

BECOMING OTHERWISE:
Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in
a Small Town

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this is my own original work in concept and execution, and that I have not, in entirety or in part, submitted the work to this, or any other university, for obtaining any degree or qualification.

Rike Sitas

February 2014

DEDICATION

...the 'why' arises and everything begins in that weariness tinged with amazement...
all depends upon a breaking free, a leap and then a question... (Albert Camus)

This thesis is dedicated to Zia and Luca Sitas because you remind me that other
worlds are not only necessary, but also possible.

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ABSTRACT

The past few decades have seen a ‘cultural turn’ in urban planning, and public art has become an important component within urban design strategies. Accordingly, public art is most commonly encountered in the urban literature as commissioned public sculptures. Simultaneously operating are a range of critical, subversive, and experimental practices that interact with the public space of cities in a myriad of ways. Although these other types of public art projects may have been engaged in the fields of Fine Art and Cultural Studies, this has been predominantly in the global North and they have yet to enter Urban Studies in the global South in any comprehensive way.

Through an analysis of three examples from the Visual Arts Network South Africa’s ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’, this thesis argues that experimental, inclusionary and less object-oriented forms of public art offers useful lessons for Urban Studies. The research presented in this thesis involved a qualitative study of: *The Domino Effect* which followed a participatory process to develop a domino tournament in the Western Cape town of Hermon; *Living within History*, a performative collage project which explored the local museum archive in the town of Dundee in KwaZulu-Natal; and *Dlala Indima* which was a graffiti-led Hip-hop project in the rural township of Phakamisa in the Eastern Cape. Each involved affective engagements with the vastly unequal contexts typical of South African public spaces.

Although there is an increasing recognition that affect plays an important role in understanding and designing the urban, it is still largely assumed that citizenship is enacted according to rational criteria. The public art of ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ demonstrated that affect impacts on how people can access complex spatial issues and perform citizenship. Furthermore, as part of a larger epistemological project of ‘southerning’ urban theory, this thesis therefore argues that intersecting conceptual threads from three bodies of literature: public space, public art and public pedagogy, is important. More specifically, it demonstrates that public art can harness an affective rationality that may foster alternative ways of knowing and acting in/on the urban, thereby offering public art as a unique pedagogy for exploring and deepening cityness.

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ACRONYMS

ANT	Actor-Network Theory
BASA	Business Arts South Africa
CAP	Community Arts Project
CBO	Community-based Organisation
DAC	Department of Arts and Culture
DAG	Durban Art Gallery
FIFA	Federation Internationale de Football Association
GIPCA	Gordon Institute of Performing and Creative Arts
JAG	Johannesburg Art Gallery
JPP	Joubert Park Project
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
KZNSA	KwaZulu-Natal Society of the Arts
NAC	National Arts Council
NGO	Non-governmental Association
NLDTF	National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund
PARF	Public Art Regulatory Framework
SAHA	South African History Archive
SFMOMA	San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
UCT	University of Cape Town
UJ	University of Johannesburg
VANSA	Visual Arts Network South Africa
WITS	Witwatersrand University

1. INTRODUCTION: Becoming Otherwise

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

test: would Vladimir and Estragon be willing to wait here?

test: would a ball kicked along the road roll backwards?

test: would a bunch of flowers stay alive all the way home?

test: would Charles Baudelaire walk these pavements?

test: how long would a goldfish survive?

test: would Frida Kahlo find enough colours?

test: would the carrots grow straight?

test: would Nawal el Saadawi be able to relax?

test: would a cellist be heard?

test: would Elvis be happy here? would Fela?

(Press, 2010, p. 62)

South African public spaces are still highly contested, where different interests are in constant negotiation. The racial legacy of apartheid, the ever-present spatiality of patriarchy, and disputed capitalist logics still fundamentally shape the design of, access to, and use of public spaces. Although public spaces are fraught, they are also hotbeds of creativity, and a ‘cultural turn’ in planning has recognized the importance of fostering vibrant public spaces for civic life. Karen Press’ poem ‘Under Construction’ (epigram) was written as part of a series of poetic challenges to urban planners. Her ‘tests’ pose a set of questions that frame planning as involving both technical and creative operations, suggesting that the functioning of a city is as important as its affective impact. The assumption is that a ‘good’ city is one that not only meets the basic needs of people, but moreover create the kinds of spaces where environmental and cultural life thrives: cities that are colourful, inspiring and alive as much as they are accessible, efficient and safe. The reality of urban planning is often

much more banal, and typically foregrounds the physical environment where streetlights, traffic lights, waste management and pavements are approached with the most functional and cost effective design strategies. This is especially apparent in South Africa where planners face the daunting task of addressing the spatial legacy of apartheid, which has resulted in vast inequality of provision that remains racialised along colonial and apartheid-determined class lines. Even the most seemingly prosaic urban interventions, such as the quality of light emitted by a streetlight, have affective repercussions (Sennett, 1992). It is these sensory consequences that Press (2010) in her poem, and Thrift (2004, p. 57) refers to when he asks: if cities ‘can be seen as roiling maelstroms of affect... where... particular affects such as fear, happiness and joy are continually on the boil’ why have the affective dimensions of city life and urbanity been largely neglected?

One assumption that has emerged in planning discourse is that ‘beautiful’¹ cities are more conducive to livability, and over the past few decades, public art has become an integral part of urban planning as a means to address this, especially in the ‘North’². This trend of instrumentalising art for urban development has been underpinned by the impulse to build more creative cities, largely as a means for social and economic development (Florida, 2002; Landry, 2007). Although the inclination for more artistic and affective urban spaces has been rationalised through a desire for greater well-being, the practice of culture-led development has been widely critiqued as yet another form of exclusionary development, foregrounding the interests of urban elites (Miles, 2005; Peck, 2005; Zukin, 2010). Despite hesitation about the creative cities discourse, and escalating apprehension about the role of the arts in planning, this approach to public art prevails and is being replicated in many places in the South. Whereas the concern about artist-led gentrification may be valid, the reality is much messier, as art has always operated with and against the status quo.

In addition, public art does not only refer to the primarily sculptural objects often referred to within arts and planning discourse. Simultaneously operating are a range of experimental practices that interact with the public space of cities in myriad ways. Graffiti can be found all over the world, and ‘new genre’ public art projects that foreground participatory processes have gained greater currency across the globe

¹ Notions of beauty are contested (Berger, 1972; Bourdieu, 1993)

² I am using ‘North’ and ‘South’ as heuristic devices to distinguish between the global North usually associated with the G8, and the global South, but recognise these terms are complex and contested. Quotation marks will not be included henceforth.

since the 1960s (Kaye, 2000; Kwon, 2004; Suderburg, 2000). Much of the critical reflection on these kinds of projects live in catalogues and conference proceedings, and although these other types of public art projects may have been engaged in the fields of Fine Art and Cultural Studies, they have yet to enter Urban Studies, especially in the South, in any comprehensive way (Minty, 2006; Pinder, 2005).

Whilst it is widely agreed in Urban Studies that affective dimensions shape cities, the field is still grappling with how to engage, research and act within an affective rationality (Amin & Thrift, 2013; Crang, 2003; Lefebvre, 1991; Sennett, 1992; Thrift, 2008). Although Amin and Thrift (2013) acknowledge that affect is not only an experiential phenomenon, and argues that it is a type of spatial thinking, urban and political issues are still largely dealt with as rational as opposed to being embroiled in a complex web of sometimes irrational emotions (Sitas & Pieterse, 2013). Artists, on the other hand, more readily accept, and are able to operate beyond the rational and the real. Public artists tend to have a specific interest in how art can grapple with, often complex, dynamics in and of public space. Artists, however, sometimes lack contextual knowledge and political savvy, and whereas Freire (1970), is popularly invoked by artists, the engagement is often quite shallow. Public pedagogy *a la* Freire (1970) and Biesta (2006, 2012) grapple with power and learning in interesting ways, but make similar assumptions to artists about space: that it is a vessel for social interaction as opposed to being ‘sentient in its own right’ as Amin (2015, p. 1) argues. This thesis argues that drawing together conceptual threads from the public space, public art and public pedagogy literatures helps to address a shortfall within Urban Studies to adequately engage affect. Furthermore, as Pinder (2008, p. 233) maintains: ‘attending more closely to existing and potential cross currents and collaborative ventures between urban theory, empirical research and artistic and activist practice [can] deepen and widen the analytical and political edge of these interventions’. It is this ‘analytical and political edge’ of affective Urban Studies, and its epistemological, methodological and pedagogical implications that offer a useful lens within a Southern urban studies agenda (Minty, 2006; Pieterse, 2008; Simone, 2010).

While it has not been systematically recorded or adequately critically engaged, public art in South Africa has a relatively long history; a range of organisations, institutions and producers; significant investment in comparison to other African countries; and a discourse that is globally connected. In order to explore a ‘critical

edge' of public art, the Visual Arts Network South Africa (VANSA) started a series of long-term exploratory public art experiments aimed at pushing the boundaries of the practice, the first of which was 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town' (VANSA, 2012). This thesis focuses on three projects that happened as part of 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town': The *Domino Effect* followed a participatory process to develop a domino tournament in the Western Cape town of Hermon; *Living within History* was a performative project in the town of Dundee in KwaZulu-Natal; and *Dlala Indima* was a graffiti project in the rural township of Phakamisa in the Eastern Cape.

Although this research explores 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town', it is also a culmination of ten years of my own public art praxis as an artist and researcher, and founder and director of the public art/architecture organization, dala. Since its inception in 2008, dala has initiated and hosted a range of projects and partnerships with: cultural organisations locally, regionally and internationally; civil society and social movements; public entities; a number of private and national galleries; schools and tertiary institutions; often drawing different types of organisations together in one project. In addition to working as a practitioner, I have written critical pieces for a number of catalogues and art publications; presented reflections on public art at a number of local and international conferences; acted as an advisor on a number of projects, including VANSA's 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town'; hosted a range of public art symposia; and used public art projects as a teaching tool for research methods at a postgraduate level. Since commencing with my doctoral studies, *Third Text* have published an article stemming from my and Edgar Pieterse's research (Sitas & Pieterse, 2013), and another article is pending publication in 2015 as part of a special issue in the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. My work at the African Centre for Cities, has involved actively locating this research in Southern urban theory. This puts me in a unique position at the border of art and cultural, and urban research to explore how a pedagogy of public art can contribute to Urban Studies.

This thesis is part of a bigger epistemological project of speaking back to the urban literature from the South, and is therefore conceptually dense as it tries to tease out a relevant language for Southern art and urban theory. By drawing on the artistic, activist and affective dimensions at the intersection of public space, public art and public pedagogy, this thesis makes an epistemological challenge to ways of knowing

the urban. Because art can operate beyond the rational, the functional and social, it can open up other ways of accessing and expressing the politics of public space. Alternative ways of knowing the urban have methodological implications and therefore this research argues for affective research methods and tools as another way of producing knowledge about the urban. These are the contributions this research makes to Urban Studies, while at the same time contributing to theorizing about public art and pedagogy. Public art, offers transgressive and transitional tactics for acting upon and within hugely unequal power relations as they manifest in public space. In this way, the thesis, in addition to adding to limited empirical record from the South, offers an important contribution to a communal pedagogical project within and beyond the academy.

In the following sections of the introduction I provide an overview of public art in South Africa leading up to the development of ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’; then situate the study within the ‘southern turn’ in Urban Studies, and finally introduce the ‘otherwising’ potential of an affective Urban Studies.

1.1. Public Art in South Africa

Creative interventions in cities vary from institutionalised public commissions in the name of heritage and urban renewal, to the more fragmented and illegal splatterings of spray cans and stencils. In response to this, the notion of urban space as canvas is being interrogated and legitimised across the globe. Thus, urban art initiatives are becoming increasingly prevalent the world over. Despite the burgeoning industry, research into public art in the South is still limited. Furthermore, different disciplines tend to address public art in contradictory ways, and much of the documentation and critical reflection in South Africa lives in catalogues and people’s memories as opposed to being subject to rigorous academic engagement.

‘Public art’ still tends to be an all-encompassing term and is usually associated with public sculpture. The reality is that public art encompasses a variety of forms of creativity; from visual art, architecture, design, performance and urban planning, including: memorials, monuments, public sculptures, murals, graffiti, street art,

community art projects, performative interventions; and a range of festivals. Minty (2006, p. 438) suggests:

Despite the vibrancy in public art practice, the challenges in South Africa are many: the poverty of debate around public art, the lack of diverse and skilled voices, a poor level of discourse and writing, uneven coverage by the media, poor marketing, a lack of methodologies specific to the local context and conservative views on sculpture. The importance of documentation of processes and products, the recording of audience reactions to work, a sustained approach to training and publishing are all necessary to grow a vibrant public art.

Since Minty wrote this in 2006, some things have changed. Public art practice has grown, and a sophisticated and globally connected public discourse within creative fields has emerged. This has however remained largely within public arts circles, but critical sentiments are bubbling to the surface more frequently as cities begin to implement formal commissioning and regulatory processes, and discontent regarding the still often conservative approach to public art enters public debate (Badsha, 2014; V. Pillay, 2014; Young, 2014). But Minty's challenge still stands. Regardless of a relatively long history, and a multi-faceted public arts community, there is a dearth of documentation, critical reflection and academic engagement within art disciplines, let alone in Urban Studies.

While many graffiti artists claim that the first moments of public art can be found in Stone Age rock art³, public art is usually associated with the many colonial and apartheid monuments dotted around the country in big cities and small towns alike. The most common forms are the large-scale plinthed effigies of prominent figures, such as Queen Victoria or Jan Smuts (Figure 1) or iconic architectural shrines such as the Voortrekker Monument⁴. Although regime change in many places in the world has resulted in the toppling of prominent monuments, these ideological markers continue to inhabit public space in South Africa⁵.

³ This has emerged in countless interviews with graffiti artists over the years and is one of the narratives used in opposing punitive anti-graffiti by-laws.

⁴ The Voortrekker Monument is a commemorative monument in the form of a massive granite mausoleum just outside of Pretoria. It was built to memorialise the voortrekkers (pioneers) who left the then Cape Colony to settle in the South African interior. The monument served as a foundation myth for Afrikaners and became an important heritage symbol for the apartheid state.

⁵ Monumentalism is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.2.



Figure 1: Sitas (2009). Luthuli Square, Durban [photographs]



Figure 2: a picture of politics (2012). 'Free Mandela' [photograph]



Figure 3: CMP (1994). Mama Africa (Durban) [documentation of mural]



Figure 4: Kentridge, W and Marks, G. 2009. Fire Walker [sculpture]⁶

⁶ Image source: <http://handsomethings.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/slide12.jpg>

Simultaneously, as monuments to apartheid order were being erected, so too were subversive public forms of expression emerging through anti-apartheid graffiti, community arts projects, public performances and protest theatre. The Hip-hop movement that emerged in South Africa, particularly in Cape Town, produced a range of politicized anti-apartheid murals, but less artistic political messages were also scribed onto public space, such as ‘Free Mandela’⁷ graffiti (Figure 2). In an absence of safe and well-maintained public parks during apartheid, groups of artists and community organisers redesigned People’s Parks, that functioned both as playgrounds for children, and as sites for political engagement when gathering in public space was heavily policed⁸.

Muralism became an important public art strategy during the transition in the 1990s. Organisations such as the Community Mural Project (CMP) worked on participatory murals, addressing issues of diversity, reconciliation and transformation. Like the ‘Free Mandela’ graffiti, many of these murals have been removed, such as Mama Africa (Figure 3), because as Marschall (2008) asserts, they do not comply with the ‘world class’ cities image South African cities aspire to.

In many ways, art and struggle were inextricably linked during apartheid but post-1994 the arts sector, including public art, changed somewhat (Makhubu & Simbao, 2013). New monuments started emerging: using the same colonial bronze form, prominent counter-colonial or apartheid figures such as King Dinizulu were erected, facing off with the Louis Botha in Durban⁹. Additionally, new types of monuments have emerged in the form of public sculptures. Kentridge and Marx’s iconic ‘Fire Walker’ erected in 2009 is one such example (Figure 4). The artwork operates as a counter-monument celebrating ordinary people by depicting a mielie cooker¹⁰, yet its installation involved the eviction of traders. This resulted in

⁷ Graffiti is discussed in further detail in Chapter 4.3. A note to accompany Figure 2 is that this iconic piece of anti-apartheid struggle heritage was recently removed by mistake by Cape Town’s ‘graffiti squad’, to much public uproar about the sanctity of cultural and political heritage. The graffiti squad has been tasked to document and remove all illegal graffiti in Cape Town.

⁸ As with much of the public art at the time, there is no readily available documentation of the People’s Parks. My knowledge of the parks is through conversations with people like Steven Sack, and others involved in their development. Sack was also involved with Junction Avenue Theatre Company, and later the Johannesburg Development Agency.

⁹ King Dinizulu was the first Zulu king to be recognised by the South African government, and Louis Botha was instrumental in his release from British incarceration. Here the municipality attempted to create an historical dialogue between the first president and the Zulu King of the time.

¹⁰ Mielies (corn on the cob) are cooked in big fire drums and sold on street corners all over South Africa

apprehension about the purpose of public sculptures, particularly when in relation to regeneration strategies (Matsipa, 2014). Another concern about the public sculpture industry is artists still tend to be predominantly White¹¹ men. Art and urban renewal, as in many other parts of the world, are inextricably linked in South Africa. Decorative mosaic abounds. But not all public art and urban regeneration commissions are exclusive. The Trinity Sessions' work in Diepsloot is an example of a people-centric culture-led development project (Figure 6).

'Infecting the City' is one example of a range of performative festivals that have been initiated in public space. Temporary performative public art festivals have become common the world over, often with the intention of disrupting the banality of everyday life, and creating new art audiences by bringing 'high' culture to the streets¹² (Figure 5). Festivals tend to be temporary moments that manifest in public space. There have also been a range of organisations that focus on longer-term engagements, often implementing inclusionary practices, and interdisciplinary participants as a means to explore more serious spatial issues. Organisations such as: the Joubert Park Project (JPP) and Keleketla (Johannesburg), Public Eye and Gugulective (Cape Town), Siwela Sonke and dala (Durban) have been at the forefront of these practices. These organisations have been networked with a wide range of public art practitioners locally, regionally and internationally since the late 1990s, and in many ways have been at the cutting edge of public art practice not only in Africa but globally as well.

Corporate public art abounds in the form of advertising, and new kinds of brand communications blur the boundaries between art and advertising, where art images and installations double as brand contact points. Even markers of markers of popular culture, such as graffiti, are increasingly being employed as marketing strategies (Serazio, 2010). In South Africa there has been a number of public-private partnerships such as mobile provider Cell C and the City of Johannesburg that resulted in artist Mary Sibande's series entitled *Long live the dead queen*. Large billboards were installed all over Johannesburg as a challenge to perceptions of Black women (Figure 7).

¹¹ Although South Africa's racial classifications are contested constructs, they still bear social, economic, political and spatial importance and therefore the thesis uses the racial classifications as they are used in public discourse (White, Black, Coloured, Indian)

¹² Public performance is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.2.



Figure 5: Infecting the City (2014) Documentation of performances [photographs]

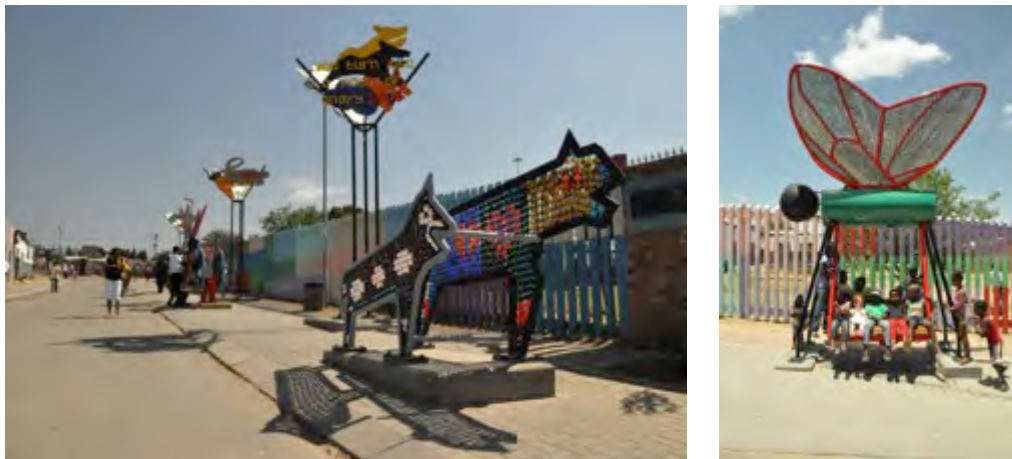


Figure 6: Trinity Sessions (2011). Diepsloot [photographs]



Figure 7: Botha (2011) Mary Sibande's Long live the dead queen [photograph]

This demonstrates that in comparison to other countries on the African continent, South Africa has considerable investment in public art. In addition to private sponsorship, the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF), the National Arts Council (NAC), Business Arts South Africa (BASA) and the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) have made funds available for public art. The Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) pioneered large-scale public commissions as part of inner city development plans, attaching a percent for public art programme akin to the public arts policies found in many cities in the United Kingdom. A similar programme was rolled out in Port Elizabeth. There are also a range of funders situated in the North that have been particularly interested in supporting public art in South Africa, such as the Goethe-Institut (Germany); Alliance-Francais (France); Arts Collaboratory (Netherlands), Pro Helvetia (Switzerland) and to a smaller extent, the British Council (UK).

Because of the diversity of public arts practice, this thesis adopts a definition of public art as

not simply art placed outside... (it) is art which has at its goal a desire to engage with its audiences and to create spaces – whether material, virtual, or imagined – within which people can identify themselves, perhaps by creating a renewed reflection on community, on the uses of public spaces or on our behaviour within them (Sharp, Pollock, & Paddison, 2005, p. 14)

According to Pinder (2008, p. 731), these are practices that

are critical and politicized in relation to dominant power relations and their spatial constitution, that are involved in but frequently disrupt everyday urban life, that make use of artistic and creative means to question and explore social problems and conflicts without necessarily prescribing solutions, and that resist the processes through which urban spaces are currently produced in the interests of capital and the state as they seek out and encourage more democratic alternatives.

In 2009 one of the founding members of the JPP, Joseph Gaylard, became the Director of VANSAs. This transition saw public art, as Sharp et al (2005) and Pinder (2005) describe above, enter as a prominent feature on VANSAs's agenda as a means to explore transformation in the arts and culture sector. 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town' was the first in a series of public art explorations. It was remarkable for two reasons. Firstly, it was locally funded, produced and implemented and happened on a national scale. Secondly, unlike most other projects

that tend to be short-term and almost always occur in the major urban centres, this was implemented in small towns and involved a substantial residency period. Selected artists spent three months researching, developing and initiating inclusionary and participatory processes to tap into existing knowledge and practice to address context-specific socio-economic, spatial and cultural divides through creative experiments (VANSA, 2012).

Pinder (2005), in attempting to locate the relevance of public art for Urban Studies, calls projects such as these ‘arts of urban exploration’. For Pinder (2008), there are important pedagogical lessons for Urban Studies in ventures such as ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ as ‘[i]n the process such artist activists shift the emphasis away from art objects and towards situations and processes so that the city becomes ‘a laboratory for dramatic experimentation’. This thesis is particularly interested in the epistemological, methodological and pedagogical implications Pinder’s (2008) ‘dramatic experimentation’ of public art may have for thinking about public space. And moreover, articulating affective Urban Studies within a ‘southerning’ of the predominantly Northern urban canon. It is therefore important to turn to the Southern lens that is emerging.

1.2.Southern becoming: cities in the making

Despite the recent impulse to brand cities with particular homogenising identities, such as being *the* ‘creative’, ‘cultural’, ‘sustainable’, or ‘financial’ capital of a particular region (Landry, 2007); cities will always defy simplistic classification because they are continually being made and remade; being pushed and pulled in a complex web of relations between the everywhere and the everyday. Although cities are unequal the world over, the level of inequalities are more visible in the South where the vast difference between being rich and poor is more apparent. Understanding the power dynamics that regulate, curtail, enable, stifle and liberate urban life has been at the forefront of Urban Studies, regardless of competing epistemological perspectives.

The ecological approach typical of the Chicago School tasked urban sociology with the empirical challenge of describing the structural relationship between the social and environmental in order to demonstrate how ‘symbolic interactionism’

shaped society (Mead, 1967). Whereas a neo-classical approach foregrounded the economy (Stigler, 1941), structuralists were more preoccupied with the political economy, locating discussions about power in relation to capital (Harvey, 2006). Realist and feminist critiques challenged these structuralist approaches, arguing that there is no singular hegemonic approach to understanding, and feminists in particular argued that gender was conspicuously missing these approaches (Massey, 1994; Rose, 1993). Postmodernists argued that post-Fordist society was markedly different, and therefore required a radical rethinking (Foucault, 1980). Weberian institutional approaches looked to the role organisations play in mediating power (Weber, 1958). Though institutional critiques focus on particular organisations, systemic analysis returned to the philosophical traditions of the Chicago school, acknowledging the complexity of systems (Sassen, 2011).

Within, against and alongside these broader traditions, Southern theorists have been trying to make sense of the chaotic cities of the majority world, questioning the Northern canon's value epistemologically. This Southerning emerges explicitly in Connell's (2007) *Southern Theory*, and Comaroff and Comaroff's (2012) *Theory from the South*; but also in Ong's unraveling of neoliberalism in China; and Roy's challenge to homogenising 'planetary urbanism' amongst many others captured in Parnell & Oldfield's (eds) (2014) *Routledge Handbook on Cities of the Global South*.

Pieterse (2008, p. 1) cautions that Southern scholarship tends to be 'divided between those who take an apocalyptic view and those who display an irrepressible optimism'. Pieterse's (2010; 2008) dwelling only on the dire is most explicitly seen in Mike Davis' (2007) *Planet of Slums* which locates the future of cities in devastating slums where he describes a miserable set of insurmountable conditions with scant possibility for change. The limitation of such an approach is that it negates alternative kinds of agency and resistance that exist in everyday negotiations of the city. The bleak situations people have found themselves in have also led to new forms of informal social, spatial and economic innovation and entrepreneurship. Although these processes should not be romanticized, they cannot be ignored.

For Simone (2010, p. 333)

[i]f we pay attention only to the misery and not to the often complex forms of deliberation, calculation, and engagement through which residents try to do more

than simply register the factualness of bare existence, do we not inevitably make these conditions worse?.

Livelihoods are networked in diverse and flexible ways as the formal and informal, the monetized and social intersect on an everyday basis (2011b). According to Roy (2011, p. 223), '[w]riting against apocalyptic and dystopian narratives of the slum, subaltern urbanism provides accounts of the slum as a terrain of habitation, livelihood, self-organization and politics'. For Bayat (1997, p. 57), this politics is marked by the everyday struggle of the urban poor eking out a living.

The type of struggles I describe here may best be characterised as the 'quiet encroachment of the ordinary' – a silent, patient, protracted, and pervasive advancement of ordinary people on the propertied and powerful in order to survive hardships and better their lives. They are marked by quiet, atomised and prolonged mobilisation with episodic collective action – an open and fleeting struggle without clear leadership, ideology or structured organisation, one which makes significant gains for the actors, eventually placing them as a counterpoint *vis-a-vis* the state.

Bayat is critiquing the tendency to banish the urban poor into marginality and victimhood, highlighting everyday encroachments as political moments of struggle against a repressive elite. Whereas Bayat's 'quiet encroachment' is useful in rethinking the plight of the urban poor as active agents as opposed to passive victims of capitalism, binarising ordinary people and those in power may not be that useful either. The reality is that state institutions are not necessarily intentionally trying to crush the majority of urban dwellers (as the majority of urban dwellers in the world are poor). Institutions have their own logics, internal struggles and external pressures, which curtail their ability to address urban issues swiftly and efficiently, and ultimately, may not have the power to solve the problems of urban injustice expected of them, despite this being the conventional mandate of the state.

Yet the focus on agency remains important. In a context where the state is unable to provide equitable economic and social provisions, people have to make a plan. Simone (2008, p. 69) refers to these arrangements as a kind of human infrastructure:

These conjunctions become an infrastructure – a platform providing for and reproducing life in the city... an experience of regularity capable of anchoring livelihoods of residents and their transactions with one another is consolidated precisely because of residents' reciprocal efforts are radically open, flexible, and

provisional. In other words, a specific economy of perception and collaborative practice is constituted through the capacity of individual actors to circulate across and become familiar with a broad range of spatial, residential, economic and transactional positions.

Although thinking of people as infrastructure is somewhat offensive in its metaphorical reductivity, Simone's challenge to understanding how people survive (and sometimes thrive) through these networked positions poses an interesting empirical challenge. He asks 'how researchers, policymakers, and urban activists can practice ways of seeing and engaging urban spaces that are characterized simultaneously by regularity and provisionality' (Simone, 2008, p. 69). In order to understand and intervene in meaningful ways, recognising these daily interrelations and intersections is essential.

It is also this everydayness that Simone is attempting to engage when making sense of cityness in the South. For Simone (2010, p. 3), cityness, is an ongoing negotiation, marked by a hustle for survival on the periphery. It is something messy, though not necessarily disorderly, but something that is constituted on a daily basis by those circulating within and between cities. Simone challenges the normative assumption of informality as disorganised and therefore in need of ordering, and asserts that what is seen as chaotic is more often than not, based on complex and organised yet flexible, systems of exchange, and coming and going.

This coming and going traverses various scales and at different paces: across neighbourhoods and continents; on and underground, across water, through the air, through payphones and text messages and myriad social media that have impacted on the way people communicate and organise. So pervasive is this movement, it has triggered a debate about where the city ends. Although practically bounded within municipalities, with post and telephone codes, there has been an increasing sentiment that the city, or the notion of the urban does not end at a line on a map. According to Amin & Thrift (2002, p. 1)

[t]he city is everywhere and in everything. If the urbanized world now is a chain of metropolitan areas connected by places/corridors of communication (airports and airways, stations and railways, parking lots and motorways, teleports and information highways), then what is not the urban?

In this thinking, even if life may be socially, spatially and materially different outside of the urban, traces of urbanity and links to the urban are ever-present: economically through migrant labour and paying remittances to family elsewhere; and culturally in the beats and rhymes of Hip-hop that can be heard emanating from the pockets and mouths of youth in every corner of the globe. Brenner (2013, p. 91) asks

[u]nder these conditions, the field of urban theory, as inherited from Wirth, Castells, and other major twentieth-century urbanists, is in a state of disarray. If the urban can no longer be understood as a particular kind of place — that is, as a discreet, distinctive, and relatively bounded type of settlement in which specific kinds of social relations obtain — then what could possibly justify the existence of an intellectual field devoted to its investigation?

Despite his challenge to the field of Urban Studies, Brenner goes on to explain the conditions under which urban scholarship can maintain relevance. Brenner's argument tends to be Northern-centric, not taking into account rural conditions in the South, and the reality that urbanisation in the South is still happening at a rapid rate. As cities are very much still in a process of making and becoming, especially in the South, the discussion on whether Urban Studies is relevant or not is less interesting than exploring ways of Southerning the literature through an affective lens.

In order to nuance emerging scholarship, Pieterse (2012) identifies four fields of enquiry: developmentist articulations of southern urbanisms; everyday urbanisms; vitalist ontologies revolving around relationality; and ecological urbanisms. Implicit in many of the discussions is how these different ontological positions articulate how cities are in the making, or 'becoming'.

The notion of becoming has found growing currency across a range of disciplines, where cities, spaces, politics and people are imagined as in a constant process of being in the making. It is making sense of the emergent city that is beginning to permeate Southern scholarship (Simone, 2010). Of interest to this research, as hinted in the title, is how this becoming is being harnessed for becoming something else. In this case I use the word 'otherwise' for four interconnected reasons: firstly, it suggests that things are not alright and need to change; secondly, coupled with 'becoming' it suggests that there are processes in the making that can enable this change; thirdly, 'otherwise' can imply the troubling or transgressive role

of becoming¹³; and finally, other-wise can imply becoming wise about the ‘other’. This ‘other’ can refer to people, but also to other ways of knowing. In a context where formal political processes are faltering, creative engagements in and of public spaces may offer affective alternatives for becoming otherwise that have epistemological, methodological and pedagogical implications for Urban Studies.

1.3. Structure of this thesis

The thesis is structured as follows. *Chapter Two: Literature Review* locates the study within existing literature at the intersection of public space, public art and public pedagogy, before arguing for an affective Urban Studies that transgresses all three. *Chapter Three: Researching Affectivity for Urban Studies* situates this qualitative study within broader trends of researching art and the urban and introduces the case of ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons’ in more detail. *Chapter Four: ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’* provides an account of each of the projects, firstly by locating them within their art practice; secondly by describing the process and products; and finally drawing out some project-specific reflections. *Chapter Five: Trespassing, Transgression and Transitional Tactics for a Pedagogy of Public Art*, by looking across all three projects, returns to the idea of an affective Urban Studies, to argue how public art can offer new ways of knowing, studying and acting within the field of Urban Studies.

¹³ This use of otherwise is usually associated with children when they are being uncooperative.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: Towards an Affective Urban Studies

This chapter situates the study in the context of the conceptual threads emerging out of the three bodies of literature. *Romancing the Agora* explores the ways in which public space has been imagined: by looking at the ‘relational turn’ in understanding space and power dynamics (Amin & Thrift, 2002; Amin, 2008; Brenner, Madden, & Wachsmuth, 2011; Castells, 2011; Farias, 2011; Harvey, 2012; Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 1994; McFarlane, 2011a; Merrifield, 2006); by unpacking the notion of the everyday that has come to permeate urban literature (Amin & Thrift, 2002; Bayat, 1997; de Certeau, 1984; Lefebvre, 1991, 2004; Simone, 2008, 2010); and by exploring how these inform the idea of the commons and the right to the city (Hardin, 1968; Harvey, 2012; Lessig, 2001; Maclellan & Talpalaru, 2009; Mitchell, 1990; Ortega, 2009; Ostrom, 1990; Zukin, 2006). Ultimately in challenging the romantic notion of public space as merely a vessel for ‘civicness’ this chapter argues for understanding the political potential for affective eventfulness (Amin & Thrift, 2002; Amin, 2008).

Art and Public Interaction starts by looking ‘inside-out and outside in’ in order to unpack the spatial turn in art, as artists increasingly challenged the ‘white cube of the gallery’ (Demos, 2003; Kaye, 2000; Kwon, 2004; Suderburg, 2000). It goes on to explore ‘working with(in)’ and how alongside the ‘spatial turn’ came a ‘social’ or ‘participatory turn’ in art practice as artists began engaging more explicitly with situated social issues (Bishop, 2012; Bourriaud, 2002; Foster, 1996; Kester, 2004; Kwon, 2004; Lacy, 1995, 2008; M. Miles, 1997; Minty, 2006; Sharp et al., 2005). As the social benefits of art were recognized, these were instrumentalised in a ‘cultural turn’ in planning (Bell & Jayne, 2001; Florida, 2002; Landry, 2007; Miles, 2005; Moulaert, Demuynck, & Nussbaumer, 2004; Peck, 2005). Finally, this chapter explores the political tensions and contradictions between art, activism and aesthetics (Benjamin, 1969; Bishop, 2012; Bourdieu, 1989; Kershaw, 1999; Makhubu & Simbao, 2013; M. Miles, 2009).

Public Art Praxis as Affective Urban Pedagogy explores how art and politics are coalescing around the urban, and what the pedagogical implications for public art projects may have for Urban Studies. It starts by revisiting Freire's idealism in the context of public pedagogy (Biesta, 2006, 2012; Freire, 1970; Sandlin, Schultc, & Burdick, 2010), before exploring the implications for recasting democracy and citizenship affectively (Amin & Thrift, 2002; Holston, 2009; Ong, 2006; Stevenson, 2003; Thrift, 2004, 2008). It goes on to spatialise the discussion by looking at the implications this has for knowing public space and the urban (Ellsworth, 2005; McFarlane, 2011b). Finally it argues for how trespassing (Amin & Thrift, 2002; Boal, 1979) and transgression (hooks, 1994; Kershaw, 1999) in public art practice can be useful tactics for creating transitional spaces of public becoming (McFarlane, 2011b; Winnicott, 1989).

Affective Urban Studies draws out how looking across these three bodies of literature pushes the boundaries of each discipline in important ways. When drawn together, the literature makes an argument for affective Urban Studies that is: underpinned by thoughtful spatialised knowledge that recognizes the sentience of public space (Amin, 2015); that can transcend the real and the rational through creative experimentation that is politically progressive; that is grounded in a pedagogical project of addressing unequal power relations in knowledge and action. This praxis poses a unique way of knowing, studying and acting upon and within the urban through affective engagement.

2.1. Romancing the Agora

The romantic notion of the agora as the public meeting space of democracy has captured the imagination of thinkers for centuries. The idea of the freedom of public space has underpinned a great many deliberations on what it means to have a vibrant public life in cities. It is this mythical imagining that still informs the design of malls, underpins the policy developed for public parks, and draws the imagination of the public artist attempting to reanimate defunct spaces in the city (M. Miles, 1997; Minty, 2006; Sharp et al., 2005).

One of the essential debates around the notion of public space is what makes space public in the first place? A seemingly straightforward definition is that public

space is any ‘social space’ that is ‘open and accessible to people’ (Wikipedia). This kind of definition usually stipulates that all government owned spaces that are open to the public are public space; this includes outdoor spaces such as beaches, streets and parks; but also public buildings such as libraries and museums. Although this may technically be correct, this kind of definition does not account for: the reality of accessibility; the impact of surveillance and policing of public spaces; or include the range of ‘pseudo-public spaces’ that have emerged as popular social spaces, such as malls (Edwards, 2003; Goss, 1993); transient spaces, such as airports, hotel rooms (Augé, 1995) or trains (LaBelle, 2010) or Foucault’s (1984) ‘heteropic spaces’.

As Jurgen Habermas (1991) has noted, the word public is burdened with a “syndrome of meanings” (p. 2). Accessibility, ownership, functionality, recognition—these are all frames of usage for public which often overlap... But who constitutes the public as opposed to a public? Furthermore, any sense of the word public is necessarily defined over and against definitions of private. There is no public without the private citizens who constitute it. Where are the boundaries that separate the public sphere from the private sphere, public space from private space? (Roberts & Steiner, 2010, p. 21)

Drawing on Habermas’ (1962) ‘public sphere’ that provides an important site for struggle, where people are free to critically discuss power structures, these debates keep returning to the utopian notion of civicism where ‘civitas and demos’ prevail as the yard of measure (Amin, 2015). Hannah Arendt differentiates between public space and the public sphere; and the relationship between action, freedom and plurality:

For Arendt this is not so much a question of physical location as that it is about a particular quality of human togetherness which she characterises as ‘being together in the manner of speech and action’. In such terms the construction of public sphere can be understood as an ongoing process of ‘becoming public’. Becoming public is necessarily connected with the condition of plurality which, I connect with the idea of a ‘citizenship of strangers (Biesta, 2012: 684).

Publicness is therefore measured against social interaction, and the ability of people to practice formal and deviant political acts. This somewhat aspatial perspective has been increasingly challenged as thinkers reassert the relational importance of the interaction between people, spaces and things (Amin & Thrift, 2002; Amin, 2008, 2015; Lefebvre, 1991).

In order to explore the conception of public space, this chapter starts firstly, by situating the quandary of public space within Urban Studies by looking at the

‘relational turn’ that challenged structural approaches to defining space and power dynamics. Secondly, it explores the notion of the everyday that has come to permeate the literature. Finally, it unpacks how this has informed the notion of the commons and the right to the city.

2.1.1. The relational turn in Urban Studies

From a structuralist perspective, Lefebvre, Castells, Harvey and Massey have had a profound impact on the way public space has been understood, especially in Anglophone scholarship¹⁴. Ultimately, for these Marxist geographers, power is inextricably linked to capital, but the approach of each to spatiality is slightly different, each having a unique avenue through which rights and responsibilities in and of public space have been argued.

Lefebvre (1991), writing in response to the massive changes in everyday life and public space he had witnessed in Paris, asserts that space is not a vessel for ‘things’, but is rather actively produced: ‘no longer a passive surface’ (Merrifield, 2006, p. 107), space ‘becomes reinterpreted not as a dead, inert thing or object but as organic and alive: space has a pulse, and it palpitates, flows, and collides with other spaces’ (Merrifield, 2006, p. 105). In order to understand how space is produced and reproduced, Lefebvre (1991) offers his ‘spatial triad’ as a heuristic device, arguing that too much emphasis had been placed on ‘representations of space’ as opposed to ‘representational space’ or space as a lived practice.

Castells however, feels Lefebvre may have fallen for the same fetishisation of space that he had warned others about. Castells reasserts the agency of capital as primary, where space is the territory where capitalism plays out. Castell’s approach unpacks power relations less from an everyday perspective of particular urban spaces, but rather from a global perspective where power and agency is enabled by technology. Although Castells’ thinking underpins much contemporary social

¹⁴ Lefebvre was Harvey and Castells’ predecessor, but his seminal text *The Production of Space*, although written in 1974, was only translated into English in 1991 after thinkers like Harvey and Castells had given Lefebvre currency in their own work. Lefebvre is still more popular in Anglo-American scholarship than in France. Harvey and Castells were contemporaries: Harvey based in the United Kingdom and Castells between Spain, France and for most of his academic life, in the United States.

movements theory, Harvey has a more explicit approach to understanding the revolutionary potential of public spaces in cities.

For Harvey cities ‘are built for the circulation of capital – whether that capital is human (the workforce), commodity (goods and information) or abstract finance (credit for buying property and creating new construction)’ (Zukin, 2006). Inspired by Lefebvre’s thinking on space being socially produced, Harvey’s approach locates the ‘power of capital to make and remake urban space’ as central (Zukin, 2006). Because of this ‘the major axes of repression and liberation coexist in cities, for this is where the core of modern economies lies’ (Zukin, 2006).

Massey (1994) is concerned with Castells’ (and others’) tendency to see space as passive and time as active. Massey’s assertion of the concept of space-time underpins her analysis of the specificities of place. Massey explained that just as space is not static, neither is place. Just as Marxists believe capital is a process as opposed to a thing, so too are places. Places are therefore not bounded entities or enclosures, but are rather the product of a set of social relations.

Although Massey’s critique adds a more relational approach to power than Castells and Harvey may ascribe, the emphasis is still first and foremost on human interaction. For Amin (2008, p. 20) ‘interaction is not a sufficient condition for public culture’. He maintains that

the dynamics of mingling with strangers in urban public space are far from predictable when it comes to questions of collective inculcation, mediated as they are by sharp differences in social experience, expectations and conduct. This is precisely why even the most imaginative attempts to engineer social interaction in public space, from experiments with street theatre and neighbourhoods with front porches, to multicultural festivals and slow food celebrations, are normatively ambivalent... and that sociality in urban public space is not a sufficient condition for civic and political citizenship. Accordingly, it is too heroic a leap to assume that making a city’s public spaces more vibrant and inclusive will improve urban democracy (Amin, 2008, p. 7).

In some ways, Lefebvre’s humanist perspective is possibly what is holding back rebalancing his spatial triad, by virtue of neglecting the role the non-human plays in the way public space is constructed. It is this concern that has underpinned the ‘relational turn’ that has emerged in human geography over the past decade. In this relational thinking,

places, for example, are best thought of not so much as enduring sites but as moments of encounter, not so much as 'presents', fixed in space and time, but as variable events; twists and fluxes of interrelation (Amin & Thrift, 2002, p. 30).

In order to understand this interrelation, instead of focusing primarily on human interaction, it is important to see how 'human dynamics in public space are centrally influenced by the entanglement and circulation of human and non-human bodies' (Amin, 2008, p. 5). Amin asserts Lefebvre's conceived space not as a vessel for action, but an actant in its own right. Drawing on actor-network theorists such as Latour (2007), the focus is less on structure and agency, and more on the elaborate networks between people and things. Challenging the modernist binaries of 'nature' and 'culture' actor-network theory (ANT) is a 'sociology of association'; a 'sensibility' rather than a theory (Johnston, Watts, Gregory, Pratt, & Whatmore, 2009, p. 6). According to Amin and Thrift (2002, p. 145)

its focus on networks transcends the dichotomy of micro- and macrolevel analysis that characterises social research, insisting on an approach which neither distinguishes structure and agency, nor differentiates local and global. Further, it provides an account of social life which incorporates non-human elements as *actants*, on the grounds that they can be just as important as human actants

ANT foregrounds

(1) *the constitutive role of non-humans* in the fabric of social life... [and restores]... agency to non-humans as long as it is appreciated that (2) *agency is distributed*, which is to say that it is a relational effect that is the outcome of the ASSEMBLAGE of all sorts of social and material bits and pieces (Johnston et al., 2009, p. 6).

Assemblage thinking emerged out of Deleuze and Guattari's (1983, 1987) use of the term 'agencement' which was translated into 'assemblage' by Massumi¹⁵ (1992). Deleuze and Guattari explore a post-structuralist view on capitalism, in an attempt to move beyond thinking of cities as vessels for human action in relation to capital.

¹⁵ who may not have thought carefully enough about the connotations of the word in the art world. Assemblage in art and compositional theory refers to the postmodern pastiche of object and text. Epistemologically it is limiting and the metaphor does not match what assemblage thinkers are actually talking about.

Assemblage—whether as an idea, an analytic, a descriptive lens or an orientation—is increasingly used in social science research, generally to connote indeterminacy, emergence, becoming, processuality, turbulence and the sociomateriality of phenomena. In short, it is an attempt to describe relationalities of composition—relationalities of near/ far and social/material. Rather than focusing on cities as resultant formations, assemblage thinking is interested in emergence and process, and in multiple temporalities and possibilities (McFarlane, 2011a, p. 206).

McFarlane (2011a, p. 221) ultimately sees assemblage as ‘an orientation, a concept and an imaginary’ that offers a far more nuanced approach to understanding and acting upon inequality in cities. For Farias (2011, p. 372), assemblage offers a new kind of participatory inquiry:

The politics of urban assemblages is thus attached to new forms of collective experimentation and learning in which multiple forms of knowledge are brought together in new ways...[that]... involves a symmetrization of knowledge positions between experts and laypersons, the redefinition of their identities, valuation criteria and languages, and a revalorization of the figure of the public intellectual (Callon et al., 2009).

Brenner et al (2011, p. 237) critiques assemblage thinking for what he sees as an inability to negotiate capitalism adequately, and he maintains, that ‘[e]ven though the urban process has taken on new forms in its planetary mode... it remains a fundamentally capitalist urban process’. There is a concern that assemblage thinking may err on the side of relativity rendering agency and power unfathomable, and diluting the importance of still arguably important dimensions linked to things like race, class and gender. According to Jacobs (2012, p. 412)

[w]ithin urban geography, relationality is interpreted and put into action in quite different ways. Indeed, there are urban geographies making claims to relational thinking that are radically incompatible, and live not in relation to each other but in parallel universes.

Despite these seemingly incompatible perspectives, the potential for using relational approaches is most relevant for this research in looking at the relationship between public space and the everyday. Many of the approaches to understanding cities and public space have taken a broader, macro approach like in the case of Harvey and Castells, where the focus is on global power relations or networks and relations. But there has also been a parallel tradition of trying to make sense of everyday life in all its banality.

2.1.2. The everyday

Benjamin, drawing on the relationship between culture and everyday life, focuses on grasping ‘the city as a place of intermingling and improvisation, resulting from its porosity to the past as well as varied spatial influences’ (Amin & Thrift, 2002, p. 10). Benjamin’s public spaces are fluid and capable of refashioning themselves within social and historical contexts that include the interrelation of people and the physical environment. Benjamin, like many others has been fascinated by the walking scale of the city, and maintains that through walking, one bears witness to the porous ways in which city life is made and remade.

de Certeau is equally, if not more fascinated with walking in the city, and explores the role of the flaneur as the epitome of practicing the everyday, where

the ordinary practitioners of the city live “down below”, below the threshold at which visibility begin. They walk – an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, *Wandersmanner*, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban “text” they write without being able to read it (de Certeau, 1984, p. 93).

de Certeau distinguishes between the Cartesian strategies of urban planning and the tactics of ordinary practice of people. The ‘planned’ or built city is in dialectical relationship with the ordinary and everyday practices where the everyday actions of walking become subversive ‘speech acts’ or ‘enunciations’ that challenge the assumed dominance of the built environment that

create within the planned city a “metaphorical” or mobile city, like the one Kadinsky dreamed of: “a great city built according to the rules of architecture and then suddenly shaken by a force that defies all calculation” (de Certeau, 1984, p. 110).

Ultimately what this emerging tradition was trying to do is make sense of the relational networks of power shaping, and being shaped by the ordinary lives of people. Amin and Thrift (2002, p. 7) harness this thinking into three metaphors that shape urban life:

The first is *transitivity*, which marks the spatial and temporal openness of the city. The second captures the city as a place of manifold *rhythms*, forged through daily encounters and multiple experiences of time and space. The third notes the city as

footprints: imprints from the past, the daily tracks of movement across and the links beyond the city.

For Amin and Thrift (2002, pp. 10–15), ‘transitivity encapsulates the city as everyday process, mobilized by flesh and stone in interaction’. Although they draw on the importance of the ‘gifted meditative walker’ or ‘wondering/wandering’ as critical practice, they also caution that the *flanerie* alone is insufficient. Walking is racialised and gendered and does not necessarily take into consideration different rhythms that shape a city: ‘[t]he rhythms of the city are the coordinates through which inhabitants and visitors frame and order the urban experience’. Drawing on Lefebvre’s (2004) thinking about rhythmanalysis, Amin and Thrift make an argument for ‘receptivity’ to both the rhythms and the things (such as streetlights) and processes that shape the rhythms. Inextricably linked are ‘footprints of simultaneity’ that script the city. These include historical monuments, maps, street names and most literally, the kinds of art present.

The city, lastly, is scripted also in a literal sense, through its urban art forms. These include not only events in galleries and other closed spaces, but also open spaces used for artistic expression (concerts in parks, rap in the streets, ethnic festivals and parades) and the urban fabric itself used as canvass (murals, graffiti) (Amin & Thrift, 2002, p. 24).

Core to this is the visuality of how these representations are scripted. These three components are engaged towards a new ontology ‘of encounter’ where notions of ‘process’, ‘potential’ and ‘becoming’ are key. Additionally, they foreground the contested claims and uses of public space, that have animated discussions around the notion of the commons.

