yet most work remains informal, contractual, or project-based, leaving workers vulnerable to exploitation and instability.

Fragmentation and Lack of Representation
Creative workers remain dispersed across disciplines and regions, with no unified national body to represent their interests at government or industry level. This fragmentation weakens bargaining power and collective visibility.

Legal and Institutional Gaps
While laws such as the Employment Equity Act and Harassment Act exist, enforcement is inconsistent, and many artists lack access to legal resources or knowledge of their rights. Exploitation thrives in this vacuum.

Psychosocial and Gendered Impact
Harassment, particularly against women, remains widespread. Reporting mechanisms often retraumatise victims, discouraging complaints and perpetuating silence. The psychological toll of economic precarity and systemic neglect deepens the crisis.

Opportunities for Reform
NARC identified urgent opportunities: building a National Registry of Artists, establishing a Fair Contracts Desk, minimum wages and advocating for cohesive policies that recognise art as both cultural heritage and economic labour.

ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS

A defining feature of the Conclave was the roundtable breakaway format, designed to shift the gathering from plenary dialogue into focused, solution-oriented conversations. Participants were divided into four facilitated clusters, each addressing a critical pillar of the cultural economy:

Labour, Contracts & Rights

This group was mandated to explore the persistent vulnerabilities facing artists and creative workers — precarious contracts, unequal power dynamics, harassment, and a lack of consistent protection in law and practice. The task was not only to identify problem areas but to surface possible collective solutions, ranging from standardised contracts to more accessible dispute resolution. Perspectives from legal practitioners, industry veterans, and emerging creatives ensured that both the technical and lived dimensions of labour rights were brought into the conversation.

Public Funding & Cultural Infrastructure

Here, participants interrogated the funding ecology of the creative sector — characterised by underfunding, fragmented mandates, and weak institutional support. The group's focus was on how to redesign systems of public investment, improve transparency in allocation, and rethink cultural infrastructure as the backbone of the economy rather than a peripheral luxury. Practitioners, funders, and government voices combined to map out what a more reliable, accountable, and enabling funding environment could look like.

Education Pipelines & Institutional Access

This cluster centred on the pipeline from education to industry, asking hard questions about access, curricula, and mentorship. The mandate was to interrogate how institutions prepare (or fail to prepare) young creatives for the realities of the industry, and to propose ways to bridge the gap between training and work. Students, academics, and practitioners shared perspectives on how to democratise access, build industry-ready skills, and ensure that education institutions do not remain disconnected from the economy they are meant to serve.

IP, Ownership & Export Models

This group tackled the question of ownership — of ideas, stories, and the rights that underpin creative wealth. The focus was on how artists can retain greater control over their intellectual property, navigate exploitative contracts, and position their work for global markets. Here, perspectives from entrepreneurs, producers, and policy thinkers converged on the challenge of protecting South African creatives while expanding opportunities for export and participation in the global cultural economy.

ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS

While the roundtable clusters were designed to set mandates for problem-solving, the discussions themselves revealed a layered and often urgent set of realities. The voices in each group captured both the technical challenges of the sector and the deeply personal experiences of creatives navigating it.

Labour, Contracts & Rights

This group underscored the absence of enforceable protections for performers and creative workers. Participants spoke candidly about contracts that strip them of agency, restrictions on collective bargaining, and the chilling effect of clauses that bar unionisation. A recurring theme was the call for "basic human rights" for performers, whether through sectoral determination, collective agreements, or legislative reform.
As one participant put it: "It is a silly thing to assume that people don't know the plight of their industry — the problem is not awareness, it's the lack of implementation." The group's closing sentiment was clear: without enforceable mechanisms, artists will continue to cycle through the same demands across generations, with little progress to show.

Public Funding & Cultural Infrastructure

The conversation here was dominated by the double-bind of underfunding and inaccessibility. Attendees highlighted the lack of development-oriented infrastructure (studios, rehearsal spaces, community hubs), as well as opaque, overly bureaucratic funding processes that lock out those without networks. Personal testimonies drove the point home — such as the creative who required R20,000 upfront to rent a venue, an impossible ask without personal connections. Participants noted the absence of transparent advertising for funding opportunities, and stressed that "funding cannot be about who you know — it must be about what you're building." The group pushed for community-based infrastructure and streamlined, accessible funding models.

