

[PHOTOS]: Celebrating diversity in art

By: TIMES REPORTER



Up-and-coming and seasoned fashion designers showcase fabulous creations during the Kreative Kigali event. (Alex Niragira)

It was a colourful cocktail of activities, when Impact Hub Kigali organised a day-long event to celebrate creativity and diversity in art.

From community art sessions, debate on the future of the music industry to fashion, live music and theatre, Impact Hub set the stage for a wide range of creative activities during the full-day Kreative Kigali event that took place in Kigali on Saturday.

Dubbed, I am Kigali –Kreative Kigali, it was the second event in a succession of initiatives under the I Am Kigali campaign that aims to celebrate innovation, cultural evolution and diversity. The event, on Saturday, shone a spotlight on the rapidly evolving creative scene and the creative talents emerging in and around Kigali.



Dancers take centre stage at the event. (Alex Niragira)

From the Umuganda morning hours until midnight, there were enough events lined up to keep people entertained and challenged.

Among the guests was the Ambassador of The Netherlands to Rwanda, Frédérique de Man, who described the event as very useful.

“This event is fun, useful and important. So many things are happening in the creative sector in Rwanda, and a broad collaboration like this is very useful. It’s important to highlight the positive effects of a strong creative sector – it is economically and culturally wise to focus on growing it,” The Dutch Ambassador said.



Legendary singer Abdul Makanyaga (centre), was among the main entertainers at the event. (Alex Niragira)

Kreative Kigali kicked off early morning when the community arts organisation Kurema, Kureba, Kwiga hosted a participatory Arts Umuganda, where local artists and eager volunteers came together to create a colourful mural praising Kigali's creative scene.

In the early afternoon hours, Eric Karengera Kirenga, aka Eric Soul, and Uwase Mutimura from Africori, hosted a debate in Café Neo's rooftop space about the future of Rwanda's music industry in the digital era. Meanwhile, the floor below was buzzing with budding and established designers showcasing their couture creations, kitenge designs, jewelry and accessories in the Fashion showroom featuring brands from Rwanda, Belgium and Kenya, to name but a few.

Eric OneKey, a local poet and performer, said such events are important to make art and creativity more visible in Rwanda. "Through events like this one, we open up art and creativity to people and to the city, and that's a really an important step in making people more comfortable around arts. And to me personally, as an artist, it is very inspiring," he said after reciting a poem on the community mural.



Art lovers take part in Saturday's Arts Umuganda mural project. (Chadrack Kayirange)

Art lovers were treated to energetic live music from different artistes including, Moutcho, Makumbi Sound, the legendary Makanyaga and Abatanguha crew, a group of talented break-dancers who wowed everyone with their acrobatic and sophisticated moves.

Buzzing with creative impressions from morning till evening, the audience and participants left Impact Hub's community space after meeting a blend of Rwanda's finest, upcoming and inspiring creative talent. And that was just what the organisers were aiming for:

“This event showcases the cohesive and talented creative community in Kigali. This is the first time to host such a variety of events and sessions in a single day, and I believe we accomplished exactly what we had hoped for: To show the incredible creative spark that is in Kigali and in Rwanda,” said Jon Stever, co-founder of Impact Hub and initiator of the ‘I am Kigali’ campaign.

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