2.1.3. The commons and the right to the city

The public / private contestation over space is reflected in the battle for the commons that has found increasing currency around the world.

It is difficult to think of a political concept that has been as impoverished by decades of neoliberalization as “the commons” (MacLellan & Talpalaru, 2009, p. 1)

According to Harvey (2012, p. 67)

[t]he recent revival of emphasis upon the supposed loss of urban commonalities reflects the seemingly profound impacts of the recent wave of privatizations, enclosures, spatial controls, policing, and surveillance upon the qualities of urban life in general, and in particular upon the potentiality to build or inhibit new forms of social relations (a new commons) within an urban process influenced if not dominated by capitalist class interests.

The notion of the commons stems from the idea of shared environmental resources such as air and water, and has been extended to include the social and cultural commons. Although contested, the framing idea is that there are certain things and thoughts that should be collective or common to everyone. The language surrounding the ‘fate of’, the ‘fight for’, the ‘tragedy of’, ‘the future for’ the ‘commons’, demonstrates the affective currency the notion of the commons has summoned in a range of different disciplines. Most significantly, ‘reclaiming’, ‘revitalising’ and ‘remaking’ the ‘commons’ has become a rallying cry across a range of (largely anti-capitalist) social struggles and left wing academic debate (Klein, 2009).

Whether enunciated in the context of economic justice, environmental sustainability, anti-militarism or internet freedom, the overarching applicability of the commons as a tool of protest across diverse fields of struggle suggests a greater collective protest that extends beyond the critique of economic privatization and exploitation: the importance of a reinvigorated notions of the commons is evidence of a more profound rejection of all forms of power that thrive in the multifarious spaces of social, political, economic and cultural partition (MacLellan & Talpalaru, 2009, p. 1).

For Hardt and Negri the cultural commons is both physical space and thought.

It

is dynamic, involving both the product of labor and the means of future production. This common is not only the earth we share but also the languages we create, the social practices we establish, the modes of sociality that define our relationships, and so forth. These commons are built up over time, and are in principle open to all (Harvey, 2012, p. 72).

In these visions, the ‘commons’ are open and democratic, and foster some kind of social interaction and sharing. As digital technology expands and proliferates, so too does the commons, that is now not only located in physical space. The struggle for physical space has been digitized as social movements globalize, just as the battle for digital commons has been grounded as hackers gather on the streets under the

guise of ‘Anonymous’. Even Lessig (2001, p. 3), a prominent Internet activist advocating the rights of the commons, admits the notion is ‘obscure’, but worth defending.

Despite the utopian ideals of the commons, the reality is much messier. Claims to various commons are contested, and different interest groups vie for priority or control (Hardin, 1968; Harvey, 2012; Ostrom, 1990). Ortega (2009, p. 1) maintains that ‘[t]o discuss public space is to discuss a space of conflict’. The reality is that there are very few spaces (common, public or other) that function within this imaginary ethos of the commons, however attractive it may sound. In fact, the historical imaginary has always been exclusive. Just as the ‘democratic’ site of politics under the proverbial African tree was for adult men, so has the European conception of public space been shaped by patriarchal hegemonic power.

The fictional ideal of the classic public sphere is that it includes everyone; the fact is that it can be constituted only by the rigorous exclusion of certain groups – slaves, children, foreigners, those without property, and (most conspicuously) women. The very notion of the “public”, it seems, grows out of a conflation of two quite different Latin words, *populus* (the people) and *pubes* (adult men). The word *public* might more properly be written with the *l* in parentheses to remind us that for much of human history political and social authority has derived from a “pubic” sphere, not a public one (Mitchell, 1990, pp. 35–36).

Mitchell’s challenge raises the question of who has the right to gain access to public space. The recognition that public space is fundamentally unequal has been explained in a number of ways. One of the salient discussions has revolved around the question of the right to the city introduced by Lefebvre in 1967. According to Attoh (2011, p. 674)

At the heart of Lefebvre’s conception of the right to the city is his notion of the city as an oeuvre, or as a work produced through the labor and the daily actions of those who live in the city. The right to the city, for Lefebvre, thus signifies a great deal. It signifies the right to inhabit the city, the right to produce urban life on new terms (unfettered by the demands of exchange value), and the right of inhabitants to remain unalienated from urban life.

For Harvey (2012, p. x)

[t]hat right, he asserted, was both a cry and a demand. The cry was a response to the existential pain of a withering crisis of everyday life in the city. The demand was

really a command to look that crisis clearly in the eye and to create an alternative urban life that is less alienated, more meaningful and playful but, as always with Lefebvre, conflictual and dialectical, open to becoming, to encounters (both fearful and pleasurable), and to the perpetual pursuit of unknowable novelty.

This cry for rights to the city has been adopted by academics and activists alike. As with the notion of the commons, the rights to the city are multiple. Attoh (Attoh, 2011, p. 675) summarises the claim succinctly:

For some, the right to the city is a right to political space and is coterminous with the rights of national citizenship (Dikec, 2005). For others, the right to the city is simultaneously a right to occupy (Mitchell, 2003), design (Van Deusan, 2005), and define what public space is (Gibson, 2005). For others still, the right to the city is a right to autonomy in the face of state urban policy (Phillips and Gilbert, 2005: 70) as well as a right against police brutality, surveillance, and state overreach (Mitchell and Heynen, 2009). The right to the city is, in many instances, a socioeconomic right; it is a right to housing (Marcuse, 2008), to transportation (Bickl, 2005), and to natural resources like water (Phillips and Gilbert, 2005). In other instances, the right to the city is more of a right to a communal good, like aesthetics or community (Matilla, 2005)... Scholars ascribe the right to the city to all manner of groups. Scholar-advocates of the homeless (Phillips and Gilbert, 2005; Van Deusan, 2005), of immigrants (Dikec, 2005), of racial minorities, of the disabled, of women, of sexual minorities, and of political activists...

Amongst all of these scholars there seems to be a general consensus that cities are unequal and that many people are not afforded the same kind of access to city spaces, regardless of supposed dominant democratic ideologies. The right to the city discourse has been engaged as a means to challenge non-existent or faulty participatory processes and as a rallying cry for social justice. Although a progressive agenda, Attoh cautions that despite a consensus that the rights to the city are being breached for many people, the notion of what rights this means, and how to mediate contested rights is still somewhat unclear: how to reconcile ‘our democratic right to make the law and our civil right to break the law’ (Attoh, 2011, p. 678). In many ways, the conflict over the role of public space exemplifies the tensions surrounding the right to the city discourses.

The primary focus has been to look at how public space can foster particular kinds of human interaction. In an attempt to counter the increasing privatization of the commons and to foster an equitable right to the city, a ‘good’ public space is often claimed to be one that is inclusionary and ‘a visible emblem of order and harmony’ (Amin, 2006, p. 1010). By implication, public space should then be all things to all

people, which is an ambitious expectation. This ideal does not take into account the myriad power relations that shape people's everyday activity and freedom of movement. Amin (2008, p. 15) warns that in a diverse world, sometimes some form of enclosure is necessary to protect marginal or vulnerable groups:

depending on circumstances, policy effort to promote multiplicity as a principle of urban inclusion and civic acceptance of the right of the many to public space might indeed necessitate making special, perhaps even separate, provision in public space for certain groups in order to ensure that multiplicity does not result in harm.

The enclosure of parks for children is one such example. Harvey also looks at how multiple claims on a public space may require some kind of exclusionary practice.

In the grander scheme of things (and particularly at the global level), some sort of enclosure is often the best way to preserve certain kinds of valued commons. It will take a draconian act of enclosure in Amazonia, for example, to protect both biodiversity and the cultures of indigenous populations as part of our global natural and cultural commons (Harvey, 2012, p. 70).

Making sense of the trade-offs involved with reconciling a range of claims on the commons and rights to the city requires a re-reading of public space. In order to shift this thinking, Amin (2008, p. 8) locates the potential of public space 'in the entanglement between people and the material and visual culture of public space, rather than solely in the quality of social interaction between strangers'. For Amin (2008, p. 15)

[t]he atmosphere of a public space, its aesthetics and physical architecture, its historical status and reputation, its visual cultures, subtly define performances of social life in public and meanings and intentions of urban public culture... The projections—cast out from billboards, public art, the design of space, public gatherings, the shape of buildings, the cleanliness of streets, the sounds and smells that circulate, the flows of bodies—come with strong sensory, affective and neurological effects. They shape public expectation, less so by forcing automatic compliance, than by tracing the boundaries of normality and aspiration in public life.

Because space is imbued with such impactful dimensions, Amin (2015, p. 1) argues for thinking about 'the urban landscape as sentient in its own right, as a hum of interacting and humans and nonhumans'. He asks if 'demos and civitas' are no longer the sole measure, what kind of politicized sociality this kind of conception of public

space and public interaction produces? Amin locates the political potential of public space in the moment of an event: ‘in the entanglement of aesthetic form, material culture, and everyday practice, in the reorganisation of the phenomenology of place’ (Amin, 2015, p. 14), and argues for a ‘choreography of place’ that enables its ethical activation. Drawing on the communal rallying when a man collapsed on a train he was in, and witnessing the powerful political imagery used by activists in public demonstrations, Amin (2015, p. 3) surmises that

[t]he possibility remains... that the memory of an occasion when differences were crossed, expertise was pooled, and solidarities were formed to good effect, will linger in the unconscious of those who witnessed the event.

It is the ‘traces’ and ‘resonances’ of the event that hold the possibility of political becoming. It is the same impulse behind this politicized eventfulness that has increasingly populated the discourse at the intersection of art and public interaction.

2.2. Art and Public Interaction

These projects promote a view of art as an effective channel for ‘recentering’—the identification of a multitude of centers that endlessly fracture and shift, very much resembling the nature of cities themselves. An alternate vision of the city through cartography informed by contrast, temporality and ephemerality is proposed alongside dominant representations of the city ... These interventions are foils to state- and private-led urban development schemes. Their strength lies in their direct engagement with the sphere of public dialogue and self-determination. These artistic practices and strategies are shaped by community interaction, revealing that meanings residing in urban forms are relentlessly negotiated by the numerous actors that inhabit the city (Guazon, 2013, p. 864).

Although public art is often treated as a separate discipline within the field of Fine Art, the development of public art projects needs to be seen in the context of shifting thinking and practice within Art and Cultural Studies. The section starts by looking at the emergence of an emphasis on ‘site specificity’ as contemporary art started moving out of the ‘white cube’ of the gallery. Just as there was a ‘siting’ of

contemporary art, there has been a return to a ‘humaning’ of sorts, as inclusive and collaborative practices arose again to the fore. The participatory urge within the arts in many ways mimics the impulse to participatory politics, but comes with similar cautions around social control through social inclusion, or social cohesion. It is therefore important to look at the relationship between public art and cultural policy. Simultaneously, a range of debates about the relationship between art, aesthetics and politics has emerged in response to society in crisis, which is discussed in the final section.

2.2.1. Inside-out and outside-in: site and the spatial turn

Increasingly since the 1960’s there has been an intensification of ‘[s]ite-determined, site-oriented, site-referenced, site-conscious, site-responsive, site-related’ work (Kwon, 2004, p. 1). For Suderberg (2000, p. 4) this shift stems from ‘Western Euro-American modernism, born, as it were, lodged between modernist notions of liberal progressiveness and radical tropes both formal and conceptual’. For Kaye (2000, p. 1), ‘a ‘site-specific’ work might articulate and define itself through properties, qualities or meanings produced in specific relationships between an ‘object’ or ‘event’ and a position it occupies’.

Essentially site-specific art emerged as a challenge to the autonomy of an art object, emphasizing the spatial relevance in the encounter between the artwork, the space and the audience. Artists began turning the gallery inside-out and bringing the outside into the works of art and gallery spaces. Thinking about site-specific art, or the ‘spatial turn’ in contemporary art that Deutsche (1998) and others refer to, involves a rethinking of the relationship and role of art within society. But the definitions of site-specific art have tended towards the vague to the point that Daniel Buren (2000, p. 3) claims that ‘site-specific as a term “has become hackneyed and meaningless through use and abuse, and Demos (2003, p. 98) asks ‘[w]here, exactly, is the “site” in “site-specific,”... Is the “site” a geographical area, a representation of that area, its phenomenological experience, an institutional grid, a discursive network, a community formation?’

Kwon (2004) sees three phases of site-specific art emerging since the 1960s: firstly ‘phenomenological site specificity’; secondly ‘institutional site specificity’; and

finally, ‘discursive site specificity’. ‘Phenomenological site specificity emerged out of minimalisms’ emphasis on the autonomy or ‘innocence’ of space, and in particular, art galleries and museums. Here, art moved from being seen as solely an autonomous object; like a painting that could hang on any wall, to being phenomenologically located within a particular space. Kwon looks at how Modernist assumptions about the role of art fundamentally shaped public art policies where a plethora of minimalist sculptures started popping up all over cities. Artists started to reject what became referred to as ‘plop art’ or ‘turds on a plaza’ in favour of a more critical consideration of site (Kwon, 2004, p. 65).

It was this concern that led artists to not only consider the role of the artwork in relation to a particular site, but also the role of the site, and more specifically, the ‘institutional frame of the gallery as intersecting with larger cultural and economic forces’ (Demos, 2003, p. 98), and thus ‘institutional site specificity’ emerged. ‘Institutional site specificity’ started questioning the ideological assumptions being made by neutralizing art spaces, asserting that

the seemingly benign architectural features of a gallery/museum, in other words, were deemed to be coded mechanisms that *actively* disassociate the space of art from the outer world, furthering the institution’s idealist imperative of rendering itself and its values “objective,” “disinterested,” and “true.” (Kwon, 2004: 13)

Site-specific work in the 1970s had primarily focused on critiquing institutional power dynamics within the contemporary art arena, but as the 1980s progressed, artists started moving further into the social arena, becoming concerned with broader and more urgent socio-economic issues ‘such as the ecological crisis, homelessness, AIDS, homophobia, racism, and sexism, or more generally in order to relativize art as one among many forms of cultural work’ (Kwon, 2004, p. 24).

The ‘spatial expansion’ into a range of public spaces also involved an expansion into different disciplines such as ‘anthropology, sociology, literary criticism, psychology, natural and cultural histories, architecture and urbanism, computer science, political theory, philosophy... fashion, music, advertising, film and television’ (Kwon, 2004, p. 26). For Kwon, this extension into other physical and theoretical territories marks an important discursive shift, where ‘discursive site specificity’ unhinges site-specificity from a location and into the realm of discourse. Although this was not the first time artists had worked discursively, there seems to be

an intensification of socially engaged or discursively sited art. One of the most important distinctions is that the physical location is not a precondition as per the previous phases described. The ‘sitedness’ is constructed through the process and is less about a geographical area and more about the ‘convergence with an existing discursive formation’ (Kwon, 2004, p. 26).

In this way different cultural debates, a theoretical concept, a social issue, a political problem, an institutional framework (not necessarily an art institution), a neighborhood or seasonal event, a historical condition, even particular formations of desire are deemed to function as sites (Kwon, 2004, pp. 28–29).

In Kwon’s conceptualisation, contemporary site-specific work foregrounds social issues as opposed to spaces as the sites of artistic interaction. But Kwon (2004, p. 53) cautions that,

[c]ertainly, site-specific art can lead to the unearthing of repressed histories, help provide greater visibility to marginalized groups and issues, and initiate the re(dis)covery of “minor” places so far ignored by the dominant culture. But inasmuch as the current socioeconomic order thrives on the (artificial) production and (mass) consumption of difference (for difference sake), the siting of art in “real” places can also be a means to *extract* the social and historical dimensions of these places in order to variously serve the thematic drive of an artist, satisfy institutional demographic profiles, or fulfill the fiscal needs of a city.

What Kwon intimates is that this ‘inclusionary’ or ‘participatory turn’ has important repercussions.

2.2.2. Working with(in): inclusion and the social turn

This expanded field of post-studio practices currently goes under a variety of names: socially engaged art, community- based art, experimental communities, dialogic art, littoral art, interventionist art, participatory art, collaborative art, contextual art and (most recently) social practice (Bishop, 2012, p. 1).

Foster (1996) claims that the response to the elitism of mainstream art industry has been to relocate the work in the imagined camp of the proletariat. Here the assumption is ‘that the site of artistic transformation is the site of political transformation, and, more, that this site is always located *elsewhere*, in the field of the other’ (Foster, 1996, p. 302). For predominantly middle class artists, this has meant

working with people and spaces that have been deemed marginalized by the elite. Although many projects attempt to address the ‘invisibility’ of ‘the other’, these attempts often construct new forms of alterity, despite their best intentions¹⁶. This concern is echoed in Marie’s (2013, p. 58) catalogue piece for ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ when he asks

[d]o poor people really need your/our/my help? Perhaps they could do with your money, but do they really need groups of artists running through small towns spreading culture and good will? ... If anything, it is the artist who needs the poor, disenfranchised and the suffering in a similar way that Picasso, the cubists and DADA needed Africa. The marginal acts as a vital catalyst to invigorate the mundane and middle class.

One of the ways legitimacy has been sought is through what could be called a ‘participatory turn’. In order to counteract behavism, the impulse has been to make sure people take part, and funding is increasingly contingent on participatory strategies. In a crude sense, public art has moved from being an autonomous (often Modernist / minimalist) object made by and for an urban elite; through a phase of negotiating itself in terms of the physical and structural sites in which it engages; to a set of processes and practices where people are allegedly at the core. Prominent 1960s artist and feminist activist, Suzanne Lacy (1995), terms this ‘democratizing’ of art practice ‘new genre public art’

Dealing with some of the most profound issues of our time—toxic waste, race relations, homelessness, aging, gang warfare, and cultural identity—a group of visual artists has developed distinct models for an art whose public strategies of engagement are an important part of its aesthetic language... We might describe this as “new genre public art,” to distinguish it in both form and intention from what has been called “public art”—a term used for the past twenty-five years to describe sculpture and installations sited in public places. Unlike much of what has heretofore been called public art, new genre public art—visual art that uses both traditional and nontraditional media to communicate and interact with a broad and diversified audience about issues directly relevant to their lives—is based on engagement (Lacy in Kwon, 2004: 105).

Raven refers to this ‘new’ kinds of socially engaged art as ‘art in the public interest’ which

¹⁶ There are numerous projects that use the language or ‘invisible’. One prominent project in Durban was called ‘Blind Spaces’ and involved a group of middle class artists from South Africa and Brazil working in Warwick Triangle in the CBD of Durban. For the middle class minority, this area is often seen as a no-go zone. For the half a million people that commute through the area on a daily basis, it is far from invisible.

forges direct intersections with social issues. It encourages community coalition-building in pursuit of social justice and attempts to garner greater institutional empowerment for artists to act as social agents. Artists engaged in such art “aspire to reveal the plight and plead the case of the disenfranchised and disadvantaged, and to embody what they [the artists] view as humanitarian values” (Kwon, 2004, p. 106).

According to Milevska (2006)

Participation is the activation of certain relations that is initiated and directed by the artists and often encouraged by art institutions, and that sometimes becomes the sole goal of certain art projects... While inviting the audience to actively participate, the artists of the participatory projects create certain interfaces that are well prepared in advance and highly contextualised in a certain social, cultural and political environment.

For Bishop (2012, p. 2) exploring the rise of participatory art happening in a parallel form in Europe, sees this ‘social turn’ where

the artist is conceived less as an individual producer of discrete objects than as a collaborator and producer of *situations*; the work of art as a finite, portable, commodifiable product is reconceived as an ongoing or long-term *project* with an unclear beginning and end; while the audience, previously conceived as a ‘viewer’ or ‘beholder’, is now repositioned as a co-producer or *participant*... [where] these shifts are often more powerful as ideals than as actualised realities, but they all aim to place pressure on conventional modes of artistic production and consumption under capitalism [emphasis Bishop’s].

Interestingly, artists and theoreticians tend to draw their genealogies from different historical frameworks. Kwon locates hers within contemporary art theory, predominantly in the United States, and demonstrates how Lacy rejects the public art history and draws on Marxist and feminist activist movements and Raven draws on Russian constructivism and labour movements of the 1960s. Bishop looks at the history of the ‘social turn’ or participatory art from another perspective. She draws on the Situationist International movement and Debord’s (1970) critiques in *Society of the Spectacle*. Debord (1970, p. 17) called the (then) contemporary epoch one of spectacle: where ‘being’ has become ‘having’ and ‘having’ is in ‘appearing’; where society has been subjugated by materialism. This critique of the spectacle of market forces and the pressures of liberal individualism is echoed by Bourriaud (Bourriaud, 2002), Sholette (2011) and Ranciere (2013). But as Bishop (2012, p. 11) asserts:

For many artists and curators on the left, Debord's critique strikes to the heart of why participation is important as a project: it rehumanises a society rendered numb and fragmented by the repressive instrumentality of capitalist production. Given the market's near total saturation of our image repertoire, so the argument goes, artistic practice can no longer revolve around the construction of objects to be consumed by a passive bystander. Instead, there must be an art of action, interfacing with reality, taking steps – however small – to repair the social bond.

Instead of seeing participatory or inclusionary impulses in art as a linear progression as Kwon intimates (although Kwon does allow for some flexibility within the genealogy), Bishop (2012, p. 3) sees the current turn as part of a longer repetitive process, fundamentally linked to broader socio-economic occurrences.

From a Western European perspective, the social turn in contemporary art can be contextualised by two previous historical moments, both synonymous with political upheaval and movements for social change: the historic avant-garde in Europe circa 1917, and the so-called 'neo' avant-garde leading to 1968. The conspicuous resurgence of participatory art in the 1990s leads me to posit the fall of communism in 1989 as a third point of transformation. Triangulated, these three dates form a narrative of the triumph, heroic last stand and collapse of a collectivist vision of society.⁵ Each phase has been accompanied by a utopian rethinking of art's relationship to the social and of its political potential – manifested in a reconsideration of the ways in which art is produced, consumed and debated.

Although stemming from slightly different historical references, what all of these perspectives share, is a shifting notion of the role of producers and consumers of 'art'.

...it shifts the focus from artist to audience, from object to process, from production to reception, and emphasizes the importance of a direct, apparently unmediated engagement with particular audience groups (ideally through shared authorship in collaborations (Kwon, 2004, p. 106).

The assumption underlying much of this thinking is that in order to make meaningful art in an unequal world, some kind of collaborative or inclusionary consideration is paramount. For many advocates of public art, the inclusionary impulse is emphasized even more in order to honour the importance of the 'public'. Sharp (2005, p. 1003) believes that 'in the deployment of public art it is the processes through which it becomes installed into the urban fabric that are critical to inclusion' and will reflect how public an artwork ultimately ends up being received. Sharp argues that inclusion is essential in the installation of any public art process if the intervention is to be relevant for society.

Despite a seemingly general consensus that participation is necessary, there is little consensus as to how participation is being conceptualized and practiced. For Bishop (2012, p. 2), participation means ‘people constitute the central artistic medium and material’ of a project. For Lacy (1995, 2008), addressing social issues implies an engagement with ‘the public’. For Raven, to be ‘art in the public interest’, the public needs to be involved (Kwon, 2004). What is murky in many artists or art writers’ interpretation of participation is what exactly constitutes participation. At what point in the life of a project does participation occur? Who are considered participants? What is the difference between an audience member and a participant?

Referring to participatory democracy, Arnstein (1969, p. 216) unequivocally states that ‘citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future’. Arnstein’s ‘Ladder of Participation’ has become a key reference point for understanding participation across a wide range of disciplines.

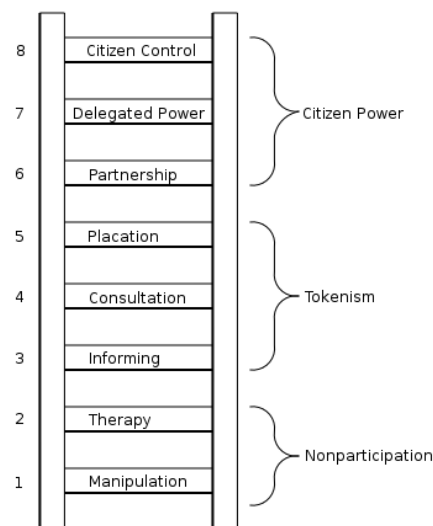


Figure 8: Arnstein, A. 1969. Arnstein's Ladder of Participation [Figure]

For Arnstein, anything other than ‘partnership’, delegated power’ and ‘citizen control’ is ‘tokenism’ at best. In Arnstein’s view, the transformative potential of participation lies in collective decision-making and a redistribution of power. Although Arnstein is referring to collaborations between authorities and broader

society in development initiatives, the ethos behind her definition can be applied in alternative settings. To foster participatory public art would mean developing strategies and structures for collective decision-making where the artist is no longer central (Kester, 2004). What it also signals is that any form of working together requires engaging with (often) unequal power dynamics and competing interests. Bishop (2012, p. 279) challenges the applicability of Arnstein's ladder in the context of art:

while the ladder provides us with helpful and nuanced differences between forms of civic participation, it falls short of corresponding to the complexity of artistic gestures. The most challenging works of art do not follow this schema, because models of democracy in art do not have an intrinsic relationship to models of democracy in society. The equation is misleading and does not recognise art's ability to generate other, more paradoxical criteria.

Bishop's distinction between democracy in society and democracy is somewhat contradictory as she simultaneously challenges the autonomy of art (like Kwon and others) while selectively claiming its independence. To contextualize, Bishop is

largely responding to Bourriaud's (2002) writing on relational aesthetics. For Bourriaud, public art has become inherently relational, where the artist is a catalyst rather than the central figure in an artwork. The artwork is therefore the human relations and social situation created by the interstice of the work. In Bourriaud's notion of relational aesthetics, the object of art becomes superfluous to the kind of sociation that the work catalyzes. Art becomes a way to experiment with and address the alienation implicit in the spectacle as Debord (1970) describes, where according to Miles (2009, p. 425) '[t]his is not an invitation to festivity but a visualised critique of a society in which excess of things is the sign for a lack of connections between people'. For Bourriaud the interaction around the work is paramount: the conversations between audience members being more important than an interaction to the artist or installation.

Bishop's 2006 critique of participatory art in 'The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents' triggered a volatile debate between herself and her US contemporary, Grant Kester. Although they both agree that Bourriaud's sociability does not equate to a democratic process, much as Amin (2008) argued that social

interaction does not imply transformation, they disagree on the role of public, participatory or collaborative art in relation to neoliberal capitalism.

Kester critiques Bishop's favorite artists by charging that their emphasis on artistic autonomy, shock and (ersatz) viewer disturbance merely shore up a capitalist system based on individualism and spectacle. Bishop charges that the communalism of Kester's artists is simply another form of the volunteerism that advocates of privatization often knowingly exploit in their quest to dismantle a once vibrant public sector (Heartney, 2012, p. 69).

What this debate highlights is the contested understanding and application of participatory or inclusionary processes. And in the same way that participation has become a contested form of social engineering within development disciplines (Cook & Kathari, 2002; Hickey & Mohan, 2004) so too has its use become questioned within the art world, triggering a range of discussions about alterity (Foster, 1996), ownership (Kwon, 2004; M. Miles, 1997; Miles, 2005), authorship (Bishop, 2012; Bourriaud, 2002), autonomy (Bishop, 2012; Kwon, 2004), authenticity (Bishop, 2012; Clements, 2008), and most importantly, a concern about whose interest is being served (Bishop, 2012; Kester, 2004; Kwon, 2004; M. Miles, 1997; Miles, 2005; Sharp et al., 2005). As Kwon (2004, p. 3) asserts,

While such efforts challenge conventional power dynamics and hierarchies that sustain the contemporary art world, more often than not the democratic mode of communication that new genre public art envisions is for a unified public sphere. At the same time, it often maintains a certain paternalistic attitude toward the "collaborating" audience members.

Although noble in intention, many of these kinds of public art projects are premised on the idea that the role of public art is to foster social cohesion (DAC, 2013d), based largely on the same thinking Amin (2008) has been questioning. According to Bishop (2012, p. 25), the 'emphasis on compassionate identification with the other is typical of the discourse around participatory art, in which an ethics of interpersonal interaction comes to prevail over a politics of social justice'.

It is this conciliatory impulse within public art projects that has informed an increasing interest in the instrumentality of public art that has been harnessed by municipalities and property developers, and as Bishop (2012, p. 276) maintains,

[e]ven though participatory artists invariably stand against neoliberal capitalism, the values they impute to their work are understood formally (in terms of opposing individualism and the commodity object), without recognising that so many other aspects of this art practice dovetail even more perfectly with neoliberalism's recent forms (networks, mobility, project work, affective labour).

2.2.3. Social cohesion and cultural planning

As Zukin (1987, p. 226) notes, 'so much of the dominant capitalist economy has . . . undergone a cultural turn'. What Zukin implies is that 'culture' has been recognized as having economic merit. Architects and planners have embraced this notion seemingly whole-heartedly and culture has become currency. Despite this 'cultural turn', there is a disjuncture between how culture is understood theoretically, and how culture appears in development strategies. The definition of 'culture' has been contested for some time, and regardless of its prolific use to explain a multitude of things and situations, there is little consensus as to what it means and how it could or should be used, if at all.

For Landry (2008, p. 173), one of the pioneers of the notion of a 'creative city' 'culture as values, insight, a way of life and form of creative expression, represents the soil from within which creativity emerges and grows, and therefore provides the momentum for development'. In his definition, culture is a resource, something that can be harnessed, a knowable 'thing'. Although he recognizes different cultures, he still seems to refer to culture as a set of fixed entities, and this wellspring of creativity can be harnessed to create an identity for a city, thereby attracting economic development. Zukin (2010, p. 1) exclaims that '...today, all big cities are erasing their gritty, bricks-and-mortar history to build a shiny vision of the future' and public art and cultural planning has become part and parcel of that process. For Marschall (2008) this vision largely subscribes to the notion that the 'white cube' of the gallery is transposed onto the city, where spaces can be 'curated' in particular ways, usually underpinned by modernist notions of cleanliness as espoused in 'world class cities' rhetoric.

The notion of a 'world class city' predominantly espouses clean, affluent global cities that are deemed desirable business and tourist destinations. Many cities of the global South have been clamouring to join the ranks of 'world-class cities', and have sought to 'tame' the 'unruly' elements that taint the image of order typified by

the ‘world class cities’ image (Murray, 2008). Disorder is seen most explicitly in the encroachment of the informal into the formal (street traders, beggars, and the homeless); and of the illegal onto the sanctioned expressions of creativity in these newly curated cities (seen most explicitly in graffiti). Broken windows theory, emerging in the 1980s (Kelling & Wilson, 1982), was implemented as an explicit policing strategy in New York during the 1990s. It initially tackled graffiti, and was soon extended to any behaviour deemed publicly undesirable, such as loitering, drinking in public, and begging. Although the effectiveness of this approach has had questionable results, and despite critique of its exclusionary and oppressive tactics, it still informs the regulation of public space all over the world. Underlying the approach is the idea that these unruly elements are counter to the economic engagements that make cities ‘world-class’.

The role of culture in planning for economic development has gained currency amidst these debates. For Florida (2002) there is a very specific set of cultural conditions that enable economic development, which specifically manifest in what he calls a ‘creative class’. He argues that a high presence of creative practitioners and gay men enable economic activity, which in turn attracts more capital, which has a positive impact on property development. In making sense of the ‘cultural turn’ in planning, Amin and Thrift (2007, p. 158) argue for the importance of recasting the cultural-economy where the ‘market’ is understood

through the embodiment of new symptoms, the technological and social unconscious that girds economic life, the orders of moral justification, judgement and emotional energy thrown up by city life, and the instantiation of much of the matter that makes markets.

Although this re-orientates how the cultural economy can be thought about, the reality in cultural policy has not shifted significantly, and thinking of culture as instrumental to economic development prevails in South Africa too. According to the ‘Mzansi Golden Economy’.

The following is a list of the large scale projects/work streams of Mzansi Golden Economy (MGE) as a strategic response: Cultural events, Touring venture, Legacy projects, Cultural precincts, Public Art, Art Bank, Sourcing enterprise/information centres, National Academy for Cultural & Creative Industries of SA (NaCISA), Arts in schools, Cultural Observatory (DAC, 2013b).

The Department of Arts and Culture has identified culture as an economic growth opportunity that has the potential to foster large-scale employment. The instrumentalisation of art in this way is not uncommon the world over. Bishop (2012, p. 13) contends,

[i]n the UK, New Labour (1997–2010)... Anxious for accountability, the question it asked on entering office in 1997 was: what can the arts do for society? The answers included increasing employability, minimising crime, fostering aspiration – anything but artistic experimentation and research as values in and of themselves. The production and reception of the arts was therefore reshaped within a political logic in which audience figures and marketing statistics became essential to securing public funding.

This begs the question, whose culture, and for whom? (Sharon Zukin, 1995). Guazon (2013, p. 865) locates this within global discourses of art and development where ‘[s]tate- and corporate-funded art commissions thrive on relentless promotion and lend credence to the notion that urban sites combine the peculiarities of the local and the encompassing familiarity of the global’. For Miles (2005, p. 889), reflecting on Florida’s new cultural class, argues that ‘a cultural zone can easily be read as a zone of affluence’ where ‘cultural consumption [becomes] a ‘means to defuse dissent’ and a powerful means for controlling cities’. Echoing Zukin, he puts it quite bluntly,

culturally led urban redevelopment tends to include the following: the insertion of a flagship cultural institution in a post-industrial zone, often a waterfront site, to lever private-sector investment in the surrounding area and attract tourism; the designation of a neighbourhood as a cultural industries quarter for small- and mediumsize businesses in the arts, media and leisure (M. Miles & Hall, 2005, p. 893).

In this context, cultural workers pave the way for gentrification. Whereas this may bring in macro-economic gains for municipalities, it can result in the displacement of locals deemed undesirable. Frequently the way this manifests is through commissioning processes, where artists (predominantly middle class urban artists) are given a set fee to produce creative works (predominantly in the form of sculptures), to install in public spaces in a given area. Although art is assumed to be inherently subversive, in the context of urban development, it has also become big business for ‘culturepreneurs’ such as the *Trinity Sessions* in Johannesburg¹⁷

¹⁷ The Trinity Session is a public art company made up of two artists, Marcus Neustetter and Steven Hobbs. They have been awarded most of the recent commissions for public art in Johannesburg. Although they have met with a lot of critique, they are not only businessmen, and their corporate public art work allows them to do a range of other, more socially relevant projects. Their success

According to Pinder (2008, p. 733)

[t]he ability of the art world and cultural industries to marginalize or absorb oppositional practices has long been well documented. Also in need of critical consideration are the ways in which art has become a prized asset for capitalist urban development, from processes of gentrification to prominent discourses of the ‘creative city’ and the ‘creative class’. In part this is precisely because of its associations with creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship that are depicted as such vital ingredients of a vibrant economy.

Despite its global proliferation, the use of creative industries to gentrify urban areas has been increasingly critiqued, predominantly for its exclusionary effects. For example, Moulaert et al (2004) caution against the impact niche cultural development in the form of beautification has on the welfare state. Peck (2005) argues that the ‘cultural class’ is instrumental in extending existing neoliberal politics with seductive packaging. Pratt (2010) sees it merely as ‘boosterism’ or another kind of place branding. Sharp (2005) shows how exclusionary art practices, and large public art monuments, can further exacerbate existing inequalities. Bell and Jayne (2001) and Evans (2005) highlight the lack of evidence relating to culture’s contribution to regeneration and argue for more robust empirical work. Miles warns about the risks of a new cultural class, and what this means for the radical and transformative potential for public art. In a response to elite-centric development and inequalities that are rife the world over, Appadurai (2004) asserts the aspirational importance of culture. By implication, and echoing Miles and Sharpe, this suggests that cultural practice not working to address inequality is maintaining the problematic status quo and Miles (Miles, 2005) states that ‘art subsumed to the agenda of a regime dedicated to marketisation will not retain a radical edge’.

Mitchell (1990, pp. 37–38) is even more cautionary about public art, warning that there is an implicit violence in the installation of public art.

We may distinguish three basic forms of violence in the images of public art, each of which may, in various ways, interact with the other: (1) the image as an *act* or *object* of violence, itself doing violence to beholders, or “suffering” violence as the target of vandalism, disfigurement, or demolition; (2) the image as a *weapon* of violence, a

demonstrates the precarious nature of working in the public art realm as they need to retain their monopoly in order to make enough money for their other projects, but in doing so, they are marginalizing other artists from access to potential livelihoods through commissioning processes.

device for attack, coercion, incitement, or more subtle “dislocations” of public spaces; (3) the image as a *representation* of violence, whether a realistic imitation of a violent act, or a monument, trophy, memorial, or other trace of past violence

For Mitchell, it is not only the commemoration of war where violence manifests. He notably refers to the agency of objects. In development strategies ‘the more subtle “dislocations” of public space’ are concealed. Although Mitchell located his argument around an object, Bishop (2012, p. 14) highlights how the emerging participatory practices in ‘socially engaged art’ started being adopted within cultural policy in the UK in somewhat insidious and coercive ways, where ‘social participation is viewed positively because it creates submissive citizens who respect authority and accept the ‘risk’ and responsibility of looking after themselves in the face of diminished public services’.

The same discourse of social inclusion can be found in cultural policies the world over. The vision for the South African Department of Arts and Culture states ‘[w]e are a thriving arts, culture and heritage sector contributing to sustainable economic development, leveraging on partnerships for a socially cohesive nation’ (DAC, 2013a). For South Africa, ‘social cohesion’ is paramount.

The department defines social cohesion as the degree of social integration and inclusion in communities and society at large, and the extent to which mutual solidarity finds expression among individuals and communities. In terms of this definition, a community or society is cohesive to the extent that the inequalities, exclusions and disparities based on ethnicity, gender, class, nationality, age, disability or any other distinctions which engender divisions distrust and conflict are reduced and/or eliminated in a planned and sustained manner. This, with community members and citizens as active participants, working together for the attainment of shared goals, designed and agreed upon to improve the living conditions for all (DAC, 2013d).

Although this is a desirable vision, the way this translates into public art policy can run the risk of manufacturing consensus for the *image* of social cohesion, which can skirt over the very real challenges of urban inequality, and curtails the subversive possibilities for art in the public sphere. In a draft of the Cape Town Public Art Regulatory Framework that was circulating for public comment,

The City of Cape Town will support the work of local artists to enrich and expand the experience of living in the city. It will support the creation of multi-cultural, multi-generational and other experiences that expand understanding of Cape Town’s

diverse cultural perspectives, provoke thought, debate and engender positive action to build community (DAC, 2013c).

This principle demonstrates the inclusive agenda through public art's mandate for community building which implies consensus. Additionally,

The City will support the work of artists to express and evoke a sense of context, with the intention of creating a relationship between place, forms, materials and experiences in the urban environment. Art should acknowledge the receiving environment's existing context and significance, and be relevant to that context. The public art collection will reflect Cape Town's unique identity and enhance the image of the city (DAC, 2013c).

This last sentence of this principle (which appears first in the list of principles) implies that the role of public art should be inherently linked to place-making and city branding. Public art becomes inherently instrumental in this case. The primary function of art runs the risk of merely fostering an *image* of social cohesion that is conducive to publicity, and serves a contested nation-building agenda (Marschall, 2010a). According to Bishop (2012, p. 25)

In insisting upon consensual dialogue, sensitivity to difference risks becoming a new kind of repressive norm – one in which artistic strategies of disruption, intervention or over-identification are immediately ruled out as 'unethical' because all forms of authorship are equated with authority and indicted as totalising.

The 'tyranny of participation' (Cook & Kathari, 2002; Marie, 2013) in public art has increasingly emerged in public art discourse, revealing an inherent tension, and reframing questions about the role of art and artists in society. Bishop (2012, p. 15), referring to these kinds of practices in the UK asserts that

This aim of unleashing creativity, however, was not designed to foster greater social happiness, the realisation of authentic human potential, or the imagination of utopian alternatives, but to produce, in the words of sociologist Angela McRobbie, 'a future generation of socially diverse creative workers who are brimming with ideas and whose skills need not only be channeled into the fields of art and culture but will also be good for business'.

Although many theorists (Bishop, 2012; Kester, 2004; Lees & Ley, 2008; Pinder, 2008; Sharp et al., 2005; S Zukin, 1987; Sharon Zukin, 1995) would maintain that any public commission amounts to complicity, which may be easy to agree with

in principle, the reality of practice is much more complicated. Many artists do commissioned work in order to fund the other more critical projects they are involved in. In a context like South Africa, receiving a commission is a prestigious, relatively lucrative and desirable thing, even for the harshest critics of culture-led gentrification. These kinds of opportunities open up networks and possibilities for greater autonomy in a context devoid of the cultural stipends and support typical in European countries. It is also these contradictory ideals for public art that may open up a space for critical interpretation and contestation.

Even many of those who choose to work within developmental frames, are still convinced of the radical purpose of art, especially in public spaces. It is perhaps this purpose that is more interesting to unpack than the collective-individual producer nexus. It is therefore important to explore the relationship between politics and aesthetics in public art projects.

2.2.4. Art in Crisis: politics and aesthetics

All artists are alike. They dream of doing something that's more social, more collaborative, and more real than art (Dan Graham in Bishop 2012: 1).

This impulse for art to do *more* raises interesting questions about the relationship between art, aesthetics and activism, as well as the kinds of politics art is engaged in. This section looks at the dual crisis that shapes art, aesthetics and politics in the public sphere: art in crisis both refers to artists working within a radical 'tendency' or 'impulse' to critique troubled society; as well as the perception that when art is instrumentalised for an activist agenda it runs the risk of losing its aesthetic credibility and therefore its 'artness'. This section starts by looking at the contradicting politics of art and the role of the artist, before exploring the contested aesthetic tensions where art and politics intersect.

Foregrounding social issues has meant finding new social forms through which to practice 'art' in a time of 'crisis' (M. Miles, 2009).

The conscious politicization of art often comes about in response to the realisation that art is, in some sense, always already politicised. The category of art has been constructed differently at different times and places, and within different cultural, social and political systems (Bradley, 2007: 9)

Additionally, in any given moment, art is functioning in different ways and is simultaneously complicit with and resistant to powered elites.

Following the Northern canon, art was ‘liberated’ from the church and state, and everyday artisanal practice in the nineteenth century. Informed by a Modernist agenda, the art gallery linked to the academy emerged as a new form of bourgeois institution with self-proclaimed autonomy. This approach to art spread and replicated itself around the world, and the commodification of art became mainstream, as did the differentiation between ‘high art’ and popular culture. This does not mean it has met with no resistance: as can be seen with the rise of site-specific work mentioned earlier, that directly challenged the Modernist ideals of the ‘white cube’ (Kaye, 2000; Kwon, 2004; Suderburg, 2000); as well as through conceptual arts’ rejection of a commodifiable object in the 1960s. Simultaneously artists have aligned themselves with social movements and societal critique such as the Dadaist movement in the early 1900s; the rise of the Situationist International in the 1960s (Debord, 1970); the punk movements in the 1980s; the protest theatre and community arts centres in apartheid South Africa (Orkin, 1991); Invisible theatre and agit prop in South America (Boal, 1979); and contemporary acts of culture jamming (Serazio, 2010; Sholette, 2011). Art has also been used to prop up fascist regimes as can be seen in the work of Nazi propagandist work Leni Riefenstahl, and monolithic monuments in Stalinist Russia.

Because of the multiplicity of art practice, the question of the definition and role of ‘the artist’ and ‘the arts’ keeps recurring, especially in the context of emergency (M. Miles, 2009). This is especially pertinent for South Africa that was until relatively recently in a permanent state of severe emergency. Until 1994 in parallel to the mainstream, largely Modern art agenda, there was a united cause for artists in the anti-apartheid struggle. Anti-apartheid art can be seen explicitly in poster art (Poster Collective of the South African History Archive, 1992) and graffiti, such as the ‘Free Mandela’ piece that was recently erased in Cape Town by the Graffiti Squad (Mposo, 2013), but similarly in the early work of Sifiso Ka Mkame, Tyrone Apollis, Pitika Ntuli and William Kentridge; the protest theatre of Matsemela Manaka, Workshop 71, Kessie and Ronnie Govender, Junction Avenue Theatre Company; in the of poetry of Wally Serote, Mazisi Kunene, Mafika Gwala, Breyten Breytenbach, Ari Sitas, Alfred Qabula, Antjie Krog, Karen Press, and Lesego

Rampolokeng; by photographers such as Omar Badsha, and Afrapix; in the music of Prophets of Da City, Johnny Dyani, Jonas Gwangwa, Vusi Mahlesela, Abdullah Ibrahim; and in community arts centres like the BAT Centre and the Community Arts Project (CAP). After the transition, there was a decade of national hopefulness which coincided with a shift in art practice where it seemed that White artists were liberated from politics and gravitated towards conceptual work, while Black artists were freed to focus on more individualised identity politics as was prevalent in the North (Makhubu & Simbao, 2013). The South African arts industry also entered the global art market.

Despite national optimism, the material conditions of the majority still remained somewhat undesirable, and according to Makhubu and Simbao (2013, pp. 299–300)

[t]he rise of biennales and large-scale international exhibitions during the first decade provided beneficial exposure. This also coincided with the notion that artists were now ‘freed’ from ‘the imperative to make work in response to the socio-political conditions of apartheid in South Africa’, and turn to the emergence of concerns with complex issues often related to individual identity. But this premature closure of the ‘apartheid burden on the artist’ can be a setback when the caged life of the majority in black township spaces continues and remains a trope for inferiority¹⁸.

When reflecting on the 2013 Michaelis end of year student exhibition in Artthrob, curator and art critic Blackman said his experience ‘was set-off by a feeling of absence. Where, after all, was the politics, the cause, the environment, where was process and queer theory?’ He asked ‘[i]f art in South Africa is changing then what is it heading towards? If identity politics and resistance art have run their course, then what will replace it?’ (Blackman, 2013). He concludes that

this apolitical stance seems to foreshadow what is happening in South African art schools today. Largely born after the release of Mandela, having grown up on a historical diet of politics that was mostly foreign to them, while at the same time divorced from current politics by their class, many young South African art students are experimenting with ideas that are closest to them: the effects of popular culture, the ‘curse’ of having grown up middle-class, the ‘politics’ of the art school they have spent the last four years in, and their own emotions.

¹⁸ Makhubu and Simbao were commenting on the book *10 Years, 100 Artists: Art in a Democratic South Africa* published by Bell Roberts gallery

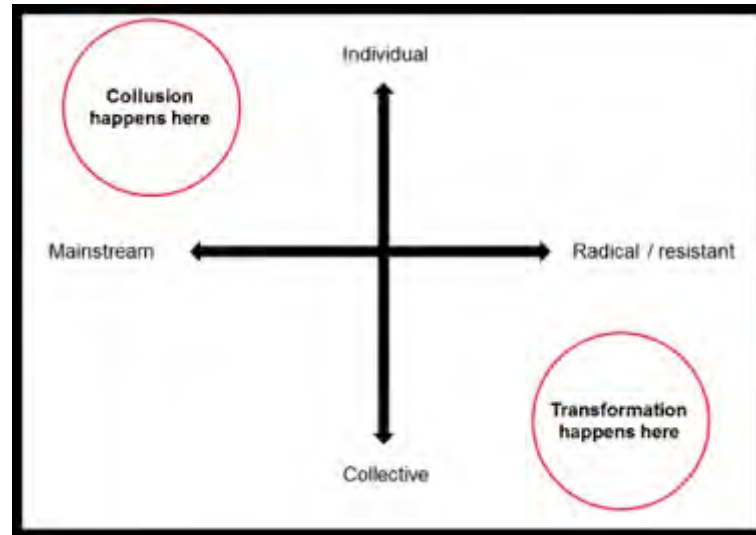
Brett Murray's 'Spear', a painting of President Jacob Zuma with a flaccid penis, triggered a vibrant public debate about the role of art in political critique, but it fell short of the 'radical' Benjamin refers to when he calls cultural producers to reflect on their position within societal power structures.

There is a tendency to think of artists as implicitly subversive, but the reality is that many artists working in the public realm, and especially those who are able to leverage funding for public art projects, do not fill the starving stereotype. They are not Basquiats, hustling at the edge of the art world and an alienating society. They are more often than not, middle class artists who have come through the academy (Blackman, 2013). In South Africa they are predominantly White, and often visiting from the North. Although artists may not be in positions of authority in formal structures vis-a-vie the state, they are often conceptualizing and coordinating projects in economically marginalized areas, which brings myriad power relations that cannot be ignored.

For Benjamin (1970, p. 4), it is not good enough to be sympathetic with the struggles of the people: the responsibility of the intellectual/artist 'can only be determined or better, chosen, on the basis of his [sic] position in the process of production'. Benjamin unequivocally suggests that any behalfist notion replicates the status quo and therefore the privileged intellectuals/artists needs to situate themselves *with* not *for* the people while simultaneously reflecting on the process of creative production involved in this process, and 'this reflection sooner or later leads the writers who are essential, that is, the best technicians of their trade, to conclusions and positions which are the basis of their trustworthy solidarity with the proletariat' (Benjamin, 1970, p. 70). For Clements (2008, p. 23) who would agree with Benjamin that making art on behalf of societal issues is not the same as dismantling the power structures within art industries, '[r]adicality, unlike an inaccessible modernism, may also correspond to a type of cultural exchange that is egalitarian and non-hierarchical and conforms to Freirian notions of widening cultural literacy'.

Clements (2008, pp. 26–27) provides an assessment matrix for working out the radical potential for public art. In his reflections on the different methodologies that have emerged around public art, he explains how public art can be classified along an axis from mainstream to radical, or resistant, art. Mainstream public art generally works within the hegemonic frame, where resistant art generally works in

critique of the status quo. In a similar fashion to Miles (M. Miles, 1997; Miles, 2005), Sharp (2005) and others, he argues that mainstream art often compromises itself to existing power structures, while resistant or radical art opens up space for critique.



Adaption of Clements matrix demonstrating his overall argument

He then goes on to look at how public art practice tends to gather around four sites:

Firstly, art intended by the artist(s) uncompromisingly, without negotiation. Secondly, art created through negotiation with one or more representatives. This can be elitist and relate to an art group cabal or more non-elitist and attempt to canvas opinion from the wider public constituency. Thirdly, art facilitated by the artist but completed with participation from representatives of the community. Fourthly, collective projects which can be either facilitated by an expert or organized and created by the participants (Clements, 2008, pp. 26–27).

