cityscapes

re-thinking urban things

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CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

DESIGN ON THE EDGE

SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL

CONNECTION PARADOX

CAMBRIDGE, UNITED KINGDOM

THE CITY OF FRAGMENTS

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ENTER

To design is to commit oneself– individually or collectively– to action. Action unavoidably implies consequence, as city dwellers everywhere know.
We live in the aftermath of design actions–some good, others bad, many negligible, the vast majority blandly utilitarian.
Despite its increasingly atomised, individualised and commodified meanings, design remains central to the logic of cities.
If we are to understand cities, we need to look at what motivates people–from those in desperate need of water and sanitation, to those professionally engaged in organising the city's potential– to design cities as they do.

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"Design Will Not Save the City", 2014

Featured Photographer: ***Michael Wolf***
Architecture of Density (see page 188)

FROM THE EDITORS

We say this with optimism: design alone will not save the city. The Latin root of the word design speaks of mark making. Cities occupy and mark space in very real and physical terms. There is nothing ephemeral about a city, nor is there anything abstract about the consequences that flow from a poor design decision.

While important in debating the outcome of urban interventions, qualitative assessments like "good" and "bad" are not the central focus of this issue. Rather, our interest is in the human agents and actors who, in their capacity as engaged citizens, are variously retooling the functions, capacities and possible outputs of the places they inhabit. Rather than blandly accept that the human will to do, act and mark–in a word, design–will right what is wrong in so many cities in the global south, we want you to pause. What are our cities' key infrastructural and developmental problems? Who is addressing them? In what manner? With what ideological motivation? To whose exclusion? All questions unearthed by architectural critic Fernando Serapião in his recapitulation of social housing design in Brazil, a story that inaugurates our collaborative partnership with USP Cidades at the University of São Paulo. The city, an expression par excellence of citizenship, is however also increasingly abstracting the rights of city inhabitants. What, we foreground in this issue, is the role of the citizen in city making? Is it possible that instead of being passive recipients of design interventions, citizens can be co-authors or design partners? It is an idea explored in a conversation between urban thinkers Richard Sennett and Ash Amin. Responding to Amin's query whether his recent thinking on cities proposes "a pluri-verse of 1001 hands doing the crafting", Sennett responds: "One of the practicalities of this is that most people, because they're not being pushed to develop their visual intelligence, create the most conservative designs–because that's what people know." Which prompts a further line of questioning. What are the limits of co-opting citizens as design partners? Cities, after all, need to address a number of fundamental variables, many of which are beyond the ken of people diverted by real life dramas (school fees, groceries, credit limits, social media updates, even where to go to the toilet without fear or loss of dignity). This issue of Cityscapes is built on the proposition that five deep logics pertain to cities everywhere: 1) form, 2) metabolic flows, 3) spatial dynamics, 4) choices by/of residents, and 5) political and fiscal stability. There is a tendency, however, especially in Cape Town (where this magazine is crafted by a half-dozen hands), to reduce talk about design to objects, in the process excluding issues of process and institutions. As part of her lengthy walk across Cape Town, journalist Kim Gurney attended hearings of a commission of inquiry tasked with investigating complaints received by the provincial government about inefficiencies in three police stations in Khayelitsha. The testimonies of Khayelitsha residents, including Nontebeko Nduna, who is forced to do her ablutions on vacant land, point to systemic failings and incapacities that disfigure an entire community, an entire city, a whole country. ***Good reading.***

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> “I see the city more as an assemblage of different parts, that don’t fit neatly together, says Richard Sennett (p.57)”

Image: ***Justin Plunkett***, “sKhayascraper”

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INTELLIGENCE

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RIDDING DESIGN OF ITS SAVIOUR COMPLEX

Fran Tonkiss

Cities are among the clearest of cases that design is never simply a technical process, and is not confined to those with the right credentials or the latest software

It's easy to be sceptical about the power of design. Too many contemporary cityscapes look like an unhappy mix of bad design, design cliché, or no design at all. Well-meaning strategies to "design out" crime, promote social mix or overcome spatial division break down in the face of a paranoid urbanism of defended enclaves and entrenched inequalities. And too many design solutions for rational and "good" cities have produced their perverse opposites in ham-fisted zonings, degraded housing and dysfunctional infrastructures. Indeed, the best arguments that can be made for the power of design tend to come from its worst moments. If it's questionable whether design can save us, there's less question that it can damn us. The urban planner Kevin Lynch once wrote, "we find strong descriptions of place in most anti-utopias, where physical oppression abets social oppression in a very direct and circumstantial way". It hardly needs underlining in the South African context that it's easier to design environments that will isolate, alienate or repress people than spaces that will empower them. The devil, it seems, gets all the best designs.

No doubt it's better for design to be ineffective—or merely decorative—than it is to be dystopic, but there is a need to think in a more critical way about what we mean by design, and who we think is engaged in it. An expanded sense of the term—one that speaks to the kind of complex problem a city is—includes not only physical designs but also legal and policy designs, economic arrangements, the design of organisations and processes, and the numerous designs for living in the city that are enacted by people making space for themselves in everyday, inconspicuous and ephemeral ways.

The design of cities is, in part, a technical sphere in which architects and urban designers, planners, surveyors and engineers purposively organise urban space and construct built forms. But the shaping of buildings, spaces and streets happens as part of a much broader design context involving legal divisions, economic distributions, political deliberations, social institutions and interactions.

This raises the question of what becomes visible as design in the city, and which processes—in spite of their powers of city-making—remain hiding in plain sight: property rights and economic power, social hierarchies and solidarities, informal ties and organisations, unequal shares of vulnerability and risk, mundane practices of urban life. These less visible designs create the conditions under which anything gets built, occupied and inhabited in the city. Indeed, the nominal "designer" may have least of all to do with the ways in which different spaces come to be produced and consumed, shared or segregated, made and remade.

***Fran Tonkiss** is a professor of sociology and director of the Cities Programme at London School of Economics. She is the author of* Cities by Design: The Social Life of Urban Form *(Polity Press, 2013)*

> **"Design, simply, is what people *do* to cities: the 'ordinary' inhabitants who make and remake their environments"**

Too narrow a concept of design gives too much status or blame to agents (planners, engineers or architects) who may have relatively little power over how urban spaces ultimately are produced, and renders invisible other kinds of agency implicated in the making of buildings and cities (from financialised property schemes and foreign investors, pension funds and asset managers, to politicians and crime bosses). Talking about design in the city in this sense means going beyond questions of what goes where, to questions about who is getting it and how much. The physical forms of the city—distributions and densities of population; housing stock, public buildings, sites of work, leisure and consumption; the design of transport systems and other services; the balance between public and private space; the relation of the city to its environment—are products of social, economic and political designs before they become briefs for architects or engineers, if they ever do.

In a much more basic sense, a great deal of urban form is made not on the basis of conscious design objectives, but out of people's intentions to do *other* things: to make a living; find a space to sleep; get from A to B, and on to Z according to routes and along paths unanticipated by any transport planner. What happens in a city happens as the result of innumerable more-or-less conscious designs on the part of its inhabitants: improvised or long-term, intentional or incidental, temporary or more permanent. This kind of demotic design raises questions about differential rights to make decisions over, and make physical interventions in, urban environments; and about variable claims to make, use and occupy city spaces. Design, simply, is what people *do* to cities: the "ordinary" inhabitants who make and remake their environments—not always, it should be said, under circumstances of their own choosing. These are practices of design that go beyond the master plan, the design commission and the competition entry, and which confuse any easy distinction between the expert and the ordinary, the qualified and the amateur, the formal and the "unplanned".

Cities are among the clearest of cases that design is never simply a technical process, and is not confined to those with the right credentials or the latest software. The legal, economic and political conditions under which spaces are made are themselves powerful effects of design. And in the demotic grammar of city design, social actors spell out the conditions of their own lives and of their relations with others in ways that cannot be captured in blueprint. Ridding design of its saviour complex means seeing what the experts or the initiates do as part of an extended field of design that includes very different collaborators, quite different commitments, and more or less tolerable forms of compromise.

A NEW OLD STORY

Vanessa Watson

Architects and developers are scrambling to sell fantastical graphic visions of new satellite cities in the world's so-called last property development frontier, Africa

Urban design and architecturally-inspired visions of fantastical new cities of the future seem to be in fashion again. Not since the days of French architect Le Corbusier back in the 1930s, have built environment professionals found their work attracting such public interest. And, significantly, there are many elements in common between the grandiose, modernistic and technocratic urban solutions of Le Corbusier's day and the Dubai look-alike visions posted on property developer websites for the rapidly growing cities of Africa and Asia. Glass-box skyscrapers separated by swathes of green and rapid transit routes have seemingly not lost their allure in the urban design world, while the "real" world of informal shack dwellers and street traders is erased both from the map and the consciousness of politicians and urban elite.

In an article published in 2010, Michele Acuto, using Dubai as a case study, describes these promotional plans as exercises in the use of "symbolic power", as cities try to establish themselves as "world class" and as attractive places for the elite and investors. Acuto, a senior lecturer in the Department of Science, Technology, Engineering and Public Policy at University College London, argues that the built environment has become an important vehicle for these promotional narratives with buildings needing to take on iconic identity: skyscraper towers are commonly used but so are ultra-modern and distinctive airports, trade centres, office blocks and retail centres.

Indian cities have been subject to this Dubai-ification for a good decade or so, as Gautam Bhan has identified in his writings, but African cities are more recent targets. In the post-2008 economic climate, African cities have been labelled as the world's "last property development frontier" and international architects and developers have scrambled to sell fantastical graphic visions of new satellite cities—or in some cases entire city makeovers—to gullible politicians. Visions such as the one for Kigale, Rwanda, assume that the largely informal urban population will be wished away (a process that is actually underway in this city). The new satellites such as those for Nairobi and Hope City in Ghana promise a modernised and sanitised living environment for the middle classes, far removed from the squalor and congestion of existing cities. Hope City, designed by an Italian architect who was evidently inspired by African beehives, is a particularly futuristic conception of buildings that contain all facilities needed for their resident and working populations, and seemingly remove the need to go outside at all.

Other cities are creating large land areas through infill to create new urban extensions. Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo is one of Africa's largest and poorest cities, yet a major land infill of the Congo River will support upmarket retail and residential developments, and in the process many small farmers along the banks of the river have had their livelihoods destroyed. In Nigeria, Eko-Atlantic is being created on an artificial island off the coast of Lagos: the island stretches for over 10 km allowing some 250 000 people to disengage themselves from the congestion and pollution of existing Lagos. At the same time, poor occupants of Lagos' waterfront—the floating shack-dwellers of Makoko—have had their houses proclaimed illegal and destroyed by the government.

Adding to the selling power of the glitzy graphics, many of these plans also claim to be "smart", "eco" and sustainable cities, thus drawing on fashionable rhetoric to justify designs that are very far from these concepts. Smart cities require a great deal more than broadband and other computer-controlled infrastructure: they are also highly dependent on the associated human resources and expertise to develop and maintain "smartness" and these are not necessarily available in the target cities.

The plans are also difficult to reconcile with environmental sustainability. Skyscraper glass-box buildings are huge consumers of energy for air-conditioning and lifts; large public green spaces have to be maintained and watered; satellite cities usually generate considerable traffic flows back to the main city; and most of the graphics show car-based movement systems rather than public transport, walkable streets and mixed use.

Using these terms can be described as a form of boosterism to help sell a property development, but they do no more than pay lip service to the deeper meaning of the concepts. Design has become a superficial exercise of cut-and-paste graphics along with copied text to give the impression there is a concern with more than just profit. But the real impacts will be felt in increasingly unequal cities in which the poor are consistently marginalised in both a spatial and functional sense as they are pushed further and further towards the urban peripheries, and as public infrastructural and facility resources are redirected away from meeting basic needs towards supporting the demands of the new enclaves of the elite.

> **"Design has become a superficial exercise of cut-and-paste graphics along with copied text to give the impression there is a concern with more than just profit"**

City design does not have to be like this of course. Architectural and planning history recounts a number of individuals (such as Jane Jacobs, John Turner, Nabeel Hamdi and more) who have viewed design as potentially developmental and empowering for the urban poor, and also as a skill that can lie in the hands of ordinary citizens, and not just those of the highly skilled professional designer. Intelligent practice, writes Nabeel Hamdi in his 2004 book, Small Change, "builds on the collective wisdom of people and organizations on the ground—those who think locally and act locally—which is then rationalised in ways that make a difference globally". A good African example of this is the Muungano Kabimoto project in Nairobi, where a community started a saving scheme and, with the help of the local Slum Dwellers Association affiliate NGO, constructed four-storey homes on a 16 m2 plot. These homes were affordable and directly tailored to the needs of the occupants.

During its tenure as the first global south city to receive the World Design Capital (WDC) award, what philosophy of design will the city promote? Will it be tempted to use the title to indulge in "world class" boosterism of the city, with questionable arguments that more tourists and foreign investors will somehow benefit everyone in Cape Town? The year of WDC is a major opportunity for Cape Town to take a different tack and to recognise the many everyday design initiatives scattered across the metropolis—innovative ideas that create livelihoods, improve shelter and services, and directly challenge the grandiose approaches to urban development that now seem to be gaining support across the continent.*

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BEAT DOWN, BUT NOT DEFEATED

Caroline Wanjiku Kihato

For Johannesburg's many migrant women everyday life in the city is about mediating, melding and juggling the formal codes and unwritten street laws

I was done tarmacking. It was 1994 and I had been on Nairobi's streets for more than a year in search of a job or business opportunity, something that would put my 7-6-3 years of primary-secondary-tertiary education to use—with no luck. Nothing. Not even a regret letter from one of the 35 job interviews I had done. On 5 August 1994, with little more than an address, I boarded a plane bound for Johannesburg. Back then Jan Smuts International Airport was still manned by burly Afrikaans-speaking immigration officers. One of them stamped me into the country on a two-week holiday visa. That was my official story. In reality, I was in South Africa in search of a livelihood and a future I could be proud of. Twenty years and three airport name changes later, I am still in Johannesburg.