Education Pipelines & Institutional Access

This cluster emphasised the disconnect between formal education and the realities of the creative economy. A strong consensus emerged that South Africa does not teach "the business of artistry" — leaving graduates ill-equipped to negotiate contracts, price their work, or manage compliance and financials.
As one creative reflected: "Our institutions train talent, but they don't train survival. You leave with a degree, but not with the tools to live off your craft." Beyond skills, participants stressed the need to democratise access to training and mentorship, build confidence in local skills pipelines, and integrate business literacy into creative education. The notion of education as both a science and an art — extending beyond performance into economics, law, and psychology — was a recurring theme.

IP, Ownership & Export Models

The group on intellectual property highlighted both the lack of grassroots-level legal support and the confidence gap this creates for creatives. Participants proposed "creative legal clinics" at universities where artists could seek affordable, accessible advice on contracts and IP disputes. Ownership of one's work was described as the cornerstone of bargaining power: "When you know you own your work, you walk into the room differently. You don't take two rand for something priceless." Alongside protection, the group also called for positioning South African creativity for global markets — ensuring that ownership translates not only to protection, but also to international leverage.

Taken together, the findings reveal a sector caught between extraordinary talent and systemic neglect. Across all groups, the common threads were clear: **lack of infrastructure, lack of protection, lack of business literacy, and lack of implementation.** Yet the sessions also surfaced concrete and actionable ideas — from collective bargaining frameworks to legal clinics, from township-based studios to revised curricula.

CLOSING REMARKS: MR MATOTI BUTHELEZI

GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CHAIRMAN AT THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE ECONOMIC COLLECTIVE (NEXEC)

As the evening drew towards its conclusion, the gathering was anchored by closing reflections from Matoti Buthelezi, Group CEO and Chairman of NEXEC. His remarks carried both gravity and vision, reminding participants that the Cultural Economic Conclave was not a symbolic exercise but a deliberate act of construction. Far from being an isolated event, it was positioned as the first building block of a long-term framework for youth-led transformation. Buthelezi began by situating the day within a larger struggle: the historical marginalisation of young people, creatives, and cultural workers within South Africa's economy. Too often, he argued, culture is relegated to the periphery — seen as ornamental rather than infrastructural, celebrated for its vibrancy but denied the protection, policy, and capital that would allow it to flourish as a sector. He stressed that this had to change, and that change would only come through the organised, collective efforts of those in the room.

He pointed to the diversity of voices present — actors, producers, designers, academics, union leaders, government representatives, and students — and emphasised that this mix was not incidental, but essential. "The power of this Conclave," he observed, "is not in what any one of us can say alone, but in what we can insist upon together." He underlined that fragmentation has long been the Achilles' heel of the creative economy: brilliant voices scattered, labour weakened, and opportunities captured by gatekeepers. The Conclave, he said, must mark the beginning of a different story — one in which unity becomes leverage, and culture is treated as a pillar of reindustrialisation, not as an afterthought. At the heart of his remarks was the call for a Cultural Economy Compact. This compact, he argued, should not be a vague memorandum but a living framework of commitments that artists, government, funders, and institutions are all held accountable to. "Our compact," he declared, "must demand dignity. It must guarantee protection. It must secure participation. Without those three, there is no economy worth calling ours." He urged participants to feed their group discussions into this compact, however incomplete, with the knowledge that drafts would evolve but that silence was unacceptable.

Buthelezi also challenged the mythology of the starving artist. He argued that young people in the creative sector cannot continue to be applauded for their talent while denied the means of survival. The time has come, he said, to pair recognition with remuneration, applause with policy, passion with protection. In his words:

"This is not a moment for spectatorship. The creative economy cannot be carried on applause alone — it must be built on power, protection, and participation. If South Africa is to reclaim its future, then artists, youth, and workers must stand as infrastructure. Tonight, we make a promise to ourselves: never again will culture be marginal. It will be the foundation upon which our economy stands."

His closing remarks were not framed as the final word, but as an ignition. The work, he reminded the room, begins now: drafting the compact, pursuing reforms, and continuing to bring together practitioners across disciplines and divides. He noted that NEXEC would continue to serve as the engine and platform for this process, but the ownership of the compact belonged to all present — to every creative worker and every young South African who refuses to accept precarity as the norm.

GEORGE AND MANANA WINES

The Conclave was more than an exchange of ideas — it was also a space of intimacy, warmth, and human connection. Much of that atmosphere was shaped by the thoughtful contribution of George and Manana Wines, who generously provided their distinguished selection of red, white, and sparkling wines for the evening.

