

2027

Clan Guidelines



The Clan is not a logo ...

... it is a signifier of what we do.

What Is the Clan?

The Clan is a sculptural representation of a San rock painting, which we understand to represent unity of intent and is the chosen central effigy at the annual AfrikaBurn event.

It is a vital part of our creative infrastructure — and it's important that it matches the strategic pathway of AfrikaBurn, an ever-evolving work in creating the world anew.

The Clan is a commissioned artwork, carrying the opportunity and responsibility to be an agent of transformation, and as such, comes with support of additional inputs for the build crew.

The Clan is a tool for development and legacy, and it's our mission to make sure that the values it portrays are relevant in the world and specifically in the South-African context.

As the icon of AfrikaBurn's identity since its first event in 2007, it stands as a uniquely South African symbol as a recognisable San figure.

But where did it come from, what does it mean – and why and how did AfrikaBurn come to choose it as the icon that represents its identity?

Please read the [History of The Clan](#)



Since its inception, the Clan project has been championed and interpreted by different artists each year, which has created a diversity of experience and expression.

This is an invitation for you to bring your idea into the diversity of the Clan and add to the collective expression that shapes the Clan as a whole.

So ... What to Consider When Considering a Clan

(please carry on reading)

A. Process Overview

- An Overly Simplistic Short Version of How It Happens

	Proposal Submissions	Adjudication	Planning	Actualisation	Reporting
Who	YOU Everyone is invited to submit a Clan proposal	ArtCom Sub-Committee: Clan Team (minimum of 3 people)	Clan Artist in collab with Clan Team	The Clan Crew	The Clan Artist and/or Clan Project Manager
What	An outline of the conceptualisation, design, and execution plan for the Clan, according to you	Assessment based on build experience, concept, design, construction, and cost.	Appointment of a Clan Project Manager, Detailed Budget, Detailed Timeline	Admin, Logistics, Crew Management, Build, Lights, Burn, Site Clean-up	Budget Reconciliation, Monitoring & Evaluation
When				Fully ready: 10 days before the event Burn: Saturday 8 PM	End of June
How	via email to art@afrikaburn.com				

Time Matters

Reinventing the world is a nurturing process. And it doesn't make sense to keep on trying to squeeze it into tight timelines — it stifles creativity and shortens the impact.

Also, we believe that adding time to the planning and refining of processes can significantly alleviate the financial and personal pressures associated with building large artworks in the desert.

Time and process are potent tools for meaningful and sustainable change. We feel that we should at least try.

It is in this light that we are busy shuffling our calendars. The idea is to extend the Clan process to allow for a more thoughtful and sustainable approach.

B. About the Sculpture

The Design

It should be worthy — beautiful, inspirational, a conscious manifestation of the guiding principles of AfrikaBurn.

It's a Burning Artwork — it must work as a sculpture, and it must work as a burn.

Ideally, the Clan will be a 3D sculpture, viewable from all sides.

The preferred minimum height is 15m.

Consider the proportions of the Clan form and its relationship to people and setting.

Consider the space beneath and around the Clan

While this is not one of the design criteria, consider a reference to the theme.

The design must be a recognisable approximation and interpretation of the Clan motif.

Materials

In line with our principles, the Clan should be constructed out of waste / recycled / environmentally friendly materials wherever possible.

Materials are to be considered from a burn perspective as well. Avoid materials with a high glue or chemical content (such as MDF).

Burn

The Clan is a sculptural fire. Burning is as integral to the design of the piece as structural and aesthetic considerations.

A burning artwork is conceptualised and built as a burning artwork, which is different from being an artwork that can burn. A burning artwork comes alive when set alight; it makes sense, and it requires very little accelerant.

Consider the following:

- How would you like your sculpture to burn and fall?
- The duration of the burn — too long and people lose focus, too short and people miss it.
- The lighting of the Clan—priming time, ignition points, performance aspect, etc. How do they work together, or how might they clash with each other?

There's a vast knowledge base accumulated through years of experience by the different fire team players — it's at your disposal; please make use of it.

Lights

As an aesthetic element, part of the design of your piece, as well as for safety reasons, the lighting is part of the sculpture — and it can make a big dent in your budget when not thought through properly.