In many ways my new book, *Migrant Women of Johannesburg: Everyday Life in an In-between City* (Palgrave Macmillan/Wits University Press), bears echoes of my own journey to South Africa from Kenya. The book follows the lives of various women from Rwanda, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Congo Brazzaville, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Burundi, who now live in Johannesburg. Drawing on their stories of love, illness, fear, children, violence, family and money, the book explores these women's relationships with their host and home communities. It unavoidably includes thoughts on the South African state, economy and the country's largest city, Johannesburg. Some social scientists will tell you that their first major work was "kind of" autobiographical, that it was on a subject that they could own, knew something about and felt confident in telling the story. But a researcher's close biographical proximity to written work does raise questions around its "truth", its capacity to reveal what is *really* going on, unencumbered by personal feelings and experiences. Is it good social science if the author is so close to the subject matter? How "objective" is the research if the author forms personal bonds with her informants? How useful is the work in providing "scientific" insights?

These were the questions I faced as I embarked on what would be a nine-year PhD and then book project. If anything, my proximity served as an advantage. I had relatively easy access to migrant communities and a personal interest in the subject matter that sustained me through the often-laborious and demanding process of academic writing. But for positivists, my closeness posed a methodological danger to "objectivity". Happily, social science seems to have moved on, and the objective veil-like the Emperor's nakedness—has been unmasked. By "coming clean" about our positionality and our relationship to the research, we realise that objectivity is a fiction. No matter how "distant" a researcher is from the subject matter s/he can never be totally unbiased. Indeed, all research is in some way coloured by our experiences and influenced by who we are and where we come from. But, no matter how comforting the scientific "endorsement" was, the

nine-year journey was filled with moments of doubt intermingled with bursts of confidence—confidence that there was a story in the hustle of markets, shrieks of laughter in hair salons and tears by hospital beds. A story that continues to shape Johannesburg.

Foremost, *Migrant Women of Johannesburg* is about urban life. It is about how women like Fazila from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sibongile from Zimbabwe, and Rosine from Burundi shape Johannesburg's politics, regulatory systems and local economies. When Sibongile comes home from work to find her Hillbrow flat turned upside down and her sister, the victim of domestic violence, in hospital she makes a conscious decision not to go to the police. Her sister's boyfriend is Zimbabwean and reporting him to the authorities would mean bringing unwanted attention to the community, which she relies on in times of difficulty. She negotiates with the elders in her community that she will not "rat" on the perpetrator and they will reprimand him and keep him away from her

> **"To an outsider life in the city may seem unintelligible, insecure and chaotic, yet beneath the surface is a complex labyrinth of moral codes and obligations that govern urban relationships"**

family. Much of everyday life in the city is about mediating, melding and juggling "street laws" and the laws of the state. And it's not just ordinary urban residents negotiating the different spheres of urban regulation. Local councillors, state authorities and policy makers are working it too. I saw this when I met Hannah, a Malawian street trader whose goods are routinely confiscated by the metro police because she hawks her goods illegally on Klein Street. A long charade ensued as the officer painstakingly wrote out a notice for Hannah to appear in court. Both Hannah and the officer knew it was a charade: no last names were exchanged, no real addresses given nor identification numbers requested that would lead back to Hannah. As I discovered, Hannah and the officer are involved in a reciprocal relationship: money and goods are exchanged between; the street tax forms part of an unwritten deal between police and traders that keeps Hannah trading on the street.

To an outsider life in the city may seem unintelligible, insecure and chaotic, yet beneath the surface is a complex labyrinth of moral codes and obligations that govern urban relationships. Migrant women allow us to see how populations living on society's margins influence urban practices. The lives of Sibongile, Hannah and the other women I profile demonstrate to us how significant they are in shaping the actions of state agents, and overturning common understandings of urban governance as a state-led project. As we follow them through the city's streets, the boundaries between legality and illegality, formal and informal, official and unofficial city collapse—rendering these categories inaccurate descriptors of the city or their lives.

At a café in Johannesburg's CBD one late afternoon Ayo, a Nigerian woman, said to me: "There is a certain—what do you say?—indeflatability—is that a word?—of the spirit. You can beat a woman down and down, but there is always one eye that is roaming like a periscope even when she is down, looking for the next opportunity. That one eye, you can never destroy. This is one lesson Johannesburg, the city, never forgets." ✱

***Caroline Wanjiku Kihato** is a writer and urban specialist based in Johannesburg. She is currently a visiting senior researcher at the University of the Witwatersrand's School of Architecture and Planning*

THE LANDSCAPING IN JUBA

Sean Christie

In July 2011, South Sudan gained independence from Sudan and became Africa's newest country. This is what it was like to be a journalist, white and from South African at that moment

Brief: As the Open Society Foundation's South African foreign policy correspondent I am expected to travel to South Sudan to bear witness to the birth of Africa's 54th state, where, particularly, I must perceive Pretoria's attitude towards Juba, and vice versa. In preparation I attend a round table discussion at which South Africa's former ambassador to the United Nations cautions diplomats of the future Government of South Sudan (or Goss) to "be wary of those who love you more than you love yourselves", and to "avoid making our mistake, which was to promise too much".

Airport: A basaltic runway bristling with anti-aircraft guns, and here's the white whale again: UNHAS' vast Ilyushin IL-76 multipurpose airlifter. In the tea room-sized terminal (the new one has not been completed in time), an enterprising man with teeth like fossils hawks a "Bye-bye Bashir" T-shirt. Another of his shirts, channelling the Jay-Z hit, gloats: "I got 99 problems, but a Bashir ain't one."

The new highway: Four kilometres of newly laid double carriageway connects Juba to the airport. The donated streetlights and the photovoltaic panels meant to power these lie beside the road, still to be erected. A succulent with pretty pink flowers has been planted in the central island, forming a tape of pink that links the unfinished airport to Africa's newest capital.

Hotel: A former governor's residence now operated as a hotel by an expatriate South African couple, both formerly with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. All the world's media are in the bar, gassing along to a programme on Discovery called *World's Lost Tribes*. The big Al Jazeera cameraman doubles over when a bearded Papua New Guinean wearing nothing but a penis gourd says, "I save my pigs, I save my children, but my house is gone."

Bar: The hotel owner, DeeDee, says, "It happens, you know. I don't like talking about it but the syndrome is real enough. People who stay here more than a few months get cynical. We call it Juba jaded. JJ'd."

Room: Cockerels and airplanes. And mosquitoes and the faintest kiss of rain. Then all out Congolese *kwassa kwassa* from the neighbouring nightclub, which is owned by the giant NBA star Deng. Deng who? It is actually possible to Google this on generator-powered broadband.

Consulate: South Africa's chargé d'affaires arrives 15 minutes late for our meeting, inspects the shoes of the guard in the guardhouse, and then orders him out for ice: "Quickly man, we have a lot to do today." In his air-conditioned office he reveals fascinating details about South African government support of Salvar Kiir's provisional government. "We got it wrong in Burundi, where we spent billions on reconstruction and development for no meaningful return—not this time," he says, tapping a finger on a newspaper report about the planned expansion of the South African Breweries plant, which, like the solitary *jebel* on the outskirts of town, towers over Juba's huts and shanties.

Work: I write the story in the foyer of the Beijing Juba Hotel and send it in, cc'ing Pretoria because, well, their man in Juba was just a little too forthright, and I must guard my government relationships carefully. In the dusty parking lot outside the hastily built hotel there is a single palm tree, made of metal and painted blue.

Independence eve: A sign that reads "Swiss Ambassador" has been taped to the door of my room. The receptionist says there isn't nearly enough hotel accommodation in Juba to absorb the dignitaries who are flying in, so I've been moved to a room in a construction yard managed by Zimbabwean expatriates who refer to themselves as Rhodies (after Rhodesia, the overthrown white supremacist state). They celebrate independence eve inside their compound walls by drawing swastikas on each others' nipples and asking me questions like, "have you ever welded a bushcat" (had sex with an African woman). I spend many hours dancing in a field miles outside the walls of the construction yard.

Independence Day: Woken by a call from the chargé d'affaire, who has only just read the by now published story. Incoherent with anger, he demands that I present myself at the consulate, where he accuses me of being a liar, and exactly the sort of thing that is wrong with South African journalism. I play the digital recording of our meeting back at him. "Get out," he hisses. Stopping by Logali House for a much-needed beer I SMS an account of the extraordinary meeting to my wife, ending the message with a slur against the chargé d'affaire. The phone pings in response. It is the chargé d'affaire. "Your sentiments are noted."

The new highway: In the course of the Independence Day celebrations all the solar panels meant to power the street lights have been stolen. The succulents are still there, though; their bright chewing gum flowers hold the carriageway together. *Adenium obesum*, the desert rose, chosen, the taxi driver tells me, because they are native, and grow here regardless of neglect, or help.

"Be wary of those who love you more than you love yourselves"

Sean Christie *is a journalist based in Cape Town*

DESIGN, AND WHAT MAKES IT GOOD

Miguel Luiz Bucalem

The pursuit of good urban design involves intent, purpose and will, also a shared vision and the will to overcome antagonisms and understand diverse interest groups

The partnership with the African Centre for Cities (ACC) of the University of Cape Town, which started in 2013 with the USP Cidades International Seminar, is being consolidated in 2014 with the publication of this magazine's first Portuguese-language edition. Through this partnership, which brings with it additional international distribution, USP Cidades hopes to contribute to the debate on Brazilian cities and their challenges, taking advantage of the qualified forum offered by Cityscapes. Due to arrive in Brazil later this year, Cityscapes will broaden the debate on urban themes, with a journalistic, attractive, and inviting approach. USP Cidades is very pleased to bring to our country an innovative publication, at a time when cities are a central theme that interests and affects so many people. In addition, the publication contributes to the exchange through a south-south cooperation among countries, highlighting the potential of this partnership to the exchange of experiences, in particular for South African and Brazilian cities.

The theme of this edition of Cityscapes, "Design will not save the city", addresses an issue that involves various perspectives and is of great relevance to anyone involved in the constant pursuit of a city that can offer better quality of life for its citizens. As a way to contribute to the debate, I will present some thoughts on the subject here. I believe that 'good urban design' is essential to allow cities to cope with the myriad of challenges they face today. This necessarily raises a question: What does good urban design mean?

Design is not the mere graphic representation of an idealized landscape; good urban design demonstrates intent, purpose and will. There is a technical quality ingredient too, although good technical quality is surely not enough. Good urban design involves an element of collective construction and shared vision in order for a project to be successfully implemented—it is a required condition. Meeting this requirement (of collectivism and shared aspiration) is not an easy task, because cities are stages of complex dynamics and any large-scale urban intervention affects the lives of many people. The process of creating an urban design that is accepted by citizens who have a direct stake in the project, while still remaining consistent with the vision of a desired city, is very challenging. In essence, interests and visions that may at first seem antagonistic have to become compatible. Accomplishing this goal may be a greater challenge than producing a quality urban design. But good design arises from the continuous effort of dealing with antagonisms and seeking to understand the diverse nature of legitimate interests. It requires leadership, a constructive and genuine participatory process that prevents differences in knowledge and information about the project at hand from becoming obstacles to reaching a shared vision.

> "**Good design arises from the continuous effort of dealing with antagonisms and seeking to understand the diverse nature of legitimate interest**"

There is also the feasibility question: good urban design should have a chance to become reality, and for that the financial, legal and institutional framework of each location plays a central role. Good urban design must also be managed and maintained over time, in order to serve the city in the long run—it is an ongoing task that does not end in a design's physical implementation.

The technological evolution of urban infrastructure and productive activities in cities pose new challenges and opportunities for urban design. City utilities such as distribution centres and drainage structures, which until a few decades ago were isolated from people's interaction, must be harmonized with their surroundings through good urban design solutions. Activities and services associated with green industry should no longer be isolated in industrial zones and need to interact with housing, retail and services in the neighbourhoods. Drainage structures, which when inefficient impose major social and material costs, must not be hidden anymore. Their urban function needs to made explicit, and must take shape and be associated with the recovery of rivers and streams. These examples of good urban design need to be discovered and applied.

Certainly, the contents of this issue will present different views on the subject of urban design and its role in the development of cities. Hopefully they will lead to an interesting debate. There appears to be consensus that the more people become interested and empowered to discuss urban issues, the better the evolution of cities will be. Cityscapes magazine contributes to this goal. By presenting urban issues in a more journalistic and accessible way to citizens, many who will have had no previous technical training in planning, it enlarges the number of people who can join a qualified debate about cities. We are convinced that the USP Cidades partnership with ACC, which is reinforced by the publication of Cityscapes in Portuguese, including the production of local content, fits perfectly with our own mission of addressing the urban challenges, particularly of Brazilian cities. ✱

Miguel Luiz Bucalem *is the academic coordinator of USP Cidades at the University of São Paulo and a former secretary of urban development in the Sao Paulo Municipal Government*

CITY REPORTS

Istanbul
New Turkey is squaring off against its older, poorer self

Rio de Janeiro
After a period of growth, Brazil pauses and takes a breath

Nairobi
Mall culture after the terrorist attacks

The people vs. Kenya's new constitution

Cape Town
An avant-garde shopping mall faces the wrecking ball

THEY CAME AT NIGHT

Residents of Istanbul's decades-old informal settlements have emerged as a political force to challenge Turkey's new wave of urban development

Words: ***Joseph Dana***

On a bitterly cold winter evening, as a sharp breeze blew off the Bosporus strait, Turkish demolition crews accompanied by riot police entered a residential neighbourhood on the Asian side of Istanbul. They met fierce resistance from residents of the gecekondu, informal settlements commonplace across Istanbul. Police eventually had to use tear gas and water cannons to quell the angry inhabitants. "Why are you doing this?" yelled an elderly resident at the police. "What do you have against the people that live here?" When the dust settled, 16 structures lay in ruin. Orchestrated by senior Turkish government officials, the destruction of the gecekondu has become a facet of daily life in Istanbul, particularly as a massive urban regeneration programme repurposes land throughout the city.

Luxury shopping malls and concrete apartment blocks are replacing older neighbourhoods throughout the city, as Istanbul goes through the urban equivalent of a facelift. Spurred on by new Turkish desires to rebrand Istanbul as a globally competitive city, the Turkish government has redoubled efforts to radically transform the city's urban environment. But this transformation is not bringing prosperity and a better city for all of Istanbul's residents. Many have seen their neighbourhoods destroyed under the pretext of earthquake preparedness and other arbitrary building codes; some residents have even been forced to move upwards of 50 kilometres from the city centre.

