ELECTRIC SOUTH

Electric South Report: AI and Immersive Media Convening for South African Artists and Researchers

THE CONVENING

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Event Focus: Reimagining the Role of AI in Immersive Media for African Artists: Challenges, Opportunities, and Pathways to Sustainability

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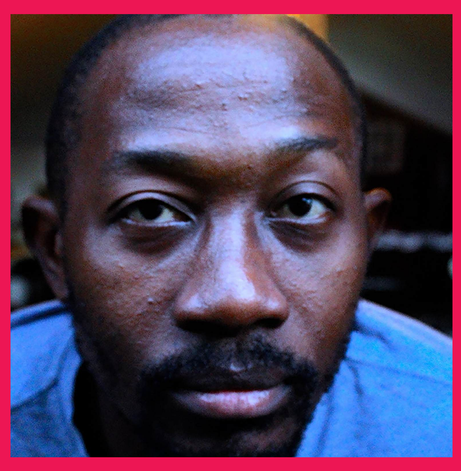

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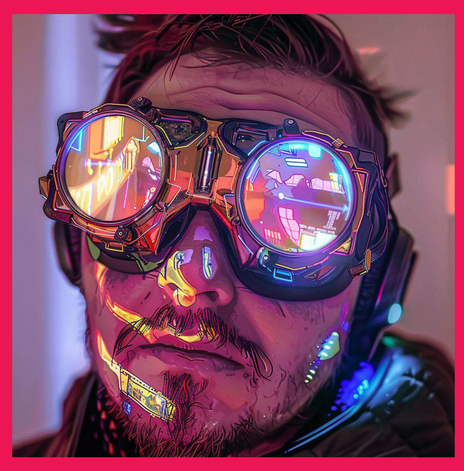

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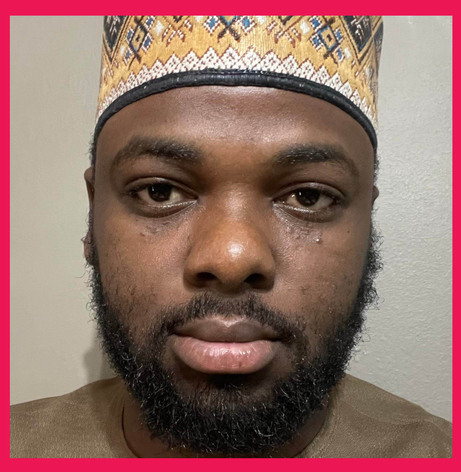

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Executive Summary

The Electric South AI and Immersive Media Convening brought together 10 experts from diverse fields, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), immersive media, academia, and the arts, to explore the challenges and opportunities AI presents to African creative economies. Over two days, participants engaged in structured discussions, lightning talks, and collaborative sessions to identify priorities for research, policy, and advocacy.

This convening marked a foundational step in fostering a community that champions African voices in the intersection of immersive media, digital arts and emerging technologies such as AI. Importantly,

it centered the voices of immersive storytelling practitioners: creative technologists, interdisciplinary XR artists, producers and others who centre technology in their work, and therefore are uniquely positioned within the creative sector, to put forward their insights.

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1. Creativity Unleashed: Exploring how AI is enabling new forms of art

Members of the Creative Economy are a missing voice in strategic discussions around emerging technology. The Convening brought together key stakeholders to discuss what the future of the creative sector will look like as the use of AI increases: its transformative potential and challenges in immersive media for African artists. During the course of The Convening, the focus amongst the group shifted from the originally proposed 'Exploring AI's Impact on the African Immersive Media Landscape' to a wider, future forward frame - Reimagining the Role of AI in Immersive Media for African Artists: Challenges, Opportunities, and Pathways to Sustainability

Central Role of AI in the Creative Economy:

- AI is transforming how art is created, distributed, and consumed, with immersive media offering a powerful medium for storytelling and cultural expression, that does not shy away from the use of AI and other emerging technologies.
- African artists have unique opportunities to shape global narratives by leveraging AI in immersive spaces, from XR, VR to AR.

Broad Relevance Across Stakeholders:

- The topics covered in The Convening appeal to artists, technologists, funders, policymakers, and academics/researchers, fostering collaboration across disciplines.

