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The previous issue of *Image & Text* was dedicated to two thematic clusters, namely visual and textual inscriptions of Pretoria and ‘blindspots and ways of not seeing’. Number 26 is again an open issue that features current research by researchers from four South African tertiary institutions. In keeping with the expanded scope of the journal, the six articles deal with a variety of topics in various fields related to visual culture. Three articles deal with aspects of South African architecture, soap opera and fashion, whereas two others deal with broader generic issues related to design. The last article presents a discursive examination of a body of poetry by Ursula K le Guin and their interface with photographs by Roger Dorband. As in many other fields, the issue of identity and how it informs visual culture continues to inflect a number of the articles, as does the notion of spatiality, as well as the transformed/ing context of post-apartheid South Africa. In addition to the research articles, there are two book reviews and one conference report. Although the articles may appear divergent, they have many commonalities in terms of the examination of visual culture and visuality in contemporary culture.

The first article is by Deirdre Byrne and is entitled ‘“Other ways to be”: Home, space and (un)belonging in the poetry of Ursula K le Guin’. In this article, the author investigates the occurrence of the themes of home, belonging, familiarity, unfamiliarity, origins, nostalgia, memory, mutability, ephemerality, destinations, space and place and how they inform Le Guin’s poems and prose writings. Byrne focusses on a number of poems that are accompanied by photographs by Roger Dorband and examines the dialogue between image and text in these multimodal texts. In particular, Byrne is interested in the gendered nature of ‘home’ and how Le Guin and Dorband respond to and explore it in their ‘multimodal understanding of space’.

The next article, by Anneke Allers and Amanda Breytenbach, is entitled ‘Arcades revisited as urban interiors in a transformed city context’. The city referred to is Pretoria, and the authors focus on arcades in the CBD as ‘urban interiors and the potential of these spaces to become points of social interaction within a transformed
city context'. The authors revisit the origins of European arcades as new social spaces in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and argue for their revival in today’s fragmented urban metropoles, such as Pretoria. The authors investigate the importance of ‘lingering’ and promenading, and note that today’s cities do not facilitate aimless wandering in urban space. Allers and Breytenbach base their article on field research and interviews with pedestrians in Pretoria. They present helpful ideas that have the ‘potential to reanimate the arcades as urban interiors’, based on the design of the ‘building edges that link the interiors to the adjacent arcade space’.

In ‘An interpretation of the role of meaning in interior design’, as in a previous article in *Image & Text*, Raymund Königk touches on the often fraught relationship between the disciplines of architecture and interior design. He suggests that interior artefacts should be read semiotically as meaningful articulations of identity in terms of cultural discourse, and he uses Eco’s semiotic framework to implement this. Accordingly, he posits that ‘successful interior artefacts are dependent on the generation of meaningful images and their appropriate spatial interpretation.’ As in the previous two articles in this issue of *Image & Text*, spatiality takes its place as an important component of identity formation, as does embodied experience. Königk argues for a more nuanced approach to interior design that recognises its potential ‘to exercise its hegemonic agency with critical application by adding ambiguous or ideologically informed levels of meaning.’

‘g.o.d. and the *deus ex machina* of design’ by Duncan Reyburn and Marno Kirstein takes its title from Nelson and Stolterman’s concept of the “guarantor of design” or g.o.d. and the contexts and considerations that affect how this g.o.d. is selected, constructed, and deployed.’ The article discusses the often problematic relationship between client and designer (in South Africa), particularly in corporate design environments and argues that ‘fantasy legitimation (or *deus ex machina*)’ should be replaced by solid design research. Invoking theorists such as Bourdieu and Žižek, the authors explore the complex nuances of being a designer and balancing the demands of technical skill with ideological imperatives. The authors conclude that ‘tested, credible and creditable research practices enable the designer to construct a g.o.d. that is legitimate’, and propose that empathy should be the cornerstone of client-designer relations.

Francois Jonker shifts the focus to popular culture in the next article. In ‘We were looking for our men in the faces of stars: Soap opera and Afrikaner masculinities in *Egoli: place of gold*’, he investigates this popular South African soapie that ran from 1992 to 2010. His focus is gender and identity construction, but instead of focussing on femininity as many theorists have done, he looks at the representation...
of masculinities in episodes of *Egoli* from the key year 1994 when South Africa attained democratic status. In order to explore the representation of masculinity, Jonker concentrates on ‘two white, Afrikaans male characters: Dr Walt Vorster (portrayed by well-respected opera icon Gé Korsten) and Doug Durand (portrayed by the controversial “bad-boy” rock star Steve Hofmeyr).’ Jonker’s argument centres on the destabilisation of Afrikaner male, hegemonic patriarchy in the post-apartheid years, and the questioning of capitalism and class in a transforming society.

In the last article, ‘Hypersampling black masculinities, Jozi style’, Leora Farber also explores masculinity, but focusses on the representation and construction of black masculinities by means of fashion in Johannesburg. Farber selects ‘young fashion designers and design collectives currently practicing in the urban environs of Johannesburg’ for her investigation, with particular reference to Khumbula and the Sartists. Farber argues that these young and dynamic designers are negotiating various forms of black masculine identities that are informed by historical forerunners such as the European dandy. She shows how these designers appropriate and re-work fashion in order to perform new and emerging black masculinities. As in Jonker’s article, the author shows how identities can be disrupted and questioned in order to pave the way for new configurations of race, class and gender. By referring to a number of photographs, Farber shows how stereotypical images of black masculinities are being problematised by designers in order to explore new forms of agency.


In line with with the editorial policy of *Image & Text*, this issue features contributions by established researchers as well as younger voices. It is important to nurture a body of emerging researchers who will continue to investigate visual culture critically.

*Image & Text* is a group project, and it would not be possible to produce it without the advice of the Editorial board. I would like to thank Rory du Plessis in particular for his help as editorial assistant and Kyle Rath for his professional design of the journal.
‘Other ways to be’: Home, space and (un)belonging in the poetry of Ursula K. Le Guin

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ABSTRACT

Ursula K Le Guin’s writing, in poetry, fiction and expository prose, displays a carefully nuanced response to space and place. In many of her narratives, the protagonist journeys to a distant realm and then returns home via a complicated route, thus following a conventional quest structure. The theme of home – the place where one is welcome and at ease – is recomplicated, I suggest, in her later writings. In Always coming home, the “home” posited by the title is located, not in any definable place or time, but within a holistic appreciation for the interconnection of natural phenomena. In her later works, Blue moon over Thurman Street and Out here: poems and images from Steens Mountain Country, Le Guin and her collaborator, photographer Roger Dorband, take the interrogation of “home” still further until the volumes become intensive investigations of mutability and duration as well as familiarity and dislocation. Through Le Guin’s characteristic propensity for balance and equipoise, these volumes lead the reader to new understandings of self, place and (un)belonging.

Keywords: familiarity; unfamiliarity; polarities; Le Guin; poetry; space; feminist geography; ecocriticism.

Introduction

Ursula K Le Guin has written frequently, in the course of a career spanning many decades, about home and homecoming. The second page of The dispossessed summarises the theory of General Temporality as follows: ‘You can go home again, the General Temporal Theory asserts, so long as you understand that home is a place where you have never been’ (Le Guin 1974:1-2). In fact, the narrative trajectory
of *The dispossessed* takes the main protagonist “home” in two contradictory directions: Shevek’s trip to Urras is a return to humanity’s planet of origin, but, paradoxically, he leaves it to return “home”, to Anarres, the planet of exile, with a sense of relief. Home, thus, possesses a double inflection: one stemming from the Odonians’ exile from Urras, and the second from Shevek’s personal journey to Urras and return to Anarres. On both counts, Shevek finds that his expectations are subverted by the unfamiliar elements that he encounters in each society.

Taking Shevek’s experience in *The dispossessed* as my starting point, in this article I explore the dynamic balance between mutability and duration, familiarity and unfamiliarity in Le Guin’s representation of home. Le Guin is known for her propensity to use the codes of representation in a ‘widdershins’ fashion (Suvin 1975). The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines ‘widdershins’ as ‘in a left-handed, wrong, or contrary direction’ (Widdershins 2014). In terms of Le Guin’s depiction of home, writing ‘widdershins’ means that she focuses on what is unfamiliar, even uncanny, in houses and homes instead of the expected focus on the familiar and comforting.

Despite the fact that the theme of home appears frequently in Le Guin’s writing, it has not been widely explored in critical responses to her work. This article aims to fill this gap by focusing on three of Le Guin’s multimedia texts: *Always coming home* (1986), *Blue moon over Thurman Street* (1993b) and *Out here: poems and images from Steens Mountain Country* (Le Guin & Dorband 2010). All three of these works are multi-generic and multimodal. *Always coming home* contains drawings, calligraphy, poetry, drama and a musical recording, while *Blue moon over Thurman Street* and *Out here* are collaborations involving poems and photography. Texts of this multi-generic nature demand to be read in a multimodal manner, in which, as Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2001) define it, ‘common semiotic principles operate in and across different modes, and in which it is therefore quite possible for music to encode action, or images to encode emotion’. My use of multimodal reading in this article acknowledges that the textual components of evocations of home in Le Guin and Dorband coexist with the visual images, but that the “meaning” of these texts exceeds what can be understood from either one of these components alone. By exploring the way text and visual imagery combine in Le Guin’s poetic treatment of home, my article will gauge how the dialectical synthesis between familiarity and unfamiliarity poses a challenge to conventional notions of situatedness, home, and origin.
Always coming home is eponymously, but multivalently, concerned with home and homecomings. After declaring in ‘A First Note’ that ‘The people in this book might be going to have lived a long, long time from now in Northern California’ (Le Guin 1986:xii), the text contains a tantalising foreword, entitled ‘Towards an Archaeology of the Future’, in which Pandora, the author-figure, proclaims that:

The only way I can think to find [the Kesh people], the only archaeology that might be practical, is as follows: You take your child or grandchild in your arms, a young baby, not a year old yet, and go down into the wild oats, in the field below the barn. Stand under the oak on the last slope of the hill, facing the creek. Stand quietly. Perhaps the baby will see something, or hear a voice, or speak to somebody there, somebody from home (Le Guin 1986:4-5).

The privilege of the Foreword, together with these lines’ resonance with the text’s title, demands that they be given weight and attention as announcing the direction of the text’s gaze and address. Home is not coterminous with the speaker, but located in an Other space and time. Pandora’s spatio-temporal location is not-home, *unheimlich*, testifying to the sense of dislocation and alienation that has marked Western experience throughout the late twentieth century. Significantly, the only way to reach the utopian home towards which the novel directs its imaginative energy is through an act of imagination. Pandora longs for home, but it is a space and time that she has never experienced. In other words, her nostalgia is future-orientated instead of being directed towards the past. The same sentiments are expressed by Odysseus, the prototypical nostalgia patient, when he complains: ‘all my days are consumed in longing – to travel home and see the day of my arrival dawn’ (Homer 1992:75). Homer’s *Odyssey* is a story of travel motivated by desire – Odysseus’s desire for what he lacks in the narrative present (his homeland and his wife). Similarly, in *Always coming home*, Le Guin is spurred to imagine a socio-environmental ‘home’ in the future precisely because it is absent in the present. The home she invents is characterised by a dynamic balance of forces between humans and animals, culture and nature, technology, and living beings.

In order to understand the kinds of nostalgia expressed by Pandora and Odysseus, it is useful to turn to the Russian cultural theorist, Svetlana Boym. In her work, *The future of nostalgia* (2002), Boym recognises, in a way that resonates with Pandora’s longing for an imaginary home, that nostalgia is an emotion without what TS Eliot would call an ‘objective correlative … a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion’ (in Cuddon 2000:605): it has
no object in the real world, for it is a ‘longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed’ (Boym 2002:13). She goes on to warn against the chimera-like dangers of nostalgia: ‘The danger of nostalgia is that it tends to confuse the actual home with the imaginary one’ (Boym 2002:16). Nevertheless, she distinguishes between two kinds of nostalgia based on the root words nostos and algia:

… the restorative and the reflective. Restorative nostalgia stresses nostos and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home. Reflective nostalgia thrives in algia, the longing itself, and delays the homecoming – wistfully, ironically, desperately (Boym 2002:xviii).

For Boym, restorative nostalgia allows the subject to progress towards the longed-for conditions. In this way, it serves the goals of utopia, which evokes a world where ‘socio-political and individual relationships are organized according to a more perfect principle than in the author’s community’ (Suvin 1975:49). Reflective nostalgia, on the other hand, is less helpful because it delays change, keeping the sufferer stuck in the moment of longing and lack. She adds: ‘This typology of nostalgia allows us to distinguish between national memory that is based on a single plot of national identity, and social memory, which consists of collective frameworks that mark but do not define the individual memory’ (Boym 2002:17).

Always coming home draws on the collective frameworks of anarchism, communitarian ethics and ecofeminism, but still retains Le Guin’s fondness for individuality, as has been argued elsewhere (see Sawyer 2006). It is, then, an instance of restorative nostalgia, with a widdershins spin on its creative attempt to recreate an imagined future home.

The primary narrative (amongst several) in Always coming home is Stone Telling’s autobiography, which records a life journey conforming to Le Guin’s (1993a:142-143) description of ‘the Quest Theme’ in her own writing:

Most of my stories are excuses for a journey. (We shall henceforth respectfully refer to this as the Quest Theme.) I never did care much about plots, all I want is to go from A to B — or, more often, from A to A — by the most difficult and circuitous route.

In Le Guin’s fiction, heroes such as Shevek, Genly Ai, Ged and Stone Telling go on quests, like Odysseus in The Odyssey, but find that the more important part of the journey is the return. The return brings the experiencing self back to the point of origin; but the ambiguous recursivity of such returns is repeatedly emphasised in narratives within the text (such as ‘Dangerous People’, featuring the absent Whette, who moves in spirals without ever arriving). The impulse towards Boym’s restorative nostalgia may attempt to return to the historical past, but will always run up against
deferral, différence, and must eventually concede that return is impossible. Writing the history of a future that has not yet happened, as Le Guin does in Always coming home, only serves to emphasise the fragility of that future and its contingency upon present choices.

The home that is desired in Always coming home is an ontological orientation towards the world, rather than a geo-spatial location. It is characterised by a vision of wholeness:

It was the network, field, and lines of the energies of all the beings, stars and galaxies of stars, worlds, animals, minds, nerves, dust, the lace and foam of vibration that is being itself, all interconnected, every part part of another part and the whole part of each part, and so comprehensible to itself only as a whole, boundless and unclosed (Le Guin 1986:290-91).

This image of an interconnected network of forces recalls David Harvey’s (2004) relational notion of space-time, in which

An event or a thing at a point in space cannot be understood by appeal to what exists only at that point. It depends upon everything else going on around it (although in practice usually only within a certain range of influence). A wide variety of disparate influences swirling over space in the past, present and future concentrate and congeal at a certain point to define the nature of that point.

In Kesh cosmology, similar to Harvey’s relational space-time, each part has its place within the whole, and is connected meaningfully with the other parts and with the larger whole. This powerfully evokes the central tenets of ecocriticism, summarised by Dana Phillips as: ‘everything is connected to everything else’ (cited in Terblanche 2012:30; original emphasis). In emphasising space as connection, Le Guin also demonstrates affinities with feminist geography, which explores, among other themes, the social networks of spatial behaviour (see, for example, Johnson 2012:346-47).

Intimations of mutability: Blue Moon over Thurman Street

The theme of home is also featured in Le Guin’s first collaboration with photographer Roger Dorband. The volume, titled Blue moon over Thurman Street, is a visual and poetic tribute to Thurman Street in Portland, Oregon, where Le Guin lives. The street begins in the industrial district of Portland, travels up a gradual slope through suburban areas, and ends in Forest Park on the side of a mountain. The multimodal text follows the same trajectory, offering a documentary on the urban scenes to
which it bears witness. Dorband has used black and white photography, foregrounding the text’s distance from reality by frustrating any expectations of direct representation. The choice not to use colour emphasises what Ariella Azoulay calls the ‘civil contract of photography’: what is included (or foregrounded) and what is excluded (or de-emphasised) is more conspicuous in this medium. In synchronicity with Azoulay’s insights, Le Guin and Dorband focus on the excluded or ‘abandoned’ (Azoulay 2008:65), which, like her, they identify as women and womanhood. Their reinsertion of women into the urban space is most vivid in the visual and verbal texts that focus on the suburban section of Thurman Street. These include several meditations on houses and the way ‘house’ overlaps with “home” but is not synonymous with it. Le Guin’s poetic treatment of houses portrays them, first, as spaces of imaginative portent. In this way, it resonates with a number of theoretical perspectives. For Gaston Bachelard (1969:6), houses hold pride of place as intimate spaces in the poetic imagination. They are the original and privileged repositories of memories of childhood: ‘the house is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind [sic]’. Although Bachelard’s usage is resolutely androcentric (‘mankind’), the image of the house is a common metaphor for women’s psyche, as Alicia Ostriker notes (1986:53). Irma du Plessis (2010) emphasises the intersection of race, class and gender in her feminist analysis of the political space of the family: ‘Die ruimte van die huishouding en die gesin is ‘n etiese ruimte, en daarom ‘n diep politiese ruimte’ (‘The space of the household and the family is an ethical space, and thus a deeply political space’). In a similar vein, Le Guin (1993b: 82) uses the metaphor of international relations to evoke the political dimensions of home: ‘A house … rearranges organs / is repartitioned / as often as Poland’. In ‘Housewife’, Le Guin (1993b:92) explicitly associates womanhood with domesticity in a way that plays into stereotypical gendered assumptions of the house as women’s domain:

Doorway I call you
Door of the mystery
Woman I call you

Stronghold
Householder
Lifehold
Womanhouse
Housewoman
Housewife

Blue moon over Thurman Street contains several references to doorways, thresholds and liminality. The penultimate poem in the volume opens: ‘Ever more mysterious / grow the doorways’ (Le Guin 1993b:110), while the poem ‘Doorway between’ ends with a quotation from the Bhagavad-Gita: ‘All being is seen between / two unseens’ (Le Guin 1993b:50), which is repeated later in the volume (Le Guin 1993b:92). These collocations between different texts in the same volume indicate that doorways are important, calling our attention to the liminal zones between being and non-being. So when the housewife is called ‘Doorway’, the word is used as an honorific, bearing witness to women’s role as the custodians of threshold zones, passages, and transformations from one state to another. In this way, while acknowledging that many of the women who live in houses on Thurman Street may be housewives and domestic hosts, Le Guin avoids the pejorative connotations of this description, bestowing dignity and integrity on it instead. The poem revisions patriarchal stereotypes of a woman as confined to the domestic realm, by ascribing power to the housewife and stature to the space she inhabits. To this extent, Le Guin’s treatment of space exhibits affinities with radical geography’s understanding of the ‘spanning tussen enersyds die landskap as natuur, of fisiese ruimte, wat onafhanklik van die subjek bestaan, en andersyds hoe die subjek daardie ruimtelikheid beleef’ (‘tension between, on the one hand, landscape as nature, or physical space, which exists independently of the subject, and, on the other, the way the subject experiences that spatiality’) (Bezuidenhout 2013:14). In addition, she exhibits a feminist geographer’s response to emplacement, recognising that ‘physical and social spaces and places have been socially constructed to reflect and reinforce unequal gendered social relations’ (Dias & Blecha 2007:2). These meanings are reinforced by the photograph accompanying ‘Housewife’, dominated by a magnificent spreading tree in the foreground and a view of an imposing balcony ringed with white railings on an evidently large, well-established house.

By foregrounding spreading lines, such as those of the branches and the railings around the balcony, the photograph implies that the woman, like the house and tree, is substantial, secure and well-founded.

By contrast with the solidity of the woman’s presence in ‘Housewife’, the untitled poem ‘A house stands …’ (Le Guin 1993b) offers an extended meditation on mutability in houses, while suggesting that home does not change as much as houses do. The final stanza of the poem is accompanied by a photograph which, like the photograph accompanying ‘Housewife’, includes a tree.
Page 95 of *Blue Moon over Thurman Street* (Le Guin 1993b:95). Reproduced with kind permission from Roger Dorband.

Page 95 of *Blue Moon over Thurman Street* (Le Guin 1993b:87). Reproduced with kind permission from Roger Dorband.
This photograph, like several others in the volume, foregrounds the contrast between the natural and the built environments. The contrast is evident in various other distinctions: between the dark, vertical tree trunks and the white walls of the house; between the organic, slightly oblique lines of the trees, and the geometric rectangles of the built environment, represented by the windows. At the same time, the house is recognisably built of wood, echoing the living wood of the trees. The viewer looks through the tree trunks, as through a portal, and through the windows into the traces of human life within the house. The interior of the house is depicted as a space of confinement, at a distinct remove from the natural world, as represented by the trees. The accompanying poem reads:

What does a house hold?
Sometimes a fullness of shadows.
Light lies outside on patterns of glass and wood more fragile yet. And there are forgettings. The held, The kept, the lost, The leafshadows (Le Guin 1993b:82-86).

While the building in the photograph is designed for durability, the poem focuses on mutability and ephemerality. Ultimately, the poem resonates with Bachelard’s (1969:6) insight that houses embrace different temporal epochs: ‘Past, present and future give the house different dynamisms, which often interfere, at times opposing, at others, stimulating one another’. Le Guin (1993b:86) concludes that the house’s meaning resides within its inhabitants’ relationship to objects and time: ‘The held, / The kept, the lost, / The leafshadows’. ‘Held,’ ‘kept’ and ‘lost’ refer, Bachelard-like, to people, objects and memories, but these, Le Guin suggests, are even more ephemeral and susceptible to change than leaves and the shadows they cast. There is a resolute refusal of nostalgia in these lines, which exemplify what Le Guin refers to as the Bhagavad-Gita’s ‘austere tenderness’: the poem takes note of the way phenomena shift modes and pass away, but does not offer comfort for their inevitable loss. In Boym’s terms, both ‘restorative nostalgia’ and ‘reflective nostalgia’ are revealed as longing for what was always already slipping away.

7 Le Guin has called herself ‘the most arboreal science fiction writer’ (Freedman 2008:13).
Blue moon over Thurman Street addresses the theme of home indirectly, through its poetic and visual investigation of the trope of the house. The signifiers ‘house’ and ‘home’ are related in a similar way to Yi-fu Tuan’s ‘space’ and ‘place: Tuan (1977:6) explains: ‘What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value’. In other words, while space is characterised by physical markers, place is identified by its meaning to the experiencing subject. In an analogous way, a house is a building, but home is known by the experiences of its inhabitants. Le Guin and Dorband do not offer comforting images of firesides, hearths or family scenes for the reader. Instead, there are incongruous images of armchairs on lawns (Le Guin 1993b:82) and images of outer façades of houses with only the faintest traces of human life within. The final impression left on the reader is that there is no abiding or comforting sense of familiarity to return to: instead, all is change, even on a street that is imbued with familiarity for both photographer and author.

Outer and inner space: Out here

The title of Out here, Le Guin and Dorband’s multimodal eulogy to the Steens Mountain Country in Southeast Oregon, juxtaposes distance and proximity, implying that the solidly rooted presence of “here” is also “way out”, distant and unfamiliar. Le Guin acknowledges this productive tension, which is at the heart of the volume, in her Foreword (Le Guin 2010:10): ‘once you get here, it’s as here as a place can be: a landscape that is immensely and intensely vivid, present. But still, it’s out here. Distance is inherent in its presence’. Like Always coming home and Blue moon over Thurman Street, Out here is an irreducibly composite work, comprising three different genres: poetry, photographs, and sketches. All of these modes combine in praise of an unfamiliar, unhomely environment. Implicitly, Le Guin and Dorband ask, throughout Out here, ‘How can a barren, inhumanly strange landscape be “homed” and made part of ordinary human existence?’ Part of the reason may lie in Dorband’s affinity with the work of the environmentalist and photographer Eliot Porter, himself a devotee of Walter Thoreau’s nature writing. Porter was a founder member of the Sierra Club, which campaigned, at times radically, for the preservation of unspoilt wild spaces (Solnit 2002). Porter used photography as ‘a propaganda device, and a weapon for the defense of the environment … and therefore for the fostering of a healthy human race’ (Solnit 2002:32). Part of the intention in compiling Out here is to encourage a full, multimodal appreciation of wild, sparsely inhabited spaces as a means to enlarging human imagination. Like Porter, in the midst of a vast desert, Dorband combines an appreciation of space...
with attention to detail. The emptiness of the landscape is captured in several panoramic photographs, but it is evoked through sharp focus on small details, which, in photographs of brush and reeds, accumulate to provide a broad spatial sweep. In these works, Dorband’s judicious use of focus and colour brings the reader to appreciate the paradoxical richness and ordinariness of the life-forms that inhabit Steens Mountain Country.

The first poem in the volume, ‘High desert’ (Le Guin 2010), announces the central paradoxes of the volume by pointing to movement and stillness, slowness and speed, apparent emptiness and small signs of life. The poem asserts firmly that ‘Out here, there is another way to be’ (Le Guin 2010:15; the line is repeated three times, with minor variations). This line places the human observer, the implied subject of ‘be’, into the landscape, demanding that they embrace the unfamiliar elements of silence and slowness as constituents of ‘here’. ‘Here’ includes rocks, trees, quail, owls, and a hawk, which are defamiliarised as different from the built environment that makes up familiar, urban existence. ‘High desert’ invokes different existential modes in the same way as Le Guin’s (1989) utopian essay, ‘A non-Euclidean view of California as a cold place to be’, which is also structured around dynamic opposition. Yin and yang are the pivotal polarities of the essay and Le Guin (1989:90) mentions that ‘[o]ur civilization is now so intensely yang that any imagination of bettering its injustices or eluding its self-destructiveness must involve a reversal’. ‘Yang’ energy is ‘[b]right, dry, clear, strong, firm, active, aggressive, lineal, progressive, creative, expanding, advancing, and hot’ (Le Guin 1989:90). Le Guin (1989:90) proposes that the opposite, ‘yin’ energies, which are ‘dark, wet, obscure, weak, yielding, participatory, circular, cyclical, peaceful, nurturant, retreating, contracting, and cold’, may provide an antidote to the race for success, progress and dominance that structures the West. The poem ‘High desert’, with its interest in the small, the slow and the silent, articulates the same creative impulse away from sensationalism and impact as ‘A non-Euclidean View of California’ in that both texts express dissatisfaction with the dominant modes of action and interaction, and both propose alternatives. The tree, rocks, owl, and quail in the poem do not aspire to win or achieve anything. Their goal is the simplicity of being, and in continuing, they provide a model for ‘another way to be’ — the ‘cold’ form of existence posited in the earlier essay. With its subtle echoes of phrases, lines and words, and rhymes that are not quite complete, the poem emphasises how the dialectical tension between familiarity and strangeness, movement and stillness, can bring about ‘another way to be’ which is more salutary than the customary human modes of existence.
Later in the volume, the long poem evocatively entitled ‘Malheur Cave’ (Unhappiness Cave) (Le Guin 2010) provides the volume’s most vivid enactment of spatial disorientation. The following lines exemplify Le Guin’s (2010:47) poetic method:

But this is still only the anteroom  
I look back there’s the unlieded eye  
the arc of dazzle already far away  
but what is far what is away  
under the rock inside the dirt  
where here is only here  
The lid is over me  
because I’m going on to learn  
the pupil of this dark eye

As the speaker moves deeper into the cave, her disorientation increases (Le Guin 2010:48):

I don’t know what it is that I don’t see  
This silent stale dirty darkness is  
a place. A place to be. A place I am.  
A hearsay arch of red and gold  
designs of blinded fire overhead

When I was there my little light  
only showed how dark ate light  
and now I’m here I have no light  
but mind’s eyes in the cave of skull

With only a remembered guidebook to direct her, the speaker finds that the experience within is profoundly different from a tourist attraction. Progressive visual deprivation is signalled by the poem’s repeated references to eyes, lids, and pupils. Even the cave entrance resembles an eye in its capacity to allow light in. The line ‘the pupil of this dark eye’ also represents the speaker as a learner, learning what selfhood can mean in the absence of visual orientation. This leads her to reflect on the necessity of light for vision; and of both light and vision for spatial and existential situatedness. Without light, the speaker is claustrophobically confined to her own thoughts: ‘mind’s eyes in the cave of skull’. The skull is smaller, but no less oppressive than the cave. She is thrown back onto unconventional methods of locating herself:
first, she recognises that the cave is ‘a place’ among other places, rather than a
non-place as it might seem to be in the absence of light. Then she notes that living
things can ‘be’ in it, and finally she asserts that she is firmly in this subterranean
place, which offers the opposite experience of nearly all other places.

The poem refers repeatedly to light, its absence, and to the capacity of darkness to
create a disorientating environment. These references attest, in a similar way to the
speaker’s obsession with the lack of water in TS Eliot’s ‘What the thunder said’ (Eliot
2014, lines 10-16), to the centrality of light for humans, who are dependent on visual
cues. The visual deprivation the speaker experiences in the cave is structurally likened
to the visually overwhelming empty spaces of the desert of Steens Mountain Country.
Light also forms the focus of one of the volume’s few photographs of interiors.

This photograph, although depicting a recognisable human structure, defamiliarises
it in a number of ways. The barn’s emptiness echoes the emptiness of the vast desert
spaces depicted in Dorband’s photographs of the panoramic vistas of Steens
Mountain Country: but an empty human habitation is more unpredictable, more likely
to surprise the viewer into a second look, than an empty desert. The uniformity of
the wooden walls, floor, and roof provide another source of estrangement, while the
spots of light throughout the structure, which may be caused by holes in the barn,
remind the viewer that light is the only way humans can see inside the barn, around
the desert, or see anything at all. The defamiliarising effect of the photograph is
mitigated, nevertheless, by the terminus of the back wall. Like many other phenomena
in Steens Mountain Country, the barn offers ‘another way to be’, even for buildings.

The visual trope of sight continues in two photographic references to eyes: the
photograph that accompanies ‘Malheur Cave’ and a visual echo in the photograph
of the lake.

The photograph of the entrance to Malheur Cave is the only photograph in in the
volume to appear, monochrome, emphasising the dramatic contrast between light
and dark, or between knowing where one is and complete disorientation. The dark,
slightly textured floor of the cave leads the viewer’s eye towards the brightly lit
aperture, accentuating the appeal of light to one who has been lost in the dark,
but the light that floods into the photograph through the opening is blinding,
suggesting that the cave visitor may be as disorientated by an excess of light as
she has been by its absence.

The photograph of the lake also suggests an eye, particularly in its oval shape,
startling deep blue shades and the line of cliffs that edge it on the top right. The
viewer’s gaze is led towards the lake by the diagonal lines of the bushes and by
the flat line of the horizon, above which lies a much paler blue sky, a less intense
version of the lake’s azure. The lake dwarfs the cliffs, making them appear no higher
than a small ridge in the ground, and it is only on looking closer that their height is
seen. The effect of the photograph is to surprise and impress the viewer with the
intense colours and dramatic shapes within an apparently empty landscape.
Dorband forces the viewer to look more than once at the scene in order to appreciate
its intensity, grandeur, and scale. The ‘eyes’ in the cave photograph, and the lake
photograph, are both inhuman, and they both metaphorically reinforce the way
looking carefully at natural phenomena can deepen perception.

