

Special Award recipients honoured at 20th Annual BASA Awards, partnered by Hollard and *Business Day*

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Human rights activist Justice Albie Sachs, Swiss cultural centre Pro Helvetia and law firm Webber Wentzel have all been honoured with Special Awards at the 20th Annual BASA Awards, partnered by Hollard and *Business Day*.



The Special Awards are selected by the Business and Arts South Africa (BASA) Board of Directors and celebrate remarkable contributions by individuals, businesses, and organisations to the sustainability of South Africa's arts. The awards promote the core goals of BASA's strategy, i.e. to act as a change-maker, and to facilitate connectivity and sustainability through robust and ongoing research and diverse public, private and civil society programmes.

Justice Albie Sachs was named this year's Art Champion, while the Chairman's Premier Award went to Webber Wentzel for pro bono legal service offered to the Gerard Sekoto Foundation from 1986 - 2017. Pro Helvetia, was honoured with the Diplomacy in the Arts Award for ongoing support of diverse arts projects in Southern Africa.

"This year's Special Awards winners are powerful endorsements of the ability of individuals, businesses and other organisations to make an impact on South Africa's arts sector and highlight the extensive work that BASA is doing in creating exciting and innovative partnerships," said Andre le Roux, Chairman of the BASA Board.

Art Champion recipient Justice Albie Sachs' appreciation for art began as a child. While in exile during the '80s, he acquired some of his most precious South African artworks. A highlight of Justice Sachs' involvement and support for the arts is the Constitutional Court Art Collection. In 1994, when he was appointed Justice of the Constitutional Court, Sachs together with former Justice Yvonne Mokgoro, sought the input of dozens of artists – local and international, renowned and amateur – as they decorated the court. The collection, which is available for the public to see, currently holds over 450 pieces by local and international artists and was assembled as a symbol of one of the founding principles of South Africa's radical new Constitution namely, Humanity.

Sachs, who currently resides on the boards of both the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa as well as the National Arts Festival, recognises the power of artworks to enable transformative moments of exchange and, in that way, fundamentally alter the ways in which we interact with one another.

"Judge Sachs has served on the National Arts Festival Board since 2008 and, in his tenure, has brought his considerable

passion for the arts; his empathy; and his intellectual curiosity to bear on all that we do. He is a formidable ally in our ongoing mission to sustain the arts sector and position it to make a contribution to the rebuilding of our country. This BASA award is an acknowledgement of the entirety and integrity of his contribution - both seen and unseen - and we extend our warmest congratulations to him," Ayanda Mjekula, National Arts Festival Chairman.

The Diplomacy in the Arts Award is given in recognition of foreign missions that contribute to the development and preservation of the arts in South Africa, as well as the continued prioritisation of cultural diplomacy between South Africa and the international community.

Pro Helvetia reaches out to most countries in the Southern African region in order to promote artistic and cultural exchange. While raising awareness of Swiss contemporary arts in the region, Pro Helvetia forges ties with local organisations and event organisers. In the process, it develops and nurtures long-term partnerships, initiates co-productions with artists from the region and organises tours and residencies. Their programmes are interdisciplinary and exploratory in nature, placing special emphasis on music, contemporary dance and theatre, as well as visual and digital arts and design.

Pro Helvetia encourages initiatives that forge connections between the world of the arts and other fields of inquiry and work. It also supports exchanges around critical issues and questions facing artists and the arts field within the differently demanding and complex realities of Southern Africa and Switzerland.

The Chairman's Premier Award is made at the discretion of the Chairman of BASA and recognises sustained and extraordinary commitment to the arts in South Africa. This year's recipient is Webber Wentzel for providing pro bono legal services to the Gerard Sekoto Foundation (GSF) for almost 30 years.

Gerard Sekoto is considered by many to be the 'Father of South African Art'. As a South African, some of his works have achieved extremely high value on the international art market with pieces carried in private and corporate collections around the world.

Since the original founding of the Gerard Sekoto Foundation, Webber Wentzel's legal team has provided free legal advice in researching Sekoto's life, searching for his artworks and publishing books about his art. To date, the law firm has provided pro bono work to the GSF to the value of R12m.

About BASA:

Business and Arts South Africa (NPC) is an internationally recognised South African development agency with a suite of integrated programmes implemented nationally and internationally. BASA encourages mutually beneficial partnerships between business and the arts, securing the future development of the arts sector in South Africa and contributing to corporate success through Shared Value. BASA was founded in 1997 as a joint initiative of the Department of Arts and Culture and the business sector as a public/private partnership. For more information on BASA contact us on 011 447 2289 or visit our website: www.basa.co.za

The members of the BASA Board are Andre Le Roux (Chairman), Herman Bosman, Michelle Constant (CEO), Mandla Langa, Hilton Lawler, Khanyi Mamba, Gianni Mariano, Dorothea Moors, Carel Nolte, Yacoob Abba Omar, Charmaine Soobramoney, Mandie van der Spuy (Deputy Chairperson) and Gail Walters.

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" Basa hosts 'My Debut Story' panel discussion: Celebrating the success of emerging creative "

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Business and Arts South Africa (BASA) is an internationally recognised South African development agency which integrates the Arts into, and contributes to, Corporate's commercial success. With a suite of integrated programmes BASA encourages mutually beneficial partnerships between business and the arts.

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