Clements' matrix suggests that the more radical and resistant, and additionally the more collaborative a project is, the more likely it will be to transform society. While Clements' argument demonstrates the importance of collective and transformative practice, and it is interesting to plot different projects along the axes he provides, there are two flaws with a matrix such as this. Firstly, it is based on state-centric dichotomies that are not necessarily antithetical, and secondly, it does not take the far more complex reality of working within the realm of public art into consideration. Although it is tempting to agree with thinkers that argue that working with power structures is implicitly problematic, working in the field of public art is a far messier reality, especially in a context with limited cultural funding. Artists are

often simultaneously working on individual public commissions as part of city beautification strategies, and more collective, subversive projects, which may be illegal and often critical of the authorities that are employing them.

Making sense of the radical in art also highlights an epistemological dilemma. Baz Kershaw (1999), trying to make sense of where the radical in performance lies, argues that there is an inherent tension between modernist ideals of the generalizability of justice (Brecht) and post-modernist deconstructions of power (Foucault) that have complicated the notion of ‘political’ in art. For Kershaw, the ‘promiscuity of post-modernism’ has rendered the term ‘political’ ever present in every ‘nook and cranny of culture’, and therefore suggests that the term ‘radical’ may be more useful. According to Kershaw (1999, p. 18)

the chief challenge offered by the paradigm shift to the idea of the radical can be framed generally as follows: how to hold on to the healthy democratizing pressures of the post-modern, without succumbing to the dangers embedded in its tendencies to ethical relativism, political pragmatism, genetic quietism and ecological pessimism? My response to this challenge is an argument that claims for radical performance a potential to create various kinds of freedom that are not only resistant to dominant ideologies, but that also are sometimes transgressive, even transcendent, of ideology itself. In other words, the freedom that ‘radical performance’ invokes is not just freedom from oppression, repression, exploitation – the resistant sense of the radical – but also freedom to reach beyond existing systems of formalized power, freedom to create currently unimaginable forms of association and action – the transgressive or transcendent sense of the radical. What I am interested in centrally, then, is not the ways in which radical performance might represent such freedoms, but rather how radical performance can actually produce such freedoms, or at least a sense of them, for both performers and spectators, as it is happening.

Although Kershaw is referring specifically to performance outside of the theatre, the thinking is relevant to public art not only because much transient public art is made up of performance, but also likewise it speaks to the performative in the production of public art: the process of making and installing work in public space is a performance in itself (Sitas, 2012b).

The normative assumption is that the ‘high’ art of the academy and gallery is notable for its aesthetic credibility, while ‘low art’, craft and popular culture are substandard. Another simplistic assumption is that participatory or community art chooses function over form; the qualitative experience of the art process over the material aesthetic quality. Additionally, these assumptions neglect to reflect on the capacity of art to move beyond the social or representational, and into the conceptual

and abstract, revealing other less tangible interpretations and expressions of the world, which can be equally radical.

These assumptions presuppose is that there is a fixed set of criteria by which to judge art autonomously. According to Bourdieu (1993, p. 35) '[t]he work of art is an object which exists as such only by virtue of the (collective) belief which knows and acknowledges it as a work of art' and by implication, any form of criticism is a product of cultural norms. Bourdieu unpacks these cultural norms through interrogating the idea of taste. For Bourdieu, taste is constructed through the cultural industries of the bourgeois. Public and private galleries, academic institutions, art critics and artists themselves operate in a self-perpetuating system of the production of particular kinds of aesthetic standards. These standards set by cultural intermediaries are then used to measure the economic and symbolic worth and value of a particular artwork. Bourdieu challenges the notion that any kind of art can be judged independently or autonomously from the context of its production.

There is in fact every reason to suppose that the constitution of the aesthetic gaze as a 'pure' gaze, capable of considering the work of art in and for itself, i.e. as a 'finality without end', is linked to the institution of the world of art as an object of contemplation, with the creation of private and then public galleries and museums, and the parallel development of a corps of professionals appointed to conserve the work of art, both materially and symbolically (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 36).

For Bourdieu, radical art would challenge these norms and takes into account the aesthetic registers of ordinary people. Implicit in the social and participatory turns in art has been a challenging of aesthetic norms, but one of the biggest questions has been at what point does an art project cease to be an art project and is rather an event, a protest or a workshop? For Bishop (2012), this retaining of the classification as art has something to do with the 'authorial identity' of the artist as a particular kind of (somewhat egotistical) producer.

For Bourriaud (2002) the interaction around the work is paramount; the conversations between audience members being more important than an interaction to the artist or installation. But despite the focus being on the interaction, the artwork, and the aesthetic dimension remains important as the catalyst for the encounter, as does the centrality of the artist. Bourriaud is interested in the 'slippages' between art

and non-art work, whereas Kester (2004), writing about ‘dialogic art’ is more interested in the ‘intersections’ of art and the everyday.

Kester draws the term dialogical art from Mikhail Bakhtin for whom literature offers dialogic encounters producing new insights: ideas emerge between speakers and not in the utterances of individuals (M. Miles, 2009, p. 430).

Whereas for Bourriaud the author of the aesthetic moment remains with the artist, for Kester, the interaction between artists and ordinary people is premised on Freireian notions of democratic dialogue. The dialogue is not only between artists and audiences/participants, but with the context as well, where the artwork is produced through the interaction of all three. According to Miles (2009, p. 430),

Kester complains that such practices are ‘criticized for being unaesthetic ... for needlessly suppressing visual gratification’. But this seems to say merely that such work is not reintegrated into the trajectory of modern art, the terms of which are aesthetic.

By engaging with everyday aesthetics, normative aesthetics are assumed to be challenged. Both Bourriaud and Kester use the word ‘aesthetics’ in their writing, but the term seems to be used interchangeably with the word ‘art’. This highlights the difficulty of defining what would be deemed ‘un’aesthetic. Aesthetics are usually associated with normative notions of ‘beauty’, but even challenging aesthetics with everyday aesthetics is an aesthetic exercise. Benjamin (1970, p. 9) argued that the politics and the aesthetics of an artwork should be inextricably linked

the political tendency of a work can only be politically correct if it is also literarily correct. That means that the correct political tendency includes a literary tendency. For, just to clarify things right away, this literary tendency, which is implicitly or explicitly contained in every correct political tendency —that, and nothing else constitutes the quality of a work. The correct political tendency of a work includes its literary quality because it includes its literary tendency.

For Benjamin, radical, political or activist art is simple: you must be working with people in registers they can identify, with an overall agenda of challenging the status quo (of patriarchal capitalism). Rancier (2006, p. 1), while agreeing with the impulse of questioning inequality, would disagree on the location on politics within political art:

Art is not political owing to the messages and feelings that it conveys on the state of social and political issues. Nor is it political owing to the way it represents social structures, conflicts or identities. It is political by virtue of the very distance that it takes with respect to those functions. It is political insofar as it frames not only works or monuments, but also a specific space-time sensorium, as this sensorium defines ways of being together or being apart, of being inside or outside, in front of or in the middle of, etc. It is political as its own practices shape forms of visibility that reframe the way in which practices, manners of being and modes of feeling and saying are interwoven in a commonsense, which means a "sense of the common" embodied in a common sensorium.

For Ranciere, the politics of art are not as literally transferred as Benjamin suggests, and rather operate on a sensory or affective level. Ranciere's 'common sensorium' suggests that it is not about what the art *is*, but what it *does*. Whereas Benjamin asserts the need for the politics of art to *appear* in familiar *aesthetic* registers, Ranciere foregrounds the importance of activist art to *resonate* in recognizable *affective* registers. For Bishop (2012, p. 283), 'it is not enough to keep producing activist *art*'. Unlike activist art, which has often stopped at the point of making some kind of political critique, suggested in Bishop's challenge is exploring the role of artistic activism.

In many ways activist art is no less instrumental than art being leveraged for processes of culture-led development. The politics may be different, but the role of art remains essentially the same where artistic processes and products are assumed to fulfill a function of some form of social transformation. The risk here is curtailing art's ability to transcend the real: it is art's autonomy from being entirely grounded in the rational that gives it its critical potential. This does not mean art need be devoid of politics, it rather sees autonomy as a way to engage politics in an alternative way through an affective rationality.

It is this impulse to explore the intersection of art and progressive politics that has led many artists to revisit Freire's notion of 'cultural action'. Public artists in particular have been exploring new forms of cultural citizenship and democratic enrolment, and therefore the following section of this chapter explores the pedagogical implications of a public art of urban interaction may have for Urban Studies.

2.3. Public art praxis as urban pedagogy

Just because everything is different doesn't mean anything has changed (Kershaw, 1999: 25)

...cities – as spaces of encounter and rapid change, of concentrations of political, economic and cultural resources, and of often perplexing unknowability – are constantly sought to be learnt and relearnt by different people and for often very different reasons, from coping mechanisms and personal advancement to questions of contestation and justice. It is in this very concentration and demand of and for learning that the city is cast as a learning machine. (McFarlane, 2011b, p. 362)

The spatial and social turns in art, the cultural turn in planning, as well as the radical impulse in art practice, all demonstrate how increasingly the intersection of art and politics seems to be coalescing around issues of the urban. According to Pinder (2008, p. 730) these encompass art forms

that are critical and politicized in relation to dominant power relations and their spatial constitution, that are involved in but frequently disrupt everyday urban life, that make use of artistic and creative means to question and explore social problems and conflicts without necessarily prescribing solutions, and that resist the processes through which urban spaces are currently produced in the interests of capital and the state as they seek out and encourage more democratic alternatives.

The urban enquiry emerging out of these kinds of artistic interventions offer interesting pedagogical provocations: both institutionally and in the realm of public pedagogy. Pinder (2008: 734) identified three pedagogical challenges posed by public art to Urban Studies: 'the first concerns methods and ways of knowing the urban... the second issue... concerns the institutional means and structures through which studies of the urban are conducted... the third challenge concerns the urban conditions themselves and attempts to forge paths beyond the closures of the present'.

For Pinder, the ways in which some public art projects are operating are offering novel ways of studying and interpreting urban issues, specifically with a collective focus on alternative visions in highly unequal societies. Although Pinder

agrees that there is a tendency to romanticize the role of public art in society where ‘the economic, social, cultural, and political claims about the impacts of art in public spaces are often criticized for being overblown and unrealistic’ (Schuermans, Loopmans, & Vandenabeele, 2012, p. 676), he argues that the expectations on public art, be rethought. He argues that while public art may not fulfill the claims of addressing highly entrenched socio-economic issues, it may offer interesting spaces for socio-political action. For Schuermans et al (2012, p. 676) ‘socio-politics’ refers to

the way art becomes political not through overt struggle, but through fine-grained microcultural and discursive processes of exchanging meanings and ideas... This perspective redirects art research from exploring the meaning ‘embedded’ in art works to consider the sociopolitical processes of learning stimulated by art.

It is how to consider this learning that has pedagogical implications for Urban Studies. According to McFarlane (2011b, p. 362) ‘learning is crucial to how urbanism is produced and to how different constituencies respond to it. Learning is a central infrastructure of urban change, politics and every-day life’, yet ‘despite its centrality to urban politics, economics and life, learning remains a neglected and undertheorised domain in urban geography’ (McFarlane, 2011b, p. 360). Although there are myriad approaches to urban learning

all of them contain one central claim or assumption about learning: that learning is a process of potential transformation... As a process and outcome, learning is actively involved in changing or bringing into being particular assemblages of people–sources–knowledges. It is more than just a set of mundane practical questions, but is central to political strategies that seek to consolidate, challenge, alter and name new urban worlds (McFarlane, 2011b, p. 361).

Because the politics of learning McFarlane alludes to is most explicitly cited through Paulo Freire’s (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, this section starts by unpacking Freire in the context of public pedagogy (Biesta, 2012; Freire, 1970; Sandlin et al., 2010; Schuermans et al., 2012), before exploring what kinds of ‘becoming’ are foregrounded in shifting notions of democracy and citizenship (Holston, 2009; Ong, 2006; Stevenson, 2003). As Amin (2008, 2015) argues, much of the focus on democracy and citizenship has focused on human interaction, and therefore this section goes on to consider how to spatialise the discussion (Ellsworth, 2005; McFarlane, 2011b), before making an argument for how trespassing (Amin &

Thrift, 2002; Boal, 1979) and transgression (hooks, 1994; Kershaw, 1999) in public art practice can be useful tactics for creating transitional spaces of public becoming (McFarlane, 2011b; Winnicott, 1989).

2.3.1. Practice, praxis and public pedagogy

We are constantly being taught, constantly learn, and constantly unlearn. Education is an enveloping concept, a dimension of culture that maintains dominant practices while also offering spaces for their critique and reimagination (Sandlin et al, 2010: 1)

Public pedagogy emerged at the intersection of education and cultural studies, as many of the initial scholars of cultural studies were educational researchers who were fascinated with the impact of popular culture on society. Public pedagogy refers to sites of learning that exist outside of formal schooling systems, recognising that much of what we learn on a daily basis may come from elsewhere. While many researchers have focused on popular culture, there has been an increasing exploration of ‘sites beyond popular culture as spaces of learning, including museums, public parks, art installations, among others’ (Sandlin et al, 2010: 3).

The notion of public pedagogy democratises learning as it recognises that learning does not only happen through formal institutions. This does not make it any less ideological and therefore Giroux (2003) distinguished between a ‘corporate public pedagogy’ underpinned by neoliberalism (which is often used in the critique of consumer culture) and a ‘critical public pedagogy’ informed by ‘social transformation and progressive politics’ and embracing radical democracy (Roberts & Steiner, 2010, p. 21). The field of public pedagogy has expanded across a range of disciplines, but the roots stem predominantly from Paulo Freire.

Freire’s 1972 seminal text *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* argues for the importance of praxis – ‘reflection and action’ (Freire, 1972: 96) – in liberation. He claims that one of the major obstacles to freedom lies in the power dynamics implicit in the dichotomous power positions of colonizer/colonized, which manifests explicitly in the teacher/learner dichotomy. Heavily influenced by Frantz Fanon, Freire sees these relationships as mutually oppressive. Freire argues that to shed the shackles of these relationships, knowledge needs to be democratized and dialogic. For Freire

[d]ialogue with the people is radically necessary to every authentic revolution... Sooner or later, a true revolution must initiate a courageous dialogue with the people. Its very legitimacy lies in that dialogue... The earlier dialogue begins, the more truly revolutionary will the movement be... (Freire, 1972: 98-9)... We can legitimately say that in the process of oppression someone oppresses someone else; we cannot say that in the process of revolution someone liberates someone else, nor yet that someone liberates himself, but rather that men in communion liberate each other (Freire, 1972: 103)

This liberation has to come through collective learning. To do this he challenges the ‘banking model’ of traditional education that assumes that teachers are active agents of knowledge, and learners are passive receptacles for the information being imparted, where knowledge is ‘banked’ into the empty vault. He believes in the importance of co-constituting knowledge and that the ongoing collective pursuit of knowledge is key for liberation: coining the term conscientization. Freire’s impact has been wide felt across a range of disciplines and underpins much of popular education and public pedagogy today.

Although Freire’s pedagogical approach still informs education praxis all over the world, and his utopian approach remains useful in foregrounding social justice, it is important to note three shortfalls in his idealism when trying to make sense of power. Firstly, Freirian thinking tends to imagine a largely homogenous oppressed with a unified progressive agenda, which often does not tally with the messy reality in a conservative, misogynist and bigoted world where power dynamics are not as dichotomous as economic elite vs. disenfranchised poor. Secondly, while Freire does recognize that political becoming emerges when ‘confronting difference’ (Finkelpearl, 2001, p. 289), overcoming difference is premised on the notion of consensus towards a unified progressive agenda. Neither of these allows the space for dissent, dissensus or irreconcilable difference within the ranks of the oppressed. Finally, as with much of the literature on dialogic or democratic processes, the focus is largely human-centric and does not necessarily account for the relational, spatialised agency that McFarlane, Amin and others argue for.

Biesta (2012, p. 685) attempts to address some of these challenges and distinguishes between three forms of pedagogy: ‘a pedagogy *for* the public, a pedagogy *of* the public and pedagogy that enacts a concern for “publicness”’. For Biesta, the first functions in an instructive manner, where people are told what to think. The second looks at how learning happens publicly, much like in the case of

Freire's conscientization through collective political education, still based on an educational regime, and largely geared towards consensus. The third 'is not about teaching individuals what they should be, nor about demanding from them that they learn, but is about kinds of interruption that keep the opportunities for "becoming public" open'. Biesta's challenge asks what kind of public pedagogy allows for interruption or Ranciere's 'dissensus'.

To 'stage' dissensus is to introduce an incommensurable element—an event, an experience and an object—that can act both as a test and as a reminder of publicness. It is an element that can act as a 'test' of the public quality of particular forms of togetherness and of the extent to which actual spaces and places make such forms of human togetherness possible (Biesta, 2012: 693).

Biesta's sites of public pedagogy are therefore not only analytical but generative as well. This has implications for knowledge production beyond conscientization where conflict is seen as part of a radical praxis. Although Biesta allows for spaces of dissensus, he assumes that 'human togetherness' will allow freedom to emerge, which dislocates the politics of critical public pedagogy and runs the risk of subordinating 'praxis to the realm of ideas, nostrums of discursivity, and the regime of the episteme' (McLaren, 2010, p. 566).

In other words, again it is about finding the balance between Freire's structuralist worldview where power is located within macro binaries of oppressors (primarily linked to capitalist classes), and the oppressed (disenfranchised poor); and a post-structuralist view that agency is distributed between people and things, and the relations between (Amin & Thrift, 2002; Amin, 2008; McFarlane, 2011b), without succumbing to or being 'domesticated' by the '*soi-dissant* politics of postmodernism' (McLaren, 2010, p. 565).

von Kotze and Wildemeersch (2014), reflecting on public art in the North and South propose a 'pedagogy of contingency' that sits somewhere between: that takes into consideration the dissensus of Ranciere at the same time as situating the politics of public art within the historical contexts and material realities of struggle according to Freire. Ultimately they argue that art has the potential to create spaces of encounter that disrupt the status quo, where '[t]he disruption of normality and creation of a transitional space that invites experimentation is the first step in the process of criticality' (von Kotze & Wildemeersch, 2014, p. 323).

Whereas educators have long recognised the role of arts in learning, it is questionable whether artists or urbanists have fully recognised the potential for learning in art processes: particularly in the fields of public art. Urbanists have tended towards looking at public art's instrumentality while participatory art has invoked Freire's (1970) language of dialogue, but the dialogue has often only referred to conversations during the artwork such as in Bourriaud's (2002) relational aesthetics, or the temporary work that Bishop (2012) critiques. Freire's dialogue involves more than merely a conversation that tends to happen in the moment and not much thought is given to what happens beyond that particular instance. Artists and urbanists also rarely consider the pedagogical dimensions of working in public space with a range of contested socio-economic and spatial issues. While coproduction has gained currency in Art and Urban Studies, where academics or artists may work with authorities and activists (although rarely both at the same time), the pedagogical implications have not been extensively explored in the South or elsewhere.

Fundamental to a public pedagogical agenda is recognising and enabling citizenship for liberation, which has implications for thinking about democracy. For Roberts and Steiner (2010), democracy can only be radical if it is politically progressive and pluralistic. In their view, differences and divergent opinions must be nurtured, and space for conflict is imperative. 'Its principles are based on moral and ethical beliefs, values, and assumptions that are subject to debate and deliberation' (Roberts & Steiner, 2010, p. 21). It is therefore useful at this point to consider changing notions of democratic practice and citizenship. Much of the writing on the intersection of citizenship studies and cultural practice calls for a renovation of the way in which democracy is both conceived and practiced.

2.3.2. Democratic Renovations¹⁹

The social inclusion / cohesion dilemma that Harvey (2012), Amin (2008) and Bishop (2012) explore is inextricably linked to a question around the role of citizens and citizenship in a diverse and unequal world. Although they critique the democratic pretensions underpinning the idea that being together in a particular space is enough,

¹⁹ This title is taken from Sitas & Pieterse's (2013) article entitled 'Democratic Renovations and Affective Political Imaginaries'

they are not rejecting democracy outright. Their challenges ask important questions about the nature and role of democratic processes in producing particular kinds of citizenship.

While it seems that it has become increasingly difficult to define democracy where there is ‘a real danger that democracy has so many meanings that it has ceased to have any meaning at all’ (Biesta, 2006, p. 122), it may be useful to think about democracy as something that is constantly being produced through its dispute. For Dewey democracy is a ‘mode of associated living’ (Biesta, 2006, p. 122). This association need not be based on consensus as Amin (2008) and Harvey (2012) warn against. This kind of democracy is present not in its form, but in its constant renegotiation. In a move away from the traditional notion of democracy being related to a particular political system, or political enrolment through formal structures (such as voting), democracy as a social practice in the making, may allow for more radical potential.

But what makes a democracy radical, and over and against what other conceptions of democracy is radical opposed? Should any political or social arrangements less than radical democracy even qualify as democratic? Is a democracy radical by virtue of the quality of public and civic life it promotes and sustains? Against what standard might such quality be measured? The scope of participation? But what kind of participation, and with what level of deliberative, critical agency? (Roberts & Steiner, 2010, p. 21).

Just as the notion of democracy has been shifting, so has the idea of citizenship. Citizenship used to refer to ‘membership, belonging, rights and obligations’ of people in relationship to the state (Stevenson, 2003, p. 4). This approach assumes that a citizen’s political activity is located around political participation in public forums, and is most significantly expressed in the act of voting that is geared towards some kind of consensus. The reality is far more complicated. In a globalizing world, where access to mainstream political processes is limited for many people, new forms of political participation are emerging. Ong (2006) calls these mutations of citizenship, as assemblages as opposed to territories dictate political mobilization. For example, ‘[d]emocratic values are becoming performed in public spaces to challenge authoritarian rule, corruption, and the lack of access to rights and benefits for excluded populations’ (Ong, 2006, p. 503). Although de-territorialized from the idea of the state, Holston and Appadurai (1996, p. 189) still argue for the importance of the space of citizenship, asserting that ‘place remains

fundamental to the problems of membership in society, and that cities (understood here to include their regional suburbs) are especially privileged sites for considering the current renegotiations of citizenship'. In order to understand these spaces of citizenship, Holston argues for recognizing what he calls 'insurgent citizenship':

The spaces of an insurgent citizenship constitute new metropolitan forms of the social not yet liquidated by or absorbed into the old. As such, they embody possible alternative futures (James Holston, 1999, p. 158)... These insurgent forms are found both in organized grassroots mobilizations and in everyday practices that, in different ways, empower, parody, derail, or subvert state agendas (James Holston, 1999, p. 167).

Holston is challenging urban planning not only to take its cue from outdated Modernist notions and practices of citizenship, and rather to consider the insurgent forms that emerge outside the status' quo.

Asserting political agency through a cultural lens is also challenging normative notions of citizenship, and as Stevenson (2003, p. 5) maintains, 'to talk of cultural citizenship means that we take questions of rights and responsibilities far beyond the technocratic agendas of mainstream politics and media'. For Stevenson, citizenship cannot be understood without looking at its cultural dimension. Culture in this context is not fixed ideologically or spatially, but 'move in a diversity of networks that have developed a variety of linkages' (Stevenson, 2003, p. 17). And importantly, culture 'is as much about difference as it is about sameness' (Stevenson, 2003, p. 17). Citizenship is therefore located in these contested arenas where the 'politics of cultural citizenship is more concerned with the generation of dialogue (Stevenson, 2003, p. 153) and 'aims to promote conversation where previously there was silence, suspicion, fragmentation or the voices of the powerful' (Stevenson, 2003, p. 152).

This casting of citizenship in/as dialogue has underpinned much of democratic experimentation in South Africa that boasts comparatively progressive participatory processes, such as the Integrated Development Plan (IDPs), and Ward Committee systems.

What is common across the scholarly reviews of urban democratic institutions is the assumption that citizens should be enrolled into democratic cultures through participation in rational deliberative forums that will have an impact on decision-

making processes related to their livelihoods or democratic voice (Sitas & Pieterse, 2013, p. 329)²⁰.

The reality has looked somewhat different which can be seen in the failure of these systems. The assumption that people make decisions according to rational criteria is also being increasingly questioned. Consumer culture, and particularly advertising, is based on the assumption that people make many decisions based on desire rather than need often to their detriment. It is the affective dimension of brand communication that plays an important part in decision-making processes (Kotler & Keller, 2011). The success of the advertising industry attests to the importance of affect in the decision-making process.

According to Lorimer (2008, p. 344) affect ‘refers to both material, ecological properties of a body and the forces and processes that link them together. It describes prediscursive, embodied experiences that are subsequently codified into subjective emotions’. Affect is the result of external stimuli that triggers an emotional resonance within us. Affect is therefore intrinsically embodied as it experienced through a range of senses. It is the childhood memory triggered by wafting smells; the cringe at nails on a chalkboard; and the sense of awe at a spectacular sunset on an inner city Johannesburg rooftop in summer. But affect is not only an experiential phenomenon: it is also a way of thinking. Thrift (2004, p. 60) contends that

affect is understood as a form of thinking, often indirect and non-reflective, it is true, but thinking all the same. And, similarly all manner of the spaces they create must be thought of in the same way, as a means of thinking as thought in action. Affect is a different kind of intelligence about the world, but it is an intelligence none-the-less.

Affect has had slightly different articulations in different disciplines: phenomenological approaches which unpack the embodiedness of emotion; psychoanalytical approaches which unpack the drive behind affect; and philosophical approaches, inspired mainly by the thinking of Spinoza and Deleuze (1988). Spinoza argues that thinking and action need to be thought of as simultaneous processes. Drawing on his work, and attempting to connect the philosophical approaches to affect with political theory, Connolly (2006) makes an argument for the role of affect in decision-making processes.

²⁰ The following section stems largely from Sitas & Pieterse’s (2013) research for ‘Democratic Renovations and Affective Political Imaginaries’.

Affect, Connolly demonstrates, is particularly important for action-oriented decision-making processes because humans tend to act on the basis of external stimuli at a pace faster than that at which the brain can process, which means that something else – affective dispositions – informs responses through the preliminary orientations that we have. Affect holds the key to decipher deeply embedded dispositions, desires and concerns that steer us towards a particular kind of response that is most resonant, most appealing and most promising (Sitas & Pieterse, 2013, p. 330).

In this view affect is inextricably linked to the social and draws on layers of embodied experience and is therefore always in the making. Affective decision-making can be seen most explicitly in the seduction of consumption. Advertisers have managed to capture popular adoption of a range of goods and services that are inessential to human life, and often push people into unnecessary debt. Despite the assumption that politics operate on a rational level, the reality is much more imbued with emotional affect. Amin and Thrift (2013, p. 157) see politics as being

shot through with emotions from start to finish. Political ideas are frequently born out of passionately held beliefs; many political impulses are contagious precisely because they work on feelings.

This is why marketing techniques are now routinely used as part of political campaigning (Amin & Thrift, 2013; Curtis, 2002, 2004). While evoking emotions for consumerist or political ends has been frowned upon, it also offers an opportunity: affect may be able to be harnessed for progressive political action in a context where formal, rational political processes seem to be floundering. It is this affective becoming that could offer interesting possibilities for recasting the social and political life of people, and challenges new kinds of democratic citizenship.

Although art and politics have been intertwined, and art, like advertising, operates at an affective level, art is not always accessible. According to art educationist Greene (2000, p. 125) ‘simply being in the presence of art forms is not sufficient to occasion an aesthetic experience or to change a life’. Greene explains how art can be instrumental in shifting the way we think, and argues for a ‘pedagogy of thoughtfulness and imagination’ (Greene, 2010, p. 30). For Greene, activating the social imagination is key in this process.

We also have our social imagination: the capacity to invent visions of what should be and what might be in our deficient society, in the streets where we live, in our schools. As I write of social imagination, I am reminded of Jean-Paul Sartre's declaration that "it is on the day that we can conceive of a different state of affairs that a new light falls on our troubles and our suffering and that we decide that these are unbearable (1956, pp. 434-435)" (Greene, 2000, p. 5).

For Greene, social change can only happen through social imagination. The role of art in this process is about exploring alternative ways of becoming, but through affective means. It is this politicized imagining that taps into Connolly's (2002, 2006) affective decision-making potential. This also takes Amin and Thrift's (2013) challenge to refine the 'arts of the political' seriously, by inserting the arts more explicitly in their project. Critical at this stage is to (literally and figuratively) ground this discussion of affective cultural citizenship in the materiality of the spaces in which this learning is operating.

2.3.3. Learning and the city

Pedagogical and learning discussions tend to focus on what is going on in the minds of the people involved, with giving scant consideration to material conditions surrounding a learning moment (Ellsworth, 2005): the spaces where learning is happening; the materials and resources being engaged; and the effect and affect these have on what is being learnt. This recalls Lefebvre's (1991) rebalancing of the spatial triad where the materiality and the spaces of encounter they engender impacts on the social experience produced in a particular moment.

McFarlane (2011b, p. 360) situates learning about the city squarely in the urban seeing the city 'as a machine for learning'. While the metaphor of a machine may not be entirely appropriate as a somewhat technocratic reference for something that is more than merely mechanical, his approach to learning and urban change offers an interesting lens through which to explore how learning is mediated in relation to its material conditions. McFarlane (2011b, p. 361) is responding to a tendency to focus on clusters of learning which has resulted in restricting urban learning to 'questions of economic innovation, urban and regional competitiveness, and organisational learning, and have offered less in terms of critical engagement with power inequalities and exclusion' and argues for 'the importance of appreciating learning as a distributed process that foregrounds materiality and spatial relationality, and of the

city as pluralised, multiple learning machine’ (McFarlane, 2011b, p. 363). In order to do this, McFarlane offers three conceptual tools for understanding learning: ‘translation’; ‘coordination’; and ‘dwelling’:

translation, or the relational distributions through which learning is produced as a sociomaterial epistemology of displacement and change; coordination, or the construction of functional systems that enable learning as a means of coping with complexity and facilitating adaptation; and dwelling, or the education of attention through which learning operates as a way of seeing and inhabiting urban worlds (McFarlane, 2011b, p. 365).

‘Translation’ means that knowledge is always mediated through spatialities (including physical spaces, reports, products), and intermediaries (both people and spatialities such as ‘near and far’ or technologies such as the Internet). Additionally, knowledge is not static, but rather social, which means it is being ‘created, contested, and transformed through learning’. Ultimately McFarlane is arguing that ‘the spaces through which knowledge moves are not simply a supplement to learning, but constitutive of it’ (McFarlane, 2011b, pp. 363–364). ‘Coordination’ refers to how these multiple sites, objects and relations of knowledge are coordinated where ‘learning is not simply a process of accessing stored data, but depends on the (re)construction of functional systems that coordinate different domains’. Here, different types of data and knowledge dimensions, such as ‘language, models, procedures, rules, documents, instruments, traffic lights, market layouts, ideas, discourses and so on’ are organized (McFarlane, 2011b, p. 364). Finally, ‘learning through dwelling entails shifts in perception, a ‘way of seeing’ that is haptic – sensed, embodied, practiced – and that positions learning as a changing process of perceiving how to use the affordances of documents, objects and situations’ (McFarlane, 2011b, p. 365).

McFarlane (2011b, p. 366) is primarily attempting to recast policy learning that has tended to be either ‘top down’ or ‘bottom up’, in order to make an argument for ‘tactical learning’ inspired by de Certeau (1984) that ‘manipulates events and turns them into opportunities’ for better urban living. These everyday learning tactics largely stem from improvising around marginality. McFarlane does not romanticize coping mechanisms of the urban poor, but rather makes a case for how learning is operating in a situated and mobile way as people adapt to cities. Importantly, for McFarlane (McFarlane, 2011b, pp. 367–368),

as an ongoing process of tactical learning, improvisation is not – as it is commonly understood – straightforwardly spontaneous, ‘of the moment’, or mere ad hoc-ism. It is learnt over time through the use of coordination devices’ and constitute urban learning [that] in the context of improvisation involves acting within assemblages of multiple relations – reciprocal relations stretched between family and friends, negotiating the ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’, and delimiting the possibilities of resistance – which are coordinated in order to manage a field of uncertainties.

It is these, often collective, tactics as an approach to learning that underpin McFarlane’s ‘critical urban learning’. Although McFarlane is building an argument for creating platforms for urban learning that explores ‘the possibilities learning as a site of progressive urban politics’ (McFarlane, 2011b, p. 374), specifically referring to social movements, this approach is useful for looking at the pedagogical implications of tactical affective learning in public art.

2.3.4. Trespassing and transgression: transitional tactics of transformation

de Certeau’s (1984) *Practice of Everyday Life* is often cited in public art literature and employed as a rationale in public art practice as it foregrounds the everyday, affective, and immediate walking scale of the city. McFarlane’s use of tactics is therefore apt in the context of this research. He tempers the ‘latent potential in de Certeau’s work of romanticizing marginality’ by looking at Hansen and Verkaaik’s (2009) notion of ‘urban infrapower’. McFarlane (2011b, p. 366) proposes that urban infrapower offers a useful lens for understanding how people ‘translate, coordinate and dwell in the city’ in three interconnected ways. The first refers to how we learn sensorially by being immersed in the city (‘sensing the city’). The second is how people come to know and coordinate the city through their daily interactions (‘knowing the city’). The third is linked to the performative ‘urban gestures’ that people enact this knowledge as tactics. This could be seen as a useful a mechanism to recast Freire’s conscientised praxis with the spatialised and relational power dynamics that McFarlane and Amin espouse, where these become tactics of urban transformation. It is often these kinds of tactics that public art ventures such as ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ reveal, engage, or challenge (discussed further in Chapter Four). Two useful tactical approaches that have found

currency in art and educational praxis have been those of trespassing (Boal, 1979) and transgression (hooks, 1994; Kershaw, 1999).

Augusto Boal's (1979) *Theatre of the Oppressed* draws on Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and explored trespass as a performative strategy.

This invasion is a symbolic trespass. It symbolizes all acts of trespass we have to commit in order to free ourselves from what oppresses us. If we do not trespass (not necessarily violently), if we do not go beyond our cultural norms our state of oppression, the limits imposed upon us, even the law itself (which should be transformed) – if we do not trespass in this we can never be free. To free ourselves is to trespass, and to transform. It is through the creation of the new that that which has not exist yet begins to exist. To free yourself is to trespass. To trespass is to exist. To free ourselves is to exist (Boal, 2000: xxi)

For Boal, this is not only about trespassing public space (as this is where much of the theatre emerged), but also to trespass difficult or contested ideas.

The word trespassing is usually associated with signs – hammered onto grass and the sides of private buildings, indicating who may or may not legitimately take up a specific type of space. Trespassing is a capitalist concern for property: people here; dogs there; no sleeping over there or there or there or anywhere. The Theatre of the Oppressed, a theatre movement inspired by Paulo Freire, is concerned with developing the idea of the 'spect-actor' – here the audience is active rather than passive. Trespassing in this context is as much about physical space as it is about societal roles. It is in this negotiation of trespassing, that a revolutionary movement or moment has the potential to exist (Sitas, 2012a, pp. 45–46).

The purpose of the *Theatre of the Oppressed* is to conscientize 'the masses' through an affective register: playing out real life situations and drawing on cultural cues to draw in audience participation around particular political issues. For Boal to trespass spaces and power relations opens up the space for revolutionary action in the making. The kind of public art or artistic urban interaction Bishop (2012), Kester (2004), Pinder (2005, 2008), Schuermans et al (2012) and Miles (1997) write about, and that underpins 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town' literally and figuratively trespass in similar ways. Amin & Thrift (2002, p. 148) recognise that 'the principle can be transported to other settings' where, specifically referring to citizenship, 'the purpose, through participation is to listen, learn and enjoy, but also to express, connect and change; to trespass'.

To ‘transgress’ is slightly different to ‘trespass’. Transgression generally refers to going beyond the parameters of moral, social or legal norms. Transgressive art usually refers to art that aims to shock, such as early Dadaist or surrealist work. hooks (1994) has expressed transgression most explicitly in relation to pedagogy in *Teaching to Transgress*, where she asserted the importance of learning to transgress as a means to freedom. Drawing on Freirian critical pedagogy and feminist pedagogy, hooks argues for the liberatory potential for transgressing norms as a learning imperative. For Kershaw ‘transgression’ is not only about political consensus around left-wing progressive politics. It is also about producing some kind of resistance to problematic power regimes. Transgression in public art implies producing work that transgresses social norms which opens up the possibility for dissensus, disruption or conflict.

The notion of ‘transgression’ has started to gain currency in the public art realm in South Africa²¹, but so far in a somewhat shallow capacity (PLAY>URBAN, 2013; and Public Acts, 2014). The references to transgression are still primarily used as ways to rationalize performative public art interventions (generally by middle class artists in marginal public spaces), where the meaning is conflated with the idea of traversing the city in affective ways, but do not engage the radical potential implied by hooks and Kershaw.

Because public art moves within, and beyond the social, these tactics of trespass and transgression are useful as strategies to create Winnicott’s (1989) transitional spaces of becoming. Winnicott’s analysis of transitional moments of learning in infants has found currency in education and art theory and is understood as ‘as the time and place out of which experiences of the learning emerge’ (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 17). It is these transitional spaces von Kotze (2009) refers to when she claimed that

by creating transitional spaces – in the sense of both temporary physical spaces that offer transitions from one place to another and mental spaces beyond the familiar, everyday landscapes of thinking – an art, architecture, design and engineering project may also function as a collective practice that opens further democratic possibilities.

²¹ Particularly coming out of Wits School of Arts

According to Schuermans et al (2012, p. 678) reflecting on what public art as public pedagogy could mean to geographers,

[p]ublic pedagogy emphasizes how educators (e.g. artists) cannot merely impose meaning or singular answers upon their educational subjects. Instead, public pedagogy through art is about creating ‘transitional spaces’ where individuals are challenged to face the ambivalences that result from encounters with diversity...

Although Winnicott (1989) may have originally been referring to a particular transitional state of mind, for Ellsworth (2005), von Kotze (2009), Schuermans (2012) and McFarlane (2011b), these transitional spaces include both the mental and material conditions of the event (Amin, 2015). Von Kotze & Wildemeersch (2014, p. 325) argue that these transitional spaces are ‘pedagogies of contingency’:

[l]ike public art, a pedagogy of contingency is tied in tightly with space and time: context matters hugely, the pedagogical and artistic practice is connected to the reality of the neighbourhood and, at best, reflective of unequal power relationships and injustices beyond. The historical moment, space, and particularity of participants shape the relationship, the encounter, the process, and what gets defined as useful knowledge and worthwhile experience in the end.

Tactics of trespass and transgression in public art may offer the opportunity for these contingent transitional spaces to emerge, which require participants or audiences to rethink or relearn normative perspectives of the world in interesting ways for Urban Studies.

2.4. Affective Urban Studies

Pick up any academic or popular publication that deals with urban life in Africa and be prepared to be overrun by caricature, hyperbole, stereotype and moralistic hogwash. Urban Africans are either bravely en route to empowering themselves to attain sustainable livelihoods or the debased perpetrators of the most unimaginable acts of misanthropy. Explanations for these one-dimensional distortions vary from historical dependency perspectives, to the vagaries of the peddlers of neo-liberal globalisation agendas, or to the glorious agency of dignified actors who persist with their backs straight, chin up despite the cruelties bestowed by governmental neglect and economic malice. Amidst these registers it is almost impossible to get any meaningful purchase on what is actually going on in the vibrant markets, streets, pavements, taxi ranks, hotel lobbies, drinking halls, clubs, bedrooms, rooftops, gardens dump sites, beach fronts, river edges, cemeteries, garages, basements, and other liminal spaces of daily life and the imaginary (Pieterse & Edjabe, 2010, p. 5).

This thesis argues that an affective Urban Studies at the intersection of public space, public art and public pedagogy can make important in-roads to addressing Edjabe & Pieterse's concern because public art often operates within the liminal spaces they refer to. Hawkins (2012) explores the intersection of art and geographical studies and while she recognises the potential of combining 'socially engaged' arts and social and cultural geography, she does this largely in the interest of the 'expanding fields' in these two disciplines rather than focusing on the pedagogical effects. Pinder (2008, p. 773) argues that art projects are politicised in a way that has pedagogical implications for knowing the urban, but fails to adequately unpack how the fields of Urban Studies, art and pedagogy intersect. Although he hints that other ways of knowing the urban are possible, he does not sufficiently explore how this may happen beyond key moments within an arts project. This thesis contends that paying closer attention to the intersection of these three bodies of knowledge is important as they push the conceptual boundaries in valuable ways.

The public space literature challenges simplistic notions of public space as a vessel for 'civicness' that underpins much of the public art and public pedagogy literature, arguing for a 'sentient urban landscape' (Amin, 2015), and therefore questions some of the founding humanist premises implicit in art and pedagogical perspectives. While the arts are in the business of producing cultural objects and situations, human interaction is still foregrounded as paramount and framed within simplistic notions of democracy, and public space is often seen as just another kind of gallery or stage (Bishop, 2012; Bourriaud, 2002; Kester, 2004). The 'sentience' of inanimate objects and places poses an important challenge to public pedagogy that largely think of 'public' as people yet neglects how spatiality shapes learning and knowledge production.

Additionally, the public space and urban literature, as is evident in the way art trickles into urban design, tends to have a limited knowledge of the kinds of art practices that exist, and urbanists tend to romanticize the arts. For example, Thrift (2000, 2008) explores the embodiment of dance that suggests a non-representational dimension to knowing, but his ideas are focused on dance that happens on a stage, and in his casting of an affective embodied non-representational politics, he does not think of the long tradition of radical street performance as providing more critical examples of politics and embodiment. The public art literature opens this up by exposing a

range of experimental and inter-disciplinary art practices. It also challenges the notion that art in itself is always subversive.

Although the public space literature is coming to greater grips with the urban realities of places outside of the North, this is still limited. The power dynamics at play in the South often involve complex spatialised networks embroiled in race, class, gender and ethnicity that operate at a largely irrational level, fueled by fears and desires that cannot always be rationally explained. Race thinking still permeates South African life, but while non-racialism underpinned the transition narrative, twenty years after democracy, the spatial legacy of apartheid has not been adequately addressed, and therefore racial divisions remain a stark reminder of the work that still needs to be done (Erwin, 2012). Thinking in the field of public pedagogy and public art have been crucial in trying to address difference, with varying success in diverse neighbourhoods around the world (Biesta, 2006, 2012; Bishop, 2012; Finkelppearl, 2001; hooks, 1993; Kester, 2004; M. Miles, 1997; von Kotze & Wildemeersch, 2014), but racial integration in South Africa is often not possible because neighbourhoods are rarely meaningfully diverse.

Urban politics tend to be seen to play out on formal political platforms, be it through public participatory processes (such as ward committees), community based organisations or through social movements. Politicised art practice is useful as it provides a range of other kinds of political enrolment and demonstrates how the autonomy of artistic practice can provide an affective engagement with power that is able to move beyond the real and rational. Public art projects can provide less threatening spaces for grappling with complex urban issues than formal social and political forums (Bishop, 2012; Bourriaud, 2002; Kester, 2004; Makhubu & Simbao, 2013; Sitas & Pieterse, 2013). The uncertainty, although daunting, is what allows new forms of knowledge to emerge (von Kotze & Wildemeersch, 2014).

The public pedagogy literature recognises the public dimensions of knowledge production and forces thinking around public space and public art to consider the pedagogical implications: for example by asking what is being learned in Amin's (2015) 'eventfulness' and Pinder's (2005) 'art of interaction'? Artists and urbanists tend to invoke Freire somewhat uncritically. Thinking about the role of learning in public, and how this can be orchestrated, can deepen the kinds of public encounters within art encounters. Public pedagogy is largely underpinned by making sense of

power, and negotiating thinkers like Freire and Biesta allow for greater engagement within the epistemological tensions between structural and the post-structural politics. This has important implications for action (von Kotze & Wildemeersch, 2014).

For Freire (1970), conscientization is a pedagogical imperative of recasting learning environments for liberation. Much like *Romancing the Agora* challenges the romantic notion of public space as a container for democracy, *Public art praxis as urban pedagogy* which argues that recasting political enrolment as contested (Amin, 2008; Harvey, 2012), pluralistic (McFarlane, 2011b; Stevenson, 2003), and largely shaped by affect (Connolly, 2002, 2006; Massumi, 1997; Thrift, 2004), may offer a more credible way of maintaining the progressive politics espoused by Freireian cultural action, while allowing for spaces of disruption and dissensus (Biesta, 2012). Public pedagogy shows how citizenship is learned in the process of doing. It is insufficient to think of these kinds of political enrolments as solely social, hence the suggestion that spatialising the discussion offers important in-roads for critical affective urban praxis (Amin, 2008; Ellsworth, 2005; McFarlane, 2011b).

Amin (2015, p. 18) reflects on the political potential of affective eventfulness, but states '[h]ow to engineer this is not at all self-evident, if possible'. This thesis argues that the public art of 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town' may offer important affective in-roads into how this can be done. Working across these disciplines also unlocks a deeper exploration of alternative futures, or becoming otherwise, as this thesis frames it. Engaged simultaneously, urban theory provides a frame for understanding certain kinds of contextual realities that remind us that the non-human plays an important role; while artistic practice allows for the suspension of reality in which to make sense of and disrupt pasts, presents and futures; and grounding this as a pedagogical project enables a deeper engagement with power and knowledge production. It is this simultaneity that enables affective Urban Studies to emerge.

3. METHODOLOGY: Researching Affectivity for Urban Studies

Nonrepresentational styles of work provide a very different means of 'theorising' and 'witnessing' (Thrift, 2000, p. 244)

There is an urgent need to restore attention to the modes of conceptual and affective complexity generated by socially oriented art projects (Bishop, 2012, p. 8)

This chapter explores the complexity of researching affectivity. It starts by locating this study within qualitative enquiry, before situating it within methodological literature in Urban Studies and public art. It then goes on to introduce the case of 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town', before detailing the methods used to gather information.

3.1. Qualitative inquiry

By the turn of this century, the use of qualitative methods had become common across all disciplines, and whereas there used to be a strong push to argue for the benefits of qualitative approaches in opposition, or addition, to quantitative means, increasingly the discussion is less about whether to use qualitative means or not, and more about the intricacies of strengthening existing qualitative praxis. According to Cragg (2002) because of qualitative research's pervasiveness, 'we are beyond simply championing or justifying qualitative method'.

Qualitative research is 'replete with enthusiasm, creativity, intellectual ferment, and action' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The kind of public art of interest to this research shares these qualities, and in some ways each project within 'Two Thousand and ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town' was a type of qualitative study on its own. It was therefore fitting to engage qualitative means to understand how

these projects operated socially, spatially and aesthetically within the myriad power relations typical of post-apartheid South Africa.

The field of qualitative research has become a vast, complex and contested field and therefore finding a common consensus on what it is, is less interesting than exploring how it is being used and what constitutes 'qualitative quality' (Crang, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Bent Flyvbjerg, 2001; Mouton, 2001; Tracy, 2010).

For Gillham (2000, p. 11) qualitative research is most appropriate to achieve the following:

- To carry out an investigation where other methods – such as experiments are either not practical or not ethically justifiable.
- To investigate situations where little is known about what is there or what is going on.
- To explore complexities that are beyond the scope of more 'controlled' approaches.
- To 'get under the skin' of a group or organisation to find out what really happens – the informal reality which can only be perceived from the inside.
- To view the case from the inside out: to see it from the perspective of those involved.
- To carry out research onto the processes leading to results...rather than into the 'significance' of the results themselves

Although all relevant to this research, the last three are important to emphasise. In the case of inclusionary and experimental public art, the result is completely dependent on the process. Looking at the 'informal realities' (that may fall outside of the art process) and looking from the 'inside out' allows for a different perspective on understanding the potential of these kinds of art projects to engender some kind of societal critique of, or change in power relations. As has been previously mentioned, few comprehensive case studies of public art in South Africa have been afforded rigorous academic attention. A case study is therefore most appropriate in this context as it allows for an in depth study of a particular case that is somewhat unique in the realm of contemporary public art (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 1984). And according to Flyvbjerg (2006, p. 242),

[i]n this connection, it is worth repeating the insight of Kuhn (1987): that a discipline without a large number of thoroughly executed case studies is a discipline without systematic production of exemplars, and that a discipline without exemplars is an ineffective one.

Despite there being a shift away from rationalising the use of qualitative case studies as both Crang (2002) and Flyvbjerg (2006; 2001) argue, it is still important to consider what makes for good qualitative research. While there is understandably a reluctance to develop a singular checklist for assessing qualitative research, there are certain qualities that may be useful for guiding strong qualitative enquiry. For Tracy (2010, p. 839),

quality qualitative methodological research is marked by (a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence.

These qualities became a useful point of reflection on how the research was developed in order to ensure ‘rigorous’ collection of appropriate data; enable the kind of self-reflexivity that makes a study ‘sincere’ and ‘credible’; and get ‘under the skin’ (Gillham, 2000) of the project in order to ensure resonance and making a significant contribution to the field.

One of the biggest challenges of writing about art projects is managing the disjuncture between the format and structure of academic writing and the affective, and often ephemeral creative happenings that operate in seemingly incompatible registers. Engaging Geertz’s (1973) ‘thick description’ is useful in this regard. In the absence of a reader being present at the projects, ‘thick description’ allows for a detailed mechanism for showing rather than telling, and comes closest to replicating the kinds of experiences of art in the public realm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Tracy, 2010). ‘Thick description’ also allows the opportunity to record affective interactions between humans and the material world. In order to situate the ‘story-telling’ (B. Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 240), Tracy (2010) argues that ‘worthy topics often emerge from disciplinary priorities and, therefore, are theoretically or conceptually compelling’ and hence it is important to situate the research within a broader discussions about methods in Urban Studies and public art.

3.2. Researching public art and urban affectivity

Critical writing on public art tends to stem from art criticism and journalism, and tends to be located in arts specific journals, magazines and catalogues (Bishop, 2012; Lacy, 2008; Rendell, 2010). In Urban Studies, public art usually appears in evaluations of culture-led development, and focuses on the art product or its instrumentalisation in the politics of development agendas (Evans, 2005; M. Miles, 1997; Miles, 2005; Sharp et al., 2005). These studies rarely explore *how* research into public art is being, or can be done. Crang (2002, 2003, 2005), reflecting on emergent qualitative research in human geography identified a glaring gap in literature about the non-verbal

Most strikingly among this current work, we can note that the concentration remains strongly on the verbal... and what does seem underplayed in the literature are approaches and methods that take up the recent growth in interest in non-cognitive, embodied and haptic experiences. Interests in different ways of knowing and producing knowledge about the world do not come through that strongly (Crang, 2002, p. 653).

