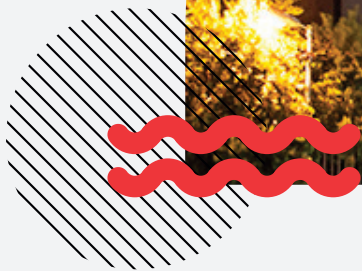


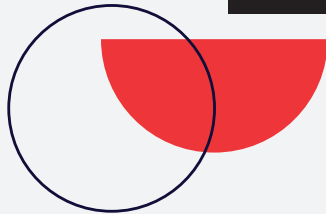
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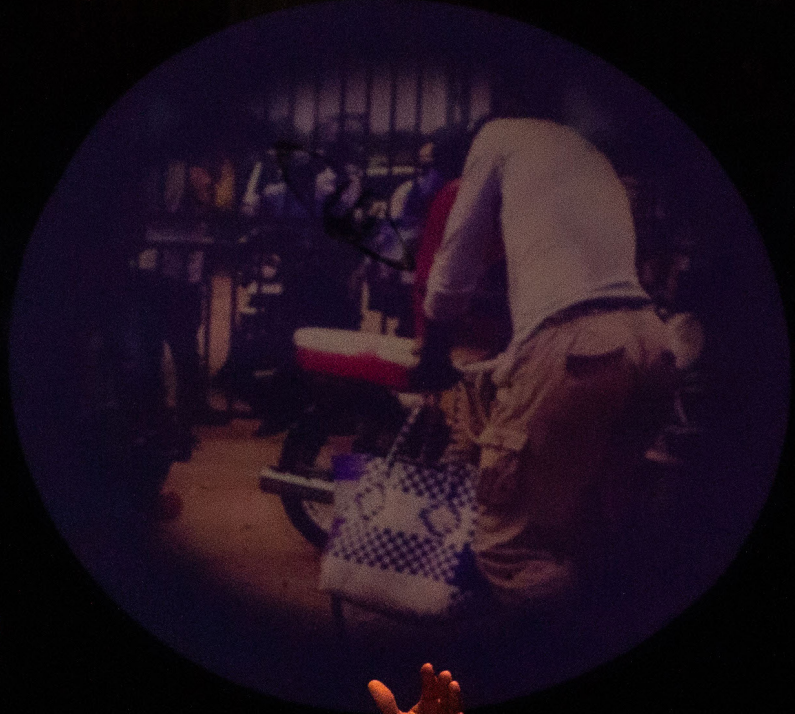
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The Market Theatre Foundation is an agency of the
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'Barbershop
Chronicles' actors
on stage



Editor-in-Chief: Lusanda Zokufa. **Copywriter and Editor:** Ace Moloji. **Layout and Design:** Zuko Ntshidi

For The Market Theatre Foundation:

CEO: Tshiamo Mokgadi. **CFO:** Devi Padayachee. **COO:** Lekgetho Makola. **Artistic Director:** Greg Homann.

*Season's
Greetings*



Dear MTF Colleagues, Partners and Students

As the curtain falls on an extraordinary year, I would like to take a moment to give a standing ovation to each of you for your role in making our spaces warm, inclusive, and vibrant. In 2025, The Market Theatre Foundation staged many unforgettable performances – both behind the scenes and under the spotlight – made possible by your passion, creativity, and unwavering commitment.

As we enter the festive season, let us all enjoy a much-needed interval: a time for rest, reflection, and reconnection. May you find joy in the company of family and friends and return refreshed and inspired for the next act in our shared journey.

The year ahead holds particular significance for us as an organisation, and for the broader South African cultural community, as the Market Theatre embarks on its 50th anniversary celebrations. For five decades, we have collectively kept the spirit of authentic storytelling alive. Now, the stage is set for an exciting, year-long celebration of our legacy and our future.

Wishing you a restful festive season and a joyful New Year.

Happy Holidays!

Tshiamo Mokgadi

Chief Executive Officer

The Market Theatre Foundation


**THE
MARKET
THEATRE
FOUNDATION**

AN INVITATION TO CO-CREATE: MTF HOSTS 50TH ANNIVERSARY SUPPORTERS' NIGHT



The evening was all about fundraising, strengthening stakeholder relations and revealing artistic plans for the Anniversary Year.

The Market Theatre Foundation hosted an intimate Supporters' Night at Gramadoelas on Thursday, 13 November 2025. The event was aimed at raising funds for The Market Theatre's 50th Anniversary next year. Keynote speakers included MTF CEO, Tshiamo Mokgadi, as well as Artistic Director, Greg Homann.

