



Sibikwa  
arts centre

PERFORM WITH PURPOSE

Sibikwa Arts Centre  
Annual General Report  
2023

*A Year of Resilience, Creativity and Connection*

## Organisation Profile

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Sibikwa Arts Centre is a pioneering multi-disciplinary NPC, NPO and PBO arts organisation based in Benoni, Gauteng. Established in 1988, Sibikwa has become a beacon for inclusive arts education, community engagement, and cultural development in South Africa. Our mission is to provide accessible arts training and performance opportunities that empower individuals and transform communities.

### Core Focus Areas:

- Community Engagement: Facilitating projects that promote social cohesion and cultural expression.
- Arts Education: Delivering structured programmes in drama, dance, music and visual arts at schools and in communities.
- Professional Development: Offering CATHSSETA and SACE accredited training and entrepreneurial incubation for emerging artists, facilitators, educators and creatives.
- Cultural Advocacy: Engaging in policy dialogues and initiatives that support the arts sector's growth, governance and sustainability.

Sibikwa's holistic approach integrates artistic excellence with social impact, fostering a vibrant cultural ecosystem that reflects South Africa's diverse heritage.

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## Executive Summary

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In 2023, Sibikwa Arts Centre continued to affirm its role as a creative force for inclusion, education, and transformation. Against a backdrop of complex socio-economic realities, the organisation upheld its mission to bridge artistic excellence and community empowerment through dynamic programming, strategic partnerships, and impactful leadership.

Over the year, Sibikwa reached over 6,400 beneficiaries through education and training, and over 3,250 people who attended arts events and performances, provided employment to more than 200 individuals, and worked across diverse settings in Gauteng and beyond. The Centre hosted major projects that advanced inclusive practice, cultural exchange, youth development, and democratic participation, while strengthening its organisational systems and partnerships.

Notable initiatives included the *Ecole Nomade* and staging of *1789* in collaboration with the the French Institute of South Africa, Lesotho and Malawi (IFAS) and *Théâtre du Soleil*, the second edition of the *Body Moves Inclusive Dance Festival*, and the continuation of our flagship arts education programmes, including the *Sibikwa Arts Academy*, *Artists in Schools Programme*, and *Inclusive Creative Arts Programme*. In 2023, we also welcomed the Entrepreneurial Development Trust as a new funder of our *Uvuko Creative Arts Entrepreneurship Incubator*, initiated a new multi-year partnership with the General Representation of the Government of Flanders on the *You, Me & Democracy 4IR* project, which marked a milestone, incorporating digital exchange, augmented reality, and youth engagement, and deepened relationships with longstanding partners including TotalEnergies, the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, and EU partners.

Despite the increasing financial and operational pressures affecting the broader sector - including delayed funding disbursements and constrained resources - Sibikwa demonstrated adaptability and forward-thinking. Through strategic governance, fundraising efforts, and a deep connection to community needs, the organisation laid a strong foundation for growth and sustainability in the years to come.

This report outlines key achievements, challenges, and learnings across these pillars, while also celebrating the resilience of our team, the creativity of our artists and learners, and the generosity of our partners.

## Introduction

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*In challenging times, art reminds us of our humanity and our capacity to dream, heal and rebuild.*

The year 2023 marked another chapter in Sibikwa Arts Centre's enduring journey - one shaped by resilience, innovation, and community connection. As with years past, this period brought with it a dynamic blend of successes, hard-won lessons, and strategic insights that continue to shape our organisation's path forward. In the face of ongoing social, economic, and political uncertainty - both locally and globally - Sibikwa remained steadfast in its mission to create inclusive, accessible, and transformative arts experiences.

From the onset, our team leapt into strategic planning and programme implementation with energy and purpose. Our work across arts education, inclusive training, civic engagement, and cultural production achieved numerous milestones, thanks to the dedication of our staff, the guidance of our Board, and the trust and collaboration of our partners. While challenges persisted - particularly those linked to delayed funding, rising costs, and constraints around core operational support - our collective commitment allowed us to remain agile and impactful.

In 2023, we strengthened our organisational systems, invested in team development, and worked closely with our Board to shape new business development and professional growth strategies. These efforts were grounded in forward-looking planning, allowing us to identify cost-saving measures and expand revenue-generation opportunities. While financial sustainability remains a pressing concern, especially in the face of delayed proposal outcomes and inflation-linked funding shortfalls, our strategic approach continues to position us to respond effectively and creatively.