Istanbul has always played an oversized role in Turkish politics. Using Istanbul as a canvas to manifest various desires for the country, the government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has promoted rapid urban growth initiatives, including the creation of a new five-runway airport, a rail tunnel connecting Asia and Europe under the salty water of the Bosporus, and a third long-span bridge to allow expansion of the city northward. Istanbul has particular significance for Erdoğan: he was born in the working class district of Kasımpaşa and served as mayor of the city before moving to Ankara, the Turkish capital and seat of the prime minister's office.

The sheer scale and pace of projects in the city has become a source of widespread corruption. In December 2013, a massive corruption probe shook Turkey's political foundation. Among a litany of charges, confidants close to the prime minister were accused of graft in the awarding of construction contracts in Istanbul. Erdoğan has been implicated in the corruption allegations. When the environment minister, a long-time friend of the prime minister who oversaw some of the mega projects in Istanbul, resigned as part of the corruption probe, he told reporters that he had done nothing without Erdoğan's approval.

Istanbul's modern legacy is one of rapid urbanisation and constantly shifting urban land laws. The best place to evaluate the current urbanisation programme in the city is in its gecekondu, haphazard forms of unplanned settlement that emerged during a period of rapid industrialisation in the 1950s. The Turkish government encouraged people to move to the cities to help with the industrialisation drive. By the 1980s, Istanbul's population stood at roughly five million. Today, the city's population is over 15 million and is estimated will reach almost 19 million by 2020.

Unable to offer housing to all, new residents were encouraged to set up informal neighbourhoods on large tracts of state-owned land.

Most of the houses that formed the first gecekondu were detached single-story structures that sat within low-density areas. Over time, population increase saw these neighbourhoods expand significantly. Given that many structures were built off the grid, ad hoc solutions and a strong spirit of independence runs through these communities. The migrants that started these informal neighbourhoods often originated from the same villages and regions in the Turkish interior, further adding to the strong community bonds that exist to this day.

According to Yasar Adanali, an Istanbul-based urban thinker and a lecturer in urbanism at the University of Stuttgart, the lack of secure title and constant threat of evictions and demolitions underpins the culture of gecekondu. "They had to build their houses at night so that a roof was there in the morning and couldn't be demolished without a warrant from a court," says Adanali. The word gecekondu, he explains, literally means "built over night" in Turkish. While notionally illegal, these neighbourhoods have flowered into vibrant residential spaces. In some parts of Istanbul, the gecekondu are completely off the city's electrical grid and are not officially policed. Public buses don't enter many of these areas. Over time, the original one-storey structures have been replaced with four- or five-story apartment blocks. By the 1980s, the Turkish government began to develop legal mass housing schemes in Istanbul. The move included the legalisation of certain gecekondu neighbourhoods. In effect, the move began a process of formalising the informal sprawl that typified modern Istanbul urbanisation.

"Gecekondu are, of course, illegal buildings but in the 1980s they acquired legal status and people began moving to these areas," says Sila Aklip, an architect at the TAK Design Collective in Istanbul. "The problem is that there was no infrastructure. To be sure, aspects of the quality of life are high, especially regarding the quality of urban space, but because of the lack of infrastructure and proper planning, these areas began to highlight inequality in time."

Turkish laws relating to land rights have exacerbated the problem. The selective use of Ottoman laws, which are fundamentally at odds with modern western secular laws regulating land ownership, enabled developers and shady businessmen to buy and sell large tracts of land in Istanbul. The transactions were based on less than clear terms. The Turkish government's plans for a new global Istanbul require available land serviced by transportation arteries, which the gecekondu provide. Portrayed as overly dense and unsafe, the government is targeting various gecekondu. It claims the upgrades will ensure safety and earthquake readiness.

> **"The Turkish government's plans for a new global Istanbul require available land serviced by transportation arteries, which the hastily built gecekondu provide"**

Adanali disagrees with this assessment. He remembers a time when the government supported the gecekondu and respected the strong communities living in these areas. For him, the gecekondu, in many ways, embody the first waves of modern urbanisation in Istanbul. "I prefer not to define gecekondu as a problematic concept," says Adanali. "For me, it is a solution. If you look at the parliamentary discussions in 1950s Ankara you will see that the gecekondu were embraced." Government officials viewed gecekondu as a "miracle". It was also a necessary "solution" to basic housing needs at time when ten new homes went up in gecekondu for every one planned home built by the state, adds Adanali. However, in contemporary Istanbul the gecekondu don't serve the same role they once had in Turkish society.

"In Istanbul, the one- or two-story gecekondu period is mostly over," says Selva Gürdoğan, co-founder of Super Pool, an Istanbul design and urbanism studio. "You won't find more than a handful of neighbourhoods that actually have this sort of the classic gecekondu typology of one- to two-story buildings."

The next phase in the gecekondu saga will be a political one. Last summer's massive Gezi Park protests, which started a mainstream battle over the urban future of Istanbul, saw many gecekondu residents leading the fight against the current waves of urbanisation in Istanbul.

"This is already a social disaster," Mücella Yapıcı, the head of Istanbul's Chamber of Architecture, recently told the online magazine Vocativ. "Urban transformation has caused social and physical disintegration in Istanbul." Despite their often-makeshift origins, gecekondu remain areas that people want to live in. This is because they represent grassroots urban initiatives that have successfully balanced the needs of the community in the face of poor resources and infrastructure. The persisting corruption allegations against the Turkish prime minister have drawn attention to the alliances powerful businessmen with close connections to the current Turkish government.

In Istanbul, particularly, gecekondu communities are on the cusp of reshaping Turkish politics in a profound way. Protests over the urban environment such as those in Gezi Park have prompted gecekondu residents to mobilise beyond local politics. Their actions are an example for millions of people living on the urban margins.

CLIFF OR HAIRPIN TURN?

Life in Rio de Janeiro is up, but down; actually it's both

Words: ***Julia Michaels***

"Imagina na Copa!" Imagine what things will be like during the World Cup! Brazilians have been saying this for the last three years. Every time a building falls down, a bus runs someone over or a waiter simply gets an order wrong: *"Imagina na Copa!"* And now, with the FIFA World Cup imminent, things are undeniably getting worse. Rio de Janeiro, locus of a 1983–2007 brain drain, and reverse influx of brainpower in 2008–12, has definitely lost its mojo.

The return of talent to the city in 2008 was prompted by a fortuitous constellation of factors: an unheard-of alliance at all three levels of government; the promise of a series of mega events; municipal and state finance cleanups; and a new public safety policy, pacification, which saw police occupy favelas previously ruled by drug traffickers. Brazil was also in the midst of an economic boom, reaping the benefits of having brought 40-million people—not a number to be sneezed at—out of poverty in the previous decade. What could go wrong?

No one saw last June's street protests. It wasn't favela residents doing the protesting either, but middle-class university students. And as they took to the streets to protest a bus fare hike, crime rates began ticking up. Since then, a litany of plagues have descended on Rio: strikes, street violence, police abuse, beach-gang assaults, drug traffickers retaking pacified territory, vigilantism, absurdly high prices and floods. *Imagina na Copa!*

And what of after the Copa? And after the 2016 Olympics? This year the jitters aren't exclusively about hosting international football's premier event. With presidential and gubernatorial elections coming up in October, protests and shifting political alliances have weakened the incumbent governor, Sérgio Cabral, who backed the pacification programme. Who knows the future of this policy, which has halved the 2007 homicide rate to 24 per 100 000 in 2012 and favourably impacted the lives of about 1.5-million residents of favelas and adjoining neighbourhoods. Public safety has been at the core of Rio's turnaround.

Mariana Albanese, like a growing number of foreigners, students and young professionals, lives in a South Zone favela. In a recent blog post, she described a key effect of pacification on daily life there: when the police replaced the drug traffickers, they destroyed residents' knowledge of the rules, of what to expect. "People know that, depending on an officer's intentions, good or bad, a party will be permitted, or not. Because, in addition to the violence that everyone has seen, there's extreme social control over daily life. The philosophy of pacification is based on the principle that everyone is suspect until proven otherwise," she wrote.

During the years of the brain gain, *cariocas*—as native inhabitants of Rio are known—gabbed about how wonderful their city was becoming. A coffee company proclaimed on a bus shelter ad that its product was coming back, just like "the good things of Rio". Now, *cariocas* are wringing their hands and reverting back to default pessimism. A British newspaper has diagnosed class warfare as the reason for all this.

"I feel cheated," says a college-educated Portuguese immigrant, one of thousands who fled Iberian joblessness for easygoing Rio. He laments the violence and his diminishing capacity to live a short bike ride from the beach. "People are so egotistical. I don't want to bring up children here."

> **"Ever since a military dictatorship ended in 1985, Brazil has muddled back and forth between default egotism and what's best for the nation"**

Ever since a military dictatorship ended in 1985 after ruling 21 years, Brazil has muddled back and forth between default egotism and what's best for the nation. But this moment is sharply different from what has come before. Even if they drop back into poverty at some point, the 40-million new entrants into the formal economy will never drop back into invisibility, into second-class citizenship. Their presence challenges Brazil's entire social structure, all its assumptions about the less fortunate serving the more fortunate, about police buffering the income gap, about the two-tiered provision of education, transportation and healthcare. The newly non-poor have seen too much: in Rio's public schools, where 80% of students live in favelas, 98% of the teens access the internet every day.

Favela residents aren't the only ones who've lost a sense of what the rules are. Middle class *cariocas* now debate if, in the absence of police patrols, their teenagers should or should not be going out to beat up pervasive street criminals. It's easy to mistake the chaos unleashed by social integration for a looming cliff; to miss the possibility that what's really occurring is a dispute over newly vacated territory—the territory of urban order. No force—be it police, business interests, politicians, protestors, criminals or the media—has ever fully or unilaterally dominated that territory. The challenge now is to come up with a new arrangement that better suits the city's needs.

Most observers agree that police violence and corruption, for example, need to be deescalated. There are proposals to unify the various police forces, and to demilitarise them. The process is messy. Whether Rio will rise to the occasion and what the official arrangements will look like remains to be seen. For now, *cariocas* will just have to imagine. ✱

INSECURE SHOPPING

Nairobi mall culture after the Westgate attacks

Words: ***Flavie Halais***

I first visited the Westgate Shopping Mall, which made international news when it was violently occupied by armed al-Shabaab militants in September 2013, on my very first day in Nairobi. Like the city's national park, elephant orphanage or Karen Blixen's estate, Westgate was a central landmark for tourists, a haven for the large community of expatriates, and a common meeting space for Nairobi's upper class elites. Opened in 2007 and owned by an Israeli businessman, the five-story landmark housed banks, shops carrying imported products, a cinema, playgrounds and top-notch restaurants.

That a shopping mall should play such a significant role in a city's psyche speaks both to the paranoid tendencies of the well-off and perceived lack of public space in Nairobi, a city with substantial public parks flanking the congested inner city. Years of high crime in this segregated city (first racially, now socially) have pushed wealthier residents into gated compounds on the western side of the city. Shops and restaurants here trade behind high walls or in malls, offering few opportunities for outdoor window-shopping or people watching while on a stroll. There are no squares and few parks in Westlands.

Last September's attack on the Westgate mall has left a huge void. An imposing hulk, Westgate now stands empty on a neatly kept, near-deserted road formerly bustling with car and pedestrian traffic. Its façade is largely intact; only a few bullet holes and shattered windows suggest the violence and carnage perpetrated inside during the four-day siege. Inside is another story. Pictures taken by journalists allowed inside

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Security at Nairobi's malls was already tight before the September 2013 Westgate attack. Few have forgotten the 1998 bombing of the United States embassy

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in December revealed a building entirely ravaged by explosions. The multistory parking lot had collapsed onto itself.
Clearing and reconstruction are underway. Kenyan authorities have also announced a public-private partnership to rebuild the mall as fast as possible. Business in the neighbourhood however remains depressed. The Nakumatt supermarket, located at the end of Mwanzi Road, has lost many customers. At a street-level parking lot across from the mall, taxi drivers listlessly wait for customers. They are unable to relocate to oversaturated stations nearby. A short walk from the Nakumatt, on the Westlands roundabout, tourist numbers are down at the small crafts market. Also situated on the roundabout is Sarit Centre, a large but uninviting mall that lost much of its custom when Westgate opened. Private security guards, a common feature of life in Nairobi, filter access to the mall, as usual. But they are not permitted to carry weapons. In a bid to bolster public security in the wake of the Westgate attack, the Kenyan government called in the army. Now soldiers nonchalantly wield large rifles at the entrance to Sarit Centre. The rival mall hasn't been able to take advantage of Westgate's unfortunate downfall. Shoppers, no matter where they live, have opted to take their custom to The Junction, a smaller version of Westgate that was built in the same architectural style. Some however prefer Village Market, a mall near the United Nations campus and United States embassy. Both are located several kilometres away from Westlands.
Security at Nairobi's malls was already tight before the September 2013 Westgate attack. Few have forgotten the 1998 bombing of the United States embassy, which killed over 200 people. More recently, in January 2013, an improvised explosive device was detonated at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. Cars entering the city's large shopping complexes are subjected to routine inspections. Bags are similarly searched at walk-through entrances. At Yaya Centre, a smaller mall popular with French expatriates, who school their children at the lycée next door, two metal detectors have been installed at the front entrance as supplemental security. The additional security is more a psychological prop than a viable security deterrent against a well-planned attack in a city where the spectre of urban terror is a pressing daily reality.

THE PEOPLE VS. CONSTITUTION

Kenya's optimistic 2010 constitution is being tested in informal settlements

Words: ***Flavie Halais***

In Mukuru, one of Nairobi's largest informal settlements, three shillings gets you the privilege to relieve yourself in a communal toilet, which, although cleaner than a plastic bag thrown over the railway tracks, might still facilitate the spread of infectious diseases. If you're a woman, this privilege ends when the sun sets at 7pm, after which venturing out at night-time means risking muggings, rape or worse. Because the settlement is located on private industrial land, the state hasn't been able to bring basic infrastructure and public services, which would spare parents and children the indignity of defecating in open view in a poorly-lit one-bedroom shack.
But Kenya's new 2010 constitution, because it includes such novel provisions as the right to accessible and adequate housing, has given slum dwellers a newfound hope that their situation might one day improve. With support from civil society organisations and advisers from local universities, some of Mukuru's residents have decided to sue both their absentee landlords and the government, claiming their constitutional rights to humane living conditions have been violated.
A first lawsuit, launched in October 2012, seeks to invalidate the land titles sold by the state in the 1980s and 1990s to well-connected industrialists and friends of the government. It claims the sales came with conditions that weren't met by landowners. "People were given land and failed to develop it," explains Jane Weru, executive director of Akiba Mashinani Trust, one of the organisations supporting the lawsuit. "They took this land only for speculative purposes."