‘Malheur Cave’ records a process during which the speaker moves from knowing
where she is to being utterly lost and having to rely on unfamiliar and unusual
methods of finding her way. This leads to an expanded understanding of self through the mechanisms of self-orientation and location. In the same way, Rebecca Solnit asserts that getting lost is an inspirational moment. She explains in *A field guide to getting lost*: ‘Leave the door open for the unknown, the door into the dark. That’s where the most important things come from, where you yourself came from, and where you will go’ (Solnit 2006:6). The experience of disorientation, for Solnit, allows the individual to understand ultimate matters such as origins and destinations. But even ‘origin’ and ‘destination’ are spatial metaphors, pointing to life as a journey in the same way as the recurrent quest motif in Le Guin’s fiction. Finding oneself, for Solnit, involves accepting that ‘the dark’ or non-being is both the origin and the destination of human life. Or, as Le Guin (1993b:50, 92) quotes in *Blue moon over Thurman Street*, ‘all being is seen between two unseens’. While light and vision lend definition and a sense of solid location, darkness and the unknown, Le Guin and Solnit suggest, are finally larger and more important for (self-)discovery and creativity.
Conclusion

For Le Guin, as for many feminist theorists, “home” is a profoundly gendered space. She pays attention to the patriarchal propensity to confine women in houses and then forget about them in a number of poems, but, specifically in ‘Read at the award dinner’ (Le Guin 1999), she warns that this is a dangerous strategy that may bring about wildness instead of the desired domesticity:

For the housewife will fill the house with lions
and in with the grandmother
come bears, wild horses, great horned owls, coyotes.
(Le Guin 1999:11).
The home that houses a surprisingly lion-loving housewife, I argue, links the houses depicted in *Blue moon over Thurman Street*, with the great expanse of Steens Mountain Country, depicted in *Out here*. Both spaces harness and hold in tension what is familiar and unchanging together with *unheimlich* aspects of threatening strangeness. As there can be nothing known without evoking the unknown, Le Guin’s and Dorband’s multimodal understanding of space must be understood by exploring balanced oppositions in their work, such as yin and yang, culture and nature, self and other, human and animal, but most particularly the dialectical tension between the known and the unknown. As ‘Malheur Cave’ demonstrates, when the self is deprived of its familiar strategies of self-recognition and self-knowledge, it can, nevertheless, assert firmly that here is ‘a place I am’, which means that the self is home.

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Arcades revisited as urban interiors in a transformed city context

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ABSTRACT

Pretoria is the administrative capital of South Africa and is located within the City of Tshwane in the Gauteng Province. The city’s Central Business District (CBD) is characterised by a network of arcades and walkways that cut through the long and deep city blocks. In this article, we discuss arcades as urban interiors and the potential of these spaces to become points of social interaction within a transformed city context. We reflect on the original purpose of the arcade and based on criteria derived from a literature review, we critically assess the current use of three arcades and describe challenges experienced in the functioning of these spaces. The design of the building edges that link the interiors to the adjacent arcade space are revisited as a design element that has the potential to reactivate the arcades as urban interiors. Guidelines for improving the city dwellers and daily commuters’ experience and use of these spaces as urban interiors are formulated and discussed. These guidelines, although formulated within a South African context, are relative to any urban interior within a city that has lost its sense of place and that needs to be reactivated through the treatment of its surrounding buildings’ edges.

Keywords: Arcade; urban interior; social public space; building edges; staying zones; linger.
Introduction

Until the early 1990s, the Pretoria Central Business District (CBD) was the heartbeat of the city’s economic activities, but owing to the sprawling city edges many of the commercial activities have been relocated in the rapidly expanding suburban areas. The city centre has undergone many changes over the past 30 years as a result to this decentralisation of commercial activities. The CBD area houses a number of governmental departments, small commercial educational colleges and smaller scale, informal commercial ventures. People living on the periphery of Pretoria continue to travel to the old CBD for work, education, shopping or to visit public services. Thus, Pretoria’s CBD has not lost any of its usual routines; rather one kind of activity has been replaced by another.

The Central Business District (CBD) is characterised by a network of arcades and walkways that cut through the long and deep city blocks. In comparison to the city centre of Johannesburg (located 68km south-west of Pretoria), the city blocks in Pretoria are twice as long and pedestrians need to traverse longer distances along north and south connecting routes (see Figure 1). This movement is facilitated by the network of arcades and walkways, which form mid-block pathways, thereby increasing the permeability of the inner city (Bothma 2003:14).

In this article we are concerned with the potential that arcades offer Pretoria’s old CBD and the dialogue that needs to occur between the arcade’s interior and the surrounding building edges that link it to the public urban space. The arcades have the potential to become urban interiors where people can shop, eat, interact or simply pause and linger. Having lost much of their original former sense of place, these arcades are largely desolate and are used merely as thoroughfares. The arcades are no longer destinations in which citizens can stroll, escape from the busy sidewalks and socially interact. The judicious re-design of the building edges could reactivate these urban interiors and contribute to the improvement of inner city connectivity.

An urban interior that satisfies the city dweller socially can engender a sense of place (Johnson, Glover & Stewart 2014:31; Carr, Francis, Rivlin & Stone 1992:187). Herein lies the potential for creating and increasing commercial activity and public pause areas in city centres. Leani van der Westhuizen (2005:18) argues, ‘[p]ublic spaces are increasingly being seen simply as opportunities for consumerism’. While consumerism alone is not enough to satisfy our basic needs, if commercial activity within a space is absent and no other significant activity occurs in the adjacent urban interior, the sense of place is lost. The objective is to suggest which design
features are required to reactivate the building’s edge and the adjacent urban interior, thereby increasing both the social and commercial activity and re-establishing a sense of place. At the same time, the reactivation of these arcades as urban interiors has the potential to improve pedestrian connectivity and support elements within the non-motorised transport network in Pretoria’s CBD.
Background to Pretoria and city development

The city centre has a rich history, which was established in the 1880s. Dieter Holm (1998:57) explains that Pretoria’s first transformation took place over a very short period from the 1880s to the 1900s. During this period, the town developed from an agrarian community to the capital of the South African Union in 1910. The town’s transformation was visible within the urban design that was developed under the guidance of the Dutch architect Sytze Wopkes Wierda. An orthogonal urban grid was introduced that was ordered around the church and the central space of the Kerkplaats (Church Square) (Holm 1998:57-58). This central space remained the focus point in the city centre for many years. Since the end of the nineteenth century, government buildings such as the Raadsaal (Parliament building) and the Palace of Justice were erected around Church Square (Holm 1998:64; Van der Klasthorst 2013:34).

The city has remained the administrative capital since the formation of the South African Union in 1910 and is, under the current governance, one of the three capital cities of South Africa. The national executive function of this capital city continues to operate from the CBD area and houses governmental departments, educational colleges, commercial activities, as well as the Pretoria High Court (North Gauteng High Court), the Reserve Bank of South Africa and the State Theatre (see Figure 1). Originally, properties in the CBD were mostly orientated longitudinally; however, insufficient shop frontages resulted, which led to the formation of arcades to increase the ratio of shop front to sidewalk. An additional important function of these enclosed urban spaces was to provide convenient pedestrian connectivity within the inner city. This function can contribute positively to the proposed future development and transformation of the inner city transport plan.

In 2013, the Gauteng Provincial Government, Department of Roads and Transport released a draft report that communicated a 25-year, comprehensive, integrated transport master plan for Gauteng. The proposed plan focuses on the development and upgrading of a non-motorised transport network system within Gauteng’s inner cities. Studies and surveys that were conducted as part of the transport master plan show that a large majority of the work force and more than 70 per cent of scholars within the urban areas either walk to their final destination, or walk as part of their commuting trip to public transport facilities (Gauteng Provincial Government 2013:2-7). The spatial development plan for the City of Tshwane was developed since 2007 and strategic goals included in the Gauteng draft report, indicates that this city’s main goal is to promote a greater use of public transport across the municipal area (Gauteng Provincial Government 2013:12). Part of the
strategy to achieve this goal is the inclusion of better pedestrian connectivity between transport points (Gauteng Provincial Government 2013:12). The Joburg Inner City Urban Design Implementation Plan, formulated by the Johannesburg Development Agency, states that pedestrians are the most important element within the inner city network as all city dwellers are at some point of their journey on foot (Gauteng Provincial Government 2013:18).

Statistics show that within the current status quo of the non-motorised transport network of Pretoria, there are a high proportion of walking trips included in all travelling trips within the city (29 per cent), and that 51 per cent of scholars and students in Pretoria mainly walk to their final destination (City of Tshwane 2015, Chapter 11:2-3). Despite the above observations and statistics that show that the inner city facilitates a high percentage of pedestrians, the current pedestrian networks within the central business district have received the least attention (Gauteng Provincial Government 2013:18). The majority of sidewalks and thoroughfares are physically difficult to negotiate and are unsafe. The sidewalks offer limited protection from the weather and lack spaces for social interaction.

**Arcades as urban interiors**

When referring to a place or space as urban – urban fabric, urban public space, urban area – it is immediately positioned within the context of a city. Cities consist of buildings, streets and in-between open spaces. These open spaces include arcades, thoroughfares, pedestrian streets and public squares and are considered to be exterior public spaces. Urban interiors are associated with enclosed and controlled spaces within the city. Researcher and lecturer in Interior Architecture at the University of Wellington, Christine McCarthy (2005:112-125) states that ‘to control space is to limit it and to restrain it: to interiorize it’. Therefore, to recognise and define a space as an interior is to assign it the abstract quality of ‘interiority’ which further contributes to understanding this term as confined, contained, enclosed, private, secure, protected, or sheltered space.

Arcades are confined, contained, and enclosed by the edges of the surrounding buildings and provide a level of privacy, protection, and shelter to city dwellers and daily commuters. Christopher Alexander, Sara Ishikawa and Murray Silverstein (1977:582) explain that, ‘[a]rcades run along the building, where it meets the public world; they are open to the public’. Although arcades function externally from the building interiors, the quality of interiority is present within these spaces and they can therefore be referred to as urban interiors rather than as exterior public spaces.
The arcade’s historical typological development and significance as public space is discussed in German architect Johann Geist’s book Arcades, which is considered to be a seminal reference on arcades, passages, and galleries. Geist (1983:3) identifies that various terms can be used for arcades, for example ‘passages’, ‘the corridor’, ‘galleria’, ‘boulevard’, but all of these terms generally designate the same building typology. A definition for the term arcade is constructed by Geist (1983:4) and Walter Benjamin (1999:31) and indicates a passageway that is lined with retail outlets on both sides linking two busy streets, offering a public space that eases pedestrian traffic flow and provides a short cut and protection from the weather.

Geist (1983:4) elaborates further on the space under discussion where he says that ‘... the illusory element of the arcade is the space within its confines: an intended exterior is made interior; the façade with exterior architecture is drawn into the enclosed space’. Tracey Davis (1991:7) defines the function of the arcade as a space where shopping and socialising are merged.

The arcade had its origin in the Palais Royal located in Paris (France). In the late eighteenth century, during the French Revolution, there was a need for public space that was removed from the streets. The street still existed in its medieval state where there was no sidewalk, thus promenading and social interaction was an unsafe leisure activity (Geist 1983:59-62; Benjamin 1999:32). The Palais Royal provided such a public space removed from traffic where the public created centres of activity with secret societies, literary and political clubs in the salons and cafes that lined the arcade’s building edges (Geist 1983:59; Hanssen 2006:2). At the same time, society was in an era of cultural and industrial development and there was a need for a new means to market and display the products of an exploding commercial industry (Geist 1983:12; Benjamin 1999:3). The arcade came into existence as it addressed the need for undisturbed public spaces allowing the opportunity to display merchandise in a setting where the bourgeoisie could promenade, take shelter, enjoy socialisation and engage in luxury marketplace activities away from the dangerous streets lacking sidewalks.
Lingering and the need for social public space

Arcades as promenades are characterised by the integration of commercial activity into a pedestrian orientated urban interior, injecting the city with an element of surprise and discovery; providing places of escape from the busy city streets. Here the city dweller and commuter are able to pause, re-orientate, and take shelter. Architect and professor of Architecture at the University of Berkeley, Christopher Alexander *et al.* (1977:169) define the promenade as a place where people go ‘to stroll up and down, to meet friends, and to stare at others and let others stare at them’.

Sociologist and academic John Bruhn (1991:325) argues that anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists concur that humans are social beings who require interaction with each other. In order for individuals to understand their experiences within the world, they need to have a sense of social awareness that can only be established through taking part in social interaction and observing other people engaged in social activity (Mehta 2007:167; Marris 2004:78; Jacobs 1961:67; Carr, Francis, Rivlin & Stone 1992:27). Amanda Johnson, Troy Glover and William Stewart (2014:22) establish that many people regard public spaces where they can socially interact as important. Where public life is absent or disappearing within a community a sense of isolation and disconnection from the world becomes evident (Carr, Francis, Rivlin & Stone 1992:25).

Restaurants or coffee shops contribute to creating welcoming and meaningful community gathering spaces and places where people can socialise (Mehta 2007:181-183; Johnson *et al.* 2014:34). Jan Gehl (1987:71-74), an architect and urban design consultant, observed that people need time to linger in their surroundings to fully experience the environment. All meaningful social activities, intense experiences, and conversations need to take place in spaces where people can walk, sit, lie, or stand (Gehl 1987:71-74; Jacobs 1993:271-272). Therefore urban interiors must be designed to stimulate social interaction by allowing for the opportunity to linger. Gehl (1987:149) explains that ‘[i]t is important … to be able to stand in public spaces, but the key word is staying’.

Building edges and staying zones

Arcades provide a type of urban street environment where the urban dweller is able to both promenade and observe while being undisturbed by the movement
of other pedestrians (Fyfe 1998:83-87; Whyte 2009:21). Sociologist Derk de Jonge (cited by Gehl 1987:151) explains the phenomenon, of what he terms the edge effect, in a study he undertook of recreational areas. The study indicates that the preferred areas for staying and observing people are along the building edges of spaces. People have a need to survey their surroundings, without feeling exposed, through pausing along the edges of public spaces (Gehl 1987:151; Whyte 2009:108). A sense of place imbued with meaning is established when there is an opportunity to socially interact (Alexander et al. 1977:497; Johnson et al. 2014:39). The careful design and consideration of an urban interior’s building edge can therefore allow for points of pause and interaction. The activation of spaces on both the interior and the exterior of the building edge can contribute to developing a sense of place.

The Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan (see Figures 2-4) is an example of a typical historic arcade (Geist 1983:74) and an urban interior that provides staying zones along its building edges. A staying zone refers to a point along the building edge where the dweller can stay, as Jan Gehl and Birgitte Svarre (2013:84) define ‘good places for standing’ as the points along an edge of a space where people pause and stay. The Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II has a symmetrical plan with a repetitive column grid layout and glass shop fronts in-between the columns. These shallow recesses, in-between the columns, present ample space for people to stay and observe window displays and further form a backdrop and possibility for staying zones (see Figures 2-4).

A research study conducted by architectural students from the University of Melbourne in 1978, showed that a direct link can be established between open space quality and street life. By increasing the amount of public seating by 100 per cent on a pedestrian street in Melbourne, there was an 88 per cent increase in seated activities (Gehl 1987:36). Vikas Mehta (2007:183) also found that where a gathering place has seating that spills into the adjacent street, people are drawn to that spot and thus more people are drawn in. Favourable conditions for lingering are required in order for interaction to take place in public spaces. Building edges need to be lined with seats, staying zones and points for watching, displaying, exhibiting and interacting. To achieve this, building edges need to be opened up, moving into the exterior space extending the interior out, and thus inviting people into the interior.

Planning building edges and staying zones do, however, identify a dilemma in the design and consideration of urban interiors, since different designers take separate responsibility for the execution of the exterior and interior spaces. The architect punctures walls with large windows that define the shop fronts. The layout and shop fitting of the buildings’ interiors are designed by the interior designer/architect,
whilst the adjacent urban interior is the responsibility of the urban designer. As a result, little consideration is often given to the potential dialogue and connection between the interior, the building’s edge and the adjacent arcade space. Lingering and social interaction are negatively impacted in urban spaces where store fronts are vacant or visually disconnected by blinds or obstructions (Mehta 2007:183; Johnson et al. 2014:35; Jacobs 1961:47; Gehl & Svarre 2013:104; Carmona, Tiesdell, Heath & Oc 2010:134; Jacobs 1993:287; Whyte 2009:225). In contrast, large expanses of transparent windows create the possibility for new staying zones. It is to these points that the city dweller is attracted (Alexander et al. 1977:581; Jacobs 1993:286; Whyte 2009:100-101). Thus, the arcade’s building edge becomes a pause space between two realms, activating dialogue between the interior spaces and the arcade.

Arcades as urban interiors within a transformed city context: conditions and elements contributing to the function and success of arcades

In his book *Arcades*, Geist (1983:76) discusses the history and development of arcades around the world. In the nineteenth century, some cities like Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Sydney, and Melbourne exemplified the social conditions of the time through revealing stark contrast between the hierarchies of social orders. Geist (1983:76)
describes these cities as ‘cities of the railway and tramway age, of the age of steam and of gas, of a society sometimes restless, sometimes complacent, moving, often fumblingly and falteringly, toward greater democracy’. Geist (1983:76) further indicates that arcades in these cities, in contrast to the original purpose of the eighteenth century arcades, were built to serve purely commercial functions and address the daily needs of consumers who flowed into the crowded and developed downtown areas.

Geist (1983:110-114) argues that throughout the lifespan of an arcade the conditions surrounding it and the immediate environment can change, and the composition of the arcade’s users can affect its functionality to a great extent. He formulates conditions that need to be addressed and elements that need to be present in order for an arcade to remain functional and successful even with user and environmental changes. These are:

- **location** – the arcade needs to be situated in the centre of the city where there is a constant flow of people who meet to socialise, linger and shop
- **position** – an arcade must connect two busy streets and facilitate pedestrian traffic
- **internal organisation** – the arcade must have its own attractions, ‘architects must not only accommodate as many shops as possible within the space of the arcade but also make the traversal of the arcade as pleasant and entertaining as possible … making it a preferred place for an undisturbed promenade’ (Geist 1983:112)
- **the public** – the arcade should address the needs of the particular sector of the public that it attracts.

Up to this point of the research, the literature review identified the seminal authors and publications, presented an historic overview as well as design conditions that can contribute to long term success and function of arcades as urban interiors. Using Geist’s conditions and through the critical literature review, the following three criteria and research questions were formulated and used as a reference point to critically analyse, map and document the current functioning of arcades as urban interiors in Pretoria’s CBD:

**Criterion 1:** Address the need for social public spaces, staying zones and creating opportunities to pause and linger. Do the building edges of the arcade address this need?

**Criterion 2:** Address the need to escape and orientate users. Does the arcade interior provide a space to escape into and allow city dwellers to orientate themselves in the space through a visual connection to the urban context?
Criterion 3: Address the need to attract the public through retail functions and social events. Does the current functioning of these retail space’s edges address the retail and social needs of the particular public that it attracts?

In 2009, three arcades in Pretoria’s CBD – President Arcade, Polley’s Arcade and Burlington Arcade (see Figure 1) – were studied. The study included informal interviews with commuters and city dwellers, mapping of pedestrian movement, and observations made on the functions and activities within the arcades. The visual observations and mapping of pedestrian movement indicated that these arcades have a constant flow of pedestrians. All three arcades link either busy traffic streets or thoroughfares with heavy pedestrian traffic. Although these urban interiors have a constant flow of pedestrians, the urban interiors have become largely deserted and under-utilised.

In 2009, the pedestrian movement, preferred points for lingering, and existing possible staying zones along the building edges were mapped and analysed (see Figures 5 and 6). The three mentioned arcades were revisited in 2015 and a comparison of the current situation was made with findings documented in 2009. This information, within the framework of the criteria formulated above, is henceforward used to discuss the current functioning of these arcades as urban interiors in Pretoria’s CBD.

Overview of the visual and built environment of the three arcades in Pretoria

President Arcade (see Figures 7-10) is surrounded by tall buildings and is for the most part open to the sky. The arcade incorporates a play between covered and open roof areas along the building edges that cater for seasonal changes. People feel the warmth of the sun during winter and still have shelter when it rains. There is a high level of pedestrian movement along Pretorius Street, one of the linking streets and people are able to wait for their buses within this urban interior rather than on the sidewalks. There are a number of colleges and schools in and around the arcade and many of the students and children socially interact in the arcade during their lunch breaks and free time. During this time the space comes alive; school children play soccer and gather around the street vendors to socialise. The majority of the people linger at the visually blocked shop front of the Identity store, located at the arcade’s entrance (Figure 7). This staying zone faces an occupied shop front, allowing dwellers to observe the activity of the opposite shop while at the same time observing the movement along Pretorius Street. Where the building edges are closed up with no visual connection to the interiors, people quicken their pace as they move through the arcade. Most of the food outlets and shops do not open up into the arcade space, resulting in disconnected spaces.
Mapping diagrams indicating points where people linger, President Arcade, 2009 (diagram by Anneke Allers).

Mapping diagrams indicating points where people linger, Burlington Arcade, 2009 (diagram by Anneke Allers).
Burlington Arcade (see Figures 11-13) has an historical feel to it with its Art Deco shop fronts that have been built at alternating levels, creating an active and enticing building edge. The arcade is frequented continuously by pedestrians, as it links with a main pedestrian route from Church Square. The original shop front display areas have been adjusted to suit a South African context where street vendors are currently accommodated in the narrow shop front spaces (see Figure 13). People linger in the arcade while they are shopping and this allows the retail and food outlet activities to extend into the urban interior, in turn attracting more people from the pedestrian street. Midway in the arcade is a jazz shop that opens up into the arcade where the owner has provided seating, creating an active social spot. The arcade has intermittently covered and open roof areas, which provide random visual connections to the surrounding environment.

Identity – visually concealed shop front, President Arcade, Pretoria, 2009 (photographs by Anneke Allers).

President Arcade, Pretoria, 2015 (photographs by Anneke Allers).

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Polley’s Arcade (see Figures 14-16) was designed and project managed by the architect Norman Eaton between 1955 and 1960 (Polley’s Arcade 2010). This arcade provides an important link between two heavily frequented streets and is mostly used as a thoroughfare through which people can move quickly. The surrounding buildings house the South African Police Service Headquarters and all the shop fronts have been closed up, resulting in a visually blocked connection to the interiors. This creates a feeling of isolation discouraging people from lingering in this urban interior, with its wide empty corridors. The outstanding qualities of this arcade are the intricately laid hand-cut marble mosaic patterns with a staircase located midway in the arcade. This staircase raises the arcade floor space to a first floor which is connected to Schoeman Street. Daylight enters the arcade through the entrances to the street; additional skylight openings have been closed up. The strong visual link between the two streets ensures that pedestrians remain orientated within the space, even though they are isolated from the surrounding building edges and urban environment.

Critical review of the three arcades

The review criteria and research questions are employed hereafter to present a critical discussion of the function and utilisation, as well as to determine design features that need to be present in order to facilitate improvements to the urban interior.
Criterion 1: Address the need for social public space, staying zones and opportunity to linger

Industrialisation, suburbanisation and the segregation of various functions create the risk that city centres may suffer loss of activity and become redundant (Gehl 1987:19-24; Johnson et al. 2014:28). Pretoria’s CBD has experienced, to varying degrees, aspects of this phenomenon in all three arcades. President Arcade has been renovated since 2009 and although there are new planter boxes, floor tiles, and overhead grids and lighting within the arcade, the building edges still remain without formal seating and have limited opportunity for the creation of staying zones (see Figures 8 and 9).

The Department of Education together with some small educational colleges and schools are housed in President Arcade. As previously mentioned, school children and employees tend to stay and socially interact at points where there are already established activities and congregate around street vendors who station themselves within the arcade (see Figure 10).

Polley’s Arcade and President Arcade both have shop fronts that are closed up, blocking any visual connection to the interiors of the surrounding spaces (see Figures 8, 9 and 14). Polley’s Arcade has lost the opportunity to function as an urban interior for city dwellers, because all the shop fronts are closed up. In President Arcade the clothing outlet ‘Identity’s’ shop front has been closed up. A discussion with the shop owner in 2009 indicates that he did not want his customers to be distracted by the school children and employees of the education institutions who lean against the shop front. This lingering and staying zone at the entrance to the arcade identifies...
the need that people have to interact in public spaces during their breaks. In 2015, we noticed that people still linger in this area and lean against the visually blocked shop front. This staying zone is directly opposite an active shop front, which allows people to look onto activity while their backs are turned towards the blocked ‘Identity’ shop front. This pattern repeats itself throughout the arcade and supports the notion that the sight of action is an incentive for interaction (Alexander et al. 1977:774; Mehta 2007:183; Johnson et al. 2014:33; Jacobs 1961:47; Gehl & Svarre 2013:90). The design of Burlington Arcade has been more successful in allowing for possible staying zones and opportunities to linger. In Burlington Arcade, the Art Deco shop fronts are built on alternating levels, creating niches that the passers-by can lean against and from which they can observe their surroundings (see Figure 12). The Arcade was undergoing renovations in April 2015 during our visits and the installation of new floor tiles hindered any opportunities for lingering along the buildings edges, but lingering and interaction with shop interiors were evident at the service windows located in the narrow shop front spaces.

Criterion 2: Address the need to escape and orientate users

When an arcade is lined with blank walls people tend to move faster through the space, losing their sense of place and becoming disconnected from activity inside the building edge. When an opening in a blank wall is created, it establishes a visual link and an integration of interior and exterior. At this point, according to architect and phenomenologist Christian Norberg-Schulz (1980:5 & 58), true dwelling occurs, because it allows for orientation within the setting, thus providing a meaningful personal experience.

Instead of waiting on the busy narrow sidewalk in Pretorius Street, school children tend to “escape” into President Arcade, leaning against the shop front edge, socialising, and playing while waiting for transport. Even though the shop fronts at some points are closed up and the city dwellers are visually disconnected from the surroundings, there is a clear visual connection between the two ends of the arcade and pedestrians are able to orientate themselves within the city context. This is also true for Polley’s Arcade. Although the latter arcade is disconnected from its surrounding building edges, people still use it as a thoroughfare because it links two busy streets in the city, and allows for pedestrians to escape to a quiet corridor that links Pretorius and Schoeman Street.
Criterion 3: Address the need to attract the public through retail functions and social events

Architect and avant-garde theorist Bernard Tschumi (1983:7, 148) argues that architecture is not neutral: it cannot be reduced simply to a language of form and style, and one cannot dissociate the language of walls and space from the actions and events that take place in and around them. The building edge “speaks” to the city dweller and the city dweller “responds”, yet if the building edge is blank, then no dialogue can take place and the space becomes derelict.

In President Arcade the activities taking place inside the shops are disconnected from events in the exterior space of the arcade. Passers-by cannot see into the shops and food outlets. None of the shops have store fronts that can open up allowing merchandise to be displayed in the arcade space in order to tempt people to enter. Nor do the food outlets open up into the arcade, thus the patrons inside are unable to watch activity outside, while the passers-by cannot be enticed by sights and smells of food, or be tempted by people inside enjoying their food. The informal interviews that were conducted revealed that city dwellers are often mugged within this arcade. Dwellers are of the opinion that the disconnection between interior and exterior enables criminal behaviour and leads to a lack of a sense of safety in the arcade.

In Burlington Arcade many of the shop fronts are built at a higher level than the ground and open up with sliding glass panels. When people sit at these points, it appears as though they are sitting inside the shop; the shop’s function and arcade activity thus overlaps and integrates. A popular social spot has been created in front of the jazz music retail shop, which opens into the arcade and blurs the boundaries between the two spaces. Music from the shop draws people into the arcade and creates a point where one can relax and linger, thereby establishing the character for the whole arcade. The pedestrians stop to sit on the chairs set up outside the store and listen to CD’s on earphones.

In Burlington Arcade the conversion of the narrow shop fronts to small vending outlets, allow for the opportunity for smaller retail points to be integrated into the city’s retail fabric. These shops accommodate vendors who only require a small retail space, and thus create the opportunity for activities inside the shops to extend into the surrounding arcade. The small retail spaces now open up directly into the arcade and the customer shops while standing within the arcade space. The adjustment to the original design of an arcade has led to the successful commercial functioning within a South African transformed city context.
Design guidelines to reactivate arcades as urban interiors

Through reflecting on the original purpose and functioning of arcades as urban interiors and assessing the current functioning of the arcades within Pretoria’s CBD, guidelines have been established in order to improve the use of arcades as urban interiors. The following guidelines are not only relevant for Pretoria’s urban interiors, but have a wider application. These guidelines can be used to improve any enclosed urban interior within a city that have the potential for commercial integration with possible staying zones for social interaction.

i. Create a network of permanent social points to act as staying zones to draw the city dweller into the urban interior, for example restaurants with outdoor seating located between retail outlets.

ii. Create a pattern of active and less active building edges opposite each other to provide pedestrians and city dwellers with a view into/onto activities.

iii. Incorporate niches and seating within the building’s edge, so that people can establish staying zones as informal social points.

iv. Establish staying zones that overlook retail activity so that city dwellers can observe these activities while lingering and socialising in the urban interior.

v. Create opportunities for informal vendors within the urban interior.

vi. Create visual links between the connecting routes of an urban interior as well as between the shop interiors and the arcade’s urban interior to orientate and visually connect the users.

vii. Create building edges that can open-up completely, thereby blurring the boundary between inside and outside and establishing a strong connection between the urban interior and surrounding building edges.

Conclusion

In this article, we discussed arcades as urban interiors and investigated the potential of three arcades in Pretoria’s CBD to be reactivated as public social spaces in order to attract city dwellers, commuters, and small scale and retail businesses. The literature review and investigation into the three arcades indicates that an urban interior should address city dwellers’ need for social public spaces by providing staying zones that provide an opportunity to pause, linger, and allow for social
interaction with other city dwellers. An urban interior should be a place that we can escape into and not just pass through, providing us with shelter from the weather as well as safety and privacy from heavy pedestrian traffic. The urban interior’s building edges should link the retail or shop interiors to the adjacent arcade space through introducing large transparent or retractable shop fronts that can visually link the retail activities, merchandise and food outlets to the urban interior.

The assessment of the three arcades in Pretoria’s CBD, based on the criteria derived from the literature review, indicates that there are very few opportunities currently to linger and stay in these urban interior spaces. This is detrimental to social interaction and also causes these urban interiors to lose their sense of place. Guidelines for improving the city dwellers and daily commuters’ experience and use of these spaces as urban interiors were formulated and discussed. The guidelines indicate that the interior designers/architects, architects, and urban designers need to consider points for social interaction along the building edges of public spaces. Niches and seating as part of active and less active building edges opposite each other, should be designed as part of the building edge so that the city dweller can create staying zones. This will enable the city dwellers to stay and socially engage with other people, establishing a sense of place. The city dweller will also take note of the adjacent building interiors which then should increase commercial activity. Within such an urban interior the city dweller is able to create a sense of belonging and meaning and be encouraged to make use of the space on a daily basis.

The network of arcades in Pretoria indicates that an independent pedestrian network is created that provides a more intimate experience for the city commuters. The strong shift towards the development of a non-motorised transport network system in South African cities impacts directly on the position and utilisation of urban interiors since these spaces link public transport points, connect activities and contribute to providing safe, pleasant experiences to pedestrians. The reactivation of these urban interiors can therefore contribute to the improvement of pedestrian connectivity between transport points.

The proposed guidelines, although formulated within a South African context, are relevant to any urban interior within a city that has lost its sense of place and that needs to be reactivated through the treatment of its building edges. Further research can be done by using the criteria to observe other inner cities in South Africa in order to expand on the guidelines. The guidelines are suggestions to which design features need to be present along the building edges of these arcades to ensure a successful urban interior within a South African context, but are relevant to any urban interior that needs to regain its function as a social public space with a strong sense of place.
REFERENCES


An interpretation of the role of meaning in interior design

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ABSTRACT

The cultural role of the interior artefact, through the representation and interpretation of meaning, is considered in this article. This follows Umberto Eco’s moderate hypothesis of culture in which all cultural phenomena can be studied as contents of a semiotic activity and in accordance with Jeff Lewis’s construct of culture as a collection of meanings. The ‘interior artefact’ that is considered here is the physical manifestation of interior design as a professional practice in the built environment and not a general product of human activity. It is assumed that successful interior artefacts are dependent on the generation of meaningful images and their appropriate spatial interpretation. The interior artefact is a material artefact that creates and communicates meaning; it offers the framework for situated meaning and is the result of that meaning. The interior artefact is the spatial embodiment of the visual identity imagined by the interior designer on behalf of the client. In this context, interior design is considered as a cultural activity with importance for human development, which includes the utilisation and development of identity. The article considers identity to involve more complexity than merely expressing categories of belonging (such as race and gender). In interior design the generation and interpretation of meaning is dependent on the visual presence of cultural discourses; the article concludes with a brief discussion of some of these.

