

# Basa Awards 2020 Q&A

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*CEO of Business and Arts South Africa (Basa) Ashraf Johaardien (AJ) describes the 2020 iteration of the annual Basa Awards, partnered by Hollard, as "an integrated online experience available to the public from 19 November 2020". Sascha Polkey (SP) chatted to him to find out more:*

**SP:** Ashraf, we've known each other for nearly three decades. From being drama students at the University of Cape Town in the early '90s, to working together as colleagues at the National Arts Festival from 2017 to 2019, our respective journeys across the South African creative landscape have given us perspective on the importance of awards, but this year the recognition of arts programmes, projects and artists just feels so vital to ensuring that the evolution of the arts continues. What are some of the awards' programmes you've played a role in producing, and how has your overall experience of awards' processes and ceremonies translated into your vision for the 23rd Annual Basa Awards partnered by Hollard?

**AJ:** Well, we've jointly worked on the Standard Bank Young Artist Awards, the Standard Bank Ovation Awards, and the Cape Town Fringe Fresh Awards, but prior to that, I also produced the annual Arts and Culture Trust Awards (from 2005 to 2010), the University of Johannesburg's Awesome Awards in 2013 as well as their 2015 Dignitas Awards. In terms of the various processes and ceremonies, they've all been quite different; but like the Basa Awards, all these have been aligned in terms of a very clear two-pronged purpose: celebrating success and rewarding excellence. I only joined Basa last year, so this year is my second Basa Awards and due to the challenges of 2020, we've really had to think out of the box with regard to the vision for this year. We sat down together with our lead partner Hollard, to get creative and, in the end, I think it's fair to say that with regard to this year's format, we've thrown the box away entirely in some respects.



Ashraf Johaardien. Photo by Theana Breugem

**SP:** Can you tell us more about the integrated online experience you have lined up? What exactly do you mean by that?

**AJ:** Guests who attend awards ceremonies have a certain set of expectations, as do viewers who watch broadcasts or recordings of those ceremonies. Given the challenges of lockdown, our team really wanted to push beyond the limitations of a webinar, to offer audiences, finalists and winners something that felt less predictable than what they've become accustomed to lately. So no, we have not reinvented the wheel, but we've limited the Zoom content to (hopefully!) less than 10%. When we go live, audiences will be able to stream an exceptional awards showcase, emceed by Fleur du Cap Award-winner Roshina Ratnam and founder of Fomo Fridays Joburg, Ayabonga Lwazi Ngoma; directed by Alby Michaels; featuring performance and music by uKhoiKhoi, with musician/composer Yogin Sullaphen, alongside vocalist and performing artist Anelisa Stuurman. Alternatively, guests will have the option to interact with various elements of the awards' platform, including a virtual exhibition by our featured artist Banele Khoza, an all-new Basa Awards podcast series hosted by news anchor Samm Marshall, listening to messages, learning more about the 2020 adjudication panel and, of course, exploring the various categories and finalists in print, as well as video on demand. They can also return at any point to

revisit the site and its content.

**SP:** You mentioned that Banele Khoza is the 'featured artist'. What does that mean?

**AJ:** Banele is a visual artist, curator and gallery director. Basa commissioned him to create the works, which are being presented to this year's Basa Award-winners. He is the winner of the 2017 Absa L'Atelier Gerard Sekoto Award, and he was named on the *Mail & Guardian's* list of top 200 young South Africans.

**SP:** Who is invited to the bespoke experience of the 23rd annual Basa Awards, partnered by Hollard?

**AJ:** Everyone! Anyone with internet access can log on to experience this year's ceremony via the Basa website, from 19 November 2020, and navigate to the 'Awards' tab.

### About Business and Arts South Africa (Basa)

Basa is constituted in terms of the new Companies Act and is registered as a public benefit organisation. Mandated to champion business investment within the arts, cultural and heritage sector, Basa is the connector catalyst for businesses and the arts, driving focused and sustained partnership by unlocking shared value and fostering social cohesion. The Basa board of directors comprises chairperson Charmaine Soobramoney, with deputy chair Mandie van der Spuy and Kojo Baffoe, Kathy Berman, Devi Sankaree Govender, Ashraf Johaardien, Hilton Lawler, Khanyi Mamba, Unathi Malunga, Makgati Molebatsi, Zingisa Motloba, Dr Yacoob Omar and Mirna Wessels.

For more information or to become a Basa member please visit [www.basa.co.za](http://www.basa.co.za).

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### Business and Arts South Africa



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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