Timeliness and Innovation:

- The rapid adoption of AI and immersive technologies presents a timely opportunity to address challenges like infrastructure gaps, language inclusion, and monetisation.

Infrastructure as a Foundation:

- Explore how improving access to affordable, quality and reliable tech infrastructure, including quality internet and electricity can unlock immersive media's potential for artists in underserved regions across the African continent.

Monetisation and Sustainability:

- Discuss pathways to turn immersive projects into viable revenue streams, with case studies or examples of successful models. Leverage AI and other emerging technologies towards data governance, integrity and transparency to ensure equitable recognition and compensation for work and innovation.

Language and Cultural Representation:

- Highlight efforts to include African languages and stories in AI-driven platforms, ensuring the continent's diversity is not just preserved but celebrated.

Collaborative Innovation:

- Emphasise the role of partnerships (academics, funders, corporations) in building capacity and creating a supportive ecosystem for African creatives.
- Create ethics through doing and putting forward alternatives

2. The African Context: Addressing infrastructure, access, and language inclusion

The conversations spanned a wide array of topics, highlighting both immediate actions and longer-term strategic priorities.

The Convening underscored the transformative potential of AI in African immersive media, while also identifying challenges that require immediate attention and strategic planning.

Moving forward, the convening participants recommended developing clear principles and guidelines to shape future actions and inviting broader community input to refine these ideas.

High Priority: Addressing Immediate Challenges and Opportunities
The group identified access and infrastructure as critical to unlocking AI's potential for immersive media in Africa. Without equitable access to technology, electricity, affordable, quality internet and robust digital infrastructure, the gap between those who can leverage AI and those left behind will widen. Participants emphasised the need for foundational investments in connectivity, hardware, and 'virtual literacy'. Another urgent issue was data and privacy rights, with a focus on compliance with regulations like South Africa's POPIA.

Building trust in AI systems will require transparent data governance frameworks that safeguard user rights and acknowledge contributors, to the extent possible.

The need to frame a narrative for the future emerged as a pivotal cultural and strategic goal. AI should not merely adapt Western paradigms but reflect African identities, histories, concepts and futures. Through virtual and synthetic media, creatives can explore new storytelling formats that embrace cultural authenticity. African immersive artists are uniquely positioned to present alternative solutions, cognisant of the potential for AI to enable leapfrogging of resource deficiencies while keenly aware of displacement and consequence mitigation.

The idea of an educational revolution was explored as a spectrum, ranging from grassroots 'virtual literacy' initiatives to advanced training in AI development.

Participants called for bottom-up and top-down approaches that simultaneously empower local communities and secure governmental and institutional support.
Finally, the convening stressed the importance of building trust and community. Artists, technologists, and policymakers must collaborate to ensure that AI adoption benefits all stakeholders. Transparent processes, shared ownership, and open dialogue will be crucial in achieving this.

High Priority: Long-Term Strategies
As the conversation shifted to long-term goals, the group envisioned a Protopian future, rejecting dystopian or utopian extremes in favour of a pragmatic, hopeful vision for AI in immersive media. Sci-fi-inspired thinking was proposed as a creative tool for imagining new possibilities while navigating ethical dilemmas.

The debate over open vs. closed systems revealed differing perspectives on data sharing, intellectual property, and collaboration. Artists expressed concern over copyright, IP, and the ethical use of their work, particularly in AI-generated remixing and sampling. However, there was also excitement about new economic and creative models enabled by AI, such as decentralised content monetization.

The importance of governance and regulation was underscored. Participants called for regulatory frameworks that strike a balance between fostering innovation and protecting creators. This would require collaborative efforts among governments, cultural organisations, and the private sector.

Low Priority: Incremental or Supportive Initiatives
The group noted that some initiatives, while important, are less urgent for immediate action. These include ecosystem mapping to identify key players and opportunities, fostering public-oriented AI to benefit broader communities, and ensuring African representation in global AI dialogues.

Cross-Cutting Issues
Several cross-cutting themes emerged that require attention across timelines. The availability of high-quality localised data sets and ensuring data equity are foundational for creating inclusive AI systems. Participants also discussed the environmental impact of AI, urging the community to consider sustainable practices.

Lastly, large language models (LLMs) and small language models (SLMs) were highlighted for their potential and pitfalls in immersive media. While they can generate new creative possibilities, they must be guided by principles of fairness, inclusivity, and cultural respect.