Keywords: artefact, cultural discourse, interior design.

Introduction

I shall reflect on the creative ability of interior designers to unlock greater and deeper cultural meaning within the built environment. Since I believe that this creativity is rooted in the cultural world, I refer to the description of interior design’s cultural aspects in the International Federation of Interior Architects/Designers (IFI) Interiors Declaration (IFI 2011):
CULTURE

As a creative enterprise, interior design is a mode of cultural production. It is a place-maker that interprets, translates, and edits cultural capital. In a global world, interior design must play a role in facilitating the retention of cultural diversity.¹

These two paragraphs in the Interiors Declaration are in opposition: when interior design translates cultural capital, it facilitates cultural exchange, which is a unifying and globalising force; this may threaten cultural diversity. It becomes obvious that a deeper understanding of interior design creativity, or cultural agency, is necessary to mitigate these factors. This article is a reflection on the findings of my PhD thesis, which is not based on the objective to prove or defend a theoretical position, but is the result of a theoretical inquiry to understand interior design creativity: it asks the question: ‘how does interior design create meaning?’

The thesis investigated a collection of photographic representations of interiors that were designed by numerous designers from around the world, and which were published after the signing of the IFI Interiors Declaration in February 2011. The purpose of the collection process was to assemble a corpus of interior artefacts rapidly that allow the researcher to claim representivity and generality.² When I collected the data, I further adopted an attitude that is akin to an interior designer collecting visual material to create a mood board. In this way, it represents my own tastes and preferences; it can also be seen as a visual synthesis of my normative position to the ontological question (what is interior design?). I present speculations on the cultural role of the interior artefact within the larger cultural discourse. This is presented as a theory of interior design as a cultural process. It considers the generation of meaning in the interior artefact as a cultural practice. I follow Umberto Eco’s (1979a:22) moderate hypothesis of culture in which all cultural phenomena can be studied as contents of a semiotic activity and in accordance with Jeff Lewis’s (2008:396) construct of culture as a collection of meanings. In this way, interior design can be understood as method to create meaning, and the interior artefact can be understood as a meaningful object. I consider culture as a noun of process (after Williams 1976:77) as culture is continually created, interpreted, and reproduced. This process is a general description of human development as an assemblage of meanings that are made and interpreted by a group. Culture is a system of meaning, and interior design is active within that system. The action to produce culture is reduced to the action to create meaning.

¹ The text was edited to eliminate the term ‘interior architecture’.

² The corpus is a non-probability judgmental sample that was collected from design blogs; artefacts could be designed by any professional (i.e., the designer did not have to self-identify as an interior designer) but must be recognisable as a volumetric interior. The purpose was to consider the interior artefact and its material contributions, not the professional contributions of a particular occupation. The data was collected from twelve blogs, but 75 per cent were delivered by five prominent blogs: Dezeen; Arch Daily (and its derivatives); Designboom Magazine; The CoolHunter; and Trend Hunter. The blogs offered search functions and organised their content by discipline or type, which facilitated the search process. Dezeen, Arch Daily, and Designboom Magazine (contributing 65 per cent of the corpus) are cited regularly in academic articles. The corpus was assembled with analytic intent, specifically to consider how interior design practically produces meaning, and by extension culture, through a grounded theory analysis. This article represents the theoretical integration of that analysis, and is presented therefore as a theoretical and philosophical investigation. The intent is to generate a general understanding of the interior artefact.
Interior design as a cultural activity with importance for human development

Social space is the vehicle for the cultural life of society to take place (Perolini 2011:167) and it is produced by and influences cultural interaction. Space encourages or discourages certain behaviours and interactions and gives form to social structures and ideologies (Perolini 2011:168). This is an account of the recursive relationship in which cultural practices inform space-making, while space-making, in turn, constructs and maintains cultural practices. Interior design offers the tangible cultural spaces that serve as vehicles for intangible cultural practices (e.g., a restaurant acting as vehicle for a waiter serving dinner, with associated meanings of servitude and social position and additional connotations of commodity and expense). Culture is strategically important for human development and is a universal human characteristic (UNESCO 2003; 2005); since interior design is a cultural activity that provides the tangible vehicles for the expression of intangible cultural aspects, there is a need to consider and understand interior design’s role in this context.

Material objects and spaces create and communicate meaning; they offer the framework for situated meaning and are the result of that meaning (O’Toole & Were 2008:618-619), that is, material objects communicate meaning and are created meaningfully. They are the result of actions and also connote those actions. The interior artefact is such a material object or space:

[Space and material culture] is both a manifestation and influence on our cultures, social structures, sense of agency, identity and power structures (O’Toole & Were 2008:631).

The interior artefact exists as a technical object in the technological system (Techne) and a meaningful object in the cultural system (Dogma); it straddles the interdependence between the tangible and intangible aspects of culture. Like all technical (functional) objects it can be said that interior artefacts are ‘in flight from the technological system towards the cultural system’ (after Barthes 1983:8). This is an expression of the relationship between first- and second-order meaning and the process of transfunctionalisation to move between the two (after Gottdiener 1985). Any functional object generates meaning and must communicate with its user on two levels: first-order meaning indicates a functional object’s operational purpose or use, while second-order meaning may refer to socially constructed connotations such as cost or social status. The embodied meaning of the interior artefact is considered as an utterance (after Eco 1979b). Any utterance conveys organised

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3. The term ‘space’ is used in this article to refer to inhabitable artefacts that can be entered and navigated by humans, for example, landscapes, open urban places such as sidewalks and squares, buildings, interiors, and rooms. When the interrelationship between cultural practices and spaces is considered, or when these spaces obtain identities or are inhabited, they can be considered as ‘places’. It is beyond the scope of this article to consider the philosophical underpinnings of ‘place-making’.
and analysable content formed by a hierarchy of semantic features. The features exist as a system (Eco 1979b:176). This section highlights some of the systemic characteristics of meaning in the interior artefact.

Both levels generate meaning: the technical object conveys first-order meaning in the technical system and is primarily concerned with the interior artefact’s functional characteristics and operational purpose; as a meaningful object the interior artefact carries second-order connotations in the cultural system. This embodied meaning is the primary cultural aspect of interior design; it establishes the interior artefact as a cultural object and its continuous (re)generation is consistent with considering culture as a noun of process.

Considering the interior artefact as techne or dogma allows me to consider broadly the creation of meaning in interiors. The creation of meaning addresses the psychological needs of the inhabitants, while technification directs embodiment thereof in physical objects. O’Toole and Were (2008:618) describe the relationship between meaning and function in objects as follow: ‘[m]aterial objects and places are ostensibly constructed and possessed for an operational purpose, but also to create and communicate meaning’. The implication for interior design is that as meaningful objects, the second-order meaning to be embodied in interior artefacts must be generated first. This challenges the role of the interior designer as a technologist who is primarily concerned with the production of a physical object that protects the health and safety of the inhabitant; the physical expression of the interior is relegated to a secondary professional role.4

Eco (1979b:14-40) proposes a model of interpretation based on the complexity of the text: if the text is simple, few factors have impact on the message and its eventual acceptance by the addressee; for more complex texts, such as fictional texts, other factors such as the suspension of disbelief are important (Eco 1979b:16).

Meaning in the interior artefact functions on similar principles: as technical objects interior artefacts require of their inhabitants to trust that they will fulfil their function, as meaningful objects they require a suspension of disbelief which is associated with the ambiguity and complexity of the interior artefact.

Eco (1979b:40) offers a tantalising invitation to complexity of meaning in texts:

To conclude a book of textual interpretations with a metanarrative text that speaks ambiguously and with tongue in cheek of its own ambiguity and of its own derisory nature seems to me an honest decision.

4. This has implications for the establishment of interior design as a profession (also refer to Königk 2010); the professional ground shifts to a concern with meaning. A professional concern with the imaginal aspects of the built-environment and relegation of the spatial aspects (or at the least a counterpoint to the spatial bias of architecture) provides a greater ontological separation from architecture, and interior design is no longer ‘a little bit of architecture’; it establishes a discrete practice. Perolini (2011:168) evokes Lefebvre’s (1991:135) ‘representational space’; in this realm space is lived through associated images that are connoted with spatial codes and symbols. The interior design occupation, as a profession, should place greater emphasis on the generation of meaningful images.

5. Or other ‘metatextual propositions’ (Eco 1979:16); for a scientific text the metatexual proposition is not the suspension of disbelief but a greater sense of trust. I assume that in the technical object a sense of trust and suspension of disbelief would be required since the technical object exists in both the technological system and the cultural system. This requires a hermeneutic approach to the generation and interpretation of meaning in technical objects, with constant comparison between the constituent parts and the whole and the interrelationship of the constituent parts and of the technological and cultural systems.
To appropriate this invitation to the interior artefact (as a complex spatial text) requires the interior designer to be aware of the ambiguities; the unpredictability of iteration and interpretation; and the instability of meaningful codes that are embodied in the interior artefact. The generation of texts is dependent on contextual and circumstantial selections, overcoding, and the framing of the text. This establishes a horizon of meaning and delimits a spatiotemporal condition that informs the codes and subcodes that are utilised in the text.

When it is considered as a ‘text’ the interior artefact is a common and usual artefact that exists within the cultural system like any other. In this case, the interior artefact can be considered as a (non-linear) text that contains units of meaning. This text is interiorised in a spatiotemporal horizon that is contained paradigmatically and contextually, and which is dependent on unpredictable iterative sequences to convey meaning between the interior designer and the eventual inhabitant. The interior artefact functions with similarity to all artefacts in the system of objects.

When the inhabitant identifies codes within the artefact and makes meaningful connections external properties, such as associations and connotations, are recognised. The reader then makes indexical presuppositions and assigns the text to an external world (Eco 1979b:17). The interior artefact’s placement within an external world generates connections to world structures and discursive structures; these connections represent extensions of the meaning embodied in interior. Eco (1979b:17) suggests that during the interpretation of a text the reader places these extensions of meaning into brackets and he labels them as ‘bracketed extensions’. During the design of an interior artefact, the interior designer can foresee these bracketed extensions and should incorporate them proactively; this will produce denser meaning within the text.

A sign is a correlation between an expression and content (Eco 1979b:179); as such the identifiable signs in the interior realm can be considered as expressions. During the interpretation of a text the reader is faced with a series of expressions. The reader applies codes or systems of codes to these expressions to transform them to content (Eco 1979b:15). This is the process whereby the reader gains access to the meaning of a text and reaches understanding.

During its generation, the interior artefact is manufactured like any other artefact. Information is extracted from the cultural domain; the designer extends or transforms it, and embodies the new meaning in an object. This object is either rejected or validated. Once the object is validated, its contained meaning is returned to the domain and made available for further transmission.
During the inception and manufacture of the interior artefact, existing meaning is reproduced, transformed, or extended in an unpredictable sequence of iterations that are impacted on by various role-players. Interior design is an innovative practice that introduces gradual change into a process of establishing enduring meaning. This production process facilitates cultural exchange and the translation of cultural capital. In this process, the interior artefact’s idiosyncrasies are conversant with the interior design process and the physical nature of the interior artefact.

Since the interior artefact serves as a tangible vehicle for the expression of intangible cultural practices, it can be argued that the interior facilitates the close relationship between individuals and the larger cultural groupings to which they may belong. As individuals articulate personal attributes that contribute to collective cultural identities, so do individual interiors. The personal attributes of an individual can be made analogous to the specific attributes of an interior. Individual interiors that are created in iterative sequences and which express intertextuality can be considered as subsequent ‘generations’ of interiors. Interior design can express customs and conventions handed down over time; these can be extended or altered to introduce innovation.

The connection and differentiation between the ‘self’ and the ‘Other’ is regulated through boundary conditions. In this context, the ‘power of the individual’ is expressed as the individual’s control over his or her own identity and the assimilation thereof in the larger cultural habitus. The individual will express various territorial behaviours to protect his or her individual identity as ‘oneself’. Territorial behaviour involves marking and communication that spaces or objects belong to an individual (or smaller subgroup) (O’Toole & Were 2008:620). The interior here serves as a tangible agent to express territorial behaviour. Individuals and interiors collectively contribute to larger cultural habitus; conversely, they maintain individual identities within these larger groupings. Interiors, or marking smaller interiors within a larger space, can generate a sense of belonging and identity (Perolini 2011:164).

In conclusion, I assume that as people create their personal identities and express these in personal spaces, so too are public spaces created. Individuals employ familiar methods to denote occupation, inhabitation, and identity to mediate the boundary condition between oneself and the ‘Other’. The professional practice of interior design is the best located occupation to facilitate this process in the public domain. It is now necessary to consider interior design specifics in greater detail.
A discrete understanding of interior design’s idiosyncrasies as an agent of meaning

Interior design is a traditive discipline that carries meaning from earlier artefacts; it acts as other cultural practices but it includes its own idiosyncrasies. This section considers some of these in greater detail to contribute to answering the ontological question.

I consider culture as a noun of process that implies that culture is continuously renewed and reconstructed to contribute to a sense of continuity and durability. In this iterative practice, culture is (re)produced out of the medium itself, and as a cultural product interior design is produced out of and for interior design. The interior design discipline is self-referential and self-duplicating; this is evidenced by strong intertextual links between interior artefacts. Since intertextuality implies knowledge of other interiors this supports a pedagogic underpinning that is concerned with the production of interior artefacts specifically.17

To initiate the discussion the following definition is proposed:

Interior design is the generation a meaningful image which is expressed spatially.

This utterance takes the form of a meaningful image that is embodied in an inhabitable use artefact (technical object).18 It was indicated above that meaning addresses psychological and social needs while technification embodies them in physical objects. During this process interior design must mediate between the tangible and intangible aspects of cultural production: it must construct the message (intangible) and then spatially express the message (tangible). As meaning is expressed in a material, physical, and volumetric artefact, the role of the interior artefact (as an inhabitable space) within the cultural domain differs from other artefacts. The interior artefact’s idiosyncrasies are conversant with the physical nature of the volumetric interior.19

For interior design to produce culture (construct meaning), it must generate a physical object, which is the inhabitable spatial expression of the imaginal meaning in the mind of the designer. The designer is responsible to create a material artefact to convey the design intention. This object is usually documentation of the designer’s intent; it will be interpreted and constructed by a team of contractors and craftspersons. For interior design, technification therefore implies the generation of two different material objects: it is the generation of drawings (imaginal texts) and it is the construction of the physical interior artefact. It can be inferred that the

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17. This does not imply that interior design, as an occupation, or interior designers, as cultural producers, do not access the cultural domain in general, which will also influence the production of the discipline and inform that production through, possibly very strong, multidisciplinary influences. The interior artefact exists like any other artefact in the cultural production system. This is based on the assumption that the built environment is the product of culture in the broader sense and that similar cultural production methods inform the built environment on a number of scales; but it does not ignore the fact that creative disciplines have their own idiosyncrasies. As a discipline, interior design is influenced by closely related disciplines such as architecture, but also by unrelated practices such as music and literature.

18. Here I distinguish between the interior as an indicator of function (first-order meaning) and its connotations (second-order meaning). The built artefact is firstly functional but includes other communicative purposes; the communicative purpose supports the built artefact’s primary function (Eco 1980:13).

19. The volumetric interior is distinct from the rest of the world; its containment offers opportunity for the generation of a contrived identity that exists discretely in the contained interior.
The interior design process is primarily concerned with the generation of construction documentation; during the construction process the interior designer merely acts as a facilitator.

In the interior artefact there are two layers of meaning: first-order meaning (use value and denotation) in which the metatextual proposition is dependent on the inhabitant’s trust in the technical execution, or in the interior artefact’s ability to fulfill its function. In second-order meaning (associations and connotations), the metatextual proposition is dependent on the inhabitant’s suspension of disbelief and trust in the message and its connoted references.

The associations and connotations (second-order meaning) are unstable and timely; they are contextually bound and dependent on the creative participation of the inhabitant (which serves as the addressee or reader when the interior artefact is considered as a text). In generating the meaningful image (which functions as an utterance containing the second-order meaning), the interior designer must identify and generate various levels of meaning. These levels of meaning are then embodied through analytical and iterative design practice in a hermeneutic manner. In this iterative practice the interior designer can refer to existing artefacts and collect and synthesise various meanings, both deep and superficial. It is possible to map the hierarchy of semantic features that forms the analysable content of the utterance. In this way, the interior designer can investigate how the message will be structured in the artefact, or how similar messages were structured in previous artefacts. This further establishes interior design as an iterative practice. The transfer of meaning is dependent on correlations between the associations identified by the designer and those active in the mind of the inhabitant. The designer must develop an emphatic response to the future inhabitant.

The temporal emotions are a class of emotions that Jennifer Lois (2010:441) claims belong to a class of emotions ‘that can only be felt by crossing timeframes, and thus may be more useful (than non-temporal emotions) in constructing a continuous self over time’. She continues to describe the characteristic of all emotions to be experienced in the present, remembered from the past or anticipated in future, but some emotions can only be experienced by bridging the present either to the past or to the future; these include: nostalgia, regret, ambition, hope, optimism, disillusionment, and dread. The temporal emotions facilitate the construction of a self-identity over time by tying life experiences together to provide a sense of durability and continuity. The meaning embodied in interior design contributes to the generation of enduring cultural identities in a similar manner. Since interior design functions like all other cultural practices when it collects and extends

20. First-order meaning is concerned with the technical nature of the profession: how the interior is constructed?; was this done safely and responsibly?; are appropriate material choices made?; does the interior environment protect the health and safety of its inhabitants?; does the interior environment protect or damage the larger natural environment?, etc.

21. Second-order meaning expands interior design’s professional ground beyond that of architecture.
information that exists in the cultural domain, it implies that interior design is an expression of culture as an inherited legacy of meanings which provide a sense of continuity (even though some interior artefacts have a relatively short life span). This sense of continuity is established when the interior designer imbues the contemporary interior with appropriate signs that convey earlier meaning; this establishes interior design as a traditive discipline. This combination of inherited meanings that are continually embodied in new artefacts that are produced with technical mastery, displays a dichotomy between tradition and innovation; artefacts like these can be considered as ‘new’ (after Deleuze 1992) or as well done artistic works (after Eco 1990). Interior artefacts that display this characteristic exhibit the qualities of culture as a system of iterative meanings, thoughts and traditions in a continuous dimension of critical and theoretical reflection (after Baudrillard 1998). Interior design is traditive and innovative simultaneously and without contradiction.

The analogy between individual identity and identity contained in the interior artefact can be further expanded: in commercial interiors, the constructed spatial identity must find correlation with the personal identity of the individual who chooses to consume the interior by inhabiting it. This inhabitation is expressed when the individual occupies the interior temporarily. When individuals choose to occupy an interior, they indicate that interior artefact as an outward extension of their personality. In this instance, the interior functions as a signifier for personal identity. This merely indicates an association between the identity of the inhabitant and the space, and not a shared identity.22 Interior design fashions identity through artifice and participates in the staging of individual identities (Sanders 2006:304-305).

Since differentiation is made between the interior artefact and other artefacts, the built artefact (in general) must be differentiated from general texts; although built artefacts (including interiors) can be considered as texts they are fundamentally different from written texts, and meaning cannot be created in them in the same way. The interior artefact is a spatial text that cannot be made analogous to a narrative text (after Lefebvre 1991). The spatial text is not read but inhabited and its connotations are contained23 in a broad ‘horizon of meaning’.24 The general properties of linguistic texts (narrative texts) or oral utterances (‘linear text manifestations’) are made applicable on the interior artefact (which is interpreted non-linearly) through comparison. The interpretation, and possibly the generation, of messages and meaning is a continuous process and its timing is unpredictable (Eco 1979b:18).

The transfer of messages is dependent on the transmission of a sign between the sender and the addressee, and the existence of overlapping associations (which the sign connotes) in the mind of the reader and the addressee. Eco (1990:143) describes

22. This personal expression can be considered analogous to the use of fashion to construct or extend personal identity.

23. Lefebvre uses the term ‘acted’; I prefer the term ‘contained’ for its connotations with interiority (also refer to Colomina (in McCarthy 2005:114) for whom ‘the horizon is an interior’).

24. Butler (2013:11) refers to the ‘spatiotemporal horizon’ in which traditions are generated and propagated in an unpredictable iterative sequence.
two models of interpretation: the ‘dictionary model’ is composed of a limited set of semantic universals whereas in contrast the ‘encyclopedia model’ is a system where every semantic unit must be interpreted through every possible association. When Lefebvre’s description of the spatial text is considered, it must be conceded that the spatial text, with its ‘broad horizon of meaning’, must be interpreted according to the encyclopaedia model. Although this would generate a more nuanced interior with several layers of meaning, it may be problematic since (especially commercial) interiors need to send unambiguous messages to possible inhabitants.

The dictionary model is useful to generate explicit messages that are easy to interpret. The dictionary model is effective since it depicts the competency of the laity (after Eco 1990). In my interpretation of interior design as a creative discipline, the dictionary model explains direct and artificial connotations. These connotations enable fairly accurate and speedy interpretation, but it may lead to a banal practice of interior design in which meaning is simply ascribed and encoded and may generate pastiche. The use of a dictionary approach may contribute to the impression that interior design is easy to execute.

The encyclopaedia model in contrast is ambiguous; it introduces complexity in the interpretation of artefacts (and their pre-emptive generation) when it is considered that the laity can attribute incomplete connotations and disconnected associations to sememes (after Eco 1990). The encyclopaedia model’s potential for unlimited semiosis is reduced by the cooperation of the interpreter (Eco 1979b:39). This again implies that, for interior design, consideration must be made for the future inhabitant of the interior artefact. The inhabitant of the commercial interior plays a specific role in the consumption of meaning and the generation of identity that this implies.

Although I tried to highlight some of the systemic characteristics of meaning in the interior artefact, the task remains incomplete. To expand the comprehension of interior design’s idiosyncrasies, some time will be spent on its hegemony.

**Applying interior design’s hegemony**

In its facilitation of cultural exchange and the translation of cultural capital, interior design may pose a threat to cultural diversity. There is a need to understand this to enable its application with circumspection, rigour and responsibility.

I consider the interior artefact to be active within the traditional consideration of culture as an inherited legacy of works, thoughts, tradition, and the continuous
dimension of critical and theoretical reflection (after Baudrillard 1998:101). If interior design is considered as such a cultural practice, it differs from the popular image of the discipline as a form of mimetic production; which is evident in its depiction in popular media. Interior design’s hegemony does not lie in its role as tastemaker but in its influence on larger cultural discourses. If interior design (re)creates culture and meaning by repeating norms and standards contained in the discipline’s own cultural residues, and those it accesses from the cultural domain in general, it re-establishes existing cultural norms, extends them, reinforces them, questions them, and can even subvert them.

I would go further by stating that interior design exercises interpretive processes during the generation of interior artefacts. The design process itself is dependent on the interior designer interpreting and recreating existing cultural codes and norms. In this way, interior design is hegemonic when it (re)creates existing cultural norms. I call on interior designers to not merely exercise this agency, but to do so critically. The critical application will require a new awareness of the cultural codes that are (re)created. This requires empirical design practices and implies a greater role for research as part of the design process. The interior designer must identify the cultural codes and understand their interdependency in the generation of meaning in the interior artefact.

When the inhabitant recognises external properties connoted by the interior she assigns the subject to an external world (after Eco 1979b:17). These external links generate connections to a larger encyclopaedia of knowledge. The generation of texts is ideologically informed and so is their interpretation, even if the participants are not aware of that (Eco 1979b:22).

I identified interior design discourses from the literature that was compared and synthesised to reach a list of eight tacit interior design discourses. These discourses offer interior design the opportunity to exercise its agency with critical application. The use of the discourses allows the interior designer the opportunity to ‘frame’ the interior by adding ambiguous or ideologically informed meanings. I will briefly present these interior design discourses:

**Alteration:** Scott (2008:xv) defines ‘pure’ architecture as the production of a new building on a cleared site. If interior design is considered as an architectural discipline, in so far as it produces built artefacts, then the act of alteration distinguishes the professional practices of interior design from architecture. This elevates the act of altering existing buildings to a major theoretical discourse for the discipline in which the interior designer’s response to the host has normative
Episteme therefore also influences interior design as an institution: ‘Our social interaction consists very much in telling one another what right thinking is and passing blame on wrong thinking. This is indeed how we build the institutions, squeezing each other’s ideas into a common shape so that we can prove rightness by sheer numbers of independent assent’ (Douglas 1986:91).

This article can therefore be considered an epistemological design study that I hope will interfere in interior design’s production system.

I am not concerned with the architectural canon but include some architectural works here as example, since (as a young discipline that is informed by architecture) interior design refers to other theoretical sources (such as architecture) in an intertemporal manner (Königk 2010:149). Sources include, but are not limited to: Alexander (1964); Ching (2014 [1979]); Crisler (2003); Curtis (1996 [1982]); Johnson (1994); Lang (1987); Rowe (1987); and Venturi (1966).

As a theoretical discourse form is concerned with first-order meaning, this is expanded to include the consideration of historic interiors, or the history of interior design, which is not afforded a separate theoretical category here.

From my own experience as a gay interior designer, I need to comment on Sanders’ assumption. Within interior design, I am marginalised owing to my masculinity, and I am acutely aware that my masculinity is imbued with hegemonic agency. It is also my experience that in predominantly feminine environments gay men are perceived as men first and as such pose similar threats as heterosexual men. As a man in interior design I am the ‘Other’; as simply a man, I (still) occupy a normative state. During my career I have been accused by female interior designers of being ‘hard’, ‘critical’, ‘intimidating’, and ‘lacking empathy’, characteristics which I assume do not fit with the image of interior design as a caring profession. I have also been told (by women) that the discipline was unable to professionalise fully since it is filled with women and that they are therefore unwilling to

implications (Scott 2008). Interior design can be considered as a temporal discipline that in the act of alteration illustrates the failure of architecture (to reach its utopian or theoretical ideals) (Königk 2010:50).

Episteme: if design is considered as a way of thinking then attention must be paid to ‘to the thinking and considerations that inform its production’ (Leach 1997:xv). If epistemology is considered as the knowledge of knowledge systems that separate those forms of knowing which constitute defendable, and therefore valid, belief from mere opinion, then the use of episteme in design implies a normative position that distinguishes between right thinking and wrong thinking. Episteme is concerned with design arguments and whether these arguments are defensible. As research interferes with the objects it studies (Grosz 2009:127) which affect the larger cultural system (Saukko 2003:25), so too does design production.

Form: the theoretical informants that contribute to the generation and use of form in design are related to the epistemological arguments about design thinking. These arguments constitute a major field of architectural theory (Königk 2010:14), and it hardly warrants an elaboration on this field. In interior design, form relates to the specific shape of the volumetric interior (Edwards 2011:90); this shape is determined by the host building, or architectural envelope, but can be manipulated by the interior designer. Architectural production is informed by arguments and understandings of architectural form, but these omit many important interior design characteristics (Jennings 2007:49). Since form is an interior design vehicle for communication (Tan 2011:46), understanding it in a discursive sense is imperative. Form as a theoretical construct explores all that is concrete, material, and objectified in the physical interior artefact (Taylor & Preston 2006:11).

Gender / Sexuality: it is my belief that gender plays a significant theoretical role in the discipline owing to its perceived acceptability as a career for women or gay men (and an implied criticism of male heterosexuality). Taylor and Preston (2006:10-11) assert that it is not possible to ignore the role of feminist theory in interior design. Interior design’s feminine characteristics are historically founded in the emergence of interior decoration as a women’s pastime at the end of the nineteenth century. It is argued that gay men are attracted to this profession (like fashion and theatre) owing to their perceived marginalisation elsewhere (Sanders 2006:305-5). Since gender, as a construct, is so instrumental in the establishment of individual identities, it includes notions of the body, privacy, publicity and display; it is extended to issues of ontology and power. In the commercial practice of interior design a greater sensitivity to gender as a construct will enable the interior designer to design appropriate environments with greater sensitivity.
Identity / Ontology: for Penny Sparke (2009:3), in interior design identity addresses issues of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, and age. This list of categories can be considered as an initial list only, and it must be stated clearly that the construction of identity in the interior involves more complexity than merely expressing categories of belonging. This article can therefore be considered an ontological study of interior design. 35

Inhabitation and the body: developments in feminist and geographic studies investigate the relationship between particular bodies and their environment; as a specific body is located its capacities and desires are expressed and (re)produced by specific spaces (Taylor & Preston 2006:10-11). This supports the notion that inhabitants choose to consume a specific interior as an expression of their self-identity. The consideration for inhabitation could be expanded to include theories that are sensitive to human beings as embodied psychological phenomena, rather than living, physical objects (Hewlett in Perolini 2011:169).

Interiority: the theoretical consideration of the inner self as distinct from the rest of the world is applied in interior design in the contemplation of enclosure and the differentiation between the ‘self’: ‘Other’ conceptual pair. Interiority establishes the interior as a discrete realm and moving into the interior is a movement from the public arena to a space that can express the idiosyncrasies of identity (Hillier & Hanson 1984:144-5). Interiority is the philosophical concept that examines the innerness of interior design as a locus for feeling and projection in which the interior environment is experienced via the body (as a ‘culturally lived organism’) (Taylor & Preston 2006:11).

Taste: when expressed in the interior, taste serves as a marker of social distinction (Sparke 2009:3). The use of taste contributes to social stratification and the expression of identity; this is specifically achieved through meta-knowledge of the second-order meaning that is connoted by objects. Taste as a discourse in the interior emerged in the professional struggle between architects and upholsterers in the nineteenth century; the interior emerged as a conceptual entity which is not simply architectural, but imaginal as it involves covering the inside shell with furnishing and decoration (Rice 2004:276). Taste as a discourse ranges from Elsie De Wolfe’s (1920) practical discussion of its application in the domestic interior to Pierre Bourdieu’s (1984) social critique of it as a cultural construct. In the commercial interior taste is applied in the ‘alliance to consumption and the acquisition of possessions as a symbol of social status’ (Taylor & Preston 2006:12).

35. Which partially answers the ontological question, what is interior design?
The tacit discourses offer interior design the opportunity to exercise its hegemonic agency with critical application by adding ambiguous or ideologically informed levels of meaning. These additional layers of meaning must augment, and not replace, the commercial meanings that the interior artefact must convey on behalf of the client to the future inhabitant; interior design should serve its professional and commercial responsibilities first. From the discussion above it is evident that interior design discourses are interrelated and do not form discrete, autonomous fields. These theories are primarily concerned with the construction of identity and the meaningful expression thereof. The interior design theories identify a disciplinary body of knowledge that includes social, political, philosophical, technological, and psychological aspects. The products of interior design act hegemonically when spaces give form and expression to social structures by encouraging and discouraging certain behaviours and when they influence the interaction of its inhabitants. In other words, interior design provides the tangible vehicles for the expression of intangible cultural practices. Finally, it must be noted that these discourses are not necessarily active in the mind of the designer or the inhabitant. The associations that a text connotes are only virtually present in the mind. Associations are stored socially or culturally and are picked up, by both the generators and interpreters of texts, when needed. It is therefore assumed that, like all hegemonic practices, interior design exerts cultural control and influence in ways which are not necessarily immediately apparent to either the designer or the inhabitant, but which are present and available. This article calls for greater awareness of interior design’s cultural role and greater critical application of its agency to create meaning.