Writing this report is both a moment of reflection and a celebration of what we've accomplished. Yet, we remain acutely aware that much work lies ahead. Financial constraints, infrastructure needs, and the demand for long-term sustainability continue to challenge us. However, Sibikwa has never been a stranger to adversity. Our 35-year legacy is built on adaptation, reinvention, and an unshakable belief in the power of the arts to transform lives. We are particularly proud of and thankful for the new and sustained partnerships that fuelled our work this year.

As we look toward the future, we do so with pride in what has been achieved and a renewed determination to continue building a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable cultural future.

Here's to a new year filled with innovation, creativity, and the unwavering spirit of community.

Sincerely,



Caryn Green

CEO

## Chairperson's Message

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Since our founding in 1988, Sibikwa has consistently leveraged the arts to drive education, advocacy, and transformation in South Africa's diverse communities. 2023 was no exception. It was a year of connection and engagement - facilitating links between artists and audiences, learners and teachers, and communities and possibilities.

As social, political, and economic challenges persisted locally and globally, Sibikwa remained steadfast in its purpose: to inspire, include, and ignite change through multidisciplinary arts programming. Our approach blended cultural participation with education, entrepreneurship, and policy dialogue, underpinned by our strategic pillars of Society and Community, Arts Education, Training, Arts Industry Development, and Cultural Policy. As we reflect on 2023, I am proud to acknowledge Sibikwa's unwavering commitment to artistic excellence and community empowerment.

This year, we navigated a complex socio-economic landscape, marked by both inspiring achievements and significant challenges. Our programmes benefited over 10,000 individuals, encompassing arts education, inclusive initiatives, community festivals, and professional training. These accomplishments are a testament to the dedication of our staff, the creativity of our artists, and the resilience of our communities.

However, we also faced considerable obstacles. Delays in funding disbursements and rising operational costs tested our financial stability. Many artists and organisations across South Africa grappled with similar issues, highlighting systemic challenges within the arts sector. Despite these hurdles, Sibikwa remained a beacon of hope and innovation. We adapted our strategies, forged new partnerships, and continued to provide platforms for artistic expression and cultural dialogue. Our commitment to inclusivity, particularly through programmes for individuals with disabilities, reinforced our role as a leader in accessible arts education.

Looking ahead, we are focused on enhancing our sustainability, expanding our reach, and advocating for systemic changes that support the arts sector's growth. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our funders, partners, staff, and community members for their unwavering support.

Together, we will continue to harness the transformative power of the arts to build a more inclusive and vibrant society.

Sincerely,



Pamela Grayman

Chairperson

# SOUTH AFRICA'S ARTS AND CULTURE SECTOR



## The 2023 Arts and Society Landscape

In 2023, South Africa's arts and culture sector demonstrated remarkable resilience amidst economic challenges and evolving societal dynamics. The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture allocated R6.3 billion for the 2023/24 financial year, with R1.8 billion dedicated to arts and culture promotion and development. Initiatives like the Mzansi Golden Economy (MGE) and the Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme (PESP4) aimed to bolster the sector, with PESP4 allocating R462 million to create 40,000 jobs. Despite these efforts, the demand for funding far exceeded available resources. The National Arts Council received 3,646 applications requesting over R1.4 billion, but only 209 projects were approved, receiving a total of R28.5 million. This shortfall left many artists and organisations without critical support, leading to project delays and financial strain.

Nevertheless, the year was marked by significant cultural milestones. The recognition of South African Sign Language as the 12th official language underscored a commitment to inclusivity. Exhibitions like the repatriated apartheid-era artworks showcased at the Apartheid Museum celebrated 30 years of democracy and highlighted the enduring power of art to reflect societal change. Moreover, South African designers gained international acclaim, bringing global attention to the country's fashion industry. The Cape Malay community in Cape Town continued to influence the arts scene, blending traditional heritage with contemporary creativity.

In summary, while financial constraints posed significant challenges, South Africa's arts and culture sector remained a vital force for social cohesion, economic development, and cultural expression. Sibikwa Arts Centre stands committed to contributing to this dynamic landscape through its innovative programmes and community-driven initiatives.



## Sibikwa's Governance & Financial Sustainability

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Throughout 2023, Sibikwa Arts Centre maintained its commitment to sound governance and financial stewardship amidst a shifting economic and donor landscape. The Board of Directors remained actively engaged, providing critical oversight in strategic planning, fundraising, and systems optimisation. We extend our sincere gratitude to Mr. Zwelakhe Gumede, who concluded his 4.5-year tenure on the Board in December. A Sibikwa alumnus and qualified accountant, Mr. Gumede played a pivotal role in strengthening the Centre's financial controls, reporting systems, and overall fiscal accountability.

