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PRESS RELEASE

Local creatives to light up 2026 Cape Town Carnival

The Cape Town Carnival, which will take on the Green Point Fanwalk on 21 March, has become synonymous with sparkles, spectacle and the city's best street party. Showcasing the talent of 1500 performers from diverse communities, it is a joyful celebration that brings together an audience of all ages.

The behind-the-scenes tour at the Cape Town Carnival workshop highlighted the Cape Town Carnival's objective to elevate local artists and develop craftsmen and artisans.

Inspired by the 2026 theme "Follow your HeART", this year's Carnival stars 12 "Carnival Champions" drawn from across the city's creative community. Two of these champions are trail-blazing graffiti artist Rizah Potgieter, and the legendary DJ Ready D, who will be part of the *BPM - Beats Paint Move* float.

Speaking at the Workshop Tour today (EDS: Thursday 12 February), Potgieter described how excited he was to have the unique opportunity to transform street art into a centre-stage performance. "It's the first time a graffiti artist has been featured in the Carnival, and I'm really excited to express myself in front of thousands of people as I create live during the event."

Fellow Champion and fashion designer Stephen van Eeden – who inspired the Boldly Beautiful float – emphasised the Carnival's role in elevating the local fashion industry.

"Fashion is sometimes underplayed but it is definitely an artform," he said. "It also has the ability to change lives, and this event helps to put fashion in the Western Cape on a platform. By focusing on the local industry, we can teach skills that can be passed on from generation to generation," he said.

Other Carnival Champions include singers Zolani Mahola, Anslin Gysman, *Suidooster* star Natasha van der Merwe, late hip-hop artist Bravo le Roux, make-up influencer Jemma Fourie, performance legend Terry Fortune, activist Nyaniso Tutu-Burris, make-up artist Qhayiya Tyali, and media personality Dylan Majavie.

Besides shining a light on well-known artists, the Cape Town Carnival also provides an opportunity for artisans to learn and perfect skills – such as seamstress Daphne Lodewyk, who has worked in the costume department for a decade.

“The Cape Town Carnival is a special event to work for because every year we have new costumes inspired by the new themes, which means I get to learn new things. My proudest costume was probably the Madiba shirt – it was so big we had to lay it on the floor. Madiba will be featuring in the event again this year, but he’ll be wearing a new shirt!”

The Cape Town Carnival’s focus on celebrating and supporting local artists and performers is particularly meaningful given the fact that many artistic endeavors have experienced severe funding cuts.

This was alluded to by Mayoral Committee Member for Safety and Security JP Smith, who spoke about the City’s decision to step into the breach: “We are in a challenging time with the defunding of Western Cape events (EDS: By the National Department of Sport Arts and Culture). The inadequate contribution is a travesty, but the Cape Town Council recently approved R26-million extra for events to make up for the shortfall as it would be terrible to lose these important cultural celebrations.”

Smith is a long-time supporter of the Cape Town Carnival, having been present for all 16 years that the event has been running. “It is an event close to my heart. It’s a collective cultural energy drink and plays such an important role in social cohesion as it never fails to remind us that as Capetonians, more unites us than divides us.”

The Cape Town Carnival will take place on Somerset Street, Green Point, on March 21. The event is FREE but there are limited VIP and seated stand tickets on sale on <https://capetowncarnival.com>

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