3. Building Sustainable Models: Turning creative innovation into livelihoods

The discussions sparked a rich and expansive wish list for the future of AI in Africa, particularly its integration with the creative sector. Participants envisioned a future where AI is not only a transformative tool for art and storytelling but also a driver of societal equity, economic empowerment, and environmental sustainability.

Key Aspirations for the Creative Sector

The creative sector was identified as a cornerstone for AI's impact, with aspirations to build a skilled and empowered workforce that understands AI's potential and can harness it for their artistic and economic benefit.

This includes leveraging AI tools for increased economic gains, such as decentralised payment systems, scalable pricing, and enhanced distribution networks for creative outputs.

Participants called for significant support for artists, both in funding and access to tools, envisioning a landscape where artists and academics can "define a lingo" of their own in harmony with nature, humanity and local context. The desire for more accessible tools - optimised for local languages like Sesotho - and cheaper devices was emphasised as key to democratising AI-driven creativity.

They also highlighted the need for interdisciplinary spaces where creatives, technologists, and policymakers can explore AI's possibilities and create radical, playful, and transformative art.

Education and Accessibility for All

There was a collective wish for an educational revolution, particularly for children in marginalised areas. AI tools should make learning fun and accessible, fostering skills and confidence for future tech careers. The vision extends to free, high-speed internet and electricity, mobile data accessibility, and platforms like YouTube or video-based education being formalised and integrated into curriculums.

The group dreamed of African multi-modal large language models and avatars designed to support students, providing tools that reflect and amplify local cultures and languages. By raising the collective understanding of AI across Africa, these tools would empower communities to engage with AI on their own terms.

Policy and Systemic Change

Participants urged policymakers to prioritise a safe and enabling environment for creators and technologists, protecting them from exploitation and ensuring equitable participation in the AI economy. Governments must recognize the role of artists in shaping technology policy, integrating their voices into national AI strategies.

Ideas such as Universal Basic Income (UBI) trials, a four-day workweek, and budgets for experimentation and “the unknown” were proposed as measures to reimagine the relationship between labour, creativity, and AI. The wish list included support for small creator communities and more grants and competitions to encourage innovation.

AI and the Planet

Participants expressed a strong desire for AI systems to tackle the climate crisis and promote sustainable living.

There was a call for technology to serve humanity, not vice versa, with a focus on mindful resource use and solutions that enable both people and the planet to flourish.

Economic and Social Equity

Economic aspirations included building a new economic system that uplifts marginalised communities and redistributes resources more fairly.

This aligns with the wish for AI systems to address inequality and empower individuals in underserved areas.

The group envisioned Africa as a global leader in XR and immersive media, with businesses from the Global South shaping perspectives and centering African narratives. Better publicity and capacity building for local creators and technologists would amplify these voices on the world stage.

SWOT Analysis of AI and Immersive Media in Africa
The SWOT analysis provided a comprehensive lens on the potential, challenges, and future pathways for integrating AI and immersive media into Africa's creative industries. By examining strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities, participants mapped out how the continent can position itself to benefit from these technologies while mitigating risks.

The SWOT analysis highlighted the potential for AI to transform Africa's creative economy while underscoring the need to address weaknesses and mitigate threats. The discussion concluded with a strong emphasis on building inclusive ecosystems, increasing AI literacy, and advocating for policies that prioritise equity, access, and local ownership of data. By doing so, Africa can harness AI not just as a tool for creation but as a force for empowerment and cultural preservation.

Strengths: Africa's Creative and Demographic Advantages
Africa's youthful population and early adoption of new technologies provide a strong foundation for engaging with AI. With the continent being one of the few regions experiencing population growth, there's immense creative energy and talent to leverage. AI enables small teams, even individual creators, to execute large-scale digital projects, increasing productivity, shortening production timelines, and automating repetitive tasks.

The continent's vast cultural heritage -its stories, languages, and diverse perspectives - offers a unique opportunity to document and preserve cultural assets at scale while developing solutions tailored to local contexts. Access to AI tools could also support education prototyping and open new pathways for exploration, data analysis, and storytelling.

The existing infrastructure in AI development globally provides a basis for Africa to contribute its distinct insights in specialised fields like the arts and creative industries.