While progress was made in cultivating funding partnerships and enhancing income-generation strategies, Sibikwa experienced financial strain due to delayed fund disbursements, rising inflationary pressures, and challenges in securing core operational and infrastructure support. These factors reflect broader systemic trends in the arts sector, where operational costs are rarely covered by project-specific grants, despite increasing compliance and delivery demands.

Nevertheless, 2023 also brought key funding successes. We welcomed the Entrepreneurial Development Trust as a new strategic partner and deepened relationships with longstanding funders including TotalEnergies, the French Institute (IFAS), the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, and the Government of Flanders. Notably, our multi-year partnership with Flanders for the *You, Me & Democracy – 4IR* project marked a significant milestone. This digital diplomacy initiative integrates augmented reality, youth engagement, and online exchange to advance democratic participation through the arts.

From a compliance perspective, Sibikwa maintained its status as a going concern and received an unqualified audit opinion for the year ended 31 December 2023. Independent auditors confirmed that the financial statements presented fairly, in all material respects, the Centre's financial position, performance, and cash flows in accordance with South African Generally Accepted Accounting Practices and the Companies Act.

Total revenue for the year rose by 26.5%, increasing from R6.7 million in 2022 to R8.5 million in 2023, a result of successful fundraising and expanded grant awards. However, this growth was offset by a proportional increase in expenditure: project costs rose to R6.57 million, and operational overheads, including staffing, security, and facilities maintenance, totalled R2.69 million. Consequently, Sibikwa recorded a net deficit, while closing the year with a cash balance of R1.24 million - enough to sustain operations for approximately 11 months at the current burn rate. However, this trend indicates a pressing need to strengthen liquidity strategies and reduce vulnerability to timing gaps in funding.

Looking ahead, Sibikwa's Board and leadership team are prioritising financial resilience through several interventions. By addressing structural funding gaps and enhancing revenue diversity, Sibikwa is laying the groundwork for a more sustainable financial future - ensuring the Centre's continued ability to deliver transformative arts programming for generations to come.



## Strategic Highlights & Achievements

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In 2023, Sibikwa continued to deepen its impact across multiple fronts, reaching a diverse and growing audience through our core programmes.

### Society and Community

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Sibikwa's work in community engagement in 2023 championed inclusive participation and creative dialogue. Our spaces and stages welcomed intergenerational audiences and celebrated the voices of underrepresented communities. *Ifindo*, an original production by the all-female Sibikwa Sisters ensemble, explored evolving perceptions of lobola and toured schools and arts centres across Ekurhuleni and Johannesburg. The *Heritage Storytelling Festival* brought together pre-schoolers, families, and emerging storytellers for a day of interactive storytelling, games, and culture, led by Sibikwa's Khula Youth Theatre Company. The *Body Moves International Inclusive Dance Festival* returned with renewed energy and a stronger African focus. Featuring artists from Kenya, Madagascar, Ireland, Flanders, and South Africa, the festival hosted workshops, live and digital performances, and disability-led dialogues. Through these programmes, Sibikwa reinforced the importance of the arts in strengthening community identity, access, and intergenerational connection.

### Education

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Education remained a core pillar of Sibikwa's programming in 2023. Through accessible, inclusive, and innovative initiatives, we nurtured artistic skills, personal growth, and career orientation for thousands of young people.

The **Sibikwa Arts Academy**, which supported 154 learners through weekend classes, excursions, and public performances. The mid-year production *Vusamazulu* honoured Credo Mutwa, while the year-end showcase *My Space, My Identity* celebrated youth expression.







## Arts Industry Development

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Sibikwa continued to enrich South Africa's cultural sector by developing platforms for performance, touring, and artistic collaboration. The total number of audience members who attended Sibikwa initiatives was 3 252, 6400 young children, youth, people with disabilities, educators and creatives benefited from Sibikwa's programmes and 209 administration, technical, teaching, professional and support staff gained employment through these programmes. These combined efforts reinforced Sibikwa's role not only as a cultural hub but also as an engine for skills development and employment in the creative sector.

The large-scale production of *1789*, in collaboration with IFAS and Théâtre du Soleil, offered employment to over 50 creatives and reached nearly 1,000 audience members. A filmed version was developed as a learning resource on the French Revolution and theatre-making.



Sibikwa served as a satellite venue for the **ASSITEJ Cradle of Creativity Festival**, hosting international performances and workshops. Our learners also performed at the Market Theatre and engaged in the Young Critics Programme.