The 1980s marked a turning point in qualitative research as a crisis in representation emerged (Crang, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), and while there was a systematic focus on rethinking representation through the verbal, working through the politics of visual representation was not as common. Although Crang notes an increase in the use of visuals in qualitative methods,

[g]eographers seem to use visual material principally to generate data rather than as an aesthetic product... However, the expressive possibilities of the visual for our work seem to be less utilized. Using visual media to express and interrogate varied geographies through aesthetics is something that I suspect most geographers are not trained to do (Crang, 2003, pp. 500–1).

And while there was an increased emphasis on performativity and embodiment, the focus remained on the performativity as form to be researched as opposed to a type of research in itself. For Crang (2005, p. 232), ‘the body has recently become an important topic *of* work, but not yet something *through* which research is often done’ [*italics author’s emphasis*]. Hawkins (2012, p. 55) attempts to address this gap intersecting art and geography in three ways:

(1) changing orientations towards the sites of art's production and consumption; (2) art's investigation of bodies and experiences; and (3) an ontological project around the practice and materiality of 'art'.

She draws on 'socially engaged art' public art as providing important moments for intersecting the art and geographical studies. She argues for linking the ways in which artists and geographers explore the relationality of site; how geographers can learn from how artists treat the body and the senses; and shared creative materialities and practice. Although she draws together the parallels between the disciplines, she does not explore the challenges of conducting research in this way. It is therefore important to unpack the complexities of researching performative, embodied, visual, affective and ephemeral work.

As Bishop (2012, p. 5) asserts when reflecting on researching participatory art practices:

visual analyses fall short when confronted with the documentary material through which we are given to understand many of these practices. To grasp participatory art from images alone is almost impossible: casual photographs of people talking, eating, attending a workshop or screening or seminar tell us very little, almost nothing, about the concept and context of a given project. They rarely provide more than fragmentary evidence, and convey nothing of the affective dynamic that propels artists to make these projects and people to participate in them.

Public art projects also tend to make big claims whether they are large-scale commissions or more experimental initiatives. According to the kinds of words that regularly appear in public art proposals and publicity, public art aims to enliven, beautify, celebrate, commemorate, activate, intervene, animate, democratize, transform public space and create social cohesion through collaboration and participation. These are ambitious endeavours and are based on the assumption that cultural action has the potential to stimulate some form of societal change. One of the biggest challenges is finding ways of measuring or assessing the validity of these claims.

Reflecting on Lacy's challenge for more critical engagement with public art, Cartiere and Willis draws on three questions for assessing how good public art may be.

Harriet Senie explores a range of possible approaches for evaluating public art within an “art-world standard” which when filtered down result in asking of any public artwork, three crucial questions:

1. Is it good work, according to its type: art, urban design, or community project?
2. Does it improve or energize its site in some way—by providing an aesthetic experience or searing (or both), or by prompting conversation and perhaps social awareness?
3. Is there evidence of relevant or appropriate public engagement or use?

According to Senie, “successful public art has to score on all three or it isn’t (successful).” (Cartiere & Willis, 2008, pp. 15–6)

These questions try to move towards a more rounded approach to understanding public art by including public engagement as criteria for understanding the relationship between the work and its site. Despite this move towards a more holistic critique, it remains a limited line of questioning, primarily because it relies on the contested ‘art-world standard’ notions of good versus bad work, that assumes that the art is located solely within bounded disciplines (such as art, urban design). It is also still bound into evaluation on a good / bad binary. While there needs to be some measure of an art work’s impact and relevance, it is more useful to think of what the artwork is doing rather than whether it is good or not.

Inspired by Bourriaud’s (2002) relational aesthetics, Marie and Cane (2011, p. 103) argue that to make sense of public art, a researcher must look away from the work. They ask:

What would an essay look like that didn’t speak about Fire Walker, but rather spoke near by it? What would an essay read like that didn’t write about Fire Walker, but rather wrote around it?

They were responding to the proliferation of permanent public artworks in Johannesburg. For them, turning your back to the work is an important strategy. In this way, the research focus is *around* the work; the spaces the work inhabits; and the public(s) that interact with the work on a daily basis. Although this approach is not very different to triangulation or crystallisation of data in research terms, this approach suggests a gap in art criticism that has conventionally foregrounded the artwork or artist as central. Marie and Cane’s challenge is to re-think the centrality of

the artwork in the case of public art, and to focus on the context within which the artwork operates. Amin (2008) would perhaps suggest that Marie and Cane do not so easily discard the artwork, and include it in the relational analysis.

This impulse to write more critically about the context or situation of art in the public realm is unpacked by Rendell (2010) who pushes for a situated practice of art writing, which she calls ‘site-writing’. For Rendell, writing about art works, especially those happening in public spaces need to include a spatial aspect of the process of writing. She argues for a ‘sitedness’ when engaging the relationship between the art, the site and the writer, and advocates for writing itself to be a ‘critical spatial practice’. For Rendell (2010, p. 18), it is important to assert the ‘critical’ and ‘spatial’ drawing on the Frankfurt school and urban theorists (Lefebvre and Thrift specifically). While Rendell, Marie and Cane promote a more theoretically embedded criticism of public art, their emphasis focuses largely on permanent art works in the form of public sculptures, and lacks a sense of criteria with which to work with the processes of public art.

For Lacy, in order to meaningfully engage with ‘new genre’ public art projects from a research perspective, and in order to enable the qualitative depth required of this kind of case study, three strategies are useful to deploy to build strong case studies. Firstly a ‘close reading critique’ is imperative.

Close reading critique is developed through legwork and immersion. A writer with intimate access follows the process of the work, describing and analyzing, somewhat like being in the studio from inspiration to exhibition (Lacy, 2008, p. 22).

A ‘close reading critique’ allows for a rich narrative and an in depth understanding of the project as it unfolds, and allows for a conversation around issues as opposed to merely a presentation of visual documentation. Secondly, ‘multi-vocal criticism’ emphasizes a range of critical voices engaging with a particular project. The example Lacy uses is the involvement of a range of different writers, reflecting from different perspectives as useful for gaining a more well-rounded critique. This echoes Flyvbjerg’s (2006, p. 236) assertion that:

If one, thus, assumes that the goal of the researcher’s work is to understand and learn about the phenomena being studied, then research is simply a form of learning. If one assumes that research, like other learning processes, can be described by the phenomenology for human learning, it then becomes clear that the most advanced

form of understanding is achieved when researchers place themselves within the context being studied. Only in this way can researchers understand the viewpoints and the behavior, which characterizes social actors.

‘The third critical strategy links public practices to theory, history, and broader spheres of cultural production’ (Lacy, 2008, p. 23). Lacy emphasises the need to draw on theory beyond the contemporary arts canon. Her challenge is aimed at a British audience, by suggesting engaging other thinkers from ‘the continent’ (meaning the rest of Europe), suggesting engagement with French thinkers such as Bourdieu and Baudriard. The challenge can be extended to explore thinkers outside of the dominant canons of the North. Bishop (2012) and Kester (2004) both advocate an approach to art criticism or analysis that focus on power. It is these grey areas of power dynamics, these incongruencies, these disjunctures that are often more interesting than merely categorising artworks along a good-evil axis (Kester, 2004).

Although there is a sentiment within the art world that art should be exempt from research because of the assumption of its implicitly ethereal and subversive nature, the necessity for critical engagement becomes an increasing concern when projects espouse the transformative potential of their participatory processes, especially given the potential ‘tyranny’ of participation mentioned in previous chapters (Cook & Kathari, 2002). Currently the primary form of evaluation of public art projects appears in funding reports, which require particular kinds of feedback. From experience²², some funders are satisfied with visual documentation of participants accompanying a narrative account of what happened. In some cases what happens is the construction of particular kinds of images that are attractive to a funding audience that sometimes has little resonance of the reality of the project²³. Others, such as the NLDTF that funded ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ require detailed information on each person involved (such as name, contact details and ID numbers). Whereas this may signal that people took part, neither of these approaches is able to capture the *quality* of participation or what kinds of challenges or changes occurred.

²² Having run a public art organisation since 2008, I have written several funding proposals and reports, and have contributed to reports of other local and international partners on projects.

²³ My Masters research focused on Dutch organization, Cascoland’s work in South Africa. Having hosted the organization in Durban it became clear how certain images compelling to a European audience were selected to represent (and in some cases misrepresent) what was happening in reality.

Additionally researching public art projects means making sense of a number of elusive dimensions. Public art of interest in this study often tends to be transient and ephemeral. Unlike with a public sculpture, these kinds of projects may not leave physical remnants behind to scrutinize over time. The happening is in the now and the traces are left behind in visual documentation and people's memories. Public art, especially in the context of 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town', involves a complex set of relationships between spaces, people and things. It is the exploration of these relationships that often underpins public art processes.

Although the research process has not been shaped solely around actor-network or actant-rhizome theory (ANT), there are some useful sensibilities that can underpin researching public art, echoing Thrift's impulse to non-representationality. ANT provides an important critique of modernist binaries (Castree & Macmillan, 2001), and prefers to explore the 'co-relation of all manner of things, and not just people (Hubbard, 2006, p. 145), where agency is distributed as a relational effect between a variety of actors or actants (Johnston et al., 2009, p. 7). Public art often mediates the understanding of the everyday through interactions between people, spaces and objects, often seeking to highlight the relational effects of the interaction between infrastructure and people. In the context of South Africa, this often draws attention to the ways in which inequality is reproduced through these relations or 'networks effects' (Murdoch, 1997, p. 741). It is therefore useful to keep these sensitivities in mind while conducting research on public art.

Drawing on Latour's relationality (2007), and Deleuze (1994) and Massumi's (1997) thinking about the role of affect, Thrift (2000) makes sense of the ephemerality of everyday human activity through looking at dance as a way to unpack what he describes as a 'nonrepresentationalist' approach. He emphasises on looking at creative work as providing a layer of experience that it is difficult, if not impossible to represent outside of the context in which it happened. It is this experimental and embodied world 'in the making', these 'processual' moments that Thrift is engaging in his explanation of nonrepresentational theory, and that pose a methodological challenge in the context of studying public art. In order to make sense of these kinds of relationality, situational analysis becomes useful as a theoretical and methodological tool.

According to Clarke (2005), situational analysis emerged out of a desire to re-engage ‘grounded theory’. ‘Grounded theory’ emerged in the 1960s as a response to the foregrounding of quantitative research methods in the social sciences. Most significantly, for Denzin (2003b, p. 253):

It challenged (a) arbitrary divisions between theory and research, (b) views of qualitative research as primarily a precursor to more “rigorous” quantitative methods, (c) claims that the quest for rigor made qualitative research illegitimate, (d) beliefs that qualitative methods are impressionistic and unsystematic, (e) separation of data collection and analysis, and (f) assumptions that qualitative research could only produce descriptive case studies rather than theory development (Charmaz, 1995c)

Despite this ‘revolutionary’ push, ‘grounded theory’ has largely been contested territory and has often been accused of being imbued with the positivist objectivism it is attempting to flee. It is this positivist tendency that sparked Clarke’s interest in re-engaging ‘grounded theory’ from a situated approach, by pushing ‘grounded theory more fully around the postmodern turn’. For Clarke (2005, p. xxii), situational analysis allows for a more integrated and grounded approach to understanding a particular case.

Situational analysis allows researchers to draw together studies of discourse and agency, action and structure, image, text and context, history and the present moment-to analyze complex situations of inquiry broadly conceived... The situation per se becomes the ultimate unit of analysis, and understanding its elements and their relations is the primary goal. Thus situational analysis can deeply situate research projects individually, collectively, organizationally, institutionally, temporally, geographically, materially, discursively, culturally, symbolically, visually, and historically.

Key to its analytical process is situational mapping that allows for ‘grounded theorizing’ as an ongoing process rather than the development of substantive and formal theories as the ultimate goals’. This allows for a ‘systematic and flexible means of research design’ (Clarke, 2005, p. xxxiii). As ventures like ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ are often unpredictable, a flexible research design best enables ongoing critical reflection and analysis, and allows for new research tools and respondents to be identified where necessary and are very useful strategies for making ongoing sense of the data as it unfolds. All these strategies allowed for a range of voices and perspectives to emerge. It also allowed for a visual tracking of the relationality between different actants. In the context of public art, where the human and nonhuman interact, a situational approach opens up the

possibility for making sense of the ‘affective maelstrom’ Amin & Thrift (2002) talk about.

In order to set the scene of the situation, it is useful at this point to introduce how this specific case study emerged.

3.3.CASE: ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’

In 2009 I received a call from Joseph Gaylard, the Director of VANSA at the time, asking if he could include me in a proposal he was drawing up to send to the National Lottery Foundation Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF). Having shared experience of working with a range of public art projects, and being mutually concerned about the exclusive nature of art practice in South Africa, he thought I might be interested in engaging this venture because of its experimental methodology that was being devised.

According to the proposal drawn up by VANSA, ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ emerged out of a desire to address the following:

The project is responsive on the one hand to the rapid growth of public art as an area of professional practice in the visual arts in South Africa during the course of the last ten years, a growth that has resulted in many significant works being produced with investments from both the public and private sector. On the other hand it is also responsive to the dearth of public art projects outside of the major urban centres, and of public art projects that grow out of extended, reflective and thoughtful engagement between public art practitioners and communities (VANSA, 2009).

Also of fundamental importance to ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ was the way in which work was to be implemented:

The project will seek to create unique and meaningful experiences in these locations, drawing on the historical and contemporary realities of these communities, generating artworks that place these communities at the ‘centre’ of the 2010 experience, drawing on local stories and creating new narratives that bring people together, promote cohesion and community-building (VANSA, 2009).

The following objectives were set out by VANSA (2009):

- To involve the citizenry of small towns and rural areas in the realisation of creative projects that are rooted in their own experience. To create projects that stimulate identification, debate and a sense of community
- To promote an environment in which creative work in public space is integrated into the daily life and experience of small towns and rural communities
- To equip artists with the professional skills to engage with public art commissions and the realisation of projects
- To produce a publication linked to the project that can serve as a manual/guide for future similar interventions

All three of these excerpts from the proposal demonstrate a commitment from the organisers to explore a more embedded approach to public art than is often experienced by large scale public and private commissions, despite their participatory pretensions, and made the project appealing as a ‘worthy’ case study (Tracy, 2010).

According to Flyvbjerg (2006, p. 219) there are:

five common misunderstandings about case-study research: (a) theoretical knowledge is more valuable than practical knowledge; (b) one cannot generalize from a single case, therefore, the single-case study cannot contribute to scientific development; (c) the case study is most useful for generating hypotheses, whereas other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building; (d) the case study contains a bias toward verification; and (e) it is often difficult to summarize specific case studies.

Flyvbjerg argues that ‘case knowledge is central to human learning’ (p. 222) and hence being close to, and including different kinds of knowledge in research is paramount. In fact, ‘concrete, context-dependent knowledge is more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories or universals’ (p. 224). In this vision, coproduced contextual knowledge blurs the boundary between rule-based and tacit knowledge. One of the ‘blows’ to case study work has been the claim that cases cannot be generalised and are therefore of little use. Flyvbjerg (p. 229) builds an argument demonstrating how case studies are generalizable, but also asserts that ‘formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas “the force of example” is underestimated’. This is a useful way to access ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’, as it worked in unprecedented ways in South Africa.

Flyvbjerg goes on to argue that the selection of different kinds of case studies allows for moving beyond case studies being hypothesis generating, and argues that the selection of the appropriate case allows for further generalisation. He introduces the notion of four types of case studies: extreme or deviant cases; maximum variation cases; critical cases; and paradigmatic cases. Paradigmatic cases are ‘cases that highlight more general characteristics of the societies in question’ (p. 232). He asks how a paradigmatic case can be identified and asserts the importance of the researchers ‘informed’ and ‘accountable’ intuition about the nature of the selected case study. While this may seem to err on the side of bias, Flyvbjerg goes on to unpack subjectivity in case study research and argues that good case study research is open rather than closed, and this flexibility allows for the assumptions and mind of the researcher to be changed, which mediates bias. Ultimately the way in which a case study reveals itself as paradigmatic is not through the selection criteria, but ‘will depend on the validity claims that researchers can place on their study and the status these claims obtain in dialogue with other validity claims in the discourse to which the study is a contribution’ (p. 233).

Although I did not embark on the research thinking ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ would necessarily emerge as a paradigmatic case, I had identified five main reasons that made it stand out, and which therefore underpinned my interest in exploring this venture: Firstly, unlike many large scale public and private commissions that generally employ prominent artists, ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ included aims to support a range of well-established **and** emergent artists. Secondly, unlike many public and private commissions that focus on work being made in a studio **for** the public, it required artists to engage meaningfully in spaces and **with** people. Thirdly, when these kinds of ventures do exist, they are often funded externally and happen in collaboration with artists from the North, which involve complex power relations. In contrast, this ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ was funded locally, and implemented by artists living in South Africa. Fourthly, unlike most public and private commissions that happen in major urban centers, often with minimal engagement with the spaces in which they intervene, it happened in small towns and required artists to live and work on location for a relatively substantial period of time (around three months). Finally, being invited to take part as a ‘critical friend’ (essentially a sounding board and critical writer) meant that I had unique

access as it unfolded which strengthened the possibilities for rigorous qualitative research.

Initially the ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ had been designed to happen at the same time as the FIFA 2010 World Cup, but the NLFDT, facing its own internal administrative challenges, was only able to release the money well into the preparation for the event so the projects unfolded at the end of 2010 and into 2011. In a very short space of time VANSAs had assembled the team and sent out a call for proposals. I was appointed as one of four ‘Curatorial/Advisory Consultants’ that became more affectionately known through as ‘critical friends’. Critical friends were chosen as people who were both practitioners and academics and these included me (co-founder of dala and urban researcher), Nontobeko Ntombela (curator and lecturer at Wits), Dorothee Kreutzveld (artist and previous member of Joubert Park Project, also a part time lecturer at Wits) and Rat Western (performance artist and lecturer at Rhodes).

3.3.1. Situatedness: the ‘critical friend’

In order to elaborate on my involvement in ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ it is important to explain the idea behind the ‘Curatorial/Advisory Consultants’ or ‘critical friends’. According the terms of reference (VANSAs, 2010), the responsibilities of a ‘critical friend’ were as follows:

Consultant Responsibilities

- Provide input and advice on the overall shape of the 2010 Reasons project, including concept, strategy, project methods, communications, documentation
- Provide training inputs related to public arts practice and proposal writing
- Advise on the selection of projects against submissions from artists and groups
- Provide curatorial support and advice to one or more of the selected projects during both the residency/development phase of projects, and their realization as permanent public artworks
- Produce visual documentation and short written reports on the process towards the development of projects
- Assist in the generation and provision of content for a publication related to the project

In an interview with VANSAs Director, Joseph Gaylard (personal interview, 2012 March 10) he explained where the idea had come from:

The idea came from my parallel life as a policy researcher/consultant, and in the context doing policy related work engaging small groups or networks of people that could act as independent sounding boards on particular projects, where they are not the client and they aren't a stakeholder in an ordinary sense, where they have a slightly disinterested position, disinterested in the technical sense where they are not directly invested in the outcome.

For Gaylard, the idea of a 'critical friend' was someone both inside and outside of the process. This position simultaneously allows 'the freedom to engage in quite a critical and independent way with a project' (which would be the 'critical' part of the 'critical friend'), while

the friend part is really predicated on the idea that these people have some shared practice have an interest in the broader area one is working in and will have sympathy in the kind of work and additionally would have an interest in sharing their knowledge, practices and thoughts in constructive ways, and in ways that would really build the thinking around a particular project

In the context of 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town', VANSAs brought together a group of people who could act as a sounding board for projects and ask questions such as 'what is this project really about? what are the issues that one would need to think about and consider in taking forward a project like this?', while at the same time being able to 'provide some practical advice and support around the actual implementation, realization of a particular project' (Gaylard, personal interview, 2012 March 10). The projects and 'critical friends' were matched in 'an organic way' and the artists and 'critical friends' negotiated how the relationship would work. For Gaylard, this flexibility or 'quality of openness' was of utmost importance, which he felt 'generated very interesting results and processes which were quite varied'.

For artist Sadie (personal interview, 2012 March 10),

critical friends were a group of facilitators who came in from the outside but had a sensitivity to working in a particular way to help the artists to reflect on the choices and type of work they were making. It was really a tool for dialogue that brought about reflection on process and outcome.

For Sadie, the first site visit put him and Coppen 'on edge' as it meant they 'would have to deliver something that was coherent and clear'. Despite this uneasiness Sadie asserted that

it was a really nice place to start resolving making certain decisions and making sense out of what was becoming a complex set of research process that every day was opening up more possibilities. So the first visit of the ‘critical friends’ really helped us to put us at ease (Sadie, personal interview, 2012 March 10).

When asked about the relationship between feeling both uncomfortable and reassured, Sadie said,

...uncomfortable because it is your own conditioning about bringing people in to reflect on your process. It makes you accountable for your process so it makes you unsettled because at that point somebody can say to you that your thinking is off or... it is that point where critical feedback isn’t often favourable, and often it can unsettle and derail a process if handled incorrectly, not that that was the case, but as any practitioner you build up that anxiety around having to present something to somebody else. I think that’s where the discomfort comes from. You are kind of battling your own demons in that moment. And the ease is once you kind of realize the sensitivity that was being given to the process.

For Gaylard (personal interview, 2012 March 10), the functioning of the ‘critical friends’ relied heavily on the ‘generosity’ of everyone involved.

It relied on people having the ability to share and interact with people they don’t necessarily know particularly well, and to share their work and experience with other people. Partly what is important about putting those kinds of structures in place is how you choose people to be involved, and then really trying to nurture or generate that sort of environment of generosity.

The purpose of the ‘critical friends’ had a broader scope than a focus on specific projects. The additional layer was to enable ‘building a community of practice and critical discourse around the projects’ (VANSA, 2012, p. 7). The ‘critical friends’ were therefore engaged as a group of thinkers and practitioners who would draw together threads from a range of projects in order to build a broader language around public art. While the final review session and workshop primarily ‘generated interesting discussion at a granular level around each of the projects’ it became a starting point for generating a wider language around critical public art practice in South Africa, and for Gaylard, is something that future incarnations of ‘critical friends’ will aim to address in a more comprehensive manner (Gaylard, personal interview, 2012 March 10).

The idea of having ‘critical friends’ is a novel one, and could be seen as VANSA’s attempt at responding to Lacy’s (2008) call for a ‘close reading critique’, and Bishop’s (2012) ideal of having a critical voice involved in ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ in key moments throughout the duration of a project. In this way, VANSA desired a more situated engagement with the work that was being produced, although resources made it impossible to have ‘critical friends’ throughout the entire process on each location.

One of the first tasks of the ‘critical friends’ was to sit on the proposal selection panel with VANSA. At the beginning of the meeting we had collectively established some broad criteria to inform the selection. Other than excluding projects that were explicitly counter to the overall aims of ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’, we aimed to (Sitas, field notes, 2010):

- Balance geographical spread so as not to favour certain provinces over others (for example, there were a lot of proposals from the western cape)
- Balance the types of projects so as not to favour a particular type of public art intervention (such as performance or sculptural work)
- Balance well known and emerging artists in order to avoid only supporting already well-established artists

Whereas we had started with budget for six projects, ultimately we came to the consensus that four projects would get full funding; two would get partial funding given that they already had other forms of institutional and financial support; and an additional four would get proposal development funding.

The following projects were given full funding. *The Domino Effect* culminated in a big domino tournament in Hermon in the Western Cape. The project tapped into the existing practice of playing dominos, in an attempt to develop a catalyst for fostering greater social cohesion in a socio-economically and racially divided community. *Made in Musina* was a participatory public performance project that happened in the Limpopo border town of Musina. It was a follow up to a participatory film project initiated by the same artists on one of the border farms in the region. *Living within History* happened in the historical region in and around Dundee in KwaZulu-Natal and used the practice of historical re-enactments as a departure point for unpacking alternative oral and lived histories in and of the region. The project culminated in a series of workshops and public performances. *Dlala Ndima* was a graffiti project in the township of Pakhamisa in the Eastern Cape. The artists (who are

from the township) renovated a derelict building as a cultural community centre and painted a series of graffiti murals on public and private spaces around the township. Implicit in this was exploring a new visual language for graffiti in contemporary South Africa.

The following projects were selected for partial funding. *noli procrastinare or, kooperasie stories* was a project commemorating the 1981 Laingsburg flood. This project explored alternative narratives of the flood that have been somewhat ignored in the mainstream expression of local history. Bringing students from Stellenbosch to work with local communities, the project initiated 104 encounters to commemorate each of the lives that was lost during the floods. Bronze sculptor, Guy du Toit, worked in Richmond in the Northern Cape, and developed a series of participatory counter-monuments. *Trinity Sessions*' Markus Neustetter, and Bronwyn Lace worked in Sutherland, extending their project engaging communities around the famous telescope, in an attempt to build greater links between local residents and the scientific community.

It was at this moment that I recognised that VANSAs was trying to do something differently with 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town'. Given my role as a 'critical friend' I realised that it was a good opportunity to add another layer of rigor and use the experience as a case study for a PhD. As they represented very different types of projects, and were located in three very different geographic locations, I motivated and was appointed as a 'critical friend' for the following projects: *Living Within History* (Dundee, KwaZulu-Natal), *Dlala Indima* (Phakamisa, Eastern Cape); and *The Domino Effect* (Hermon, Western Cape)²⁴.

3.3.2. Embeddedness and mediating risk

As with any embedded research, and in the interest of Tracy's (2010) 'sincerity' it must also be noted that being involved in the project meant that there were three primary risks to mediate against.

Firstly, having recognised that there was something unique in the development of the project, and furthermore, being involved in the selection process raised

²⁴ These are described and analysed in more detail in Chapters Three and Four of this thesis.

questions about my stake in the success of the project which in turn raised questions about the ability to take a critical stance in relation to the research. It became clear that my research should not be evaluatory in the sense warned about earlier in this chapter (the research was not intended to be about ‘good’ or ‘bad’ public art), the research was therefore not focused on looking for success, but rather on understanding the social, political, aesthetic and affective situations the projects were generating, and what implications these projects may have in relation to theory on public art and public space. This approach opened up the possibility to learn from both intended and unintended consequences of working at the intersection of art and the public realm.

Secondly, while the need to rationalise insider/outsider-ness has become less important in the context of contemporary qualitative research (Crang, 2002, 2003, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), the role of a researcher in public art projects is still a relatively new phenomenon and raises issues about power relations between the researcher and the researched, as Sadie (personal interview, 2012 March 10) intimated when reflecting on the ‘critical friend’ component. Although many of the artists were open to critical engagement, there was still hesitation. One of the projects were reluctant about ‘critical friends’ and I was initially denied access from a researcher’s perspective as the artists feared that researching the project would sabotage it. An email rationalising the choice to exclude external involvement said this:

As an outsider to a process, the assumptions and interventions through questions and challenges for an academic pursuit can be detrimental to our relationships and possibilities for building the foundation we are trying to establish (Neustetter, 2010).

In response to this reluctance Gaylard speculated that the nurturing role of the ‘critical friends’ may not have been communicated clearly. Another participating artist who wished to remain anonymous felt that the sentiment came from fear and arrogance: fear of being critiqued, and arrogance at the assumption that critical engagement was necessary for such well-established practitioners. Since this initial hesitation, and seeing the research unfolding in the other projects, the artists have opened up, inviting me to include them in the research process. Although there was no scope to include them in this doctoral research, the experience is a good reminder of the importance of acknowledging power relations.

These kinds of research projects also mean building good relationships and making friends. Whereas historically there has been a fear of these kinds of relationships in research processes because of the assumption that the researcher will not be able to maintain a critical distance, I found the opposite to be true. The better I got to know those involved, the easier it became to be (sometimes brutally) honest about what I was thinking. As Sadie (personal interview, 2012 March 10) said in response to the critical friend process

[w]hat was really interesting about the critical friend process was that it put us on edge. It is our conditioning to be uncomfortable about people coming in to reflect on our process and practice. It makes you accountable for your process which makes you unsettled. It's that point where critical feedback is not always favourable. But it simultaneously put us at ease because of the sensitive way it was dealt with.

To echo Bishop, 'due to the experience-based character of participatory art and its tangential relationship to the canon, the bulk of this research has been discursive' (Bishop, 2012, p. 8). This included many conversations and interviews with the project artists, participants and audiences, as well as a broader arts and academic community.

Thirdly, ethnographic work usually involves deep, long-term immersion in the site of study, but this was a logistical and financial impossibility. As Bishop asserts:

Very few observers are in a position to take such an overview of long-term participatory projects: students and researchers are usually reliant on accounts provided by the artist, the curator, a handful of assistants, and if they are lucky, maybe some of the participants (Bishop, 2012, p. 6).

Luckily, unlike many public art researchers analysing inclusionary projects, I was able to visit the sites at a number of key strategic moments (in addition to the ongoing digital or telephonic communication). Whereas most researchers and critics of public art have very limited access to public art projects beyond the event or documentation, I had the opportunity to engage with the projects in person at five key moments:

WORKSHOP 1		
3-5 Aug 2010	Nirox, GP	The first workshop included all the participating artists. Artists presented their project proposals for collective feedback. This gave me the opportunity to interview the artists about their initial hopes and assumptions for their projects.
SITE VISIT 1		
29-30 Jan 2011	Dundee, KZN	This site visit occurred in approximately the middle of the three-month residencies. Artists invited the 'critical friends' to visit at key moments during the process. This gave me the opportunity to see the projects as they were developing and observe the artists at work. It also meant I could interview a range of participants and surrounding audiences/spectators in addition to the artists involved.
4-6 Feb 2011	Phakamisa, EC	
2-3 Feb 2011	Hermon, WC	
SITE VISIT 2		
14-16 Feb 2011	Dundee, KZN	This site visit coincided with the final stage of the project. In each case the end of the project was marked with an event or series of events. This allowed me to see the culmination of the work that had been developed, and to interview participants and audiences/spectators. In most cases it also required me to participate in some way.
22-24 Feb 2011	Hermon, WC	
20-22 Mar 2011	Phakamisa, EC	
WORKSHOP 2		
8 Apr 2011	VANSA, GP	This workshop happened a few months after the end of the project and coincided with the exhibition opening at the Goethe-Institut in Johannesburg. The artists presented reflections on their projects to each other with invited audience of external arts practitioners and writers, some of whom were asked to contribute to the catalogue. This moment allowed me to observe how the artists chose to represent the processes and projects they had undertaken. Furthermore, I was able to interview the artists and the broader audience.
EXHIBITION		
10 April 2011	Goethe, GP	Instead of producing documentation for the exhibition, the artists were asked to generate an installation that best reflected the work they had done. The exhibition enabled me to explore how other, removed audiences, made sense of the project work.

In essence, the artists were the embedded researchers, which meant developing ways to reflect on the embeddedness of others. Tapping into the projects at strategic moments meant relying on a range of tools that could generate enough information to understand the complexity of each situation in order to do this.

3.4. Tools

Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artifacts; cultural texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003b, p. 5).

Public art projects generate a wide range of materials and experiences, and require a flexible though strategic approach to gathering information. In order to engage a ‘thick description’ approach to the situational analysis Clarke advocates; and in order to build a study that will have the ‘rigor’ and ‘resonance’ Tracy describes, the following research tools were employed.

3.4.1. Participant Observation

Observation has been characterized as “the fundamental base of all research methods” in the social and behavioural sciences (Adler & Adler, 1994, p 389) and as (the mainstay of the ethnographic enterprise" (Werner & Schoepfle, 1987, p. 257). Even studies that rely mainly on interviewing as a data collection technique employ observational methods to note body language and other gestural cues that lend meaning to the words of the persons being interviewed. (Angrosino, 2000, p. 729).

Despite the prevalence of observation as a fundamental part of qualitative enquiry, the role of the observer and the validity of the observation have been contested. Angrosino (2000, p. 732) maintains that ‘it might be useful to shift from a concentration on observation as a "method" per se to a perspective that emphasizes observation as a context for interaction among those involved in the research collaboration’. Current thinking on observation can be linked to the relational impulses of situational analysis (Clarke, 2005), where the situation is the unit of analysis as opposed to specific individuals and sites.

Being situated within the ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ project as a ‘critical friend’, allowed for a congenial ‘dialogic relationship’ to emerge. Participant observation in this case meant taking the combination of actors such as artists, participants, audiences and authorities in relational consideration with the place, history and creative work that was being made. With the increasing

prevalence of digital media and increased technological connectivity, the observation of the situation, given that it was impossible to be physically present at all times, extended to virtual interactions as well. Being a dialogic process also meant structuring both formal and informal grounds for conversation.

3.4.2. Interviews / conversations

The interview is a conversation, the art of asking questions and listening. It is not a neutral tool, for at least two people create the reality of the interview situation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003a, p. 48).

Interviews have become ubiquitous with all kinds of research. They form the basis for much quantitative and qualitative research, and are tools that are used across varying theoretical paradigms. Importantly, interviews are ‘inextricably and unavoidably historically, politically and contextually bound’ (2000, p. 695). Despite the ‘unavoidable, conscious and unconscious motives, desires, feelings and biases’ (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 696) brought to the interview situation by all involved, ‘interviewing is one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow humans’ (Fontana & Frey, 2000, pp. 697–8). Given the nature of ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’, interviews played an important role in the research process.

The research engaged semi-structured interviews with artists prior to the project, during the project and after the project was completed²⁵. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allowed interviewees to contribute to shaping the interview process and provided an interesting space for artists to reflect at different points of the project. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with VANSAs representatives and ‘critical friends’ during and after the project. In addition a series of interviews with independent public arts practitioners were conducted. One group interview was conducted with the project participants and invited public arts practitioners during the final review workshop.

Gaining access to the formal participants in the project was relatively easy, but approaching members of the general public surrounding the projects posed a range of

²⁵ See bibliography for complete list of interviews conducted.

challenges. Firstly, people were generally busy in the immediacy of the projects, whether as audiences or participants. Secondly, due to the transitory and ephemeral nature of some of the components of the projects, people drifted off as soon as the event was over. Finally, because the projects were breaking the monotony of the banality of everyday life, often people were caught up in enjoying the projects in the now, and without space or time for critical reflection, appropriate questions needed to be as, if not more flexible than those for the direct participants. Despite these challenges, a range of semi and unstructured interviews with audience members were conducted.

To give an example, I had initially intended to disseminate a perception survey asking a limited set of questions about the projects to audiences. When I attempted to deliver these, it became clear that this was not the appropriate mechanism for unpacking the work, especially with incidental audiences that may have been passing by. People were too busy taking part, or watching, and then often moved off to their next destination. Furthermore, the form of a questionnaire was intimidating and often seen as too ‘test-like’. What became apparent was the strength of informal conversations underpinned by a series of questions. This allowed me to ask people what they thought was going on, which yielded interesting interpretations. It meant building relationships, however short-lived with people, which made it easier to explain the research after a rapport had been built through discussing the projects. Moreover, this gave people the confidence to say things like ‘I have no idea what is going on’ (audience member in Dundee), where the questionnaire form was too leading.

3.4.3. Field notes and research journal

Participant observation and interviews generate a lot of written information, and therefore implicit in qualitative research is the systematic recording of field notes, and the processing of these notes through a research journal of sorts. For Richardson (2000, p. 499):

[a]lthough we usually think about writing as a mode of “telling” about the social world, writing is not just a mopping-up activity at the end of a research project. Writing is also a way of “knowing” – a method of discovery and analysis. By writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it.

The purpose of writing as an on-going process provides sufficient material for ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973) but also enables on-going analytical possibilities. Experimenting with writing styles allows for exploring different ways to tell the narrative of research, and helps write ‘less boring research’ according to Caulley (2008). Richardson (2000) proposes what she calls ‘creative analytic practices: CAP ethnography’, which explores creative analytical writing methods. In the context of researching creative work, I found her emphasis on writing as a way of ‘knowing’ compelling, and a useful tool throughout the research process. She proposes four categories of notes to identify within ones writing: ‘observational notes’, ‘methodological notes’, ‘theoretical notes’, and ‘personal notes’. Additionally, she proposes a range of writing experiments to strengthen the focus and style of writing up research.

Missing in Richardson’s engagement with writing is the idea of writing in different mediums, which allows for different writing styles and practices. Notebooks allowed for illustrative notes that need not require a linear narrative and could be written in a range of different contexts, crouched on a pavement or in the back of a bumpy bus. Audio recordings (Dictaphone) allowed for a quicker stream of consciousness to be recorded. We rarely think of the materiality of writing and what this means for the styles we engage. Processing field notes into a computer allowed for different structures, styles and registers to emerge. This descriptive, anecdotal, analytical and experimental approach to writing allowed the on-going reflective and reflexive practice Schon (1987) advocates. It also allowed for the opportunity of exploring the intersection of theory and metaphor. Writing more engaging research papers allows for the ‘resonance’ Tracy alludes to; where ‘the research influences, affects, or moves particular readers or a variety of audiences through: aesthetic, evocative representation; naturalistic generalisations; transferable findings’ (Tracy, 2010, p. 844).

3.4.4. Documentary review

While visual analyses may not be enough as the only research strategy (Bishop, 2012; Hawkins, 2012; Rose, 2001), public art projects accumulate a plethora of documentation: both written and visual, which are important to engage. The

sensory experience of the project could be captured to some degree through the field notes and research journal, but specific attention was also paid to the kinds of documents that were collected and released as part of the process. There were four formal vehicles through which the projects were packaged: firstly, there were the ephemeral moments that happened in public space and their related traces that were left behind; secondly, each project contributed on an ongoing basis to a blog; thirdly, a publication was produced that included both descriptive documentation and critical analysis from commissioned writers; and finally the projects culminated in an exhibition. Furthermore, the artists provided me with their personal archives of photographs and videos. These are useful to look at as they often tell the processual story of the project that sometimes get excluded from the glossier products that are put into the public eye or to funders.

Despite the recent flourish of studies engaging visual methodologies, there still seems to be a primary focus on the image as the object of analysis (Rose, 2001). Much of the literature on visual methodologies unpacks single images generally through some form of content or discourse analysis. Although some degree of content analysis was utilized for this study, the primary focus was addressing the documentation as in dialogue with the other elements of the projects. Situational analysis proved useful in this regard, as it provided tools to unpack the relationship between human, nonhuman and discursive elements within a situation (Clarke, 2005).

3.4.5. Situational Maps

Situational mapping allows for a relational consideration of a particular situation to be explored. The primary analytical ‘exercises’ are situational maps which are used as ‘strategies for articulating the elements in the situation and examining the relations among them’; social worlds/arenas maps which are used as ‘cartographies of collective commitments, relations and sites of action’; and positional maps which are used as ‘simplification strategies for plotting positions articulated and not articulated in discourses’ (Clarke, 2005, p. 86). The main use of these mapping exercises ‘is “opening up” the data and interrogating it in fresh ways within a grounded theory framework’ (Clarke, 2005, p. 83) and ‘through these mapmaking processes, one is forced to think about the nature of various relationships in the data that otherwise might be unthought-of and unarticulated (Clarke, 2005, p. 142). In the context of this

research, situational maps made it easier to engage the diverse human and nonhuman actors and affects involved in ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’.

3.5. Conclusion

This research design, by not focusing on simplistic evaluatory criteria, allowed a nuanced way to access the affective eventfulness of ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’. The combination of tools also allowed the research to reveal affects of human engagement with the materiality of places and the art forms. Interview questions could focus on describing and interrogating the affective impact of the art processes and practices, while observation and ‘thick description’ allowed for detailed documentation of how people behaved in relation to particular spaces and situations. In order to ground the discussion within examples, the following chapter unpacks the findings of each of the project.

4. FINDINGS: Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town

2010 Reasons to Live in a Small Town is an example of how *participatory* and *site-specific* processes of art making combine in a network of projects that cut across vast swathes of South African geography, culture and language. The projects, in different ways, raise important questions about meaning creation and (inequitable) spread of resources across South Africa. Issues around a range of binaries such as urban/rural; white/black, upper class/working class are engaged with and challenged using a range of art-based, cultural strategies. The projects navigate different modes of practice from historical archaeology to pantomime, conventional site-specific artwork, to cultural activism. There is never a reliance on one modality, but a utilisation of a multiplicity of methods as they each (sometimes with reckless abandon) pursue their self-imposed briefs (Marie, 2013).

Marie aptly captures the breadth of experimental practice in of ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’. In dealing with more serious spatial issues, the art took a range of forms. Because each of the projects are significantly different, and given that this thesis is not being submitted within an arts degree where a certain level of background information on each art practice can be assumed, there is some conceptual contextualizing that is necessary which makes these encounters with the projects more theoretical than is usually expected in the findings section of a PhD thesis. The sections are therefore structured to give a brief background to the respective art forms, before describing the projects, and teasing out project specific reflections.

The Domino Effect looks at a project that culminated in a domino tournament in Hermon in the Western Cape. As this project most explicitly draws on the FIFA World Cup as a departure point, the section situates the project within the relationship between art, games and mega events (Baldwin-Philippi & Gordon, 2014; Chappelet & Junod, 2006; Cornelissen, Bob, & Swart, 2011a, 2011b; Kliewer & Kapust, 2010; McLuhan, 1994; S. Pillay & Reynold, 2013; Rodriguez, 2006). It argues that despite being unable to meet ambitious claims for a long-term legacy, and largely being devoid of aesthetic engagements typical of contemporary public art practice, tapping into an existing game (dominos) was an affective rupture of the monotony of

everyday existence, which highlighted the inherent tensions and divisions still present in much of South African life.

Living Within History explores a project that utilized collage and public performances as catalysts for interrogating the ‘historical imagination’ at the intersection of history, heritage and public space in Dundee in KwaZulu-Natal. The section situates the project within thinking about the relationship between public art and monumentalism (Crampton, 2001; Marschall, 2005, 2010b; M. Miles, 1997; Minty, 2006; Sharp et al., 2005) and the politics of public performance (Cohen-Cruz, 2013; Kershaw, 1999, 2008). It argues that the ‘historical imagination’ the artists engaged challenged the tendency for monumentalism and many public art commissions under the guise of heritage to fix history in problematic ways. The section suggests that the disruptive tendencies in *Living within History’s* public art practice offered important critical moments of encounter at the intersection of a fraught colonial and apartheid history and everyday life.

Dlala Indima unpacks a graffiti-led Hip-hop project that culminated in the launch of a cultural community centre in the rural township of Phakamisa in the Eastern Cape. With a very limited budget *Dlala Indima* were able to renovate a building into a functioning cultural space; while drawing in hundreds of community members into discussions about social and ecological well-being. Positioning Hip-hop as a critical practice (Beer, 2014; Caldeira, 2004; Jaffe, 2014; Pieterse, 2010; Williams & Carruthers, 2010), the section argues that working in familiar registers enabled alternative citizenship and development practices.

4.1. The Domino Effect (Hermon, Western Cape)

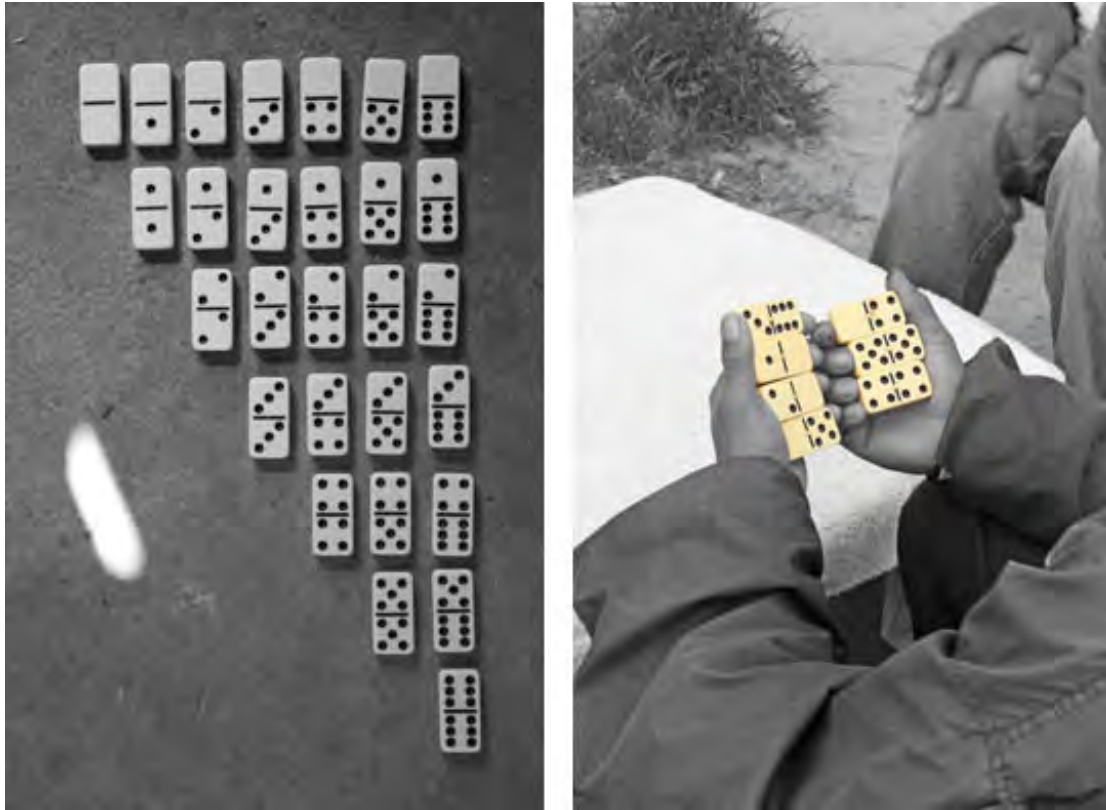


Figure 9: Derrick and Murphy (2011). The Domino Effect [photographs]

The clack-clacking thwack-thwacking of falling pallet-dominoes was ear-shatteringly loud. You could barely hear the cheering and shouting above the din of wood hitting the tarmac. 100 pallets had been positioned along the road from the R46 into the lower village of Hermon in a domino trail leading towards the entrance to the tournament. Because of the wind, each pallet was being held up by residents; readying themselves for the signal. As the pallets toppled one by one, the people holding the pallets ran following the spectacle. Something that had taken the better part of a morning to set up, meticulously lining up the pallets so one would knock over the next, was over in less than two minutes. The dust and whooping settled and the tournament had officially begun (edited from Sitas, field notes, 2011).

According to Derrick and Murphy (2012, p. 32) the pallet dominos were ‘a kind of temporary communal sculpture’ that ‘ceremoniously opened the [domino] tournament with the necessary tone and drama’. This moment marked the beginning of the domino tournament Derrick and Murphy had been organising over the preceding months, but it was also an amplification of both the spirit and the affectivity

of the project: demonstrating the collective ethos; and mimicking the sound of the dominoes smacking onto the tables (Kreutzveld, personal interview, 2011 February 18; Derrick and Murphy, personal interview, 2011 February 22). Playing dominoes is a very popular pastime in the Western Cape, often played publicly on street corners, and counter to official rules where the game is played in silence, the smacking down of the domino *steene*²⁶ is part and parcel of the style of a player. Tapping into this existing practice, photographer Tracey Derrick and graphic designer, Chris Murphy decided to organise a domino tournament as their contribution to ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’.



Figure 10: Derrick, T (2010) Playing dominoes

The Domino Effect is somewhat different to the other ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ projects for two reasons. Firstly, it took the starting point of the 2010 FIFA World Cup most literally. Using dominoes as the game, Derrick and Murphy decided to mimic elements of the mega event: structuring a tournament with eliminating heats and constructing a fan walk along a popular pedestrian route. Secondly, Derrick and Murphy are both slightly removed from the contemporary art and public art worlds: Derrick being a portrait photographer and Derrick a graphic designer. The project culminated in the domino tournament event

²⁶ Steene means ‘stones’ in Afrikaans and refer to the domino pieces

and the aesthetic cues usually associated with contemporary art were less explicit than in other projects. In many ways, however, it typifies the kind of community art process where middle class creative practitioners move into a poorer neighbourhood to build an event aimed at social cohesion (Bishop, 2012; Foster, 1996). In this it simultaneously reveals the potential of tapping into existing games as an affective rupture of the monotony of everyday existence; and highlights the inherent tensions and divisions still present in much of South African life.

In order to unpack *The Domino Effect* in the context of ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’, this section starts by looking at the relationship between art and games, locating the discussion within critiques of global mega events. It then describes the process of developing the tournament; the tournament itself; and the legacy of the project, before unpacking the implications for this kind of creative endeavour. The section draws three conclusions: firstly, that tapping into familiar registers (domino playing) meant that people were easily enrolled; but, secondly, that in developing an event, an aesthetic engagement got lost and therefore affective possibilities were undermined; and finally *The Domino Effect* not only mimicked the process typical in mega events such as the FIFA World Cup, but also experienced similar tensions around long-term legacies. Despite ambitious goals to use the tournament as a vehicle for social cohesion in a divided community (as a serious game of sorts), the event ultimately revealed seemingly insurmountable tensions typical in post-apartheid South Africa.

4.1.1. The Art of Play and Mega Events

We think of humor as a mark of sanity for a good reason: in fun and play we recover the integral person, who in the workaday world or in professional life can use only a small sector of his being... Games are popular art, collective, social reactions to the main drive or action of any culture. Games, like institutions, are extensions of social man and of the body politic, as technologies are extensions of the animal organism (McLuhan, 1994, p. 235).

Games are ubiquitous with human experience. Although games are often associated with boards and pieces, and gaming has become embedded in technology, everyday games still flourish. Children find ways to animate every nook and cranny of cities with games: from hopscotch chalked onto pavements, to marbles played on drains; and where there are no marbles or chalk, there are always stones for five

stones, and hands to clap to rhymes. In contexts like South Africa where private spaces are often small, a plethora of adult games have spilled out onto the sidewalk: much like the dominos played on street corners in Hermon, pool tables have been dragged onto pavements; indigenous games such as *mlabalaba*²⁷ appropriate chess boards; and betting games abound.