Weaknesses: Infrastructure and Knowledge Gaps
Despite its strengths, Africa faces challenges in AI adoption. Language gaps, fragmented communities, and limited resources remain significant barriers. The technology's dependence on infrastructure, such as reliable internet and electricity, limits access, especially in rural areas.
The bias inherent in AI systems, driven by incomplete or Western-dominated datasets, poses risks for African representation.

Many artists and creators lack a clear understanding of how AI works, often perceiving it as a mystical and uncontrollable force. This lack of literacy exacerbates the fear and anxiety surrounding the technology, limiting its adoption and fostering a sense of hopelessness.

Additionally, issues around data ownership, costs, and ecosystem readiness remain challenges.

The fact that data sets do not belong to African stakeholders further marginalises the continent's creative voices.

Threats: Risks of Inequality and Exploitation
AI development carries significant risks, from widening the digital divide to reinforcing inequalities. Large corporations' control over data and AI systems raises concerns about exclusion, loss of identity, and reduced revenues for artists due to inadequate IP protections.

There's also the danger of nefarious uses of AI, including surveillance and exploitation of marginalised communities. Job losses and environmental impacts from AI systems were flagged as significant risks. Moreover, the narratives surrounding AI are often shaped by big corporations, sidelining diverse African perspectives.

The potential for AI to undermine trust - through synthetic media, biased outputs, or unforeseen consequences - was a recurring concern. Participants feared that AI might perpetuate neocolonial exploitation models, entrenching capitalist, profit-driven systems at the expense of equity and sustainability.

Opportunities: Empowerment and Innovation
Despite these risks, AI offers transformative possibilities. Participants envisioned its potential to empower creators, enabling them to brainstorm, experiment, and produce more meaningful work with greater efficiency. By creating open-source ecosystems and fostering local training and capacity building, Africa can shape its own AI-driven solutions.

Participants highlighted opportunities for job creation and using AI to tackle entrenched societal challenges, from climate change to inequality. Developing African-specific AI engines and tools can offer solutions tailored to local needs, while leapfrogging technological gaps seen in other regions. Additionally, AI could redefine education, making it more accessible and interactive, especially for marginalised communities.

Training programs focused on building readiness for AI adoption would help ensure a creative workforce that is equipped to thrive in this evolving landscape.

4. Looking Ahead: Policy and ecosystem development to support immersive tech adoption

Future Focus - Mind Mapping Expectations around AI and Immersive Media

During the Future Focus discussions, participants collectively expressed optimism about AI's transformative potential for artists, particularly its ability to make creative processes more accessible and efficient. However, they emphasised the need for deliberate action to ensure AI's integration into the creative sector reflects and supports African priorities.

Key Themes and Discussions

1. **Clarity on AI Definitions**
   - Participants highlighted the importance of distinguishing between types of AI, such as Narrow AI (focused automation with specific goals) and General AI (theoretical and broad capabilities).
   - Further distinctions were drawn between Augmented AI, which enhances human creativity through collaboration, and Autonomous AI, which functions independently.

2. **Principles for AI Development**
   - Inclusion and Diversity: AI must amplify African identities and be representative of African languages, cultures, and concepts.
   - Collaboration: The development and application of AI should involve multidisciplinary approaches and foster partnerships across sectors.
   - Education and Youth: A focus on equipping the next generation with AI literacy and prioritising their needs in policy and development.
   - Data and Ethical Governance: Ensuring protections around data usage to prevent exploitation by corporations or external powers.

3. **Opportunities for African Artists**
   - AI can serve as a tool to capture and expand African art forms, such as integrating traditional practices like dance into the metaverse.
   - It can support language diversity, ensuring African languages are integrated and understood by AI systems.
   - Encouragement of an AI ecosystem that balances technological advancement with respect for cultural heritage and societal goals.

4. **Potential Risks and Safeguards**
   - Concerns about "overlords" or excessive concentration of AI power in corporate hands were raised, emphasising the need for a counterweight that benefits marginalised communities.
   - Participants discussed mitigating misinformation and navigating issues of safety and truth in AI systems.

Vision for the Future

By leveraging Africa's creative potential and fostering inclusive ecosystems, stakeholders can ensure that AI and immersive media become transformative tools for empowerment rather than sources of inequality. The road forward requires collaboration, innovative policies, and bold investments in education, infrastructure, and storytelling.