In her opening remarks, CEO Mokgadi described the Supporters' Night as a celebration of the past and living in the future. She further invited the room to join hands with The Market Theatre in its year-long celebration filled with bold productions, powerful exhibitions, critical conversations and impactful community projects.

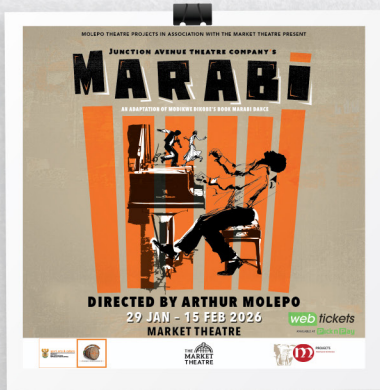
"We know that to make the impact we envision, we cannot do it alone. We also know that what we want to achieve aligns with what many of you in this room seek to achieve in your own mandates: community development, education, transformation, economic inclusion, sustainability, youth empowerment, and innovation. So tonight, we are not just introducing our plans. We are inviting you in. To partner with us. To sponsor. To open doors. To co-create the future of The Market Theatre."

Reflecting on the theatre's shared anniversary with the June 16 1976 student uprisings, Mokgadi said the theatre carried with it a profound history of South Africa's liberation struggle. The Market Theatre opened its doors just three days after the historic uprisings in Soweto, south of Jo'burg.

"Out of that moment of resistance and pain emerged a space for truth, healing, and imagination—a place where the voices silenced on the streets could find expression on stage. That connection to 1976 continues to define who we are, and it will be a central part of our reflections and celebrations as we mark 50 years of The Market next year," remarked the CEO.

WHAT'S BEHIND THE CURTAIN IN 2026?

Looking ahead to the early part of 2026, we are delighted to share an exciting lineup of productions that speak to our shared history, our contemporary world, and the stories that connect us across generations.



MARABI

29 JANUARY TO 15 FEBRUARY 2026

This South African musical theatre classic by Junction Avenue Theatre Company returns in a powerful new staging presented by Molepo Theatre Projects in association with The Market Theatre. Set in the vibrant yet turbulent 1930s of Doornfontein, Johannesburg, the story follows Mabongo as he grapples with ancestral duty, poverty, and the winds of change. His daughter Martha's love for Ginger George, a talented Marabi pianist, challenges family expectations and sparks emotional upheaval. Marabi explores legacy, love, and the rhythms that endure. It boldly asks: "When the ancestors call, who dares to sing a different song?" This revival promises to be a rich and entertaining experience for young audiences interested in South African history, literature, music, and society.



BLUES IN THE NIGHT

5 TO 22 FEBRUARY 2026

Direct from Memphis Tennessee, The Market Theatre in partnership with Hattiloo Theatre bring you a scorching, Tony-nominated musical, Blues in the Night. This is a soulful journey through love, heartbreak, and resilience. Told through 26 iconic blues numbers, the production follows three women as they navigate the emotional fallout of a deceitful man who wrongs them all. Featuring music by legends such as Bessie Smith, Duke Ellington, Alberta Hunter, and Johnny Mercer, this show is both an homage to an essential American art form and a timeless reflection on human strength.



ISITHA SABANTU

5 TO 22 MARCH 2026

Inspired by real South African eco-defenders, Isitha Sabantu tells the story of two grandmothers - one human, one elephant - who unite to protect their families and homeland from corruption and extractivism. Created by Empatheatre, the award-winning company known for research-driven theatre, this imaginative production blends poetry, puppetry, music, and myth.

A cultural complex for theatre, music, dance and the allied arts.



UNDER THE SHADE OF A TREE I SAT AND WEPT 9 TO 26 APRIL 2026

Coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings, this bold international collaboration examines how societies reckon with conflict and forgiveness. Through archival material and newly collected testimonies, artists from South Africa and Europe reflect on the lessons offered by Kosovo’s 1990 Blood Feuds Reconciliation Campaign and South Africa’s 1995 Truth and Reconciliation Campaign. After premiering in Kosovo in 2025 and touring the Balkans, this visually dynamic piece continues its international journey at The Market Theatre before travelling to Norway, Italy, Portugal, Germany, France, and New York.