Games fulfill both a fun and escapist function as a break from the monotony of everyday life. Games follow similar principles: they are often collective and are based on an agreed set of parameters or rules. They are usually competitive and are played in various configurations of solitude, participant and observer. As structured play, they have different kinds of outcomes, but are generally understood to be a suspension from reality. Increasingly, games have been recognised as useful pedagogical tools in and outside the classroom (Kliewer & Kapust, 2010), where games become instrumentalised as useful strategies to engage learning in a fun and affective way. In part this was a response to competitive games, where instead of competition, cooperation was foregrounded. According to the New Games Foundation quoted in Pearce et al (2007, p. 262) in 1970s USA, games were seen as follows:

A game is a social contract, allowing participants to suspend the culturally defined significances and consequences of their behavior. A game has a set of rules, roles, and goals that are distinct from those of the culture that supports it. It is an esthetic system with qualities of elegance, symmetry, and clarity. A game is a form of mutual entertainment whose effectiveness can be determined by the degree of engagement manifest by the players.

The purpose of the new games movement was to create cooperative instead of competitive sports and find participatory mechanisms to include spectators. While games have been used as icebreakers in educational and corporate contexts alike, the use of games as a method of learning beyond the introductory stages of a group session has been emerging, especially in racially and ethnically diverse contexts. Pillay and James (2013, p. 7) claim this of their study which explored the use of games in multi-cultural learning environments:

Findings – Participants' responses to the games were overwhelmingly positive. Participants' responses indicated games as a preferred method for developing the

²⁷ Mlabalaba is a game commonly played, predominantly by men, in KwaZulu-Natal and uses the chess board as a basis.

intercultural competence, team work, decision making and self awareness skills essential for business and entrepreneurship. Practical implications – There is a growing need to consider and align the relationship between education, the increasing cultural diversity in student populations, and the learning and teaching styles of a changing student population in order to enhance the extent of expected knowledge transfer.

However the use of games is not only about making learning more fun. For Rodriguez (2006),

philosophical games should not, for instance, be treated merely as efficient techniques to make philosophy more appealing or entertaining to students; the act of playing can become a genuine medium of scholarly inquiry into the roots of philosophical activity.

Often referred to as ‘serious games’, these kinds of games build in a functional component to play. Huizinga (1950) argues that games blur the boundaries between the ‘serious’ and ‘fun’. Games and play therefore provide an opportunity for affective engagement in more serious issues. According to Baldwin-Philippi & Gordon (2014, p. 762), serious urban games

provide players with opportunities to restructure interactions and relationships of power, providing opportunities that are qualitatively different from life outside the game...thusly conceived, games are particularly suited to the production of civic learning environments.

Their focus on civic learning moves away from assessing politics related knowledge, or measuring participation by merely being there. Games offer a feedback system where the iterative process of learning can be measured. Formal learning processes do not necessarily allow a player to return to a game for improvement, as is typical of digital games. For example, once a test is written, it is graded and the process is complete. Learning games offer the opportunity to return and keep playing, or learning.

The idea of games having the ability to function as more than mere fun has been taken up by urbanists and artists alike. Huizinga went as far as to argue that ‘serious game designers can learn from the rich tradition of contemporary performance art’ (Rodriguez, 2006). It is also no surprise that public artists have toyed with game strategies as a way to reflect on and address fraught urban issues.

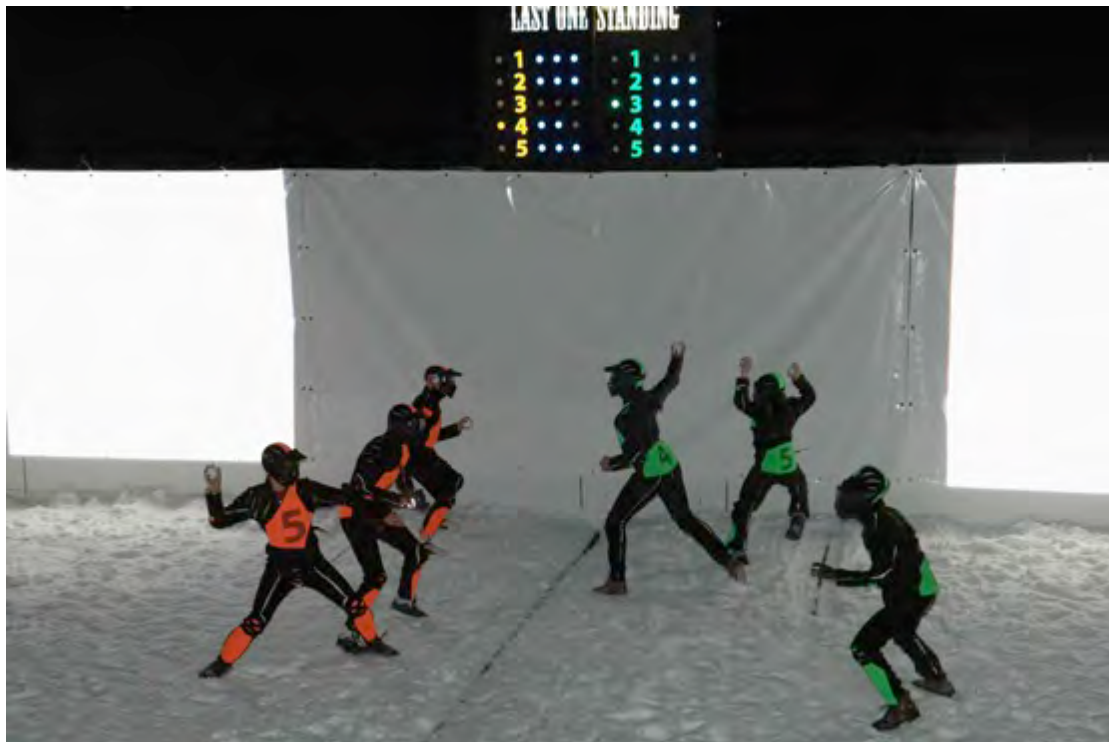


Figure 11: Joubert Park Project. date. Snowball fight [photograph]



Figure 12: Subotsky (2013). Anthea Moys vs. Grahamstown [photograph]

This is often through linking some form of affective performance with elements of play, such as the Joubert Park Project's public art snowball fight in the Drill Hall in the centre of Johannesburg (Figure 11) as a way to diffuse tensions between rival youth around contested spaces in the city. By drawing different kinds of people together in a quasi-competitive environment, the participants were able to meet on neutral ground and get to know each other as a starting point for empathy (JPP, 2007). In 2011 the Wits School of Arts, in collaboration with Haute Ecole des Arts Du Rhin (France) and Academie des Beaux Arts de Kinshasa (DRC) initiated a public art project called Play>Urban as a 'creative research platform about art practices in urban space' (Play>Urban, 2011). Johannesburg-based artist, Anthea Moys, regularly uses games and play as a means to address contentious issues, such as hosting a recent set of arm-wresting matches with different political parties in the run up to the 2014 South African elections, and 'Anthea Moys vs. Grahamstown' (Figure 12).

Although digital games are a multi-billion dollar global industry, and the majority of games literature focuses on rapidly expanding gaming culture, this research is more interested in the manifestation of games in public space. One of the most explicit ways games have come to permeate the public imagination, and impact on the design of cities has been through mega sporting events. Referring to the wide popular support and vast cultural affiliations to sporting teams and events, McLuhan (1994, p. 240) looks at the relationship between art and sport:

Art is not just play but an extension of human awareness in contrived and conventional patterns. Sport as popular art is a deep reaction to the typical action of the society. But high art, on the other hand, is not a reaction but a profound reappraisal of a complex cultural state... Perhaps there is, just for this reason, a desperate need for games in a highly specialized industrial culture, since they are the only form of art accessible to many minds.

McLuhan argues that in a context where 'high art' is inaccessible to the majority of people, sport functions as a popular art form because '[m]en without art, and men without the popular arts of games, tends toward automatism'. In addition, for Frey & Eitzen (1991, p. 504)

[a]t the same time that sport is a product of social reality, it is also unique. No other institution, except perhaps religion, commands the mystique, the nostalgia, the romantic ideational cultural fixation that sport does. No other activity so

paradoxically combines the serious with the frivolous, playfulness with intensity, and the ideological with the structural.

It is within a context of the reification of sport where games become mass media, that global mega events like the FIFA World Cup and the Olympic Games come to play in the popular imagination, but also the built infrastructure of a city. According to Cornelissen et al (2011a, p. 305) reflecting on the 2010 FIFA World Cup,

[t]he event was significant because it was the first of its kind and magnitude to be staged in Africa, placing South Africa in an increasingly competitive international environment for mega-event hosting. It was expected to leave great legacies for the country and to improve its relationship with the African continent and its standing in the international arena.

Despite these ambitious claims, there has been growing scepticism around the long-term legacy of hosting mega sporting events (Cornelissen et al., 2011a, p. 306). Furthermore, there has been little consensus amongst critics on what legacies are and how they should be evaluated. Bidding processes tend to capitalise on legacy as a positive thing, but the reality is that mega events have positive and negative, planned and unplanned, tangible and intangible effects (Cornelissen et al., 2011b; Preuss, 2011).

Chappelet and Junod (2006) suggest five legacy types of mega events: sporting legacy; urban legacy; infrastructural legacy; economic legacy; and social legacy. Cornelissen et al (2011a) argue that environmental and political legacies are absent from their criteria. Applying these kinds of appraisals to the FIFA 2010 World Cup hosted by South Africa, Cornelissen et al (2011a, 2011b) argue that while economic legacies were cited as paramount in the bidding process, the short-term impact on South Africa was largely 'inconclusive or negligible'. Tourism predictions were not met, and in some cases dropped, and retail did not upswing as substantially as was expected. Other than road upgrading, the infrastructural and urban legacy has been questionable, as stadiums have become seen as burdens on municipal budgets (Cornelissen et al., 2011b; Preuss, 2011). In terms of sporting, political and sociocultural legacies, despite the nation-building agenda, it is unclear how or whether beyond the moment of the World Cup itself, greater social cohesion has been achieved.

Although the tangible legacies of mega events may be dubious, the intangible legacies may have been more powerful. Many (predominantly urban) people had a lot of fun and those who could afford to attend the games (predominantly middle class urban dwellers and tourists) enjoyed the experience thoroughly. In addition, hosting the FIFA World Cup provides a powerful brand narrative for FIFA and host cities alike. The FIFA World Cup legacy narrative has been successfully leveraged as a means to secure other kinds of mega events (often with similar questionable tangible legacies), such as the World Design Capital 2014 title for Cape Town.

This kind of place-making has become an important focus of many cities and countries as a mechanism to attract investment, whether through foreign direct investment or through tourism. The branding of places has come under increasing critique for attempting to create singular identities for complex places; and is often seen as a symbol of neoliberal marketisation of cities (Theodore, Peck, & Brenner, 2009; S Zukin, 1987). Public art strategies have come to play a large role in place identity formation, and the complicity of artists in unequal development strategies abound (Marschall, 2008; Matsipa, 2014; Miles, 2005; Sharp et al., 2005). At the same time, cities, especially in the South need investment, and place-making narratives, such as the one constructed by the perceived success of the FIFA World Cup, have worked to attract unprecedented investment. And, as has been mentioned before, artists are not always either subversive or subsumed by elitist agendas.

It is within this conflicting simultaneity that mega events such as the FIFA World Cup reside, begging the question whether the eventfulness as Amin (2015) imagined, as an intangible affect, is worth the expense. VANSAs, through 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town' were responding to this in conceptualising their project, and Derrick and Murphy decided to experiment quite literally with the eventfulness of a mega event on a smaller scale, in a context largely marginalised by the FIFA World Cup. The next section describes *The Domino Effect* as it was developed and implemented in the small town of Hermon in the Western Cape.

4.1.2. The Domino Tournament

Tracey Derrick is a documentary photographer who has been largely interested in ‘documenting social and community issues in marginal communities’, such as prisoners and sex workers (Derrick & Murphy, 2010). Her engagement with Hermon began in 2008 while she was working on a documentary, which was cut short by discovering she had breast cancer. On her recovery, the ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ project allowed her to return to her unfinished project. Chris Murphy is a graphic designer with a passion for photography and heritage that lives in neighbouring town, Rebeeck-Kasteel. As an avid amateur historian Murphy was fascinated by the architecture in and around Hermon, and had traced its history quite extensively while in the process of trying to buy a farm in the near vicinity. Knowing each other socially, Derrick and Murphy decided to combine their interest in Hermon in developing *The Domino Effect* project (Derrick & Murphy, 2010; VANSAs, 2012, p. 33).

Hermon is a very small town of around 1000 people in the Swartland area in the Western Cape. About 100km from Cape Town, this village was largely based around a rail junction servicing local farms. The main road the R46 dissects the village into what Derrick and Murphy call ‘above the road’ and ‘below the road’: on the one side of the road (above) lies the White farm village boasting a hotel, a guesthouse, a small-scale cooldrink manufacturer, a bottle store and Agrimark; and on the other side (below), is a Coloured low-cost housing settlement where the majority of Hermon’s residents live. Hermon is still segregated along apartheid spatial and economic lines. Aside from seasonal farm work (primarily on wine farms), there are very few employment opportunities. Rates of alcoholism are very high, which are exacerbated by the hangover (and new incarnations) of the ‘dop system’²⁸. Although unemployment rates in the broader Drakenstein Municipality are thought to be around 23%, the majority of people who are employed are only partially employed, and work is temporal so much of the year, the majority of the Coloured residents in the area are out of work (VANSAs, 2012). Unequal access to resources, and lingering racism has resulted in a fractured town socially as well as economically and spatially.

²⁸ The ‘dop system’ involved paying labourers in alcohol. Although this is illegal, many farm labourers buy alcohol on credit, which is deducted from their wages, which ultimately amounts to a similar system (interview, 2011).



Figure 13: Derrick and Murphy (2011). Domino Effect [photograph]



Figure 14: Derrick and Murphy (2011). Hermon housing [photograph]

Based on the premise that Hermon had been largely side-lined by the FIFA World Cup (very few people have TVs in the area and aside from some of the

children being bussed to a neighbouring town screening, very few people even watched the games), Derrick and Murphy decided to mimic the event by using the popular pass-time of dominoes as a substitute for soccer. Drawing on the assumption that the FIFA World Cup offered a unique opportunity for exuberant nation building, they felt creating something local and in familiar tones, could be a mechanism for connecting the racially and spatially segregated community of Hermon.

In their project proposal they stated that

The small village of Hermon in the Western Cape, originating from a mission station, is still divided along classic apartheid divisions by a provincial road. The intention underpinning this project is to link the two historically separate communities. Hermon was sidelined from the soccer 2010 World Cup experience – with limited exposure to television and people’s work schedules denying access to time off. The community did not embrace nor celebrate the event. We are proposing a project with three parts: 1 The Domino Tournament at the 2 Rondeheuvel Plein, documented by 3 The Walkway. So, the concept is to create the Hermon Domino Tournament, a temporary intervention, to be played in a vacant public space at the centre of the village (Rondeheuvel Plein), which will involve community members from both sides of the road after progressing through various knockout stages to a grand final. On this site will stand large-scale dominoes, fixed and mounted at the site of the tournament as a legacy, and a permanent public meeting and play space (Derrick & Murphy, 2010).

In essence, their idea was to use participatory strategies to realise a domino tournament mimicking the FIFA World Cup; to visually link ‘above’ and ‘below’ the road creating a metaphorical bridge to address the divide through their version of a fanwalk; and to enhance a common space (Rondeheuvel Plein). This next section unpacks the process that Derrick and Murphy underwent in order to implement their mini mega event.

The lead up

When we had the idea and wrote the proposal, and then VANSAs told us we got the funding, we thought fuck, now we have to make it happen! We didn't think we would get accepted! (Derrick, personal interview, 2012 February 3)

Being relative outsiders to the public art scene in South Africa, and given its often exclusionary attitude, Derrick and Murphy did not think their project would be selected. Once the proposal was approved, Derrick and Murphy started with their

process of engaging locals in their ideas. The first thing Derrick needed to do was to learn to play, and according to local resident Doons, who became one of the core organising team members,

I had to explain how the action unfolds on the table. They were fascinated but neither understood what was going on. So I taught Tracey; she found it quite alright when her and I won the table. After that it changed and we became closer. My neighbourhood was asking me, Doons, what do these two people want so often from you, and I told them about what was going on. From that moment on there was great interest in the game (VANSA, 2012, p. 36).



Figure 15: Derrick and Murphy. 2011. Learning dominoes [photograph]

Although Doons made it sound easy, residents were initially suspicious because of the frequency of empty promises from outsiders (Derrick, personal interview, 2012 February 3). Derrick and Murphy recall the biggest hurdle, but also the turning point of the initial process of kick starting the tournament planning.

Derrick: We only had problems with the local mafia

Murphy: Oh god ja

Derrick: Which is the sports forum. They own Hermon. One night we were standing on the street, we had finished a meeting, and the streetlights had just come on and these three huge men sauntered up the street and we thought, are they coming to us and they were really like three cowboys coming up the street, very intimidating. They stopped in front of us and asked us what we were doing and why they weren't told about it, and of course Bernie, our MC, who has been involved in everything, is one of the sports forum members, so they knew about it...

Derrick: They hadn't communicated it internally, I think what it was that these guys felt offended that we hadn't personally approached them and they actually grilled us in the street for an hour at dusk, and slowly they got softer and softer to us and in the end they were really supportive.

Murphy: They ran the whole tournament on the day

(Derrick and Murphy, review presentation, 2011 April 8)

While they had started meeting some of the residents, their approach had largely been ad hoc, meeting with people as they went along, 'improvising' (Derrick, personal interview, 2012 February 3). With their duel at dusk, they cracked open the still somewhat reserved community, as they had connected with the leaders. The sports forum became the primary organising team for the tournament as it unfolded. One of the most valuable preparatory contributions the sports forum made was helping address the challenge of Bondeheuwel Plein, which was private land and not necessarily the most hospitable space for the tournament. The sports forum insisted on using the sports fields instead, and the physical legacy of the project may lie most explicitly in this decision.

We had wanted to work on the site where we built the swings and seesaw and the sports forum said no it has to be on the sports field and we thought fuck, the sports field is so big and how do we make a more intimate space, but we listened to them and it worked and it was right (Derrick, personal interview, 2012 February 3).

Once the community involvement was underway, Derrick and Murphy embarked on the parallel processes of getting official permissions and approaching a range of potential sponsors on the one hand; and developing ideas around how to mark the spectacle of the tournament, over and above the games themselves on the other. Although official municipal sanction was never given in writing, a team of municipal workers was dispatched to cut the grass and neaten the site in preparation for the tournament, and the police allocated a representative to the event. While these negotiations were underway, Derrick and Murphy also started exploring how to develop a participatory programme for the event itself.

We followed the World Cup – the spectacle before the playing, the playing, with a prize giving ceremony at the end and a fan walk to copy the one in Cape Town (Murphy, review presentation, 2011 April 8)

These preparations culminated in four processes: designing t-shirts as uniforms for the tournament day; designing banners to decorate advertise the tournament; preparing performances for the opening ceremony; and developing the markers for the fanwalk.

T-shirts



Figure 16: Derrick and Murphy (2012) t-shirts [assembled by Rike]

In an attempt to design an identity for the tournament, mimicking the uniforms worn by soccer players, Murphy had suggested designing t-shirts. In order to draw young people into the process, they turned this into a competition for local learners and over the course of a day workshop; local youngsters drew a range of designs. The winning learner, Adrian Swartz (14) received an art prize. Due to budget constraints, the original colour design could not be used so Murphy traced the design and turned it into a black and white impression to be printed on t-shirts. Because Derrick and Murphy still wanted the t-shirts to be brightly coloured, once they had been printed they held another workshop where local youths painted directly onto the t-shirts. 100s of t-shirts were printed and distributed for the tournament day.

Banners

In another attempt to draw in community members in creative ways, when the local Shoprite agreed to sponsor banners, a group of local women took it upon themselves to design them. They were hung strategically around town ‘above the road’ advertising the tournament.



Figure 17: Derrick and Murphy (2012). Banners [photographs]

Fanwalk

The fanwalk was conceptualised as the symbolic bridge between the White and Coloured sides of the road. In their proposal, Derrick and Murphy (2010) asserted that

[t]he Walkway is a well trodden path that leads to and from the local shop, and crosses the dividing provincial road. This will feature a series of display stands, which will include a photographic history of Hermon, the people and process leading to the ‘cup final’, and the final itself, a legacy and permanent reminder to the community of the event, and a bridge that speaks to local action as well as social change on a global scale.



Figure 18: Derrick and Murphy (2012). Fan Walk [photographs]

Tapping into an existing pedestrian route joining the two parts of Hermon, their thinking was to mark the significance of this linkage by installing seventeen chromadek boards with images of the residents of Hermon. These were mounted on wooden poles and dug into the ground with the intention of being a permanent marker and legacy of *The Domino Effect*; in the same way the fanwalks in major cities were demarcated, often with public art installed on the way. This was also a way for Derrick to share the portraits and documentation of the village that she had been taking as part of the process.

The boards were installed along the route, but within days of the tournament, some had gone missing and some of those remaining were bent from the effort of trying to remove them. The sports forum decided to take them all down and store them in private homes for safekeeping. They were never re-installed. Derrick and Murphy like to think those stolen were because people wanted the images so badly, and enjoyed the idea that they were adorning people's homes somewhere (Derrick and Murphy, personal interview, 2011 February 22).

While the fanwalk did not ultimately function in the way Derrick and Murphy had intended as a catalyst to link the two sides of the road, it unintentionally revealed important gaps. According to critical friend Kreutzveld (review presentation, 2011 April 8)

The first time I came to Hermon I was shown the fanwalk. And that walk, what really it is, in the daily running of the place, is a walk from the village, where most people live, to across the road, to where the bottle store is, which is owned by, what you refer to as the White community, and often people walk with their glasses, and then they walk back. And the walking back is across the cemetery, across the field. It is quite interesting that you use that as the idea of the fanwalk. I quite like the fact that people wanted to take the photos off and take something away. Things were highlighted as part of the tournament and this project, which is about extraordinary gaps. And the fact that the entire community is, I think, really now defined by alcohol consumption and enormous generational gaps, where the older generation may not drink as much as the younger generation, but drinking is the sport. And the tournament disrupted this and there was insistence from the community that there was absolutely no alcohol, even though informally this [drinking] is what happened. You could see people walking backwards and forwards from the sports ground. Anyway it is an interesting way of thinking around the reality of that walk.

Kreutzveld's interpretation was somewhat echoed by a personal experience on the day of the tournament. I was walking along the fanwalk, carrying a bunch of balloons Derrick had asked me to hang at the corner of the R46 (the interstitial place between 'above' and 'below' the road, when a woman holding an empty glass approached me asking me what was going on. She started telling me that none of the farm labourers (as opposed to other Coloured residents) had been included in the process, when another resident came past and proceeded to inform her how and where to register, ushering her away from speaking to me. Although a fleeting encounter, it was a also reminder that the groups of White (above) and Coloured (below) the road are not as homogenous as assumed.

Opening ceremony

Wanting to mimic the hype around the opening spectacle of the FIFA World Cup, Derrick and Murphy started identifying all the cultural activity in the area. Aside from gathering information on all the performance groups and bands, they felt it important to engage young people in the process, much like the opening of major sporting events. According to Derrick and Murphy (2012, p. 38)

It was important for us to start workshops with the children over the December holidays... While it was difficult to keep regular times, Saturday afternoons became popular dance sessions with Donald Lameyer from Esterhoff, a township in Riebeeck-Kasteel. Donald is a well known figure in the local Hip Hop scene and competes with his team the M.J Kings, on a national level. His participation encouraged other talented performers to come forward and contribute in the line-up of the 'event' that was to precede the actual tournament game.

Tapping into an appealing register for young people was wildly successful and those involved thoroughly enjoyed the process, and felt excited by being centre stage of the opening ceremony (personal communication with dancers, 2011 February 24). Ultimately, drawing in local performance talent was another way in which they tried to get community traction for the event. As the day drew closer, a range of performance groups came forward including a traditional *kaapse klopse*²⁹ band; a small Hip-hop outfit; and a children's steel drum band.

It was during this process that Derrick got the idea of the pallet toppling. Speaking to a local farmer on the White side of Hermon, she managed to get 100 pallets donated for the spectacle described in the beginning of this section.



Figure 19: Derrick and Murphy (2011). Palette toppling [photographs]

²⁹ Kaapse klopse is a type of music typical in the Western Cape, usually involving brass instruments.

Although one of the most memorable affective moments of the tournament day, the pallet dropping became a major point of contention between Derrick and Murphy. On the tournament day, the infamous southwesterly wind was threatening to howl through Hermon, blowing the pallets over as they were erected. Derrick was adamant to topple the pallet dominoes, while Murphy was wary of the danger they posed. Ultimately Derrick mobilised community members to hold the pallets and to let them topple one by one, but Derrick and Murphy's (2012, p. 43) relationship was showing cracks as their disagreement about how the project should run intensified.

The line up of performances and the tournament were 'inaugurated' by the toppling of hundreds of wooden pallets which were lined up like dominos forming a long row from the entrance of the village along the road to the game grounds. It took all day for a truck and a forklift driver both courtesy of 'Anna and the King' (Evert Kotze and his wife Anna) to place pallets on the road. The event took on a convivial energy and 'image' of its own, with each pallet held up by a resident from Hermon, who would 'let go' as the momentum would reach his/her point. People began to run after the hazardous toppling as it snaked along the road, making a great noise and much dust. On a level of involvement the speedy toppling created its own dramatic 'fanwalk' moment.

Spectacle and steene smacking: Domino Tournament

As the dust settled from the pallet domino toppling, people flooded into the sports grounds, jostling to get a spot in the meager shade provided by a few scattered gazebos. As soon as people were seated, the Coca Cola truck started blaring the opening riff of the 1990s pop song, Barbie Girl by Aqua as the group of young dancers entered the field under the direction and choreography of Donald Meyer. As the last domino dancer dropped to the grass, the steel band started playing; followed by performances from the local performance groups; and finally an impromptu performance by a local 10 year old dancing to Michael Jackson's Thriller. While MC, Bernie Louw, introduced the event proceedings, the organising committee whisked the tables onto the field and the junior teams got ready to play.



Figure 20: Derrick and Murphy (2012). Opening Ceremony [photograph]



Figure 21: Derrick and Murphy (2011). Youth teams playing [photographs]

There were 20 junior and 40 adult teams, and games were played in heats until quarter-finals, semi-finals and finals. The juniors played their heats first, and the adults commenced around dusk. The audience crowded in incrementally closer, dragging the mobile bleachers around the tables in progressively intimate configurations so everyone could see the action on the tables. As a referee who was

asked to watch for cheating, I spent the next few hours intimately immersed in the games being played.

Dorothee and I had been asked to be a referee as we were outside the community. Not knowing anything about dominoes, we just had to learn to look out for cheating. What hit home was how seriously the children took the tournament. Derrick and Murphy had mentioned that the children do not usually play in public – the game in the public realm is for the adults. The tournament offered a platform for children (who are generally more marginalised and ignored in society) to traverse the playground of the adults. And they took this very seriously. One of the smallest boys (no older than 8/9) who was playing on a team with one of the younger looking girls (same age), made a mistake in the quarter finals. He put down the wrong piece. The devastation on his face when he realised his mistake was palpable. He looked like he had gutted himself. He managed to stave off tears, barely. The adults also took the kids seriously. Crowding around and watching and cheering (Sitas, field notes, 2011).

The Coca-Cola truck persistently pumped out pop music as the teams slammed domino after domino in the hot afternoon sun. At the end of the junior tournament, the winning team, the ‘Pop Queens’ (both dancers in the opening ceremony; and both girls), were awarded their prizes, which were donated by the local Shoprite. Dusk brought some reprieve from the searing heat, and as the adults’ heats were about to start, the Coca-Cola truck lost power momentarily. According to Kreutzveld (review presentation, 2011 April 8),

while it was great to have the stage there in the form of the Coca-Cola truck there was a very serious sound, so there was continuous R&B blaring, which flooded the entire field where the tables were, where people were playing dominoes. And then this was interrupted every now and then by the MC. But when the adults came on, just as the sun was setting, for some reason for about 10 minutes or so there was no music coming from that stage. And I think that was my favourite moment because the only thing you could hear here was the performance... it is quite an active thing, its not people just putting the stones down quietly and carefully because everyone has their own style, which is quite an amazing thing, and apparently you have to slap down the stone, so this is what you would hear, you had something like 15 tables or so, and you had the mafia, which was quite extraordinary in arranging these things and making sure everything was going according to some kind of scheme, and it was silent and you only heard the stones being slapped on the table. So there was this focus on the game and I think that was my favourite moment in that tournament.

The silence from the truck and the audience allowed the full affective spectacle of the domino games to emerge. Although unintentional, it marked another aural / auditory cue, as powerful in its silence, as the toppling pallet dominos was in its racket.

The adult heats were even more austere than the juniors, as team after team was eliminated. A steady crowd of onlookers watched the games as more and more tables were removed as the final approached. In an unlikely duo for the usual configuration of domino playing, which does not normally include gender or generational mixing, father-daughter team, Gert and Rene Brander, took the title to much applause.

While the majority of residents from ‘below the road’ took part in the event as players or audience members, very few (if any) of the residents from ‘above the road’ were present for the actual games. During the course of the planning stages, the wealthier White residents had provided a range of supportive gestures, such as sponsoring the banners and prizes, providing pallets for the domino toppling, and advertising the event on their properties, there was no desire to be directly involved. According to Derrick (personal interview, 2012 February 3)

They don't want to get involved in the Coloured life. They socially don't want to mix with Coloured people and an event like that feels social and they just don't want to get involved. They want to keep to their own lives. I think they are pretty scared. It's that old apartheid thing hey: they are separate people, we don't know them, we're scared. One of them [White people] was amazed that they [Coloured people] pulled it together, such an event with no alcohol, everybody sober, and everybody talking about it for so long. It really surprised her. She was shocked that it worked so well with “those people”.

In a range of informal interviews with the ‘above the road’ residents on the day of the tournament, the overwhelming sentiment was that there was support for the activity in principle, given that ‘they have very little going for them and its nice to see something positive happening for a change’ (personal interview, 2011 February 22), but the tournament itself did not resonate. Dominos are not as popular as a daily activity, and it seems that the everyday divisions are so entrenched that the ‘above the road’ residents did not see any reason to join in. For many, it did not even occur to them.

Legacy: The Domino Effect

One of the concepts that are often found circulating any large-scale project is that of legacy, as epitomised by the 2010 FIFA World Cup Legacy Trust. The legacy of *The Domino Effect* while not explicitly stated as such, was ever present from the

projects inception in the proposal; through the workshops and review processes, interviews and final reporting. Their definition of *The Domino Effect* as part of their project signaled this. According to the definition provided at the beginning of their proposal,

The domino effect is a chain reaction that occurs when a small change causes a similar change nearby, which then will cause another similar change, and so on in linear sequence (Derrick & Murphy, 2010, p. 1).

Their ambition was that *The Domino Effect* would have a longer term ‘trickle effect’, and result in a legacy of an annual domino event. Derrick and Murphy were also constantly referring back to what would be left behind, and ultimately the way this was referred to was twofold: firstly in the tangible markers left in Hermon; and secondly, in the intangible systems that were imagined could be harnessed for the more regular event.

Whereas the fanwalk that was intended as the physical remnant to be left behind was largely unsuccessful, there were two more permanent and tangential interventions: a small children’s’ playground, and trees surrounding the sports fields. In an early visit to Hermon as part of the project, it became glaringly apparent that there were limited facilities for children. Wanting to do something on the Rondeheuvel Plein that had been their initial tournament site, Derrick and Murphy mobilised their networks and managed to get a friend to install a seesaw and a set of swings on the plein. The installation was done on private land and without the health and safety permissions typical of installing this kind of urban infrastructure, and was immensely popular. Although these were installed without authorisation, at the end of the project, Derrick and Murphy were in the process of getting municipal permission to complete the park with a jungle gym and domino play sculptures. Unfortunately nothing amounted from these plans.



Figure 22: Derrick and Murphy (2011). Swings [photograph]



Figure 23: Derrick and Murphy (2011). Tree planting [photographs]

For Derrick and Murphy (2012, p. 46)

One of the most exciting aspects of the project was planting trees around the sports-field where the tournament took place. The trees act as a kind of marker of the toernooi and related activities. We also planted indigenous White Karee, Wild Peach and Wild Plum trees by the church hall, where meetings and rehearsals took place. These are the only two communal locations for the Hermon community.

Hermon can be blindingly hot, ‘with temperatures rising as high as 45 degrees in summer’ (Derrick, review presentation, 2011 April 8). As is common in many of these kinds of Western Cape settlements, shade is rare. When I had been given directions for my first visit to Hermon, I had been told to park under the tree. It was a baffling instruction until I arrived and realised, there was only one significant shade-bearing tree ‘below the road’. Planting of trees around the sports field were not only a symbolic marker of the project, but a very practical intervention addressing the dire need for shade; especially during the very common sporting matches on the sports fields. Their choice of indigenous and endemic trees that do not require as much water; and trees that are not attractive to the roaming goats and sheep; made it more feasible for them to thrive.

The more intangible legacy of the domino tournament as a recurring event was more ambitious. At the end of the project, in the reporting that appeared in the publication, Derrick and Murphy (2012, p. 47) declared,

[o]verall, our sense is that the project provided powerful raw material for the pursuit of a similar tournament in the future, which could also potentially become a self-sustaining and self-organised sports/cultural ‘enterprise’, owned by Hermon’s residents and driven by a dedicated toernooi committee. Already, meetings have been scheduled to plan ahead and our role will include organisational input and advice. A defining comment was made by the master of ceremonies for the tournament, Bernie Louw, who concluded the evening stating, “Hermons’ people showed us today co-operation and working together is something we can do. Next year we can do this again.”

The vision was to continue hosting the tournament on an annual basis. Derrick and Murphy would slowly withdraw until it was a sustainable community initiative. Unfortunately this was not to be the case. A year after the tournament, Derrick and Murphy had not pursued the idea. In a follow up interview, Derrick (personal interview, 2012 February 3) lamented this. Murphy and her had decided they were unable to work together, with the pallet dropping being the proverbial straw that broke the camel’s back, and while Murphy desired to see the tournament happening again, he was not willing to be involved in the organising process. None of the community members had approached them to support another tournament, and everyone slipped back into their busy daily lives. Derrick was saddened by this, and suggested that the main hindrance was the amount of time, energy and resources it took to get the tournament together. Raising a new budget would have been a time-consuming exercise, and given that Derrick, earning her own livelihood from private

photography teaching, was not in a financial position to put her work on hold to do this. In addition, the running of the project in the preparatory stages required a great deal of time and effort to ensure that planning meetings happened. The final constraint in pulling off such a tournament was access to technology and networks. Whereas people in Hermon have cell phones, very few have regular airtime, let alone smart phones. No one in the ‘below the road’ community has a computer, let alone access to a printer or email. These constraints would have made it very difficult to pull off a tournament without some kind of local intermediary. Given that the ‘above the road’ residents, although happy to contribute in kind, were not all that ready to have a hands on approach to the tournament, there has to this date, been no future tournament planning.

4.1.3. Reflections

This section explores *The Domino Effect* through three reflections. Firstly, it looks at the relationship between participation and playing, arguing that tapping into the existing practice of dominoes resonated with locals and engendered the kind of participation uncommon in many commissioned public art projects. Secondly, while the domino tournament was a successful event, the project as a whole marked, and was marked by gaps and therefore it explores the unintended consequences and missed affective opportunities. Finally, it returns to the concept underpinning the project, that of the idea of a ‘domino effect’, reflecting on the legacy of such a mini mega event.

Participation and playing

McLuhan (1994, p. 238) asks, ‘[d]o not our favourite games provide a release from the monopolistic tyranny of the social machine?’. He argues that games are popular because of the break from everyday banality that they allow. Tapping into existing games practice (dominoes) and using the format of another popular game (FIFA World Cup), Derrick and Murphy were able to grasp the popular imagination of residents of Hermon. The involvement of Hermon residents as organisers, tournament participants and audience members attests to this. Tapping into familiar registers, such as Bourdieu (1989) and Benjamin (1970) suggest, meant that people were easily enrolled into the production of the tournament, and turned out en masse to

participate in, and enjoy the festivities on the tournament day. With a total of around 60 teams and an audience several hundred strong, the tournament clearly struck a nerve with locals who thoroughly enjoyed the days events (Hermon, audience interviews, 2011 February 24).

Because of the ubiquity of games in everyday life, they have become a useful strategy for enrolling people in more serious agendas (Rodriguez, 2006). For Derrick and Murphy, the Domino Tournament was intended as a mechanism to connect a disconnected community ‘above’ and ‘below’ the road. This may not have happened in the way they intended, but the tournament did surface and challenge a range of power dynamics typical in post-apartheid South Africa.

The intention of participatory practice as Arnstein (1969) imagined it, involves fostering ‘citizen power’, and although most often spoken about in development circles (Cook & Kathari, 2002; Hickey & Mohan, 2004), aims to redress marginalising power dynamics. While the organizing committee attests to this, it can be seen most explicitly in the involvement of children in the tournament. Children are largely seen as recipients of care as opposed to active agents (Sitas & Pieterse, 2013), yet here they were centre-stage: both in the opening ceremony and the tournament itself. Furthermore, the winning team was comprised of two girls, which is not insignificant in a patriarchal society. In personal communication with children, they expressed how empowering it was to be taken seriously enough to be included in the tournament, which resonates with Baldwin-Phillipi (2014) assertion of the importance of renegotiating power relations in serious urban games. Serious games, however, usually offer an iterative process allowing space for reflection which was missing in *The Domino Effect* so it is impossible to say whether this moment, or event as Amin (2015) would imagine it, had long-term implications.

Although Bishop (2012), Miles (1997) and Pinder (2005) all caution not to have unrealistic expectations of what public art is able to achieve in redressing complex societal issues, the notion of *The Domino Effect* suggests a ‘trickle effect’ impact that cannot be entirely ignored as it was the underpinning premise of the project. It is therefore useful to explore the intended and unintended consequences that emerged.

Missed moments

As with any participatory process, the practice of enrolling Hermon residents was a difficult one, and it took some time to negotiate the power dynamics in order to reach the community leaders who could unlock community involvement. Sustaining people's interest and ensuring that people attended the meetings and workshops was a time-consuming, and sometimes arduous process. So much so, that just working out the logistics became the overwhelming task of Derrick and Murphy, that they felt they were unable to insert their aesthetic stamp in any coherent or meaningful way. While they were happy with the way the event unfolded, they felt they had compromised their creative integrity by focusing more on the logistical planning than on inserting their 'creative voice' (Derrick and Murphy, personal interview, 2011 February 22; Derrick and Murphy, review presentation, 2011 April 8). For critics of participatory art, *The Domino Effect* fell short in one key predictable way: being devoid of 'art', begging the question about at what point a project stops being art, and is merely another event?

Whereas clearly defined aesthetic registers were developed as part of the other two projects explored as part of this research, the 'art' in this project was more elusive. The only aesthetic artifacts that were produced as part of the project were the t-shirts that were handed out on the day; the banners advertising the event; the fanwalk boards that were up for around 48 hours; the large dominoes that marked the pitch on the day; and a plethora of pictures that remain only in the project archive. In order to illustrate this point, there are two examples that are interesting to consider in the affective experience of the tournament: the first is more tangible and revolves around the t-shirt designs; while the second is more intangible and draws on the missed affective opportunity Kreutzveld (review presentation, 2011 April 8) describes when the Coca Cola truck generator failed.

The competition that had been run with children produced some beautiful, albeit naïve, or 'outsider art' t-shirt designs³⁰. Instead of using the original work of the winning entry as would be the norm in community or participatory art projects, the image was transferred and poorly rendered digitally with an accompanying font

³⁰ 'Naïve' or 'outsider' art usually refers to art produced outside mainstream cultural circuits or the art scene. This includes art made by untrained creative practitioners such as prisoners or children. The term 'outsider art' as coined by Cardinal (1972).

(Comic Sans) that has developed a poor reputation in art and design circles (Haley, 2012). Murphy explained that due to budget constraints a full colour image could not be reproduced, but this does not mean the original artwork could not have been rendered in black and white. Consequently, the artist's design process undermined an important participatory moment where instead of using the winning artwork, the art was 'bastardised for expedience' (anonymous 2010 Reasons artist³¹, personal interview, 2011 April 11). Even though the children then painted on the t-shirts, and although this was done without ill intention, what resulted was that the aesthetic integrity of the winning artist and the designer was undermined. It not only fell short of art standards usually associated with contemporary art practice, but undermined the aesthetic challenges made by community art on behalf of 'outsider art'.

The affective moment Kreutzveld captures when the blaring music stopped and the cacophony of domino stones dominated provides an example of another missed opportunity. While providing pop music at high volumes resonated at a popular level with residents, being the mainstay of these sorts of public events, the Coca Cola truck drowned out the possibility of working aesthetically and affectively with the game itself, and most specifically with the sound. LaBelle (2010) argues that sound shapes everyday life more profoundly than most other senses, and therefore is a useful artistic strategy. Sound is the one sense that allows you to see around corners. The pallet dropping offered one extreme, although the clattering din was an unintended consequence rather than intentionally choreographed (Derrick, personal interview, 2012 February 3), it had affective impact and lingered in the memory of all involved. On a quieter note, Kreutzveld suggests that the blaring music undermined the performance of the domino playing, which could have been tapped into as another aural affective moment.

For Amin (2015), traces of the event may have stuck in the memory of people but the political dimension was lost because the sensory landscape as sentient was not adequately addressed. Missing these kinds of affective opportunities demonstrates how difficult it is to balance popular resonance with affective or aesthetic engagement that distinguishes projects such as these as art events with progressive agendas. If the lasting impression of a project such as this is not an aesthetic one, then what is its legacy?

³¹ The artist in question wished to remain anonymous because he did not want to hurt the feelings of the Derrick and Murphy

Domino effect? Becoming other-wise?

Any game, like any medium of information, is an extension of the individual or the group. Its effect on the group or individual is a reconfiguring of the parts of the group or individual that are not so extended. A work of art has no existence or function apart from its effects on human observers. And art, like games or popular arts, and like media of communication, has the power to impose its own assumptions by setting the human community into new relationships and postures (McLuhan, 1994).

McLuhan is arguing that games as much as art are only meaningful in their effects, and as a type of mass communication, impose a particular set of assumptions. He suggests that sporting events as mass culture is a form of art and a communicating one at that. While not explicitly stating it as such, his concern is also with legacies. Although *The Domino Effect* does not conform to the normative definition of ‘serious games’, where the pedagogical imperatives are usually explicitly stated, in MacLuhan’s definition, they are no less discursive.

Given the obsession of legacies both within the mega sporting event, and participatory art worlds, it is useful to return to Chappelet and Junod (2006) five legacy types: sporting legacy; urban legacy; infrastructural legacy; economic legacy; and social legacy; coupled with Cornelissen et al’s (2011a) environmental and political legacies.

While there are no art relic legacies to speak of, the tangible legacies include the playground and the trees, both of which responded to a very functional need and are arguably more useful than monuments (environmental, infrastructural and urban legacies). The primary legacy Derrick and Murphy intended to leave straddles the tangible and intangible as they had hoped this would be the starting point of an on-going, community-run tournament (sporting and economic legacies). This desire proved too ambitious and despite an interest the material realities made this impossible without external mediation. None of the ‘below the road’ members of the organising committee had access to the kinds of communication technology needed to leverage the kinds of networks needed to pull off these kinds of events. Although cell phones proliferate, few people have airtime let alone access to email, computers, or printers. The majority of residents fluctuate between eking out a livelihood in harsh working conditions (often leaving to work for stretches of time on local wine farms) and unemployment, making the confluence of time and resources restrictive. Just as

the FIFA World Cup would be next to impossible to replicate without the networks and associated sponsorships, so too was the domino tournament.

The biggest disjuncture *The Domino Effect* highlighted was the insurmountability of the ‘above’ and ‘below’ the road divide (social and political legacies). ‘Above the road’ residents do have access to the networks and resources that could enable an on going tournament, yet there was a reluctance to get involved in a direct way. According to Derrick (personal interview, 2012 February 3)

one of them [White people] was amazed that they [Coloured people] pulled it together, such an event with no alcohol, everybody sober, and everybody talking about it for so long. It really surprised her. She was shocked that it worked so well with “those people”.

It is arguable whether or not public art projects can substantively address these kinds of deeply engrained societal divisions (Bishop, 2012; M. Miles, 2009), but they can certainly signpost that these kinds of divisions still exist. Regardless of the best intentions of the artists, the absence of ‘transitional’ and ‘contingent’ spaces means that the project missed the other-wising potential that has proved successful in other art and gaming experiments that have pulled disparate people together (von Kotze & Wildemeersch, 2014; Winnicott, 1989). *The Domino Effect* may have challenged negative perceptions harboured by ‘above the road’ residents of those ‘below the road’ who had been lumped together as alcoholics and therefore socially surplus, but the long-lasting social impact this had on integration the artists had envisioned did not materialize.

4.1.4. Conclusion

The Domino Effect highlights the inherent tensions in producing this kind of socially engaged artwork. Although it set out with Freireian ideals: setting up a platform for encountering the ‘other’ in order to bridge a gap for dialogue to emerge; it lacked a critical dimension where this could become possible. This may be indicative of how entrenched racialised spatial inequality is in South Africa, but it could also speak to the inexperience of the artists in responding to the participatory turn. Even though the possibility of affective eventfulness as Amin (2015) and Miles (1997) imagined may have been missed; and the project fell short of art-norm

aesthetic standards; and while it was unable to leave the kind of ambitious legacy that underpins the premise of mega events; *The Domino Effect* was a lot of fun, breaking the monotony of everyday life in a community existing under harsh socio-economic conditions.

4.2. Living within History (Dundee, KwaZulu-Natal)



Figure 24: Copen and Sadie (2011). Siwela Sonke at Soni's Store [photograph]

The dust from the untreated concrete floor swirled up in ever-increasing intensity as the impromptu choir's singing reached each crescendo. A circle of powdered shoes rhythmically stomping in a tempestuous mist. A takkie, a suit shoe and a sandal. The acoustics of the largely empty shop meant the voices reverberated and echoed, bouncing off the walls and windows. Looking in from outside, it was as if the small shop was heaving in a yellow glow, on the otherwise darkened street. It was 9pm. Usually the street would be empty by this time in the evening, but that night, there was a light spilling out of Soni's store on the corner of Wilson and MacKenzie streets. The shop front windows were alive with activity. Boisterous local kids had taken over the one as an impromptu photobooth and were re-enacting a Dadaist collage of a battle; an irreverent parody of anglo-Zulu history: a top hat and a knobkerrie; a shawl and a shield; dainty handkerchief stuffed into an earthenware ukhamba. In another shop window, a group of wine-sipping adults peered and pointed at an array of archival images of Dundee; hey that's the old bioscope before it became a church. And, what is my great grandfather's head doing on the body of a horse in the middle of a coal-littered battlefield? In the back of the shop, in a darkened recess, a group of faces was lit by the flickering of two screens, the sound of kids splashing in a pool twittering in the background while 100s of shadowy soldiers die repeated deaths in the bottom of an empty public swimming pool. That's

the one I did! And that's me there! What are these umlungu's doing? Making trouble? No, making art. (edited from Sitas, field notes, 2011).

It was on this humid KwaZulu-Natal night that the project *Living Within History* culminated in a shop front that more closely resembled an exploded history book; an archive with its guts pulled out and presticked back together; a Situationist museum of sorts. In the windows were a range of costumes and objects that had been borrowed from the local Talana Museum: old colonial war uniforms; Zulu shields and spears; hats and parasols; and earthenware pots. On the left wall, the artists had tiled A4 photocopied images from the archive, interspersed with some printouts from the collage workshops they had been running with local children, using the archive as material. Next to the tiles was a large-scale print of an aerial view of the town of Dundee from Google Maps, edited by the artists showing the spaces they had been working in. On the right hand wall were hundreds of cut out objects, people, and places, and big blobs of prestick; as well as a number of collaged vignettes in the process of being made and remade. In the back of the shop, the artists had set up two screens showing the work they had facilitated and made over the course of the three months residency.



Figure 25: Coppen and Sadie (2011). Event festivities [photograph]

What was most remarkable was what was happening in the moment. Firstly, the event was happening on a normally quiet street at night, on the border between the historically Black and White side of Dundee (the invisible dividing line between the banks and the PEP store). Secondly, what was normally associated with a retail space (a downtown shop front) was being used as a museum / gallery. Thirdly, unlike the quiet, austere and predominately cordoned off spaces usually found in museums and galleries, the archive was animated and accessible, as people tried things on and moved them around. Finally, in contrast to usual social relations in Dundee, there were both White and Black residents in the same social space (something that was constantly being exclaimed as unique by the residents, to each other). And all of this in a mere few hours of encounter as the project was exhibited to the townsfolk. Of course, the encounter did not just happen. It was the outcome of a complex process of building relationships over the previous few months.

This section unravels how the *Living Within History* project culminated in an event so atypical for the relatively conservative, and still divided northern KwaZulu-Natal town of Dundee. As the project was primarily a performative exploration of ‘historical imagination’ (Coppin, personal interview, 2011 January 29), this section starts by situating the project within dominant thinking about monumentalisation, history and heritage, and the politics of public performance. It goes on to look at the core activities of the project, before drawing out some key reflections on this kind of creative work, specifically focusing on the role of disruption that underpins the kinds of trespassing and transgression Boal (1979), hooks (1994), and Kershaw (1999) assert as politically progressive.

4.2.1. Monumentalisation, history and heritage

There is general consensus amongst contemporary historians that history is not nearly as static as previously imagined. Increasingly the fixedness of history has been challenged and alternative voices and interpretations of history are emerging. Despite this opening up of historical studies, there is still a tendency to want to fix historical moments in the public imaginary. The most common way history is commemorated in public space is in the form of monuments. Monuments, much like the battle-wounds etched into the history of the area, scar the landscape in and around Dundee. Although

monuments have been normalized in the public imagination of most cities, what they seek to represent has not gone unchallenged. According to Marschall (2005, p. 22)

Images of the past commonly serve to legitimate a present social order. Monuments and memorials are a means of—often literally—casting in bronze or carving in stone such images of the past, thus solidifying and preserving carefully selected memories for the future. Since the experience of the present is intricately connected with the memory of the past, public monuments are a means of controlling and guiding people’s perception of the contemporary socio-political order, as well as shaping community and national identity [Connerton 1989]

Cities have specific agendas linked to public art commissioned for public spaces and monuments are some of the most permanent markers of the ideologies that have shaped, and continue to shape, the spaces in which we live. For Miles (1997, p. 38) monuments ‘both define and make visible the values of the public realm, and do so in a way which is far from neutral, never simply decorative’.