The participants provided a robust framework for integrating AI into African creative industries, emphasising the importance of proactive and inclusive design to foster innovation while safeguarding cultural and ethical values. The insights will guide Electric South's future initiatives in AI and immersive media.

African creatives to expand their reach and representation globally.

- **Advancing AI that is "assistive" rather than dominating, ensuring technology supports human agency and creativity.**

Actionable Recommendations: Future Focus - AI and Immersive Media

Based on the key themes and discussions during the Future Focus discussions, here are actionable recommendations to guide Electric South's strategic initiatives and advocacy in AI for African artists:

1. Establish Clear Definitions and Context for AI

- Action: Develop a glossary of AI terms relevant to the creative sector (e.g., Narrow AI, Augmented AI, Autonomous AI).
- Outcome: Ensure consistent understanding among stakeholders, fostering more informed discussions and collaborations.
- Next Steps: Include these definitions in Electric South's training materials, reports, and future convenings.

2. Promote Inclusive and Representative AI

- Action: Advocate for AI systems that support African languages, cultures, and creative practices.
- Outcome: Increased visibility and inclusion of African identities in global AI ecosystems.
- Next Steps: Collaborate with organisations like Mozilla or African AI initiatives to develop localised datasets for training AI.

3. Foster Collaboration Across Disciplines

- Action: Create a multidisciplinary working group to align AI development with the needs of artists, technologists, and cultural experts.
- Outcome: Integrated perspectives that ensure AI applications are relevant and practical for the African creative sector.
- Next Steps: Leverage the network from the convening to form this group and establish regular meetups or virtual sessions.

4. Develop Educational and Youth-Focused Programs

- Action: Launch AI literacy workshops tailored to artists and young creatives.
- Outcome: Empowerment of the next generation to use AI creatively and ethically.
- Next Steps: Seek partnerships with educational institutions and tech companies to design and fund these programs.

5. Advocate for Ethical Data Use and Governance

- Action: Draft a position paper on ethical data use for African artists, addressing privacy, ownership, and access concerns.
- Outcome: Increased awareness and protection for artists engaging with AI systems.
- Next Steps: Work with legal experts and advocacy groups to disseminate and promote adoption of these guidelines.

6. Integrate African Arts into AI Development

- Action: Support projects that document and digitise African art forms for integration into AI and the metaverse.
- Outcome: Preservation and promotion of African cultural heritage in emerging digital spaces.
- Next Steps: Identify grants and funders to support digitization projects, such as capturing African dance for AI training.

7. Explore Collaborative AI Models

- Action: Advocate for AI that enhances human creativity (Augmented AI) rather than replacing it.
- Outcome: Tools that amplify the creative capacity of African artists and align with their needs.
- Next Steps: Partner with developers working on open-source or public-interest AI projects to create artist-friendly tools.

8. Develop Policy Recommendations for AI in Creative Economies

- Action: Build a policy framework addressing AI's impact on IP, job creation, and cultural heritage.
- Outcome: Strategic alignment with South African and African Union AI plans.
- Next Steps: Draft a white paper based on insights from the convening to influence regional AI policies.

9. Promote Ethical and Responsible AI Narratives

- Action: Host storytelling workshops on AI's societal impacts to counter myths and hype.
- Outcome: Balanced narratives that encourage responsible AI adoption in the creative sector.
- Next Steps: Engage participants from the convening to co-create these workshops and narratives.

10. Advance Research on AI and African Creatives

- Action: Prioritise research on AI's role in African creative economies, particularly around access, inclusion, and cultural representation.
- Outcome: Evidence-based insights to guide stakeholders in the creative and tech industries.
- Next Steps: Seek funding and partnerships to support longitudinal studies and publish findings widely.

5. Resources: What’s Needed for AI and Immersive Media in Africa

The discussions over both days illuminated the essential steps, stakeholders, and resources necessary to advance AI and immersive media within Africa. The discussions spanned policy, education, creative practices, and funding, underscoring the urgency to establish sustainable frameworks that support innovation and equitable growth.