If the titles are quashed, Mukuru's land will revert back to the state. Based on the new constitution, this should ensure the land's availability to those who have been using it for decades, and also compel the state to bring public services to the area.
A second lawsuit, still in preparation, is even more ambitious. Based on testimonies meticulously gathered from hundreds of women, it aims to expose the consequences of poor living conditions, in particular sanitation, on the health, income and psychological well-being of the claimants. They want the government—whether national or municipal hasn't been determined yet—to be held accountable for a situation that affects the population of Nairobi at large. The end goal of the claim is to compel the government to bring much-needed infrastructure to Mukuru to address the cumulative public health, economic and human rights issues.
Both cases seek to test a constitution, which, although initially praised for its generous provisions in terms of land rights, later revealed profound flaws in the way these rights apply to informal settlements. "There's nothing in the constitution that protects the land rights of slum dwellers," says Patricia Kameri-Mbote, dean of the University of Nairobi School of Law.
Drafted over a chaotic, seven-year process, the Kenyan constitution was finalised in urgency after the 2008 post-election violence, in part the outcome of unresolved grievances over land. The new legal text was seen both as a way to bring the country together and address the issue of land upfront. "It was clear during the discussion that certain things could be improved," says Kameri-Mbote. "But you knew that if you opened these questions again, you risked losing everything that had been done."
While the Kenyan constitution (and the three subsequent land laws passed in 2012) deals with land rights in a progressive way, Kenya's laws don't take into account the specificity of Kenya's urban slums, where land ownership and land use play a much different role. Whether on public or private land, an overwhelming majority of slum dwellers (95%) do not own their homes, instead paying rent to various "slumlords". The issue is even more contentious in Kibera, Nairobi's largest slum settlement, where the Nubian community has been promised title to state-owned land. The promises remain unfulfilled.
A crucial step in protecting the rights of slum dwellers would be to ensure security of tenure, but both the constitution and subsequent legislation ignore this. "Unless the state looks at the issue of tenure, nothing can be done," says Weru.
The provision for "community land" in the constitution also poses a problem. Introduced as an alternative to defining land either as public or private, it has yet to be formalised as law. Kameri-Mbote hopes the legislation will give a broad definition to the term "community" so that it could apply to state-owned land transferred to slum dwellers—which is what the first lawsuit in Mukuru seeks to achieve. So far, lawmakers seem to have narrowly interpreted "community land" based on ethnicity. More legislation will be enacted in 2014 to give a framework to the constitution. An upcoming bill looks poised to protect slum dwellers from forceful evictions. But jurisprudence also plays a role, and if successful, the Mukuru lawsuits may very well change the game for all of Kenya's informal settlements.

LETTER FROM CAPE TOWN

THE DELICIOUS MONSTER

In 1975 an avant-garde shopping mall in Cape Town's affluent southern suburbs opened and marketed itself as "the place for people". Now derelict, the building's failure and possible demolition is being fiercely debated

Words: ***Sean O'Toole***

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"He would have failed his first-year studies with that building," says Marie Philip. She laughs. The retired publisher is seated in her Kenilworth apartment recalling her two decades as a tenant of Cape Town's famously polarising Werdmuller Centre, an eccentric mixed-use shopping mall designed in the high modernist style and opened in 1975. Currently abandoned, its entrances boarded up, the mall's new owner is in the process of securing state approval to demolish the building, a fact that has prompted a fierce critical backlash by architectural enthusiasts and heritage activists. Philip does not form part of this motley group of activists, whose statements and opinions draw attention to a particular moment in the history of South African cities.

This is largely why I sought her out, to retrieve an embedded user narrative. "There wasn't the remotest consideration for people using the building," offers Philip. "It was an anti-people building."

Philip, together with her husband David, a former Oxford University Press employee who lent his name to the new imprint, David Philip Publishers, initially only rented warehouse space in the Werdmuller. In 1978, the publishing pair, together with two staff, moved into an office situated in the business annex at the rear of the building.

One of a handful of committed anti-apartheid publishers, Philip effortlessly, without malice, enumerates some of the building's many faults: its dramatic walkways, which often confused visitors, were deathly slippery in the rain; like so many signature pieces of avant-garde architecture globally, it leaked during the rainy season and its warehouses were prone to flooding; its split-level office spaces were traversed with an awkward spiral staircase; it alienated shoppers; and so on. "It didn't fail on all counts," concedes Philip. "The office spaces had high ceilings, good views of the Hottentots Holland mountain range and a lovely terrace."

As part of their stake in the building, David Philip Publishers opened a retail bookshop. "It didn't work," says Philip. The reason: a lack of foot traffic between Main Road and the railway station behind the office block. "It was a hostile building and people didn't feel welcome." Philip remembers an early tenant: Roelof Uytenbogaardt, a well-known Cape Town architect and the building's designer. Her only transaction with him was via an angry letter Uytenbogaardt left on her car windscreen when Philip parked in the architect's bay. This highlights another fault: celebrated by some as an early experiment in mall-making, the Werdmuller only offered 15 parking bays, all of them reserved for tenants. For suburbanites attuned to the logic of the car, the centre's reserved parking bays acted like an injunction: shop elsewhere, where they have a parkade preferably.

Commissioned by the blue chip insurer Old Mutual, who named its modernist showpiece after former chairman George Werdmuller, there is no single conclusive reason why this adjective-inspiring building in the prim southern suburb of Claremont failed. Rather, and this is key, there is only a series of possibilities, a rich and interlinked set of possibilities that, in their totality, offer one way to account for the bunkered qualities of South Africa's urban areas, notably in Cape Town and Johannesburg. But let me focus on the Werdmuller first.

There are many people who have an opinion on why this dramatically sculptural building failed, more so now that its current owner, New Property Ventures, is looking to demolish it. Here's a truncated summary, which I have loosely ordered chronologically:

1) Old Mutual didn't really know what they wanted when, in the late 1960s, they approached Uytenbogaardt, a star student who attained his Bachelor of Architecture at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 1956 and later studied under architects Robert Venturi and Louis Kahn at the University of Pennsylvania;

2) The mall's commissioner, Old Mutual, also kept shifting the goalposts by acquiring more land, which they unfairly forced the architect to incorporate into his original plan, rather than allowing him to start it afresh with the revised allocation;

3) Uytenbogaardt also didn't quite know how to proceed as the building represented an emerging urban typology from a time before the form and circulation dynamics of these secular cathedrals was set, especially locally;

4) it was a hubristic example of high Euro-American architecture—raw concrete on stilts softened by the odd delicious monster—grafted onto a deeply Anglicised community where decorative embellishments like cast iron *broekie*-lace and neatly trimmed roses still function as a kind of ersatz ideology;

5) the architect's quixotic allocation of space, which included numerous entranceways, elevated ramps and dramatic light wells, didn't adequately maximise the potential of the 6451m^2 site and ultimately provided insufficient rental stock for its owner;

6) it didn't have the draw of a name brand retailer amongst its 49 retail stores, no Pick n Pay, neither a Checkers, only a Bears, the furniture chain's vacated floor space occupied by an evangelical church during the Werdmuller's last inglorious years;

7) its many nooks and crannies functioned as makeshift urinals, and also posed security headaches for the centre's management, especially during the 1990s, as rivalries between taxi associations using an adjoining plot of land spilled over into public violence; and

8) perhaps decisively, local history was at odds with sound and efficient urban design principles, with informal traders—a key part of the original design rationale of this notionally "democratic" building—unable to become stakeholders in the Werdmuller after Claremont was declared a whites-only area in the early 1970s and its non-white residents forcibly evicted.

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01. Architect Roelof Uytenbogaardt with a model of the Werdmuller Centre. Photo: Wolff Architects Archive
02. Werdmuller Centre, Claremont, Cape Town, 2012. Photo: Dylan Culhane
03. A print advert for the Werdmuller Centre, 1976. Photo: Wolff Architects Archive
04. Werdmuller Centre, Claremont, Cape Town, 2012. Photo: Dylan Culhane
05. Werdmuller Centre, Claremont, Cape Town, 2012. Photo: Dylan Culhane

Having never visited the Werdmuller during its operating lifetime—I arrived in Cape Town in 2008, by which time Old Mutual were seeking permission to demolish the scrappily occupied building—it is hard to know how much emphasis to place on the various reasons cited for the building's failure. So, as a way of contextualising the often-instrumental views of architects, developers and academics, I decided to try and sketch a character profile of this inanimate object, ungraciously dubbed by some as the "Weirdmuller". What did its users experience? It is a question central to approaching the city as an open and generative field of encounter, rather than as an obstacle course of pre-defined problems.

"It was a bit creepy for people not familiar with the place," says Alistair Andrews. "It wasn't the most beautiful space, you know. I can't imagine what the architect was thinking when he designed that place." A well-known bassist whose releases include the gospel album *Your Unconditional Love* (2000) and newer world music offering *Rainbow Music*(2009), Andrews worked at the Werdmuller for nearly a decade before his employer, Paul Bothner Music, vacated the now derelict building. "What made that place really was Bothners," thinks PE-born Andrews, who is also a member of the Oyama Bonsai Club. "A lot of musicians used to come there and make it a vibe." A worker at the centre at the same time as Andrews and Fiona Thomson's Church-on-Main occupied the upper reaches of the cylindrical retail precinct, Andrew says the building became "a sight for sore eyes" in its latter years as Old Mutual did "nothing to maintain it". I asked Andrews which song or album he thinks musically evokes this dystopian building. "*Dark Side of the Moon,"* he replied.

Like Pink Floyd's 1973 album, the Werdmuller was—until Old Mutual boarded it up—a moody refuge for curious late adolescents. Bridget Impey, the Johannesburg publisher who from 1983 to 2001 worked for David Philip Publishers, recalls encountering architectural students on their routine pilgrimages to building. "It was a crazy building," says Impey. "All our warehouses had L-shaped entrances. It made it impossible to use forklifts in them. It was completely unusable. Despite all its ramps, if you were in a wheelchair you couldn't get from one side to another." Impey recalls Nicholas Combrinck, whose imprint was acquired by David Philip, having an office that was furnished to look like an "avant-garde New York office". "The building needed that sort of sensibility to make it work," offers Impey.

More formally rectilinear, the rear offices were a late addition to the Werdmuller. An elevated bridge connected them to the ailing retail section. "Safety was never a problem," says Impey, challenging an often-repeated reason for the building's failure. "The most dangerous thing about the Werdmuller were the taxi wars at the taxi rank, which was much more rough and ready and not as formalised as now. Taxi drivers would do wheelies and fire their guns. But our biggest security problem was the police: being a progressive publisher we would get knocks on the door from the special branch."

There is an opposing view to this fond remembrance. In an impact report authored by Ashley Lillie, a heritage specialist contracted by New Property Ventures, and submitted to Heritage Western Cape (HWC), security is routinely flagged as a problem. "Designed as a permeable structure that allowed access from all sides, this permeability led to security problems," reads one passage in the report, which was requested by HWC in 2011. The report also quotes Bruce Ballard, a quantity surveyor who worked for Old Mutual and published a report on the Werdmuller in 2007. "A successful retail centre must provide shoppers with a quality shopper experience: convenience, security, style, the right tenant mix, and first class management," wrote Ballard. "The Werdmuller Centre is lacking all of these."

This view was forcefully reiterated at a public consultation meeting convened by NPV in November 2013, held in the gutted interior of the Werdmuller's retail precinct. A red interior wall displayed a lone piece of graffiti. "We will miss you" it read. The meeting, a legal requirement when seeking heritage approval for a demolition, was by Sadia Chand, of Chand Environmental Consultants, offering a full range of environmental, sustainability and risk management services. Chand, who wore a slim-fitting black evening dress, also specialises in public participation processes. "Tonight we're going *Ally McBeal* style: unisex toilets," she offered, her speaking voice exhibiting marked American inflections.

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After detailing the "terms of engagement", she introduced Lillie, a man with a full head of grey hair and hawkish nose.

"We are here because of a strange anomaly in the Heritage Resources Act, which requires that any development that will change the character of a site exceeding 5000m2 in extent requires what is called a notification of intent to the responsible resources authority," he elaborated. Seated next to Lillie was Mike Nixon, the British-born owner of NPV. Nixon is the straight talking businessman with balding crown who made an un-suspensive offer for the Werdmuller and two other Old Mutual properties in a bundled purchase. For his audience with some two-dozen members of the public he wore frameless glasses, sport coat, jeans and brown shoes made for navigating boardrooms and construction sites.

"From a formal point of view this building is unique," remarked Nixon after the stage-managed public interaction had been concluded. "But that does not give it the necessary significance to be a blight on the landscape. I don't believe it does. I think common sense will prevail and hopefully we will get the right answer and produce something that is meaningful to Claremont." Nixon has a strategic ally in Abdul Kerbelker. Near the end of the public consultation, Kerbelker, executive manager of the Claremont Improvement District Company—a management company representing

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local property owners' interests—emphasised the interruption posed by the building that sits in the middle of a busy transport interchange. "We hear the sentiments of architects and practitioners, but we also see 15 000 people blocked off from this building," said Kerbelker, whose organisation supports the demolition.

The mall, that strange cipher of modern culture, is a relatively recent invention. In the US, where the automobile and dispersed urbanism laid the foundations for new satellite shopping centres, malls were key markers of postwar plenty. Uytenbogaardt enjoyed a close-up view of boom-era US prosperity when, in 1958, he enrolled in his postgraduate studies at the University of Pennsylvania. "Louis Kahn once told me that Roelof was the best student ever to have graduated from Penn," remarked Glen Gallagher, a founding member of Johannesburg practice GAPP Architects and Urban Designers, in 2005. By the time Uytenbogaardt returned to Cape Town in 1963 the mall concept had already taken root locally. According to Nigel Mandy, in his book *A City Divided* (1984), one of the first developers to recognise the potential of this new urban form was Cecil Behrmann.