REFERENCES


36. The use of the discourses allows the interior designer the opportunity to ‘frame’ the interior artefact.


IFI, see International Federation of Interior Architects/Designers


UNESCO, see, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.


g.o.d. and the *deus ex machina* of design

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**ABSTRACT**

This article explores the way that design ought to be narrated and legitimated within the context of the South African design industry. Special attention is given to the presence of disavowal in the design process, when clients commission designers to effect change for them, yet second-guess, mistrust, and scrutinise the proposed design solutions. Our grappling with this problem is done with reference to Nelson and Stolterman’s concept of the ‘guarantor of design’ or g.o.d. and the contexts and considerations that affect how this g.o.d. is selected, constructed, and deployed. Both practical and ideological factors are negotiated as ways to understand these contexts and considerations, and, thereafter, the significance of empathy is highlighted as a means to tackle the various disjunctions that tend to arise in the scripting of the drama of design.

**Keywords:** Design research, best practice, Client-designer relationship, guarantor of design (g.o.d.), design and ideology, empathy.

**Introduction**

This article focuses on the manner in which the drama of design could be narrated and legitimated in corporate design environments, particularly in South Africa. This is done, firstly, by highlighting significant practical and ideological concerns in this drama, and, secondly, by examining the significance of empathy and empathic design as an ideological category that aims to bridge or mediate between
design praxis and design’s ideological horizon. The intention is to pay sufficient attention to the establishment of best practices in design, whilst keeping in mind its inherent intricacies. As a ‘wicked problems’ discipline, design clearly deals with issues that are complex enough to ‘have no definitive formulation’ and ‘no stopping rules’ (Buchanan 1992:16). Wicked problems are so multifaceted and interwoven that solving them by using only one approach, or any singular focus, would be hopelessly misguided. Moreover, wicked problems are deeply shaped by multifaceted ideological factors that are themselves wicked problems and wicked contexts.

With this in mind, and to get a sense of why the narration and legitimation of the drama of design is of such paramount importance, it is helpful to focus on a common difficulty within the corporate sphere in the way that many relationships between clients and designers are negotiated. This difficulty may be stated simply as follows: although clients approach designers to effect change for them, the design solutions proposed by the designer are often second-guessed, scrutinised and mistrusted.

While reasons for this difficulty may vary, the fact remains that the designer constantly needs to justify her design decisions to the client in order to allay the latter’s reservations about implementing the proposed design solution. For design decisions to be justifiable they need to be based on something, preferably something with influence in the eyes of the design client. This ‘something’—this foundation upon which design decisions are based—corresponds to what Harold Nelson and Erik Stolterman (2012:202-203) call the ‘g.o.d.’ or ‘guarantor of design’.

Wherever the buck stops for making design decisions, whatever factors are given priority, or even whoever has the final word, is a g.o.d. Even if the term comes across as being a little too provocative, it seems to be a suitable way of naming a source of authority for generating change. After all, godhood carries with it many other connotations that are inferred when an appeal is made to a higher authority, including: the right to cause change, higher knowledge, security, prescience and power, as well as many other attractive qualities (aesthetics, for instance) that can persuade the client (and the designer) to leave their choices in the capable hands of their g.o.d. Specifically, with regard to higher knowledge, the godhood of the g.o.d. also, rather problematically, implies a rhetoric of omniscience. This is to say that it conveys the g.o.d.’s capacity to fully comprehend all possible ends and outcomes. Even if this is unreasonable and impossible, the ideological function

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1. See, for example, Serial Kolor’s (2015) poster series: We turned the worst client comments into posters, which contains comments that highlight the disjunction between client and designer: “You haven’t put enough design into it”; “You start working on it. I’ll send you the brief later”; and “Okay, one last minor change.” The same concept is also found in Shanley and Treacy’s (2014) posters, but many other examples can be found online that explore the tensions in the client-designer relationship.

2. According to Nelson and Stolterman (2012:203), the g.o.d. hones in on what certifies and legitimates a design actor’s decisions, and how they are held accountable for their actions. Instead of focusing on the responsibility of designers for the outcomes of their actions, as Nelson and Stolterman do, this article investigates two additional aspects related to the g.o.d., namely: how design actors construct (or select) their g.o.d. in the first place, and how this g.o.d. is then deployed in practice.
I WANT YOU TO USE A BETTER FONT, SOMETHING LIKE, COMIC SANS MS? WOULD BE NICE!

I want you to use a better font, Serial Kolor, 2015.
The target audience is males and females aged zero and up.

Figure 2

The target audience, Mark Shanley and Paddy Treacy, 2014.
I really like the colour, Mark Shanley and Paddy Treacy, 2014.
of this perceived omniscience is sustained by a basic emotional need: clients and designers are concerned about the risks of every design project, and the promise of omniscience, albeit a false promise, can appease such concerns.

Surprisingly, while the guarantor of design influences the way that design decisions are justified, negligible attention is given in design scholarship to its ideological dimension—that is, to the way that ideology acts as a foundation to the more practical outworking of the design process. Even when there is an implicit understanding of the magnetic pull of a g.o.d., hardly any heed is paid to the question of how to determine, ground and deploy its legitimacy. It should be obvious enough that any falsely selected g.o.d. amounts to little more than a deus ex machina—a ‘god from a machine’ that is inserted somewhat abruptly and clumsily at the end of a drama to ‘resolve plot complications’ that would otherwise be left hanging (Letwin, Stockdale & Stockdale 2008:43-44). Any deus ex machina, a g.o.d. set up without much careful consideration, is a false source of legitimation. And yet, as discussed below, this false legitimation is still enough to blind those involved in the design drama to their own use of flimsy reasoning and process management.

With this in mind, here that the best chance any designer has of choosing the most appropriate g.o.d. is through a particular view of design research itself, rather than constructing a fantasy legitimation (or deus ex machina) for the narrative of the design process. Design research in turn needs its own guarantor, empathy, which is discussed towards the end of the article. An exploration of perceptions among South African design practitioners of what the g.o.d. is, and how this affects the dramatisation of the design narrative, serves as a context for the discussion.

A great deal of the background research to this end has been done in a study investigating the conversance of designers with ‘research for design’ methods (Kirstein 2014). That study included a series of in-depth interviews and questionnaires of perceptions in the communication design industry regarding design research. Using the data collected and analyses conducted for that study as a point of departure, this article takes a critical look at the processes involved in the identification of the g.o.d., as well as the formulation of and adherence to its strictures. Where inconsistencies and shortcomings are identified, recommendations are made for discovering and deploying a more useful and potent (but still limited) g.o.d.—a g.o.d. that can serve the drama of design better than a deus ex machina. To begin with, though, it is helpful to get a sense of the ideological concerns that shape the way that design decisions are made.

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3 Kirstein’s (2014) study investigates a tripartite stance of communication designers towards design research, namely: awareness, attitudes and aptitude. This tripartite stance is collectively referred to as ‘conversance’. Furthermore, that study restricts the investigation to ‘research for design’ methods (which assist given design projects in meeting their objectives), as opposed to more general ‘design research’ methods (which may incorporate design itself, as part of the research method, to research something other than design).
The ideological dimension of design

Tony Fry (1999:5) regards design as the ubiquitous ‘normality of the made world that is rendered background’. This is not an exaggeration. After all, design has become somewhat synonymous with human environments. This is not to say, however, that design should be conceived of primarily in terms of the visible or the obvious—that is, in terms of clear aims, objectives, uses and products. Rather, it is best understood as the visible viewed as if it were invisible; it is the apparent that has been regarded as transparent and concealed. It is, paradoxically, too big to be seen. Thus, as much as the notion of design suggests a world that we look at, it also suggests a world we look (away) from or through. It is as much a part of the ground and frame of our perceptions as it is the thing that we perceive. To use more pejorative language, it is a prominent part of the foundation of our biases and prejudices.

Design is consequently best considered as an entire process of human invention that, whether intended or not, changes or intervenes into not only human circumstances but human consciousness itself, or perhaps even into the unconscious horizon of our perceptions. As Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek (2006) contends, design is part and parcel of the ‘disavowed ideological dimension’ of society as that which ‘directly materializes ideology’. Ideology, for our purposes, may be understood as something that presents an ‘enchanting picture of reality’ (Lilla 2014). It is not, as common parlance would suggest, merely a system of beliefs or ideas. It is not just a concern of ‘-isms’ or ‘oughts’ or worldviews that reside only at the level of our conscious engagement with the world. Rather, it is a subtle force that mediates between society’s avowals and denials, between what is consciously acknowledged and what remains hidden from conscious awareness. It is more about the construction of a sense of equilibrium and a sense of togetherness than it is about specific ideas, although they may certainly play their part in the way that ideology affects people (Bawn 1999:303-334). Also, significantly, ideology suggests loyalty to a particular ‘kernel of enjoyment,’ as well as to things like institutions, rituals, politics, communities, and the like (Butler 2014:128). It suggests a way of thinking within particular boxes with set parameters that are difficult to challenge. In Louis Althusser’s (1971:153) words, ideology may be defined as an ‘imaginary relationship … to the real conditions of existence’.

Following an ‘optical metaphor’, Mark Lilla (2014) suggests that ‘ideology takes an undifferentiated visual field and brings it into focus, so that objects appear in
a predetermined relation to each other’. Far from being innocent or neutral, then, ideology, as that which design makes concrete, suggests a hidden set of co-ordinates according to which understanding itself is mapped and thereafter shaped and put into practice. Unless this more invisible ideological dimension of design is called forth from its assumed scenography, the question of the place of design in the world becomes merely a surface concern. This is to say that design would only be dealt with at a symptomatic level; at the level, that is, of what it looks like rather than at the level of how it functions to shape and underpin our engagement with the world radically. The need for engaging with the relationship of the g.o.d. to design should also hereby become apparent. It is necessary, as is shown below, to change processes, but such processes will only be alterable if their ideological grounding can be adjusted.

To understand better how to deal with design in its totality, at its most fundamental ideological level, it is helpful to make use of the metaphor of a drama, as previously mentioned. If design may be understood as the planning of and carrying out of an activity, as the realisation or the conclusion of that activity, and also as the value added or purpose achieved through some activity (Dilnot 1984:3; Buchanan 2001:9), then it is clear that design is not something that is ontologically isolated from agency, processes, outcomes and values. It is part and parcel of the rules of relationship. Put differently, while design may be referred to as singular, it always presupposes a multiplex of material and nonmaterial processes that are continuously interacting. It is drama replete with front-stage elements, actors, and narrative trajectories, as well as the wirework and production schemes that are hidden backstage. It also, very importantly, suggests an affected audience. All of these factors will play some role—whether great or small—in selecting, establishing and deploying the g.o.d.

The birth of the g.o.d.

To understand, generally speaking, how any designer selects the g.o.d., one needs to consider where the designer’s knowledge fits into the broader discourses and definitions of the design field. After all, it is what the designer knows that sets up her perceived hierarchy of importance of the various elements in the drama of design. Rather fittingly, Kees Dorst (2008:5) designates the term ‘design actor’ to the domain of design knowledge that describes the design practitioner. The designer as actor is located within the drama, rather than outside it, as one of its protagonists. Therefore, while designers are themselves writing the narrative of
the design drama, they are also inevitably among the *dramatis personae* of that same narrative. They are a part of the world they are rewriting; they are stakeholders in the process that they are constructing. This means that they suffer the outcomes of their dramatisation as much as anyone else would. They bear the weight of the g.o.d. that they have elected to serve.

In attempting to understand what the design actor does, Christopher Crouch and Jane Pearce (2012) describe the position of the individual design practitioner, the design practitioner’s identity, and the context in which these are located. In particular, Crouch and Pearce distinguish between the *field* and *habitus* of the designer. *Field* refers to a collection of practices and perspectives that delineate what falls within the domain of design and what is found outside of design. The delineation is not, however, necessarily a clearly drawn line but is a space contested by the various participants (Crouch & Pearce 2012:8).

Different voices contributing to the theorising, research and practice of design agree on some points while inevitably disagreeing on others. And, where there is disagreement, a natural process of contestation emerges concerning what is truly a part of the design field and what falls outside of it. Through this process of contestation, it becomes evident that there is a hierarchy according to which some views are considered to be more important than others (Crouch & Pearce 2012:8-9). This is a very important aspect in establishing the field of design, as the more dominant voices in the discourse effectively decide—at a high level, based on authority attributed to them by the design community itself—whether certain practices are considered an intrinsic part of the field or not. This certainly applies to attributing relevance to research practices, which will be accepted or rejected in accordance with predominant prejudices and ideological positions adopted by the various participants in the design drama.

The process of contesting the design field works hegemonically. It naturalises itself so that it not only encourages practitioners within the field to do things in a prescribed way, unthinkingly, but also discourages them from questioning the *status quo*. This means that even within the field of design, there are philosophical disagreements and opposing practices out of which any individual designer must elect their own set of convictions and modes of operation (Crouch & Pearce 2012:10; Nelson & Stolterman 2012:22-23). This individualised distillation of a specific set of views, practices and attitudes is what becomes the habitus of the design actor. *Habitus* refers approximately to “the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinate ways, which then guide them” (Wacquant 2005:316).
As Pierre Bourdieu (1984:170) presents it, habitus is neither the result of any kind of pure free will, nor is it totally determined by forestructures of understanding. Rather, it is created by an interplay between the individual and the larger structural order. This is to say that the habitus is created somewhat unconsciously 'without any deliberate pursuit of coherence ... without any conscious concentration' (Bourdieu 1984:170). It should be apparent, then, that the design actor’s habitus is wrested from the field through a process of reflection and discrimination, which includes the conscious and unconscious inclusion and/or exclusion of certain ideas. The habitus, representing the design actor’s convictions, adopted practices and attitudes, is the pool of knowledge and (for better or worse) biases from which the g.o.d. is discovered and/or constructed. Accordingly, what the designer accepts to be authoritative and true will be the determinant of what she chooses to be the basis of authority on which design decisions ought to be based. It will also form the bedrock of justifications that the designer uses to defend her design decisions to the client.

If, for example, the habitus of the individual designer is fixated upon the primacy of *techne*—technical knowledge and craftsmanship—there is a very good chance that other aspects of the design process will be downplayed or even neglected. Even while there are clearly a number of other important factors at play in the drama of design, this sort of emphasis on *techne* could cause distrust to fester between the client and the designer, especially since *techne* is unlikely to be at the heart of a client’s decision making process.

Even if this example is somewhat simplistic, the point is that any one particular emphasis within the designer’s habitus will inevitably have repercussions on how other elements within the drama of design are regarded by both designer and client. To put it more plainly, it is in negotiating tensions between the field and habitus that the designer will select or establish the g.o.d. The importance of properly negotiating the tension between field and habitus is therefore obvious: without such an understanding, the possibility of choosing a false g.o.d.—a *deus ex machina*—is increased dramatically. The above brief example also highlights a clear indicator of when a *deus ex machina* has been selected: it is anything that threatens the quality of relationship between the client and the designer.

5. In fact, there are some who contend that this is what characterised design thinking until the last decade or so (Dorst 2008:5-7; Kirstein 2014:24-26).
Manifestations of the *deus ex machina*

Drawing on her habitus, the design actor discovers or creates, whether wittingly or unwittingly, an *a priori* set of conditions and conventions that will serve as her frame of reference from which she can demonstrate deference or subservience to her g.o.d. This guarantor ultimately resides in one or both of two domains: within the design actor, or outside of her. Even if the g.o.d. is the designer, that designer will often still opt to express the guarantor as being a separate “other”. The main reason for this is that it allows the maintenance of a veneer of professional objectivity. Instead of claiming to be the g.o.d., a designer may for example attribute their decision-making to their ‘other’: intuition and creative instinct or, even more credibly, past experience. In short, tacit knowledge is a particularly powerful motivator for relying on any particular g.o.d.

Ken Friedman (2008:153) describes tacit knowledge as an intuitive application of practical knowledge gained through repeated use and exposure. In other words, experience in writing design narratives eventually entrenches the design actor into ways of thinking and doing that become second nature. This can and does happen to the extent that the designer cannot necessarily articulate what her decision-making is really based on. Through this, the visible is rendered background and the ideological co-ordinates that guide the design process become unchallengeable.

As it turns out, there is strong evidence that reliance on tacit knowledge for foundational strategic decision-making is highly prevalent among South African communication designers (Kirstein 2014:90). While reliance on tacit knowledge is inescapable not only in design practice but even in the most mundane of everyday activities, Friedman (2008:154) laments that many of the flawed theoretical positions posited in design—even where research is involved—can ironically be attributed to a superficial understanding of tacit knowledge that is uninformed by literature or any other form of rigour. Even if tacit knowledge could help to support a legitimate g.o.d., there is still a need for design knowledge that is externally informed. Even if a legitimate g.o.d. can be selected by the fluke of a good intuition, the need remains for a means to test it.

With unprecedented access to field-specific information, not all of it equally reliable, there is clearly a need for a sifting mechanism to establish what is “truthful” and what is not (to help the design actor understand the nature of her extra-personal g.o.d.). For this reason, many designers rely on the credibility of what is broadly called “research”. Part of the problem with this so-called “research” in the design
industry is that it suffers from an acute lack of semantic clarity (Kirstein 2014:11). For example, South African design practitioners who were interviewed regarding their research practices made no distinction between scholarly and non-scholarly sources, credible and dubious research, or even whether “research” described the information they were gathering as opposed to their own processes of locating the information (Kirstein 2014:78, 84, 89, 92, 95).

Moreover, many of these design practitioners bill clients for “research” when this probably involves little more than indiscriminately assimilating whatever results a web-based search engine churns out (regardless of where the information originates from). Any information of the designer’s choosing is packaged as authoritative with the simple words ‘our research indicates …’. This is precisely what is meant when referring to the deus ex machina—the so-called research here appears to act as a suitable and genuine source of external authority whereby the design results can be corroborated. It may even temporarily assuage the fears of the distrustful client. And yet, even a marginal increase in critical insight reveals just how flimsy this g.o.d. really is. It is a mask, albeit somehow a convincing one, that hides the fact that there is no real substance to the elected authority. It is at most a placeholder that indicates the need for a legitimate g.o.d.

Of course, there are designers who take greater care to process the assimilated information provided by their online research. In such cases, what is offered to the design client is not research merely because the design actor stumbled across it. Rather, it was properly assimilated into the design process—a process of experimentation, discovery and iteration that is seen as practice-led (or practice-based) research. Many design practitioners will shy away from the strictures of academic research because these strictures were not always developed for use in industry, or perhaps because they are inhibitive to the creative (and often non-linear) design process (Augustin & Coleman 2012:xiv; Biggs & Buchler 2007:62). When this is the case, the design process itself is often put forward as an inherent form of practice-led research. Although this suggestion has come from many quarters and for many different reasons, it has to date been effectively debunked (Kirstein 2014:44-45). This means that while a given design process may very well qualify as being practice-led research, all design processes do not automatically qualify as meriting this label simply by virtue of being design processes. Arguing in this manner would only be a typical example of circular reasoning.
The above contentions do not apply to all design actors everywhere. Some make a more concerted effort to locate receptacles of relevant design research on which to draw, taking special note of the origin of the information. Closer investigation reveals, however, that this process can become a minefield. Even case studies published by representative graphic design bodies such as Brand Council SA have been demonstrated to be ill-disguised design brag-pieces with no evidence of a compelling underlying research process (Kirstein 2014:46-47). Another more obvious contention would be that, even if due process is followed, the findings of a given design research project may not be valid owing to factors overlooked by the researcher. This, when added to the uncertainties of the research process outlined above, would suggest that designers not only need to look outside of their own prejudices for design knowledge to arrive at a trustworthy g.o.d., they also need to have some level of understanding of how research itself works. To legitimate research as a valid guarantor of design, one has to understand what legitimates research itself. This is something addressed in more detail further on.

The identification of acceptable research in constructing the design narrative is, unfortunately, not the only hurdle to be overcome. Even a hammer can be useless in hammering nails if the nails are in the next room. When a design actor says, ‘Our research indicates …’ she may very well be referring to excellent, accurate research. The research may even be represented in a manner consistent with what was intended by the original researcher. The question remains, then, whether the research begat the design narrative, or whether the design narrative determined what research to include. If one is to apply research to the process of design dramatisation, it makes sense that the dramatist (who is admittedly not the only force at work in shaping the narrative) would rely on the research to steer the direction that design narrative takes.

There is, nevertheless, another practice identified among certain South African communication designers where the design decision-making precludes identification of research—an intellectually dishonest logic called reverse rationalisation (Kirstein 2014:90). Reverse rationalisation can be described as a line of reasoning through which the justification or rationale is precluded by its outcome, rather than actually leading to its outcome. Reverse rationalisation takes on the structure of disavowal, which can be formulated via a paradox: ‘I know quite well … but still …’ (Pfaller 2014:40). Here, the designer may know quite well that the g.o.d.—the use of tacit knowledge or pseudo-research, for instance—is rather flimsy; but nevertheless still continues to operate as if the g.o.d. is legitimate. This hypocrisy, albeit often unconscious, cuts to the heart of the ideological edifice that justifies the selection
and deployment of a false g.o.d. The edifice is illusory but it is nonetheless treated as if it is real. The rationalisation is only that—a false story—and yet it is assumed to be sufficiently viable.

An example of reverse rationalisation is where a creative director or design manager intuitively, at the outset of the project, strikes upon what feels like a solution to the design brief. This is then communicated to a junior designer or dedicated research team member with the instruction to find research that will support the design decision. Even when this backwards rationalisation of design decisions is not made deliberately, the design actor may still succumb to this approach unwittingly in a well-documented phenomenon known as confirmation bias (Taleb 2010:55; Kahneman 2011:80). 6

This is where an ideological dimension is most evident in choosing the g.o.d.: reverse rationalisation is commonly used by designers to convince not only the client, but even themselves, that their design decisions have been, and are, legitimate. The obviousness of the truth (namely, that this is little more than an elaborate form of self-deception) is the very thing that makes the truth invisible (namely, the design outcomes have been largely supported by unconscious choices rooted in untested prejudices). This logic is something that Žižek (2014:8) points out with reference to Donald Rumsfeld’s famous remarks about the relationship between the known and the unknown: “There are known knowns; there are things that we know that we know. There are known unknowns; that is to say, there are things that we now know we don’t know. But there are also unknown unknowns—there are things we don’t know we don’t know”. Žižek (2014:9) points out that there is an important relationship between the known and the unknown that is neglected by Rumsfeld, namely the ‘unknown knowns’—“the things we don’t know that we know’. In this design context, those involved in the process often “know” that their research is substandard and rushed or carried out merely to support a decision that has already been made, but it is not the kind of knowledge that is readily recognisable and is therefore not easily admitted. 7 The designer may know very well what is going on, but will still find ways to keep this knowledge buried and ineffectual.

Rather than making tacit knowledge explicit, as research should, the design process is often carried out in order to make explicit knowledge tacit. An illusion is created (“We know that we have not carried out sufficient research”) and then treated as if it is real (“Nevertheless, we will continue as if our research is sufficient”). What is not in question here, though, is the obvious fact that design research must be given greater credence, as must the way in which the design actor appropriates

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6. This is also called ‘confirmation error’. A similar cognitive error is expectancy bias, in which the design actor will interpret whatever they see as confirming their a priori assumptions (Hubbard 2010:135).

7. That is to say, while the designer may have a niggling suspicion that their research is not air-tight, they cannot identify precisely where they strayed.
it into the dramatisation process. What is at issue is precisely how research can be understood and conducted to ensure that the guarantor of design is valid. This is to say that research needs to be conducted in such a way as to consciously seek to make the so-called unknown knowns more fully present and available, including the knowledge that all research is, by its very nature, limited to the co-ordinates that have been set up to ensure that the research question/s has/have been appropriately addressed.

To better understand design research, it is essential to see that design really exists in a constant tension not only between the habitus and field, but also between circumstances and behaviours, realities and ideals. Part of this tension is found in straddling past and future. This of necessity involves a persistent negotiation of the status quo on the one side (what has been) and that which design hopes to evoke or elicit on the other (what will or could be). Enmeshed with this tension is the process of change itself. The design outcome is, to borrow Victor Margolin’s (2002) phrase, a ‘politics of the artificial’; it involves imaginary interventions into the sociosphere and its contexts and must be brought to bear onto reality to turn it into the new, desired reality that the designer envisages. More specifically, the process of dramatisation (that is, the narration of the design solution) implies writing the desired future as a new narrative that is to supplant or append existing perceived reality. This process is perpetually negotiating the risk that either, at one extreme, the status quo will merely be upheld in keeping with existing preconceptions and expectations or, at another extreme, that the actual outcome will be too far removed from what is needed to make any appreciable and effective difference. Clearly, the g.o.d. will play an invaluable role in navigating this risk, and an insufficient g.o.d. is likely to lead to either one or the other of these extremes.

Another problem faced by designers working with wicked problems is that it is often nearly impossible to determine what the outcomes will be: the g.o.d. is therefore as crucial for determining the ends to be aimed at as it is for determining how such ends will be reached. Risk is therefore at the centre of any design enterprise. The design client does not necessarily identify risk in its broadest phenomenological sense, but at the very least she recognises the need to manage risk as far as her business objectives are rendered vulnerable. As pointed out earlier in this article, design clients are often suspicious of design solutions, scrutinising and second-guessing the proffered design narrative. This, as the above argument has thus far suggested, turns out not to be an indictment against the clients. After all, it appears that their suspicions are often well-founded, considering the insubstantial ways in which many design decisions are justified.
This section has looked critically at the ways in which designers misappropriate the idea of the g.o.d. Although identifying these problems is arguably a step in the right direction, it does not yet enable the introduction of corrective behaviours and practices. For that to happen, various other areas of understanding need to be unpacked, such as what research is, which research methods are suitable to design, how to identify a method suited to answering the imminent design problem, and how design should be implemented. Discussing all of these facets in detail lies beyond the scope of this article. However, a discussion of what the components of an effective g.o.d. could look like, serves as a point of departure for identifying and implementing further corrective measures.

Towards discovering and deploying a legitimate g.o.d.

The article has suggested that a particular understanding of research will best equip a designer to construct a substantive g.o.d. to legitimate her design drama. Knowing what characterises research and what distinguishes research activities from non-research activities, is indispensible in developing useful and credible research practices. Some would contest that having an authoritative foundation on which to base design decisions poses a danger: that of leading the designer to believe she is exempt from taking responsibility for her decisions (Nelson & Stolterman 2012:204). However, the danger of such presumed exemption only really appears when an illegitimate g.o.d. is constructed. When a designer appeals to a g.o.d. such as research without ensuring its veracity, she is already refusing to take responsibility for her actions—the g.o.d. therefore becomes a convenient excuse for lazy thinking and general passivity. On the other hand, one who appropriates research with suitable vigour, verification and validity demonstrates that she assumes responsibility for her work.

The seriousness of shirking responsibility is further clarified in considering the wicked nature of design problems. For example, several of the designers interviewed by Kirstein (2014:84) indicated that they shy away from research methods because methods are formulaic and do not seem to address the diverse needs of design projects. Most of the designers interviewed could not identify a single research for design method, and some offered that they use their “own” (undisclosed) methods (Kirstein 2014:78). In other words, these practitioners assert that employing credible research practices is restrictive and does not recognise the wicked nature of design problems.
This gross misapprehension of the nature of research methods is counterproductive. When designers resort to reverse rationalisation, essentially relying on tacit knowledge and past experience alone, are they not failing to acknowledge that they are dealing with wicked problems? Relying solely on intuition, built on past experience, belies that the designer does not consider the new design problem she is confronted with to be unique, or different to previous problems. On the contrary, several characteristics of research speak directly to the wicked nature of design problems. For example, research:

- begins with a research question (which requires a genuine understanding of the nature of the research problem)
- requires a clear, articulate goal (which sets a stopping-point for the research process)
- must be guided by the research question (so that it attends to the needs of the given design problem, rather than meandering aimlessly) and
- must follow a procedural plan (tailored to meet the objectives of the research project) (Kirstein 2014:16; Leedy & Ormrod 2013:2-4; Neuman 2012:11).

Consider also that eight out of nine designers who completed a detailed survey, submitted that they do not do more research in the workplace because of rigid time constraints (Kirstein 2014:81). If they truly understood the nature of research, these designers would not easily conclude that a lack of time justifies, or necessitates, conducting research without using an undergirding method. Subscribing to standard accepted research practices would ensure that the research method acknowledges the wicked nature of the design problem, and save time by assisting the designer both in reaching her goal faster and knowing when she has reached it. Appropriating tested, credible and creditable research practices enables the designer to construct a g.o.d. that is legitimate, and which also facilitates and streamlines the design process.

Unfortunately, until fairly recently, there has been a widespread perception that existing research methods are not suitable for design, since they were developed for other fields of human knowledge (Cross 1999; Narváez 2000; Bærenholdt et al. 2010:6). More recently, it has been argued that the research methods being devised specifically for design are one-dimensional, overly simplistic and not rigorous enough to address design problems holistically (Dorst 2008:6-7). Perhaps
This may account, in part, for the disdain for design research methods and theory expressed by some design practitioners. This disdain is unhelpful and effectively restrains designers from improving their research practices. Very few of the respondents surveyed and interviewed by Kirstein (2014:84, 96) indicated that they make any effort to remain informed about latest developments in design research practices. This means that even if improvements and new discoveries are made in the field, many designers remain ignorant—regardless of whether the information is made widely available. Any new part of the field cannot therefore be assimilated into the designer’s personal habitus. This phenomenon is also far from being a theoretical “what if” scenario; whereas hardly any of the 26 design practitioners (across several design agencies) interviewed in Kirstein’s (2014) study could name a single research for design method, he was able to locate over 180 that are well documented (Kirstein 2014:50). This suggests that designers should not only have an understanding of accepted research practices, but also up-to-date knowledge of research practices in their own field.

Regardless of whether a designer’s research practices and processes are at the cutting edge, articulation is also a critical factor that all too often becomes an unsurmountable hurdle. In some cases designers cannot proceed to execution simply because they are unable to explain their process to their client (Kirstein 2014:96). In other cases, the designer cannot satisfactorily justify the decisions underpinning the design approach and outcome (Frascara 2007:62, 63). These are surprising occurrences, since designers are communication professionals. However, the issue clearly goes deeper than designers’ command of rhetorical devices. It may very well be that an inability to articulate effectively, in part, belies a lack of clarity and understanding by the designer; it is this lack that should not be present when the design has been based on a legitimate g.o.d. Again, as intimated above, there is a strong possibility that designers themselves are often not even aware of what is needed in order to accomplish the desired outcomes, despite claims to the contrary.

It is reasonable to assume, bearing in mind the widespread lack of understanding noted above, that this dismissal of the importance of thorough design research begins at the level of design education. In fact, Jorge Frascara (2007:62, 65) accuses design educators of hiding their lack of knowledge behind fuzzy terminology such as ‘intuition’ and ‘research’. What begins as a reliance upon mere intuition in design training will obviously filter through to the design industry. This is yet another reason why design practitioners need to keep abreast of best practices in their field: so that the theoretical component of their habitus is not the product of their limited formal design education only.

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8. This disdain has been identified in several South African studies. See Kirstein (2014:5, 84), MacGarry (2008:135, 143) and the IDA world design survey pilot project (2008:66).

9. Assuming, of course, that the person who executed the design is either present to defend her design (or process), or has at least communicated her process clearly to the one doing so.
When habitually keeping up with best practices in the field, a designer is adopting a professional lifestyle of erudition. Doing so is a de facto admittance of the designer’s incomplete, and imperfect, knowledge and understanding. This is a good admittance, albeit implied, since constructing a legitimate g.o.d. requires designers to recognise their biases — when a designer can recognise her own biases, she can proceed to differentiate between acceptable and bad bias. Naturally, designers will be biased in their approach to their design, no matter how rigorously they have researched the design problem. Even though research methods are developed in order to offset the effects of bias, they cannot do so completely for two reasons. Firstly, any method will be selected because of the biases of the designer. It is precisely because the designer gains experience and develops tacit knowledge that she develops decision-making heuristics that exist a priori to a given design problem, which makes her thinking biased (see Hubbard 2010:3-6; Kahneman 2011:7,10-11).