Warmest regards,
GREG HOMANN
Artistic Director of The
Market Theatre Foundation

THE MARKET THEATRE

THE MARKET THEATRE IS TURNING FIFTY—AND WE’RE CELEBRATING WITH AN OFFER YOU CAN’T RESIST! FOR EVERY SHOW, THE FIRST FIFTY TICKETS ARE JUST FIFTY RAND. THAT’S RIGHT—IT’S **50 FOR 50!** CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF THE MARKET WITH THE BEST PRICES ON THE MARKET. TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY.

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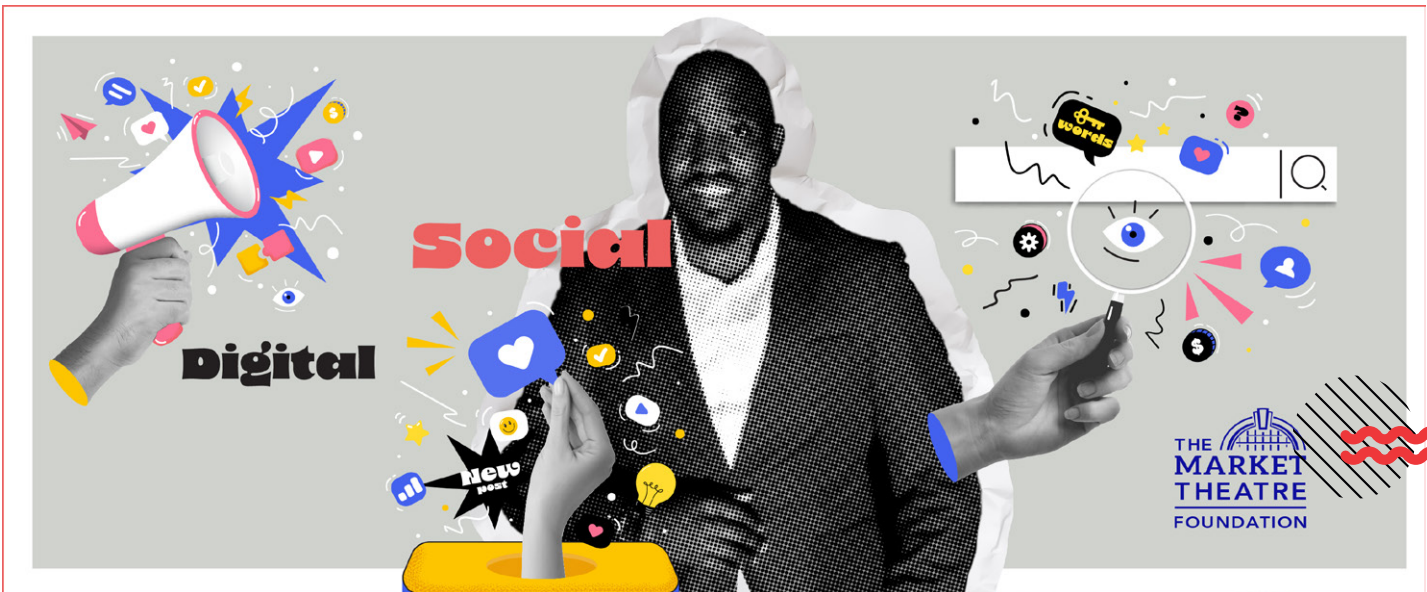
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A cultural complex for theatre, music, dance and the allied arts.

FEATURE

CONTENT IS KING: NEWLY APPOINTED DCO AIMS TO GROW DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

The Market Theatre Foundation is thrilled to announce the appointment of Sfiso Ntombela as the new Digital Communications Officer



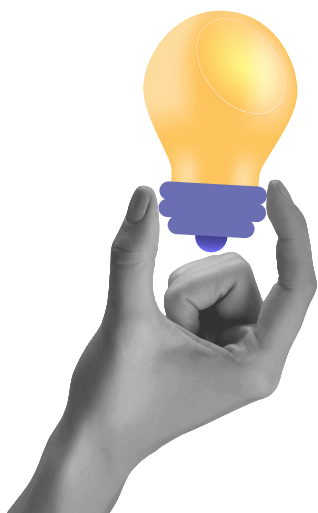
With a strong background in digital marketing, content creation and creativity, Sfiso aims to tell authentic stories that inspire and connect people. Before joining The Market, he held various roles in marketing and communications, focusing on strengthening brand presence and enhancing community engagement.