Born in 1908, a product of Parktown Boys and Wits University, during the war years Behrmann served as a police reservist "doing guard duty by driving around the northern suburbs at night". These drives allowed him to map the tentative pathways of Johannesburg's early northern sprawl. One site particularly impressed him: it was located at the southwestern corner of Oxford Road and Tyrwhitt Avenue in Rosebank, an upscale residential enclave that has been transformed into bustling mixed-use neighbourhood, albeit retaining its patrician character. After Rosebank became the prime fashionable shopping district north of the city, Behrmann looked south. Completed in 1961 and comprising 15 shops supporting a Checkers, Southdale is said to be South Africa's first "true suburban shopping centre".

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Malls are purpose-defined objects, often ruthlessly so: they promote buying and selling. It is the sine qua non of their existence

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Unlike the Werdmuller, which was never adapted during its lifetime, Southdale has been extended several times to account for new growth and lessons drawn from consumer behaviour.

Behrmann's most famous achievement is however Hyde Park Corner. Opened in 1969 and built in tandem with related townhouses, this upper-class mall was the country's first fully enclosed shopping centre. Aware of these up-country trends, Old Mutual, a bastion of Cape Town's seemingly unshakable Anglophile manners, commissioned a similarly inward-looking shopping centre in close proximity to Werdmuller. Opened in September 1973, Cavendish Square was Cape Town's first shopping mall. It is now also the rich and successful cousin to the destitute Werdmuller opposite Main Road—or the San Andreas Fault, as commercial property owners disparagingly refer to this road, which originates near the historic Grand Parade in central Cape Town.

"We are losing the historic perspective." Architect Heinrich Wolff is addressing a group of mostly white men seated inside the offices of the Cape Institute for Architecture (CiFA). "The first malls in SA happened in the 1960s. When Roelof came to this it was a new idea of rearranging shopping and taking it away from the road. There were all sorts of experiments, and Old Mutual engaged in these experiments.

Why do they build Werdmuller and Cavendish at the same time? They didn't know what worked. It is an experiment."

It was at Wolff's suggestion that I began to track the story of the Werdmuller. Born in Roodepoort, west of Johannesburg, and trained as an architect by Uytenbogaardt in Cape Town, Wolff has light blue eyes. He speaks with unapologetic directness and intelligence. A snatch of conversation from a December 2013 CiFA meeting convened to debate and respond to Lillie's heritage impact report helps to contextualise Wolff's opinions within a larger matrix of practitioners devoted to the built form in Cape Town. "As a piece of sculpture it is okay," remarked architect Simeon Peerutin, currently also CIfA's president. "But it never functioned effectively from the beginning. How do we as architects say that this piece of sculpture should be retained or reused when many people far more skilled than me have tried?"

"At the time it was developed it was intended to be inventive and experimental," a female voice responded.

"It didn't work," insisted Peerutin.

"It is a prime example of how not to do an economic building," interjected a male voice from the floor. "It is a total and utter failure as a retail and economic model. It will never make money in its current form."

"Parts of it are significant," insisted Fabio Todeschini, an emeritus professor at the School of Architecture, Planning and Geomatics at UCT who worked with Uytenbogaardt on the design of the Werdmuller.

Sensing unproductive drift in the debate, the chair interjected: "The architectural profession might shoot itself in the foot by promoting the retention of a building, which cannot be used."

"Quite the contrary," countered Wolff angrily. "I think the architectural profession can prove its impotence by not staking a claim to this building. If the architectural profession says we cannot imagine this thing being used in a sensible way, it is our failure."

"I agree," responded Todeschini. (He would later angrily shout at Peerutin before storming out of the meeting: "I'm embarrassed by our president. Thank Christ I consider myself a defunct architect.")

"If we say there is nothing we can do, we are saying we are a fairly pathetic bunch of people who when faced with any kind of a challenge will give up," added Wolff. His comment prompted a guttural consensus from the floor. It was an inconclusive consensus. No summary was offered at the end. A subsequent request to view CiFA's formal response to Lillie's report went unanswered, as did enquiries directed at Lillie. The HWC decision to this report is still pending. Late one evening, a heritage specialist

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> **There wasn't the remotest consideration for people using the building ... It was an anti-people building**

working for the City of Cape Town government, remarked on an earlier version of this article, which appeared in a national newspaper. It had put a lot noses out of place, he smiled. "But you failed to address one key point, a point almost everyone involved in this debate has sidestepped: Whose heritage are we talking about?" Definitely not the majority of black citizens, he implied. In the township, the mall is a post-apartheid phenomenon, a visible if unequal marker of change and possibility.

"Being an architect is the most difficult profession in the world," says Iain Low, a professor in the School of Architecture, Planning and Geomatics at UCT. "You have to be a poet, scientist, lawyer, economist, material specialist, engineer and administrator. Roelof Uytenbogaardt was a poet but failed on all the rest." Uytenbogaardt's biography is one of high promise and visible failure. Aside from his controversial Werdmuller Centre, Uytenbogaardt designed UCT's Sports Centre, which nowadays resembles a plucked chicken after its elegant black stone cladding, which had been poorly installed, was removed and never replaced. In a sense, poor materials and inferior workmanship scuppered Uytenbogaardt's ambitions.

"Unfortunately Uytenbogaardt's buildings, including the UCT Sports Centre, suffer from poor construction and those magnificent curves and forms rapidly eroded into ugliness," offers Marilyn Martin, who while still director of the South African National Gallery, helped oversee an exhibition of the architect's work.

Poor quality materials and labour notwithstanding, Uytenbogaardt's legacy remains one of widespread failure. Architect Jo Noero is due to embark on a large project overwriting Uytenbogaardt's sports complex and stadium at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). The incomplete community hall project he worked on in Steinkopf in the Northern Cape, once a pilgrimage site for architects, has also fallen into ruin. Ironically, these cumulative failures underscore the value of his failed shopping mall in Claremont. "It is one of the few remaining, if not the only remaining intact example of this key architect's work, one of the few South African architects listed around the world with Herbert Baker," says Noëleen Murray, an architect and lecturer at UWC whose doctoral thesis focussed on Uytenbogaardt. But a building is more than just an expression of its designer, of architectural passion and designer whimsy; like cities, it is how a building gets adopted and used that is important, if not decisive. Meaning: there is a need to not only understand architectural projection and fantasy, but also to disentangle it from the narrative of how buildings are experienced and used.

"I think the Werdmuller is a story of a particular journey for us," says Mokena Makeka, a prominent city architect whose work at the central train station in Cape Town has been important in lodging ideas about the various, often conflicting publics for architecture in South Africa. While he concedes that the Werdmuller might well be a commercial failure, Makeka, who is also an adjunct professor at Columbia University in New York, says that its inability to generate sufficient rental income is not the only formula for assessing its value. Like Wolff and many others he is an advocate of adaptive reuse. "Put up a glass box that goes however high, with its own circulation," he offers. "You allow the developer to realise their value, without necessarily having to demolish it."

This approach, while speculative, attempts to address the many opposing arguments that are both microscopic and contextual. Similar to Wolff, Makeka thinks it is the Werdmuller's ability to flag wider contextual problems that makes it such a compelling building. "I think it disrupts the traditional control model of commerce," says Makeka. "It is actually quite tongue in cheek. It breaks a lot of rules and is almost a political statement about the extent to which you allow capitalism unfettered control of the human body. I think its design was really meant to enable other forms of occupation, and other forms of agency." It is a line of reasoning that Wolff is similarly keen to explore, and why he is adamant the Werdmuller needs to be preserved—not as a museum piece, but in some adapted form that retains vestiges of the inconclusive experimentation that underpinned its construction.

Of course, malls are purpose-defined objects, often ruthlessly so: they promote buying and selling. It is the *sine qua non* of their existence. Failure is not something that is simply adapted to. But this line of reasoning also presumes that their function is discrete, localised and strictly internal. Increasingly, this isn't the case. As their typologies have been refined, driven by a host of contradictory imperatives—ranging from a culture of consumption founded on cheap fossil fuel and endless land for urban sprawl to the increasing securitisation of daily life and carnivalesque nature of consumer capitalism—so the impact of malls on cities is growing, often with profound consequences. Wolff is more succinct about this: "Malls are a good way of making money, but they are not a good way to make a city."*

FEATURES

Cape Town
Ongoing protest action has politicised the toilet

Cambridge
We need to think about cities visually, says Richard Sennet

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Designing housing solutions for São Paulo's poor

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Sergio Fajardo on overcoming fear and building citizenship

Cape Town
The carless highway as a sign of protest, closure and crisis

CAPE TOWN

EDGE DESIGN

Can design avert the toilet wars in Cape Town? We explore urban form and social change by comparing two majority black Cape Town neighbourhoods: Khayelitsha, a sprawling settlement on the city's eastern periphery, and Dunoon, a post-apartheid neighbourhood located on a busy northern transport corridor. Both reveal a common ethos of self-built propositions. The citizen, it seems, is delivering the city

Words: ***Kim Gurney*** | *Photos:* ***David Harrison***

The approach road to Lookout Hill in Khayelitsha, a 30-year-old township established during apartheid, is dotted with potholes that the cars ahead traverse in confident zigzags familiar with the worst. Situated about 35km outside Cape Town, Khayelitsha is home to an estimated 450 000 people (or 391 000 according to 2011 census figures). Its sidewalks teem to either side: Afro Zorro Car Wash, window frames, mattresses, bathtubs and basins, signs reading "Trailers for hire" and "Scrap for sale", cash stores and hair salons, a man pulling an overloaded bin, a suitcase abandoned on its wheels, chemical toilets lined up under a tarpaulin, roadworks ahead with a sign: "STOP/ RY GO". Like any other South African neighbourhood in early 2014, the street poles are also festooned with electioneering posters. "Step up for Diversity" urges the ruling African National Congress (ANC). "Register to Win" says the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA). "Don't vote, organise", admonishes a bus shelter stencil.

That is exactly what a constellation of non-governmental organisations based in Khayelitsha have done. The Social Justice Coalition (SJC) and partners triggered a Commission of Inquiry into policing in Khayelitsha, instituted by the premier of the Western Cape, Helen Zille. Its daily hearings at Lookout Hill community hall are gathering testimony around alleged inefficiencies and a breakdown in relations with the community, to make findings and ultimately national recommendations. Indeed, the complainants suggest the case is emblematic of post-apartheid realities in other townships and informal settlements, an idea replicated by their distinctive black T-shirts with white circular logo: "Safe Khayelitsha! Safe South Africa!" In contrast, the police underscores in its opening statement a rejection of systemic failures in favour of a contextual approach. This ideological seesaw infuses proceedings from the outset and also the larger anvil upon which they repeatedly turn.

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Outside the Lookout Hill community hall, a boy washes his body in the water of a blocked drain. Inside, Khayelitsha residents bear witness to their daily lives. The texture of their testimonies is a startling weave linking everyday acts, like sanitation, with vulnerability to brutal violence. The voice that brings this story home, in a quietly determined way, belongs to Nontebeko Nduna, a community activist for SJC and a mother of two. Nduna sits before the formal commission behind black-cloaked tables, sleek microphones and large contextual maps pinned to the walls in front of a packed public hall. Half the listeners wear headphones to better understand her testimony that a translator renders live from isiXhosa into English. She manages to elegantly carry off the black T-shirt of the activists' coalition with high-pinned hair, deep pink fingernails and matter-of-fact tone. Nduna lives in a shack in CT section of Taiwan informal settlement in Site C, she explains. Her family has an electricity box but no water and no toilet, so they have to use communal toilets about 10-15 minutes' walk away. "Others use portable toilets but unfortunately we don't have them because you need space to have a portable toilet and we don't have space in our house to put that portable toilet," she says. "So when the communal toilets are closed, I walk towards the N2 [highway] where I help myself." Walking that distance, she explains, anything can happen because the communal toilets close at night and there are no lights. "So anyone can follow you and do anything. People get robbed. They get raped. There is nothing that does not happen in that area when people are going to the N2 to help themselves."

> **"Ongoing protest action has politicised the toilet, casting it as a cipher of freedom"**

In winter, adds Nduna, when the sun sets earlier, she carries her cellphone to light the way as well as illuminate the interior of the toilet. "So that is a thing that attracts the person to rob you because they want the cell phone you are holding." Nduna's recommendations to the commission include more visibility: "in town there are police riding horses ... and if we could have lights", she adds.

At one point during her testimony, Nduna stands on her chair to better point out on a map to the commissioners exactly where she is talking about. Two weeks later, she takes me there.

We are standing in a coral-coloured communal toilet in Site C. On the right are washbasins, and through an open doorway three toilets. The door to the first is broken and the flush is permanently running. The seat is missing. Graffiti on the left says "Sex me plz" and on the right is a crude pornographic drawing. There is no toilet paper and no lighting. Further along are three open showers. This communal facility opens at five in the morning and shuts at nine in the evening. During the day, says the attendant, it's so busy there are often queues. She keeps the place as clean as possible.

A woman is scrubbing her laundry in basins outside. Further along, a water tap stands in a circular concrete drum. An informal business set up across the way in a container signs itself: Bobo Bread, Handmade Belts.