Think about:

- Burn: Removal of the lights before the burn.
- Options: Balance between cost, adequate output, maintenance required to function during the event, use outside of the event, environmentally friendly or not, etc.
- Power Source: Placement of your power source in relation to the piece — where, in, on or near the sculpture can it go, so that it doesn't disturb the aesthetic of the sculpture (visually and/or soundwise); how far is practical; how to keep it safe from accidental damage and non-consensual borrowing

The Team

Remember that this enormous piece will need to be constructed. Consider our ethos in your team building. We encourage projects that promote skills exchange amongst a diverse team. Ideally, your project will reach out, create opportunities and develop skills.

Bringing in paid professional contractors and service providers is not encouraged.

Collaborate – this is the glue that holds Tanwka Town together and makes it the amazing space that it is. Collaborations plug the holes in skill sets and can elevate aspects of the piece to levels that you might not have considered.

C. About Cultural Relevance

Radical-Inclusion & The Two-Part-Budget

- Where the two parts are:
 - 1) The **Artwork**
 - 2) The **Social Development** through the Artwork
- where community development is not compulsory and forced upon the artist;
- and where an equitable disbursement of monies is not compromised.

In a nutshell:

Three-Quarters of the funds budgeted for the Clan (in the AfrikaBurn Annual Budget) are allocated towards the hard costs of producing the actual sculpture;

One-Quarter of the budget is reserved for **community development** — this means that proposals that do not have an incubation element do not have access to this money, which then can be redirected to other projects that do.

Artistically speaking, this levels the playing field more fairly, since the **construction budget is the same for everyone**.

In terms of **Inclusivity**, this means that proposing a Clan can remain an open invitation to everyone, as, one way or the other, there is no detriment to **civic responsible use of monies**.

Incubation Projects are not just normal projects that are built with cheap labour by people from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. They are projects with specific concepts and outcomes that abide by a process with responsibilities and accountability. Not all artists can and/or should take this on.

This two-part budget model is meant to nudge our artists where it might be a little tender, but also to make provision for their circumstances, motivations and learning processes. The aim is to create a space that acknowledges the diverse strengths of our artist community.

And so,

Everyone is invited to submit a Clan proposal.

D. About the Proposal

What's a Clan Proposal?

1) A Clan proposal is a **written document** that you submit to the AfrikaBurn Art Portfolio, expressing your intention to design (and build) the Clan and how you're envisioning it. It's a comprehensive description, through **words and pictures (drawings)**, that lets us peek into your head and understand what your idea is.

2) Further down, there are some **touchpoints** that we would like you **to include in your Clan proposal**.

At the initial stage, the level of detail required is not equal for all the topics.

We need to have an idea about your plan (and your ability to make one), not your truck's ETA in Tankwa, so please do not start stressing the small details yet.

3) Should your proposal be **shortlisted**, we'll ask you for more information as necessary.

4) Should your proposal be **selected**:

- After agreeing to the final details, the **Clan Proposal**, together with a detailed **Budget** and a rigorous **Timeline**, will be **appended to the Clan Grant Agreement**, which both parties sign.
- You'll be required to provide **structural drawings**.
- What you build must be as was pitched and/or agreed to.

This is particularly important around the design of the Clan and the budget.

6) Please **Be Honest**, in your proposal — you must be **clear** and **upfront** about what you are capable of, technically and practically:

- We want to help you to safely actualise your vision — this might not be the Clan; it might not be this year.
- Your initial Clan proposal is not likely to be the final one — please **request input** when needed, and **accept feedback** provided by ArtCom, as a group or individually.
- We are open to the possibility that the **design** and **build** of the Clan can be **separate** and done by **different crews**. - Please let us know in your proposal if this applies to you in any way.

7) Submitting & Updating your Clan Proposal:

- by email to clan@afrikaburn.com, CC art@afrikaburn.com
- Subject Line: **2027 Clan Proposal - [Project Name]** or [Your Name] or [anything we can easily refer to]
- All Info about this proposal must be in **One Email Thread ONLY**. If you need to add, change, update anything in your proposal, please look for the original email and do it there.
- Deadline: **30 August 2026**, Sunday, midnight.

Key Elements to Include in Your Clan Proposal

1. The Concept

The core idea behind the Clan you're proposing.

What is the Cultural Meaning, Artistic Vision, Philosophical Statement, and Social Impact?

What are the potential/desired outcomes?

2. The Design

Description of the proposed Clan design.

Include size, shape, structure, colours, and other key features of the sculpture.

Consider proportions, scale, and how the design interacts with the surroundings.

3. Images

Any visual aids to illustrate the design. It is important that we can see the intended image and proportions of your Clan. If you have access to the skills, you could draw it up on a technical program like SketchUp, but a handmade drawing on a serviette will also do. .