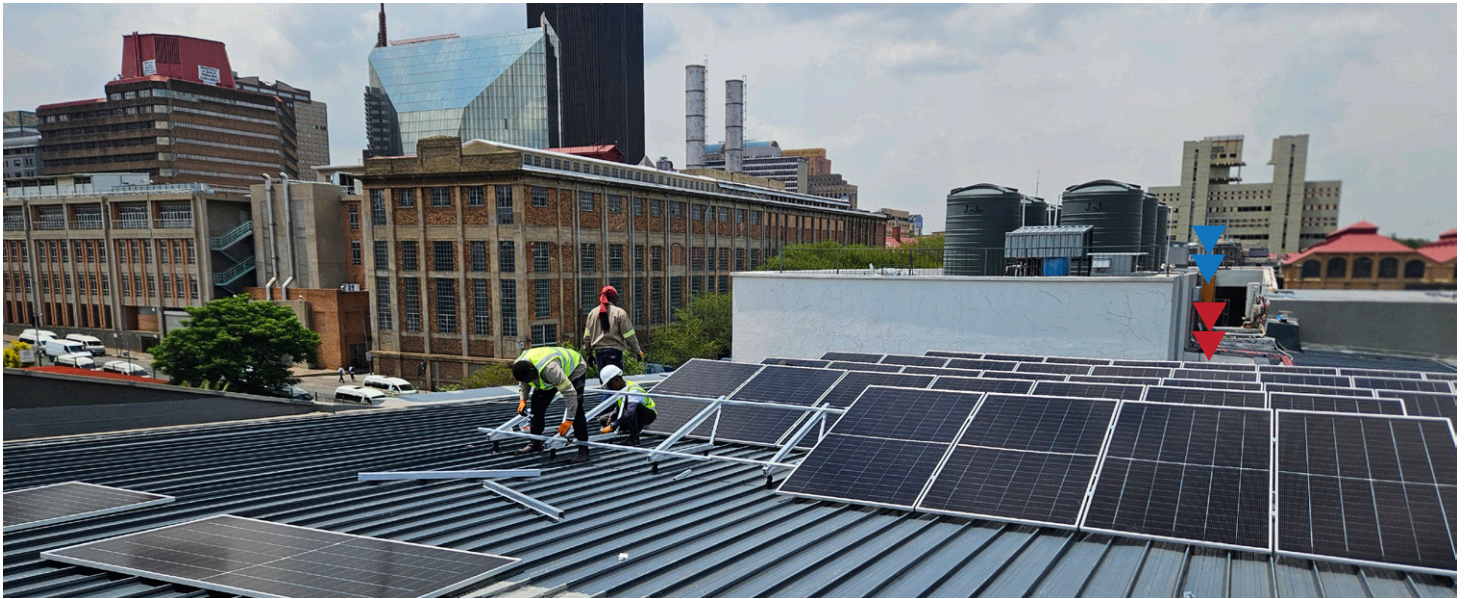
"I'm passionate about using communication as a tool for impact and community development, bringing both creativity and purpose to every project I take on," he shares.

To Sfiso, this role is a dream that has come true. A few years ago, he applied for the Digital Marketing internship at MTF, but didn't make it. He remembers encouraging himself that he would, in the near future, be back at his desired employer of first choice in the cultural sector. Now living his dream, Sfiso will be responsible for social media strategy, content creation, website content, reporting, lead generation and more.

"I have always been deeply inspired by the work this organisation is doing, using storytelling to bring communities together. Storytelling has always been something I love; something that connects people beyond words. Yesterday as I came in The Market Square, I said to myself: Sometimes the timing isn't right, but that doesn't mean the dream is wrong. Some journeys take longer, and that's okay."

Lusanda Zokufa, Head: Brand and Communications, welcomed Sfiso to the team, saying his passion for digital communications tools will strengthen MTF's online presence and customer engagement.





The Market Theatre Foundation has taken a major step into the future of energy security through its solar panels installation project. The project commenced on 3 November 2025, following the appointment of a service provider, and is now ready for testing and commissioning.

The project team consisted of 15 members, including the professional team. All team members wore PPE and name tags for easy identification, as movement increased across The Market Square and other MTF buildings.

The team was fully briefed on the work of the MTF, including the various programmes that take place within The Market Photo Workshop and The Market Theatre Laboratory. “They have assured us that the work will generate minimal noise, allowing normal operations to continue without major interruptions,” said Thuli Hlaneke.

The installation of solar panels will go a long way in ensuring operational stability and energy resilience at all MTF buildings, allowing the work of the organisation to continue without being hampered by power outages.