I am briefly thrown back to September 2011 and a visit to the Habitare Furniture Fair in Helsinki, a precursor event to the Finnish capital's tenure as 2012 World Design Capital. An exhibition of "outhouses" caught my eye—outside toilets for second homes in the countryside. The modernist array of wood, glass and eco-friendly gimmicks included a cascade of brightly coloured flowers down a tiered flatpack model—all the better for soaking up excess rainwater—and the winning design by Yoshimasa Yamada with windows to mimic the

knots of trees. How such innovations would read back in the Western Cape where local politics was fraught with the issue of open toilets was a mystery back then. More so in 2014 as Cape Town assumes the World Design Capital mantle with its own tagline, "Live Design, Transform Life", and the strategic mission to promote design as a tool for making "better cities for people and improve lives within an African context".
Ongoing protest action in the interim has further politicised the toilet, casting it as a cipher of freedom.
Nduna, who has lived in Khayelitsha since 1997, is standing in the alley outside the communal toilets wearing orange and yellow drop earrings, big brown sunglasses and the same black T-shirt as before. The high-pinned hair is gone but her quietly poised demeanour and deliberate manner are unmistakeable. She points down the street fronted both sides by dense dwellings to the pink building where she lives next door. There is one streetlight between and it hasn't been working for years. At night, when the toilets are closed, she must navigate a myriad of shacks towards the N2 and find a place to relieve herself, where she becomes vulnerable to attack. "This area is one of the most dangerous," says fellow SJC activist Luthando Tokota. Nduna nods in agreement and they both fall silent. "Let's move on," he suggests.
We cross a busy road from shacks onto a piece of veld adjacent the N2 in the RR Section. "Do you want to cross over?" Tokota asks and, as we set foot on the grass edge, I better understand why. It is difficult to sustain a conversation in the nauseating waft. "People get robbed, they get raped, and also the accidents ... You can see the distance and all of them have to use this space," he says. "Any questions?"
In his narrow-brimmed black hat, flash buckle with an eagle insignia, and black briefcase on the back seat of my car, Tokota is a suave guide to the sanitation realities in Khayelitsha. We start with dozens of toilet innards lined up on the roadside for collection before traversing the bush, portable toilets (or "porta potties"),

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chemical toilets and different versions of flush. The latter are usually communal and padlocked, with five families officially sharing three keys per unit. New green-doored loos in RR Section provide some relief—but only for families closest, and with access to keys, says Tokota.
Many are in disrepair: chemical toilets assembled without concrete bases are unstable and sited in vulnerable positions—in one instance, next to a swamp. These kinds of issues are reflected in a social audit that SJC published in 2013, which it conducted on 256 chemical toilets across four Khayelitsha areas. "People don't want to use them, they better go to the bushes to relieve themselves. Just imagine there are heavy rains," says Tokota pointing to the swamp. As if on cue, I narrowly avoid stepping in excrement, parked like a judgment delivered right next to the unstable toilet. "And at night it is also a risk," adds Nduna. "You can't see those things [toilets]. You can come inside here and anyone can grab you and do whatever they try to do. It's not a good place."
Nduna's very personal story about sanitation was only part of her testimony to the commission. She also gave evidence about a niece knocked over and dragged by a police car (the case remains unsolved), and closed with an anecdote about vigilantism. The picture she painted was harrowing, although she adopted a fatalistic tone in the narration: "Why would our family be any special or different to any other family whose case is incomplete?" After delivering her testimony, she broke down and silently wept, folding her head in her hands.
Nduna confirms speaking to the commission was an emotional experience but worth it to make the stories known. "At least something comes out of it," she says. "I think it will be helpful. There are so many things that were not known but now are out. Everything is out there now, everybody knows about it." The general hope among complainants is that any recommendations may also be helpful elsewhere. As Tokota says: "Here in Khayelitsha, the problem that we are facing is the problem that people in Gugulethu are facing. But there, for example, in Crossroads, there are no NGOs like SJC. So at least Khayelitsha has got these NGOs who can expose these kinds of issues."
While that may be so, the police during the commission adopted a bad-apple defence. During Nduna's proceedings, for instance, legal counsel for the police, Norman Arendse, said: "If we can get the case numbers and any other particulars ... so the miscreants can be brought to book and be disciplined." This case-by-case approach is consistent with the SAPS official opening statement: "The test of whether or not these complaints collectively indicate general incompetence or a breakdown in community relations must be contextual, and objective. In other words, we cannot use the standards of policing found in Constantia or Camps Bay or Rondebosch [more privileged suburbs in Cape Town] to be the same as those [of] Khayelitsha. We will therefore submit that there is no systemic failure of policing in Khayelitsha if one takes into account the social and economic conditions of the people of Khayelitsha."
This includes police resources. A key statistic emerges in the testimony of Dr Gilbert Lawrence, who heads up the Department of Community Safety in the Western Cape government. He cites the ratio of police per person in Khayelitsha as 1:1 675—it is as high as 1:1 702 in Harare Section. West across the city, in the Atlantic suburb of Camps Bay, the ratio is 1:38. According to Glenn Schooling, a retired policeman and former deputy provincial commissioner of operations who also testified at the commission, the problem with places like Khayelitsha and Nyanga is numbers. "As long as you have 200 to 300 dockets given to a detective you will never have a positive result," he said. "We can do whatever we like, it's not going to work." Management is also an issue: "We need the gatekeepers to be there to do their job properly and to take pride in the work they do."
Over the course of the commission, the police accepted some serious problems while sticking to a case-by-case approach. Social activist Zackie Achmat for one was not impressed. Testifying as director of Ndifuna Ukwazi, one of the complainants, he said of the police: "It's not a case of rotten apples, the whole orchard is rotten." He nonetheless conceded the need to "find those good apples and work with them". In his affidavit, Achmat also put a different spin on the security issue. He wrote: "Most of my comrades and colleagues feel unsafe in their homes, on the street, on public transport, in schools, and elsewhere. Their lives are blighted by crime, which sometimes involves extreme violence." Achmat also condemned as "morally indefensible and legally untenable" the fact that a minority can buy the constitutional right to be free from violence through private security while the majority is denied it.
While navigating the streets from the communal toilet block back to Lookout Hill, the registration plate on a motor vehicle hoisted for self-repairs in a garage offered its own concise testimony: "Black Man Always A Suspect."

"The idea with this more technical politics is to address systemic challenges and the politics of the barricades is not enough"

I am seated in a sea of white faces, including my own, at the University of Cape Town's annual Summer School lectures to hear a talk entitled "The Politics of Poo". The distorted demographics will later elicit pointed criticism and an apt quotation from Frantz Fanon, delivered from the back row, regarding the absence of the very people who are the subject of discussion.
Steven Robins, a professor in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at University of Stellenbosch, kicks off a series of erudite lectures, starting with "A Very Brief History of Shit" before turning to the poo-flinging of recent Cape Town protests. The city's highways, the international airport near Khayelitsha and the steps of the provincial legislature in the city centre have been the most high-profile targets of activists throwing faeces in public places to highlight sanitation issues.
Robins, a lean sprightly man with owlish glasses, makes heavy blows to the media hype and anxious public responses to the topic by making intriguing connections that put the topic in a broader sociopolitical context, starting with an historical recap. He reels back to Dutch colonial administrator Jan van Riebeeck and the first environmental law, promulgated three years after the white settlement of South Africa in 1652: the law proscribed the dumping of human waste in rivers, followed by the privatisation of waste. Robins also discusses the "sanitation syndrome" in the colonies in the 1900s and evictions around the bubonic plague, all by way of contextualising the contemporary so-called "toilet wars" in the Western Cape.
"I was interested in trying to understand why these [media] images were having such a powerful political effect," he tells the audience about his own motivation researching the topic. "I wondered why, with this focus on the spectacle of the open toilet, which was a problem. What was out of focus was the everyday practice whereby people had to relieve themselves along the highway." The open toilet issue, he

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Opening spread Youngsters play a game of football on an open plot of land opposite Enkanini, a large informal settlement in Khayelitsha
01. Nontebeko Nduna, Khayelitsha resident and community activist with the Social Justice Coalition, at her home in Site C, Khayelitsha
02. Luthando Tokota of the Social Justice Coalition during a walkthrough of BM section, Khayelitsha
03. Griffiths Mxenge, a suburb in Khayelitsha, is named after an anti-apartheid activist murdered in 1981 by police operatives
04. Communal flushing toilets in Dunoon
05. Learners take a break in the courtyard of Inkwenkwezi Secondary School, Dunoon
06. Flushing toilet in Silvertown, Khayelitsha
07. View of Inkwenkwezi Secondary School from Usasaza Street, Dunoon
08. Small business enterprise on Usasaza Street, Dunoon
09. Somali trader Mohammed Khalid outside his grocery store (or spaza shop locally) in Dunoon
10. Members of the public at Lookout Hill community hall on Spine Road, Khayelitsha, host venue for the Khayelitsha Commission, an independent enquiry into allegations of inefficiency of Khayelitsha-based members of the South African Police Service

says, became a way of crystallising the politics and resonating as a sign of indignation. "It's not just about the closed toilet. It comes to stand in for … what it means to be a citizen—because the open toilet is a symbol of the violation of dignity that the middle classes understand [as] defecation ought to be a private thing … It suggested the limits of democracy. It symbolised the expectations of modern citizenship hadn't been fulfilled yet." Sanitation issues could also be understood as a proxy: "It's a broader question about the way the economy works."

He also started considering what it was about the portable toilets that people rejected and concluded it was something about the location of the technology and social complications with site-specificity. "Engineers would argue about cutting-edge technologies but it's about how it's used in situations and particular contexts. So the challenge was to go beyond the outrage."

Robins says a cluster of social movements behind this issue are now working to generate their own statistics in what amounts to a new kind of technical politics in the context of grassroots mobilisation. They hark back to anti-apartheid legacies but are connected to other global influences—such as Arjun Appadurai's notions of globalisation from below—and operate in multiple spaces from the street to shebeens, courts, trade unions and cyberspace. "The barricades may be effective up to a point but it's not enough," says Robins. "You need highly politically savvy activists who understand the constitutional gaps for social mobilisation. What is required is a more tactical engagement with the state. You lobby, take it to the courts, and then to the streets—the experiments with activism in this country are extraordinary."

The cauldron of this political experiment and the site to best understand it is Khayelitsha, adds Robins—partly because of its links with HIV/ Aids activism and the line of continuity between. The idea with this more technical politics is to address systemic challenges and the politics of the barricades is not enough, he says. The SJC campaign to politicise the issue of sanitation thus began from an everyday reality. The strategy, Robins tells his audience, included queuing for toilets in better resourced areas; collecting personal testimonies of daily violence; preparing a social audit; challenging outsourcing and governance issues to promote public engagement with public budgets; engaging around service delivery agreements; and promoting access to the Information Act in what amounts to "patient, slow activism".

Patience may be required, as the urgency of the debate seems missed by some in the audience. During a question session afterwards, one member of the predominantly grey-haired audience offers this solution to privacy issues: "They make lovely things in the township. The Japanese make beautiful screens. Why can't that be part of it?"

Ibrahim Francis, a fast-talking activist with shaven head and beard, is holding up a large protest banner on a hot afternoon in early February in the Cape Town city centre. "Poo-protest means democracy stinks" reads his placard. While ANC protestors adjacent are protesting for better toilets from the headquarters of the opposition-led province, he says the debate should get beyond party politics. Francis is neither a fan of the ANC nor DA, which runs the Western Cape provincial government. The people are the victims because of dishonest leadership and we have to rethink the whole idea, he says. "We have to be honest with one another because the whole system stinks."

Francis has come to the city centre today to say as much in bold capital letters. He positions himself adjacent a public demonstration at the provincial legislature as the ANC delivers a memorandum to the province's premier and DA leader, Helen Zille, about housing, land and sanitation. Party leaders declare demands from the legislature steps flanked by a line of stony-faced police. "Down with

no houses for the people! Down with water cuts! Down with electricity rises!" This call is topped by a crescendo: "We want land! We want change!"
The Secretary of the South African National Civics Organisation takes the microphone: "Down with Helen Zille, down! Down with the Western Cape administration, down!" The protestors echo his bracing words. "We are the citizens who fought for the freedoms of this country and cannot stand for the reversals of the gains. Away with Helen Zille, away! We cannot allow a republic within a republic!" A printed banner in the crowd of hundreds states: "Land for Gold and Shops but not for Houses". A hand-painted sign adds: "We Need Houses/ Where is our Bill of Rights". Zille, who was invited by activists to sit on a portable toilet in the townships, emerges to accept the memorandum and stands wedged between the protest speakers. The official memorandum includes land for housing and cultural purposes, eradicating the bucket and portable toilet systems, relocating and upgrading informal settlements and withdrawing all eviction notices. The final exhortation is to register for the forthcoming elections: "It is only through the vote that the halls of Jericho can fall," proclaims a speaker. Music cranks up from a van stationed alongside. "Zuma! Zuma! Zuma!" goes the refrain. The procession departs, singing the president's praises down Wale Street.

