



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **IDAHOBIT 2026 at the Goethe-Institut Johannesburg**

At the Heart of Democracy: A Pan-African Celebration of Queer Art, Language, and Resistance  
Johannesburg, South Africa – 21 May 2026

The Goethe-Institut Johannesburg presents IDAHOBIT 2026, a bold, multi-sensory celebration of queer creativity and dialogue taking place on Thursday, 21 May 2026 from 15:00 to 22:00. Marking the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia, this year's programme expands into an immersive cultural experience under the global theme "At the Heart of Democracy."

Featured artists and contributors include Rayanne Chidzvondo and Rachel Ngeitokondjo Sakeus (visual art), alongside interdisciplinary practitioners such as Troye Shannon, Sisipho Madubela, Seth Riley, and Niza Jay, as well as the Phefumla Queer Collective, whose work engages performance, theatre, and community storytelling.

The film programme includes works such as *Tebogo*, directed by Carl Collison, and a short film by OUT Moris, an independent, community-driven media platform focused on LGBTIQ+ visibility and storytelling. A drag art performance by "Immaculate Angel" and DJ Naledi Chai will close off the exhibition. Developed in collaboration with key cultural and human rights partners including the Austrian Cultural Forum, Institut Français (IFAS), Pro Helvetia, Heinrich-Böll-Foundation, Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation, and the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria - the event reflects a shared commitment to advancing dialogue, inclusion, and creative expression across the region.

### **From 2025 to 2026: Expanding the Vision**

Building on the success of IDAHOBIT 2025, which brought audiences together through film, panel discussion, and music in an intimate evening of reflection and exchange, the 2026 edition significantly expands both scale and scope. Last year's programme featured the screening of *Young, Gifted & Queer*, a film by Renaldo Schwarp alongside critical conversations with academics and creatives, creating a space for dialogue around identity, representation, and community.

In 2026, that project evolves into a fully immersive, participatory experience, shifting from conversation into embodied storytelling through art, film, and performance which the Goethe-Institut Johannesburg has invited Renaldo Schwarp to curate.

### **A Call That Reached Across the Continent**

At the core of IDAHOBIT 2026 is a continent-wide open call for artists - inviting creatives from across Sub-Saharan Africa to respond to a curatorial framework centred on language as a site of power and resistance. Artists were encouraged to explore how language has historically been used to exclude, regulate, and silence queer identities, while also recognising how queer communities actively reclaim, reshape, and reinvent language as a tool for identity, belonging, and resistance.

The response drew submissions from across the region, reflecting a wide spectrum of perspectives from deeply personal narratives to politically engaged and experimental work. Selected artists receive both a platform within the exhibition and a \$300 USD (±R5000) honorarium, contributing to a broader ecosystem of support for queer cultural production.

### **Creating Space for Queer Artists Across Africa**

Providing a platform for queer artists from across Africa is one way of engaging with history and its ongoing impact. In many African countries, the criminalisation of homosexuality is rooted in colonial legal and moral frameworks that continue to shape social attitudes and institutional realities today. Reflecting on this context helps to better understand the conditions under which exclusion and vulnerability persist.

From a pan-African perspective, solidarity is grounded in recognising shared histories and interconnected developments across the continent. Creating space for queer artists enables the visibility of perspectives that challenge established ideas of gender, identity, and belonging, while fostering dialogue, care, and imagination. It underscores the importance of self-expression, cultural diversity, and human dignity.

Operating from South Africa where LGBTQIA+ rights are legally protected also creates the possibility to support creatives from contexts where such freedoms are restricted. The Goethe-Institut South Africa works with 15 institutes in Sub-Saharan Africa, where in some countries events of this nature cannot be held, publicly presented, or openly promoted.

### **A Living Exhibition: IDAHOBIT 2026**

Curated by award-winning filmmaker and creative strategist Renaldo Schwarp, the Goethe-Institut is transformed into a living, guided exhibition space a multi-layered environment where audiences move through interconnected works spanning visual art, film, and performance.

Rather than presenting static displays, the exhibition unfolds as a constructed narrative experience, where language is encountered as something spoken, embodied, performed, and contested. Through this approach, the programme positions queer expression not as an add-on to democracy, but as something central to its function and future.

### **Programme Experience**

The programme begins at 15:00 with a series of interactive sessions, workshops, and discussions developed in collaboration with partner organisations, creating space for dialogue around equality, diversity, and social cohesion. These exchanges foreground lived experience while encouraging collective reflection and learning. The opening sequence follows, featuring a live performance by the Phefumla Queer Collective, a curated opening film, and welcome remarks.

As evening falls, the space shifts into an immersive showcase of queer artistic expression. Audiences encounter a layered programme of installations, performances, and film screenings examining identity, representation, and the politics of language. Across these works, deeply personal stories intersect with broader social realities, offering insight into both the challenges and resilience of queer communities across Africa. Music, live activation, and informal gathering elements close the evening, reinforcing the event's emphasis on community, connection, and shared presence.

## **At the Heart of Democracy**

IDAHOBIT 2026 engages directly with the tension between formal democratic ideals and lived realities, asking what it truly means for queer lives to exist at the centre of civic and cultural life. By amplifying voices from across the continent, the programme contributes to a broader rethinking of democracy as something shaped not only by institutions, but by language, identity, and cultural expression.

### **Event Details**

Event: IDAHOBIT 2026 - At the Heart of Democracy

Date: Thursday, 21 May 2026

Time: 15:00 - 22:00

Venue: Goethe-Institut Johannesburg, 119 Jan Smuts Avenue, Parkwood

Entry: Free

Language: Multilingual

RSVP here: [Event Registration IDAHOBIT 2026 - Formular ausfüllen](#)

### **About IDAHOBIT**

Observed annually on 17 May, IDAHOBIT raises awareness about discrimination and violence faced by LGBTQIA+ communities worldwide and calls for continued action toward equality, dignity, and human rights.

### **Closing**

Through collaboration, creativity, and critical engagement, IDAHOBIT 2026 offers more than a cultural programme; it creates a space where new narratives can emerge, and where queer voices are not only heard, but recognised as essential to the ongoing shaping of democratic life.

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