4. Materials & Sustainability

Specify the materials you plan to use and their environmental impact.

Consider the burn perspective, avoiding materials with high chemical content.

5. Lighting

Outline the lighting plan for the Clan at night, considering both aesthetics and safety.

Are you planning to have projections or any other enhanced visual effects?

6. Burn Plan

How will the sculpture burn and fall, and how long will it take to collapse?

Ignition plan and any performance aspects.

7. Technical Considerations

Outline technical aspects such as wind load, anchor points, and erection plan.

Do you think you'll need heavy lifting equipment or riggers?

8. Execution Plan

Include timelines, milestones, key activities, and key activities.

Specify resources, materials, and any external support required.

9. Budget

Breakdown of expenses

10. The People

Who are you? Please give us a brief bio of you and your team.. What do you do in the default world?

What are your experiences inside and outside of AfrikaBurn? We want to know about your skill set, your dreams, your motivations. And anything you think is relevant here.

Clan Rule N° ONE: Don't underestimate the TIME this will take.

Clan Rule N° TWO: Keep track of your BUDGET from the start.

Additional Pearls of Knowledge

- a) It is much harder working in the desert than in a controlled environment. It is harder than you imagine and will take longer than you think.
- b) Make provision for weather days. Allow plenty of time for the finish.
- c) Do as much prep work as possible beforehand in town.
 - If you can, plan for a dry run in town - Assembling your sculpture in a controlled environment allows you to identify any potential problems, structural or assembly-related;
 - and resolve them in advance, while you have access to shops and other resources, which in the desert are in limited or nonexistent supply
 - By the time you reach the desert, you'll be reassembling a puzzle you've already successfully solved.
- d) Focus on constructing the Clan first, and any other sculptural elements second. You have a responsibility to the event to ensure that the Clan effigy is present.
- e) The Clan will burn on the Saturday night of the event, weather permitting.
- f) Ignition of the piece is the choice of the Artist in consultation with the Art Committee.
- g) Performances before, during, and/or after ignition of the sculpture are open to collaborators and will be handled by you, with the help of the Art Committee if needed.
- h) The cleaning of the Clan site is done by the Clan Crew.
- i) The project carries on after the event:
 - Budget Reconciliation: Full and detailed ledger, together with all supporting slips.
 - Monitoring & Evaluation Report is due at the end of June.

To YOU, Future Clan Artist, Good Luck!

To All the Clan Artists,



Image by Monique Schiess

2007:

Paul Jorgensen, Brendan Smithers, Uys Van Der Merwe, Jonah De Lange, Gerald, Up Rize, Abarra



Image by Jonx Pillemer

2008:

Paul Jorgensen, Brendan Smithers



Image by Graham Abbott

2009:

Egon Tania & Crew



Image by Simon O'Callaghan

2010:

Nathan Honey and Marco Guidetti



Image by Jonx Pillemer

2011:

Nathan Honey, Isa Marques and Robert Weinek



Image by Nick Taljaard

2012:

Mike Rule & Crew



Image by Monique Schiess

2013:

Brendan Smithers & TNT

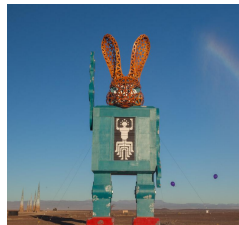


Image by Jason Buch

2014:

Brendan Smithers & TNT



Image by Janneke Westrate

2015:

Nathan Honey & The Sutherland Community



Image by Raul Araqao

2016:

Design: Brendan Smithers and Monique Schiess; Build: Mike Rule & Crew



Image by Sean Furlong

2017:

Egon Tania & The Gentis Clan



Image by Colleen Thiel

2018:

Design: Simon Duncley; Build: Mike Rule & Crew



Image by Peter Vickers

2019:

Design: Lindsay Cessford; Build: Mike Rule & Crew



Image by David G-Evans

2020/2022:

Tree of Stories Crew



Image by Gautier Berr

2023:

Sean Marais & Crew

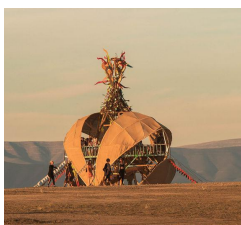


Image by

2024:

Sean Marais & Crew



Image by

2025:

Laurence Brown & The Tree of Stories Crew



Image by

2026:

Neo Monnapule & The Ubuntu Clan Crew

Thank You!