Art Space

Strategy Summary

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Nafasi

Kiswahili (noun):

1. opportunity; possibility; chance

2. a vibrant art centre and platform for artistic exchange in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania where contemporary visual artists and performing artists come together to create, learn, inspire, exhibit and perform.
Nafasi Art Space is a leading contemporary art centre and creative hub in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, where visual and performing artists create, learn, exchange, exhibit and perform. It was founded in 2008 by Tanzanian artists who wanted to create a platform that promoted the arts and invited the public to engage with and experience Tanzanian culture. Nafasi has since grown into a vibrant space that hosts 38 studios, exhibition halls, performance spaces, a gallery, and a children’s art centre. Nafasi hosts regular exhibitions, performances, festivals and other art-focused public events.

Today, with more than 60 member artists, as well as trainings, workshops, artist residencies, and a lively programme of inclusive and welcoming public events, Nafasi is one of the leading cultural centres in Tanzania and a home for the arts.

True to its name “Nafasi”, which means “chance” or “opportunity” in Swahili, Nafasi strives to create vital spaces and opportunities for artists to create new and original artwork and connect with audiences. Nafasi promotes the human right to participate in free and active cultural life, strengthens community, and helps build a shared sense of cultural pride and identity.

“"My time at Nafasi will always be one of the best experiences ever..."”
- Ayubu Mbabazi, Nafasi Intern
In 2018, Nafasi celebrates its 10th anniversary. In its first decade of existence, Nafasi has demonstrated that fostering creative and artistic expression and making art accessible to all can play a vital role in economic development and social cohesion, both driving innovation and employment and also promoting cultural diversity and freedom of expression.

Nafasi's core objectives focus on promotion of culture as a human right and also a source of meaningful employment. To date, Nafasi has built a thriving creative ecosystem of studios, galleries, performance and rehearsal spaces, and meeting places for exchange and open dialogue.

Our work provides employment, gives artists a vibrant place to create, learn, and exchange, and offers an extensive programme of free and inclusive events for all. Here we set out our plan to continue our work and become sustainable over time.

Nafasi will continue to build upon the success of its first ten years, with additional focus on building partnerships in the creative sector, training tomorrow's art managers, stimulating artistic collaboration, and developing audiences. We will continue to advocate, promote, and champion contemporary Tanzanian art.

We believe in
1 Artistic integrity and independence
2 Exchange and open dialogue
3 Social transformation through art
4 Artist-centred ethos
Strategic Objectives

1. **Creation**: A supportive working environment for contemporary visual and performing artists, providing physical and creative infrastructure for independent art production, creation, and presentation.

2. **Learning and exchange**: A space for critical learning to stimulate the discovery and production of contemporary art in Tanzania, through education and exchange between Tanzanian artists and the local, regional, and international art world.

3. **Exhibition and performance**: An active public programme that reflects and represents Nafasi’s activities and creates a platform for visitors to participate in, purchase, and experience contemporary art.

4. **Active artist collective**: To host an active collective of contemporary visual and performing artists who drive the activities of the centre, support and inspire the artistic community, and stimulate critical discourse in society.

5. **Audience and outreach**: To grow, maintain, and nurture new audiences for contemporary arts, through outreach to communities with limited access to the arts.

6. **Sustainable arts organisation**: To build a sustainable and independent art institution that drives innovation and excellence in arts and culture production, programming, and management.
Growing our capacity and infrastructure will build on the artistic and entrepreneurial traffic between the artists, the public, and the artists’ clients. It will also support the sustainability of the centre with increased income through membership fees for the studios, venue rental, workshop and meeting space, and events.

Our objectives here are to help set up the physical infrastructure for the artists to work in, as well as create a platform for public and business to find artistic services in a centre that can sustain itself over time.

Objectives:

1. Create and maintain Nafasi’s work environment and production facilities, offering affordable studio space to Tanzanian artists.

2. Create spaces and resources for learning and exchange for artists, including improving access to information about current art trend and art history for artists and the public.

3. Build and maintain the infrastructure needed for public engagements and promotion of the arts at Nafasi.
Most artists in Tanzania do not have formal art education and have had no or limited contact with international art movements. Based on the needs and requests of the artists, we offer training to improve their qualifications.

We will work to increase the capacity of member artists through training, workshops and active incoming and outgoing artist exchanges. This serves to improve the quality of their work, increase their chances of making a living as artists, and set the standard for a new generation of artists in Tanzania.

Objectives:

1. Foster and active learning environment by providing workshops and training for artists.

2. Stimulate exchange with artists locally, regionally, and internationally in order to connect Tanzanian artists with the global art community by creating an active international and regional art exchange programme through artists residencies (short and long term).

3. Provide opportunities for networking and exchange with visiting artists and Nafasi artists with special projects/presentations.