The **Khula Youth Theatre Company**, formed through Sibikwa's inclusive education, training and internship pipeline, was established as a vibrant platform for emerging performing artists from disadvantaged and marginalised communities. Comprised of 10 young performers, the ensemble produced and toured original, issue-based theatre for schools, festivals, and community venues. Their work tackled themes of identity, resilience, and social justice, while fostering dialogue with diverse audiences, and through their participation in initiatives across Sibikwa's pillars they gained practical performance opportunities, mentorship, and professional exposure, exemplifying Sibikwa's commitment to nurturing the next generation of socially conscious artists. Both Khula and Sibikwa Arts Academy ensembles performed at prestigious corporate events, including the Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation fundraiser and the TotalEnergies AFCON Trophy Tour.



## Cultural Policy & Advocacy

Sibikwa’s long-standing commitment to arts advocacy for cultural rights, inclusive governance, and active citizenship continued in 2023 through national and international platforms.

The **Urban Culture, Democracy and Governance Labs** project continued, deepening civic education and dialogue in schools and communities, culminating in interactive theatre performances and policy forums. Taking place in Daveyton, Tembisa and Benoni, these Urban Labs work with community members and local government officials toward developing community submissions to the IDP review process and a final gathering to bring together all stakeholders to share learnings and define an actionable way forward.

Sibikwa contributed to **provincial and international conferences**, including:

- The UCLG Culture Summit in Ireland
- Community Arts Centres Indabas across four provinces
- The Commonwealth Foundation Creative Learning Programme
- Market Lab Think Tank and ABCD Unconference

## Marketing & Visibility

Efforts to strengthen visibility and audience development focused on social media growth, database expansion, and strategic publicity.

Platform	2022 Actual	2023 Actual
FACEBOOK	1274	12 418
INSTAGRAM	2964	3308
X	1005	968
LINKEDIN	1231	1294
YOUTUBE	(not recorded)	1003
MEDIA (TV, radio, print & online) Clip Count	44	41
MEDIA (TV, radio, print & online) AVE	R3 528 475	R5 421 913

Sibikwa partnered with Blue Key Digital Marketing and Maria McCloy PR to enhance engagement around flagship events, while actively building its database of 1,081 subscribers, in 2023, and audience networks.

## The Way Forward

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As we reflect on the progress and challenges of 2023, it is clear that Sibikwa remains a vital space for artistic expression, education, and social transformation. Looking ahead to 2024 and beyond, our focus is firmly on strengthening organisational resilience, expanding access to our programmes, and deepening our impact through strategic innovation and inclusive practice.

In the face of ongoing sector-wide funding instability, a key priority is enhancing **financial sustainability** - diversifying income streams, expanding our base of private donors, developing earned revenue, and pursuing multi-year partnerships with local and international funders. The goal is to build a more robust financial model that enables greater independence, stability, and long-term planning. Internally, we will continue investing in **leadership development, governance excellence, and operational systems** - strengthening monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and enhancing our culture of continuous learning, creativity and innovation.

On the **programmatic front**, we are committed to refining and scaling our core initiatives. We will continue strengthening our inclusive arts education and accredited professional training and development programmes, with plans to broaden their reach and to explore digital tools to enhance delivery. We also recognise the importance of **early childhood development** and will work toward developing participatory performance-based learning models that support foundational learning. Simultaneously, our focus on **youth and disability inclusion** will remain central, as we partner with special needs schools, advocacy organisations, and policy stakeholders to advance arts access for all. In line with global trends, **digital transformation, democracy and placemaking** will shape our strategy going forward in exploring how emerging technologies such as augmented reality and virtual collaboration can be used to engage youth and democratise access to arts and culture.

*Sibikwa remains deeply rooted in the belief that the arts are not a luxury, but rather a necessity for healing, community-building, and human connection.*

## Conclusion

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As we turn the page to a new chapter, we carry forward the momentum of 2023 with optimism, clarity of purpose, and an unwavering commitment to creative excellence and social justice. This past year has reaffirmed Sibikwa's enduring role as a beacon of artistic innovation, community empowerment, and cultural transformation. Despite the persistent challenges facing our sector, the milestones we have achieved reflect the strength of our vision, the ingenuity of our team, and the steadfast support of our partners and communities. Looking ahead, we are resolute in our focus on sustainability, inclusivity, and growth. With the continued collaboration of our funders, supporters, and stakeholders, we are prepared to imagine boldly, build resiliently, and celebrate fully - a future in which every voice is heard, every story is honoured, and every space is a stage for transformation.