Secondly, research as an activity is an exercise in discrimination (by delineating a particular, exclusive area of investigation) and therefore is inherently biased (Foucault 1972:66-69). However, not all bias is bad; just as tacit knowledge is a necessary component of everyday praxis, delineation is essential to conduct research. Biases of inherency such as this are useful and necessary, but procedural biases introduced by the designer can distort the research (and therefore design) process. Awareness of their own biases empowers designers to construct a more solid and viable g.o.d. It also helps them to accept criticism of their design processes and proferred solutions humbly, which is especially helpful when the criticism is legitimate. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to assume that ‘design’s own knowledge’ is a sufficient cure to the central problem outlined near the outset of the article: that clients, even though they commission designers to effect change, often mistrust, scrutinise and second-guess the solutions tabled by the designers. Even when a designer has employed a viable g.o.d., this fact will not necessarily dissipate the client’s mistrust and hesitance to adopt the proposed design solution.

Empathy as an ideological category: the foundation of a legitimate g.o.d.

This article has argued for the need of a valid g.o.d. and for its connection to design research by examining some of the ways that a false g.o.d. or deus ex machina is selected and deployed. The concluding section proposes that the g.o.d. termed ‘design research’ needs to be be further legitimated by empathy.
At first glance, it may appear that what has been termed the \textit{deus ex machina} g.o.d. is primarily supported by ignorance; in other words, that it seems to be supported mostly by the fact that many designers do not know any better. This, as already noted, is only partially true. Kirstein’s (2014) research certainly confirms that an epistemic failure has a significant part to play in this process, but the more alarming fact noticed by Kirstein is that often designers do know better than to set up and then rely on a flimsy g.o.d., and yet they nevertheless act in a way that undermines this very knowledge. This is to say that better knowledge or judgement is not enough to destabilise the ideological centre that keeps the \textit{deus ex machina} perfectly intact.

A possible way to address this problem is to pay attention to a fundamental paradoxical disavowal at the centre of the client’s posture towards the designer. It is a posture which actually mirrors the designer’s disavowals of her own better judgement that research needs to be done. There is both trust (“I know quite well that the designer can complete this job sufficiently well”) and distrust (“But still, I choose to second-guess, scrutinise and mistrust the solutions that the designer offers”). To understand how to overcome both the disavowal of the designer regarding research, and the disavowal of the client regarding the designer and/or her practices, it is vital to recall that the issue of ideology is at the centre of this article. It is ideology that acts as the primary ground of the epistemic problems noted here. It is ideology, a commitment to a particular kernel of enjoyment, that sets up the prejudices that act against best design practice.

A solution to the problem of selecting a \textit{deus ex machina} begins to emerge when we see that ideology may further be understood as that ‘generative matrix that regulates the relationship between visible and non-visible, between imaginable and non-imaginable, as well as changes in this relationship’ (Žižek 1994:1). It should already be clear that ideology is located, not at the level of our conscious ideas or in any kind of ‘internalisation of external contingency’, but is most evident as the externalisations that result from a perceived inner necessity (Žižek 1994:4).

This suggests that locating what drives the twin ideological errors that result in the selection and deployment of a false g.o.d. is not just about identifying the error itself (the lack of thorough design research or the lack of trust between client and designer). Rather, it is about locating what it is that brings the error about. Put differently, it concerns what mediates and grounds the relationship between invisible factors (such as design decisions) and visible things (like design outcomes), as well as between invisible things (human motivations, for example) and apparent things (such as what is actually being communicated).
When the client sets herself up against the designer, and when the designer sets herself up against design research, this contention that ideology serves a mediating function—between the visible and invisible, between the past and future, between comfort and risk, between what we know and do not know, and so on—suggests that what is most lacking is in fact a sufficient point of connection between the client and the designer, and between the designer and the end user. A proposal for the missing point of connection is empathy. The point of arguing for greater empathy, however, is not to suggest that it is a neat solution or resolution to the problems discussed. Rather, it is a necessary element in human interactions that destabilises the presumptions that underpin the problems already discussed. Empathy is not necessarily comfortable or comforting, but is something that arrests and unsettles the process in order to ask questions about what is required to make any process or dialogue work. As the cornerstone of human relationships, it presumes all of the complexities that come with those relationships. Nevertheless, these complexities are preferable to the rigidity of mutual suspicion that often dominate client-designer discourses.

Claiming empathy as central to the design process by no means suggests that empathy is ideologically neutral. In fact, the reverse is true: it is a profound indicator of ideological values, forestructures of understanding and prejudices. Nevertheless, somewhat paradoxically, empathy is also a profound influencer of human relationships precisely because, while it is ideological, it is also that which potentially challenges and even mollifies inflexible ideologies. This paradox—that empathy is capable of both enforcing and undermining prejudice—demonstrates its complexity. Since empathy is a process of emotional contagion that allows one to subjectively, vicariously and imaginatively experience and/or identify with the cognitive state, perspective and/or emotional posture of others (Wieseke, Geigenmüller & Kraus 2012:318), a lot depends on which others are identified with. In its most simplistic and problematic form, empathy may only concern the most immediate circle of relationships in negotiating the habitus-field dialectic. Thus, for example, a designer may make the mistake of only empathising with other designers and would therefore find that her existing prejudices are reinforced rather than challenged. Empathy may be involved here, but only in its most limited sense, as something that confirms in-group biases. This is not the kind of empathy that is recommended here.

In its broadest and most useful sense, empathy—the kind of empathy that is able to mediate the various tensions in the design drama properly—is rooted in a threefold directive: firstly, it involves an identification with those in one’s most immediate circle of relationships (designers empathising with other designers, for
instance); secondly, it involves an identification with those who are outside of one’s most immediate circle of relationships (designers empathising with the client and the audience, for instance); and thirdly, it involves a deliberate experience of oneself as an other to others (for example, designers attempting to look at themselves and their work from the perspective of the client and the audience). In accordance with this threefold directive, empathy involves both centring (a sense of one’s situatedness amidst familiar forestructures of understanding) and decentring (a sense of one’s situatedness amidst less familiar and even unfamiliar contextual factors). If one of the three directives is lost, the kind of empathy needed for overcoming gaps in the client-designer-user/audience relationship would be absent. Empathy, in its most profound sense, is therefore not merely concerned with supporting in-group biases, although in-group biases will have their part to play. Rather, it is about a larger concern even for those who are not part of in-group identification.

Of course, empathy is not a new concept in design research. It seems, in fact, to be implicit in a range of human-centered design approaches, like collaborative (co-design), experiential, interactive, participatory, and open design. It regards identification as having some primacy in the design process, especially at the affective and emotional level (Holt 2011:152). Against purely instrumental approaches in user-centered design, empathy is ‘other-directed’ and so naturally carries with it somewhat utopian values and possibilities like ‘betterment, improvement and even perfection’ (Holt 2011:152). It is essentially collaborative in its desire to be open-minded, observant and endlessly curious as it seeks to behold things with the ‘eyes of a fresh observer’ (Leonard & Rayport 1997:10-13; Mattelmäki, Vaajakallio & Koskinen 2013:67). It is an approach that is perpetually committed, not only to function and emotion, but to ethics: for example, the Golden Rule, as the central principle of all ethical systems, is rooted in empathy (Gensler 2013).

Empathy, as an ideological category, therefore underpins the legitimate g.o.d. in three ways. Firstly, it is rhetorical, which means that it sets up a point of identification, at least to begin with, between the client and designer, as well as between the designer and the user or audience. In this, it prioritises understanding the different parts that each stakeholder plays. Secondly, it is ethical, in that it seeks to place the good—the wellbeing of as many stakeholders as possible—at the centre of the design process. Of course accommodating the various stakeholders is fraught with complexities, tensions and difficulties. The process will always be a negotiated one. Compromises are inevitable and, in the end, some will be better accommodated than others. Nevertheless, empathy acts as the glue that keeps the discussion going even when difficulties arise. When prioritised by all involved parties, it allows
for the possibility for conversation to continue, even in a deadlock. Finally, empathy is practical. It suggests that the best way to legitimate design research is to deal with the actual realities of all parties involved, including the relationship issues that are at the centre of the drama of design. Empathy does not function merely at the level of concepts and biases, but seeks to let the process itself play a significant role in its own unfolding.

Conclusion

This article contended that ideology is at the heart of the grounding, selection and deployment of a g.o.d.. Ideology, as that which mediates relationships, is always, in the hermeneutical sense, deeply prejudicial; in other words, it is that which filters reality in a particular way by means of pre-established loyalties and frames of reference. The practices of a number of designers in the South African design industry illustrate the way that this filtering process often leads to the selection and deployment of a flimsy g.o.d.. It seems all too common in the South African design industry that genuine design research is forced into the shadows by less robust research processes, or by fuzzy decision-making co-ordinates like intuition or experience. The obvious solution to this would be to establish and serve a legitimate g.o.d., but this, too, appears to be insufficient. As Kirstein’s research has shown, many designers in South Africa know better than to use flimsy research practices, and yet this knowledge seems insufficient for generating any genuine change. Giving prominence to empathy not only as an ideological category, but also as a priority in the design process, seems to offer a chance for challenging or destabilising the ideological postures of the design processes’ various stakeholders, whose biases may preclude the possibility of any kind of helpful advancement. This occurs only on the presumption that empathy fosters dialogue even within highly complex and conflicted scenarios.

The practical application of the ideas presented in this article is therefore twofold. In the first place, the article highlights some of the existing problems that exist in the South African design industry with regard to the general failure to make use of design research. And secondly, for the sake of generating helpful discussion, and in the hope that this general failure may be overcome, it attempts to pinpoint the primary ideological problem that supports the lack of design research, namely a widespread lack of empathy. If this deficit can be dealt with by the design industry in South Africa, a lack of design research will certainly be more easily addressed.
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We were looking for our men in the faces of stars: Soap opera and Afrikaner masculinities in *Egoli: place of gold*

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**ABSTRACT**

This article examines the representation of masculinities in selected episodes from the soap opera *Egoli: place of gold*, aired in 1994. This specific moment in South African media history is characterised by a heightened sense of anticipation surrounding *Egoli* as the first local long-running soap opera developed for the relatively new – and only – independent broadcaster in the country, M-Net. Because of this genre's reliance on perceived realism, *Egoli* offers a historically significant televisual mediation of the widespread social and political changes that mark this particular period. This article, however, diverges from the wealth of research on soap opera as a so-called women's genre and approaches *Egoli* with a keen interest in the programme’s negotiation of masculinities. The article’s analysis centres on two particular white, Afrikaans male characters: Dr Walt Vorster (portrayed by well-respected opera icon Gé Korsten) and Doug Durand (portrayed by the controversial ‘bad-boy’ rock star Steve Hofmeyr), and examines how *Egoli* deals with the immanent destabilising of Afrikaner patriarchy at that historical juncture. The article furthermore examines these characters through the notion of celebrity-intertextuality. The author identifies *Egoli* as the pioneer of casting celebrities as soap opera characters and turning soap opera actors into stars – a trend which has become characteristic of the South African soap opera genre.

**Keywords:** Soap opera; masculinities; television; celebrity; Afrikaner; patriarchy.
Introduction

The inception of *Egoli: place of gold*, the first long running locally produced South African soap opera, coincided with a period of accelerated political and cultural transformation, highlighted by the first national democratic election held on 27 April 1994. This article proceeds from the premise that the story of *Egoli* is a story about social change rooted in the many unresolved questions about an uncertain future facing all South Africans at that historical juncture (Wasserman & Jacobs 2003:15). During these years of transition, ubiquitous promises of change and transformation raised the question of what a ‘New South Africa’ would look like. Franz Marx, the creator of the programme, approached *Egoli* with a firm belief that it had an important role to play in the realisation of this ‘new-ness’. In an article for *Die Vrye Weekblad* in 1992, Marx states (1992; translated by Jonker):

> I do hope that this series will be able to contribute to transformation in the country. I am merely trying to mirror our society as it is today. Actually I just have a story to tell and my zeitgeist to reflect.

It might seem somewhat ambitious for a soap opera to position itself in such close proximity to the complexities of a widespread political reassessment. Yet, this ambition is quite difficult to fault, when taking into account that *Egoli* managed to maintain a larger viewership than its direct competitor in the same timeslot – the national broadcaster’s (South African Broadcasting Corporation) evening news bulletin – even during the turbulent political climate of 1994 (Silber 1994:38). As a genre, the soap opera is a form of mass media with unprecedented popularity, which makes it a valuable phenomenon for cultural research (Marx 2007:1; Geraghty 1996:88). This article, however, diverges from the wealth of research available that typically frames the genre as a ‘women’s genre’ by shifting its focus towards masculinities.

For Robert Bocock (1986:63), political transformation, regardless of its context, is essentially a struggle for hegemony. In the case of South Africa, hegemony was safeguarded up until the early 1990s solely by white – predominantly Afrikaans – men (Morrel 2007:619). This article’s interest in *Egoli*’s early representations of white Afrikaner masculinity is rooted in an awareness of the temporal unsettling of this stronghold on hegemony, on the eve of the country’s birth as a democratic nation.
The love child of M-Net and Franz Marx

Despite the enormous success of *Egoli*, its history long precedes the first broadcast (Marx 2013). Early in the 1980s, Marx already proposed the idea of a locally produced soap opera, dealing with the social complexity of daily South African life, to the *Suid-Afrikaanse Uitsaakorporasie* (SAUK; South African Broadcasting Corporation or SABC). The SAUK, however, reacted with scepticism, fearing that their audience might not respond positively to a programme that transgresses the historically cemented boundaries between language and racial groups (Marx 2013). M-Net’s Head of Local Production, Leon Rautenbach felt, however, that ‘it wanted to be more open and daring’ (cited by Louw 1999:8). In 1989, this young broadcaster put the development of its own news bulletin on hold and opted to redistribute funding towards the production of a local drama, and Marx’s proposal for a soap opera seemed to be the perfect fit (Louw 1999:8).

Since its inception in 1985, M-Net strategically formulated its brand identity around its status as the only alternative and independent broadcaster in the country. In anticipation of the economic consequences of a new democratic dispensation that would inevitably lead to the development of new audience markets, M-Net established itself as an ambassador for diversity. With its multi-coloured logo, echoing the concept of a united “Rainbow Nation”, M-Net configured its identity in line with the endless range of possibilities posed by the magical idealism of show business in a New – integrated – South Africa (M-Net 2007).

According to M-Net CEO, Koos Bekker, ‘*Egoli* was meant to become the focal point’ of M-Net (cited by Louw 1999:9), serving as a platform for the broadcaster’s construction of a utopian mythology that imagines a peaceful and prosperous future for all. The aspirational veneer typically associated with the soap opera genre provided the perfect scopic field within which to conjure romanticised images of a so-called New South Africa. Yet, judging from the composition of the primary full-time cast, it is evident that these early depictions of a promising future focused mostly on its implications for white South Africans.

Despite the fact that the narrative unfolding aimed to present a romanticised future that still lay on the brink of the horizon, *Egoli*’s creators tasked themselves with imagining a world that overlapped significantly with that of the viewer (Louw 1999:13). Through a strategic synchronicity with actual locations, real-time events, and the incorporation of local celebrities in the full-time cast, *Egoli* constructed an on-screen world that was familiar, relatable – and trustworthy. With a representational
language that intertwined pervasively with the everyday life of its audience, *Egoli* created a field of perceived neutrality that seamlessly spilled into the domestic viewing space. John Fiske (1978:111) and Christine Gledhill and Vicky Ball (2013:335) posit that the familiarity of domestic viewing environments allows viewers to respond to soap operas in ways that are intimately meaningful to themselves, yet largely uncritical to ideological messaging. This allows a broader hegemonic struggle for cultural meaning to interweave with the textual fabric of the soap opera through so-called ‘soft strategies of persuasion, seduction, incorporation and interpellation’ (Ang 1996:140). Ien Ang (1996:140) consequently proposes that “the hegemonic does not dominate from without, but from within [the text]”, through a process which Stuart Hall (1977:333) describes as successfully placing all opposing definitions of reality within the range of dominant ideals. In relation to John Fiske’s (1987:95) distinction between “producerly” and “writerly” texts, the soap opera is thus clearly...
situated as a “readerly” medium, with a thinly veiled predetermined meaning that requires very little effort to consume.

This “readerly” quality of the soap opera is reinforced by the stereotypical use of character tropes that, for Gledhill and Ball (2013:343), act as a ‘shorthand reference to specific cultural perceptions’ that despite their “flatness”, relate to the context within which they are produced. Marx (2013; translated by Jonker) seems to agree and in a conversation with the author elaborates on the men of *Egoli*:

Like a deck of cards, there must be a king of hearts, there must be a king of diamonds, a king of spades, a king of clubs. [They] need to satisfy different tastes. Because the sexual needs of women are different from those of men ... a woman is hooked by visuality, but then there needs to me more.
The King of Diamonds: Gé Korsten as Dr Walt Vorster

At the age of 64, the well-known and respected opera singer, Gé Korsten, left the stage to take up the role of patriarchal tycoon Dr Walt Vorster. Vorster in many ways signifies the epitome of Afrikaner patriarchy – the protective yet domineering husband, devoted yet authoritarian father and the very image of corporate success as the Managing Director of Walco International, a position that he inherited from his own father, and subsequently passed down to his eldest son. To his many friends in high places, three ex-wives, five children and countless employees, Vorster is known as a strict but honest man with firm family values despite his background of bad marriages. As a patriarchal figure – a cultural construction that Kobus du Pisani (2001:163) contextualises as deeply entrenched in Afrikanerism – Vorster represents not only the head of the Vorster family, but also a bastion of old-world power that seems to overshadow all others in the city of gold.

The centrality of the patriarchal figure is by no means a unique conception on the part of *Egoli*. In its American variation, the soap opera genre typically makes use of patriarchy as a central point of reference for the development of inter-character relationships. Yet the patriarchal portrayal of Vorster proves to be of unique significance, specifically in relation to the political transformation that frames the programme. As the literal face of apartheid and therefore injustice and deceit, the white Afrikaner patriarch acts as a locus of guilt, disillusionment, and national betrayal. The dismantling of apartheid revealed in many ways the falsity of the assumed homogeneity of Afrikaners as a cultural group, leading to an all-inclusive ‘crisis of identity’ (Swart 2001:75). According to Ndjabulo Ndebele (1998:24), ‘[t]he ordinary Afrikaner family lost the illusion of the heroism of the group [and now had] to find its moral identity within a national community in which it is freed from the burden of being special’.

As central to the societal arrangement of Afrikanerdom, the negotiation of patriarchy within a post-apartheid milieu serves as a vital component in the search for Afrikaner identity. The characterisation of Vorster thus serves as reflective of a broader negotiation of the cultural myth of patriarchy as it is re-membered, re-assessed, and re-written during this period of re-formation. Through the characterisation of Vorster one is urged to echo the question raised by Sandra Swart (2001): does the Afrikaner patriarch, caught up in the struggle to retain hegemony, adapt and re-invent itself, or re-entrench itself in order to legitimate the previous form of hegemony?

9. For Elsie Cloete (1992:42), the Afrikaner, even just in name, ‘symbolises for the majority of South Africans, a sinister signifier of oppression’. The ambivalent sentiments directed towards the notion of Afrikaner patriarchy are furthermore spurred by the specific naming of Vorster, who shares his name with President John Vorster, one of the primary patriarchal villains in the narrative of apartheid and the individual held responsible for the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela.
By giving fictional form to the discourse of patriarchy, its ideological underpinnings undergo a modification from the level of representation to that of figuration (Storey 2012:79), thereby producing a model of patriarchy that serves as constitutive towards a broader search for Afrikaner identity. But as opposed to being a mere model for reflection, one has to acknowledge the spectres with which the audience share the living room – the embedded understanding with which the audience approaches the archetypal image of Afrikaner patriarchy at that particular moment. In the case of Vorster, this image of the patriarch is doubly recognisable owing to the audience’s familiarity with Korsten. Even before his appearance as Walt Vorster, Gé Korsten was a household name to many South Africans, because of his ‘shockingly good looks and buckets of charisma ... he became the ultimate heart-throb for hundreds of thousands of mainly Afrikaans women, who travelled vast distances to hear and, more importantly, look at him’ (Ge Korsten [sa]). Korsten’s musical oeuvre is diverse in nature, but primarily centres on his contribution to the development of opera in South Africa. ‘People who would normally have run a mile at the mere mention of the word began flocking to opera houses to hear their idol’ (Ge Korsten [sa]). By the time of his first appearance on *Egoli*, Korsten was thus already widely known as an “accessible face” to so-called high-brow culture.

As a character, Vorster frequently appears passive, silent, or even absent from the screen, yet his patriarchal position remains “visible” in the generative effects of his disembodied power that affects the complete social sphere that comprises the programme. This generative effect is extended by the audience’s deep-rooted conception of patriarchy, as well as their adoration and respect for Korsten’s cultural appeal and celebrity status. A deeply entrenched mythical language of patriarchy and cultural capital consequently serve to scaffold Vorster’s social control from both on and off the screen.¹⁰ In the episode broadcast on 18 March 1994, during the critical approach of the first general democratic election, the proverbial skeleton literally emerged from Vorster’s closet, bringing into question the legitimacy of this power and control.

This discovery occurred during the renovation of the Vorster mansion’s poolside entertainment area. The side of the swimming pool accidentally collapsed, despite Vorster’s insistent instructions that the old pool should not be tampered with. A shocked construction team removed the skeleton wrapped in sheets and brought it into the house for further inspection. André and Sonet (Vorster’s son and daughter) immediately start treating their father with suspicion. Vorster’s behaviour hints at prior knowledge of this matter. He is portrayed after this discovery in the foreground, as central to the plot development, faced with the accusing stares of his children. Vorster’s pensive isolation frames him in the final shot of this scene as peering

¹⁰ Bourdieu (1984:258) claims that “the dominant class distinguish themselves precisely through that which makes them members of the class as a whole, namely the type of capital which is the source of their privilege and the different manners of asserting their distinction which are linked to it.” For Bourdieu (1986:47), this capital when embodied as the ‘long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body’ (a specific style of thought and behaviour) that relates to a particular legitimisation of its objectified form (a specific taste in cultural goods) can be described as cultural capital.
left out of the picture frame, alluding to his looking back in time and the notion of recollection and memory. This incident momentarily serves to suspend the hegemony of his patriarchal rule, as his family as well as the audience is led to question his moral character.

As the mystery unravels in a narratological game of knowledge and revelation played off against assumption and omission, viewers learn that the body is that of Gert du Toit, the ex-fiancé of Vorster’s older sister Monica, who was accidentally killed in a fight with the arch-patriarch Dewald Vorster (Vorster’s father) and buried there in 1961. Throughout this plotline, Vorster is positioned in relation to both his family and the audience as a gatekeeper of the ominous truth surrounding this murderous crime. This position implies a sense of complicity and serves as a reflection of the critical re-assessment of patriarchal power. As the authoritative spokesperson of an older generation of Afrikaner men, Vorster is made responsible for revealing the hidden truths of the past, and faced with the consequences of his own implicit entanglement with guilt and shame. Despite the fact that Vorster is exonerated from any form of guilt regarding the suspicious murder, this turn of events leaves his character marked by the residual effect of the “sins of his father”. In the absence of his own deceased father, the onus rests on Vorster to reconcile his family with the hidden truths of the past.11

Despite this burden of responsibility, Vorster is portrayed with a sense of moral clarity and dignity (in contrast to the demonisation of his murderous father), thereby restoring the hegemony of his position as idealised patriarch after the temporal suspension of his ennobled authority. In this light, one might be led to question whether this specific moment might be indicative of a broader desire for the redemption of patriarchy. Might this resolution reveal a longing for a restoration of the familiarity of the patriarchal status quo as buttress in the formation of a stable Afrikaner identity?

The stability of this status quo is brought into question radically once again when Vorster dies in a car accident after an unknown perpetrator tampered with the brakes of his Rolls Royce. The scene of his accident illuminates the central relationship between the patriarch, cultural capital, and wealth in a fast-paced montage sequence focusing on Vorster’s face, the winding road, and the hood ornament of his Rolls Royce – a well-known symbol of class, status, and wealth. The specific choice of murder as the cause of death for Vorster suggests that patriarchy cannot come to a natural end – its dismantling seems to be essentially violent. Yet, the disembodied power of patriarchy is ironically affirmed even after Vorster’s death through the reading of his will which manifests as a type of blueprint

11. This moment of his confession can be read in line with what Miki Flockemann (2000:144) describes as a ‘rediscovery of subjective experience’ and a ‘renewed validation of the personal and private sphere’ in South African televisual media of this particular period. Flockemann identifies this sharing of personal experiences (culminating in the public testimonies before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission) as the ideological formulation of a perceived shared narrative of a unified South Africa. Flockemann (2000:144), however, critiques such narratives for their tendency to oversimplify the reality of social relationships, specifically by means of this focal shift towards subjective ‘reporting’. Vorster’s exposé therefore pacifies a sense of national history by drawing attention to the singularity of his individual experience.
that details how Vorster’s wealth and corporate (and consequently social-) power is to be redistributed after his death.

The characterisation of Vorster therefore suggests that the social stature of patriarchy – imbued with age and cultural capital enabled by wealth – leads to a form of hegemonic masculinity that transcends the limitations of corporeality. That power might be contestable, specifically in the case of the Afrikaner within this historical milieu, but through the affirmation of solidarity within the microcosm of the family and its traditional values, *Egoli* suggests (at that particular moment) that it should stand the test of time. It becomes evident, however, that the legacy of patriarchy emerges in *Egoli* not as the continuation of male domination, but as the inheritance of monetary wealth, the shimmer of gold, which seems to have been the stronghold of patriarchy all along. This affirmation of the power of this interweaving of wealth and cultural status is at its most evident in the dichotomous relationship between Vorster and Doug Durand – a character who literally takes on the role of the other man in his not so secret love affair with Vorster’s wife, Louwna.

**The King of Spades: Steve Hofmeyr as Doug Durand**

If Vorster is located in Marx’s analogy as the “King of Diamonds” – the eternal creditor to success and wealth stemming from his patriarchal lineage – then Durand most certainly plays the “King of Spades”, crested by the upside-down heart in the form of a labourer’s implement. At first glance, the most distinct differentiation offered between these two characters is that of class. Durand is a base-level employee of Walco International; a test driver for their new vehicles who also dabbles in the world of professional race car driving – a career consistently funded.
by the latest in his succession of wealthy mistresses. Durand’s behaviour and appearance stand in stark contrast to the other men in Egoli, who seem to mimic the patriarch in their dress, posture, social conduct, and professional ambition. Durand’s attire is typified by denim, lumberjack shirts, and utilitarian boots that serve not only as a visual reminder of his working-class status, but also differentiate him as a visual focal point. The portrayal of Durand’s romantic conquests – the wealthy women of the Vorster Empire – serves to extend further his visual differentiation. By offsetting his rugged physique with impeccably dressed, styled, and bejewelled women, Egoli draws attention to the transgression of class taking place, specifically in his “intrusion” into the Vorster residence, which serves as the visual backdrop for most of Durand’s passionate encounters.

Despite Durand’s abrupt visual impingement on the lives of the wealthy, any individual familiar with Marx’s oeuvre would not be able to avoid relating the image of Durand to that of Bruce Beyers, the motorcycle-driving rebel, also portrayed by Hofmeyr in the Marx drama series Agter elke man (Behind very man; 1985-1988). The character of Durand seems to continue almost seamlessly from that of Beyers – an image already indebted to the “lubricious” media persona of Hofmeyr. As a character, Durand is by no means a “neutral image”, but rather one loaded with pre-encoded associations familiar to the viewer. In an interview with Pearly Joubert (1992:[sp]; translated by Jonker) in the Vryeweekblad, Hofmeyr commented on the roots of his success as a celebrity figure:
It's probably all in the image – 27 years old and I sing and wear torn clothing and so on ... The girls who put up my posters on their doors – that's very nice ... My image, I have seen, is sometimes more important than my talent.

In contrast to Korsten, who is known and respected not only for his good looks but more for his contribution to the development of so-called “reputable” South African culture, Hofmeyr’s celebrity status is primarily accrued through tabloid sensationalism, reporting on his dubious sex life. Hofmeyr furthermore aligns his musical career with a non-critical attitude rooted in the “popular” (Joubert 1992:[sp]; translated by Jonker):

I am a regular guy. I like to party just like any other guy ... I can’t write the intellectual stuff that someone like Coenie de Villiers writes and sings. I’m not part of the alternatives. I write and sing stuff that I like and that I can do. I don’t like pissing people off.

Hofmeyr seemingly serves as the ideal platform for the depiction of a man of a lower-ranking class status because of the audience’s inclination to approach his image as an attractive veneer, without the expectation of encountering the disembodied rationality through which Vorster performs his patriarchal power. Robert Stam, Robert Burgoyne and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis (1992:211) make use of the term “celebrity intertextuality” in order to describe this phenomenon, ‘where the presence of a film or television star or celebrity … evokes a [particular] cultural milieu’. In this light, one might argue that Durand is read not as the representation of an actual instance of masculinity caught within a particular class position, but rather as a mere node within the complex network of “empty” significations surrounding the celebrity status of Hofmeyr.12

In contrast with Vorster, whose omnipresent patriarchal power extends far beyond his corporeality, Durand is captured in his flesh. One is reminded of this in his behaviour that is physically expressive, dramatic, and gestural, often occupying a large proportion of the picture frame (a mode of depiction more in line with the norm for female characters in soap opera). His physical interactions with other characters occur in quick movements that cut diagonally across the screen, often initiating physical contact with women through grabbing, embracing, touching, and covering the faces of his mistresses while kissing them. These reminders of Durand’s corporeality relate to Pierre Bourdieu’s description of the working class body as essentially instrumental – as a mere means to an end (cited by Edwards 2006:145). For RW Connell (1987:43), this historically constructed discursive distinction leads to “functional” sexuality in which sexual reproduction can (to some degree) be read
within the production chain as the physical reproduction of the workforce. Despite the oversimplification and somewhat out-dated nature of this argument, it serves to highlight how the working-class body has been culturally figured primarily in relation to sexuality and labour – its physicality. This emphasis on physicality is critically antithetical to the disembodied rationality awarded to dominant classes and, more specifically, to patriarchy (Edwards 2006:145).

John Davies points out that ‘as well as being the instrument of the economy of patriarchal capitalist success (… for men, succeeding in becoming rich and famous with women being one of the rewards) the body is also the site of primal pleasures in soaps’ (cited by Brown 1987:19). Mary Ellen Brown (1987:19) describes this pleasure as that of women having the enjoyment of watching men as the objects of romantic desire. In contrast to the disembodiment of the patriarch that avoids this visual objectification, the continual affirmation of Durand’s corporeality seems to invite such an objectifying gaze. This is particularly evident in moments where Durand’s body is displayed as pacified and fragile.

In Episode 655, a gang of vengeful terrorists attacks Durand in the reception area of Walco International. The final shot depicts his helpless body. His sensually exposed neck and the blood trickling down his face are posed and exposed for the immediate attention of the viewer. His closed eyes allow the spectator to look without the gaze being returned, rendering Durand’s body as a passive object. In his analysis of specific genres such as the Western, ‘in which masculinity is necessarily the object of consideration’, Steve Neale (1983:18) argues that the portrayal of violence circumvents the possibility of eroticising the male by placing emphasis on the hardness, toughness, and force of male bodies, reverting to the notion of male power. Despite being portrayed within the context of physical violence, Durand, however, fails to embody the ‘hardness and toughness’ of masculine strength and becomes somewhat ‘feminised’ through his passive fragility. This ‘feminine coding’ of Durand’s passive body is reaffirmed in a later scene depicting his injured body arriving at the Vorster home.

Durand stumbles into the front door in lurching and jolting movements, falling into the arms of his ex-mistress Louwna Vorster before losing consciousness and collapsing onto the living room floor. It proves significant that this event occurs as a disruption of Vorster’s funeral, taking place at the very moment of Durand’s arrival. In contrast with Vorster, who even at his funeral eludes corporeality through the omnipresence of his power and wealth still intact within the stately Vorster mansion, Durand is depicted as the objectified bleeding body, bearing physical traces of his lack of masculine power. The floral patterning of the Persian carpet
Durand being attacked in the offices of Walco International. (*Egoli*, Episode 655, Scene 1.2).

