



Artistic programme at IFAS

Principles, vocation, resources

Don't look for an exhibition room, an auditorium or a theatre at the French Institute of South Africa : IFAS does not intend to replace an already existing cultural network, as concentrated as active, as professional as technically up-to-date. In fact, everything has been said : the artistic policy of IFAS is already and will be out of necessity a policy of partnership, a true enterprise of artistic co-operation.

Even included in its birth, the ambitions of the Institute can be revealed considering its neighbourhood : Newtown, Johannesburg.

Situated near the Market Theatre, opposite Kippie's, adjoined to Newtown Galleries, its windows overlooking both the Museum Africa and the Afrika Cultural Centre, IFAS develops an eloquent topology that gives enough information on the characteristics of its projects : **favouring the implantation of French and to a larger extent French-speaking artists in the local cultural fabric, leading with the South Africans to a reflection on a common plan of action.**

It is, on the other hand, the duty of the Institute to **help accordingly South African artists to find a favourable reception in France** and also to play an expert's role, widely relayed in Paris by the artistic agency of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the "Agence française d'action artistique" (AFAA).

Finally, a role of welcoming artists on a residence basis completes somehow this double vocation, and allows both to organise exchanges between the two countries :

South Africans going to France and French and/or French-speaking artists visiting South Africa.

The necessity of a modern vision of artistic relations has forced IFAS to go "out of the walls", and to find on site two privileged partnerships, two associated centers :

- The first one is situated at **Amakhono**, 10 km away from the Johannesburg City centre, between Soweto and Roodepoort. It is a haven of creativity, a place of life, a centre for interdisciplinary art. A French cottage will welcome musicians, photographers, painters and comedians, bringing them into contact with the black roots of the South African culture.
- The second is in Cape Town. The Photolab PICTO created with the help of IFAS an exhibition room : the **IFAS-PICTO gallery**. Together, these two organisations are setting up an annual programme of exhibitions of photos. This partnership gives the French Institute a point of contact to observe the new images evolving in this country at a time of transition.

IFAS is furthermore publishing a quaterly newsletter, the "**Wolhuter Mail**", named simply after the street on which the Institute is situated. It is a way of communication, but also, as we hope soon, an open forum offering to the public of the Institute the possibility to participate in the contemporary artistic debate, allowing the public to get informed about the artists of the programme of IFAS.

We can only emphasize the French-speaking vocation of IFAS, which makes the Institute a plural partner ; a regional approach allows true cultural contacts : Indian Ocean, panafrican dialogue, openness to the French-speaking world.

Thus, the latest born cultural centre of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs can try to prove the advantage of a French-speaking partnership, and to establish itself as an essential piece of a wonderful mosaic which shows the cultural side of the New South Africa.