“This is a highly welcomed intervention by the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture’s facilities management directorate, aimed at investing and supporting the MTF’s transition to renewable energy resource through this solar infrastructure project,” commented MTF COO Lekgetho Makola, adding that the savings from diesel-powered generators will support the

institution’s artistic programming, keeping classrooms, galleries, rehearsal rooms and stages lit throughout the year.





This review first appeared on pARTicipate, written by Bruce Dennill

Barber shops are generally places of intimacy – physically speaking, in that they are often smallish rooms containing just a handful of people – as well as in that most of the people there are spending much of their time in conversation, and where repeat clients get to know their barbers and each other, they often share at a relatively deep level. That conceit is at the heart of Nigerian-born British playwright Inua Ellams' script, but to begin with, the scale of the piece rather undoes at least part of the idea. Featuring a cast of ten playing multiple characters, the play takes place in six different cities – London, Lagos, Accra, Johannesburg, Kampala and Harare – spreading the reach of the story far and wide.

The narrative builds slowly, in focused, concentrated scenes – a barber and a customer who doesn't pay here; three barbers sharing a shop and a customer who's not welcome inside there; a group of barbers and customers all distracted by a football match somewhere else – with the characters being slowly, episodically added to, layer by layer.

This aspect of the piece is fun and fascinating, with there likely being personal favourites among the many men – they're all men, and all black men, which is important for the themes of the play – from their many different cultural and economic backgrounds. Each scene and set change is marked by delightful musical numbers featuring muscular (and sometimes amusing) choreography and multi-part harmonies.

These add to the depiction of the various cultures, showcasing dance steps and more that are recognisably South African (Pantsula) or Nigerian or Ghanaian or whatever.

As the building of characters and stories continues, Barber Shop Chronicles begins to unpack its real value – revealing how men across Africa and in its diaspora communities deal with masculinity and its many subsidiary issues (everything from being comfortable with vulnerability to dealing with anger over racism and other forms of prejudice).

As the characters, now more fully developed, begin to enter this level of complexity and profundity, other links in the play's clever structure become evident, along with the reasons for the back and forth between different barber shops in far-flung communities (all within a limited timeframe). While it ultimately all comes together, at two hours without an interval (likely to keep the infectious energy at the same level throughout), it's possible to argue that one or two of the piece's shorter chapters could be trimmed or dropped without losing any of the story's meaning or impact.

Of the fine ensemble cast, special mentions go to Anthony Oseyemi (gravitas and a mixture of warmth and steel), Vitus Dunu (larger than life stage presence and comic timing) and Abongile Matyutyu (comic relief and goofy charm). The vibrant sets and aforementioned music are also powerfully appealing elements. There's a lot to take in in Barber Shop Chronicles, and much of it stays with you for some time after the lights come up.

FEATURE IN CONVERSATION WITH THE ART CAVE



Founders of The Art Cave: Phila Nxumalo and Tebogo Malapane

The art of fringe programming is leadership. It's about holding space and being a platform for emerging voices on the fringe. Well, at least this is the curatorial philosophy of The Art Cave, an interdisciplinary movement co-founded by two budding visionaries, Philangezwi Nxumalo and Tebogo Malapane. The organisation was formed in 2020, in the heart of the COVID-19 pandemic, as a considered response to the uncharted waters.

When The Market Theatre Foundation's Artistic Director, Greg Homann, envisioned a daring space for vibrant and bold fresh works, appointing Phila and Tebogo as curators of The Kippies Fringe was a no-brainer.

And when the call came, they didn't cave!

At the time of announcing the return of the Kippies Fringe, Homann said, "The Market Theatre's longstanding history as an iconic performance space lends itself to works that are still on the fringe, cultivating a fresh and dynamic layer of live-performance artists that could possibly feed into our main programming in the future."

And so it was that from June – December 2025, the small 50-seater venue adjacent to The Market Theatre transformed into a refinery for developmental works. For curators, this was a priceless moment of growth and learning that also shaped their artistic direction. As shows exceeded expectations both artistically and commercially, with several of them selling out, Phila and Tebogo were also left with career-shifting lessons. "Since this year functioned almost like a test phase, we entered with curiosity, and what

we witnessed was truly inspiring. The performances were bold, fresh, and rooted in honest, inventive storytelling from new voices who are shaping the future of theatre," Tebogo recounts.

In a time when audience sizes are shrinking and the future of live theatre itself riddled with plot holes, the role of a fringe programme goes beyond introducing emerging creators to new stages. Even more importantly, it cultivates the next layer of theatre-goers, planting seeds of sustainability and simplifying access.