Durand arriving at Vorster’s funeral after being attacked. (*Egoli*, Episode 655, Scene 2.4).

Kimberly Logan nurturing Durand back to health after being attacked. (*Egoli*, Episode 656, Scene 1.3).
that frames Durand’s passive body in the last shot of the scene contributes further to the overt feminised coding of his pacified state. Durand’s injured body consequently reminds one of Marion Young’s (1990:150) description of the modalities of the feminine body as ‘a mere thing – a fragile thing, which must be picked up and coaxed into movement, a thing that is looked at and acted upon.’

Durand’s injured body remains passive in the following episodes, as Kimberly Logan – André Vorster’s fiancée – attentively nurses him back to health as a prelude to their love affair that follows. Logan is portrayed repeatedly in moments of “erotic contemplation”, silently looking at Durand’s pacified body. This particular scene illustrates Marx’s proposal that the men in the programme were inserted for the visual enjoyment of female spectators. Marx states (2013; translated by Jonker):

The characters of the series are all the women ... in 90% of all films that you watch, or American television the characters are the men and the bimbos the women - the eye-candy. Here it was different – the eye-candy was the men.

Durand clearly falls into this category of ‘eye-candy’ and therefore remains caught in a marginal position to the idealised body-transcending power of the patriarch. The social stature that Durand desires and aims to achieve through acts of sexual conquest remains elusive, because of the inability of these physical moments of passion to transform his social disposition into disembodied power.

Durand’s powerlessness becomes most evident when placed in direct contrast to the patriarchal control of Vorster. In line with Connell’s (1987:113) contention that – in patriarchal discourse – the threat of adultery ‘has nothing to do with greater desire on the part of [the adulterer], it has everything to do with greater power’, Durand’s repeated attempts at seducing or “stealing” Vorster’s wife exposes his desire not for sexual satisfaction, but for the power of the patriarch. His transgression of what Connell (1987:108) refers to as ‘patriarchy’s demand for monogamy’, presents Durand as punishable under patriarchal rule. Durand is therefore cast as a sexual “criminal” who poses a threat to the accepted margins of sexual conduct, and therefore serves to legitimise the desirability of Vorster’s patriarchal reign. For Michel Foucault, the elaboration of such symbolic margins of accepted sexuality demarcates the bourgeoisie within a ‘noble code of blood’ (cited by Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982:168), which serves to subordinate the underclass as the bearers of various sexual and cultural dangers.

Egoli’s portrayal of underclass masculinity therefore serves to cement the legitimised reign of Afrikaner patriarchy. Through a reliance on the vacuous celebrity image
of Hofmeyr, Durand appeals to the audience primarily as visual pleasure, without the expectation of much complexity or depth – therefore not only powerless against the eroticised gaze of the spectator, but also marginalised by the all-encompassing authority of the patriarch. In this way, the programme serves to emphasise the discursive relationship between the hegemony of patriarchy and wealth, and therefore affirms class status as the root of the idealisation of Vorster as patriarch.

Concluding remarks

As a widely popular soap opera, invited into the privacy of the homes of many South Africans as a familiar and trusted friend, Egoli took part in the construction of a signifying economy that could imagine Afrikaner men in a New South Africa from within the midst of a grand-scale political transformation. With this aim in mind, this article’s analysis centred on the representation of masculinities that served as distinct anchoring points within the programme’s social matrix, in order to explore not only the mediation of gender, but also of social power relations and class.

As central to an understanding of Egoli’s production of a social gender order, the article interrogated the characterisation of Dr Walt Vorster as the vehicle for the programme’s construction of Afrikaner patriarchy. His characterisation seems to oscillate between villainy and heroism. As in the case of the skeleton, it is revealed, however, that at this early point in Egoli’s production, the programme recurrently affirmed the ascendency of a current order of Afrikaner patriarchy. Egoli therefore suggested that as a symbol of impenetrable wealth, class, and cultural sophistication, the patriarch would inevitably be redeemed -- regardless of the circumstances. The article furthermore argued that the familiarity of Gé Korsten, who portrayed this role, acts as an entry point for the audience’s positive reading of this character because of the established cultural appeal of his public persona. The casting of Korsten at this mature stage in his career served not only to provide the audience with the comforting image of a well-known cultural icon amidst the uncertainty of the changing political climate, but furthermore served to redeem the cultural value of Korsten as an emblem of Afrikaans esteem. Through a reliance on celebrity-intertextuality, Egoli therefore legitimated established Afrikaner culture as a form of capital in the complex multiracial narrative of the New South Africa.

In contrast to the elevated cultural appeal of Korsten, Hofmeyr’s celebrity status is, as he admits himself, figured almost solely on his rugged good looks. In the same light, the article claimed that the audience therefore encounters Doug Durand from a predisposition that expects to locate the pleasure of his character not within
the disembodied rationality ascribed to the patriarch, but rather in a visceral materiality, objectified for erotic visual consumption. By offsetting Korsten, as an emblematic symbol of established cultural sophistication, against the young pop star who seemed to represent a new-fangled, somewhat Americanised strand of Afrikaner culture, *Egoli* subtly promoted a mythological Afrikaner purity. Furthermore, this dichotomous relationship seems to instruct the audience that Afrikaans men can secure a position of power and ascendancy in the New South Africa only through the accumulation of wealth.

Approaching *Egoli* with the hope of encountering a radical renegotiation of cultural hegemony thus leaves one frustrated by the banality of the genre. *Egoli* tended to recycle old typologies, characters and narratives, pre-existing and ill-defined surfaces largely devoid of originality or specificity. This is largely owing to the programme’s reliance on well-known celebrities in the composition of the full time cast. This specific casting strategy provided a subtle means of introducing well-established associations of cultural value that served, in the case of Korsten and Hofmeyr, to reproduce the status quo. This strategy of celebrity casting has since become a characteristic of the South African soap opera genre, yet further research is necessary to evaluate if this strategy is being employed recurrently as a mechanism to validate cultural hegemony.

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Hypersampling black masculinities, Jozi style

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ABSTRACT

In this article, I examine emergent performances of fashion(able) and fashion(ed) black masculine identities manifest in work by selected young fashion designers and design collectives currently practicing in the urban environs of Johannesburg. These vibrant, dynamic, youth-orientated forms of cultural practice encompass a range of transnational, transhistorical, transcultural, black masculine identities. I contend that such identities are achieved through use of "hypersampling": the remixing, re-appropriating, reintegrating, fusing, conjoining, interfacing and mashing-up of often disparate elements gleaned from a multiplicity of sources to produce new fashion styles.

Many of these practitioners’ work can be said to include characteristics of “black dandyism” – appropriations of dandyesque dress and fashionable display as a means of performing black diasporic masculinities. Focusing on the work of two Johannesburg-based design collectives, Khumbula and the Sartists, I show how, through hypersampling strategies, both look back to the past, consuming, hypersampling and re-cycling images from Southern and South African history. Both deploy transhistorical and transcultural referents as a means of subversive resistance: a mechanism through which to negotiate, problematise or disrupt prevailing power relations embedded within them, whilst also operating as a form of creative agency through which to express shifting notions of black masculinities in the context of the African metropolis of Johannesburg.

Keywords: Hypersampling, hyperculture, black masculinities, black dandyism, fashion-dress-style, subversive resistance.
Introduction


In this article, I examine emergent performances of fashion(able) and fashion(ed) black masculine identities manifest in work by selected young fashion designers and design collectives (hereafter referred to as “practitioners”) currently practicing in the urban environs of Johannesburg (hereafter “Jozi”). Working across a range of interdisciplinary genres and media, these practitioners place emphasis on the sartorial as the core component of their work, but extend and develop this component in fashion-; Fine Art- and documentary- photography; fashion-films; music videos; artworks, installations; performances; and in the commercial realm.

These vibrant, dynamic, youth-orientated forms of practice encompass a range of emergent transnational, transhistorical, transcultural black masculine identities. I contend that these identities are achieved through use of what may be termed “hypersampling”: the remixing, re-appropriating, reintegrating, fusing, conjoining, interfacing and mashing-up of often disparate elements gleaned from a multiplicity of sources to produce new fashion-styles.

Hypersampling may be related to a form of eclecticism in fashion that expands into a ‘super-sampling’ of styles and signifiers (see Theunissen 2005:19) particular to hyperculture – a fluid, increasingly complex culture where boundaries and spatial proximities lose significance owing to the predominance of digital technologies such as the Internet (Hunter 2013). Given their immersion in this multidimensional digital realm, and the seemingly endless accessibility it offers, the terms “hyperculture” and “hypersampling” are particularly pertinent to work by young Jozi-based practitioners forming part of the so-called Generation Z.

My exploration is set against the backdrop of a recent surge in internationally based research around the historical figure of the black dandy, and identification of black dandyism as a contemporary diasporic fashion phenomenon (Lewis 2014). Shantrelle Lewis (2014) defines what she calls the ‘Black Dandyism movement’ as primarily, but not exclusively, African, African-American and British-based appropriations of fashionable dress and display as a means of performing diasporic black masculinities. Comprising individuals such as Ghanaian-born Savile-Row designer Ozwald Baoteng, New-York city-based Shayne Oliver (Hood by Air) and Parisian Olivier Rousteing (House of Balmain); design collectives such as the Bronx-based duo, Street Etiquette (Travis Gumps and Joshua Kissi); the London-based team Art Comes First (Sam Lambert and Shaka Maidoh), contemporary...
3. According to Susan Kaiser (2012:1), "Fashion is also about producing clothes and appearances, working through ideas, negotiating subject positions (e.g., gender, ethnicity, class), and navigating through power positions. It involves mixing, borrowing, belonging, and changing. It is a complex process that entangles multiple perspectives and approaches." ‘Dress’ is a more neutral term used in global fashion theory to describe the traditional, symbolic, or functional use of clothing (Kaiser 2012:7). "Style" refers to the actual items of dress and the ways that they are combined and worn to create identity and difference. Carol Tulloch (2010:276) considers style as a form of agency 'in the construction of self through the assemblage of garments, accessories, and beauty regimes that may, or may not, be "in fashion" at the time of use'. Tulloch (2010:274) proposes the articulation of ‘style-fashion-dress’ as a complex system that can be broken down into part-and-whole-relations between the parts (individual terms) and the wholes (the system that connects them). The larger articulation of style-fashion-dress locates style in the context of fashion: a social process in which style narratives are collectively ‘in flux with time’ (Riello & McNeil cited in Kaiser 2012:7). Following Tulloch, I use the term "fashion-style" to denote articulations of the fashion-dress-whole (the system that connects them) and the parts (individual terms) and the whole (the system that connects them). The articulation of style-fashion-dress articulates style in the context of fashion: a social process in which style narratives are collectively 'in flux with time' (Riello & McNeil cited in Kaiser 2012:7). Following Tulloch, I use the term "fashion-style" to denote articulations of the fashion-dress-whole (the system that connects them) and the parts (individual terms) and the whole (the system that connects them).

Jozi-based sartorial subcultural groups the Sbujwas and Isikothane, young, street-savvy design collectives the Sartists (Wanda Lephoto and Kabelo Kungwane); Khumbula (Andile Blyana, David Maladimo, Harness Harmses and Bafana Mthembu) (Wizman and Lunetta 2015; Lewis 2014); the Smarteez (Corrigall 2012) as well as individuals such as Dr Pachanga and Jamal Nxedlana, could all be said to include characteristics of black dandyism in their fashion-styles. Some of these practitioners, such as the Sartists and Khmbula, hypersample from the fashion-styles of established South African subcultural groups, specifically the Pantsulas and Swenkas. Both of these subcultural groups in turn were, and remain, influenced by elements of traditional and contemporary popular culture, and combine these with references from the urban environment in which they are located.

As subcultural groups established in the early 1970s, the Pantsulas's and Swenkas's fashion-styles draw on two mid-twentieth-century images of black South African masculine identities: the intertwined figures of the ‘perfect gentleman’ and the ‘streetwise gangster-with-a-heart’ (also known as the ‘gentleman-gangster’) (Goeller 2014b:[sp]). Writers and editors of The African Drum magazine, targeting a newly urbanised black male readership in the early 1950s, were particularly instrumental in creating and promoting these two interrelated historical images of black South African masculinities. These figures can be traced to the romanticised representations of the suave, dashing gentleman and glamorous American gangster portrayed in American films of the 1950s (see Fenwick 1996). The associations between gentlemanliness, criminality, black masculinity and fashion-style that they convey play out in interpretations of the American film star as a combination of the gangster and the mysterious, impeccable gentleman (Humphrey Bogart); musician (the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, American Jazz); entertainer (Frank Sinatra, Fred Astaire); and political activist (Malcolm X, the Black Power movement, Nation of Islam black suits). In Drum imagery, signifiers of, and references to, fashion-styles of each of the abovementioned “types” are translated into classic 1950s dress codes, where they are used in ways that slip fluidly between the images of the perfect gentleman and the streetwise gangster-with-a-heart (Goeller 2014b:[sp]).

In my discussion, I show how, in selected works, Khumbula and the Sartists offer contemporary, of these two interrelated historical images. In so doing, they re-fashion these images in ways that subtly resist historical and contemporary
hegemonic and/or normative constructions of South African black masculinities. Both historical figures themselves challenge hetero-normative representations of black masculinities: the perfect gentleman subverts depictions of the black male as poverty-stricken, uncouth, inferior, backward and disempowered, whilst also countering stereotypical associations between black masculinity and criminality. While the gangster-with-a-heart works to bolster associations between the black man and crime, in the context of 1950s South African townships and as portrayed in *Drum*, he also takes on the status of an anti-hero; a figure to be admired, respected, and aspired to for his conspicuously displayed wealth, power and status. Khumbula and the Sartists hypersample from these already subversive tropes of historical South African black masculinities, foregrounding the attributes of the perfect gentleman and playing down the glammed-up styles of the gangster-hero. Thereby, they subtly undermine certain stereotypes associated with urban black masculinities: historically, the black man as "tsotsi", "skelem" (see footnote 12), gangster, or thug; and in the contemporary context of Jozi, as a dangerous element with a predisposition towards violent crime.

Khumbula and the Sartists’s re-fashionings of these historical identities may therefore be considered as forms of what Deborah Willis (2003) calls ‘subversive resistance’ – a term she uses to describe strategies used by black people to produce visual images that counter dominant meanings or stereotypes. Its impact often comes through nuanced presentation of one’s self, history and community that denote forms of unsettling, disrupting, dislodging and troubling hegemonic and/or normative codes, as opposed to overt representations of active protest such rebellion, transgression or defiance. Subversive resistance can also operate as a form of creative agency; a means of negotiating and articulating shifting notions of black identities in relation to particular temporal, geographic, socio-economic, political contexts.

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6. The historical figure of black dandy originated amongst a select group of ‘prestige’ black slaves in seventeenth-century England who were not used as labour, but acted as companions to their masters and mistresses (Miller 2015). As Miller (2015) notes, they were among the first group of slaves that used fashion as a means by which the agency and subjectivity of black subjects could be imagined and produced. Known for their sartorial ingenuity and often-flamboyant personalities, black dandies complicated perceptions of blackness, particularly black sexuality, through their boundary crossings between hypervisibility and invisibility, luxury and labour.

7. Emerging in the late 1990s to early 2000s, the Sbhujwa (from the French “bourgeois”) dance form combines fast footwork with undulating movements of the torso and hips, as well as floor work and postures such as those used in house dance (Goeller 2014a).

8. The Isikotane subculture originated amongst the youth of Kathlehong and Soweto in the late 1990s to early 2000s. Adopting a dress code comprising imitation Italian designer wear (seasonal fashions characterised by flashy colours and vibrant, floral patterns, sporting “Italianate” labels such as “Sfarzo” and “DMD/Linea Italiana”), the Isikotane present a conflation of masculinity, fashion and luxury. Set against the backdrop of capitalism and neo-liberalism, they flaunt conspicuous consumption through provocative behaviours: bragging in street-battles to show who has the most clothes; spoiling expensive alcohol, clothes and foodstuffs, and burning money (Goeller 2014c:17).

9. Ariel Wizman and Laurent Lunetta (2015) identify the Sartists and Khumbula as being proponents of contemporary black dandyism. Kabelo Kungwane (2015), however, clarifies that the Sartists do not consider themselves as part of a contemporary black dandy movement, and do not see their work as fitting under the rubric of “black dandyism”, but rather that, for them, reading their work in terms of black dandyism is only one possible way amongst many, of approaching their practice.
The perfect gentleman/streetwise gangster-with-a-heart

In a South African context, the intertwined figures of the perfect gentleman/gangster-with-a-heart derive from portrayals of the charming, sophisticated urban gentleman (actor, musician, political activist) and flashy American gangster portrayed in American films of the 1950s (Fenwick 1996; Goeller 2014b:sp). American gangster films provided a new source of identity for black South Africans who had...
moved from rural to urban areas like Sophiatown in search of work. Mac Fenwick (1996) notes that:

As a part of their wider project of resisting tribalisation and the credo of separate development, the writers at Drum took this already subversive element of American culture and appropriated it to black South Africa. They were thus able to create a figure who was an economic rebel at home in, and defined by, his black urban context. This appropriation in turn allowed them … to elaborate in their own society a subject-position that was both attractive to non-intellectuals, and congruent with the cultural and artistic aspirations of those more highly-educated urban writers who were trying to create for themselves a ‘truly’ black South African identity.

Lindsay Clowes (2001) explains how, in the 1950s, Drum writers and editors often explicitly draw links between these new urban African masculinities, social success, economic prosperity and “progress” (as defined within the framework of western modernity). The westernised suit is pivotal to this image of modern urban African masculinity. Set in a hierarchically privileged position in relation to the traditional/rural, in Drum, the suit is a visual marker of western-defined socio-economic success, and identifies its wearer as a modern, urbane gentleman (Clowes 2001:11) (Figure 1). Drum writers promote the suit as such by deeming men wearing them to be ‘smartly dressed’ or ‘immaculately attired’, and proffering these images ‘as manly and attractive role models for urban audiences’ (Clowes 2001:11). Advertisements reinforce these “progressive” links between urbanisation, westernisation, and modernisation: men without “appropriate” education are represented as “backward”: shoeless and shirtless, often carrying buckets, and accompanied by cows, ‘whereas those that took advantage of the opportunities to “modernise” themselves were pictured sporting smart western suits, shirts and ties, ready to become the breadwinners of the modern western society located in the towns’ (Clowes 2001:15).

The suit therefore held powerful currency for those African men who wanted to locate themselves within the context of urban western modernity. A similar embrace of modernity can be traced to the 1930 called the “clevers”, followed by the “tsotsis”, who emerged in the 1940s (Glaser 2000:108). ‘Clevers’ were streetwise city slickers who asserted an urbanliness that defined insiders and outsiders according to dress, language and style codes. The antithesis to the clever was the “moezero” (country bumpkin). The tsotsi/ style was initially a “sub-clever” style in the 1940s, but eventually became almost synonymous with the “clever” by the 1950s. The term tsotsi gradually developed a much clearer criminal connotation over time (Glaser 2000:108). Early renditions of Pantsula fashion-dress-styles drew sartorial connections with both 1950s American gangsterism and the South-African figure of the gangster-hero. These connections contributed to the associations between the Pantsulas and the “tsotsi” or “skelm” – South African colloquialisms that, while denoting “criminal” and “thief” respectively, also refer to the emblematic figures of the ‘pantsulas’, or ‘bad boys’ of Sophiatown in the 1950s (Nuttall 2009:117). Contemporary Pantsula fashion styles have shifted to incorporate lighter, less expensive items, with the “spoo” – a cotton cloth cap worn in place of the Fedora hat – and the more flexible Converse “Chucks” All Star sneakers replacing high quality leather shoes (Goeller 2014c:sp). However, while the Pantsulas initially wore Converse All Stars as a play on African-American urban “gangsta” fashions, they ironically reiterate the subculture’s sartorial connections with both 1950s American gangsterism and the hip-hop “gangsta” fashion-styles of the mid-to late 1990s.

12. Associations between the black male and criminality can be traced throughout global history. In a pre-apartheid South African context, it takes on various manifestations, such as township gangsters that can be traced to the 1930 called the “clevers”, followed by the “tsotsis”, who emerged in the 1940s (Glaser 2000:108). ‘Clevers’ were streetwise city slickers who asserted an urbanliness that defined insiders and outsiders according to dress, language and style codes. The antithesis to the clever was the “moezero” (country bumpkin). The tsotsi/ style was initially a “sub-clever” style in the 1940s, but eventually became almost synonymous with the “clever” by the 1950s. The term tsotsi gradually developed a much clearer criminal connotation over time (Glaser 2000:108). Early renditions of Pantsula fashion-dress-styles drew sartorial connections with both 1950s American gangsterism and the South-African figure of the gangster-hero. These connections contributed to the associations between the Pantsulas and the “tsotsi” or “skelm” – South African colloquialisms that, while denoting “criminal” and “thief”, respectively, also refer to the emblematic figures of the ‘pantsulas’, or ‘bad boys’ of Sophiatown in the 1950s (Nuttall 2009:117). Contemporary Pantsula fashion styles have shifted to incorporate lighter, less expensive items, with the “spoo” – a cotton cloth cap worn in place of the Fedora hat – and the more flexible Converse “Chucks” All Star sneakers replacing high quality leather shoes (Goeller 2014c:sp). However, while the Pantsulas initially wore Converse All Stars as a play on African-American urban “gangsta” fashions, they ironically reiterate the subculture’s sartorial connections with both 1950s American gangsterism and the hip-hop “gangsta” fashion-styles of the mid-to late 1990s.
white counterparts (see Nyamende 2013). These first generation converts made the transition from oral to literate cultures, the homestead to the mission and from being “native informants” to what was known as “Kholwa” intellectuals (Mokoena 2012). The amaKholwa used not only the instruments of cultural imperialism (petitions, letters, books, newspapers), but also its dress-style as a means of resistance to subjugation and conquest. In the context of the dialectic between modernity and traditionalism underscoring colonialist discourse, the amaKholwa’s adoption of the westernised suit and its accessories played a pivotal role as ‘that [which] refused the dichotomy between [indigenous African] adornment and clothing’ and ‘produced new kinds of identities, classes, genders and persons’ (Mokoena 2012).

The amaKholwa thus set a trend for the emergence of a form of African dandyism associated with the black intelligentsia, political activism and gentlemanly refinement. It is from this elite that the educated Drums writers, who were trying to create a ‘black South African identity’, emerged (Fenwick 1996). Connections between the westernised, educated, urban gentleman, social success, economic prosperity and identification with “progress” – promoted and conveyed through the signifier of the suit – took on varying dimensions with the rise in popularity of the gangster figure in Drums from the early 1950s to 1960s (see Fenwick 1996) (Figure 2). The South African figure of the black gangster of the mid-twentieth century reverses stereotypical representations of the migrant rural black protagonist as poverty-stricken and powerless in the city; he is represented as an urban survivor who is able to achieve a material and social standard of living usually denied to blacks under apartheid (Fenwick 1996). While his clothing (typically, three-piece suits, combined with a dusk-coat, two-tone or plain Italian leather shoes and Fedora hats (Goeller 2014b:151) and the labels he wears are similar to those of his American counterparts, he differs in that he is not considered to be an anti-social criminal element, but rather, an anti-hero: ‘an extreme character living on the societal fringe ... [who] learns to shift the moral codes by which he lives’ (Lütge 2011:13-14).

Drums reiterates this image of the Sophiatown gangster – said to have a “heart-of gold” or called an “African Robin hood” because they sold goods stolen from white men at low prices in the townships – by running regular features on urban crime, wherein the gangster’s adoption of western-style clothing is valorised. Sophiatown gangs such as the snazzily dressed Americans who wore “expensive Yankee wear” – including cardigans, brown and white two-tone brogues and narrow blue trousers called “Bogarts” – often appear in the fiction and journalism sections, where they are portrayed as admirable characters to be aspired to and respected for their ability to outwit the apartheid system, and ways in which they took advantage of the city highlife (Clowes 2001:11). Although writers in the early
1950s warned that crime should be avoided, they also increasingly highlighted the ‘excitement and adventure’ of a gangster’s life (Fenwick 1996): Drum’s gangster-heroes are portrayed as frequenting or running shebeens, driving flashy 1950s cars, and dressing in exclusively styled, imported American and English clothing. In Blake Modisane’s (1963:52) words,

the boys were expensively dressed … “Jewished” in their phraseology … Shoes from America – Florsheims, Winthrops, Bostonians, Saxone and Mansfield from London; BVD’s; Van Heusen, Arrow shirts; suits from Simpsons, Hector Powe, Robert Hall; Dobbs, Woodrow, Borsolino hats. The label was the thing.
The gangsters’ lifestyle and its accessories served to highlight their wealth, power and status in the township, and, notably, their sexual prowess. As Clive Glaser (2000:135) observes, in Drum articles, sexual conquest is frequently used as a sign of the gangster-figure’s masculinity, virility and machismo. In Drum’s iconographic framework, the figures of the perfect gentleman and gangster-hero are thus intermeshed through their fashion-style. On the one hand, the suit represents the detribalised, sophisticated, economically successful, educated, modern urbane man-about-town; on the other hand, this image is extended to convey a glamorous version of hyper-masculinity that revolves around violence, criminality, virility, wealth, power and status.

The black dandy as ”African trickster”

The historical South African figures of the amaKholwa, the newly urbanised black male and the gangster-hero of the 1950s, may be likened to Lewis’s (2015) definition of the contemporary black dandy as:

A self-fashioned gentleman who intentionally appropriates classical European fashion with an African Diasporan aesthetic and sensibilities ... a modern day representation of the African trickster. ... In styling himself, particularly in dress mostly associated with a particular class, station in life, education and social status of another race, as trickster the African Diasporic dandy cleverly manipulates clothing and attitude to exert his agency rather than succumb to the limited ideals placed on him by society.

In considering the contemporary black dandy as an ‘African Trickster’, Lewis (2014) challenges colonial and post-colonial readings of black dandyism, wherein it is often dismissed as a ‘mere imitation of whiteness’, as well as the negative connotations of foppishness and decadence that the term “dandy”, when used to describe his white historical counterpart, carries.13 Monica Miller (2009) adopts a similar view, reading black dandyism as a ‘self-conscious strategy of performance designed to draw attention to the social, cultural, political and occasionally legal structures that determine how people identify themselves and recognize others’ (Corbould 2012:171-172). Proposing black dandyism to be a ‘cosmopolite self-concept’, Miller (2009:11, 178) situates the dandyesque mode as a means whereby the subject may propose more fluid identities transcending indexes of race, gender and class:

A concentration on the dandy’s cosmopolitanism establishes the black dandy as a figure with ... European and African and American origins, a figure who expresses with his performative body and dress the fact

13. Both the word “dandy” and the style associated with it originate from Victorian Europe, specifically nineteenth-century Britain. Citing the Oxford English Dictionary of 1780, Miller (2015) points out that the dandy’s look signifies more than excessive attention to personal style; he ‘studies above everything else to dress elegantly and fashionably’. The western dandy represents a paradoxical figure: while he embodies “good taste” and sophistication, his predilection for flamboyance and excess makes him a figure of ridicule and absurdity. He defies the prevailing social order by (i) presenting a rejection of Victorian prudishness, propriety, decorum and essentialism of hegemonic masculinity; (ii) transgressing hetero-normative white masculinities through revealing and contesting the limits of “socially acceptable” behaviour prescribed within this paradigm; and (iii) drawing from signifiers of masculinities and femininities, and navigating gender and sexual categories in ways that trivialise them and destabilise their boundaries (Feldman cited in Mintler 2010:124).
that modern identity, in both black and white, is necessarily syncretic, or mulatto, but in a liberating rather than constraining way.

Therefore, as Mary Corrigall (2012:153) notes, by detaching dandyism from its western origins, Miller and Lewis allow the term and the sartorial mode associated with it to be linked to arbiters of style who engage in deliberate acts of reconstructing masculine identities that are relative to negotiations of race, sexuality and class in relation to specific temporal and geographic contexts. Read in this way, contemporary black dandyism may be deployed as a means of subversive resistance: a mechanism through which to negotiate, problematise or disrupt prevailing normative conceptions of black masculinities and the power relations embedded within them, whilst also operating as a form of creative agency through which to express shifting notions of black masculinities in an urban context.

Yet, as Miller (2009) and Lewis (2014) observe, strategies of using dress-fashion-style as a form of protest, subversion and an assertion of agency in (re)defining self/gendered identities and subjectivities, are not particular to contemporary black dandies. For centuries, African diasporic men have used fashion-style as a subversive tool and mechanism for self-expression, and dandyism as a productive strategy of resistance and means by which their agencies and subjectivities could be imagined and produced.14 Writing on black dandyism as situated within the historical context of American slavery, Miller (2015) argues that it was particularly useful as a strategy of resistance for Africans experiencing the attempted erasure or a reordering of their identities during the periods of the Atlantic slave trade and European colonisation and imperialism. In order to survive the dehumanisation of slavery, Africans arriving in England, America or West Indies had to (self)-fashion new identities; through their manipulation of ‘the relationship between clothing, identity and power [which] dandyism affords’, ‘Africans and later African-Americans and Afro-Europeans [gained] an opportunity to dress their way from slavery to freedom, to restyle given categories of identity, to turn slaves into selves’ (Miller 2015).

While dandyism operated as a productive strategy of resistance in the context of Atlantic slavery and European colonisation and Imperialism, within colonial and apartheid era Southern and South Africa, the black dandy is defined according to a legacy of articulations expressing shifting notions of black masculinity, particularly amongst traditional groups such as the amaZulu and amaXhosa.15 Mokeona (2013) argues that for these groups, black dandyism becomes a way of negotiating masculinities through experimenting with and expressing fusions between the colonial dress and traditionally African sensibilities. For example, the dress-styles of groups such as the amaMfengu (Fingo) interpolate colonial and

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14. Miller (2015) examines various historical and contemporary manifestations of the black dandy. She traces his appearance in American nineteenth-century slave festivals and on the minstrel stage; his portrayal in black American literature; and his role in the Harlem Renaissance of the early twentieth century, where ‘new Negroes’ resident in an urban area post-emancipation, sought a form of ‘modern blackness’, characterised by transgression of racial and sexual boundaries (Miller 2015). She continues her investigation by looking at the figure of the contemporary black dandy in Britain, where, starting in the late 1980s, visual artists such as Isaac Julien, Lyle Ashton Harris, Iké Udé, and Yinka Shonibare have taken the legacy of black dandyism as their subject and revived it into a form of ‘Afro-cosmopolitanism’ (Miller 2015). Miller argues that Afro-cosmopolitanism is evident in the sartorial approaches of certain prominent black hip-hop artists and contemporary proponents of black dandyism in the fashion and art worlds of London, Paris and New York.

15. Mokeona (2013:2) notes that the “Zulu Dandy” was associated with young Zulu men in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who wore spectacular hairstyles. Other manifestations of the Zulu Dandy take the form of the “Zulu Ricksha” and “Zulu Policeman” as they were represented in colonial tourist postcards and photographs.
traditional garb, mixing the two, as an expression of shifting notions of “Zuluness” and “blackness” in colonial Southern Africa. Caught between colonial society and the ties that bind them to traditional society and culture, their identity is fashioned through the practice of *bricolage* – the cobbling together, in indeterminate and sometimes contradictory ways, of elements from both colonial and indigenous cultures (Mokoena 2013:4).