Key Components for Advancement

Research and Policy Review

To develop informed strategies, participants identified the need to engage:

- Academics and Practitioners: initiatives like the 4IR Commission and Lelapa AI.
- Policymakers: AU AI policy makers, DSAC (Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture), and DCDT (Department of Communications and Digital Technologies).
- International Collaboration: Entities such as UNESCO, WIPO, and funding bodies like Pro Helvetia and IDRC.
- Legal Experts: Lawyers specialising in AI and IP, to shape frameworks that ensure equitable rights for artists.

Platforms for Engagement

Efforts to foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing include:

- Hackathons: Focused events to create Wikipedia stubs for African AI ecosystems and test ideas in real time.
- Conferences and Meetups: Hybrid convenings combining tech demos, workshops, and policy discussions.
- Mapping Initiatives: Using tools to map influence and relationships among stakeholders to foster partnerships and refine strategies.

Creative Capacity Building

To demystify AI and make its benefits accessible, participants proposed:

- Educational Toolkits: Developing AI 101 resources for creators and mass education campaigns integrated into platforms like WhatsApp.
- Hackathons for Artists: Practical workshops to deepen understanding and engagement with AI.
- Partnerships with Academics: Pairing artists with university researchers for cross-disciplinary innovation.
- Funding for Creative Responses: Providing seed grants to support artist-led projects that explore AI's possibilities.

Narrative Shift

Africa’s inclusion in the global AI narrative requires:

- Mass Literacy Campaigns: Demystifying AI through media toolkits, courses, and accessible formats like documentaries and music (e.g., the "sad robot song").
- Celebrating Excellence: Positioning African creators at global exhibitions and events like SIGGRAPH and the National Arts Festival.

Immediate Priorities

1. **Demystification of AI: Counter fears such as "robots taking jobs" through mass education campaigns, narrative reframing, and inclusive policy frameworks.**
2. **Infrastructure Development: Ensuring reliable access to electricity, internet, and digital tools through partnerships with ISPs, telcos, and energy providers like Eskom.**
3. **Policy and Economic Frameworks: Crafting regulations that prioritise local ownership of data and equitable participation in the AI economy.**
4. **Knowledge Hubs: Establishing physical and virtual resource centres to pool research, tools, and best practices.**

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- Mass Literacy Campaigns: Demystifying AI through media toolkits, courses, and accessible formats like documentaries and music (e.g., the "sad robot song").
- Celebrating Excellence: Positioning African creators at global exhibitions and events like SIGGRAPH and the National Arts Festival.

High Priority: Immediate Challenges and Opportunities

1. Infrastructure and Access: Equitable access to technology and robust infrastructure are essential to bridge gaps in AI adoption. Investments in connectivity, hardware, and digital literacy are crucial.
2. Data Privacy and Rights: Transparent governance frameworks are needed to build trust in AI systems, aligned with local regulations like South Africa's POPIA.
3. Cultural Relevance: AI tools must reflect African identities, enabling storytelling that integrates cultural authenticity and local languages.
4. Educational Revolution: A mix of grassroots virtual literacy programs and advanced AI training is necessary to empower communities and drive systemic change.
5. Community and Trust Building: Collaborative efforts among artists, technologists, and policymakers are vital to ensuring inclusive AI adoption.