From the first pour to the final toast, their wines set a tone of refinement and conviviality, softening the intensity of difficult conversations and creating moments of fellowship across the room. Delegates noted how the pairing of world-class vintages with an atmosphere of candour and collaboration fostered a sense of shared experience — a reminder that transformation in the cultural economy is not only about policy, but also about building community.

"The wines gave the evening an intimacy that encouraged honesty — it felt less like a conference and more like a gathering of equals."

By curating a selection that was both elegant and unpretentious, George and Manana Wines ensured that each conversation — whether over a glass of crisp white or a bold red — carried the spirit of generosity and openness that the Conclave sought to embody. The presence of their wines reflected the very values at the heart of the event: excellence, authenticity, and accessibility.

We extend our deepest appreciation to George and Manana Wines for elevating the evening, for reminding us that dialogue and fellowship are made richer when accompanied by the artistry of local producers, and for affirming that South Africa's creative and cultural economy includes the stories told in our vineyards.

As the Conclave affirmed the urgency of building a stronger cultural economy, George and Manana Wines quietly reminded us that this economy is already alive — in the products we make, the communities we support, and the experiences we share.

NEXEC AND NARC

At the heart of the Cultural-Economic Conclave stood two engines of youth-led transformation: the National Executive Economic Collective (NEXEC) and its specialised arm, the NEXEC Arts and Creative Council (NARC). Together, they represent both the vision and the infrastructure required to drive systemic change in South Africa's cultural economy. For participants in the room, these names are already becoming synonymous with bold action; for those encountering this report for the first time:

The National Executive Economic Collective (NEXEC) is the country's foremost youth-first advisory and development organisation: the brain of a corporate entity and the heart of a non-profit movement. Its mission is to build pathways of economic inclusion for young South Africans by bridging government, private sector, and youth enterprises. Through its sectoral subcouncils, spanning agriculture, mining, energy, infrastructure, health, tourism, women's advocacy, and the arts, NEXEC operates both as an economic advisory and a mobilising platform.

The NEXEC Arts and Creative Council (NARC), NEXEC's cultural arm, exists to unify South Africa's fragmented creative sector. More than an association, it is a strategic council that provides structure, advocacy, and dignity where exploitation has long prevailed — blending grassroots organising with policy engagement at the highest levels

Both NEXEC and NARC emerge from necessity. South Africa's creative economy — despite its proven contributions to GDP, jobs, and identity — remains undervalued, underfunded, and underprotected. Artists die in indignity, students are left unprepared for industry realities, and young entrepreneurs are locked out of opportunity. Traditional institutions have lacked the authority and structural reach to address this crisis. NEXEC and NARC step into that

The Conclave was evidence that NEXEC and NARC are operational, not aspirational. They convened creatives, government, and business not for ceremony, but to secure commitments toward a Cultural Economy Compact — a living framework for reform, rights, and resources.

As Matoti Buthelezi, Group CEO and Chairman of NEXEC, charged in his closing reflections:

"Our compact must demand dignity. It must guarantee protection. It must secure participation. Without those three, there is no economy worth calling ours."

NARC is thus both a labour council and a policy think tank, an advocacy platform and a movement-building vehicle. At its core, it is about giving the arts sector an organised voice, economic value, and institutional power in shaping South Africa's cultural and economic future.

CONCLUSION

The Cultural-Economic Conclave was never intended to be a single gathering, but a declaration of intent. What began as dialogue must now mature into action — action that transforms commitments into contracts, frameworks into policies, and applause into protection. The conversations captured in this report reaffirm that South Africa's creative economy is not ornamental, but foundational; not peripheral, but infrastructural.

If this report makes one truth undeniable, it is that culture is capital. To treat it otherwise is to short-change the nation's growth, identity, and dignity. The task ahead is neither small nor symbolic: it requires courage from policymakers, discipline from institutions, solidarity from practitioners, and vigilance from society at large. The Cultural Economy Compact offers the first scaffolding of this work — a living framework to be contested, expanded, and implemented in the years to come.

NEXEC and NARC will continue to serve as catalysts, but the responsibility is collective. For too long, artists have been celebrated without being secured, and creativity has been applauded without being invested in. That era must end. The Conclave marked the beginning of a new one: an era where culture is recognised as a driver of employment, innovation, and sovereignty.

The report closes, then, not with an end but with an ignition. The voices captured here are a call to build — deliberately, urgently, and together — a future in which the creative economy stands not as a side note, but as one of the central pillars of South Africa's reindustrialisation and liberation.



THANK YOU