Conventional monuments (Jackson, 2005) are, more often than not, physical structures in public spaces that have been installed or erected in honour of a particular person, people or event. They come in many forms: inter alia buildings, statues, mausoleums, plaques and sculptures. They are often sites of commemoration and remembrance and are often seen as instrumental in nation-building (DAC, 2013b, 2013c). They are therefore produced within a specific context and with a specific agenda and, as Miles (1997, p. 58) asserts, ‘[m]onuments are produced within a dominant framework of values, as elements in the construction of a national history’. While they may have a unifying agenda, the question that arises is, in whose interest (M. Miles, 1997; Sharp et al., 2005; Sharon Zukin, 1995)?

As a general category of cultural objects... monuments are familiar in the spaces of most cities, standing for a stability which conceals the internal contradictions of society and survives the day-to-day fluctuations of history. The majority in society is persuaded, by monuments and other civil institutions, to accept these contradictions, the monument becoming a device of social control less brutish and costly than armed force (M. Miles, 1997, p. 58).

Miles suggests that the majority of people accept the meaning of monuments as an historical given (or in some cases ignore their existence). Lefebvre suggests that monuments have ‘a “horizon of meaning” within which multiple meanings clash and compete’ (Crampton, 2001, p. 223). What Lefebvre is asserting here is that the

intended meaning of monuments is not the only meaning that can be read into these structures. As we produce and reproduce space through our interaction with and within it, we develop a more complex understanding of the urban environment. So despite the ideologies that monuments embody, they too are open to critique through the ways in which we engage with them. It is often in the realm of creative intervention that these power structures are actively challenged in the public realm, and it is at moments such as this that the contradictions of monumentalism are exposed, as can be seen in the work of Krzysztof Wodiczko (Figure 26) and Jenny Holtzer.

What is interesting to note in a South African context is that regime change did not bring about a call to remove colonial or apartheid monuments and memorials. An ethic of reconciliation seems to have extended to the acceptance of these structures in our urban landscapes. This does not mean they have been immune from critique or critical engagement as can be seen in Beezy Bailey's *abekhwetha*³² (Figure 20) and Public Eye's work in Cape Town (Minty, 2006). These interventions challenge the perceived fixedness of history in post-apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, they activate monuments in interesting ways and open up platforms for discussion about history, heritage and the city. Important for this research is how through engaging with monuments, art can be used as a catalyst for dialogue, and what Miles (1997) asserts as the democratisation of monuments.

Despite the increasing challenges to monuments in urban centres around the world, in a small South African town context like Dundee, the bulk of the monuments still commemorate a colonial and apartheid past. Where new monuments are erected, the emphasis is on 'heritage'. Until recently Johannesburg was the only city in South Africa that had developed a public art framework as part of their Arts and Culture policy. To a large extent, even where policy exists, commissioned public art is still shaped by political agendas of social cohesion and cultural heritage. This can explicitly be seen in the recent debacle in Cape Town surrounding a large pair of glasses placed on the Sea Point promenade. *Perceiving Freedom* started as a quirky idea for Camps Bay beach, but because this did not hold enough social or political weight, a controversial layer of meaning linked to Nelson Mandela was added. Within days the sculpture had been 'defaced' by stencil artists (Figure 27) causing a vibrant

³² Abekhwetha refers to a youth going through the initiation process into manhood. The ritual involves being isolated in the wild and being circumcised.

public debate about the role of public art policy in South Africa (Badsha, 2014; V. Pillay, 2014; Young, 2014).



Figure 26: Bailey (1999). Abekhwetha [photograph]



Figure 27: Eloff (2014). Elion vs Tokolos [photograph]



Figure 28: Wodiczko.(1984). Projections [documentation of projection on SA embassy]

According to Marschall (2010a, p. 78)

[i]n the current South African context, most new public art projects fall into the category of commemorative art, promoted as ‘heritage’ and invested with a specific symbolic meaning linked to officially endorsed public memory discourses and sociopolitical goals such as reconciliation and nation-building.

Marschall (2010a, p. 81) argues that

[w]hat this means is that a work of public art cannot simply be intended for beautification or contemplation, but it must have a distinct purpose directly or indirectly associated with larger policy goals of reconciliation, nation-building, and transformation.⁴ Tangible cultural heritage—monuments, memorials, statues, significant buildings, museums, historical sites—is always about ‘redress,’ telling the Other side of the story, validating the memories, experiences, heroes and narratives of those previously written out of the historical record, and reshaping the inherited symbolic landscape to reflect the majority culture.

Although Marschall criticizes the political agenda behind most commissioning processes of public art in South Africa, she raises an interesting concern that while these may be the claims of the commissioning agenda, the public art that is installed is rarely able to do the things it proposes. Whereas ‘Other’ stories are claimed to be told, the form in which these monuments are erected often mimic their predecessors and therefore do little to take alternative narratives seriously.

It is within this context of interrogating history and heritage that the *Living within History* project was operating, largely exploring participatory and performative strategies to challenge normative ‘historical imaginaries’ as they called it (Coppen, 2013).

4.2.2. Politics and public performance

Coppen and Sadie describe their performances as part of *Living Within History* as site-specific engagements with power dynamics implicit in the relationship between infrastructure, history and everyday life (Coppen, personal interview, 2011 January 29; Sadie, personal interview, 2011 January 29). They are not alone in the emphasis on the role of public performance as a critical commentator on society. Just

as artists have moved out of the gallery, so too have performers moved out of the theatre and off the stage, where the proscenium arch is replaced by the bus stop or bridge, and lit by street instead of stage lights. Cohen-Cruz (2013, p. 1) argues that

[p]otentially, street performance creates a bridge between imagined and real actions, often facilitated by taking place at the very sites that the performance makers want transformed.

In moving performance into the streets, a particular notion of the role of the street is imagined. There has been an increasing wave of public performance festivals across the world, such as ‘Infecting the City’ in Cape Town, and ‘New Imaginaries’ in Johannesburg, which are South African examples within a multitude of international ones.

Infecting The City, at its core, is intended to disrupt the absurdity that we need permission from anyone to expose our humanity. Our intentions with this Festival are to bring curiosity, wonder, beauty, empathy, pain, and new ideas out into the streets for everyone to engage with (Africa Centre, 2014).

Although this is a compelling agenda, the reality is that public spaces are still restricted by authorities, and even *Infecting the City* has to apply for and comply with City of Cape Town permits, which limits the kinds of activities that can be included in the programming (Pather, personal communication, 2011). These kinds of temporary interventions explore alternative creative expressions in and of public space. In a context like South Africa, that is highly fragmented and unequal, issues of social and spatial inequality have become implicit in some of the performances. But this is not always the case. Often the performances are postmodern pastiches, and while invoking Debord’s (1970) spectacle, are devoid of Dadaist politics. A number of experimental performative projects have emerged around the country, and, unlike ‘Infecting the City’ that is situated in the relatively wealthy City Bowl in Cape Town; tend to locate themselves in poorer areas that are less traversed by the cultural elite. While these projects may challenge the perception of these spaces as marginal or unsafe, the intended audiences still tend to be middle class and are herded through the spectacle of the inner city. Unintended audiences or passersby witness the spectacle of performative art but very often the form presents aesthetics so coded and steeped in gallery practice as to be invasive and alienating. These types of festivals are usually staged in places where ‘high’ art does not usually happen, and raises interesting

questions about the idea of the spectacle: what or who is the spectacle? The performers? The herded audiences? The locals working and commuting?

For Cohen-Cruz (2013, p. 2)

[t]he usual rhetoric of street performance configures the street as the gateway to the masses, directly or through the media. But the impulse to perform in the street reflects more the desire for popular access than its sure manifestation... Space is always controlled by *someone* and exists *somewhere*, so is inevitably marked by a particular class or race and not equally accessible to all.

Assuming that taking performance to the streets will perform a radical function in Kershaw's terms may be a bit simplistic. Audiences are not always as 'public' as the Habermasian public sphere hopes for. In exclusive cities and public spaces, typical of South Africa, the kinds of audiences vary, assuming that public performance is always in the public interest is problematic. Cohen-Cruz (2013, p. 2) asks

[d]o street theatre audiences ever include a broad cross-section of people? Or different street events reach different constituencies while some reach none at all, lost in the hustle and bustle of contemporary public space, or too fleeting to make a difference?... all manifest a bravery in taking to the streets, and sometimes also an arrogance, as their shows are often imposed on people who have not chosen to be spectators.

Although the rejection of the supposed confines of the bourgeois theatre may be underpinned by a radical impulse, the types of politics enacted in public performance is hard to pinpoint, and according to Kershaw (1999, p. 16)

[f]or some time now the idea of 'political theatre' has been in crisis. Postmodernism and related theories have profoundly upset established notions of the 'political' in theatre, which were usually defined in relation to left-wing or socialist/Marxist ideologies. Right-wing theatre, by implication was not political. The problem is now compounded because Left-progressive ideologies appear to be in decline, but more importantly also because of the new promiscuity of the political. Since the personal became political, in the 1960s, the political has found its way into almost every nook and cranny of culture. Identity politics, the politics of camp, body politics, sexual politics – the political is now ubiquitous and can be identified in all theatre and all performance. Such promiscuity, though, breeds a new kind of uncertainty.

Kershaw's concern is how to identify the politics, and particularly the radical (or progressive left-wing) politics in street performances, that often appear to fall into

the trap of the relativism of postmodernism where politics become so diluted it becomes meaningless. The politics of Brechtian theatre, which aimed at a generalized notion of greater ‘justice, equality and freedom’ (Kershaw, 1999, p. 17), rooted in a Marxist tradition of rooting solidarity *with*, as Benjamin asserts, is much easier to locate. The epistemological challenge is how to hold the radical impulses of both approaches simultaneously: taking seriously the democratizing tendencies of post-structuralism, while not losing the politics of social justice in a postmodern quagmire of meaninglessness. Kershaw argues for shifting the discussion away from the notion of ‘political theatre’ to ‘radical performance’ in order to honour the subversive potential in public performance.

Because ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’, makes particular claims about the role of public creativity in fostering new spaces for interaction and integration; and *Living Within History* engages public performance in order to tackle social issues, it is important to explore the kinds of socio-politics implicit in the public performance that emerged out of the project. The next section therefore describes *Living Within History* as it unfolded, before reflecting on the disruptive potential of a ‘historical imagination’ at the intersection of history, heritage and public space.

4.2.3. Living Within History and Historical Imagining

Living Within History, unlike the other two projects explored in this thesis, situated itself as an exploratory research project, using art as a means to explore what Coppen and Sadie called ‘historical imagination’.

For Coppen (2012, p. 15)

[s]o much of our ability to comprehend the past depends on our capacity to imagine what has essentially been lost. When this is achieved, when the historical imagination is activated, routine everyday routes are afforded a back-story and the present is able to run in tandem with the past... we hoped our Living Within History project would in some way pique the historical imaginations of residents and locals. We hoped to achieve this without resorting to more literal modes of re-enactment... to stimulate interest in and around forgotten or contested spaces of the town.

For Coppen and Sadie, ‘historical imagination’ is a simultaneously critical and creative act; where ordinary people imagine the future by reflecting on the past. Their emphasis is on democratizing the process through challenging dominant grand narratives by exploring the lived experience of the every day (Coppen and Sadie, personal interview, 2012 March 15). Because of Coppen and Sadie’s emphasis on the process as a research project, this section starts by looking at some of the preparatory processes before exploring the activities.

Preparation

Neil Coppen is a writer and a theatre director and designer. Winner of the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Drama in 2011, Coppen’s theatre practice has flourished nationally. He has primarily worked in more formal theater contexts, and his most notable works of the past ten years have been ‘Suicidal Pigeons’ (2005), ‘Two ...The Beginning of the End’, ‘Tin Bucket Drum’ (2005-2013), ‘Tree Boy’, ‘Abnormal Loads’ (2013) that stemmed from his experience in Dundee, and ‘NewFoundLand’ (2014). Coppen has a deep fascination for history and much of his contemporary theatre work explores the notion of an ‘historical imagination’ as a disruptive, creative and productive force Coppen, personal interview, 2013 March 14. Vaughn Sadie is a conceptual artist, educator, curator and project manager. He has exhibited in numerous solo and group shows locally and globally over the past ten years (such as AVA, Bank Gallery, DAG, JAG, KZNSA and SFMOMA). Sadie is primarily interested in the impact of artificial light on spaces and social engagement. Sadie also has long standing collaborations with choreographer, Jay Pather and his performance outfit called Siwela Sonke (who were involved in this project), as well as with choreographer Sello Pesa (VANSA, 2012, p. 11). Sadie is currently working for VANSA on its latest exploration entitled ‘Two Thousand and Fourteen Ways of Being Here’ which aims to extend the work of ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ to explore the intersection of public art, museum practice and community politics in Cosmo City³³ in Johannesburg.

In 2007, Coppen and Sadie had visited Dundee to film the *Dundee Die Hards*, a group of historical battle re-enactors, as part of a project they were doing at the

³³ Cosmo City is an interesting example of a post-apartheid suburb that was initiated as a public-private partnership. It is an urban design experiment for mixed low income housing, that boasts free, subsidised and bonded houses for lower income earners.

time. They became fascinated with region and the concept of historical reenactments, and jumped at the opportunity to further explore the place when they saw the call for proposals for the ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ project (Coppen, personal interview, 2011 January 29; Sadie, personal interview, 2011 January 29).

Dundee is a small town in KwaZulu-Natal with a population of just over 30 000 people. Like most towns in South Africa, it is still largely divided along apartheid lines, but for the artists

[u]ndoubtedly Dundee’s biggest draw card is the 68 battle-field sites which surround the town and these remain turfs where countless histories, cultures and narratives have over the decades collided. Naturally these sites still have the ability to arouse varying emotional responses, controversies, disagreements and speculations... What interests us is that in the re-enactment, the game or battle’s outcome is always predictable with participants fighting for a victory that has essentially been predetermined centuries ago. History remains wedged in a fatalistic cycle (players die, then resurrect, then play to die once again.)The role players within the re-enactments are never permitted to shift or alter the game plan, they must adhere to fact and play within the past’s set of non-negotiable rules... The project wishes to explore the idea of living history or more particularly living within history. Our intention is not to focus on the town’s more fabled figures and terrains, but rather reveal how history is founded and made (yet seldom remembered) on smaller, less grandiose personal narratives... Our aim is not to be contentious or political (though such a process is certain to raise stimulating questions) but rather to work in close conjunction with locals, historians, community groups, tour guides and school groups to emancipate history from slavish text book accounts of battle tactic, statistics and manoeuvres. It is our hope that by launching a project that begins to re-imagine the past, participants are simultaneously encouraged to re-imagine their own future (Coppen & Sadie, 2010).

Ultimately the project sought to explore everyday life in the context of a battle-ridden history, in order to ‘emancipate history from slavish text book accounts of battle tactic, statistics and manoeuvres’ (Coppen & Sadie, 2010).

Although they had initially intended the project to be informed by ordinary people’s memories (Coppen & Sadie, 2010), increasingly the project became about exploring the everyday decay of seemingly mundane spaces, as the artists situated themselves and their work in an abandoned suburban property, a derelict public swimming pool, and an empty shop front. Unlike some of the other ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ projects that visited their towns sporadically, Coppen and Sadie moved into Dundee for a three-month residency

period, choosing to live and work in the town for the bulk of the duration of the project.



Figure 29: Coppen and Sadie (2007). Dundee Die Hards [photograph]

Inspired by the local practice of re-enactments, they had initially thought they would work on a series of collaborations that would culminate in a series of public performances and installations – a final re-enactment in the form of a mini public art festival around a particular route in the town. Through the process they realized that mimicking the existing mode of festival performances would in many ways be re-enforcing another kind of grandiose spectacle instead of creating intimate moments for what they call ‘historical reflection’ (Coppen, personal interview, 2011 January 29).

The artists started their research by conducting a series of in depth interviews with key elders in the town. As they spoke to people, a number of stories started to repeat themselves through the interviews. The story of the apartheid curfew bell in the centre of town kept emerging in different forms, which inspired a series of performative interventions, which are discussed in more detail later in this section.

These, often contesting stories about particular spaces, became sites of interest for the artists.

They also spent a great deal of time exploring various representations of Dundee, from municipal aerial photographs, to spending hours in the Talana Museum archive. The Talana is a museum, perched on the hill looking over Dundee that houses a large record of Dundee's colonial battle, and apartheid mining industry history. In exchange for digitizing parts of their collection, Coppen and Sadie were given unlimited access to trawl, scan and photocopy the documents. As Talana director Pam McFadden (2012) exclaimed,

[o]ne day, two young men sauntered into my office with a degree of trepidation and a large amount of hope. They had been told repeatedly that if they wanted their project to work they would have to visit the Talana Museum and arrange a meeting with Pam. People were skeptical, excited, convinced Vaughn and Neil were "weird" and the questions we were asked most often "What! Are they doing?", "Is this really the way to get people interested in history?", "And do you really think this is a good idea?" The answers to all of these questions were "Why not give it a try?"

As the artists explored the archive they realised how skewed the official record was. In order to address this, they used the photocopied material as the basis for developing a workshop with learners. Realising that filling this gap would require being able to engage in isiZulu, Coppen and Sadie invited Bongzi Ngobese to be a primary collaborator in the project. Ngobese had been involved in leadership programmes with youth, and became the artists' guide, mediator and translator. The artists had done extensive historical and visual research and had conducted fascinating interviews. At the first 'critical friend' encounter they presented a wide range of directions the project could take, all of which would have had intriguing outcomes, but much of the research and experimentation had taken place in private: in the archive; the artists' house; or in the educational centre where the workshops were happening. It became increasingly clear that they get out of their heads and onto the streets.

The *Living Within History* project involved a range of activities from its inception to its final event and it is not possible to analyse every activity in the context of this research. I have therefore clustered their work under three interrelated themes: firstly, their engagement with derelict aesthetics and supposedly banal

infrastructure; secondly, their enrollment of young people through their collage workshops; and thirdly, their performative and ephemeral encounters.

Setting the stage: derelict aesthetics and infrastructure as art



Figure 30: Coppen and Sadie (2011). Public pool [still image from video]

There is a long history of artists responding to the affective nature of broken, ruined or ‘ugly’³⁴ people and spaces. Artists have taken on the challenge of questioning normative notions of beauty for some time. This questioning of urban aesthetics has also impacted on urban development. The romanticisation of the abandoned red brick factory has inspired a wave of new types of studio dwellings, possibly most notably cited in the docklands in the United Kingdom. In a context where the ‘curation’ of urban spaces is usually inspired by the clean corners of the ‘white cube’ (Marschall, 2005), there is something attractive about the forgotten spaces and those deemed unredeemable by authorities. It was these kinds of spaces that Coppen and Sadie were drawn to over and again in this project as they chose to

³⁴ As with the term ‘beauty’, ugliness is also contested.

site their work in and around an abandoned suburban property, a derelict swimming pool, an empty shop front and disused parking meters.

Because the artists had decided to abandon the idea of doing one final public art performance route, they had to think of other ways of marking the sites they were working with. Using a ‘subtle staging device’ (Kreutzveld, 2012: 20), they worked with the local town planning office and changed six streetlights from the standard warm yellow 70/100-Watt high-pressure sodium bulb to a white 160-Watt mercury vapour self-ballast bulb.

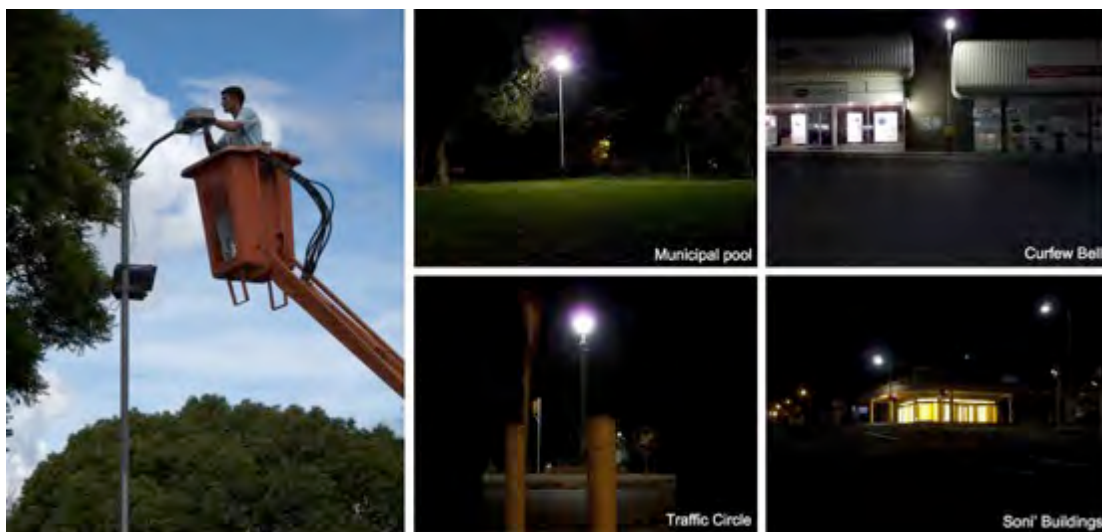


Figure 31: Coppen and Sadie. 2010. Changing streetlamps [photographs]

Last night Vaughn took us for a drive in his blue Berlingo, a car that has become ubiquitous with their project, locals joking about being able to follow their whereabouts and goings on by looking for their car ‘knowing where their mischief lies’... Like many South African towns at night, the streets were largely empty. ‘Look there’ (Vaughn), ‘where?’ (us). We were looking into what looked like a park. We looked and looked and then I noticed a hauntingly pale pool of light behind a tree. Everywhere else was orange. I remember thinking it was the colour of bones. (Rike journal, 18 Dec 2010).

Much of Sadie’s work over the past five years, including his Masters exhibition and dissertation, has revolved around exploring the use of artificial light, and how different kinds of lighting strategies shape the use and perception of public space (situations, 2008). Moreover he has an ongoing research project around street

lamps³⁵. When he started talking to the municipal planner in charge of lighting in Dundee and realized there was a unified lighting strategy throughout the town, it seemed a logical extension of his other work to propose using the existing streetlights as site markers for the project locations. Sadie was worried that such a subtle change in lighting would not be noticeable but was assured that when the municipality had tested the lights by changing a single bulb; they received four letters of complaint in the next few days (Donaldson, 2011). Working with the local newspaper, Coppen and Sadie announced what they had done, and encouraged members of the community to explore the town to find the changed bulbs.

The streetlights were changed at 97 McKenzie Street, the suburban property where collage workshops and a performance were staged; on the corner of Wilson and Victoria Street at the approximate site where the apartheid curfew bell had been situated; where the boom gate had been outside the former men's hostel; outside Soni's Store which became the *Living Within History* gallery / studio space for the final stretch of the project; the traffic circle where the Shembe performance occurred; and outside the derelict municipal swimming pool. Each of these became site markers for the spaces engaged by the project.

“Dada in Dundee”³⁶ (collage workshops with local learners)



Figure 32: Coppen and Sadie. 2010. Collage Workshops [photographs]

Rike: what do you think of history?

³⁵ See <http://www.vaughnsadie.net/streetlights/>

³⁶ Artist Kathryn Smith coined this term during one of the review sessions.

Learners: it is boring.

Rike: what has it been like working with the archive and cutting everything up and sticking it back together the way you like?

Learners: It has been really fun!

Rike: what do you think children in 30 years time will think of your collages in the archive?

Learners (laugh): they'll probably think they are boring too!

(Dundee workshop participants, personal communication, 2011 January 27)

It is not only young people that find history boring and inaccessible. History with a capital 'H' has been negatively stigmatised as being a list of chronological dates of 'significant' events, regardless of shifts in the discipline and the democratisation of historic knowledge. The history of Dundee is littered with dates and battles, and these lists are a big part of the culture and economy of the town. History may be seen as malleable, but heritage is most often not. The heritage agenda fixes moments in history (Crampton, 2001; Marschall, 2010b), and in the context of Dundee this shapes the dominant historical imagination, fixing it in an economy of heritage tourism steeped in the grand narratives of the battle history of the area. Heritage institutions, such as museums, are often complicit in this process, and many museums in South Africa have not transformed much since their conceptions during colonialism and apartheid despite their best intentions.

Nestled at the base of the Talana Hill the museum is set in a 20 acre heritage park. The Zulu name "Talana" meaning "the shelf where precious items are stored" is a most appropriate name for this large and varied museum. The museum comprises 17 buildings, dedicated to subjects as diverse as war and agriculture, mining, industry and domestic life (Talana Museum, n.d.).

The Talana Museum is made up of a series of buildings housing different kinds of exhibits. The main building documents the colonial and mining history of the town. Adjacent buildings hold exhibits showing living and working. While scouring the Talana Museum archive Sadie and Coppen had recognised that a very particular historical record had been favoured; one rooted in the colonial and apartheid pasts of the region. The images were almost exclusively of White people and dated predominantly from the establishment of the colonial town in 1882.

The only images of Indian people in the archive were photocopies of Gandhi from somebody else's book that were then placed in the archive, and some photographs from the launch of the Gandhi memorial on the centenary of Gandhi's visit... The only images of Black people were mine workers and ethnographic images from the turn of the century. Yet the White history of the town you could search alphabetically... an incredibly comprehensive colonial record (Coppen, review presentation, 2011 April 8)

The representation of the town was glaringly skewed in the official record. One of the first projects initiated in Dundee was therefore to set up a series of collage workshops with local learners, using the archived images as the primary material. The artists invited participants from a range of schools in the town. 20 learners joined the workshops, which were held at the Umzinyathi Education Centre. The morning sessions were with the primary school learners and afternoons with the high school learners.

The artists photocopied around 400 images from the archive and asked the participants to start cutting and sticking them together into new images.



Figure 33: Living Within History (2011). Historical Imagination 1 [collage]

After the first week we discovered we had the makings of an alternative archive on our hands. A wealth of idiosyncratic images (some playful and whimsical others witty and subversive) which seemed to depict a sort of parallel history to Dundee's existing one. As amusing as the output of these exercises was, the fact that the students were engaging both critically and creatively with their town's past was hugely encouraging for us. While the outcome of these workshops was creative, the process entailed in-depth discussions around the imagery and history we were exploring (Coppen, 2012: 16).

In an attempt to ‘democratise the archive’ (Coppen and Sadie, personal interview, 2012 March 15), the artists took photographs of the learners and asked them to bring photographs from their family albums to introduce into the collection of photocopied images. After making single spread collages, the artists asked the learners to develop narratives and make comic strips and stop animations. All time-consuming activities, the conversations around the work became the focal point. The artists spoke about the architectural and related social history through the images of buildings being cut up. One of the learners spoke about feeling empowered by the process to become an authority on the town, designing walking tours for his friends (personal communication, 2011 March 14).

For this participant Dundee now existed on three levels. The present-day town, the historic one (illustrated in the black and white images which he had been handling in the workshops), and the imagined (the version/version he and his friends had gleefully re-invented in their collages (Coppen, 2012: 16).

On taking part in one of the workshops, it was remarkable to see how the learners had taken ownership over the process, and while they clearly thought the artists were slightly ‘mad’, they were enjoying the irreverent engagement with a history that had up to that point been dictated to them in a somewhat sacred way (Sitas, field notes, 2011).

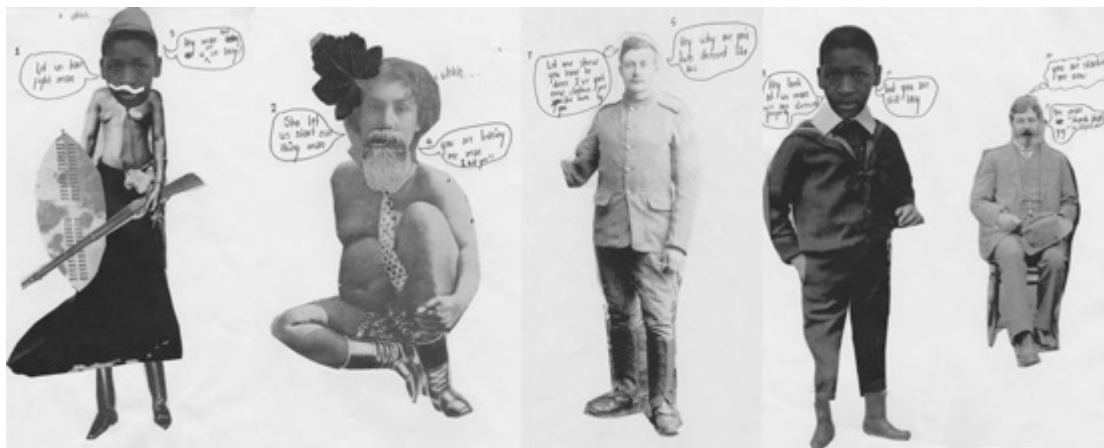


Figure 34: Living Within History (2011). Historical Imagination 2 [collage]

Whereas the workshops had initially been held in a prefab at the Umzinyathi Education Centre, as the project progressed, the workshops were moved into public

space. The learners set up a table outside one of the other sites where the artists were working (97 MacKenzie Street), and started engaging passersby in taking part in constructing new collages.



Figure 35: Coppen and Sadie. 2011. Public collage making [photographs]

97 MacKenzie Street is abandoned suburban property in a previously White area, where nothing but overgrown foundations, and the brick remnants of a gate remain. It is situated on the busiest pedestrian route between the neighbouring township of Sibongile, and Dundee's downtown. The artists were unable to ascertain solid information about the site, as all the people they spoke to (municipality and members of the community) had different stories about the land (Coppen, review presentation, 2011 April 8; Sadie, *Incidental Audiences*, 2011). They felt this was an interesting starting point to imagine alternative uses of the space. Here the passersby were asked to help re-imagine what kind of structures could exist in the mostly empty land. The collages became a catalyst for discussing possible ideas, which were then collected. The suggestions included 'everything from a taxi rank to low cost housing to a cinema or even a new mine' (Coppen, review presentation, 2011).

It was an incredible opportunity to gain insight to how people identified themselves in their community and how the needs they identified could give insight to their situation (Sadie, *Incidental Audiences*, 2011).

Sadie was particularly interested in the kinds of audiences these kinds of interventions attract. In the case of passersby during the day, the people who stopped were predominantly from Sibongile. Even though these encounters may not have triggered the kinds of 'historical reflection' Sadie and Coppen were writing about, they certainly seemed to open up a discussion about possible futures.

In order to explore different kinds of audiences, the artists decided to also screen the animations the learners had made during the workshops, at night in between the gateposts.



Figure 36: Coppen and Sadie. 2011. Collage Animations 97 McKenzie St [photographs]

The animations invented for the site were literally projected onto the site they had established as an empty canvas for experimentation during the course of the project. This intervention drew a small and different kind of audience. The screening was installed unannounced so the people that encountered it were generally people passing by car, or immediate neighbours, some of whom stopped to speak to the artists. These different audiences also demonstrated the differing mobility in the town, where the racial barriers established during apartheid seemed to proliferate: Black residents remaining in Sibongile, and White residents remaining in the suburbs.

It was once again a car that stopped that gave us the opportunity to really make sense of the whole project and our intention. A woman and her husband got out, asking what were doing and if we were the ones responsible for some of the strangeness that they had seen over that last few weeks. It was during this intensive question and answer session that they both started to notice details of building in the animation and started to recount memories and associations (Sadie, *Incidental Audiences*, 2011).

In addition, during the course of the project, the collages were blown up and installed in an empty shop in the lead up to taking over the store as a studio space for the final stages of the project. In a subversion of the storefront ‘coming soon’ posters, the collages made an imposing and intriguing impression.



Figure 37: Coppen and Sadie. 2011. Collages Exhibition Soni's Store [photographs]

Soni's store is situated on the corner of MacKenzie and Wilson Streets, on the fictitious boundary line between the Pep Store and the banks that seem to still be the invisible racial dividing line of many small South African towns. Coppen and Sadie negotiated a month's lease from the owner for a portion of the available space and decided to set up a studio / exhibition space for the remainder of the project, as described at the beginning of this section. The shop became a hive of activity as people came in to see what was happening. The learners who had been part of the workshops returned, some almost daily after school, bringing their families to see what they had been up to. Another group of young regulars came to spend the afternoon making new collages.



Figure 38: Coppen and Sadie. 2011. Collage in Soni's Store [photograph]

The artists worked from the space, editing the videos they had made and adding them to the show reels as they were completed. Coppen and Sadie gave explanatory walkabouts in English and Afrikaans, and Ngobese in isiZulu. Coppen and Sadie had uncovered a single image of the old Mosque in the Talana record, which they had on display that generated a keen interest from local shop owners who came to see the image. Some wanted photocopies, while others brought images from their own collections to add to the archive.

Many of the preparations in the shop were for the final event Coppen and Sadie were planning in order to share the outcomes of the project and to thank the participants. Described in the beginning of this section, the event happened on a balmy summer evening. A steady stream of people flowed through the space, mingling, talking and watching the videos. For many of the people it was the first time they had ever been at a social event with each other, something that came up in almost every conversation as people from different races and classes poured over the same images, tentatively sharing their perspectives.

At some point in the evening, a small hand tugged at my arm. Two youngsters had donned some of the historical costumes and as I was holding a camera, asked if I could take a photograph of them posing in front of the images. In an instant, an impromptu photo booth was set up. A range of performative 3-dimensional collages or re-enactments were constructed and photographed (Figure 39). Whereas it started with the children, soon the adults were as invested in the process. Hundreds of photographs were taken in a mash-up³⁷ of historical reenactment, again with a degree of titillating irreverence to the normative race and gender associations of the costume items: women appropriating traditional items and their rituals; men donning pretty bonnets; and kids trespassing on normally adult territory.

Although the event started in a similar fashion to most openings at contemporary art galleries with wine toting and a toasts, it became progressively more animated and ended in a dust-raising praise song led by the local choir. What had started as an experimental exploration of an archive, had ended up in a performative critique through the very same archive. The collages also provided a basis for

³⁷ Mash ups have become popular ways of mixing cultural products together. The term often refers to music, where two songs are overlaid on each other.

inspiration for the involvement of *Siwela Sonke* dancers, Sibusiso Gantsa, Mxolisa Nkomode, Ntombikayise Gasa and Neliswa Rushualang engagement with the project.



Figure 39: Coppen and Sadie. 2011. Photo booth [photographs]

Performance and ephemeral moments of encounter

In parallel to the work described thus far, and in order to activate the sites that had been identified through the interview process, Coppen and Sadie decided to collaborate with Gordon Institute of Performing and Creative Arts (GIPCA) director, and Infecting the City curator, Jay Pather's dance company, *Siwela Sonke*; a range of local music groups; and local re-enactment crew, *The Dundee Die Hards*. *Siwela Sonke* is made up of experienced performers who have spent years working in a range of different public space contexts, and with a wide variety of pertinent social and

political issues. The local music groups included a gospel choir (Ubhle Bomndeni); an isiCathamiya group (Ubhle Be Sandlwana) and maskandi group (Amaphiko Amahle)³⁸. The *Dundee Die Hards* have been performing battle reenactments since 1999.

The four Durban-based *Siwela Sonke* dancers joined the artists and spent an intensive seven days orientating themselves with the project and the sites before a series of workshops produced the performances detailed in the following accounts.

97 MacKenzie Street



Figure 40: Coppen, Sadie and Siwela Sonke (2011). 97 MacKenzie Street [photograph]

The sky is large and dense in this part of KZN and in summer the storms are wild and frequent. The rain punctuates the humidity and everything smells of soil and green. It was on the sunny side of one of these fickle days that the artists set up at the abandoned property at 97 MacKenzie Street. Sadie and the learners had marked the foundations of the site, inventing the story of the house as they went along, when *Siwela Sonke* emerged in their costumes for their unscripted improvised public performance. The dancers spent the next few hours re-enacting ‘the day of a life of a house: an inane day in the life of this very dysfunctional family’ (Sadie, review presentation, 2011 April 8). Over the course of the afternoon, neighbours, school children returning from school, and pedestrians passing by in and out of Dundee stopped to watch ‘this crazy soap opera with no walls’ (Coppen, review presentation,

³⁸ Gospel music is very popular in South Africa. isiCathamiya is a type of acapella singing. Maskandi is usually centred around a uniquely strung guitar and singing and emerged in KZN.

2011 April 8). Because the story unfolded in real time and there was no clear beginning and end of the performance, audiences got a chance to talk to the artists about what was happening, and what the purpose of the project was. Essentially a whimsical and light-hearted exploration of power at the intersection of the public and private, the performance became a catalyst for broader discussions about what the suburban property means in a town. The responses were varied. Some concerned with potential developments; others offering opportunities; and yet others lamenting over an apartheid past.

Traffic Circle



Figure 41: Coppen, Sadie and Siwela Sonke (2011). Traffic Circle performances [photographs]

On the rainy side of a KZN Sunday summers morning, the *Siwela Sonke* dancers took to the streets in the centre of town. Dundee has numerous churches. Locals even joke about not trusting a place with more churches than bars (personal communication, 2011 March 14). When Sadie and Coppen and been talking to Pam McFadden from the Talana museum about a project she had been involved with around places of worship in Dundee, it became clear that the Shembe³⁹ church had been completely ignored. McFadden even claimed there were no Shembe circles in Dundee (Coppen and Sadie, review presentation, 2011 April 8). Coppen and Sadie had encountered at least three, the biggest being prominently situated at the entrance to Sibongile. It became apparent to them that many of the White residents of Dundee were ignorant of one of the biggest churches in the region.

³⁹ Shembe is a local religion that is Christian-based but centred on the prophet Isaiah Shembe. The church is outside and is signified by a circle of white painted stones. It is the largest Zionist Church in southern Africa.

On one of the major intersections in Dundee there are four different churches surrounding a traffic circle. The dancers decided to transform the traffic circle into a Shembe circle and having extensive knowledge and experience with Shembe ritual, performed a piece on a Sunday morning. Religion is very literally sacred territory and the artists were worried about the repercussions, as were some of the other artists who questioned them at the final review presentation (Fihla, review presentation, 2012 March 8). Three things happened that hint at how the piece was received. Firstly, when Ngobese was on his way home in a taxi that afternoon, he overheard via the ‘small-town grapevine’ (Coppen, review presentation, 2011 April 8) that people were talking about a new Shembe church opening in town. After some discussion, a man jokingly said ‘uh uh – it was those two tall boys in the blue car, there was a camera there, they were up to no good’ (Coppen, review presentation, 2011 April 8). Secondly, according to local journalist Terry Worley (2012),

[t]he Shembe walkabout in the rain one Sunday morning on a traffic circle with a 360 degree view of about five churches had church goers phoning Courier staff well into Sunday night. Some were fearful that some weird cult had moved into the town. Just the mention of the ‘two movie guys in town Neil and Vaughn...’ was enough to illicit the response ‘oh, its okay then – it is a movie hey?’

Thirdly, despite the unease or sometimes flippant dismissal of the ‘crazy umlungu’,⁴⁰ (audience member, 2011 March 14), a local resident took it upon herself to keep an eye on the stones, and for the next few months regularly made sure they were kept neatly in place on the traffic circle. Although it is not clear the intention of the piece marked the memory of audiences in the way Amin (2015) refers to when he explores the potential of eventfulness, it is evident that the performance struck a cord with local residents.

Swimming pool

The first time we visited, we walked around the town, clouds pregnant with rain. As we reached the swimming pool the heavens overflowed and we were drenched in seconds. We cowered under a leaky piece of remaining roof in what was once the ticket office, avoiding the human excrement and soggy used condoms,

⁴⁰ ‘umlungu’ means white person in isiZulu.

watching a puddle in the deep end fill with chip packets, while Sadie jumped up and down in excitement telling us the stories he had picked up about why the swimming pool had been neglected. The narratives ranged from the macabre (two drowned school children) to the political (racist board member). Overall the artists felt that it had become a convenient excuse for predominantly White residents to complain about the new government being worse than the old one, regardless of there being two perfectly functional swimming pools in the neighbouring townships. Because of these contradictions, coupled with the auditorium-like space the pool provided, the artists felt compelled to create a work there.



Figure 42: Copen, Sadie and Siwela Sonke (2011). Swimming Pool performances [photographs]

Unlike with the other performances, this piece was not made for an audience, but rather for two video pieces that were then screened later in Soni's Store. The first involved a time-lapse of the pool with the sound of children playing in the other functioning pools in Dundee. The second involved the closest to a literal re-enactment that the project came to. The artists cleaned the interior of the pool and invited the *Dundee Die Hards* (as the British) and *Siwela Sonke* (as the Zulus) to enact a battle and dying sequence in the pool. In the editing process the artists layered the performers over each other to create two armies performing 'an exercise in dying' (Sadie, personal interview, 2011 January 29). The performers enacted long and drawn out death scenes, which were then slowed down. In one version of the final video, the audio is the same as the previous piece. The result is a battlefield at the bottom of a swimming pool with hundreds of people from both sides dying, with the sound of children laughing and splashing overlaid (recording from the public pool in Sibongile).

Despite this being the only piece that did not have an immediate audience, word got out around town that the artists were cleaning the pool, sparking a public debate on radio and through the newspaper over the use and future of the pool, most people expressing a desire to re-invigorate this dilapidated space (Worley, 2011). The final video was screened in Soni's Store to simultaneous amusement and bemusement (Dundee audience interviews, 2011 March 14).

Parking meters



Figure 43: Coppen, Sadie and Siwela Sonke (2011). Parking Meters [photographs]

Other than streetlights, Sadie has a general fascination for city infrastructure and when he noticed how disused parking meters had been re-fashioned by traders, he was set on animating them in some form. Whereas the other performances by *Siwela Sonke* had been tackling more serious socio-spatial issues, the duets with parking meters were a far more whimsical encounter. Taking their cue from the learner's collages, the dancers adorned themselves in the costumes that had been borrowed from the Talana Museum, and working with touch lights, improvised playful interactions with the parking meters. The exercise generated conversations with passersby who were intrigued by this strange waltz. Some even mistook the dancers for part of the celebrations preceding a visit by President Jacob Zuma.

Curfew Bell

The curfew bell piece involved the most overtly political set of performances. The apartheid curfew bell had come up several times in the artists interviews with residents and while the exact place where it was located was contested, it was such a vivid memory from the not so distant past, that the artists felt it important to mark the site in some way. Not knowing exactly where it was, they chose the street light that was the closest in proximity to where the stories alluded and changed the bulb. The other lights predominantly marked a physical space, whereas this one marked a collective memory. The artists were worried about intervening in a ‘cheesy’ or ‘trite’ way so it took some time figure out what to do (Coppen and Sadie, review presentation, 2011 April 8).



Figure 44: Coppen, Sadie and Siwela Sonke. 2011. Curfew Bell: choir [photograph]

They had been conducting music workshops with music groups from three of the most prominent local music styles – gospel, mascandi and isicatimye – wanting to write a song for the project and realized that the acapella singing that was emerging sounded like the incantation of a bell. Working with the music groups and a gospel

choir specialist from Durban, they collaboratively wrote a haunting song to be performed under the street light at the time the curfew bell used to ring: 10pm. On a warm, still, acoustically generous evening, the choir positioned themselves austere in the white spill of the mercury vapour streetlight bulb. Kreutzveld (2011) describes the relationship between the choir and the passing cars, some booming their own soundtracks.

The choir performance was an extraordinary one because there was no invited audience. The audience that happened to be there were the guys who hang out at the shebeen and the garage and people driving up and down the road, which was the main stretch. And usually driving at night in the car means you have sound that goes with it. The choir is quite a slow sound that builds in quite a somber, quite bizarre and quiet song. So the choir was disrupted. And the disruptions were quite amazing. It was as if two kinds of histories and two kinds of ways of being clashed quite audibly.

The plan was that the choir would sing the one song, which would be recorded on video so the piece would live in an ephemeral moment in time on the street and in its documentation. The artists did not know what to do when the choir wanted to carry on singing. In their minds the piece was over once the song had been sung as an echo of the curfew bell. As an art piece it was conceptually finished, yet the choir continued to sing, breaking into their more usual repertoire of gospel songs.

The performance turned into a kind of open session, a jovial, celebratory rehearsal of new and old repertoire, and while perhaps surprising to take place here, it was greeted by hooting from passing cars and applause from scattered audience across the road (Kreutzveld, 2012:20).

The scene even caused 'boom bangers', who cruise around on the Friday nights, with their one million watt sound systems to U-turn to have a second look at the ghostly scene. Others even phoned the police... but it was the same: "Oh it those ou's with the blue cab... ja, they making some TV documentary... ja, no its ok..." (Worley, 2012: 19)

Projects have a life of their own; they disrupt our expectations. It is disruptions such as these that Kreutzveld was alluding to. The following night, the *Siwela Sonke* dancers performed a piece they had choreographed in response to the site as well. In this case the disruption was far more uncomfortable.

The dancers had choreographed a piece that was

inspired by the strength of older women who form the backbone of their community and hold the wisdom to ‘carrying out old rituals holistically’. The idea was to stage a ritual in protest of a ‘forbidden place at the forbidden time’ and to ‘claim a space against the stereotype of women as powerless and fragile’ (Kreutzveld in conversation with Gaza, 2011).



Figure 45: Coppen, Sadie and Siwela Sonke (2011). Curfew Bell [photograph]

While the performance was going on, a group of drunk men spilling onto the pavement from the shebeen⁴¹ across the road started hurling abuse in isiZulu. The dancers, being isiZulu speakers, got increasingly uncomfortable and at the end were visibly shaken. The artists, unable to speak isiZulu could not understand what was going on. It was the first time the artists had felt threatened. In trying to make sense of the situation Coppen (review presentation, 2011 April 8) said, ‘we really didn’t want to go in there and alienate anyone. We really wanted to create discussion and then have those discussions and in most situations people were willing to’. It was in this

⁴¹ A shebeen is an informal, often illegal bar. Many places double up, shedding their daytime function in the evening and becoming a makeshift bar.

moment of violence that a nerve was struck that speaks volumes about both gender issues in society, and the nature of these projects to strike a chord that is not always a positive experience.

When the two women performed, again, the image was amazingly strong, a very slow kind of performance, and these women are clearly extraordinary performers and they could hold attention... then you have your men opposite from them, getting more and more drunk and getting more courage to throw comments at them from across the street, and we did not know what was happening. And in that moment, I think a lot happened that raises questions about the risks of these kinds of projects and perhaps in general about public art. And to what degree does one protect oneself? And is it always about offering a service to the community? Building bridges? Or to what degree can one interrupt certain things and create something that holds its own which has a different kind of afterlife? My sense was the ending of the situation was interesting because it was a confrontation (Kreutzveld, review presentation, 2011).

It is often in these moments of confrontation and disjuncture that the critical moments of public art are revealed.

4.2.4. Reflections

Our aim is not to be contentious or political (though such a process is certain to raise stimulating questions) but rather to work in close conjunction with locals, historians, community groups, tour guides and school groups to emancipate history from slavish text book accounts of battle tactic, statistics and manoeuvres... The project wishes to explore the idea of living history or more particularly living within history. Our intention is not to focus on the town's more fabled figures and terrains, but rather reveal how history is founded and made (yet seldom remembered) on smaller, less grandiose personal narratives (Coppen & Sadie, 2010).

Although the artists maintained that there was never an intention to be overtly political or an unsettling force in their interventions in Dundee, it is possibly the disruptive transgressions that offer the most critical moments in the project. This reflection therefore unpacks three ways in which aesthetic disruptions offer the opportunity to challenge the status quo: firstly, by looking at disrupting urban infrastructure as a means to challenge normative approaches to monumentalism; secondly, by exploring Dadaist disruption of the archive to challenge notions of history and heritage; and thirdly, by engaging the disruptive socio-politics of public performance as a means to trespass and transgress contested socio-spatial issues.

Streetlights: art as infrastructure / infrastructure as art



Figure 46: Copen and Sadie (2011). Streetlight [photograph of changed streetlight]

The streetlight is a seemingly inane and banal piece of functional infrastructure to most people. They are Lefebvrian ‘representations of space’ (Lefebvre, 1991; Merrifield, 2006); despite their light, not much more than an almost invisible part of the townscape, other than to passing dogs. Very few people take heed of the different kinds and styles of streetlights that adorn our cities. In the context of this project, through changing the bulb, the streetlight is transformed into a sculpture. What people forget is that much of the time planning a city is not about extreme architectural feats, but rather the endless slog of making sure the street lights work. We only notice them when they are off. Turning a street light into a sculpture means we are asked to regard its form, function and aesthetic qualities. Drawing attention to the physical infrastructure of our cities reminds us of their affective potential. Even though this was not the overt purpose of this particular installation, a change in the quality of light changes the experience of the space it lights.

Changing a light bulb may seem a very subtle intervention, but when the white light is seen in contrast with the normal yellow hue, the change in tone is surprisingly

evident; you can really see a difference⁴². This simple strategy did three things: firstly, it transformed an everyday object in the city, into something more significant; secondly, it highlighted a particular set of sites and spaces; and thirdly it allowed for an affective in-road to working with authorities.

In this case, the focus was not only on the street light itself. The purpose of changing the streetlight was to highlight the spaces that the artists had chosen to work as an alternative form of monumentalism (Baca, 2005; Crampton, 2001; Marschall, 2012; M. Miles, 1997). The conventional purpose of a streetlight is to light our cities. Different parts of the city are lit in different ways. Associated with this is the notion that streetlights are there to light the way for people, and generally to make areas safer. Streetlights are not usually the same as flood lamps for monuments or moveable lights in galleries for artworks. Lighting strategies for monuments often happens from below, accentuating the size and scale of the figure (most spectacularly seen in the lighting of Table Mountain). Gallery bulbs are swiveled to get the perfect non-reflected light on frames. Largely these kinds of lights are there to light up objects, which usually have some tangible value.