Dunoon is at the heart of Cape Town's post-apartheid urbanisation story. Established around 2000 as part of a roll-out of government-subsidised (RDP) housing, this peripheral neighbourhood offers a compelling counterpoint to Khayelitsha, created 30 years ago on the back of forced evictions during apartheid. The most significant difference, says Heinrich Wolff, a Cape Town architect who has done extensive work in this community, is that Dunoon is well located relative to job opportunities. It is meshed off the N7 on the route to Malmesbury between industrial, agricultural, residential and coastal nodes. He compares Dunoon to the northern Johannesburg township of Alexandra, adjacent Sandton and Marlboro: a relatively small township with very big commercial areas around it that makes walking to work feasible.
According to 2011 census data, 41% of people in Dunoon live in formal dwellings, 68% have access to piped water, 74% to a flush toilet connected to a sewerage system, 97% have refuse removed weekly and 78% use electricity for lighting. However, 15.3% still use the bucket toilet system. Dunoon's residential buildings are the most striking feature when walking around the neighbourhood. They comprise a resourceful mix that range from shacks to the thriftily made, government-issue single-storey brick and tin-roof RDP houses with all manner of space modifications, finding their apogee in multilevel flat blocks designed for maximum rental income.
It was the latter structures that caught Wolff's eye when he designed a secondary school in the area—something about the scale of these "funny buildings", as he puts it when we meet at his Cape Town architectural studio, Wolff Architects, which he runs with his wife, Ilze. This kind of curiosity, paired with pacy energy and intellectual generosity, seem to shape his practice. The first flat block he explored had 22 new houses built on the original footprint of an RDP house. While the upper level was still being completed, renters lived downstairs. "They were making bucketloads of money from renting apartments at R700 [each]. I did the math and realised this was a goldmine," enthuses Wolff. "I started looking around and realised Dunoon was full of these things."
When I first visit the area on a Sunday, about a dozen men are building a two-storey construction of grey vibrocrete (a cement product). A few days later, the same site stands empty awaiting the return of its weekend workforce. This self-build ethos is evident throughout Dunoon with numerous houses in various stages of rebuilding or modification. One example was a perfectly visible RDP house sitting fully intact inside the concrete frame of a new larger house still in progress—it arched overhead like an aspirational sheath.
Wolff's 2010 research found this trend for residents to demolish RDP houses and build rentable flat blocks instead was a thriving business. The conversions, Wolff says, essentially share the same economy of backyard shacks, a widespread phenomenon across South Africa, but is more formalised and with rentals 2.5 times higher. In Dunoon, it is not uncommon to have up to six shacks in a typical RDP house: two in the front, and four in the back with 600mm passages. At R300-R400 per space, that amounts to R2400 monthly rental. Specifically, Wolff calculated the m² rental income at 2010 rates was equivalent to a penthouse apartment in the city centre, or upmarket Bantry Bay for the more expensive Dunoon units. Services and amenities are inferior and the number of people living in the same space would be five times higher but the input costs for the developers are also much lower.
The fact that people were speculating on land was not in itself groundbreaking, Wolff explains. It is the extent of job opportunities around Dunoon that makes the scenario compelling. "Within about three kilometres walking distance there are umpteen jobs. If you live in Dunoon, you don't have to pay for transport to get to a job. So theoretically, it's just very desirable," he says. This triggers the RDP conversions and ultimately suggests that "housing is not about what a house is but what it does. Here, you can see what well-located housing does."
These private interventions have public policy implications. For one, they demonstrate the absolute inflexibility of RDP housing. "People said the RDP house was a hindrance and they just broke it up," says Wolff. "That means that the investment of the state and the people of South Africa in South Africa and its cities is reduced to zero—a house cost of R100 000 is reduced to zero. So all that is left is the site and the service, the most valuable thing—it's an interesting clue."
Further, the Dunoon builders are effectively commercial small-scale developers answering a rental housing need on well-located land and thereby increasing national housing stock. This in turn arguably allows for more organic city growth rather than a top-down city planning agenda. Wolff concludes: "This idea that the citizens can be the authors of the city, like it has been for millennia, and that through a basic desire for people to make money and prosper the city could grow, housing could be provided, and so on, and that it could be done to a real profit, is really good news."
This kind of talk also cues deeper notions around freedom. Wolff quotes Indian economist Amartya Sen, that freedom is linked not only to the vote but access to other factors like education, healthcare and personal safety. Dunoon increasingly offers more of these kinds of services. Because it is small, city authorities can arguably act on it more effectively than Mitchell's Plain or Khayelitsha, hence its rapid densification. Wolff argues that the Dunoon flat blocks contribute to the development of broader freedoms, through location, informal residential zoning, security of tenure for the RDP house owners, and diversification of housing options.
Wolff really drives this point home when he speaks about xenophobia. Dunoon has been a flashpoint for attacks against foreigners; it was reportedly amongst the first sites of xenophobic violence in the Western Cape as attacks against foreigners in Johannesburg in May 2008 spilled over nationally. According to UCT researcher Adam Cooper, writing in a paper published in 2009, 20-30 shops in Dunoon, most of them owned by local Somali shopkeepers, were looted; 23 people were arrested; and almost all foreign nationals (270) evacuated.
Wolff strikes an emotional chord as he recounts a fortified space that protects a trader from attack. "When you see the odds at which people have to survive in a place like that you realise, 'Okay, well, this makes it possible for a Somalian man to trade.' In spite of all indications [that] he should get out of here, he continues and his livelihood continues and his life is fine and he is building a life in South Africa. There are various scales of this, some more serious than others. But just knowing that when you come home, your couch and TV are there—that is what makes freedom for people. That is what makes better housing for people. And this is being provided by better, more formal, structures."

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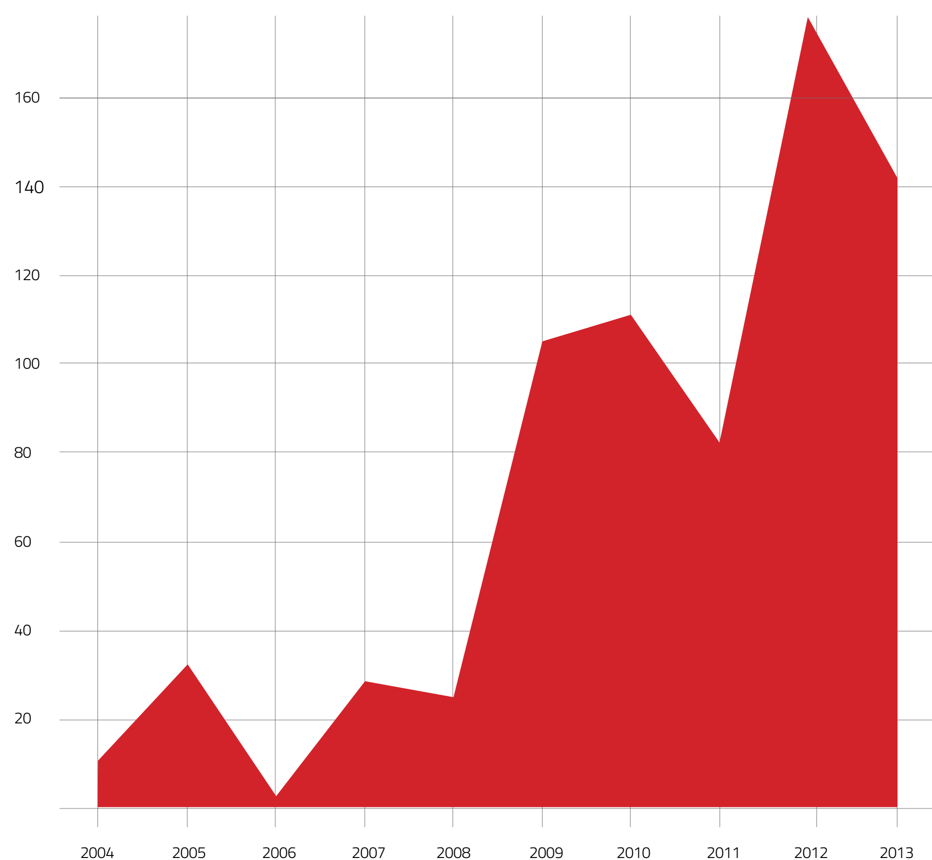
“We cannot use the standards of policing found in Constantia or Camps Bay or Rondebosch in Khayelitsha, argue the South African Police Service”



MAJOR SERVICE DELIVERY PROTESTS BY YEAR

Source: Municipal IQ Municipal Hotspots Monitor, 4 February 2014

Wolff makes a deeply compelling case. There is another element to it, which becomes evident walking around Dunoon with Gresham Chibwaz, a Malawian national who has lived in Dunoon since 2007. "We are a lot of different people—from Somalia, Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa. It's a combination of people living in a community, so I tend to learn lots of things," says Chibwaz. A man with closely cropped hair, black reflective shades and distinctive lilt in his voice, Chibwaz has also noticed lots of changes in the buildings in his neighbourhood. When he first came to Dunoon, there were only shacks and RDP houses; now there are many RDP conversions, he says. He takes me around to have a closer look.

We meet at Dunoon's work-in-progress MyCiti bus stop, which connects with the city's rapid bus transport link. Located adjacent a busy taxi rank, I park on its other side, at a local shopping centre that has recently added a supermarket, banking and other conveniences for residents. I wait for Chibwaz on a public bench and strike up conversation with a vegetable trader who sells three days a week from the side of the main thoroughfare running past Dunoon. His biggest issue is resupply—he doesn't have his own transport. As he explains this frustration, his competitor next door unpacks new produce off an open-backed lorry.

Chibwaz greets me and we start our walking tour at his first South African home, an RDP house with a silver shack in its front yard. We pass a house modified into something more comfortable. Further along, another is nearly complete with a renovation. Smart aluminium window frames are the final touch. About 50 metres on, the sight of a defunct bus as added accommodation in the front yard arrests my eye. We pass a variety of barbershops, a sign to an Educare crèche, and two women carrying chickens by their feet. The streets are neat and clean, the wind is constantly blowing.

Location, Chibwaz agrees, is the most important thing: "People do like to stay in this area: it's near the factories and the places where they work, and lots of people come and fetch the guys for work outside Shoprite." For domestic workers the nearby formerly white suburbs of Table View and Blouberg are also just one taxi ride away, he adds. Each house in Dunoon is seemingly distinctive: one has large circular windows; another has a front shack in black and brown stripes that could conceivably feature in a design magazine. The flat block conversions stand out like sore thumbs on the low-rise skyline; their finishes are notably high-end. Were it not for the small shacks to either side at one of the most ambitious examples, I could easily imagine myself standing in neighbouring Table View or Parklands.

Flat conversions are clearly answering a need, but Chibwaz thinks RDP houses were a helpful government intervention because they redressed an original lack. He says: "After that, then people did something better ... Now, other people are building their own houses the way they feel." Available land and resources, he says, allow them to adapt and modify the dwellings. Chibwaz explains it as incremental progress when fortune favours: "So you are staying in a *hokkie* [small makeshift shed], then they build [an] RDP house much bigger than a *hokkie*. Then you tend to improve when you've got something else. You think, 'I must design this way' or 'I must do this'. But as the time passed by, people got different thoughts and feelings. Maybe you think, 'It's a bit funny there' or 'No, I must add another room'." On cue, we pass a conversion that has been turned into a shop, and another that is being built on a grand multistory scale.

Chibwaz is reluctant to talk politics. He does however state that he does not think a xenophobic strand is reemerging in Dunoon. This reasoning basically circles back to where we began: Wolff's "funny buildings". Chibwaz says: "In these buildings, you will find that these people are lending [renting]. A lot of them have foreigners. They are the ones that they are lending those places. So they manage to get R750, R850 or R1 000 a room ... A lot of citizens don't want to pay like that." He points out that landlords, who as RDP title holders are generally "citizens", would be reluctant to lose their income stream: "It's like they are demolishing your business, you know." Further, he thinks things are much better now that people have recognised they live in a community where cooperation rather than identity is the key. "Whether someone is a citizen or a foreigner, or just from Joburg," offers Chibwaz, "they are here."

Twisting, dreadlocks, dye, S-curls, blowouts and braiding or just a straight haircut for R10 at a salon set up in a shipping container suggests this diversity is well catered for. But Dunoon residents also have their personal worries. Dr Mpungu, a sangoma, offers on his signboard cures for a range of problems: from marriage (listed as number one) to ghosts in the home and promotion at work.

> **"People do like to stay in this area: it's near the factories and the places where they work ..."**

As we reach the end of our journey, a man is bending over some signage on top of his container unit with a paintbrush. He is putting the finishing touches to Unisex Hair Salon, which, the work-in-progress board offers, is the "Best in Town".

Dunoon's get-ahead spirit is reflected in its one and only high school. A notice on the administration block's window says: "All learners must speak English only." They must speak it into a circular hole that measures about 10cm across. Behind this weird feature bustles the administration staff of a fairly unusual institution, Inkwenkwezi Secondary School. Built in 2007, it accommodates about 1225 learners. Last year it achieved a matric pass rate of 89%, more than doubling its achievement in 2004.

Two distinctive architectural features flank the administration block. On the left, a multifunctional courtyard offers a 360-degree purview of all the classrooms and a white prefab signed in its window "The White House". This yard is purposefully designed so the principal, Tembi Kutu, can spend less time chasing kids to class and more time in his office. Down the passage is a beautiful and impressive vaulted hall that looks absolutely nothing like conventional school halls. That is partly the point, according to its architect, Heinrich Wolff. It was designed in 2007 to accommodate a multiplicity of uses that extend to the community, which helps the school generate an income from events like weddings and church services.

Another distinctive feature is more obvious from the outside: the school's signage, which takes its cue from the environment. This is a deliberate attempt to see how architecture can integrate and show respect towards the preexisting world; it also echoes Wolff's idea that, in settings like Dunoon, formal architecture should be subservient to the preexisting architecture. His attitude can be condensed into a single word: modesty. In Dunoon, Wolff found that the local non-residential structures, most of which were identical, had very different functions, a fact indicated only through signage. "If that is the device through which public architecture is registered, we should continue that, to build on the traditions people have," says Wolff.

Born in Roodepoort, west of Johannesburg, and trained as an architect at the University of Cape Town, Wolff believes in a proactive role for design in the city's future. "The apartheid city was designed," he states. "So if that catastrophe could have been originated out of a design intention like separate development, if design can cause such consternation, certainly design must be able to improve it ... If we give up hope that our generation could do the opposite, we are in real trouble. Our generation has got to turn the city around, to try make improvements and adjustments and peoples' lives."

While the school is well signed, the entrance door is unclear. On arrival, I follow a man who is here for recycling; we enter through a back passage into that vaulted hall. Piles of books for pulping are waiting at the elevated stage end. Chairs, boards, desks and teaching equipment are clumped in varied states of readiness for a new year. On the left wall is signage missing its final integer: "We Salute the Class of 201-". The bell rings and some learners in mustard yellow skirts and black stockings, white shirts and striped ties take to the adjacent passage.

Phinda Siyo, a departmental head who teaches grades 11 and 12, is engrossed in marking papers on a circular table in the library. This

> “
> **The idea that citizens can be the authors of the city, like it has been for millennia, is really good news, says architect Heinrich Wolff**
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smart new resource centre offers internet and films in addition to rows of neatly catalogued books.
Siyo, who has an openly engaged air, comes from a family of educators: two of his brothers teach and another two are principals. Less expectedly, he was formerly a professional footballer who played for Santos but cut his football career short for teaching and came to Inkwenkwezi from Khayelitsha. Siyo plays down his footballing with a good-natured laugh: “I didn’t really make it big in the football world,” he says. “I had to focus on teaching because I was already teaching. Either you are full-time in the one thing or the other.”
He says Inkwenkwezi definitely has something different about it, which is reflected in the fact that the children feel part of the school environment. “They find it a place to be and spend their time beyond school—they are not always in a hurry to leave this place, they enjoy being here despite the challenges we have,” says Siyo. “From the community’s perspective it’s an important space. It has a lot of meaning for the children and the parents here.”
In part, what distinguishes the school seems a mirror of Dunoon: a population largely drawn from “elsewhere”. Inkwenkwezi has a number of learners who come from different areas, like Langa or Gugulethu, different provinces, including the Eastern Cape, and other countries such as Zimbabwe. One of the consequences of this diversity is that learners do not come from settled communities where they have progressed through a school system that is familiar to them. This can translate into particular challenges and manifest in disciplinary problems. Ultimately, though, the learners are all part of the school community and these challenges are dealt with in-house through mechanisms like feeding schemes and after-school care.
Harder to control is the drift of problems from outside. Like schools in the more settled parts of Khayelitsha, Inkwenkwezi is a microcosm of its community. “We’ve had situations we’ve had to deal with that clearly come from outside, whether it’s conflict that carries over into the school or children who are very disadvantaged,” admits Siyo. “But we can cater because everyone feels they are part of the school. So really the school is the centre of everything especially for the children.”
Those children, adds Siyo, are a new generation and they want to get ahead in a new way. It is reflected in their ideas about their futures. “They have different aspirations now. It’s not like they still want to have those traditional careers, which is quite good.” Teachers have had to respond in kind, learning from and adapting to schoolchildren who are “no longer interested in the same old things”. “They are a generation on their own,” remarks Siyo.