Phila concurs, saying, "Above all, audience development is an active practice. When we spoke to the community with intention and conviction, they really showed up. One of the most rewarding parts was meeting people who were stepping into the theatre for the very first time. Many had never heard of the space, yet once they experienced the work, they kept returning. That kind of audience loyalty speaks directly to the calibre and impact of the performances."

The fringe programme also treated Jo'burg audiences to shows performed in indigenous languages, creating a truly South African experience in line with the spirit of shared ownership that guides The Market Theatre's programming. "Intsusa", for example, was performed 90% in isiXhosa, while "IsiWula" and "Thandeka" were fully isiZulu productions.

"These works," notes Phila, "brought cultural richness, authenticity, and a refreshing dynamic to the theatre space."

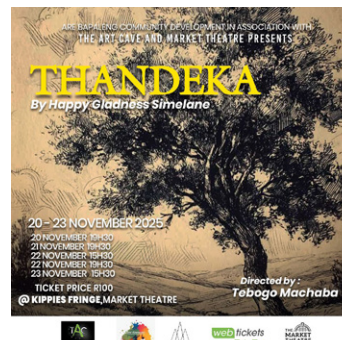
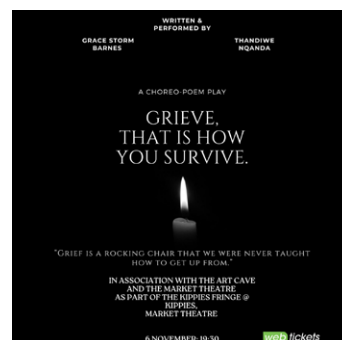
The quality of shows on display was so high that it's impossible for the curators to list their favourites, as each show was thoughtfully selected for a specific purpose and merit. Despite this parental urge to strike a fair balance between one's kids, a few shows did manage to widen their reach beyond Kippies, impressing audiences for their engaging storylines.

Among others, "The Hyena's Tuckshop" stood out not only as a perfect season premiere, but for also being a sparkling presentation of children's theatre. "For audiences, this was refreshing and unexpected. Many commented on how exciting it was to see children's theatre in that space. Being the first production in the programme also created an exciting energy for the rest of the season," states Phila.

To recognise and celebrate up-and-coming artistic excellence, The Art Cave is set to host the 2025 Kippies Fringe Awards, comprising of the following categories: Outstanding Performer, Best Direction, Best Script, Best Experimental Show, Best Production, Best Audience Achievement, Curators' Award as well as Unsung Hero Award. These awards are aimed at spotlighting developing talent before it reaches professional stages.

Whatever the future may hold for the two co-labourers who have somewhat become each other's destiny helper, the impact of Phila and Tebogo's work will be felt for years to come. Their assured presence in the space, which has seen them augment the Kippies programming with initiatives such as workshops, indicates their ability to think on their feet, adjust their sails, study market needs and form meaningful partnerships with likeminded practitioners. All this for no personal glory, but as a chapter in an ongoing story. This is just the beginning of what they call the construction of a model in which artistic excellence, youth development and innovative audience engagement intersect.

"Our role has been that of creating consistent platforms for emerging voices to be discovered and developed, bridging the gap between raw talent and professional opportunity, leading with experimentation, shaping new formats, festivals and cultural movements that speak to the times; and last but not least, championing accessibility, ensuring young artists have real entry points into the industry, not just dreams, but pathways," Tebogo concludes.





The Market Theatre Laboratory has bagged significant breakthroughs in the current artistic year, further cementing its place as a market leader in its category.

It is commonly known that in any laboratory, true breakthrough happens when a product passes every test and goes on to win the hearts of customers. This moment, which brings together innovation and market appeal, is a sign that the experiment has gone totally right. Such is the case even at South Africa's leading training ground for actors and theatre-makers, The Market Theatre Laboratory, where students are refined to theatrical perfection.

Despite navigating a challenging cultural landscape, The Market Lab ends the year on a glowing note, with alumni achieving career-defining breakthroughs. A standout success was the growth of "Afropocalypse", originally a student-devised work, into a fully-fledged professional show. After winning the prestigious Standard Bank Gold Ovation Award at the National Arts Festival, the crowd favourite enjoyed a successful run at The Market Theatre.

Staged for the first time on African soil, "Barber Shop Chronicles" boasted no less than four Lab alumni – Thabang Chauke, Tumelo Namtweya-Phiri, Vitus Dunu and Langa Mathuthu – under the direction of Sibusiso Mamba. Thabang, who played one of the leads on the show, had just returned from dazzling KZN audiences at JOMBA! as part "Father & I" before starring in this international hit.