4. Train aspiring arts professional (programme managers, curators, gallery managers, etc.) to professionalise the art industry and provide valuable on-the-job learning for students.
We work to increase awareness of Tanzanian art by running a lively programme of free events. Events have high quality art on display as well as performance art (e.g. concerts) which can attract a higher number of visitors. In this way we reach out to a general public that is not accustomed to visiting visual art exhibitions and start a dialogue about art in Tanzanian society. This also provides a platform for connecting the different art fields in Tanzania.

We increase the visibility of Nafasi artists and their works, create a stage for buyers, and increase entrepreneurial opportunities for the artists.

Run a regular programme of activities and events for the public that presents the work of Nafasi and visiting artists and showcase the wealth and vitality of African contemporary art:

- Exhibitions (internal and external, 18 per year, ~2000 people)
- Interactive events / Chap Chap (10-11 per year, ~800 people)
- Concerts (10-11 per year, ~3500 people)
- Film screenings (10-11 per year, ~800 people)
- Public art classes (1 per week, ~20-30 people)
- Annual art exhibition featuring 20-30 artists (~1000 people)

Through events listed above, link art disciplines to stimulate the exchange of ideas between visual, performing, and technical artists.
The member artists form the Nafasi Artist Collective, which provides a community to promote, support, and sustain their collective voice, merge their creative resources through collaboration, and help promote the work of the art centre.

Nafasi has a selection procedure for new artists, which is critically reviewed and adapted over time and as necessary. When studio spaces become available, a call for interest in studio spaces is distributed via our database, social media, current artists and other contacts (universities, cultural centres etc.). The selection committee consists of the Nafasi management, two artists members and one external invited member.

The committee focuses on the following criteria: art field, gender, experience, motivation, art portfolios and referees. We are working to increase the number of female artists and diversify the range of art forms over time.

**Objectives:**

1. Maintain and extend the Nafasi Art Collective.
2. Increase the percentage of female artists represented by the collective by identifying new channels of advertising vacancies which are likely to attract a higher number of female applicants.
3. Diversify the range of art forms from those currently represented in the Nafasi art collective.
We actively develop audiences and reach out to the community to raise visibility and awareness of contemporary art in Tanzania.

Our audience development initiatives will come from PR, marketing and promotion strategies using radio, TV, and print media; physical promotions such as flyers, posters, brochures; and digital and new media including social platforms and our website and weekly newsletter.

We strive to build and nurture audiences that are diverse in age, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic background, and interests. We also seek to engage specifically with people who are marginalised or who struggle to have their interests and rights protected in society, and to give them opportunities to raise their voices through art.

Objectives:

1. Increase the visibility and awareness of contemporary art in Tanzania through a range of media by delivering a comprehensive marketing and communications plan.

2. Stimulate conversation and dialogue about the role of art in society through audience outreach activities.

3. Connect artists with the local community through outreach that will positively impact society and promote societal transformation.
Our long-term sustainability will be delivered through all previous objectives as well as sound management practices and income generating activities.

We are a non-profit organisation with a five-member board that is selected by the Nafasi Artist Collective during their yearly general meeting. The board meets four times a year and hires the management, which consists of five technical staff, and four supporting staff.

Nafasi has a range of income-generating activities, including rental fees for studio space, commission fees, and a small bar and restaurant on site. We have brought in consultants to assess opportunities to develop more income and have a plan in place to implement suitable ideas.

1. Employ sound management practices in the day-to-day running of Nafasi, including: annual general meetings; staff training and development; annual external audit; regular budget and forecast checks.

2. Increase earned revenue in order to boost sustainability.

3. Partnerships and Collaborations: Provide networking and partnership opportunities with other artist and culture organisations for the benefit of the organisation and artist members.

4. Monitoring and evaluation of all programmes to keep track of progress and improve activities efficiency and success.
Nafasi Artist Members
The primary beneficiaries are the artists who work here. Members enjoy priority at exhibitions, select the board, have monthly meetings and participate/vote at the Annual General Meeting where the overall direction of the organisation is set.

Artists in Residence (AiR)
The visiting and outgoing AiRs work, train, teach and network at Nafasi or abroad. They play an important role in increasing knowledge exchange and connecting Nafasi and Nafasi artists to wider art movements.

Arts and Arts Management Students
We work directly with art departments at local universities to provide students with opportunities to learn and experience hands-on training at Nafasi.

Creative Sector Professionals
Nafasi employs six staff, while up to 75 people work directly or indirectly around events happening several times per month, including light and sound engineers, trainors, caterers, security, taxis, etc.

Partner Cultural Centres
Exchange between centres on visual and performing arts will make the entire cultural sector stronger. We work with art and culture organisations locally, regionally, and internationally to exchange ideas, and build collaboration.

Local Community and General Public
Our target audience is the local community, who are welcomed to all of Nafasi’s public events, which are free of charge and accessible to all. The general public is exposed to new concepts and ideas through art and challenged to confront social issues raised by Nafasi’s exhibitions and events.