Parallel to the current international interest in historical and contemporary black dandyism, in global Fashion Studies focus is being placed on masculinities, particularly the study of (western) men’s fashion-dress-style, which has been relatively marginalised in relation to women’s (see McNeil & Karaminas 2009:1; Reilly & Cosby 2008:xi). In a South African context, fashion ‘has proved to be the ideal vehicle for South Africans to redetermine and remap previously fixed racial and national identities in the postapartheid era’ (Corrigall 2015:151), as it allows for multiple forms of expression whereby wearers can ‘(re)-claim and (re)-define new social territory’ (Gondola cited in Corrigall 2015:151). Sarah Nuttall (2008:108) identifies the youth culture of the first post-apartheid generation as an example of ways in which the apartheid era’s resistance politics is replaced by ‘an alternative politics of style and accessorisation, while simultaneously gesturing, in various ways, toward the past’. According to Nuttall (2009:108), ‘Y-Culture’ – emergent in 2002 and established by 2008 – represents a ‘repositioning of the black body’ in ways that draw on black American style formations with local re-workings thereof.

Since Nuttall’s study in 2009, as part of work being done on the production of masculinities in post-apartheid South Africa (see for instance, Luyt 2012; Moolman 2013), a fledgling body of local research is emerging on fashion-dress-style in relation to the construction of black masculine identities (see for instance, Ratele 2012; Msibi 2012; Viljoen 2012, 2013). As a key contributor to this developing field, Corrigall (2012, 2015:151) draws links between multiple forms of contemporary and historical dandyism and what she calls ‘self-styled individuals’ in post-apartheid South Africa who ‘liv[e] as dandies, embracing the historical concept of dandy as “both artist and living art”’ (Fillin-Yeh cited in Corrigall 2015:151). Corrigall (2012:174; 2015:151) discusses how South African performance artist Athi-Patra Ruga’s practice evokes the dandyist mode and identifies the Smarteez as an example of a young black South African design collective working under the rubric of black dandyism.

This article is intended to contribute to this nascent body of research, representing a departure point for further exploration into what appears to be a rich, currently under-acknowledged terrain in South African academia. The practitioners whose work is discussed here signal a shift from the Y-Culture generation; while
hypersampling elements from this, they manifest diverse means of leveraging fashion-style that is particular to Generation Z. My argument is based on the premise that these young, emergent practitioners, and their work, are important, yet underexplored, agents of socio-cultural change in contemporary South Africa. The focus on performances of black masculine identities does not discount other forms of identity construction taking place in Jozi through fashion-style. Rather, it is generated through what is identified as an innovative, dynamic, youth-orientated area of creative production currently underway in Jozi’s urban environs, and the rich skeins of visual material and theoretical concerns such production presents. The current global interest in black dandyism as well as the international and local scholarly focus on (fashionable) performances of masculine identities indicates a need to explore the topic in local terms, whilst situating this exploration in relation to broader South African, African, black diasporic and global fashion arenas.

Hypersampling and hyperculture

An underpinning thread of connectivity in this predominantly digital creative network of production, dissemination, promotion and consumption, is the strategy of “hypersampling”: the remixing, re-appropriating, re-integrating, fusing, conjoining, interfacing and mashing-up of often disparate elements gleaned from a multiplicity of online and offline sources to produce new fashion-styles. Materially, sartorial strategies of hypersampling might involve thrifting; recycling; repurposing and upcycling, as well as the combination of differing design elements, fabrics and/or motifs. Hypersampling goes beyond this, however, in that it is integrally connected to a hypercultural society capable of speed-of-light communication and readily available access to information. I position hypersampling in relation – rather than hierarchically opposed to, or as a linear development of – “sampling” 16 and other terms that denote the “cutting, pasting and combining” of visual elements, images and styles. Ted Polhemus (1994:131) designates sampling as a postmodern phenomenon, operative in what he calls the ‘Supermarket of Style’, where all of history’s streetstyles … are lined up as possible options as if they were cans of soup on supermarket shelves … separate eras are flung together in one stretched, “synchronic” moment in time, all reality is hype and “authenticity” seems out of the question.

Hypersampling incorporates this consumerist, capitalist-driven approach, but extends beyond it; denying progressive linearity, it opens up new ways of conceptualisation and practice in which seemingly limitless options and connections

16. “Sampling” is a practice common to all cultural fields. The term is commonly used in relation to fashion history/theory, Djing, Vjaying and with regard to subcultures. Sampling occurs when existing elements are de-contextualised and re-used in combinations that generate new meanings. Dick Hebdige’s (1979:102-106) concept of “bricolage”, used in the context of subcultures, refers to the decontextualisation of known elements and their re-contextualisation in a new style regime that denotes new meaning. Given its relation to the digital realm, hypersampling differs from postcolonial terminology used to describe processes of cultural contact, fusion, intrusion, disjunction, crossovers and assimilation that occur owing to border crossings by cultures and peoples, and which trigger the forging of new identities. These include terms such as “acculturation” (James Clifford; Paul Gilroy); “hybridity” (Homi K Bhabha); “transculturation” (Nestor Garcia Canclini); “creolisation” (Edouard Glissant); “amalgamation” (Gilberto Freyre); and “entanglement” (Sarah Nuttall).
form nodes within a rhizomic matrix of interconnectivity. Such interconnectedness enables what Doreen Massey (1991:24-29) refers to as ‘flow[s] and interconnections’ that give rise to new structures of ‘power in relation to … movement[s] and relationships between different social groups and individuals’. While it is not only the hypercultural platform par excellence where hypersampling strategies are employed, the Internet operates as what Massey (1991) calls a third space of ‘in-betweenness’ – an apparently horizon-less zone – in which rapid communication and access to information produces an environment of seemingly unlimited possibility. Boundless and boundary-less, the Internet enables what is often perceived as non-hierarchical, non-linear, synchronic and diachronic interchanges across fields such as fashion, dance, music, performance, visual art, entertainment, and commercialisation; continuous processes of reworking, reinventing, reimagining signifiers (semiotic) and styles (visual), and the formation of fluid, ever-emerging identity constructions. In hypercultural societies,

[e]verything may be used to make something. All culture and history, and all materials. Evidence of this is the remix culture of YouTube videos, the musician Girl Talk, and the re-commodification of history and historical objects by hipster culture. In a hypercultural era, all of history is in the cultural domain, all culture is capable of being processed, wound down, and remixed. … Hyperculture is … a melting system of objects and value where everything blends together. … The ultimate melting pot of thought, image, and existence (cyborganthropology).

While physically located within, and moving between, Jozi’s seams (the Central Business District, Daveyton, Soweto, Alexandra, Tembisa), for Generation Z practitioners, this multi-dimensional digital realm plays a pivotal role in their creative processes. Hypersampling may be a conscious act or a subconscious response to the fluctuations of imagery and fashions circulating in social and online media in an already mish-mashed stream of information. Working with the concept of the “infinity wave” – which takes the visual form of the double helix that represents energy turning infinitely turning back on itself (Nxedlana 2015) – and hypersampling from potentially limitless combinations of visual and material signifiers and styles, practitioners work towards creating new fashion products. Their reliance on digital platforms means that the forms of individualised and collective agencies they attempt to establish cannot be divorced from the broader spectrum of consumer, visual, and entertainment culture. Positioned within a hypercultural space, for these “third space kids”, platforms such as social media as well as mobile technologies are a vital means of communication, articulation, and dissemination, as they present multiple opportunities for claiming agency over one’s self-
representation (Nxedlana 2015). In this digital field, control over one’s image and identity is closely linked to self-promotion; the marketing of not only one’s products and practice, but of the self as a brand “name”. With access to an immediate digital market, their (self)-representations of brand identities are readily available for visual consumption. Picked up on by bloggers, “look-creators” and trend-spotters, the hype of digital technology rapidly increases the potential of creating new trends, and promotion of the self as product, practice and brand.

Hypersampling from the past, practitioners adopt and adapt vintage and retro style referents, remixing them with contemporary design and materials to refashion garments in ways that signify new meanings. Their transhistorical and transcultural hypersampling traverses wide temporal and geographic terrain, spanning, for example, signifiers of, and references to, fashion styles of historical black sartorial figures of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe (the Black Dandy; -Mungo Macaroni); twentieth-century sartorial “types” (the -homeboy; -gangsta of the ‘hood; -hipster;- city-slicker; -preppie); colonial Southern African figures such as the amaKholwa; Afrikaans Calvinism and the Voortrekkers; and the apartheid era, specifically fashion styles from the 1950s jazz culture of Sophiatown. They also hypersample from the fashion-styles of the Pantsulas and the Swenkas – some of which are rooted in 1950s Sophiatown fashions (Goeller 2014a) and are drawn from the intertwined figures of the perfect gentleman/gangster with a heart. In the practitioners’ works, transhistorical and transcultural referents of referents are digitally mediated, remixed or mashed up with images, sounds and ideas globally circulated on the Internet, as well as elements from popular-, youth-, music-, prison- and cyber- cultures. They also draw on their urban environment, as well as cross-cultural exchanges taking place as a result of cultural migration into South Africa from across the African continent, often fusing global elements with the local to create new “glocal” identities.

In the following section, I demonstrate how some of these complex interwoven transhistorical and transcultural relationships play out in two photographic works by the Sartists and Khumbula respectively. I tease out their hypersampled references to forms of self-styling by the amaKholwa; the figure of the perfect gentleman; as well as the Congolese Sapeurs (La S.A.P.E)17 and the Swenkas. In the Sartists’s and Khumbula’s works, “nostalgia mode” is set at full hilt (Polhemus 1994:131); my emphasis is on how both collectives look back to the past, consuming, hypersampling and re-cycling images from Southern and South African history in ways that denote various forms of subversive resistance. Following Carol Tulloch’s (2010:276) observation that style is ‘part of the process of self-telling, that is, to expound an aspect of autobiography of oneself through narratives’, I show how

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17. Société des Ambianceurs et des Personnes Élégantes (Society for the Advancement of Elegant People).
they use these transhistorical and transcultural referents and foreground the image of the perfect gentleman to unsettle and dislodge hegemonic and/or normative codes through which stereotypical representations of black masculinities are constructed, and expose the power-relations that are inherent within them.

Hypersampling from the past; imagining the future-present

Khumbula, The three stages of preparing tea, 2014. Digital print
Photographer Harness Hamese. Courtesy of the artists.
In a black and white photograph, titled *The three stages of preparing tea* (Figure 3), Khumbula articulate the attributes of the perfect gentleman through a range of transhistorical references. The image, digitally retouched with muted colour so that it resembles a period hand-tinted photograph, shows three black men donned in tailored gentlemen’s three-piece suits referencing classic tailoring styles of the 1950s. One wears a straw Panama hat the other a black woollen beret. Careful attention is paid to period detail: a lapel pin is discreetly attached to one man’s jacket; another wears a Scottish tiepin. They are drinking tea out of white china teacups with gold rims, poured from a sliver teapot, while seated at a table on the streets of what could be Soweto. The combination of the ceremonious Anglicised tea drinking ritual and elegant formal attire in which it is undertaken, combined with the period styling and sense of gentility the men assume through their poses is performative, invoking what Ann Hollander (1995:27) calls a complex, interactive and ever-evolving ‘visual narrative’.

Khumbula’s visual narrative references a trademark of black dandyism: the suit as signifier of respectability and refinement. For international proponents of contemporary black dandyism, such as Art Comes First[18] and Street Etiquette, the suit represents a physical and psychological embodiment of black masculinity (Wizman & Lunetta 2015). Not only does it convey the visual narratives of respectability: self-pride, -confidence, -assurance, elegance, dignity and social standing, but also the concept of refinement: it is a means of visually articulating a sense of moral rigour, self-discipline, gentility, manners, values and codes of conduct.

In deploying the suit as signifier of respectability and refinement, Khumbula appear to hypersample from the Swenkas’s and their counterparts, the Sapeurs’s practices, wherein the image and attributes of the perfect gentleman are foregrounded. The Sapeurs originated in the early twentieth century during the French colonisation of the Congo. Congolese men who worked for the colonisers, or spent time in France, began adopting French sartorial elegance and aristocratic affect, combining this with a nod to the zoot-suit styles of the 1920 Harlem Renaissance jazz age. The Sapeurs exhibit extravagant enactments of dandyism and gentlemanliness, using flamboyant fashion-styles to assert a form of (hyper)masculinity. Adorned in vividly coloured, impeccably tailored suits, polished leather handcrafted shoes and accessories made from fine silks, all carrying high end labels from top global designers, and performing their ensembles with a distinctive “Afroswagger” (a form of exaggerated nonchalance and panache), they exemplify the word “peacocking”. The Swenkas, on the other hand, choose to dandify themselves through less expensive means, whilst similarly performing the practice of sartorial elegance. Like those of the Sapeurs, the Swenkas’s performances focus not only

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[18] Art Comes First draw from the fashion styles of the 1950s Jamaican Rude Boys (aka ‘Rudie’) – young rebels who wore sharply styled Mohair suits, thin ties and pork pie hats.
on the clothing, but the way it is assembled and worn on the body, the wearer’s self-image, attitude and bodily movements. Swenking is therefore not just about being elegantly dressed according to the subculture’s aesthetics and codes; but rather, an enactment of black dandyism that entails ‘portraying, thinking of oneself, acting as, and in all senses of the word, “being”, a gentleman’; and embodying the attributes of self-respect, dignity, class and social standing with which he is associated (Goeller 2015). In some respects, the Swenkas’s and Sapeurs’s form of self-fashioning echo the characteristics of the western ‘aesthetic’ and ‘aesthete’ dandy of the seventeenth century (see Mintler 2010). The former is associated with excess, decadence, flamboyance and theatricality; the latter with attributes of gentlemanly refinement, including grooming, deportment, elocution, poise and taste.

‘Nurtured by fantasies of the past and paternal values’ (Wizman & Lunnetta 2015), Khumbula look back to, and hypersample from, the fashion-styles of their fathers and grandfathers – and by extension, forms of 1950s black urban masculinities portrayed in Drum – as well as, perhaps inadvertently, earlier forms of black dandyism such as the amaKholwa. In emulating their ‘Afro-elegant’ (Wizman & Lunnetta 2015) predecessors, it could be said that Khumbula are literally “trying to walk in their fathers’ shoes”; to create a form of homage to or commemoration of the ways in which, for them, the suit functioned as a means to represent themselves as embodying the attributes of respectability and refinement. As Harnes Harmese (cited in Wizman & Lunnetta 2015) says: “Khumbula” is the Nguni word for “remember” … I want to remember how it is to [be] an African and loving who I am as an African [sic] … I want people to khumbula that being black is beautiful’. In foregrounding the attributes of the perfect gentleman and playing down the more glammed-up styles of the gangster-hero, they also subtly undermine certain stereotypes associated with urban black masculinity and criminality.

While Khumbula foregrounds the perfect gentleman through overt reference to the suit as a signifier of respectability and refinement, the Sartists take this historical figure into a differently nuanced terrain. Denying any associations between black masculinity and criminality, they use satire to foreground an image of the perfect gentleman that, like Khumbula’s rendition, also subverts stereotypes of black men as inferior, poverty-stricken and unintelligent, albeit in a different way. This is evident in their depiction of themselves as the “Tennis Boys” (Figure 4), a black and white photograph in which they are seated on an Edwardian-style park bench, in what appears to be an urban setting. Their frontal poses and direct gaze into the camera lens is reminiscent of group portraits of colonial tennis players in the Edwardian era.
With their apparently effortless sense of style and relaxed poses, they exude confidence, even nonchalance: one crosses his arms and rests his leg on his thigh with a self-assured look on his face, another displays what appears to be a friendly attitude towards the viewer, while the central figure looks straight into the lens with a slight smile; a tennis racket is propped between his legs as he steadies a tennis ball under his polished shoe. The pristine whites of their pants, shirts, blazers, socks, and V-necked jerseys; wide-brimmed spectacles, sports caps, boater hat and brogues not only gesture towards tennis as a pastime of the “leisured class” in British colonies, but also suggest that they may be Oxbridge graduates, or members of a quintessentially black Ivy League.

In this image, the Sartists hypersample from a range of contemporary and transhistorical sources. They explain that their rendition of themselves as “tennis boys” is inspired
FIGURE Nº 5


Photographer unknown. Courtesy of MAKER.
by Street Etiquette’s preppie *Black Ivy* clothing range, which thumbs its nose at the prestigious, but not necessarily egalitarian American Ivy League universities, and their historical affiliations with “academic prestige”, racialised, class-based and gendered elitism and “old money” (the Sartists cited in Wizman & Lunetta 2015). Through their black varsity chic look, Street Etiquette thus advocates a form of subversive resistance by challenging clichéd representations of African-American black masculinities as gangstas of the hood.

In referencing the *Black Ivy* range, the Sartists also point to the “ivies” – a male subcultural style popular in Soweto during the 1960s and 1970s whose name derives from the exclusive American “Ivy League” image that was transmitted to urban Africans via films and magazines (Glaser 2000:107). In contrast to their counterparts, the “clevers” – originally a township gang of the 1930s – ivies were non-criminals and shied away from violence; they tended to be employed or better-off youths. Whereas the clevers modelled themselves on American gangster and hustler imagery, the “ivy” style was ‘clean and dandyish, even prissy’ (Glaser 2000:108). Strongly influenced by elite American fashion, the ivies saw themselves as classier than the clevers, whereas the clevers, with their urban machismo, generally regarded ivies as “good boys” or “sissies” (Glaser 2000:108).

Another source the Sartists hypersample from is the Edwardian photograph of *Moeti and Lazarus Fume* (1920) (Figure 5) – the first reference of black people wearing tennis clothes in South Africa – included in Santu Mofokeng’s artwork titled *The Black Photo Album/Look at Me:1890-1950*. Although the Sartists’s image of *The Tennis Boys and Moeti and Lazarus Fume* speak of shifting performances of masculinity from a pre-apartheid to a post-apartheid context, both images may be considered as examples of subversive resistance, albeit in different ways. *Moeti and Lazarus Fume* forms part of the collection of family studio portraits of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century South Africans that portray the modern self-representation of urban black African subjects. These images convey a sense of black pride and agency in an era when the South African state archives functioned as instruments of power over black Africans, classifying them according to racial typologies based on pseudoscientific race theories drawn from tenets of social Darwinism. They visualise a different history of the colonial and Edwardian eras by foregrounding a group of subjects who commissioned and posed for their own portraits, thereby taking ownership over their self-representation, visualising themselves as successful, dignified, proud individuals.

Yet, despite this adoption of agency in their self-representation, *Moeti and Lazarus Fume* assume stiff, formal stances; their bodies are both still and ‘still’, as they
stare beyond the picture frame with expressionless faces. It is likely that their rigidly upright positions were confined by the slow film stock of the time, which necessitates that poses and eye focus be held for long periods to avoid blurring, as well as by formalised Victorian and Edwardian studio portraiture conventions. However, their dispositions also suggest a sense of physical and psychological dis-ease, both in front of the camera and in the sports clothes that they wear. Their dis-ease within the picture frame is actual and metaphoric; like the African dandy, it is possible that they attempted to style themselves by using clothing to assert agency over their self-representation and deny the limitations placed on them by their societal context, yet, they appear to remain trapped within the image and the limitations of their lives within the colonial context in which it was taken. In this sense, the image emerges from the private realm to form a community of people linked by a history of oppression.

This sense of dis-ease captured in the colonial image stands in sharp contrast to the ease with which the Sartists’s assume and assert their agency in their revision of the past, and through the subtle form of satire that they employ in “performing” their clothing. Their overt assertion of agency over their self-representation might be read as a form of subversive resistance to their grandparents’ experiences of invisibility or erasure under colonialism. It could also be read as an assertion of themselves into the past from within the present; they claim their history in a Southern and South African context with a sense of ownership and pride. In so doing, as black subjects, they assert a form of creative agency, placing themselves in history, but, crucially, it is from their positions as Jozi-based, Generation Z “third space kids”.

For the Sartists, referencing South Africa’s troubled colonial history is therefore not an unproblematised, nostalgic looking back to a romanticised past, but rather, part of Tulloch’s (2010:276) process of ‘self-telling’: an expounding of autobiographic aspects through visual narratives: as they put it: ‘We want to reference styles before apartheid because there are beautiful stories that are not told … about the black people that lived in those times’ (the Sartists cited in Wizman & Lunetta 2015). As in Khumula’s work, their fashion vignettes are an expression of pride in their heritage; created in homage to their grandparents’ struggles, the Sartists locate and reproduce the beauty and fragility of those communities, and portray their lived experiences in ways that convey a sense of dignity and respect.
Conclusion

Lewis (2014) observes that global contemporary sartorial groups such as Art Comes First and Street Etiquette have ‘mastered the art of protesting with style, using the dandy’s signature tools – clothing, gesture, and wit – to break down limiting identity markers’. This is also applicable to the ways in which Khumbula and the Sartists deploy hypersampling as a means though which to refashion black masculine identities in ways that subtly interfere with, disrupt, transgress, satirise or problematise hetero-normative, stereotypical images of historical and contemporary black masculinities.

Within a South African context, the black dandy can be defined according to a legacy of articulations expressing shifting notions of black masculinity amongst traditional groups such as the amaZulu and amaXhosa, as well as the amaKholwa during the colonial period. Mid-century tropes of the perfect gentleman/gangster-with-a-heart are a continuation of this legacy, which in turn becomes a productive source that Khumbula and the Sartists hypersample from and use as a tool to disrupt hetero-normativity and express new forms of subversive resistance, based on a commemorative return to the past. In redefining themselves in relation to the past, they operate in an infinity wave of past and present that points to an imagined future. Rewinding and fast-forwarding from their positions in the present, working within the urban context of an ever-changing Jozi cityscape, scaffolded by consumerist, marketing and digital technologies, and fed on sound-bytes of apartheid and colonial Southern and South African histories, these young practitioners use hypersampling as a means to articulate expressions of new forms of agency. Fashion-style becomes a signifier for tensions between expressions of personal and collective identities, and the re-fashioning of contemporary black South African masculinities in transition.

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One of the most topical debates in South Africa is the country’s colonial past and specifically, the relevance of its colonial memorials, monuments, and institutions. One such institution is the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG), which in 2010 celebrated the centenary of its Foundation Collection and in 2015, celebrated the centenary of its original Edwin Lutyens-designed building.

JAG’s institutional history cannot be reviewed in the singular – its awe-inspiring foundation building, its stunning exhibition spaces, and vast art collection that it holds begs to be explored on multiple levels. JAGs physical locus, its relevance to the people that reside nearby (and further away – particularly its traditional middle- and upper-class patrons), and those who interact with it on a daily basis within the larger urban space that it occupies – Joubert Park in the CBD of Johannesburg – also provide a complex narrative that touches on many of the contentious issues implicated in the dominant narrative of #ColonialismMustFall rhetoric.

Historically speaking, JAG was the brainchild of the indomitable Florence Phillips, wife of Randlord Lionel Phillips – two leading cultural figures in Johannesburg’s upper circles during the late 1800s to mid-1900s. The couple, according to art historian Jillian Carman (2006:55),1 was determined to use their wealth and social influence “to create an urban environment in which their social and cultural comforts could be accommodated, to provide “the amenities of life in Europe, which are almost entirely missing here” [Johannesburg].” Thelma Gutsche’s No ordinary woman: The life and times of Florence Phillips (1966)² and Carman’s Uplifting the

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colonial philistine: Florence Phillips and the making of the Johannesburg Art Gallery (2006) provide insightful accounts of Florence Phillips’s unrelenting pursuits to ‘uplift the colonial philistines’ by establishing, amongst others, a public art collection and gallery of modern European art in the dusty, yet fast-growing Johannesburg of the early 1900s, which was by then merely 30-years old.

A century later, JAG had accumulated one of Africa’s finest and largest collections of modern international and Southern African art (but not exclusively modern, since it holdings also include artworks and artefacts from the Middle Ages from across the globe). Today, JAG is also the only public art institution in South Africa with a secured and substantial annual acquisition budget secured by a ZAR 6 million donation in 1984 by the Anglo American Centenary Trust (once again a Randlord patronage).
One of the flagship activities of the 2010 celebrations was the publication of *1910-2010: One hundred years of collecting* edited by Carman, featuring eight essays and hundreds of illustrations from JAGs vast holdings. This book, in its first chapters, reflect on the Gallery’s historical collection strategies and activities that were mainly influenced by Hugh Lane, an Anglo-Irish art dealer who, with the patronage of Florence Phillips, was responsible for the curation of the Foundation Collection. The latter chapters of this book touch on the Gallery’s endeavours to become more focused on Southern Africa during the 1980s, and in the 1990s, almost exclusively focused on contemporary post-apartheid South Africa. Yet, the critical addressing of post-colonial issues were essentially cursory notes in most essays.

Five years later, in 2015, JAG celebrated the centenary of the original building (a designated national monument) designed by British architect, Edwin Lutyens. JAG commissioned Tracy Murinik, an independent art writer, curator, editor and filmmaker to edit its second centenary book *Constructure: 100 years of the JAG building and its evolution*. Murinik opted to present a very different and eclectic narrative than what Carman was commissioned to address five years earlier.

*Constructure* is not a book that merely celebrates the aesthetics and architectural merits of a beautiful historical monument, but rather uses the building as an anchor to explore a diversity of ideological constructs. To ensure that the narrative is multilayered, Murinik invited more than 25 contributors to explore the often-contested confluence of history; ideology; art; and cultural, public and urban spaces.

In her introduction, Murinik (2015:11) explains the editorial strategy of the book:

> Before a building exists as a structure, it exists as a series of ideas – a confluence of needs, desires, imaginings, beliefs and intentions expressed by those who commission the project … Embedded in these expressions … are distinguishing traces of who all those individuals are – the ethos of their time period, their identities and identifications – aesthetic, ideological.

This led her to include the neologism, ‘constructure’, in the book’s title to stress these complexities and ‘… to draw attention to the often misconstrued perception of a built space being a simply benign vessel for whatever happens to take place inside it … and where the construction of that space may be read … to include a history of its surrounding context, its patrons and its audiences’ (Murinik 2015:11).
Section one, Historical Overview. © JAG.
This 200-page book consists of four sections: Historical Overview, Selected Exhibitions, New Engagements/Shifting Boundaries, and Changing Visions. It includes 24 essays ranging from long academic discourses on a diversity of intellectual topics to short personal retrospections dealing with selected projects and experiences. It concludes with a transcript of an insightful closed session discussion on the future of JAG. The book is richly illustrated with more than 400 photographs that document how JAG served and interacted with its audiences and how it responded to its ever-changing urban and societal surroundings over the past 10 decades. Constructure starts with the past and concludes with a look at the future.

The first section, Historical Overview, consists of two essays: ‘Lutyens in Joubert Park’ by Jillian Carman and ‘Materialising identity, class and “respectability”: Joubert Park, Johannesburg as a leisure space, c 1890s-1930’ by Louis Grundlingh. This section concludes with an insightful chronology of JAG’s history spanning from 1886-2015.

Carman provides a detailed account of the origins of JAG and the architectural history of the original Lutyens building and how it developed and expanded over a century. The essay alludes to the underlying desires and ‘internationalist’ (and colonial) aspirations of the key players – Florence and Lionel Phillips, other Johannesburg Randlords, the City’s mayor, curator Hugh Lane, and most importantly architect Edwin Lutyens – to drive the development and construction of the art gallery. Collectively, they (but more specifically Lutyens) also envisioned grand plans for JAGs surrounding areas based on the concept of the ‘City Beautiful’ – an international movement of that time that focused on grand urban planning. Murinik (2015:12) states that ‘[t]he implications of these desires and aspirations inform the beginnings of JAG’s story, contextualising its establishment as a part of a colonial project and vision, as well as fulfilling the desires and personal motivations of the various people involved.’

Grundlingh’s following essay describes the history of JAG’s home, Joubert Park, from c 1890s to 1930. It focuses on how the Park became a key leisure site and a ‘significant spatial marker’ of changes to the young Johannesburg’s developing sense of identity, especially in the period when governance shifted from the ZAR [South African Republic] to a British governmental system after the South African War of 1899-1902. Grundlingh (2015:34) traces the impact of this legacy and the steps that the Johannesburg City Council took to ‘create and give material form to Victorian and Edwardian concepts of identity, class and “respectability”, decisions that ultimately shaped the ‘civic and cultural life of class- and racially divided city’. 
FIGURE № 3

Section two, Selected Exhibitions. © JAG.
The second section of Constructure, Selected Exhibitions, starts with a historical list of more than 700 exhibitions hosted by JAG over a century, compiled mainly from the JAG Library’s archives. This vast (yet incomplete) list provides an intriguing narrative subtext of the constantly shifting focus of JAG’s collecting policies, curatorial strategies, as well as shifts in demographic representation of artists, genres and audiences over time. This section features seven essays that critically explore selected seminal exhibitions, mainly form the past 30 years.

Same Mdluli’s (pp 90-93) essay, ‘The Neglected Tradition: Towards a new history of South African art (1930-1988)’, explores the historical significance of this groundbreaking exhibition in 1988, which almost exclusively featured black South African artists hosted by a major South African public art institution – a first of its kind – and opened the doors to exploring political and representational redress at JAG and other public institutions. Other essays in this section of the book are Julia Charlton’s account of the exhibition Outside Inside; Clive Kellner’s ‘The grammar of the exhibition, biography of a building and a phone call’, which speaks to exhibition-making as a self-consciously authorial act – of exhibitions as text; Terry Kurgan and Jo Ractliffe’s ‘Johannesburg Circa Now’, Antoinette Murdoch’s ‘Off the beaten path: women, violence and art’, John Fleetwood’s ‘Urban Life’ and Stephen Hobbs’ ‘Snagging at the joints’.

The third section, New Engagements/Shifting Boundaries, according to Murinik (2015:12)

… looks to JAG’s contemporary strategies and responsibilities of making itself relevant – both in terms of its collections and exhibitions policies, and critically in terms of engaging its physical position in the inner city – in relation to Joubert Park, the area’s daily residents, its audiences (existing, once-existing, and still desired) and its self-definition as a museum and cultural educational institution in post-apartheid South Africa.

This section features eight essays of variable length and depth of discussion. These include: Nontobeko Ntombela’s ‘Curatorial as education: A few notes on the role of education within the context of a museum’, Philippa van Straaten’s ‘JAG’s traditional collection: constructing meaning’, Dorothee Kreuzfeldt and Jo Ractliffe’s ‘Joubert Park project 2000-2001’, Usha Seejarim’s ‘The green fence’, Musha Neluheni’s ‘New engagements – old strategies’, Reshma Chhiba’s ‘Shifting spaces, publics and audiences’, long-time JAG volunteer guide Lorraine Deift’s ‘Lapeng crèche’ and finally, JAG’s librarian, Jo Burger’s essay on ‘JAG Library and archives’.
FIGURE N° 4

Section three, New Engagements/Shifting Boundaries. © JAG.
Murinik (2015:12) states:

… The[se] essays critically consider JAG’s role as a space of education, which … Ntombela … incisively [posits as] … the need for education to be “an active tool towards addressing issues of past imbalances through the museum’s collecting and display strategies”, and for education to be a central facet of curatorial production within the museum context. Pointing out that an institution like JAG “remains a paradox in a place that is fast rejecting its relevance and reasons for existing (whether politically, financially or ideologically”, she asks the question, “how can art collections help us pose questions of new histories and new modalities of display towards better serving its increasingly complex society?”

The last section of Constructure, Changing Visions, deals with the institutional visions of five living JAG Directors/Chief Curators who have lead the institution since the mid-1960s. These are Nel Erasmus, Christopher Till, Rochelle Keene, Clive Kellner and Antoinette Murdoch, as well as texts by selected current and previous members of the Johannesburg Art Gallery Committee, Bongi Dhlomo-Maulao and David Koloane.

Constructure then continues with an edited transcript of a frank closed conversation, Collective Vision, held amongst several members of the Johannesburg arts community who are, or have been, involved with or invested in the practices of JAG over the years. Murinik (2015:186) explains that:

The conversation was held in acknowledgement of the fact that JAG in many ways is, and always has been a contradictory space – built and having evolved in an ideologically contradictory and violent city and country, to mean contradictory things to various inhabitants of the city over the past century – despite many engaged and successful moments in the Gallery, especially over the past two to three decades, that have purposefully challenged those contradictions.