For Tumelo, this breakthrough was an assuring glimpse into his future as a storyteller. A rising performer from The Market Lab, he stepped into his multi-character gig on Inua Ellams' play decorated with a Standard Bank Ovation Award (National Arts Festival). Like Tumelo, "Barber Shop Chronicles" also marked Langa's debut on The Market Theatre stage. The same applies to Vitus Dunu, celebrated for his roles in Netflix hit series, "Kings Of Joburg", as well as the SAFTA-winning film, "Shumba".

Cherae Halley, Head of The Market Theatre Laboratory, says this success is no accident, adding that there's been deliberate synergy between her office and The Market Theatre Foundation's artistic department to ensure that training aligns with industry demands. "Greg Homann and I both arrived in 2023 and I think we have both been intentional about the flow of traffic between The Market Square and The Market Theatre building. And this is the reward – to have artists early in their career act alongside professionals such as Anthony Oseyemi and Emkay Khanyile is just fantastic!"

According to Halley, what made “Afropocalypse” scooping the GOLD Award special was the fact that it’d been an entire eight years since a Lab production won this highest honour in NAF’s fringe programme. “This win,” she notes, “was a reminder of the continued success and excellency that comes out of The Lab student productions.”

The show’s director, Daniel Buckland, describes it as a mischievous and vibrant look at South African society through the lens of all the weird and wonderful ways it could come to an end. “The show uses dynamic and joyous ensemble storytelling, with bucket loads of physical comedy, puppetry and storytelling, to paint a vivid picture of the fallibility of humankind, as well as the resilience and creativity of the human spirit.”

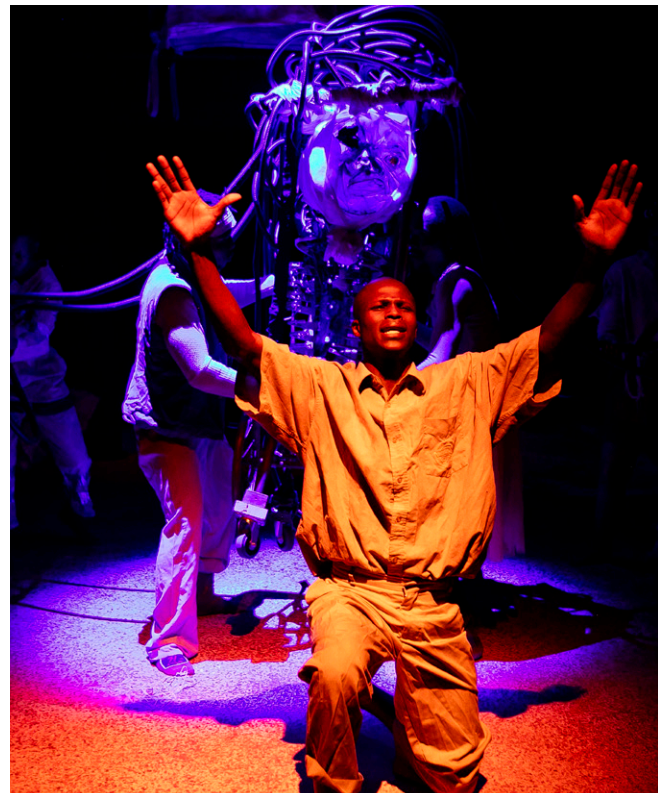
Gofaone Bodigelo, a recent graduate of The Market Lab, stunned audiences with her portrayal of Medea in the classic Greek tragedy of the same name, presented by The Windybrow Arts Centre and the Kwasha! Theatre Company. “Bodigelo in the title role teeters with a brilliance that shimmers,” writes theatre reviewer Robyn Sassen. About her character, Bodigelo told News24: “She is no different from a woman that is displaced in contemporary South Africa. For whatever reason, seeking asylum, running from a war-ridden country or just moving in hopes of a better life. There are threads in Ancient Greek literature that still live in today’s society.”

The Market Lab’s footprints can also be traced at the recalibrated Kippies Fringe, a small space for bold cultural expressions, artistic experimentation and audience development. The trailblazing combination of Philangezwi Nxumalo and Teboho Malapane – proud alumni – just wrapped up a powerful season as curators of the fringe programme through their outfit, The Art Cave. Kippies Fringe is – in the words of The Market Theatre Foundation’s Chief Executive Officer Tshiamo Mokgadi – “a small ecosystem of mentorship and opportunity, a model for the creative economy we want to grow”.