High Priority: Long-Term Strategies

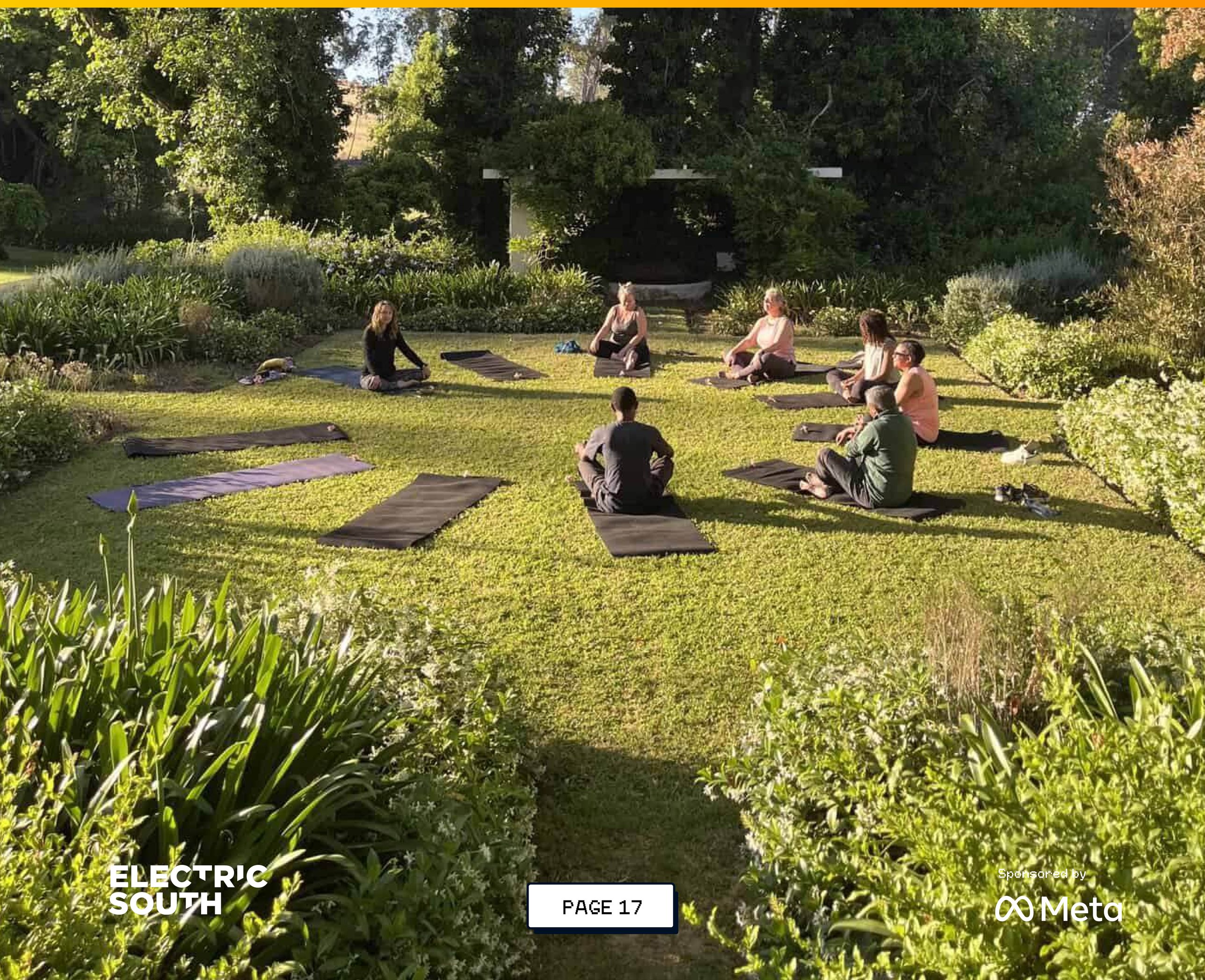
1. Protopian Futures: Advocacy for pragmatic, hopeful visions of AI in immersive media, leveraging science fiction to explore ethical dilemmas.
2. Open vs. Closed Systems: Balancing collaboration with copyright and IP concerns emerged as a key debate, alongside enthusiasm for decentralised content monetization.

Governance: Regulatory frameworks must encourage innovation while safeguarding creators' rights. Collaboration among governments, cultural organisations, and the private sector is essential.

Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaboration

Participants highlighted various partners and programs for engagement:

- Corporate: Microsoft, Google, Meta, Unity for Humanity, and Retro Rabbit for tech support and innovation funding.
- Civil Society: Pro Helvetia, Goethe-Institut, and UNESCO for funding and expertise.
- Local Innovators: Maker spaces, Bertha spaces, and Fak'ugesi festival for grassroots capacity building.
- Educational Institutions: Universities across South Africa (Wits, UJ, UCT) for research and training.



6. Convening Outcomes and Next Steps

1. Representation: Amplifying African artists' needs in AI frameworks.
2. Issue Identification: Addressing challenges like AI literacy and IP rights.
3. Knowledge Exchange: Fostering dialogue among diverse stakeholders.
4. Broader Conversations: Expanding AI discourse beyond technical applications.
5. Opportunity Mapping: Identifying collaborations and innovations for AI in the arts.
6. Actionable Plans: Building a strategy for practical implementation.
7. Community Building: Establishing a reference group to sustain momentum.