While reviewing this book, I realised that it should not be read or studied in isolation, but rather as a continuation of those publications that preceded it; it makes sense to understand the intricate tapestry and the confluence of critical engagements of complex historical, societal changes and cultural politics that encapsulate JAG’s complex and ‘constructured’ story.
FIGURE Nº 5

Section four, Changing Visions. © JAG.
Today, JAG is the only public art institution in South Africa with a secured annual acquisition budget. This allows JAG to collect new works even though the institution’s spaces are only able to exhibit around 10% of its holdings at any time due to spatial limitations, which is obviously a great contradiction. The collection keeps on growing but ironically, the exhibition and storage spaces are no longer able to effectively accommodate the vast holdings. This also applies to the staffing and upkeep requirements for such a large collection housed in a historical edifice (physically and ideologically), which in recent years have become a great concern to many stakeholders because its locus in Joubert Park and greater Braamfontein is so vastly different from what Florence Phillips envisioned a century ago.

This book provides a resource that critically investigates a complex (yet not totally inclusive – as the editor stated from the outset) narrative that touches on many of the contentious issues implicated in the dominant narrative of #ColonialismMustFall rhetoric and what needs to follow.
In her book, Impossible mourning, Kylie Thomas argues that although HIV/AIDS has been established as a central public discourse in South Africa during the last decade, the experiences of people living with HIV/AIDS remain largely invisible. Moreover, the manifold losses, sorrows and deaths owing to AIDS are publicly unmourned. For Thomas (2014:9), the failure to mourn the ‘1,000 people who die of AIDS in South Africa each day’ testifies to the fact that their lives were ‘as invisible within public memory as their deaths’. As a significant resource to contest such forms, acts and discourses of invisibility, Thomas explores a number of artworks produced by visual artists. Accordingly, the ‘book makes an argument for how visual forms of representation can allow for powerful, evocative and transformative modes of engagement with traumatic experience’ (Thomas 2014:5). An exemplary feature of Thomas’s argument is a discerning, sharp and sensitive awareness of the complexity of visual forms of representation. Thus while the book engages with a number of artworks to explore mourning and trauma, it is equally concerned with how people with HIV/AIDS are represented:

I came to understand that the entry of people living with HIV/AIDS into the realm of representation could, and often does, only serve to compound their desubjectivisation ... [T]his book seeks to show how being named HIV-positive often interpellates a particular kind of subject, one that enters into representation to be unmade as a subject. Over the course of writing this book I have come to see representation itself as a problem, one that is bound both to recognition and loss (Thomas 2014:5).
The focus of Chapter One pertains to the self-portraits made by HIV-positive women with whom Thomas worked from 2001 to 2002 in Khayelitsha just outside Cape Town. These images formed part of a book project and international exhibition. On the one hand, Thomas notes that the global reach of the self-portraits can be regarded as an indication of the success of the project. On the other hand, the project is also critiqued for rendering invisible aspects of the lives and experiences of the women who produced the self-portraits.

The project sought to show the efficacy of anti-retroviral therapy (ART) and hence framed the self-portraits and their accompanying text as positive HIV stories that ‘foreground the hopeful elements of each person’s story’ (Thomas 2014:6). For Thomas (2014:30), the positive framing of the self-portraits can be argued to act as ‘a form of blindness’. To elucidate further, the women’s life narratives are appallingly laden and incessantly punctuated by pain, suffering, abuse and violence and should not be subsumed under ‘an overarching “message of hope”’ (Thomas 2014:18). In this way, the project made the women visible to a global audience but simultaneously made their trauma, suffering and vulnerability to violence invisible. The chapter presents a compelling engagement with the way in which the dominant discourses regarding people living with HIV/AIDS render certain forms of their experiences invisible.

Chapter Two investigates the photographs of Zanele Muholi that depict lesbians who have been subject to corrective rape, as well as the portraits of women who have died of AIDS-related causes. Muholi’s photographs bear witness to the various hate crimes, violence and abuses experienced by lesbians. Thomas contends that Muholi invokes tropes of memorialisation in her photographs to counter the state’s erasure and exclusion of the experiences of lesbian individuals. Thus Thomas (2014:36) traces how a selection of Muholi’s work ‘draws on the conventions of memorial photography in order to secure a place for queer subjects within representation’.

Gideon Mendel, a photojournalist who has been documenting HIV/AIDS in Africa, is the focus in Chapter Three. Of particular interest is how Thomas analyses and explores the changes in Mendel’s photographic practices. Mendel moved away from documentary photography to rather see himself as an activist conceptual artist. Thomas (2014:83) extols Mendel’s work ‘as a visual activist and his experiments with the development of tools for visual advocacy [that] also signals the urgency of his desire to draw attention to the experiences of people living with HIV/AIDS’. 
In Chapter Four, Thomas explores artworks by Diane Victor and Pieter Hugo that relate to HIV/AIDS and mourning. Victor renders her portraits of people living with HIV/AIDS in candle smoke on paper. These portraits are fragile and vulnerable to loss and damage. Consequently, the traits of Victor’s medium are significant ‘for their ability to convey the precariousness of embodiment and of life itself in the time of AIDS’ (Thomas 2014:89). Thomas skilfully explores how Victor’s portraits evoke mourning by providing a ghostly presence of the sitter that is subject to disintegration, erasure and disappearance.

Pieter Hugo’s series of corpses photographed in the Khayelitsha morgue reveals that ‘photography and mourning cannot always be paired’ (Thomas 2014:102). Thomas’s statement is critically focused on investigating and seeking to identify the individuals who are excluded from being bereaved. Hugo’s photographs can circulate as art precisely because the individuals depicted are desubjectivised – ‘What I see in seeing the corpses Hugo presents is not the human but the limits that have been drawn around what constitutes that term’ (Thomas 2014:100). Thus a major reason that impedes the pairing of the photographs with mourning is that they represent non-subjects.

In Chapters Five and Six, the key engagement is concerned with how the difficulties in mourning the losses of AIDS can be understood in relation to the problem of mourning under apartheid (Thomas 2014:5-6). Two accounts of funerals that take place in the same graveyard are juxtaposed in Chapter Five. The first funeral took place in 1985 and was a mass burial of young people killed by police during apartheid. The funeral was a site of communal mourning and can be seen as a practice that helped strengthen social bonds. The second funeral was that of a young person who died of AIDS. In contrast to the public mourning of the first funeral, the second funeral is marked by the isolation of a grieving mother and the muteness of the community in relation to AIDS deaths. Thomas’s (2014:109) enriching analysis of the two funerals is part of a larger argument that ‘there is a fundamental relation between mourning and recognition and that failing to mourn the deaths of those who have died of AIDS is intimately bound to an ethical failure to recognize the value of their lives.’

The photographs and artworks of the murdered body of Steve Biko are discussed in Chapter Six in order to illuminate concerns about the trauma of the past and present. In an intriguing and erudite manner, Thomas (2014:8) affirms ‘that the compulsion to make visible Biko’s corpse is both a sign of our failure to mourn and an injunction to begin the ceaseless work of mourning for that which is irreparable’.
To sum up, Thomas is commended for her exceptional attentiveness to the complexity of visual representations of people living with HIV/AIDS. ‘To image and imagine AIDS’ (Thomas 2014:102) is to foreground how visual representations are enmeshed, entangled and enclosed in the discourses of ‘African AIDS’ – a continent that is marred by suffering, disease and death – that work in conjunction with visual codes to desubjectivise the individuals depicted. In so doing, the people living with HIV/AIDS are stereotyped as a monolithic group of people, devoid of a life beyond an HIV-positive status and thus devoid of personhood.

Instead of seeking to replace the negative images of people living with HIV/AIDS with a positive photographic code or schema for representing HIV/AIDS, Thomas (2014:9) has sought to explore how most of the representations lead to ‘new or intensified forms of invisibility’. As already indicated, it is the invisibility of the experiences of people living with HIV/AIDS that concerns Thomas. The call to focus on the experiences of the individual can be regarded as a tool to counter the dominant discourse of ‘African AIDS’. Succinctly put, it is the experiences of each individual that hold the potential to counter the belief that people living with HIV/AIDS constitute an undifferentiated mass. Susie Linfield (2010:98; original emphasis) resolutely states that:

In thinking about the Holocaust, it is not easy to think of six million corpses; but it is even harder, I would argue, to consider the experience of one young girl in droopy socks walking toward death. This does not mean that the six million are unreal: only that they become unreal when we forget the experiences of the individuals who comprised that terrible number.

Here Linfield reminds us that what is at stake in forgetting about the experiences of the individual who died of AIDS is that the deaths of all others may become unreal. The implications of Linfield’s statement serve not only to resonate with Thomas’s, but also to extol her exceptional work. Moreover, in the context of Linfield’s thesis, Thomas’s call for an expansive recognition and public undertaking to mourn the losses owing to AIDS is imbued with a level of urgency and importance.

Thomas’s book challenges the reader to seek an awareness and understanding of the complex realities, the histories and socio-political contexts that are beyond the frame or border of the visual artwork or photograph of HIV/AIDS. This challenge does not only serve to enrich an analysis and interpretation of the visual representation, but also acts as provocation to awaken the possibility of making visible the experiences of the individual living with HIV/AIDS. The aim of doing so is not to redeem their anguish but rather to grasp or glimpse the possibility of mourning their lives, losses, suffering and death.
REFERENCE

The sixth biannual Nordes (Nordic Design Research) Conference was held 7 to 10 June 2015 at Konstfack in Stockholm, Sweden. The intriguing theme, Design ecologies: challenging anthropocentrism in the design of sustainable futures, along with an impressive keynote line-up, attracted a surprising number of scholars from around the globe.

A call for an ecological perspective is based on the increasing awareness of the astonishing complexity of the natural and artificial environments and our inability to predict the impact of our actions within those environments. The aim of the event was to a large extent to interrogate the paradoxical position of design: simultaneously ‘an emblem of unsustainability … [by] accelerating material throughput’ and an important driver of change towards greater sustainability and wellbeing. This meant grappling with design, as both creative and destructive force, both solution and problem. In questioning the role of design amidst increasing ecological devastation, designers need to position themselves firmly as both critics and creators. However, as became clear throughout the conference, the tension between a mature critical awareness and the creative optimism needed to bring about constructive change can prove difficult to manage.

One of the key conference questions raised was: ‘how do we in design, and beyond, move from the kind of ego-system we seem to be so trapped in towards the kind of eco-system everyone and everything can gain from?’ As a starting point, designers must look towards other disciplines to help them understand as many perspectives as possible. It is thus fitting that the first keynote, Building resilience in the anthropocene, by Line Gordon (Stockholm Resilience Centre) presented an outside
perspective. As an expert in Systems Ecology, with a focus on water management and smallholder agriculture, Gordon presented a brief but insightful overview of our age of ‘great acceleration’, wherein everything is impacted by humans at an exponential pace. Despite the terrifying potential of accelerated destruction, Gordon showed some encouraging examples of resilience, such as the restoration of land in the Sahel desert, through concerted human effort. Gordon presented a set of practical principles for greater ‘resilience’, or a means for coping with the tensions between persistence and change. Gordon’s message was an optimistic one, showing how humans are indeed capable of reforming and restoring ecosystems.

In the poignant second keynote on Fashion ecologies, Kate Fletcher (London College of Fashion), presented her insights into increasing garment longevity, in response to the destructive force of fast fashion. Fletcher suggested that while reducing the ecological footprint per garment is a noble pursuit, this essentially amounts to ‘doing the wrong thing, righter’. Regardless of how sustainable production technologies become, the real problem lies in the vast quantity of fast fashion being consumed and too easily discarded. Since fashion consumption is rooted in the construction of identity and meaning, Fletcher seeks to develop a greater understanding of what people value about their clothing; not just what they wear, but how they wear. She shared various delightful anecdotes of people, encountered during her research, who have developed particularly sentimental attachments to their garments. When people develop such strong connections they would go to great lengths to mend and alter precious pieces. Fletcher proposes that the only real solution to the fashion crisis entails a dramatic shift in consumption attitudes, but this needs to be supported by design action. As long as the fashion system operates with a mechanistic emphasis on greater efficiency and profit, garments will remain devoid of meaning. There are no easy solutions, but Fletcher believes it starts with attaching a different set of values to what people wear.

The third keynote, by Alison J Clarke (University of Applied Arts Vienna), titled Buckminster Fuller’s reindeer abattoir and other designs for the real world, presented a fascinating glimpse into R Buckminster Fuller and Victor Papanek’s involvement in Nordic design projects during the Cold War era. By exposing some of the shifting perceptions surrounding their involvement over a period of time, Clarke illustrated how we have developed de-contextualised, oversimplified personas of these larger-than-life figures. Clarke’s presentation clearly highlighted the need for more theoretically rigorous investigations of prominent figures in design history, especially those we draw from so generously in informing current discourse.

Mugendi M’Rithaa (Cape Peninsula University of Technology), the fourth keynote
speaker, approached the question of design ecologies from a uniquely African perspective. M’Rithaa started by correcting some misconceptions regarding Africa’s social, political, and environmental situation. By structuring his presentation along a series of African proverbs, he illustrated how there is much to learn from traditional African values. For instance, as a response to the widespread loss of community, which goes hand-in-hand with anti-ecological thinking, he quoted the proverb: ‘If you want to run fast, run alone; if you want to run far, run together’. Throughout his presentation, M’Rithaa showed how African material culture is inherently ‘close to the earth’, making Africa ‘sustainable by default’. However, in light of rapid industrial development, the biggest future challenge is to keep Africa sustainable, by design.

John Wood (Goldsmiths, University of London) presented the enlightening and highly entertaining keynote, Designing beyond names, codes, forms and signs. He, like others, started off by reiterating the fundamentally problematic design culture that merely produces ‘new shapes’ or ‘gadgets’, reinforcing destructive industries and lifestyles. Through ‘metadesign’ practices, Wood believes design practice can be redesigned to initiate a complete paradigm shift. A major part of metadesign, and the focus of his presentation, is (re)languaging, the conscious adaptation of metaphors which structure language and thought. In such a way, (re)languaging provides opportunities to reframe ideas, initiate attitude change and by extension, affect human behaviour. Design discourse is rooted primarily in the ‘mechanistic’ language of classical science, with an emphasis on predicting and controlling outcomes. Wood thus suggested that, through metadesign, we can shift our attitudes linguistically towards a more mature acknowledgement of the complexity and unpredictability of design actions within larger systems. As an example, Wood referred to the current conception of the manicured and chemically treated lawn as aesthetic status symbol, which is of course highly problematic from an ecological perspective. He suggested that we could, through deliberate discursive practice, adjust our aesthetic preferences and return to value the original meaning of a lawn, as an area for diverse communal use. As a parting thought, Wood suggests that through language, we can make the unthinkable thinkable, and from there, even make the unthinkable possible.

In addition to the keynotes, full and exploratory papers, the conference included a one-day doctoral consortium, an exhibition of creative work, and numerous workshops. All activities, including meals, were carefully planned extensions of the theme, providing additional opportunities for discussion and critical reflection. For instance, at Jenny Markstedt’s ‘Meat and talk’ lunch event, conference goers were issued a red, yellow, or green receipt based on the ecological footprint of their meal.
selections. Also, the carefully considered conference identity and visual application, for which Konstfack students were responsible, received an enthusiastic applause. An organic-geometric stencil typeface, signifying natural-artificial symbiosis, was applied in a variety of hand-printed conference products. The clever re-using of materials, such as cut-out pieces of the laser-cut signage, minimised waste and echoed the conference theme of sustainability. However, Cameron Tonkinwise offered a counter-perspective via a tweet: ‘Applause for presentation of handmade-ness of conference materials #nordes2015, because ... ?’

Tonkinwise (School of Design, Carnegie Mellon University) further perfected his role as sceptic in presenting the final keynote and reflections on the conference. His talk, Design for cosmopolitan localism in the era of xenophobia was a powerfully discomforting, meta-critique of the conference format and theme. He pointed out how, despite decades of sustainable design, sustainability is at its lowest, and that we are all complicit as ‘climate-change deniers’. Travelling from all over the world to attend a conference, without producing tangible solutions, displays a severe lack of urgency with regard to the anthropocene crisis. Tonkinwise further takes issue with the ‘enemy in our own house’; when design researchers treat conference papers like ‘minimum viable products’. His major point of critique was thus how ‘innovation in academic conference formats is pathetic, given what a special condition it is’. This last statement was shared through a number of tweets, indicating a broader consensus that the extraordinarily privileged circumstances of the conference should be matched with a higher level of accountability.

After his critique of the conference format, Tonkinwise proceeded to highlight how the most pressing problems in the socio-political ecosystem – human inequality, anti-immigration and xenophobia – have remained unaddressed. While developed nations create increasingly comfortable and aesthetic material environments, the ethical questions surrounding the systematic exclusion of others remain largely unanswered. Tonkinwise’s admonishments came as a surprise, especially in light of the overwhelming praise the conference received throughout. However, his willingness to present this unpopular angle, was perceived by some as a self-sacrifice for the sake of deeper critical reflection; as a necessary anti-climax of sorts. This sobering talk aptly illustrated the need to deflate the design ego, if we are to work with greater urgency towards a more sustainable future.
Editorial policy and guidelines

*Image & Text* has been published annually since 1992 (primarily then as a journal for design) and was accredited by the South African Department of Higher Education and Training in 1997. Since 2011, it has been repositioned as a multi- and interdisciplinary journal that orbits around the nexus of visual culture. The aim of the journal is to draw perspectives from a broad field of interests and subjects: visual anthropology, material culture, visual arts, design culture, visualising sciences and technologies, art history, philosophy, fashion, media and film studies, architecture, literary studies, tourism studies, new media and cyber theory, and so forth. The grounding provided by visual culture studies as a comparative and enabling premise for all these approaches, subjects, interests, fields and theories is located in the global South, not only geographically but also critically.

The editors invite papers that address or intersect with the visual from any of the fields mentioned above. One of the aims is to showcase new and young academic voices, as well as more established voices.

- Authors may wish to discuss the scope or applicability of their articles prior to submission and are encouraged to contact the Editor in this regard.

- All manuscripts received are first read by members of the editorial committee, who may recommend changes before submitting the manuscript for peer review, or reject manuscripts outright that are deemed inappropriate or not up to standard.

- Manuscripts are sent for refereeing to at least two subject specialists in a double blind refereeing process. The referees are chosen from other tertiary institutions or fields of expertise as appropriate. The comments and recommendations of the referees are conveyed to authors as necessary, and they may re-submit manuscripts once changes, if necessary, have been effected. If articles are rejected by both referees, authors are not encouraged to re-submit. Authors may provide the names of one or more potential referees for consideration by the editorial board but this does not guarantee that they will be used. All authors are subject to the same rigorous review process.

- Only material deemed to be of a suitably high standard is published.

- Articles may be submitted in English or in Afrikaans.

Contributors should please ensure that their submissions satisfy the following editorial requirements:

- A declaration must be submitted wherein the author states that the article submitted is based on original research. The author must furthermore stipulate that the article has not been submitted elsewhere for consideration or has not already been published elsewhere under another title (an example is available on the journal website: www.imageandtext.up.ac.za.)
all articles must have a cover sheet that provides the following details:

- title of the article
- name of author/s
- affiliations and contact details of all author/s
- designation of author/s and date of submission

articles must be presented in the following sequence:

- title of article
- name of author/s
- 200 word abstract and six keywords
- main text with footnotes
- references
- images and captions

Manuscripts must be typed in A4 format in Times New Roman or Arial 11-point font size, 1.5 line spacing with generous left and right margins, left aligned only.

All pages must be numbered and the Harvard Reference System must be used throughout (an example is available on the journal website: www.imageandtext.up.ac.za).

Length of articles must be approximately 5000 – 7000 words (including references).

Please use footnotes.

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Benita de Robillard is lecturer in the Wits School of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand where she teaches courses informed by interdisciplinary critical and cultural theories. Her current research projects explore the nomadic meshings of sexualities, socialities and politics in the post-apartheid milieu. These explorations are located within a critical system constituted through the assemblage of feminist, queer and cripqueer theories with critical animal studies and somatechnics. For recent publications please refer to https://wits.academia.edu/BenitaDeRobillard.

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Ashraf Jamal teaches film studies at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and has taught at the universities of the Eastern Mediterranean, Malaya, Stellenbosch, Natal, Rhodes and Cape Town. He studied in the UK, Canada, USA, and South Africa. Jamal combines world literature and cinema, media studies and visual culture, ethnography, and the performing arts under the rubric of cultural and postcolonial studies. Jamal is the co-author of Art in South Africa: the future present (David Philip 1997) and the author of Predicaments of culture in South Africa (Unisa-Brill 2005). His literary-critical study Littorally speaking is forthcoming with Rodopi (2012). He is also author of a novel, Love themes for the wilderness (Random House-Kwela 1997), a novella, A million years ago in the nineties (Brevitas 2003), and a collection of short fiction, The shades (Brevitas 2002), winner of the Sanlam Prize for the title story.
Beschara Karam is an Associate Professor in Communication Science at the University of South Africa. After specialising in philosophy at the then University of Natal, she went to work for Anant Singh at his film production company, Videovision. Later, she was asked to co-write the White Paper on Film for the newly established government in 1996, which started her off on a new passion and academic path: film. She wrote her PhD on William Kentridge’s Drawings for Projection series, using traumatology and memory studies to frame her critique of his animations. She currently serves on the Advisory Board of the Journal of African Security, Peace, and Tolerance Studies. Beschara has published widely on Kentridge; film (production, criticism, theory); representation; censorship; and gender, and has presented extensively, both nationally and internationally, on film; traumatology; transmedia; video games; post-colonialism; political communication; and New Queer Theory. Her latest project looks to the marrying of Gilles Deleuze, Slajov Žižek and South African film; with a second project focusing on problematising post-feminism and film.

Ruth Lipschitz has lectured in History of Art at the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS), the University of South Africa (UNISA), and Stellenbosch University, and was a visiting tutor in Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London. Recently awarded a PhD in Philosophy (2014 Goldsmiths, University of London), her postdoctoral research engages deconstruction and psychoanalysis in order to pursue the intersectional operations of race, sex, gender and species in post-apartheid South African visual culture.

Mugendi M’Rithaa is an industrial designer, educator and researcher who lectures at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, where he is an Associate Professor. He holds postgraduate qualifications in Industrial Design, Higher Education, and Universal Design. He is passionate about various expressions of socially (responsive and) responsible design, including Participatory Design; Universal Design; and Design for Sustainability. He has a special interest in design for development on the African continent and is associated with a number of international networks focusing on design within industrially developing/majority world contexts. He is currently serving a second term on the executive board of the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design.
Martine van der Walt Ehlers is a lecturer in Media Studies at the Department of Communication Science, University of South Africa. She completed her BA Languages (Journalism), BA (Hons) Visual Studies (*cum laude*) and MA Visual Studies at the University of Pretoria. Previously, she has worked as contract lecturer in the Department of Visual Arts, University of Pretoria and researcher at the Institute for Gender Studies, University of South Africa. Her research interests include feminism, particularly postfeminism, and the representation of gender in various forms of popular culture.
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› Steven Dubin

Steven Dubin is Professor of Arts Administration and Research Affiliate of the Institute of African Studies at Columbia University in New York. He is the author of Bureaucratizing the Muse (1987); Arresting Images (1992, cited as a Notable Book of the Year by The New York Times); Displays of power: memory and amnesia in the American museum (1999); Mounting Queen Victoria: curating social change (2009) and Spearheading debate: culture wars and uneasy truces (2012). Professor Dubin’s awards include the Fulbright-Hays Research Fellowship to South Africa, Fulbright Senior Specialist award to Iceland, Chancellor’s Award/Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities, The Lady Davis Visiting Professorship at Hebrew University (Jerusalem), and writing residencies at Bellagio (Italy), The Ragdale Foundation (Illinois), and...
The Ucross Foundation (Wyoming). He has written and lectured widely on censorship, controversial art, museums, and popular culture, and is a frequent contributor to publications such as *Art in America* and *Art South Africa*. He has been working and travelling throughout Southern Africa for the past eleven years. Most recently, he has curated an exhibition of portraits produced by a ‘non-white’ photo studio in Pietermaritzburg during the 1970s and 1980s: “Developing characters: contending cultures & creative commerce in a South African photography studio” was shown in Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg and Cape Town during 2013 and 2014.

Paul Duncum

Paul Duncum is Professor of Art Education, School of Art and Design, University of Illinois, Champaign Urbana, USA. A former graphic designer and art and design high school teacher, he obtained his doctorate from The Flinders University of South Australia and taught at several Australian universities prior to his present position. He is widely published in art education journals in the areas of his research and teaching, which include children’s drawings, images of children, popular culture, visual culture and art education. His work is principally informed by Cultural Studies. He is a life member of Art Education, Australia and a member of the Council for Policy Studies in Art Education. He is the editor of the 2006 NAEA publication *Visual culture in the art class: case studies*, and a leading advocate of the visual culture movement within art education.

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Ian Glenn is Emeritus Professor and former Director of the Centre for Film and Media Studies at the University of Cape Town. After studies in English at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal and York in England, he did an MA and PhD at the University of Pennsylvania, with a dissertation on mystical experience in the poetry of TS Eliot and Wallace Stevens. He joined UCT as a lecturer in English and was head of English before moving to the new Centre for Film and Media Studies. He has published widely on African and South African literature and on South African media. He has a particular interest in the French traveller and ornithologist Francois Le Vaillant and curated “The King’s Map” in the Iziko South African Museum in 2012-13. This exhibition had as centre-piece a lavishly illustrated and never before exhibited map based on Le Vaillant’s travels that was produced for Louis XVI. Glenn is currently working on a history of South African wildlife documentaries with colleagues from the Universities of Oxford and the Witwatersrand.

Amy Kirschke


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Annette Kuhn is Emeritus Professor in Film Studies at Queen Mary University of London and a longstanding co-editor of the journal *Screen*. She has published widely in the areas of cultural theory, visual culture, film history and cultural memory, with authored books including *Family secrets: acts of memory and imagination* (1995 and 2002); *An everyday magic: cinema and cultural memory* (2002); *Ratcatcher* (2008); and (with Guy Westwell) *The Oxford Dictionary of Film Studies* (2012). Her most recent book is *Little Madnesses: Winnicott, Transitional Phenomena and Cultural Experience* (2013).
Jacques Lange

Jacques Lange is partner and creative director at Bluprint Design, publisher and editor of DESIGN> and www.designmagazine.co, and part-time lecturer in Information Design and Visual Communication at the University of Pretoria. Throughout his career Jacques has actively engaged in design practice, profession management, education, research, design promotion, policy advocacy and design journalism. His professional output has earned him many industry awards and his work has been featured in numerous international publications and exhibitions. He is an experienced industry juror, widely published author and speaker on design issues internationally. He is a past president of the International Council of Communication Design (Icograda, 2007-2009), founding co-chair of the International Design Alliance (IDA, 2005-2007), and advisor to various governmental institutions and NGOs. His research interests include the creative economy, talent mobility and creative diaspora, design policy, profession management, and contemporary design from lesser-known regions. Jacques is also one of the founders of Image & Text.

Jenni Lauwrens

Jenni Lauwrens teaches in the Visual Studies division in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Pretoria. She teaches from first year to Masters level students visual culture studies, research methodologies and key texts in visual culture. Jenni has published in local and international publications on the relationship between visual culture studies and art history. Her research interests include the aims and protocols of visual culture studies and art history, art education, art historiography, spectatorship, embodiment, phenomenology, neuro-art history, neuro-aesthetics and practices of seeing. Her PhD deals with the historical and theoretical implications of the viewer’s particular forms of embodiment.

Victor Margolin

Victor Margolin is Professor Emeritus of Design History at the University of Illinois, Chicago. He is a founding editor and now co-editor of the academic design journal Design Issues. Professor Margolin has published widely on diverse design topics and lectured at conferences, universities, and art schools in many parts of the world. Books that he has written, edited, or co-edited include Propaganda: the art of persuasion, WW II, The struggle for utopia: Rodchenko, Lissitzky, Moholy-Nagy, 1917-1936, Design discourse, Discovering design, The idea of design, The politics of the artificial: essays on design and design studies, and Culture is everywhere: the Museum of Corn-temporary Art.
The first two of three volumes of his World History of Design will be published in 2015 by Bloomsbury in London.

Nicholas Mirzoeff

Nicholas Mirzoeff is a Professor of Media, Culture and Communication at New York University, New York. After more than a decade of writing about and teaching visual culture, most recently at SUNY Stonybrook, Mirzoeff decided to join the Department of Art and Art Professions in order to create a cross-departmental and cross-disciplinary visual culture program. The new program in visual culture also signals the primacy of the visual image, he believes, which affects our lives to a greater and greater extent each day. Mirzoeff's recent book, *Watching Babylon: The war in Iraq and global visual culture*, enlarges upon this intriguing notion. His first book, *Silent poetry: deafness, sign and visual culture in modern France*, was about sign language and its relationship to painting. Mirzoeff is also the author of *An introduction to visual culture*.

George Pfruender

Georges Pfruender is a Swiss national who has spent a significant amount of time living abroad in Africa, Asia, America and the Middle East. He received his Master of Fine Arts from San Francisco Art Institute in 1991. While continuing to produce his own body of work, for the past decade he had also been Director of the Fine Arts University Ecole Cantonale d'Art du Valais, Switzerland, President of the Swiss National Board of Art and Design. Vice President of the Swiss UNESCO Commission, and since 2009, Head of the School of Arts at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As artist and researcher he has participated in conferences, panels and residency programs in Europe, USA, South Africa, Venezuela, and Taiwan, and is presently involved in projects engaging artists in migrant communities of the inner city of Johannesburg. At the Wits School of Arts he has been responsible for the coordination of arts programs at undergraduate and postgraduate levels (MFA, PhD) concerning the disciplines of music, drama, fine arts, film and TV, digital arts and cultural theories.
Annette Pritchard

Annette Pritchard is Professor of Critical Tourism Studies and Director of the Welsh Centre for Tourism Research at Cardiff Metropolitan University. Annette has a long-standing interest in the relationships between places, representations and identities and she has published 15 books and over 40 papers on these connectivities. Much of her work is driven by a commitment to transformative research and she is one of the originators of the hopeful tourism agenda and co-chair of the biannual Critical Tourism Studies Conference Series. Annette was formerly Convenor of the *Leisure Studies* editorial board and her current editorial responsibilities include serving as joint Research Notes Editor of the *Annals of Tourism Research*. She is also an advisory board member of the Copenhagen Business School’s Creative Industries Research Centre and a regular invited speaker at events and conferences.

Marian Sauthoff

Marian Sauthoff retired as Executive Dean of the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture at the University of Johannesburg in 2013. Prior to this, she was professor and head of the Department of Visual Arts and also chaired the School of Arts at the University of Pretoria. She completed her master’s (cum laude) and doctoral degrees through the University of Pretoria. Prof Sauthoff is the founding editor of the accredited journal *Image & Text: A Journal for Design*, which she edited from 1992 to 2010. She has also served on the editorial board and as guest editor of a number of international journals. She has published extensively in her field of expertise and regularly acts as a peer referee for articles and conference papers. She has served as a member of advisory boards to industry and government and as an adjudicator for national and international design awards. Her career includes design consultancy and a period as a senior researcher at the Chamber of Mines.

Annie van den Oever

Annie van den Oever is Extraordinary Professor for Film and Visual Media at the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Free State, South Africa. She is also director of the Film Archive and director of the Master in Film Studies at the Department of Arts, Culture and Media, Faculty of Arts, University of Groningen, The Netherlands. She is an editor of several academic journals and book series in her field, among them: board member of *Film and Media*, *Amsterdam University Press* (since 2003); series editor of *The key debates: mutations and appropriations in European film studies*, with Ian Christie (Birkbeck College, London), and Dominique Chateau (Paris I, Sorbonne).
Panthéon); chief editor of the new educational books series for Film and Media studies (since 2011), and Editor-in-Chief of the European Journal for Media Studies NECSus (since 2011). Her last two books are *Ostrannenie* and *Sensitizing the viewers*, both published at Amsterdam University Press.