For the two emerging theatre-makers, the call has been simple but profound: just run the show! Curation, they have learnt, is an art of leadership. “We’re not just selecting shows; we’re shaping a cultural moment with every theme we had for each month and holding space for artists to become their fullest selves,” they say.

From the curatorial brilliance of The Art Cave to the growing audiences flocking to productions at The Market

Square, and graduates securing internships with leading organisations like POPArt, The Market Theatre Laboratory continues to prove itself as a peerless force in the arts. “As our year comes to an end, we sit on the other side, proud of our resilience and our efforts in contributing to youth participation in the creative economies on various levels,” concludes Halley, crediting former Education Coordinator, Roberto Pombo, for his immense contribution in shaping the curriculum that produced this high success rate.





The Kippies Fringe Awards ceremony was held at Kippies, adjacent to The Market Theatre, on Sunday, 7 December 2025.

The creative sector is still buzzing with excitement after the hosting of the first edition of the Kippies Fringe Awards. Held on Sunday, 7 December 2025, the awards ceremony was an unforgettable night of recognising the tremendous talent that defined the six-months Kippies Fringe programme.

Artistic Director at The Market Theatre Foundation, Greg Homann, addressed nominees with passion, reminding them that before becoming an iconic venue, The Market Theatre was a fringe space. "For many, many years, it was that space—a space opened by independent theatre makers for themselves and others."

One of the night's big winners, Masedi Manenye, took to Facebook to celebrate. Manenye directed "FACES", which won three out of four nominated categories. The production scooped Best Direction, Best Experimental Show and Best Production. "This is huge for us, for our corner of KZN at the University of Zululand, where theatre is not something we often get to experience or consume. Yet here we are, proving what is possible," he beamed with pride.

According to The Art Cave, curators of the Kippies Fringe, for a show to be crowned Best Production, it had to be most loved by audiences, excel in performance, direction, design, and storytelling, and demonstrate the readiness for a full three-week run on a main stage.

The Best Director is one whose artistic vision, leadership, and execution shaped an outstanding production.

The Best Experimental Show honoured a production that boldly pushed boundaries, disrupted tradition and offered innovative, imaginative approaches to theatrical storytelling.

Vuyelwa Maluleke, who presented "The Blue Album" at the Kippies Fringe, was named Best Performer, an award given to an individual who delivered an exceptional performance throughout the run: someone whose craft, presence and emotional impact truly stood out. The project, Vuyelwa shared, allowed her to test the theory obtained from the classroom. "To many more tests in front of a public. To finding the audience for your stories and the people to make them with. To finding your way back to craft."

FULL LIST OF KIPPIES FRINGE AWARDS WINNERS

- **Best Outstanding Performer: Vuyelwa Maluleke (The Blue Album)**
- **Best Direction: Masedi Godfrey Manenye (FACES)**
- **Best Script: Halala Mr Party by Makhubalo Ikaneng**
- **Best Experimental Show: FACES (Beyond the Curriculum)**
- **Curators' Award: Mongezi Ntukwana (The Hyena's Tuckshop)**
- **Best Audience Achievement Award: IsiWula (Liyah Dlala Productions)**
- **Unsung Hero Award: Simphiwe Boya (FOH – The Market Theatre Foundation)**
- **Best Production: FACES (Beyond the curriculum)**



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IC2026 12 AUG – 20 NOV APPLICATION CLOSING DATE: 29 JULY 2026

APP2026 4 MARCH – 13 NOV APPLICATION CLOSING DATE: 18 FEBRUARY 2026

PDP2026 4 MARCH – 27 NOV APPLICATION CLOSING DATE: 18 FEBRUARY 2026

For Inquiries

Whatsapp number – 068 537 8892

Our Advanced Programme in Photography students had an opportunity to work with the Second Year Students from our sister school of performance, The Market Theatre Laboratory.

Photographers – Julia Geerds, Mduduzi Junior Modipa, Kgao Maleka, Senzo Masondo and Tebogo Losaba.

Actors – Noluthando Khumalo, Tumelo Phofi, Phumlani Ka’Ncube Ngobese, Thato Kgarodi, Thato Radebe,

Kutlwano Semela, Lwazilwesizwe Mdluli, Té Cresswell, Ntlotliseng Matsabisa, Wongama Bazi, Nande Galadl Star Mqoma and Moloko Maphuruma.