Immediate Actions for Electric South

1. Share a summary of key issues and the full report with participants.
2. Hold follow-up meetings to finalise the research agenda and advocacy strategies.
3. Explore partnerships to support capacity-building initiatives.
4. Strategic Collaborations: Engage entities like PANSLAB, National Science and Tech Forum, and global AI leaders.

Key Actions Post-Convening

1. Movement Building: Decentralised grassroots and top-down approaches to advocacy and AI development.
2. Dissemination Tools: Toolkits and manifestos for artists.
3. Policy Advocacy: Engaging stakeholders to integrate African artists' priorities into AI frameworks.
4. Sustainability: Explore initiatives such as hackathons and industry partnerships to integrate African creativity into global AI narratives.
5. Demystification Strategy: Educating artists about AI and raising awareness of their priorities within the AI ecosystem.
6. Ecosystem Mapping: Developing a detailed map of AI resources relevant to African artists.
7. Research Agenda: Focusing on AI and immersive media's intersection.
8. Capacity Building: Creating training programs and resources for artists to enhance artists' AI literacy.
9. Reference Group Formation: Establishing a steering body for ongoing advocacy.

7. 2025-2027 Electric South Policy and Research Agenda: Mapping and Demystifying Immersive Media in Africa

Strengthening Local Narratives in Immersive Media

Demystification of AI for artists emerged as a recurring theme and immediate priority. Electric South has already developed an 'AI, Artists and Africa' toolkit to serve as a conversation starter, introducing artists to the potential of AI (https://www.electricsouth.org/ai-artists-and-africa-2024/).

Based on the insights that emerged at The Convening, the following are presented as priorities for 2025 and beyond:

Demystifying Immersive Media for African Artists and Policymakers

- Revise the toolkit towards a creating an inclusive and comprehensive tool for mass 'virtual literacy' education campaigns and narrative reframing amongst artists, stakeholders in the use of digital tools in artistic mediums
- Produce additional accessible resources (toolkits, reports, and guides) to explain the potential and challenges of immersive technologies in Africa.
- Organise and facilitate hackathons for deeper, multidisciplinary learning and knowledge sharing and creating a digital resource 'hub'
- Production of immersive experiences centred on African histories, cultures, and futures.
- Foster partnerships between local artists, historians, and technologists to co-create impactful stories.
- Organise workshops and discussions to bridge knowledge gaps among artists, policymakers, and funders.
- Advocate for immersive media's inclusion in broader cultural and digital policy agendas across the continent.

Mapping the African Immersive Media Ecosystem

- Create a comprehensive map of immersive media creators, organisations, and projects across Africa.
- Identify key gaps in access to technology, funding, and training for African artists working in immersive spaces.
- Highlight case studies of successful African VR, AR, and XR projects to inspire and inform the ecosystem.

Research and Thought Leadership

- Commission studies on the impact of immersive media in African contexts, focusing on education, cultural preservation, and digital literacy.
- Host collaborative think tanks and convenings to establish Africa's leadership in the global immersive landscape.
- Fund research into localisation, cultural and heritage preservation, decolonisation in future use of AI as it intersects with local artists
- Fund a mapping study in the use of AI in immersive media and other artistic expressions
- Investigate the role of immersive media and AI in promoting African languages and diverse cultural narratives.
- Explore how localised content moderation and AI tools can make XR more inclusive and representative of African voices.

Policy Framework Development

- Research and propose guidelines for the ethical use of AI and immersive technologies in African contexts, emphasising cultural preservation, cultural sensitivity and diversity.
- Develop policy recommendations to support equitable access to immersive media and AI tools, for marginalised communities, including artists and underrepresented groups.
- Partner on initiatives to address local language moderation and content curation for immersive platforms.
- Together with the Reference Group, develop a set of principles and guidelines for the intersection of AI with immersive media and other artistic expressions
- Advocate for better visibility and monetization tools for African creators on global platforms

Acknowledgments and Closing

Electric South extends heartfelt thanks to Meta for their support and to all participants for their invaluable contributions.

This convening represents a critical step in ensuring African creatives' voices shape the future of AI and immersive media. Electric South remains committed to driving this agenda forward and fostering a vibrant, inclusive community at the intersection of AI, immersive technologies, and African creativity.

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