

Press Release: African attractions association to inspire global and local industry with second virtual conference

For Immediate Release

The African Association of Visitor Experiences and Attractions (AAVEA), in partnership with South African Tourism (SAT), the marketing agency for the Department of Tourism, is pleased to announce that it will host its second virtual conference, AAVEA 2021, on Thursday 19 August 2021.

This year's virtual conference will feature a theme focussed on *"Unfolding future: Insights that will inform our approaches for tomorrow"* and is set to be a day of inspiring presentations by keynote international speakers, thought-provoking panel discussions, an interactive exhibition space, and more.

Stepping up to virtually inspire the continent's attractions and visitor experiences professionals at the AAVEA 2021 conference are:

- **Liam R Findlay**, a Themed Scent Consultant for AromaPrime in the UK. AromaPrime provides attractions with every smell from Pirate Ship to Penguin Sick! Past projects include an authentic T-rex scent for the British Museum, celebrity fragrances for Madame Tussauds, and horrific stench for Halloween scare mazes. Liam's AAVEA 2021 virtual presentation will focus on how to boost profits at local attractions with multisensory tricks.
- **Chao Tayiana Maina** is a Kenyan digital heritage specialist and digital humanities scholar working at the intersection of culture and technology. Chao is the founder of African Digital Heritage, a co-founder of the Museum of British Colonialism, and a co-founder of the Open Restitution African Project – each an online initiative seeking to encourage a more critical, holistic, and knowledge-based approach to the design and implementation of digital solutions within African cultural heritage. Her AAVEA 2021 virtual presentation will focus on exploration of digital initiatives within African heritage and building sustainable digital solutions within heritage practice.

An exciting addition to the 2021 virtual programme is the highly anticipated release of the results of the first ever benchmark study for South African attractions. Using data aggregated from visitor experiences and attractions across the country, the benchmark study will help attractions managers and the tourism industry to understand the important role that visitor attractions play, particularly in the domestic tourism economy.

Additional speakers and programme news will follow in the months to come.

Sabine Lehmann, president of AAVEA, is excited to welcome attractions professionals to the second virtual conference:

"Hosting our conference online presents us with the unique opportunity to welcome participants and speakers from all around the world and elevates the experience! When you have the greatest minds in the industry meeting, learning, and being inspired by each other it doesn't matter if we're online or in-person - the possibilities for collaboration and growth within the attractions sector are endless. The AAVEA board and I look forward to engaging with all conference participants this August!"

AAVEA and South African Tourism (SAT) announced their collaborative partnership in 2020. The national tourism marketing agency is thrilled to co-host the virtual conference once again:

"South African Tourism has an exciting three year partnership with AAVEA and we are pleased to be collaborating with this key association this year again. We are working together to positively help the recovery of our tourism industry and to honor our heroes in this sector that have managed to survive during this difficult time in our country. The virtual conference will be an incredible springboard to use to connect, share insights including the first ever benchmark study for our own South African attractions and experiences", says Amanda Kotze-Nhlapo ,Acting Chief Quality Assurance Officer of South African Tourism.

Be inspired at the AAVEA 2021 Virtual Conference:

Registration for the AAVEA 2021 Virtual Conference will open in July 2021. Fees are R1 500.00 for AAVEA members and R2 600.00 for non-members.

For more information about the conference and South African Tourism, please visit www.aavea.org.za.

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