In this case, it is not objects, but spaces that were being lit. Sadie's lighting installation therefore questions the role and nature of marking sites of significance in a 'subtle staging device' (Kreutzveld, 2012, p. 20). The areas that were lit were not of the memorials of major battles, significant architecture, or sites you would usually find in tourist brochures. Instead they were a derelict swimming pool; an abandoned suburban property; the approximate place where the apartheid curfew bell had allegedly been; and an empty shop front. Although each site had a range of other events and encounters that happened there, the lighting alone raises interesting questions about whose narrative gets foregrounded in our public spaces. Unlike the bronze sculptures Marschall (2012) laments as markers of heritage in South Africa, the streetlights democratize memorialization in a subtle seemingly unobtrusive way.

While the legibility of this intervention is debatable, as it is difficult to say how many people noticed and what their responses were, working with the physical infrastructure of the city opened up interesting in-roads into the municipality. In this

⁴² There has been public debate in Los Angeles recently as a similar change has been proposed which will not only impact on the lived experience of street life, but would also change the film industry that is so prevalent in the city (Manaugh, 2014).

case collaboration between the artists and municipal authorities allowed the broader discussions of the project to enter official channels, opening up a conversation about the role of infrastructure in and as art.

The archive: dada, disruption and dialectics



Figure 47: Coppen and Sadie (2011). Historical Imagination 3 [collage]

Participating ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ artist, Kathryn Smith’s somewhat frivolous exclamation at the review session (2011 April 8): ‘Dada in Dundee’, may offer a more critical lens to the project than intended at the time. Working with collage through the workshops and public interventions are interesting for two reasons: firstly, in the spirit of Dadaism, they embrace a critical irreverence towards a history steeped in war that says important things about art and society in our contemporary context; secondly; the inclusion of young people in this process challenges normative power relations which opens up new forms and spaces for representation.

Dadaism emerged out of a reaction to the atrocities of war, specifically that of the First World War. It was an avant-garde art movement premised on the idea that art has a function within society beyond being merely decorative and was intrinsically disruptive. According to Arp (in Ades, 1974: 3)

[t]he bourgeois regarded the Dadaist as a dissolute monster, a revolutionary villain, a barbarous Asiatic, plotting against his bells, his safe-deposits, his honours list. The Dadaist thought up tricks to rob the bourgeois of his sleep... the Dadaist gave the bourgeois a sense of confusion and distant, yet mighty rumbling, so that his bells began to buzz, his safes frowned, and his honours list broke out in spots.

The commentary emerging out of early Dadaist work spoke against the logic of capitalism and colonial interests. In a similar vein, the commentary being constructed by the learners in the collage workshops was critiquing both the colonial history of war, and the capitalist mining industry that fundamentally shaped the area around Dundee over the last 150 years. This may not have been the intention of the artists or the learners, but using the irreverence of cut-and-paste techniques associated with collage, the learners forged new access routes into analyzing the Talana archive that is surprisingly Dadaist in its approach.

This was most evident in a number of interactions that emerged when the collages were installed in view of the public. A mildly irate, slightly amused, and somewhat befuddled member of the community came to talk to the artists about one of the images the children had made. This gentleman had recognized one of his ancestors, whose head had been severed and reattached to the body of a horse. He approached the artists to talk about the work. This moment of opening a discussion allowed a platform to engage the history of the town in a new way. Ultimately, despite his earlier anxiety the concerned citizen ended up being won over through this conversation.

Dadaism, and more specifically collage as an art form, is sometimes accused of being 'too postmodern' in its tendency towards meaninglessness, but it is the leaning towards art as a critical social practice (Miles, 2009) or as a transgressive process (Kershaw, 1999) that is important in this context. *Living Within History* was not only a collage project. The use of collage was an aesthetic and conceptual strategy to achieve other kinds of ends. According to Opper (2012, p. 17)

[i]n the artistic tussle between the value of the permanent and the advantages of the transient, the Dundee project boldly takes something as permanent (in its general intention at least) as the archive and consciously advocates its productive reconfiguring and blurring into a more inclusive participatory and contemporary artistic device.

A Dadaist technique was used as a fun access point to engage young people in a debate about history and heritage. In many ways this dialogic process is reminiscent of Brechtian ‘dialectical criticism’, where concealed inequality is revealed. Learners were allowed to irreverently trespass an archive, and transgress dominant views of history. The images the learners produced were an amusing and compelling by-product of an art project sitting in tension between the conscientizing politics of Brecht and Freire, and Foucault’s democratization of power by challenging dominant institutional knowledge sanctified in the archive. This is also classic public pedagogy in action, where becoming other-wise was paramount.

Additionally, children tend to be the least engaged members of society. It is not until children are 16 and enter the category of ‘youth’ that they are seen as something more than merely a recipient of care. This Victorian notion of the child as passive and vulnerable rarely matches the reality in a world where child soldiers, child-headed households and street children abound (Sitas & Pieterse, 2013). Yet children are still more often than not boxed in this homogenous category where limited, if any, agency is granted. Decisions are made on behalf of children and they are hardly ever consulted in these processes. Working with children challenges these assumptions, often with surprising results. In Figure 33, the collage makes a powerful commentary about land and property ownership, and was constructed by someone in primary school.

Initially the artists had not wanted the participants to use anything aside from photocopied material, but the learners were insistent about using their own writing in the images. Sadie had wanted to maintain a particular aesthetic register and was afraid that hand written text would impact negatively on the way the collages looked (Sadie, personal interview, 2011 January 29). But the artists gave the learners space to experiment with text and were ultimately impressed with the kinds of comments that were emerging, finding that they were proven wrong. The agenda of the learners was fore grounded to the benefit of the participants and the project. This kind of leeway is not often granted by artists who are in the business of aesthetics. Counter to the example given in *The Domino Effect* t-shirt designs, the Coppen and Sadie were moving towards Mile’s (1997) ideal of the artist shifting focus and fulfilling a role somewhere ‘between creative genius and creative facilitator’. It also shows Arnstein’s (1969) ‘strong participation’ at work, where the participants became decision makers.

Coppen and Sadie's dialogic and disruptive Dadaism allowed for the transgression of power dynamics that granted a particular kind of political agency for young people, where new forms of historical representation became possible. Although this may not be happening in the grander scale of participatory political processes; if young people are the proverbial future, then engaging them in futuring through Coppen and Sadie's historical imagination hints at the kinds of possibilities open if child-centred perspectives are allowed to emerge. It was this historical imagining and imaging that underpinned many of the other activities within *Living Within History*, especially the performances by *Siwela Sonke*.

Historical Imagination and Re-enacting the Archive



Figure 48: Coppen, Sadie and Siwela Sonke (2011). Performing the archive [photograph]

Public performances are not a new phenomenon, and especially in larger cities, experimental performance in public spaces has become progressively more common (Cohen-Cruz, 2013; Kershaw, 1999). In a small South African town with little support of or access to contemporary art, seemingly spontaneous performances

of *Siwela Sonke's* style are a rare spectacle. Furthermore, public performance typical in the area, aside from the occasional sales pitch⁴³, is usually associated with commemorative battle reenactments. *Siwela Sonke's* performances were intended as exploratory and disruptive moments to explore historical imagination through a contemporary form of historical reenactment. While postmodern in some respects, where meaning ran the risk of being lost and illegible, the politics underpinning the performances is interesting to note. The performers literally trespassed a range of public and private spaces, but similarly they were trespassing in Baol's (1979) sense of the term: their performances were also transgressing a range of social issues as they challenged normative power relations.

Aside from the whimsical waltzes with parking meters, the performances were aimed at raising particular questions or challenges about power dynamics. The endless dying in the public swimming pool drew on an intersection between performance and video arts, exploring the futility of war and the recursive battle history of the area. The performance at 97 MacKenzie Street questioned the colonial and apartheid domestic power dynamics between a 'maid' and 'madam'. Here the private was politicised through a public reenactment of the banality of daily power dynamics of a household. Using humour, the performers were critiquing the history of the everyday race and class dynamics so typical in South Africa. The Shembe performance on the traffic circle was more explicitly transgressive. Not only did the performers trespass in a predominantly Christian area of worship, but they reenacted the performative religious ritual of another religion in unsettling, although not offensive ways.

The two curfew bell performances were the most explicitly political. The first, overtly and intentionally so, as the singers mimicked the incantation of bell as a way to memorialise a darker political past than is usually seen in monuments to heroic figures or actions. For the singers it functioned a cathartic moment (personal communication, 2011 March 15). The incidental audiences may not have fully grasped what was going on, but were captivated and visibly moved by the haunting show. But, in the second performance, when the *Siwela Sonke* dancers trespassed traditionally male forms of public expression through their performance on Victoria Street, they were met with violent antagonism, being cajoled with a series of

⁴³ In addition to the dancing bear outside the furniture store, Beares, musicians have been known to perform on street corners to promote their CDs.

‘curative’ sexual threats by the inebriated spillover from a shebeen across the road. The performance was trespassing a public space usually filled with (predominantly drunk) males, as well as trespassing normative gender roles. Without immediate mediation, the moment made the dancers feel vulnerable, but they struck an interesting nerve, highlighting gendered inequalities still rife in this country, and made ever more sensitive in a context where ‘corrective rape’ proliferates. Additionally, it demonstrated the unsettling role public art can have in an unequal society where public space is highly contested. While this encounter made the artists and performers feel very uncomfortable, it is this kind of interruption Kreutzveld (2012, p. 21) was referring to.

What may be accepted as a performance and assumed to be sanctioned within the frame of ‘public art’ provides to some degree a safe space for exploration, subversion or simply for something else to happen, outside conventional rationalities. What unfolds may not be perceived to add value but to interfere or contaminate (place, heritage, gender norms). Here something was actively transgressed, not to be witnessed politely but resisted; the space and construct of the performance seemed un-negotiable.

This poses an interesting challenge to the agenda of art as instrumentalised for social cohesion as espoused by authorities (DAC, 2013d). It highlights the risks and violence of public art (Mitchell, 1990), and demonstrates how consensus in public art projects may not always be possible or desirable (Bishop, 2012; Kershaw, 1999; Kreutzveld, 2012; M. Miles, 2009). Although unintended, the devolution of the performance may have been its strongest component.

4.2.5. Conclusion

Given the artists’ interest in artistic research, *Living Within History* situated itself quite explicitly as a pedagogical project. The purpose was to develop new knowledge through inclusionary means, and to explore a performative politics of public space. Despite the disruptions produced by *Living Within History* of public space, the archive and a range of socio-spatial issues typical in post-apartheid South Africa, the artists’ challenge was taken seriously. In addition to including the artists work in the collection, the Talana Museum, recognizing a gap in their record, invited Coppen and Sadie to return.

The artists were able to leverage additional funding from the National Arts Council, and returned for another residency in 2013 to start an oral history / art project based in the township of Sibongile. Teaming up with South African History Archives (SAHA), Coppen and Sadie returned. They ran an intensive oral history workshop with 15 high school learners who in turn conducted interviews with people in Sibongile. Furthermore, a range of historical photographs and documents were collected and recorded digitally to include in the Talana Museum archive, and became the basis for another round of collage workshops (Coppen & Sadie, 2013). Currently the artists are fundraising for a third component of the project to further the work in Sibongile and to run an artists residency to explore other ways of accessing and integrating the archive (Sadie, personal communication, 2014 August 15).

Coppen and Sadie have been approached by other organisations such as SAHA, to further develop their methodology, and have been invited to present at a number of heritage conferences, to reflect on alternative ways of accessing archives. What this demonstrates is that regardless of the disruptive nature of their process, it has found traction in the history and heritage sector as a useful means to enroll ordinary people in negotiating historical narratives.

4.3. Dlala Indima (Phakamisa, Eastern Cape)



Figure 49: Dlala Indima (2011). Dlala Indima Centre [photograph]

The broad sky was littered with clouds that threatened to later amass into a thunder storm, but were doing nothing to soften the blow of 35 degree midday summer sun on the day of *Dlala Indima*'s launch in Phakamisa in the Eastern Cape. Groups of fashionable young people were milling about chatting, gently tip-tapping and gesticulating to some beats emanating from a sound system that had been set up on the stoep of the newly painted spaza. Four elderly women were directing some teenage boys carrying dining room chairs from nearby houses. One woman was curating a table of fruit, while another fired up a skottel for hotdogs. A group of young men were leaning against a wall, half-heartedly concealing a sweaty quart and a spliff. Children chased each other around, fly-kick jumping off the stairs and roaring through the newly renovated *Dlala Indima* Centre: the butchery-mortuary-turned-gallery. And suddenly the beats died. Within half an hour, *Dlala Indima* had mobilized: a long extension cable had been run to a neighbouring house; and a new sound system from the next township was sound-checking (edited from research journal, 5 February 2011).

Hip-hop and graffiti are usually associated with subversive, urban, predominantly male, youth culture. The culmination of a graffiti-led project with a gender and generationally diverse audience is a rare sight in cities, let alone rural townships, yet this was the scene at *Dlala Indima*'s launch event as they opened their cultural community centre to the public in February 2011. *Dlala Indima* is a creative collective of Hip-hop / graffiti artists based in Phakamisa in the Eastern Cape. In a

context where defunct community centres built by the state abound, and culture-led development is often to the immediate community's detriment as gentrification displaces undesirable locals to make way for moneyed elites, the *Dlala Indima Centre* colours the rural suburbscape in new ways.

This section looks at *Dlala Indima's* graffiti-led project that unfolded as part of 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town'. *Dlala Indima* set out to use Hip-hop and more specifically graffiti, as a means to renovate parts of a township in the Eastern Cape. The project involved refurbishing a derelict building and converting it into a cultural space, as well as painting a series of graffiti murals on public buildings and amenities, such as crèches, schools and bus stops.

This section argues that the project is remarkable for four reasons. Firstly, unlike many public art projects that tend to involve urban, middle class artists working in so-called marginalised spaces, *Dlala Indima* were working in the neighbourhood they grew up in. Secondly, Hip-hop is one of the most dominant youth cultures both globally and locally, and therefore the artists were working in a popular register that (especially young) people can relate to, arguably more so than to conceptual contemporary art, or experimental performance practice that is often associated with public art projects. *Dlala Indima* were not only replicating an existing Hip-hop vernacular, but were also experimenting across new ways of visual and verbal representation inspired by the local context that challenge the rural-urban divide. Thirdly, working with a budget of R150 000, they were able not only to decorate a range of public spaces to the community's pleasure, but moreover to renovate a dilapidated building into a functional community centre. Whereas cultural planning results in the delivery of (often defunct) community centres, and culture-led development strategies usually emerge from a state or private investors' desire for property development, this project demonstrates an interesting and viable alternative. Finally, what this culminates in is a public pedagogy where new forms of collective cultural citizenship through insurgent practices and spaces are explored.

4.3.1. Hip-hop and graffiti as critical practices

In a world where public space has lost its public nature: impractical children's parks are everywhere, billboards, posters, flyers litter our streets with advertising that

society has not asked to see. Graffiti serves as hip-hop's visual response to this unyielding environment (Fihla, 2013, p. 94).

Hip-hop is transnational in many ways, exists in slightly varying forms across the globe, and has arguably become the most dominant youth culture in South Africa. Although undeniably mainstream in many ways, Hip-hop has been instrumental in harnessing youth in so-called peripheral neighbourhoods to engage with broader social and political issues. Despite Hip-hop's prevalence as a youth subculture of massive proportions, relatively little has been written academically, especially in a South African context.

Hip-hop is generally understood as being comprised of four interconnected activities: DJing, rhyming (MCing or rapping), writing (graffiti), and breaking (breakdancing). While contested, a fourth element has been increasingly advocated: knowledge of self. It is argued that in order to do the other activities well, Hip-hop artists must have a keen sense of self and self worth (Fihla, personal interview, 2011 February 5) (Pieterse, 2010). Whereas these are all seen as important facets of hip hop culture, much of the critical discussion around Hip-hop, especially in South Africa, focuses on rhymes and representation (Beer, 2014; Caldeira, 2004; Haupt, 2001; Williams & Carruthers, 2010). Academic engagement often tries to make sense of the lyrics to mainstream songs, both valourising the subversive politics and demonizing the misogynist representations and individualist consumerism they seem to espouse. From the lyrics and fashion, Hip-hop is often critiqued for its 'individualism informed by the conspicuous consumption and instant gratification depicted in global popular culture' (Hammet, 2009, pp. 408–9). The participation (or lack thereof) and representation of women is often seen as questionable, as are ongoing references to violence. In many ways Hip-hop may merely reflect broader gender inequalities in society: including in academia (Beer, 2014) and because young people in many urban contexts are surrounded by different kinds of physical and structural violence, it is no surprise that a sense of rage permeates Hip-hop's cultural expression. In fact, Pieterse feels rage is an important part of the impulse to critique society, and a driver for Hip-hop as a hopeful process (Pieterse, 2010). Through Hip-hop, the rage is channeled into multi-layered critical dimensions, providing agency in a recognizable register for the youth. According to Lamotte (2014), this is also a political act in Bayat's (1997) interpretation of the street politics of 'quiet encroachment'. For Williams (2010, p. 222), the politics is embedded in the public pedagogy of Hip-hop:

In the context of hip-hop as a site of public pedagogy, narratives help build cultural understanding of the experiences of youth. These hip-hop narratives, shaped by rappers' and their listeners' cultural orientations, bring meaning to the cultural understanding of hip-hop as a site of public pedagogy.

These narratives are the reason that Hip-hop finds resonance amongst the youth. Rage is one dimension of Hip-hop's narrative, but Hip-hop is not all and only rage. If onlookers only address Hip-hop from the perspective of the music, they are neglecting another essential component: that of graffiti. Senegalese graffiti writer Docta, would agree with Fihla's statement above that Hip-hop is commenting visually on the canvas of the city as another form of Hip-hop's cultural voice, when he said, '[o]ne must understand that graff, basically, is a way to communicate, to get your message out there... It is the visual communication of the Hip-Hop movement' (Niang, 2006, p. 172). Although some graffiti is gang related, much of the graffiti appearing in urban centres offer an alternative to gang life. According to Christen (2010, p. 233)

[g]raffiti crews are also educational organizations that promote valuable learning among their members. Judging from graffiti writers' comments over a range of time periods and places, crews both parallel and diverge from more traditional educational institutions like schools, functioning paradoxically as both status quo and transgressive organizations. Graffiti provides poor adolescents from disadvantaged neighborhoods with knowledge, skills, and values important for success in the mainstream. At the same time, it bonds young people to their urban neighborhoods, empowering them to challenge the dominant society and to transform rather than escape their communities.

South Africa and Senegal allegedly have two of the biggest graffiti cultures on the continent (Niang, personal interview, 2012 March 4). Graffiti projects the world over have been engaging new kinds of space-making; both as subversive practices in marginalized neighbourhoods, and mainstream commissions as part of urban regeneration strategies in city improvement districts. This can be seen most vibrantly in Cape Town where often it is the same graffiti artists working between these two seemingly oppositional contexts. Yet very little has been written about graffiti despite its relevance as Hip-hop's visual marker on the city.

For many graffiti artists, the earliest type of graffiti can be seen in the rock art dating from thousands of years ago⁴⁴. Graffiti covers a range of practices. A *tag* generally takes the form of a pseudonym or nickname that is repeatedly written on various vertical structures, such as walls, electricity boxes and street lights: a calligraphic signature of sorts. A *throw-up* is usually a two-dimensional version of a *tag*. A *piece* (from the word ‘masterpiece’) is a full colour mural and demonstrates the maturity of a graffiti artist. A *piece* can include words and pictures. *Pieces* are also considered murals, which have developed a reputation as important cultural markers and are the locus of many community arts projects, most famously the Los Angeles Great Wall (Baca, 2005) (Mak1, video archive, 2011). Graffiti in the form we recognise today is seen to have emerged alongside the Hip-hop movement in the 1980’s and 1990’s in the United States, and has evolved into the myriad kinds of graffiti and street art so familiar in cities today; simultaneously loathed and loved by residents and authorities.

When graffiti is written about outside of popular magazines, it often takes the individual works out of context from the broader cultural movement from which it has emerged, commenting on their style or frequency more often than their substance. Baudrillard (1993) went as far as to say that ‘[g]raffiti has no content and no message: this emptiness gives it its strength.’ Although he is giving credence to the power of graffiti, the supposed ‘emptiness’, is somewhat contested. Neef (2007) challenges this perception of graffiti by considering its performative dimension by drawing on Bal’s argument of graffiti as a discursive act and therefore cannot be devoid of meaning. In response to the proliferation of graffiti in Cape Town, Spocter (2004) attempts to link graffiti to a postmodern use of space, through counting the different kinds of graffiti in a particular area. The analysis treats graffiti as if it were images hanging in a group show in a gallery as opposed to a complex and multi-faceted, often collective, practice that cannot merely be abstracted from the contexts in which it is created. While reclaiming graffiti from being a meaningless criminal act, and recognizing it as an important marker of youth identity, much of this writing still detaches graffiti from its broader social frame of Hip-hop⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ In 2001 I did some research exploring this claim. This sentiment was again re-iterated in a number of conversations with graffiti artists as part of the research for this chapter. It is also used as an origin story by graffiti artists rooting graffiti as an African tradition.

⁴⁵ It is important to make a distinction between graffiti and what is increasingly being referred to as street art. The two are dealt with as distinct categories, although interconnected in many ways. Important in this context is the link to Hip-hop. Whereas graffiti is usually associated with Hip-hop,

Park Jams are a vehicle through which Hip-hop as a critical practice has been manifesting. A Park Jam involves setting up a sound-system in public space, where, over the course of a day, DJs can *mix*, MCs can *rhyme*, and dancers can *break*⁴⁶. At the same time graffiti artists work on a *piece*. Graffiti is simultaneously an aesthetic exercise and social commentary, often responding from a hopeful desire of building knowledge of self: many graffiti pieces have inspirational messages, and as prominent Cape Town graffiti artist, Mak1 (video archive, 2011) asserted:

On the whole we all agree that when doing a mural it has got to look beautiful and it has to say something. I don't see the point any more of making a mural that just looks good and it is the artists (gestures signature)... Colour makes a huge difference to a neighbourhood: inspires people to do something about their neighbourhood. The whole point is how murals can be a positive influence in the community. There is more than one way of uplifting a community and art is definitely one of them. Art is not the most popular subject at school, but I think it should be one of the main – right next to maths and science. It's a good way for people to show how they feel and express themselves. People need to see art in their neighbourhood. Only a small population on the planet can afford to go to art galleries, can afford the artwork, can understand the artwork. This kind of art – graffiti art – brings it right to you and you can see the process from beginning to end. People think 'that building is not worth anything', but a bit of colour, a bit of concept, a positive message, getting the community involved, attitudes start changing of themselves and the neighbourhood, and the possibilities... just because something seems as if it is not going anywhere, doesn't mean you cant change it...

What Mak1 is suggesting is that the novelty of graffiti has passed and that the function of graffiti should be transformative. The perception of graffiti as indicative of a society in decay as foregrounded by the New York broken windows approach, is undermined by 'a new political language and symbolic register that is meaningful to poor young people' (Pieterse, 2010, p. 441). It is this impulse to the transformative that underpins graffiti as a public pedagogy, where Hip-hop graffiti becomes a site of learning, not only of different artistic practice within graffiti, but also with a range of other skills.

street art is not always linked to Hip-hop. Street art takes myriad forms, from Banksy's 'existencilism'; to new movements such as craftivism (knitting and crocheting). Street art often works to critique and comment on socio-political or spatial issues, but much of the time artists come from a Fine Art as opposed to Hip-hop background. This distinction foregrounds street art as 'A'rt, while graffiti remains something else. This 'something else' is exclusionary, but some graffiti artists use this as a powerful distinguisher: for them, 'A'rt is for the middle classes and graffiti is for the people.

⁴⁶ The term *mix* refers to playing pre-recorded music and mixing each track into each other. The word *rhyme* refers to singing or rapping over the music being played. Here the lyrics are both pre-planned and performed spontaneously, or *on the fly*. To break is to dance and is the shortened word for *breakdance*, a signature acrobatic style of dancing synonymous with Hip-hop.

Young writers learn specific techniques, and they also plan and execute complex, original projects, collaborate with others, manage time, and practice to improve. In the process they build self confidence, resiliency, a work ethic, and an appreciation of craftsmanship... Other learning within crews is more hidden but no less significant. For example, forced to build and enforce their own behavior codes, writers learn an essential premise of democratic citizenship; they have the right and responsibility to govern themselves... Perhaps graffiti's most significant educational contribution is that, unlike most schools, it introduces writers to the critical understanding of dominant power structures necessary to engage in this fight for justice. Graffiti provides adolescents with both a means to rebel and the ability to join the mainstream. But it also shows crewmembers another option: they learn that their knowledge and skills empower them to transform their communities and that their resistance can generate positive alternatives (Christen, 2010, pp. 235–6).

Although Hip-hop may be marginalised from mainstream political discourse, the dialogic methods used within Hip-hop may be useful to learn from. Unlike mainstream political forums that are often premised on consensus, Hip-hop is unashamedly conflicted. As Pieterse, drawing on Perry (2004) argues, 'open discourse is constitutive in hip-hop' and is 'critical, because it allows the contradictory and complicated politics of identity, community, belonging and aspiration to be surfaced in all its unresolved rawness, without a desire to foreclose confrontation and engagement' (Pieterse, 2010, p. 437). Perry's dialogic moment can be seen in the supposed disjuncture between Hip-hop lyrics and the aesthetic manifestation of graffiti: especially the kinds of graffiti projects Mak1 spoke of. For example, Hip-hop artists can simultaneously be performing running social commentary on the poor state of service delivery in the country, interspersed with sexually explicit or sexist language, while painting a positive message on the side of a crèche.

Graffiti itself sits awkwardly in between the subversive and the subdued. The existence of graffiti on private walls is in itself a challenge to the notion of property rights as the outer wall of a building may be privately owned, but its adjacency to the pavement also makes it public. The legislation is clear about property rights in this regard. For example, Cape Town has notoriously limiting public bylaws that restrict graffiti, yet some of the finest graffiti works in the country can be found untouched around the city. Despite a stringent regulatory framework, prominent graffiti artists are well known to authorities, yet are never arrested. And in many cases are employed by the municipality to work on murals as part of culture-led development strategies.

Drawing on the literature on participatory art, culture-led development and a public pedagogy of insurgent citizenship, this section unpacks the case of *Dlala Indima*'s work in the Eastern Cape, where a bottom-up, or community-led Hip-hop and graffiti project emerged in the gaps where mainstream development seems to have failed.

4.3.2. *Dlala Indima* (Play your part)

Dlala Indima, is a creative collective that means 'play your part' in isiXhosa. Although formalized by Buntu Fihla (graphic designer, graffiti artist and photographer), Kwanele Mboso (photographer) and Zingisa Nkosinkulu (fine and public artist) in the context of 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town', *Dlala Indima* had been a burgeoning collective of Hip-hop and graffiti artists in the Eastern Cape for some time. Since 1999 a collective called *Life Forces* had been active in the Eastern Cape, and *Dlala Indima* set out to further their agenda by using graffiti as a vehicle to beautify Phakamisa and engage the youth in developing self worth through creative action, as 'the act of creativity has the potential to open windows where the young thought they were destined to a life of bland mediocrity' (Fihla, 2013).

The Eastern Cape is known for its natural beauty of rolling green hills and red earth, but also its poverty, written so vividly about by novelist Zakes Mda; bloodlike scars of soil erosion reminding us of the socio-economic and environmental devastation wreaked by centuries of colonial and apartheid abuse. The Eastern Cape is the second largest province in South Africa and has the third largest population of close to seven million people. Regardless of its agricultural potential, it is one of the poorest. Phakamisa means 'to raise / pick up' in isiXhosa and is a township on the outskirts of King Williams Town, a small town situated in the heart of the Eastern Cape and former Ciskei. Phakamisa itself is made up of RDP and subsidised housing, and despite being a somewhat close-knit community, faces a range of social and economic issues, including substance abuse and violence. While the official unemployment rate for the Eastern Cape is around 40%, some parts experience up to 90% unemployment, leaving large numbers of youth predominantly idle.

Fihla, Mboso and Nkosinkulu all come from the area, Fihla and Mboso having grown up in Phakamisa itself. Having completed studies in the urban centres, and concerned with the level of ‘despair and victim-hood’ they saw in their home towns, the artists decided to return to implement projects that directly address the sense of frustration experienced, specifically by youth, in their communities. *Dlala Indima* became a vehicle through which to do this.

I was introduced to graffiti around 1994 when I saw a Prophets of Da City music video that showed a photo sequence of Gogga doing a graffiti piece. Already a budding photographer and artist, I was amazed by the actual act of creating graffiti pieces. That image would serve as an inspiring glimpse into a future I tirelessly pursued... and I knew that my number one objective was to use it to transform the township (Fihla, 2013, p. 94).

‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ gave *Dlala Indima* the opportunity to kick-start their work. Their project proposal stated they aimed to

beautify and promote positive messages in Phakamisa using public artworks by the proposed lineup of artists, then use that as a platform to continuing the campaign throughout the township and introducing it to schools, creches and clinics by involving unemployed youth. The whole community will serve as a vast live gallery of positive messages, all bus stops, manholes and a designated old building which is being used by unemployed youth as a drug-smoking den will be given a face-lift using mural/street art aligned with our proposed “Dlala Indima” theme (Fihla, Mboso, & Nkosinkulu, 2010).

They invited prominent Cape Town graffiti artist, Mak1, to join them in Phakamisa to roll out the project seeing as he had extensive experience of using graffiti as a vehicle for social change in neighbourhoods in the Cape Flats. Their starting point was to set up a community meeting to discuss the kinds of messages that people would like on the walls. Issues of crime, sexual abuse and substance abuse came up, but instead of speaking directly about these negative issues, *Dlala Indima* started thinking of ways to spread positive messages that would help address the problems being voiced. The next thing they did was to start working with school children, as they were not allowed at the adults meeting.

We knew that if we could get to the kids, something new and fresh would come out – what would they like to see on the walls in stead of a big badge with something written in Latin? (Mboso, review presentation, 2011 April 80)

A local musician had organized Rap Sessions every Sunday for the children (predominantly boys), so *Dlala Indima* started joining in to see how they could tap into the existing positive energy these sessions were invoking. One of the themes that had come up in the community meetings and Rap Sessions was a concern for how people were treating the environment. Many of the open spaces, even those right next to people's houses, were being used to dump housing rubble, trees, household waste and even dead dogs. The idea of working with the environment triggered a spark from a social and visual perspective.

They had already identified a derelict building, and a number of other sites that they had wanted to work with, but while scouting the neighbourhood they noticed that many of the public spaces, including the school, crèches, and clinic, were also dumping grounds. They started trying to contact the municipality to help. They presented the project and aside from the local ward councilor, garnered a lot of support. Unfortunately the practicality was more complicated. Several broken down trucks later, they decided to just hire the relevant equipment.

And that same day, one guy (from the municipality) noticed the truck passing by when we were going to dump the stuff and he just followed it and brought 4 trucks and a TLP and just cleaned it up in the manner of two hours, and then went to other places in the township and just cleaned everything up. Then they came back 2 days later and cut the grass around the building where we were going to be working and now kids could come and play around the building (Mbosho, review presentation, 2011 April 8).



Figure 50: *Dlala Indima* (2011). Clearing the site [photographs]

Simultaneously, the renovating and painting had begun. The building they had identified was privately owned and over the years had had a few different incarnations. It was initially a butchery, and because it was set up for cold storage, thereafter became a mortuary. After being a mortuary it fell into disrepair and the stigma of it being a place of death lingered. A local woman tried to use the space as a glass recycling depot, but neighbourhood youths took to hanging out and using drugs in the building at night. Part of their recreation was to throw the bottles being recycled against the wall. The roller door was installed by *Dlala Indima* so previously, being open; the building had also made a convenient toilet. As a result, the wall tiles were chipped and the place stank of old beer, urine and human excrement (Fihla, personal interview, 2011 February 5; Fihla, review presentation, 2011 April 8).

Dlala Indima had set an ambitious task⁴⁷. Renovating a building is not usually seen as within the scope of a public arts project, especially one with a budget of under R150 000. Despite the high unemployment rate, Phakamisa is home to many skilled artisans. Working with a mixture of paid labour and volunteers, the building was emptied of broken bottles, the floor fixed, the walls stripped and prepared for painting, and roller doors installed.

Work was in the harsh sun and intense. Neighbors have occasionally brought over ice water to the clean-up team and small crowds gather and enquire at times (*Dlala Indima*, 2011).

Although *Dlala Indima* paid for work when they could, the scope of their budget did not allow for the project to be a platform for large scale job creation.

The thing about this team that were working with us, at first they didn't want to work for free, they wanted us to pay them. So we had to say we can only take a certain number of you. When they start asking questions about the project and we explained they said so this is not a project that you are going to take ownership of and make a profit out of it, you are leaving something, and then that was what brought them back for the next stage of painting and paint for free. You find the unemployed youth don't have anything to do during the day, they just sit at the corner, gossip, chat. They see some guys working, so they say, lets go chill there (*Mboso*, review presentation, 2011 April 8).

⁴⁷ The proposal review committee had been ambivalent about this happening. They were excited about the project, but felt that the graffiti pieces around the neighbourhood would be enough. They did not imagine that it would be possible, in such a short space of time, and with such limited resources, to renovate a building as well as garner the community support to turn it into a functional cultural space.

The more people that joined them to ‘chill’, the bigger their audience got, and the more volunteers started joining them to fill their otherwise empty time. By the end of the project, the *Dlala Indima* core team numbered over 40 people, predominantly volunteers. Over and above this core team, an estimated 200 people were involved along the way⁴⁸.

A big part of drawing people in was through the Park Jams that were held. One of the instrumental Park Jams was held in Mdantsane, a neighbouring township. A sound system was set up by another crew affiliated with Nkosinkulu, and *Dlala Indima*, with Mak1, arrived to do a piece on the wall of a local shop.



Figure 51: Dlala Indima (2011). Mdantsane Park Jam 'umzingisi akanshwa' [photographs]

Park Jams are social events that draw in young people. They are seen as a good platform for discussing important issues and networking. As the music got louder and the paint brighter (as the piece developed) more and more people started joining what had initially been an exclusively young male audience. By the time the sun was setting, children were playing in the grass, hovering and asking the artists questions. Groups of hip youth milled about, with their fashion sense rivaling that of any urban public event. The mural was being painted on the side of a shop with permission from the owner, and a group of older adults had gathered near the entrance to watch and chat.

⁴⁸ Part of the funding criteria was that participants in the project would need to be recorded. The NLDTF requires this information as it is one of the ways they evaluate the impact of a project. Fihla comically describes how seriously they took this, and how long the list of participants ended up being. Although they made a point of thanking everyone, they acknowledged the 40 core members more formally.

During the event *Dlala Indima* spread the word about their project and recruited both audience and participants through this process: artists who had been at this Park Jam, or street event, also performed at the launch event. Although not directly related, taking part in this Park Jam meant that people started familiarizing with what *Dlala Indima* were up to. It was this sound system that was later used for the launch event of the *Dlala Indima Centre*.

It is important to note that because of the proximity of the townships, the “ripple effect” of the street shows and workshops has a huge effect on the strength of *Dlala Indima* because the foundation has been laid long before (*Dlala Indima*, 2011).

On the same day as the Park Jam, Plascon delivered the paint they were sponsoring to the project. This meant that the painting at the building that would become the *Dlala Indima Centre* could begin. Using the surrounding environment as visual reference, and the community consultations as inspiration for the writing, the interior and exterior of the building were decorated. The painting was an event in itself. Every day a sound system would be set up, playing a range of local and foreign Hip-hop. This would attract people from the surrounding neighbourhoods, generating conversation, not only about what *Dlala Indima* were doing, but what the work meant more broadly. *Dlala Indima* used this as a platform to talk about alternative futures for a largely bored and idle youth.



Figure 52: *Dlala Indima* (2011). 'Before and After' interior: *Dlala Indima Centre* [photographs]



Figure 53: Dlala Indima (2011). 'Before and After' exterior side: Dlala Indima Centre [photographs]



Figure 54: Dlala Indima (2011). 'Before and After' front: Dlala Indima Centre [photographs]

One of the days I was visiting was on a weekend. It was a sweaty Saturday morning. On the way walking from Fihla's mother's house to the *Dlala Indima Centre* we passed a group of youths that were obviously still partying from the night before. Music pumped lazily out of a local house-turned bar, while a group of young

people drank cold quarts⁴⁹. One of the young men, a childhood friend of Fihla and Mboso, came to chat to me, putting on an English accent he asked me if I was press coming to cover *Dlala Indima*'s work (what else would a White woman carrying a camera be doing in a township in the Eastern Cape?). I asked him what he thought of the project. He enthusiastically answered that it was very (he thought carefully of the word) '...artistic', insinuating that it was something to be in awe of. Watching the work in progress therefore also involved a measure of excitement as people watched a derelict and undesirable space slowly but surely become lively and lived in.

Once they had completed work on the *Dlala Indima Centre*, the crew branched out into the rest of the township. They did a series of *pieces* on bus stops.



Figure 55: *Dlala Indima* (2011). Bus stops [photographs]

Each *piece* focused included a statement and an image. The statements were taken from isiXhosa sayings and therefore do not necessarily have counterparts in English. Looking at figure 6, the first bus stop on the left has the saying 'intaka yakha ngoboya benye'. The direct translation is 'the bird builds using all the wool'. While a lot is lost in translation, the message refers to waste and recycling. The image on the far right, 'ubuhle bethu lucoceko lwethu', challenges increasingly normative ideas of beauty largely seen as being imported from the North (Fihla, personal interview, 2011 February 5)⁵⁰. As the painting took place on bus stops, the work generated a lot of interest and passersby were constantly stopping to talk about what was going on. 'Sometimes we wouldn't be able to paint, we would have to sit and say, lets all talk first' (Fihla, review presentation, 2011 April 8). Aside from talking about the messages being painted, much of the conversation revolved around the relationship between the arts, entrepreneurship and how these can be used to generate a sense of self worth.

⁴⁹ Quarts are 750ml bottles of beer.

⁵⁰ The direct translation is 'our beauty is our neatness' but whereas it works as a statement in isiXhosa, it loses meaning in translation.

As the project progressed, time was running out so *Dlala Indima* started working at night. It was also a lot cooler in the evenings than in the 35 degree heat of the day. One of their neighbours had lent them a generator, and another a set of huge lights. This meant they could get a lot more work done as the launch date approached.



Figure 56: Dlala Indima (2011). Painting the crèche [photograph]

One of the pieces they worked on at night was at the local crèche. The artists had spoken with the woman who runs the crèche about the kinds of images the kids would like to see. As opposed to what usually happens when a piece appears on a private wall in the city, the children were delighted.

In the morning it was so great seeing the kids' faces when they were there in the morning. It's the same surprise where people wake up pissed off to find graffiti on their house, but the complete reversal (Fihla, review presentation, 2011 April 8).

This was an intentional strategy on the part of *Dlala Indima*. They saw the performative value in challenging urban graffiti norms (Fihla, personal interview, 2011 April 10). As opposed to much of the other graffiti pieces they had painted around Phakamisa, they also decided to use a 'hardcore graffiti style'.



Figure 57: Dlala Indima (2011). ‘ubuntu’ graffiti [photograph]

They used this approach as a way to teach graffiti literacy to young people; how to read and look for the shapes of letters; creating a key to the puzzle of graffiti. Both Mbose and Fihla (2011) spoke about how much they enjoyed watching people trying to trace the shapes of the letters in order to figure them out. According to Fihla,

I want to break the notion of graffiti as being something illegal. Obviously you’ll always have a kid running around with a koki pen writing on walls, but we want to provide them with an avenue out of this (Prince, 2011).

The final point of ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ signaled the beginning point of the *Dlala Indima Centre*. This was marked by the launch described in the beginning of this section. Tapping in to the existing practice of handing out flyers for a young man’s initiation, *Dlala Indima* printed flyers and distributed them the same way. They felt that mimicking this practice would make sense locally and also symbolically marked the maturation of the project. The flyers advertised the launch event. Essentially a larger version of the previous Park Jams, this launch focused on bringing all the people who had participated in the project together, and to showcase the project to the broader community. On the day of the

launch, hundreds of people amassed to see what *Dlala Indima* had been working on during the preceding three months.

The programme of events is important to mention. After being opened by the neighbourhood elder, a range of young performers took to the stage on the *spaza stoep*⁵¹.



Figure 58: Dlala Indima (2011). Children perform and women watch [photographs]

Young boys got a platform to perform the rhymes they had been working on as part of the Rap Sessions. A theatre group performed a series of workshopped skits reminiscent of protest theatre in the 1980s. The focus was on the environment and how to stop treating the earth and people as waste. Both hilarious and powerful, the audience was very moved by a group of under 13s speaking profoundly about these pressing social and environmental issues (Phakamisa, audience interviews, 2011 March 21). Throughout the afternoon, local Hip-hop artists (DJs and MCs) were given a stage to perform.

In the *Dlala Indima Centre* itself, local photographer Terence Ntele exhibited a photo essay about Phakamisa. The photos became talking points, as people pointed out things or people they recognized.

⁵¹ Stoep is the Afrikaans word for a verandah in front of a house.



Figure 59: Dlala Indima (2011). Dlala Indima Centre Exhibition [photographs]

A couple of days after the launch, while the artists were having a break and recovering from the previous three months of hard work, Mboso received a call to get to the *Dlala Indima Centre* as quickly as possible as some Department of Arts and Culture representatives were coming to visit. As he arrived he noticed a bag of rubbish that had been burnt outside the door, but the representatives had already arrived so there was little he could do. He apologized for the mess and took them inside for a tour of the work. When they came out some time later, unprompted, a woman from across the road had just finished up picking up the burnt rubbish and had put it in bags with her rubbish in front of her house. It was this moment that captured the ‘spirit of the project’ for Mboso, where the ethos of looking after the environment trickled into every day practice (review presentation, 2011 April 8).

4.3.3. Reflections

This section firstly looks at *Dlala Indima*’s inclusionary processes and practices, arguing that working collectively within ones own context offers unique opportunities for inclusion. Secondly, it looks at how working in the popular register of Hip-hop opens up spaces for dialogue that other kinds of public art practices may not inspire. Thirdly, it looks at a form of cultural regeneration that counters normative practices of cultural planning or culture-led development. Finally it suggests that *Dlala Indima* is opening up platforms for insurgent cultural citizenship.

Working with / within: implications for participatory public art

During one of the site visits, Fihla was very concerned about meeting the participatory objectives stipulated in ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’. The importance of inclusion had been quite ardently emphasized during the preparatory workshops. He was explaining that they had not set up any formal processes to include people in the painting. While he was telling me this, we were sitting in the as yet unpainted *Dlala Indima Centre*. Even at this early stage in the project, the number of people who had gravitated towards the project disproved what he was telling me. Additionally, in the background of one of the videos documenting the painting, a conversation between two passersby can be heard. They were debating what ‘playing your role’ actually means: who should be playing what role, for whom. Each Park Jam or *piece* involved myriad conversations and I kept thinking how come there were so many people involved if they were being exclusionary?

What this highlighted was how persistent the ‘participatory turn’ in public art had become⁵², but also how there is a disjuncture between the language and the processes of participation. Whereas other projects may have needed to carefully construct mechanisms for inclusion, *Dlala Indima*, being from the neighbourhood, it seems, did not. People gravitated towards the project in part because it was something to do, but also because it was something people they knew were doing. Unlike other projects that often work in unfamiliar ‘Fine Art’ registers, *Dlala Indima* were tapping into an existing networks of people and practices through popular means: primarily through Hip-hop. What it suggests is that Foster’s (1996) concern about the kinds of othering and alterity prevalent in the ‘ethnographic turn’ in arts does not apply in a context where artists work at home and in familiar tones. The challenge this poses to public arts projects is on the one hand, where artists choose to position themselves when they work, and on the other, through what kinds of creative registers.

Setting up meetings with community members and attending the Rap Sessions, are two more formal ways *Dlala Indima* engaged the context, but the willingness for people to pitch in with time, labour or equipment demonstrates that the project resonated in a far more comprehensive way. Elderly women would not have attended the launch, and they certainly would not have opened the event with a

⁵² And rightly so a context where paternalistic art projects proliferate.

praise poem and a prayer if it did not appeal to them. Whereas children are normally excluded from the deliberation of important issues, here they were given centre stage, much to the admiration of the crowd (Phakamisa, audience interviews, 2011 March 21). *Dlala Indima* felt they had made an impact because parents had come to the launch. According to Mboso (personal interview, 2011 March 21), ‘it is really a big thing when parents come because they look at these things [gestures to graffiti] as young people’s stuff’. Over the course of the project, ‘there were more and more kids and their parents were sending them there – that was the first way the parents were communicating with us – by sending their kids’ (Mboso, review presentation, 2011 April 8). This was echoed at another instance by Fihla, ‘parents don’t involve themselves in youth kinds of things; them coming through almost proved that maybe we did have an effect’ (Fihla, review presentation, 2011 April 8).

The other ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ projects did not generate the kinds of crowds that *Dlala Indima* drew for their launch, and while some projects have secured future funding, none are running on an ongoing basis. In many ways, *Dlala Indima*’s organisational form embodies a participatory ethic that stems not only from its rootedness in Phakamisa, but also in the ethos of a collective inspired by the *ubuntu* of an existing Hip-hop culture. The notion of *ubuntu* comes through most literally in the graffiti piece on the side of the crèche: the piece the children were taught to decipher was the word *ubuntu*. The concept of *ubuntu* is based on the communitarian notion of ‘ubuntu, ngubuntu ngabantu’, which loosely translated into English means, ‘I am because you are’. Contrary to individualist notions of the self, *ubuntu* looks at the self as inextricably linked to others. Although the notion of *ubuntu* has become somewhat of a cliché, the message remains important for *Dlala Indima*, and the practice of which the artists took very seriously (Fihla, personal interviews, 2011 February 5) (Fihla, 2013).

Fihla hopes to literally change the face of the township through his creativity and a spray can. “A lot of what I do is based on my own experiences too,” he said.” But my aim in doing all of this was not to do selfish graffiti, it’s not about myself, it’s about the community.” (Prince, 2011).

The Hip-hop movement Fihla talks about, and *Dlala Indima* acts upon, does not mimic a liberal individualist ideology stemming from the United States, as is the warning of some theoreticians trying to make sense of Hip-hop in the South who assume a cultural homogenisation (Hammet, 2009). For *Dlala Indima*, using

creativity as a kind of agency for building up a positive ‘sense of self’, is the key to addressing the ‘social ills’ the youth find themselves in. According to Fihla, creative action in this context should be collective. Whereas Hip-hop artists are usually known for posturing, and graffiti artists are recognized through their nicknames, these individualist identities were subsumed under a collective in the context of *Dlala Indima*. Even the prominent Mak1 did not sign his own name but that of *Dlala Indima*. Fihla felt it was this collectivity that pushes Hip-hop into a social movement as opposed to a set of social events. Here, knowledge of the self is not about being the same as everyone else, which has always been the liberal individualist’s fear, but rather about how one finds individuality together. In a context where development is failing, and large numbers of people are marginalised from the formal (and informal) economy, Hip-hop and graffiti functioned as a critical, but hopeful platform for change. That there were 40 fully active and another 200 partially active members (working voluntarily) of *Dlala Indima* by the end of the project suggests that this philosophy has been put into practice.

Graffiti-led hope in Hip-hop

The transnationality of Hip-hop has meant that graffiti has become a common visual language for young people across the globe. Hip-hop culture may have global reach, but it has not meant a homogenisation of youth identities, as the form is malleable enough to find local resonance wherever it appears. It is, more often than not, referred to as an urban youth culture movement, but little attention is paid to what happens outside urban centres. Just as there is an assumption that the global informs the local urban, there is an assumption that the urban informs the rural. *Dlala Indima*’s highlights yet again the fallacy of the urban-rural divide.

Place identities in cities may draw on the fictitious, largely colonial binary or urban (civilised) and rural (uncivilised), and these markers may be used as powerful distinguishers between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Erwin, 2011), the reality is far more messy. Labour migration has meant that people have been constantly moving between urban and rural South Africa. Cultural practices, such as music and fashion, have been shared even prior to the relatively recent intensification of telecommunication technologies (Prophets of Da City was popular amongst rural youth in the 1980s before cell phones and YouTube). In fact, the assumption that culture starts in the city

and trickles into the rural can be refuted when looking at Hip-hop, specifically in the Eastern Cape. This can be seen most notably in fashion. Unlike the stereotype of Hip-hop fashion being based around baggy pants, caps and label takkies, a specific style popularised by musicians like Spoek Mathambo (also from the Eastern Cape), seems to have emerged from Hip-hop communities in the Eastern Cape. Although this should not be surprising, it often is. Urbanites struggle to shake the image of a stereotypically rural village, forgetting that township planning in South Africa is much the same wherever one goes. In some ways, Phakamisa does not look all that different from many urban townships.

While Hip-hop culture and graffiti are not urban imports into Phakamisa, the scale at which the work was happening is a rare phenomenon for somewhere outside of an urban centre, to the joy of locals⁵³. Commissioned public art projects rarely happen outside of big cities, and where they do happen, they can often tend towards, sometimes patronising, forms of community art, where middle class artists ‘help’ the marginalised poor. In order to make sense of what *Dlala Indima* were up to, it is important to look at the visual images and messages they were creating. Reading the graffiti involves both looking at the words, and the images the artists have created. The verbal messages were about caring about the self (‘ubuhle bethu lucoceko lwethu’), caring about others (‘ubuntu’), and caring about the environment (‘hlonipha indalo’). Read together, the project was about re-linking people to each other and the environment, a progressive agenda, and one that policy-makers, academics and activists are struggling with across the globe. When the neighbour cleared up the burnt rubbish from outside the centre, something of this connection was being realised.

Inspired by the context, and in particular the natural environment, the graffiti itself is introducing new aesthetic styles in a visual terrain usually marked by its angles. A visual conversation between form and context emerges, that once again highlights the problematic assumptions made about the rural/urban divide. Graffiti is assumed to be an urban practice, that visually expresses the aesthetics of a particular kind of peripheral youth in the city; and that acts as the mechanism that Hip-hop uses to soften the markers of urban poverty. Whereas some South African graffiti artists

⁵³ Countless interviews with locals (old and young) revealed how pleased residents were the work of *Dlala Indima*.

have been critiqued for replicating graffiti styles from the 1980s in the US, *Dlala Indima*'s work seems to be doing something new. Their choice of working with inspiration from nature may be a very literal translation of working with environmental issues, but what it did was foreground a different aesthetic consideration than conventional graffiti pieces, a camouflage of sorts. As Opper (2012, p. 16) puts it: *Dlala Indima* 'uses text, literally, to "pull" the sky and earth closer together. Graffiti is used to... graphically fuse the earth and sky using architecture as topographical support'.

