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Press Release

Tour gives behind-the-scenes glimpse of Cape Town Carnival magic

Beyond the doors of a warehouse on a busy Maitland street, a place of wonder awaits. This is the magical world that is home to the Cape Town Carnival Workshop. Crammed with otherworldly steel shapes, colourful structures and rails of glittering costumes, it is a buzzing world where dreams become a reality and ideas are transformed into awe-inspiring creations that will WOW the crowds this March.

With just one month to go, preparations are in full swing for the most spectacular Cape Town Carnival yet. As part of the build-up to the annual event taking place in Green Point on 15 March, designers, artists, performers, and artisans welcomed media, guests and sponsors to the magic of the Cape Town Carnival Workshop yesterday (EDS 11 February).

The Cape Town Carnival workshop is the beating heart of this iconic event and the space where everything comes to life. It is the home of all the brilliant creatives who work tirelessly away from the spotlight to craft the various floats and costumes the Cape Town Carnival has become synonymous with.

Brad Baard, Cape Town Carnival Creative Director, says, **“Fundamentally, the workshop space is about an idea. The creative ideas that are given form in this space begin completely intangibly. Through the various departments in the workshop, the invisible gets drawn out of the magical fog of possibilities. What you see here is not just one idea, but the accumulation of hundreds of ideas honed by various experts.”**

Cape Town Carnival Board Chair Prof Rachel Jafta reflected on 15 years of incredible Cape Town Carnival performances. **“I stand in front of you with a heart filled with gratitude and joy. Gratitude because so many people found it in their hearts to make this dream of the Cape Town Carnival a reality. In this workshop, you will get a sense of the vibe of the Cape Town Carnival and how it is changing lives while it prepares the magic you will see on 15 March.”**

It is clear that the Cape Town Carnival is so much more than just a once-off annual celebration. It is a project which facilitates the incredible talents of the artists and designers who bring the parade to life. The event provides year-round employment opportunities for costume designers, makeup artists, fabricators, painters and steel crafters, allowing them to showcase their creativity to local and international audiences.

One of these creatives is Ayabonga Busakwe, a fabricator at the Cape Town Carnival workshop. He describes fabrication as the process that “brings to life” the various floats after the steel “skeletons” that provide the foundation have been crafted.

Speaking about the platform the Cape Town Carnival provides to creatives, Busakwe says, **“It’s a real highlight having thousands of people looking at the float you helped bring to life. It’s so rewarding**



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seeing the final product come together and being paraded down the fanwalk in front of thousands of Carnival fans.”

For Luando Nyanga, who is responsible for painting the floats and will celebrate his 10-year anniversary with The Cape Town Carnival this year, the workshop has given him an opportunity to develop completely new skills. **“I still remember how cool I thought everything was on my first day. When I came into the space, I saw all these floats, which were completely new to me, and I immediately fell in love with the scenic department. There was a lot of pressure when I learnt how to use spray paint, but I did it with energy, and now I can add minor details with different colours to help bring the floats to life.”**

Once the floats have been built, the attention shifts to ensuring the performers are ready to shine. In 2025, over 1500 performers will take to the fan walk, all needing costumes and makeup, which highlights the enormous numbers the costume and make-up departments work with.

While the efforts to prepare the performers are undoubtedly challenging, it is also extremely rewarding for those involved. Makeup artist Raine Tauber says: **“I’ve been doing makeup for 23 years and the Cape Town Carnival is the most spectacular event I get to be part of. Being able to bring characters to life through makeup, glitter and other mediums is really exciting for us artists.”**

With almost one month to go until the Cape Town Carnival sweeps into Green Point for a night of celebrating the best of Cape Town and South Africa, Cape Town Carnival Trustee and international celebrity Jo-Ann Strauss urges people to reflect on what it means for the performers taking part. **“Imagine the children who, during the year, pour their hearts into creating this Cape Town Carnival dream and invite all of us to be part of it. The Cape Town Carnival gives these young people a chance to dream and a platform to make their dreams possible.”**

Entry to the event is free but tickets will also be available for seats in strategically placed stands along the parade route. Tickets for Cape Town Carnival seats are on sale on Quicket. For more information see capetowncarnival.com.

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