

Campaign for Free Expression NPC  
Reg: 2021/582081/08  
064 673 9874 or 071 546 7435  
info@freeexpression.org.za  
www.freeexpression.org.za

**Campaign  
for Free  
Expression**

## **The State of Free Expression in the South African Cultural Sector: A Discussion**

**Johannesburg, 04 April 2023**

The Campaign for Free Expression (CFE) will be releasing an important report into the state of free expression in South Africa's cultural sector and hosting a discussion on the report on April 13 at the forecourt of the Wits Art Museum at 18:00.

Cultural workers face many obstacles in exercising the right to free expression. Many artists believe they are stifled and suppressed due to the politicisation of the boards of arts funding agencies. They say they face the withdrawal of funds or sanctions if they speak out against maladministration, a lack of transparency in application processes, inadequate leadership, and hostile reactions to provocative work. These factors create an environment where many opportunities for the growth of their work and the sector are lost.

The maladministration of the Presidential Economic Stimulus Programme (PESP), which was meant to help the arts and culture sector at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, focused attention on how the National Arts Council (NAC), in particular, mismanaged and mishandled the distribution of funds and the selection of beneficiaries.

The CFE report and subsequent discussion will explore the factors that affect and disrupt growth and sustainability in the arts and culture sector, as detailed by cultural workers. It explores the extent to which political pressures lead to censorship and censorship to self-censorship, and the impact this has on the ability of cultural workers to engage in their sector.

The report will be available at the event and from [www.freeexpression.org.za](http://www.freeexpression.org.za).

You are invited to attend the discussion at 18.00 at the Wits Art Museum.

\*The Campaign for Free Expressions is a non-partisan, non-profit organisation that defends and promotes free expression for all across southern Africa.

**Contact:** Thokozani Mbwana

thokozani@freeexpression.org.za

066 200 2857