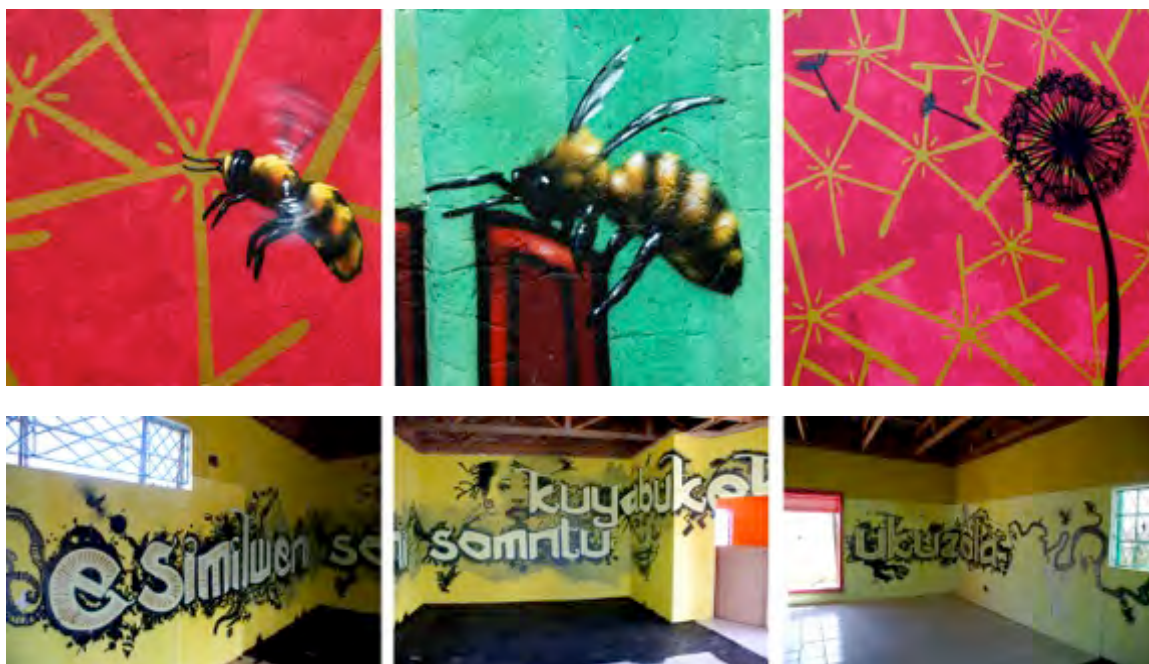


Figure 60: Dlala Indima (2011) Details [photographs]

Their decision to work in conventional and unconventional graffiti registers in order to draw in different kinds of audiences is also an interesting occurrence. Balancing a fine line between audience legibility and integrity of the craft was a big concern. The artists had an ongoing conversation on how to produce work that did not alienate non Hip-hop people, but that didn't dumb down the craft to the point of losing its radical edge.

The last time we met there was a big discussion about graffiti and how we make it, what's the word, legible. How do you break it down for people? It is the number one problem for graffiti, people say its cool, but we cant read it, so there had to be a balance. Where you can break it down so much until it looks like a cheap billboard, you are really compromising what you are about (Fihla, personal interview, 2011 April 10)

This resulted in their decision to work legibly for the bus stops, but challenge the viewer with the *piece* at the crèche.

In many ways, the painting was only one aspect to the project as a whole, acting as a catalyst for dialogue in the Freirian sense: becoming a public pedagogy of sorts. By listening to the kinds of conversations that were emerging around the project with participants and audiences alike, it seems to be pedagogy informed by furthering the Hip-hop agenda of ‘knowledge of self’, which implies others and the environment. Counter to bestselling self-help books that foreground capitalist individualism, this ethos is located around the assumption that creativity is one way to re-link people with the means of production, foregrounding cultural production above others. This pedagogy that emerged out of *Dlala Indima*’s project was an essentially hopeful one.

Anderson (2006, p. 706) maintains that ‘radical thought has an obligation to recover the category of hope and to practice utopianism because of, rather than despite, all the reasons we have to despair at the world’. Drawing on Ernst Bloch’s thinking, Anderson asserts the notion of hope, not as a blind faith that ‘things will get better’, but rather as an affective sentiment that inspires a utopian process. Here, utopianism is not an end in itself, but rather a process – it is something we do as opposed to merely think about. It is a practice of Greene’s visioning of alternative realities, embedded with an ethical commitment to fostering more just futures – of ‘becoming otherwise’ (Anderson, 2006, p. 699). It is a process in process, with a commitment to hopeful change in challenging injustices. Applying Anderson’s thinking allows participatory public art as a transformative process, to be an ongoing utopian process based on a critical/radical ethos of hope or imaginary. It is this ‘utopian process of hope’ that is embedded in the graffiti process and practice of *Dlala Indima*. This is seen most apparently in the Park Jams: where the rhymes criticized, the writing started imagining something new. Perry (2004) sees this ‘open dialogue’ and ‘multi-layered discourse’ as evidence of Hip-hop’s working as a critical practice (Pieterse, 2010).

Another cultural regeneration

When we read the proposals, we thought no way will these guys be able to renovate a building in three months, but we liked the rest of the proposal so we didn't think much of their ambitious claim. Well, we were proved wrong (Western, personal interview, 2011 April 9).

Advocates for public art generally agree that art and cultural practices are vital to a functional society. I have shown how, through an inclusionary ethic surrounding their graffiti-led project, *Dlala Indima* have managed to stimulate critical discussions around social issues facing young people in peripheral spaces, in this case, a township in the Eastern Cape. Many public art projects exist in the moment: largely performative, the spring into existence in an ephemeral moment, and then linger only in people's memories and the documentary record of the artists. Other projects may leave a marker on public space, either in the form of art objects or images. *Dlala Indima* manifested in the public performance of Park Jams and in the graffiti pieces decorating Phakamisa; but unlike other projects where the artists withdraw at some point, *Dlala Indima*'s legacy lives on in the *Dlala Indima Centre*⁵⁴. Since its renovation, the *Dlala Indima Centre* has held exhibitions and film screenings, and hosted informal graffiti residencies for artists from across the country. Although they have no formal funding, they have still managed to cobble together a cultural process of sorts, albeit under some duress at times.

Learning from this example, cultural planning needs to move beyond two things: firstly, the idea that buildings will boost culture in peripheral areas; and secondly, the commodification of cultural practice for elite-centric economic development.

The solution to supporting culture in many communities has been to deliver a building. Regardless of the best intentions of the planners, it cannot be assumed that a building will be able to foster any kind of cultural practice of entrepreneurship. The emphasis has been to build ambitious centres that are expensive to run. Participation implies that relevant government departments, NGOs and CBOs are included in the decision-making processes, but the point where participation generally begins is once the decision that the solution is a community centre has already been made. Because this involves large-scale architecture and engineering, the processes are generally authority led, and fall within normative planning paradigms. *Dlala Indima*'s

⁵⁴ At the writing of this thesis, there is still an ad hoc programme functioning out the Centre, and a few more projects around the Eastern Cape have been initiated by *Dlala Indima*.

renovation of a derelict building suggests that simpler solutions may be possible. The successful renovation of the building signals something important about *Dlala Indima*'s project. The access to skilled artisans, who ultimately worked for very little or for free, meant that the project was resonating amongst the broader community. It also challenges the idea that well networked professional contractors are necessary intermediaries in the development of public spaces. Their intervention, using a tiny budget, and community cooperation, showed how little is needed to create an affective space for creative community engagement. Imagine the possibilities had they been granted financial and infrastructural support from local authorities.

Despite the dominant practice, culture-led regeneration does not in itself imply economic development for existing propertied elites. *Dlala Indima* has shown how a graffiti-led Hip-hop project can affectively transform a neighbourhood through cultural means that does not involve gentrification⁵⁵. In a similar pattern to mainstream regeneration, artists move into a derelict space, and through engaging creative social practice, create a safer and more vibrant neighbourhood. A township in the Eastern Cape may not be prime investment property, but the kind of 'civic creativity' being enabled in this context is closer to the language of 'passion and compassion' that makes Landry's argument so compelling for planners. Here, *Dlala Indima* did not soften the blow of development, but rather found popular registers to define new types of cultural expression and citizenship.

Insurgent cultural citizenship

For *Dlala Indima*, the roles and responsibility of citizens beyond voting were paramount. In a poverty-riddled context, facing major challenges of socio-economic crisis, *Dlala Indima*'s agenda was geared towards finding hopeful strategies to imagine cultural alternatives to the victim-hood they saw as debilitating the youth. Working with inherently subversive cultural forms (Hip-hop and graffiti) *Dlala Indima* were asserting other expressions of political agency; cultural action being paramount in their vision. Their call to action was premised by changing the way people think about the relationship between themselves; others and the environment, and thereby calling for a change in behaviour (play your role). This is the pedagogical agenda Christen (2010) refers to when he asserts graffiti's role in alternative forms of

⁵⁵ There has been no recorded gentrification in the area since the art was implemented.

learning. The result of this could most explicitly be seen in the children's theatre performance during the final event. Here, children, usually alienated from formal political processes such as voting, and usually recipients of education, were centre-stage advocating for a more humane and liveable society for all: using Hip-hop as a means for social justice.

For Stevenson (2003), creating spaces for dialogue are paramount for cultural citizenship. This dialogue manifested literally in the conversations happening around the work, but also the dialogue that started happening with authorities, such as the local municipality and the provincial department of Arts and Culture. As a result, the municipality aided in not only clearing the site where *Dlala Indima* were working, but moreover, cleared the waste in the rest of Phakamisa. In a reversal of normative power dynamics, authorities were cleaning up *for* graffiti as opposed to cleaning up the work *of* graffiti.

This highlights a disjuncture with literature on Hip-hop's often-antagonistic lyrics, and writing on graffiti suggesting it is devoid of meaning. In some situations, Hip-hop is in irreconcilable conflict with authorities (Caldeira, 2004), and some would go as far as to argue that any relationship with authorities results in the taming of Hip-hop's critical edge, while in others, the relationship is far more complicated. In cities, the body of Hip-hop (loitering youths) and the practice of Hip-hop (through graffiti) are often heavily policed. Legislative frameworks safeguard urban public spaces, often in the interest of economic development as graffiti has been stigmatised as vandalism as opposed to art. Graffiti artists develop a range of performative methods to work unseen or unnoticed. In Phakamisa, this was not the case. If there was legislation, it was not enacted. In fact, other than the local ward councilor who remained suspicious, most people in the municipality were supportive of *Dlala Indima*, in principal at least (other than the clean up they were not forthcoming with resources). This was liberating for the artists in many respects, as they could work free from punitive measures from authorities.

4.3.4. Conclusion

Ultimately, it is in the Park Jam that the public pedagogical implications of insurgent cultural citizenship of Hip-hop, finds its greatest expression. South African

public spaces are still largely defunct due to apartheid spatial planning and policing. They are transient spaces where few people tend to linger. Taking over these kinds of public spaces reclaims the commons. The practice of the Park Jam combines different sensory layers that work on an affective politics of insurgency. It is also the moment where Hip-hop comes together in its myriad forms, and where the radical and hopeful most explicitly meet. By producing conflicting messages as the commercial worlds of rap and fashion, collide with simultaneously misogynist and resistant verbal commentary, and positive messages, sometimes bordering on the clichéd, the Park Jam intentionally and incidentally allows the possibility for critical dialogue to emerge.

5. DISCUSSION: Trespassing, Transgression and Transitional Tactics for a Pedagogy of Public Art

The previous chapter explores the three projects selected for this research, reflecting: firstly, on *The Domino Effect*, and the role of games and mega events in the context of public art projects; secondly, in *Living Within History*, on the opportunities offered by the disruptive tendencies in public art; and finally, with *Dlala Indima*, on the affective enrolment of young people in cultural citizenship and culture-led development. This chapter returns to Boal's (1979) trespassing as a troubling act in public space, and of social issues; hook (1994) and Kershaw's (1999) transgression as resistance to the status quo; Winnicott's (1989) transitional spaces for learning; and McFarlane's (2011b) use of de Certeau's (1984) tactics as sensorial ways of knowing and acting; and shows how intersecting the public space, public art and public pedagogy literature in the context of 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town' can offer epistemological, methodological and pedagogical lessons for an affect-attuned Urban Studies.

Chapter Two challenges the idealistic notion of consensual political processes. It argues that despite Freire's considerable contribution to the praxis of liberatory learning, his assumption of a homogenous oppressed, and the possibility of engendering an entirely consensual progressive agenda may be somewhat idealistic, and may not entirely reflect the messiness, the 'networked entanglements' (Pieterse, 2006, p. 407) of political reality. It also shows that recasting political enrolment as contested (Amin, 2008; Harvey, 2012), pluralistic (McFarlane, 2011b; Stevenson, 2003), and largely shaped by affect (Connolly, 2002, 2006; Massumi, 1997; Thrift, 2004), may offer a more credible way of maintaining the progressive politics espoused by Freireian cultural action, while allowing for spaces of disruption and dissensus. The chapter asserts that it is insufficient to think of these kinds of political engagements as solely social, and suggests that spatialising the discussion offers an important entry point for critical urban praxis (Amin, 2008; Ellsworth, 2005; McFarlane, 2011b). The public art of 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town' may offer important affective in-roads into how this can be done.

This chapter starts firstly, by exploring knowing the urban through McFarlane's (2011b) critical urban learning as affective experience (Connolly, 2006; Thrift, 2008) and Amin's (2015) eventfulness; showing what the projects revealed about post-apartheid public spaces; and arguing that public art has the capacity to surface relational power dynamics that intersect with the everyday and expose the contested commons. Secondly, the chapter extends Pinder's institutional concerns to include methodological approaches that address Crang (2005), Hawkins (2012) and Thrift's (2000, 2008) challenges regarding the role of the sensorial, ephemeral and non-representational in Urban Studies. Finally, it explores the pedagogical implications of this kind of affective praxis (Biesta, 2012; Freire, 1970; McFarlane, 2011b) of public art for urban learning (Pinder, 2008; Schuermans et al., 2012) that thinks beyond the social, political and the present, ultimately arguing how trespassing (Amin & Thrift, 2002; Boal, 1979) and transgression (hooks, 1994; Kershaw, 1999) offer useful tactics (de Certeau, 1984; McFarlane, 2011b) for creating transitional spaces for learning and public becoming.

5.1. Ways of Knowing the Urban

The epistemological concern of knowing the urban permeates the Southern literature, as urban theory tries to locate itself within, against and instead of the Northern urban canon (Parnell & Oldfield, 2014; Robinson, 2014). While making essential entry points, much of this literature focuses on socio-economic aspects of cityness, and artistic, cultural and creative life does not feature adequately as yet. Although many thinkers recognize the affective aspects to urban living, the implications for exploring this as a way of knowing the urban have yet to be sufficiently unpacked. Drawing on Amin's (2015) sentient public spaces and the political potential for eventfulness in the context of public art offers new ways of encountering urban knowledge that takes the affective and ephemeral dimensions of public life more seriously. In a context still marred by social, economic and spatial inequality, public art offers other ways of engaging the sentient remnants of colonial and apartheid planning, and in so doing can hint at ways of otherwising the spatial agenda in South Africa.

Chapter Two, *Romancing the Agora* looked at the ‘relational turn’ in Urban Studies and how this impacted on understanding space and power dynamics, arguing that the romantic Habermasian notion of the public sphere that underpins much thinking about the commons as a liberatory space for consensual democratic politics may be somewhat naïve. *Public art praxis as urban pedagogy* went on to show how thinkers such as Freire (1970), Biesta (Biesta, 2006, 2012), Stevenson (2003), Holston (2009) and Appadurai (1996) have focused their thinking on citizenship primarily in the social and political, while Ellsworth (2005) and McFarlane (2011b) spatialise the discussion by including the material aspects of enacting citizenship. McFarlane (2011b, p. 363) is particularly interested in the ‘relational distributions through which learning is produced’ through ‘translation’, ‘coordination’ and ‘dwelling’. For McFarlane, urban learning does not only happen through ‘top-down’ or ‘bottom-up’ approaches, but is part and parcel of everyday navigation of cities by ordinary people, most often under duress. This kind of learning is not only survivalist, but also has important political dimensions. Furthermore, these tactics of learning are embodied and sensorial, and often operate beyond immediate social and political needs, and thus it is useful to think of them in the context of spatialising Connolly’s (2006) affective decision-making. For Connolly (2002), understanding the importance of affect in the way people cognitively navigate their lives is imperative, and has repercussions on how people enact concerns and desires in everyday life, in the spaces they inhabit (Sitas & Pieterse, 2013). It is therefore important to cast affective knowing as an alternative lens for engaging social, political, economic and spatial issues while at the same time locating knowledge production as a generative practice.

‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ accesses more serious social, political, economic and spatial issues through affective means in the following ways. The *Siwela Sonke* dancers in *Living Within History*’s ‘flirting with fire hydrants’ and ‘parking meters polkas’ tried to highlight the contested and innovative use of urban infrastructure. The dancers were paying homage to the tactics McFarlane (2011b) refers to, but it is difficult to tell how legible this was to a bystander. Each of the projects also revealed more tangible spatial and social issues, such as the myriad divisions and contested use of public space. Most apparent were the remnants of apartheid spatial planning that largely remain unchanged, and that are primarily still racialised, seen most explicitly in ‘above the road’ and ‘below the road’ in Hermon; and ‘above’ and ‘below’ the PEP Store, and the division between town and township in Dundee. The division of neighbourhoods in Phakamisa according to

their housing type (RDP, subsidised and so forth) signal new configurations of spatial designation, with social implications, initiated during apartheid and developed in post-1994 human settlement planning. The projects also challenged the stereotypical urban/rural divide. Here, public art managed to reveal what has become so natural and normal that it is no longer visible to most of South Africa; thus, they offer interesting representational lenses through which to encounter the divisions.

Amin (2015) asserts that although public space may not embody the kind of ‘civicness’ as idealised by Habermas (1962), Arendt (1958) and others, the progressive political potential of furthering democratic ideals is possible through a particular kind of ‘eventfulness’ that is essentially relational. It is this ‘eventful’ relationality that the ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ project were, albeit unknowingly, tapping into, particularly in the interruption of the banality of everyday.

In Hermon, *The Domino Effect* developed a domino tournament that drew a community together demonstrating cooperative power, and even though there was no tangible legacy to speak of, the inclusion of children challenged normative power relations. In a community usually devoid of this scale of activity, especially a multi-generational and alcohol-free one, the domino tournament left a powerful ‘trace’ in people’s memories, and demonstrated that other ways of being together are possible given the right conditions.

In *Living Within History*, these traces can most explicitly be seen in the archive. Here, participatory strategies were used to explore alternative expressions in and of the archive, which continue to this day. In Dundee, grand historical narratives intersect with ordinary everyday stories that interrogate the relational agency espoused by assemblage thinkers both theoretically and aesthetically, collage being a form of assemblage in itself within art theory (Brenner, 2013; Farias, 2011; McFarlane, 2011a; Ranciere, 2004). The collage workshops spatialised history in their discussions of space, place, history and power, but when the learners took the collages to the streets asking passers-by to contribute to futuring narratives for Dundee, a particular kind of spatialised affective politics emerged that is brimming with Amin’s (2015) eventfulness and the infrapower McFarlane (2011b) refers to.

In Phakamisa, *Dlala Indima's* launch event is possibly a more tangible moment where space, aesthetics and politics collide, and collude with the progressive agenda Amin (2008, 2015) argues for. Here, a graffiti-led Hip-hop project culminated in an event that demonstrated how socio-political, economic and environmental concerns might coalesce in an unprecedented ways. *Dlala Indima* demonstrated that, as Amin (2008, p. 15) asserted, the 'atmosphere of a public space, its aesthetics and physical architecture, its historical status and reputation, its visual cultures, subtly define performances of social life in public and meanings and intentions of urban public culture'. The artists demonstrated that tapping into familiar registers (Hip-hop and graffiti) can unify and mobilise youth in the wider politics of socio-environmental concerns of neighbourhoods that resonated with older and younger generations, often unheard of in cities. Hip-hop has been a marker of insurgent youth culture around the world, and while McFarlane (2011b) locates his discussion of tactics within tangible housing struggles, a similar approach can be applied here as young, predominantly marginal, people carved out urban culture-spaces. *Dlala Indima's* work in Phakamisa continues today which attests to this.

Although these three examples demonstrate cooperative moments, the projects were not always about consensus. The 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town' projects demonstrate how conflicting claims on public space may enable 'resonances' or tactics of political becoming. This can be seen most explicitly when the *Siwela Sonke* dancers transgressed social (gender), spatial (public space), and temporal (women out alone at night) norms in their performance where the Dundee curfew bell once stood. That threatening and unsettling moment revealed a darker side of participation where society's conservatism rears its ugly head, but also provided a jarring event that has political implications. For the artists, VANSAs had created reflective moments (i.e. review workshop and catalogue) where this could be further unpacked. Whereas the artists initially presented this as a failure of the project because it did not fulfill the romantic notion of inclusive public art fostering spaces of Habermasian civiness, the review processes built into the project revealed that this kind of disruption may have been *Living Within History's* greatest achievement.

Public art praxis as urban pedagogy argues for recasting democracy and citizenship affectively, and suggests that in a context where formal political processes are floundering, and consumerism proliferates, rethinking how citizenship is enacted through affective means offers powerful socio-political and spatial possibilities (Amin

& Thrift, 2002; Holston, 2009; Ong, 2006; Sitas & Pieterse, 2013; Stevenson, 2003; Thrift, 2004, 2008). If human decision-making is fundamentally, and not always rationally, shaped by affect, then tapping into affective or sensorial means of navigating society becomes increasingly important (Connolly, 2002, 2006; Greene, 2000; McFarlane, 2011b; Thrift, 2008). Amin's (2015) 'eventfulness' uses two examples (the Occupy Movement and an incident of someone collapsing on a train) to illustrate the relational and affective possibilities for creating common ground, and McFarlane (2011b) writes about sensorial knowledge, but in both of these cases, affect is incidental as opposed to intentional. The 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town' project set out to use affect as a deliberate strategy to engender cultural citizenship.

Living Within History harnessed Greene's (2000) 'social imagination' in re-imagining and re-invigorating the colonial and apartheid archive; and in *Dlala Indima*'s critical Hip-hop of hope. Sadie and Coppen used aesthetic strategies (collage and public performance) to critique the existing, and construct new components of the Talana Museum archive. By implication they challenged the assumption of history and heritage as a static reality merely to monumentalise or memorialise (Crampton, 2001; Marschall, 2010b; M. Miles, 1997). The participant and audience responses demonstrate how an affective nerve was struck, and not always in the most pleasant of ways, as was experienced by the misogynist jibes of the drunken onlookers during the second curfew bell performance. *Dlala Indima* tapped into the familiarity of Hip-hop, already intrinsically dialogical (Caldeira, 2004; Pieterse, 2010; Stevenson, 2003) to imagine other ways of being in relation to the environment and becoming in terms of self-worth. The aesthetic and affective aspects were crucial to this enrolment. History was boring to the Dundee learners until they were the ones making it. Hip-hop has always been a vehicle through which young people have found political agency, despite its contradictory dimensions, and *Dlala Indima* tapped into this to leverage discussion around particular social issues. In doing this, both *Living Within History* and *Dlala Indima* created platforms for dialogic cultural citizenship in insurgent action (Freire, 1970; Greene, 2000; Holston, 2009; Stevenson, 2003).

What this highlights is that even though people may not be actively engaging with formal political participatory processes, this does not mean an aversion to political engagement. It may just be that formal inroads to political activation may be inappropriate as the sole avenue for understanding and practicing citizenship. This

kind of affective citizenship, if taken seriously, can offer alternative ways to explore the ‘poetics and politics’ of urban issues (Pinder, 2008, p. 734). This poses an important challenge to the study of cities.

5.2. Ways of Studying the Urban

Too rarely the subject of critical self-reflection, the individualized and hierarchized modes of operating predominant in universities as well as the art world are thrown into relief when counterposed with aspects of the collectivism to which some past and present artistic-activist practice has aspired, though it has not necessarily realized it (Pinder, 2008, p. 734).

Whereas Hawkins’ expanded field of art and geography frames innovative ways of the disciplines of art and geography learning from each other ontologically, the emphasis is still on what arts and geography can do for the academy. Pinder’s institutional challenge above stems from a critique of siloed, individualistic and increasingly neoliberalised academic and art worlds. He sees value in learning from the processes of collective artistic-activist practice in order to deepening interdisciplinary research that ‘calls into question the commodification of knowledge production’. Much like McFarlane’s (2011b) critique of knowledge production, Pinder is advocating giving credence to other ways of producing knowledge that cross a range of institutional divides, but that have a politically progressive agenda at its core. ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ offers examples of how this can be implemented. The previous section suggested that the project revealed alternative ways of knowing the urban. This section looks at the institutional and methodological implications the project could have in the field of Urban Studies.

Firstly, the project had interesting institutional affiliations. The project was conceived of and implemented by a non-profit organisation (VANSA), and funded locally (NLDTF), which allowed the mandate of the project to be directed autonomously from contingent funding requirements often present with international funders⁵⁶. The critical friends and writers were drawn from educational institutions (University of the Witwatersrand, University of Johannesburg, Rhodes University and University of Cape Town) and included art and urban professionals, such as Gabi

⁵⁶ Having worked extensively with funders from Europe in the capacity as Director of data and as a researcher at the African Centre for Cities, my experience has been that working with external funders often involves complicated requirements and power relations that are not always mutually beneficial.

Ngcobo from the Centre for Historical Reenactments, and independent creative professionals. One of the partially funded projects, *noli procrastinaire*, which unfolded in Laingsburg in the Western Cape, was hosted by a lecturer in the Arts Department at Stellenbosch University and was built into the curriculum, thus involving students as part of the project. Additionally, according to Gaylard (2012, p. 9)

Another important dimension of the project has been the ways in which individual interventions have activated local resources and agency, with individuals, businesses, educational institutions, civic organisations and institutions and local authorities being intensively engaged and invested in multiple ways from conception to realisation. In some instances this translated into very substantial financial and in-kind complementary investment from both citizens and authorities, and in other instances, projects gave rise to entirely new cultural initiatives at a local level.

Dlala Indima secured a massive paint donation from Plascon; they worked with local crèches, schools and clinics, as well as civic organisations such as the other Hip-hop collectives; were supported by the municipality in the clean up of Phakamisa; drew all their electricity from neighbours; and initiated the *Dlala Indima Centre* as a new cultural institution. Although *The Domino Effect* did not have the trickle down effect desired to build a new long-term organising committee for the tournament, they were able to leverage local businesses to sponsor prizes, and large-scale community support. *Living Within History* partnered with a range of small cultural organisations and performance groups; leveraged the municipality to change streetlights; drew in schools; and have developed a long-term relationship with Talana Museum to further democratise their archive. This offers interesting institutional possibilities for coproduction across disciplines.

Secondly, the way in which the project was structured provides an interesting model for building in critical and reflective processes to projects such as these, which is an essential part of any research endeavour. Unlike most public art projects in South Africa, which usually follow a similar pattern – funding is awarded and the project is implemented with little or no monitoring and evaluation – ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ built in a set of requirements that enabled deeper critical engagement (VANSA, 2009). In addition to stipulating an inclusionary ethic, the projects required artists to conduct a relatively substantial research or residency phase; ‘critical friends’ were appointed to each of the project teams as sounding boards; three reflective workshops were hosted where artists had the

opportunity to present their work to each other and a diverse set of external respondents (academics and practitioners); and a series of writers from various disciplines were commissioned to reflect on the project from different perspectives. Furthermore, I was granted unlimited access to the projects and the materials they produced as part of the research for this thesis. This provided the platform for both an internal and external ‘close-reading critique’ as Lacy (2008) imagined. Additionally, VANSAs ran project development and proposal writing workshops, which included exploring the socio-politics of public art Schuerman et al (2012) referred to, in order to strengthen critical public art practice.

Thirdly, the project did not position itself solely as a public art project, and was explicitly interested in the role of ‘creative public interventions in public space’ as critical processes (Gaylard, 2012, p. 6). This had an explicitly methodological dimension, which can contribute to thinking around methods in Urban Studies. *Researching Affectivity for Urban Studies* explored qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003b; Bent Flyvbjerg, 2001; Tracy, 2010) in the context of public art (Bishop, 2012; Cartiere & Willis, 2008; Lacy, 2008; Rendell, 2010) and Urban Studies (Crang, 2003, 2005; Hawkins, 2012; Thrift, 2008). It argued that despite the ambitious claims made by public art, research is still somewhat limited, often appearing in art criticism on a good/bad axis as opposed to rigorous academic interrogation, especially outside the field of Fine Arts (Bishop, 2012; Cartiere & Willis, 2008; Lacy, 2008; Rendell, 2010). Simultaneously, Urban Studies has been trying to explore other ways of addressing visibility (Crang, 2003; Hawkins, 2012) and the non-representational, performative, embodied and affective dimensions to urban life (Amin & Thrift, 2002; Thrift, 2004). The ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ project can provide some examples of how to address these challenges.

Artists were not expected to undergo a research methods course as is typical of research processes within the academy, but embarked on ‘a variety of largely informal and sometimes chaotic research, networking and consultative strategies’ which were largely intuitive and experimental (Gaylard, 2012, p. 9). Derrick and Murphy spent a long time playing dominoes (participant observation); speaking to people (conducting interviews); and taking hundreds of photographs (visual research). Coppen and Sadie spent three months living in Dundee (as embedded researchers); collecting life stories (oral histories); documenting Dundee (visual research); speaking to people

(conducting interviews); and trawling the archive (collecting data). Much like Coppen and Sadie in Dundee, Fihla and Mabaso, having come from Phakamisa also acted as embedded researchers, but were able to gain quicker and deeper access than other projects, and therefore their engagements were less formal as they did not necessarily have to be orchestrated. They conducted visual research from the surrounding environment, and used the art events to talk to people (interviews) Without necessarily being aware of it, the artists were conducting qualitative research, and the reflective mechanisms (critical friends and workshops) implemented by VANSAs allowed them to negotiate the insider/outsider tensions sometimes flagged as ethical considerations in formal research processes. All of these examples demonstrate the centrality of research in the projects, but they do not necessarily take the artistic interventions as research tools in themselves.

It is the notion of the creative action as a research tool that offers a unique opportunity for broadening the scope of research in Urban Studies. Hawkins (2012) touches on this in her intersection of the expanding fields of art and geography. But she still locates the impact predominantly in the generative potential of particular kinds of data: for example where art can stretch cartographic styles. She does not necessarily explore the role of the art-geography as a methodological act that can be used as a strategy where the data is less important than its socio-spatial affects. In 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town' the art serves not only as a means to produce new forms of knowledge objects (images, maps, and archives), but also acts as a catalyst for other kinds of critiques and reflections to emerge, which operate largely on affective levels that move beyond the social, political and the rational. When the learners in Dundee used their collages as a catalyst for creating dialogue amongst people passing on alternative future uses for public space, the action of making collages became the catalyst for something else. In a similar way, when *Dlala Indima* painted the bus stops as a way to open up public discussion about the environment and beauty norms, they were using a creative act as another way of producing knowledge. This involved a different kind of analytical approach than merely looking at visuals as data to be analysed (2001). Stretching Clarke's (2005) situational analysis to include ways of reflecting the affective dimensions of relationality is useful in this regard. Using a combination of thick description, visual documentation, creative non-fiction and personal accounts from various participants can build more nuanced sensory representations of Thrift's (2004, p. 57) 'roiling maelstroms of affect'.

The institutional links, built-in reflective mechanisms, and research tactics also all point to another way of co-producing knowledge, that moves past Freireian conscientization. The institutional links allowed for different types of people and organisations to be involved in the projects. Although the critical reflection was largely internalized for art practitioners, a similar ethos could be extended (which happened to some extent in *Living Within History* and *Dlala Indima*), to involve the broader network of people and institutions. Because the art encounters happened in creative registers, tapping into affective rationalities, they enabled enrolment in more fun and less threatening ways. This produces a different kind of knowledge production interaction that shifts Urban Studies out of its conventional frame, that operates between making sense of serious issues, and exploring future fantasies that are not necessarily steeped in the nightmares Watson (2014) warns against. The final section of this chapter therefore recasts these strategies as particular kinds of tactics that have important pedagogical implications for the praxis of Urban Studies.

5.3. Transitional Tactics and a Pedagogy of Public Art

Praxis implies a simultaneous doing and thinking; theory and practice in and as action (Biesta, 2012; Freire, 1970; Schon, 1987). While it is many an intellectual's aspiration, it is easier said than done. *Public art praxis as urban pedagogy* argues that public art praxis may offer a unique opportunity to unlock transitional moments where particular kinds of progressive political learning can emerge through affective enrolment (Kershaw, 1999; Pinder, 2005, 2008; Schuermans et al., 2012; von Kotze, 2009; Winnicott, 1989). This section explores how the public art of 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town' offers examples of how this may happen.

Art and Public Interactions explored shifting practices within public art that spatialised (Demos, 2003; Kaye, 2000; Kwon, 2004; Suderburg, 2000), socialised (Bishop, 2012; Bourriaud, 2002; Foster, 1996; Kester, 2004; Kwon, 2004; Lacy, 1995, 2008; M. Miles, 1997; Minty, 2006; Sharp et al., 2005), instrumentalised (Bell & Jayne, 2001; Florida, 2002; Landry, 2007; Miles, 2005; Moulaert et al., 2004; Peck, 2005), and politicised (Benjamin, 1969; Bishop, 2012; Bourdieu, 1989; Kershaw, 1999; Makhubu & Simbao, 2013; M. Miles, 2009) art practice beyond its aesthetic expressions. 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town' explicitly

places itself within these trends, positioning itself as an inclusionary public art project aimed at unpacking social issues through situated practice (VANSA, 2012).

We sought to explicitly steer people [artists] away from a paternalistic, missionary approach to engagement with particular places and people, or the imposition of ‘readymade’ projects and the ‘helicoptering in’ of objects or experiences off the studio shelf and into public spaces... Fundamentally perhaps, we were concerned not so much to facilitate the creation of public art, but to explore ways in which creative work can generate new of experiences of public or shared space, and how local agency could be animated both inside of and around this process (Gaylard, 2012, p. 7).

The assumption was that working affectively allows alternative access routes to agency. Because of the pervasiveness of the participatory turn in public art, this section starts by looking at participatory processes before exploring other critical dimensions of public art praxis.

It has repeatedly been shown that engaging an inclusionary process in public art is a useful strategy (Baca, 2005; Bourriaud, 2002; Kester, 2004; M. Miles, 1997; Sharp et al., 2005), while participatory processes have simultaneously been critiqued as ‘othering’ processes and as instruments of neoliberal development agendas (Bishop, 2012; Evans, 2005; Foster, 1996; M. Miles, 1997; S. Miles & Paddison, 2005; Moulaert et al., 2004; Sharp et al., 2005). As shown in Chapter Four, all three ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ projects focused on here demonstrate the power of working collectively to create the ‘shared spaces’ Gaylard was referring to: the pallet toppling in Hermon; the collage workshops in Dundee; and the park jams in Phakamisa. But the projects also demonstrated the pitfalls of participation, raising important questions about the constraints of working collectively that undermines the other-wising potential.

Although in Hermon *The Domino Effect* drew in Coloured participants from ‘below the road’, it was less successful with the White community ‘above the road’. On the one hand it demonstrates the seemingly insurmountable divisions still prevalent in post-apartheid South Africa, but on the other it shows that the artists were unable to make a compelling enough case for the ‘Other’ to get involved, aside from providing token gestures of support. Despite numerous attempts, the *Living Within History* artists were unable to get learners from wealthier and poorer schools into the same room, or draw adults from different races and classes together in the preparatory

stages of the project (although the final event shifted this considerably). *Dlala Indima* was able to draw in local youth, but there was a marked absence of girls that concerned the artists. While this reflects gender disparities typical in South Africa (on further investigation the artists realised that the girls were at home doing the housework), little was done to actively counter-act this. Furthermore, participation is usually thought of as bringing authorities and ordinary people together to make decisions collectively (Arnstein, 1969; Hickey & Mohan, 2004). In all three projects, whereas authorities did not actively oppose the work that was being done, and support was given where needed, they did not participate in any decision-making, largely by their own volition. So while all three examples show how collectively Freireian cultural action brought people (often those marginalised from decision-making) together to work critically at the intersection of art, social issues and public space, a project's criticality did not necessarily lie solely in its collectivity as Arnstein (1969) may have imagined it.

Despite the pervasiveness of the participatory turn in public art; for good reason in a context where problematic power relations are often reinforced through individualist public art practice; it may be useful to think of the critical role of public art praxis not in terms of Clements' (2008) matrix that suggests collectivity and radicality are implicitly related; but rather to think of public art praxis as a range of tactics that have progressive political potential. In Chapter Two, *Public art praxis as urban pedagogy* argues that Boal's (1979) trespassing and hook's (1993) and Kershaw's (1999) transgression may be more useful lenses for understanding the transformative potential implied by Winnicott's (1989) transitional spaces of learning.

Whereas *The Domino Effect* was marked by an absence of aesthetic experimentation, which in many ways limited critical engagement, both *Living Within History* and *Dlala Indima* used deliberate aesthetic and affective strategies of trespassing and transgression to critique societal norms. *Living Within History* used a combination of aesthetic engagements to question the intersection of everyday life, history and public space. Changing the streetlights stemmed from Sadie's personal interest in the role of artificial light in shaping Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad (Sadie, personal interview, 2012 March 10). By trespassing in the territory of urban infrastructure, the different streetlights disrupted urban design norms. *Siwela Sonke's* public performances were jarring disturbances, even though the critique was sometimes more legible (re-enacting the domestic life of 97 McKenzie Street) than

others (duets with parking meters). The curfew bell performance transgressed spatial and gender norms. The collage workshops and public displays trespassed and transgressed the historical record, creating transitional spaces of learning where new forms of knowledge production became possible. All of these examples demonstrate how, even momentarily, people were transported between material and mental spaces where other perspectives in and of the world became possible.

Dlala Indima's work in Phakamisa often involved a single artist working on a piece while the others used the opportunity to speak to people passing by. The aesthetic strategies were largely designed by the core team, and used as a mechanism to draw broader interest into discussions about the environment, beauty myths, and self worth. Not always a collective creative practice, the tactic of Hip-hop and graffiti still provided a transitional space for criticality to emerge. Graffiti in itself has been seen as a subversive practice, simultaneously revered and reviled in most urban contexts, where its very form is transgressive and often illegal. Yet *Dlala Indima* was able to use the decorative dimensions of graffiti as an opportunity to raise more serious socio-spatial questions. Graffiti in urban centres may clash with world-class cities norms, and regulated by restrictive public bylaws, but in Phakamisa, this was not the case. *Dlala Indima's* Hip-hop and graffiti were not only sanctioned by authorities, but were also able to transcend gender and generational boundaries in the launch event, providing a transitional space where other kinds of culture-led development became possible.

The critiques stemmed from a particular socio-spatial politics (Schuermans et al., 2012) that is underpinned by questioning the status quo, such as interrogating dominating aesthetic standards informed by world-class cities narratives: for example by foregrounding the normally invisible or undesirable: infrastructure (streetlights, parking meters and traffic circles) in Dundee; and using graffiti in Phakamisa. Moreover the artworks were intended as provocations in order to foster some kind of dialogue around socio-spatial issues, recognising plurality of perceptions implicit in cultural citizenship (Roberts & Steiner, 2010; Schuermans et al., 2012; Stevenson, 2003). Both *Living Within History* and *Dlala Indima* enabled an insurgent cultural citizenship through its dialogic processes as imagined by Stevenson (2003). For Stevenson (2003) what is paramount is recasting culture in this kind of context as an imperative of rethinking citizenship beyond what is normatively understood as the political. He argues that dialogic cultural citizenship is fundamentally important in

diverse and contested societies. Although it is often assumed that citizenship is something one does, it is also something one learns. If trespassing and transgression function as critical tactics to create transitional moments of learning, it is important to unpack what is being learned. Of particular interest to this research is how these ‘transitional spaces beyond the familiar’ can become critical moments of encounter, and can offer opportunities for becoming otherwise.

In Hermon, *The Domino Effect* took an everyday practice and monumentalized it through a mini mega event. Even though it was fleeting, in the moment it transformed a public space into a shared or common space that was out of the ordinary. And even though the ‘above the road’ residents did not take part, their negative perceptions of their neighbours were, even if only momentarily, challenged. In *Living Within History*, trespassing the archive and the public spaces where the performances happened provided transitional moments for critical reflection. Animating derelict spaces opened up new ways of imagining their uses through tactics that operated beyond the real and the rational, where spaces such as the abandoned swimming pool, remnants of a suburban property and empty shop front were repurposed through, often whimsical, performative historical reenactments. The collages transgressed dominant historical narratives in a more explicit way, creating a transitional space for young people to re-imagine and contribute to alternative narratives of the past, present and future. In Phakamisa, it was not only public spaces that were tangibly transformed through transitional tactics, but the politics may have been the most explicit, where Hip-hop was used as a pedagogical strategy for addressing socio-spatial and ecological concerns. In all three projects, young people in particular were enabled to become otherwise, troubling the status quo, and demonstrating new forms of cultural agency through affective means.

While the projects created transgressive impulses, it is difficult to tell how far the pedagogical potentialities were realised for everyone involved. The role of public pedagogy is to transform the experiences of participants into critical reflection in order to collectively draw new insights upon which to act, even if these are contested. Without a reflective platform beyond the review sessions and the questions asked for this research, it is unclear how Hermon residents processed *The Domino Effect*. It is one thing to draw out the social, political and spatial reflections on the public performances in *Living Within History*, and another to situate the discussion with incidental audiences in Dundee as a pedagogical project. Although it was not the

mandate of ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’, an affective Urban Studies would need to think how to further these possibilities.

5.4. Becoming Otherwise⁵⁷

Returning to, this final section draws together four concluding remarks on the implications the public art of ‘Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town’ has on urban scholarship as pedagogical praxis and the implication for becoming otherwise: otherwise as change; otherwising as a processual becoming; otherwise as troubling; and other-wise as building wisdom about others and other ways of knowing.

Firstly, on a practical level, creative approaches to political enrolment can have an impact on the orientation of citizens, especially the youth. This can be most explicitly seen in *Dlala Indima*’s work through Hip-hop, and as Caldeira (2004) and Pieterse (2010) have shown, exposure to dialogic processes at an early age through this powerful global cultural force, potentially allows for a productive platform for self-expression and radical critique. *Living Within History* involved young people in actively engaging place, space and history as a way to rethink the future; and although *The Domino Effect* did not necessarily involve young people in their decision-making, they were certainly given centre-stage. These kinds of affective practices that enable cultural agency can have a powerful impact on the dispositions of future citizens.

Secondly, transgressive affective practices allow for a troubling of the status quo that provides a reminder of how the public sphere is shaped by a range of social, political and material conditions. It is easily forgotten how the disciplining strategies of urban design and social order are internalized, and how this kind of rationalism may obscure radical alternative possibilities. A primarily rational approach to understanding and producing public spaces may address infrastructural needs, but also reproduce problematic power relations; even when cultural work is involved. *Living Within History* challenged restrictive nationalist ideals typical of heritage projects (Marschall, 2010b); and *Dlala Indima* confronted normative culture-led development processes. Transgressive affective practices therefore provide mechanisms to critique

⁵⁷ These conclusions were summarised in part for Sitas & Pieterse’s article entitled Democratic Renovations and Affective Political Imaginaries.

the restrictive rationality of urban design practices in engaging ways, as well as sometimes offering viable alternatives. Thus appealing to affective rationalities allows for a space of becoming otherwise that is both grounded in the reality of the past and present, while enabling access routes to other futures.

Thirdly, these transgressive tactics and affective rationalities enable a renegotiation of the commons, not as a consensual site for civiness, but as a dialogic space for democratic renovation. This notion of the commons moves beyond being a site solely for negotiating rights and responsibilities. Creative action becomes a catalyst for recasting cultural citizenship as a contested force that spans the social and spatial, the fixed and the ephemeral. This is most explicitly seen in the tactical eventfulness that public art is capable of producing. Whereas affect for Amin's (2015) eventfulness and McFarlane's (2011b) tactics were incidental; an ever-present part of life; the public art of 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town' mobilises deliberate affective strategies as a mechanism for criticality. Participatory approaches as imagined by Arnstein (1969) and Hickey & Mohan (2004), were one such mechanism, but were not the only strategy to coordinate critical communalism. It may be more useful to draw on the 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town' project's inclusionary ethic, where inclusion is not always about consensus; where disturbance, disruption and dis-ease are just as important parts of the process of communal criticality.

Finally, what this points to is the potential for an experimental politics of public art praxis that is simultaneously rooted intellectually and interrogated affectively. This praxis asserts the art of the political missing in Amin and Thrift's (2013) considerations for progressive politics. In a context where mainstream democratic processes seem to be faltering, and where Urban Studies, particularly in the South, tends to teeter on the brinks of despair or delusionary optimism, exploring a public politics of affective rationality offers important new opportunities to know, study and act within and upon the urban.

6. CONCLUSION: Affective Urban Studies and Southern Cityness

...everywhere, artists working right now may be onto more far reaching ways of communicating what contemporary city life and cities are about. The city is always suspended as a case of 'heres' and 'elsewheres', connected yet – yet ... and that is why artists may be doing a better job than southern, or northern, theorists in 'painting', 'composing', 'dancing' and 'writing' cities into being. It remains to scholarship to go further (Mabin, 2014, p. 32).

Chapter One *Becoming Otherwise* introduced the thesis, situating the study within Southern Scholarship. Chapter Two *Towards an Affective Urban Studies* explored three interrelated fields around public space (*Romancing the Agora*), public art (*Art and Public Interaction*) and public pedagogy (*Public Art Praxis as Urban Pedagogy*), before arguing how drawing the three fields together offers a useful recasting of urban studies affectively. Chapter Three *Researching Affectivity for Urban Studies* introduced and explored how research in affectivity has and can be done in urban studies in order to frame the research conducted as part of this study. Chapter Four *Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town* introduced the three projects that were the focus of this research. Using examples from 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town', Chapter Five *Trespassing, Transgression and Transitional Tactics for a Pedagogy of Public Art* returned to the intersection of literature as posed in Chapter Two, and showed how public art can offer new ways of knowing and studying the urban, culminating in arguing how public-facing art may offer transitional tactics for a pedagogy of public art. This final chapter concludes by reflecting on how public-facing art can contribute to an affective urban studies from the South.

In order to suggest ways for 'scholarship to go further' (Mabin, 2014, p. 32) this chapter argues how affective urban studies may make a modest contribution to Southerning theory. This research recognises that Southern theory is as much about site as it is about orientation, and that North-South binaries are more fluid than the

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labels imply (Parnell & Oldfield, 2014). It therefore argues that affective urban studies offers a contribution to both an empirical agenda of making sense of cities in the South; and to a re-orientation of theory that has global implications. In the light of this perspective, this chapter offers five ways in which affective urban studies can contribute to a Southerning agenda.

Firstly, as Pieterse (2012) maintains, there is a lack of theory that adequately suits the reality of cities in the South, so to carve out new epistemological territory, we need a better handle on contemporary urban life. Affective urban studies can contribute to generating new knowledge about the everyday, the contested commons, and the right to the city through engaged public-facing creative research and interaction in specific places. Intentionally and unintentionally these kinds of engagements can reveal complex local and global power relations that are often glossed over in public discourse, or inaccessible in rational forms of research.

Secondly, it is these entangled power relations that Simone (2010)'s cityness means to unravel, and it is the same messiness that troubles the romantic notion of the agora discussed in Chapter Two. As the previous chapter (Chapter Five) showed, public-facing art can create new transient affective commons that may extend Amin's (2015) notion of eventfulness beyond the incidental to the intentional. These deliberate encounters offer exciting possibilities for coproduction as different kinds of people and places are enrolled in urban enquiry.

Thirdly, public art projects extend the capacity to make sense of the relational vitalist ontologies that Pieterse (2012) refers to in revealing the affective and relational dimensions of urban life. If space is sentient in the way Amin (2015) imagines it, then what kind of sentient spaces exist in highly fractious and unequal cities of the South? Using public art as an affective urban studies tool can help reveal and critique the materiality of the city in new ways, as was shown in the context of 'Two Thousand and Ten Reasons to Live in a Small Town' in Chapter Four and Five. This is vital for developing new naming and representations social and spatial phenomena, and thus strengthening urban humanities in the South.

Fourthly, affective urban studies can contribute to debates around radical urban politics, particularly as affective enquiry can move beyond the real and the rational, and can engage people politically in non-threatening ways, as was introduced

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in Chapter Two and illustrated in Chapter Five. This recasting of affective democratic enrolment (Sitas & Pieterse, 2013) can foster an experimental politics that may be able re-vision and re-orientate the South through other kinds of narratives for urban futures that do not run the nightmarish risk Watson (2014) cautions about. Because art projects are not necessarily required to produce consensus, they may be better positioned for unpacking serious urban issues in more productive ways than formal political processes.

Finally, the previous points show that affective urban studies can also fill a gap within Southern urban theory. The cultural life of cities of the South is glaringly missing in many of the anthologies of urban studies (as mentioned in the Introduction). Aside from the ubiquitous chapter on Hip-hop, there is minimal engagement with culture in all its myriad and contested forms. Culture is largely referenced as cultural diversity linked to migration, or cultural artifacts (murals, artworks, songs) are used as evidence as opposed to affective dimensions that fundamentally frame social and spatial life. With rapid urbanisation, particularly on the African continent, cities are in the making at a rapid pace that is unfathomable for some developmentalist theories of urbanisation. The final point on the impact of affective urban studies therefore returns to Press' challenge in her poem from the epigraph at the beginning of this thesis. *Under Construction* taps into the notion of becoming, and posits a series of questions to 'test' urban planning. Fundamentally Press challenges urban planners to think of the affective impact of city making, inadvertently proposing an ideal as being one where the sensory life of citizens would be fulfilled. Taking affect more seriously as fundamental to society, will allow for culture to be foregrounded adequately in the Southern discourse, and is an exciting space for future research into Southern cityness.

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