There is interdependency between learning, social fabric, public space management, quality of life and construction on a very localised level. True to all communities, this idea has however been made explicit in an ongoing project and social experiment taking place in Khayelitsha. Established in 2005, the Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU) project is a collaborative initiative of the City of Cape Town that identifies crime hotspots—typically they are derelict, unused or poorly lit and serviced areas—and intervenes in these spaces by renegotiating their use. One example is in Monwabisi Park, a large informal settlement of about 25 000 people on a sand dune in Khayelitsha. The project here brings together early childhood development and a community participation model that aims to cut across party political lines.
It is Valentine’s Day on the day that I visit, the wind is up and sun is blazing. The bright glare is almost unbearable. The board of the Ford Foundation is also visiting, taking a view of several organisations active in the area. Instead of standing on a hot and windy Khayelitsha dune, I could have taken a train ride into Kayamandi, a township near Stellenbosch, along the famed Cape wine route. An email sent to me earlier invited me to take a stake in Cape Town’s world design capital status by designing a romantic getaway on one of Metrorail’s trains, and receive an evening of township entertainment, food and fun in Kayamandi.
“Here, you and your partner will experience a culturally authentic musical with a chorus of energetic local talent not only entertaining guests but also inviting you in the storytelling adventure,” offered the emailed invite. “Come hear, see, smell and taste the flavours of South African stories, music and food blended together with the warmth and passion of South African hospitality. If you can beat this much fun, love and laughter then let me know.”
Five days before Valentine’s Day, however, news reports told of frustrated Kayamandi residents breaking down the election booth set up for the final day of voter registration. During the same week, Municipal IQ, a data and intelligence firm, released statistics indicating that the country saw a protest almost every second day in 2013 (see sidebar). Their data is collected from media reports and identifies a protest as staged by community members against a municipality about issues that are the responsibility of local government. Kevin Allan, managing director of Municipal IQ, says in a statement that municipal managers should ensure city development is as inclusive as possible to cope with urbanisation trajectories.
They will also, it seems, have to think differently about design to accommodate the sharp end of this phenomenon. VPUU, for one, takes a community participatory approach built around an understanding of safety as a public good. At Monwabisi, the core of the project is a safe house created from modular shipping container units where the community can meet and hold a variety of functions. There is also a football field with dune for grass alongside the safe house and other multipurpose spaces.
A steep path along a sandy walkway leads through tightly nestled shacks to a water point (or “Emthonjeni”) about ten minutes’ walk away. This is basically an upgraded public space where adults can socialise while collecting water from a communal tap and children can safely play in lieu of a formalised crèche. Khumbuzile Mqeteba, who has taken care of the area on a daily basis for the past three years, is standing in the brightly swept front yard of his dwelling. He says there was nothing there before but open space, whereas now children play here regularly and the community appreciates the facility. The project’s impact can only be measured in terms of perception surveys but water taps have reportedly raised penetration from 60-70% coverage to 95% over a series of months.
Back at the modular containers, there is also a safe toilet, an important feature given the inadequate sanitation inside the settlement itself. Positioned near access roads rather than houses, accessing the toilets often means a long walk for residents. Michael Krause, director of VPUU, is talking about sanitation issues as we approach the project in his car. “If you had to walk now, you are isolated,” he says, gesturing behind him to the shacks alongside to underscore the reality of how opportunistic crime and sanitation are intertwined. “So if you had to go [to the toilet] here, basically somebody can hide behind, and nobody hears you—it’s very easy.”
Krause says toilet blocks are often crime hotspots and VPUU is encouraging the City of Cape Town to bring toilets in closer to the people. Part of the problem is the high rate of dysfunctional toilets. VPUU suggest the city over-provides in response in their coverage calculations to compensate for this high toilet failure rate, with an even spatial distribution. “It’s a simple low-cost intervention that will actually save money to the city,” says Krause. He adds as an afterthought: “It would be a nice exercise to actually work out the cost to society of a non-functioning toilet.”
It’s a busy week for Krause, an urban designer who completed his Masters degree in spatial planning at Bauhaus-Universität Weimar. Besides the Ford Foundation delegation, on the day before I visited Monwabisi with him, VPUU gave evidence at the Khayelitsha commission. In response, commissioner Vusi Pikoli said it was the first time he had heard of a project that seriously looked at implementing the National Crime Prevention Strategy. Speaking to me at Monwabisi, Krause conceded that there are many objectors to the project, who for various reasons feel threatened, but the community stands firm in its support. He believes the police are not approaching the problems as systemic, but rather following individual agendas. “Our approach is the opposite,” he says, referring to the nested issues the commission raises. “It’s not so easy in black and white, which is what we try to give in our evidence. All of us have got room for improvement and we can only win that if it’s a collective effort.”
The commission will hear closing arguments from legal representatives at the end of May 2014 before making its findings on whether there is a systemic case to answer. Its transcripts of public hearings from over 60 people, however, offer a compelling urban narrative of post-apartheid South Africa that helps cast abstract notions of democracy into concrete form.
Every time I leave Khayelitsha for the N2 highway home, the last view of this neighbourhood, seemingly cast adrift on the outskirts of central Cape Town’s global allure, is a bold graffiti passage by Faith 47. This slim single mother, wearing long blonde plaits under a peak cap, in 2010 sprayed on a bridge an excerpt from the Freedom Charter, composed in 1955 to articulate aspirations and desires around the struggle against apartheid. “Today,” writes Faith 47 in a video entry documenting the stencil’s creation, “it is becoming increasingly evident that many of these changes have only been made on a superficial level.” Her artwork reflects back in my rearview mirror. It reads: “The People Shall Share in the Country’s Wealth.” ❋

Kim Gurney *is a freelance journalist, academic researcher and visual artist. A book on art, space and publics in Johannesburg is forthcoming from Palgrave Macmillan*

Illustration: *Patrick Latimer*

CAMBRIDGE

THE CITY OF FRAGMENTS

The Washington Post once, favourably we think, described Richard Sennett as a whirlwind of big ideas. In an exemplary demonstration of this skill, he talks about capitalist planning's inclination towards tight-fitting solutions, the ongoing project of engendering a socialist city, coproduction versus designer-led urban interventions, and the need to think about cities visually rather than verbally

Words: ***Richard Sennett & Ash Amin***

On a cold winter's afternoon in January, the humanist scholar and writer Richard Sennett met with geographer and theorist Ash Amin in a "cosy room" of Christ's College at the University of Cambridge to talk about urban design. Amin's brief from this magazine was to explore in more depth some of Sennett's statements and formulations expressed in a September 2013 lecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. During this lecture, marked by Sennett's apparent delight at returning to a familiar intellectual habitat, he spoke of the need to "find principles of design that scale up". He also stated: "My thinking about urbanism has moved from a Jane Jacobs view to something that wants to take seriously Lewis Mumford's idea that urbanism is not just about spontaneity and the local; but that design can make a city with a socialist character." Underpinning Sennett's interest in the possibilities of urban design as a collaborative tool is his particular and nuanced reading of the modern city: complex and multifunctional, it exists as a collage of different parts. Rationalising it, as much as intervening in it, requires a visual logic as much as verbal prowess, he tells Amin. "I think you have to think more like a modern artist, that is to think about collage and assemblage, think about fragments that are important to people. It's a different kind of socialism."

Ash Amin: Richard, a while ago you gave a talk at Harvard University, in which you spoke about the need to bring back notions of urban design, the concept of a city that could be designed. Can you saying something about what you mean?

Richard Sennett: One way to explain why I think we need to bring design back to the forefront of thinking about urban design goes back to a debate that occurred 60 years ago between Lewis Mumford and Jane Jacobs. Jacobs really defined the urban sensibilities that most of us have: face-to-face, communal, fluid and flexible. Her most obvious antagonist was Robert Moses, who was the master builder of New York, whose programme was inflexible and undemocratic, everything one loves to hate. But intellectually, her antagonist was really Lewis Mumford, who had a very different vision of the city. He was trained as a technologist, and in fact, I think he was the person who coined the term "smart city". He was a very sophisticated technologist. Moreover he was a socialist who believed in planning as an act of massive resistance against capitalism, but also in a more positive way, the mobilisation of an alternative vision, to bring people away from suffering. He thought that Jacobs' emphasis on spontaneity and localism was both bad politics and bad urbanism: bad politics, because it privileged the spontaneous and informal in the face this massive capitalist system; and bad urbanism in that it didn't give people a picture of the kind of city they would like, a good city. It privileged the process of interaction, but offered no plan to aspire to.

__Richard Sennett__ (b. 1943, Chicago) is the Centennial Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics and University Professor of the Humanities at New York University. Classically trained as a cellist, a hand injury in his adolescence prompted a change in career. A graduate of the University of Chicago and Harvard University, Sennett has devoted himself intellectually to the fields of ethnography, history and social theory. Through his many writings, starting with The Uses of Disorder *(1970), he has explored how individuals and groups make social and cultural sense of material facts, notably their lives in cities and the labours they pursue. Since the 1990s, as the work-world of modern capitalism began to alter quickly and radically, Sennett began his ongoing project charting its personal consequences for workers.* The Corrosion of Character *(1998) is an ethnographic account of how middle-level employees make sense of the "new economy" and was followed by* Respect in a World of Inequality *(2002), an appraisal of the modern welfare state, and* The Culture of the New Capitalism *(2006).* Two recent publications, The Craftsman *(2008) and* Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation *(2012), both explore the positive aspects of labour.*

To cut a long story short, Jacobs was the dominant figure, because she is the person we react to emotionally. But I've come to believe that Mumford's arguments are valid. There is another issue, a more technical one, which is that there's no way to scale up in the way Jacobs thinks, from a community to an urban level, no way to infer from the life in the street, a complex life of hundreds of thousands of streets. Mumford's idea was that this scale of movement from face-to-face to the whole was really the work of urban design. Now, for myself, I am interested in a particular technical system. It's called "complexity theory" sometimes, or "open systems theory". Unlike Mumford, I don't think that what you arrive at is a clear and totalised image.

I see the city more as an assemblage of different parts, that don't fit neatly together. His idea was that you create a whole in which everything has a rationale, balance and harmony, which came out of the Fabian Socialism that he knew as a young man in Britain, which created this garden city image. My idea is that we have to think in a more modern way about design, thinking the way the artists think about assemblage, which is the creation of a whole of disparate or not-fitting-together parts. How do you do that? That's the scale of the problem that I'm trying to address.

AA: The modern city today is fast moving, it is extremely large, much of what goes on is hidden, and, in a sense, the real dynamism of the city partly lies in the nature of its constructed or creative chaos. I accept your desire to go back to certain design principles, but can we begin to talk about what the design principles of assemblage might incorporate, might look like?

RS: They would focus on the edges between places, rather than on the centre within, and they would look at the ways in which the edges between places can be both porous—which is a very big deal—and yet resistant, so that a community can keep some of its own identity, but exchange with its neighbours. That translates into very concrete issues of design. These include looking at how you redesign highways or traffic arteries. The transversable modern highway has been used particularly in South Africa and Latin America as a class divider, as a divider between the very poor and the very rich. You seal off the rich areas by throwing a highway down between them. How can we bridge that? How can we make that transport system more porous? Yet another version of this, which is more relevant to the Middle East and draws on what I observed in Lebanon, is how do you make the border between distinct communities—between Christian and Muslims in Lebanon—porous, without simply smooshing the community together? This was a great challenge of making something out of the Green Line in Beirut after the end of the civil war in 1990. It's a reorientation of how we see the city. Of course, the centre still matters, but the edge is more exciting for design.

AA: Conceptually, there's something really quite tantalising about the notion of the city as a bordering project. That bordering might involve, as you intimated, a sensible use of infrastructures and highways, and of mixed buildings and mixed communities. Do you think the virtual arena has a role to play here in the process of bordering?

RS: Absolutely. I may be too much of a true believer in this. [Laughs] I think there are ways to make a city—I wouldn't call it virtual—to make a city online. I don't think it's an either-or phenomenon, but I think a lot of the desirable experiences that we want in a visible place can also be made in an intimate space. What I've written about this is—and this is why I'm so interested in craftsmanship and understanding physical emotions—is that a lot of the complexities we see in the material world, we don't know how to translate into the online realm. It's very primitive. For instance, when I did the study of cooperation, I found that the ideas that people have of cooperation online are much more conceptual than the kind of mediations and dialogic relations that they have face-to-face. We don't know how to write programmes online yet, which reflect the complexity of interaction that people have materially. I believe it can happen.

AA: If we took online and placed it at the same level as, say, art and sculpture, and then imagined how these creative media could help us in the bordering project, for constructing useful bridges between communities and between different parts of the city, in a very aleatoric sense, do you think the challenge here really is one of visualisation?

RS: I do. People think in images. We have visual ways of reasoning, just as we have verbal ways of reasoning. One of the things that I think was quite unfortunate in the 1980s and 90s was the idea of thinking of the city exclusively in verbal terms, as a language. This goes very far back to Wittgenstein's idea that the limits of my language are the limits of my experience, a completely false idea, in my view. I think the work of picturing is a way of thinking about what things should be like, and it is remarkably not done in urbanism.

AA: Who should be the principle agents of picturing in the city, the kind of city that you want to see designed?

RS: This is where I think high-tech comes in, because formerly that would be the province only of people who are very skilled designers. One of the things that's interested me is how to make design online something that is accessible to people who are not trained designers. I tried with Ricky Burdett. We created programmes for urban design online, a simplified version of computer-aided design (CAD), which meant that our students who were economists and sociologists, after a couple of weeks of preparation, were actually able to design a street or hospital. Not well, but the technology made it possible for them to picture ideas they had about different kinds of social processes and spaces.

> **"I'm not interested in democratic planning, which assumes that people spontaneously go for good. I don't believe that"**

I'm up on all of this. I know that you could resist it by saying that if you measure the actual technological and sociological complexity that most technicians have, it's so primitive that you would think, "Screw it!" But I think it's everything to aim for.

AA: Would you imagine in this context, a smart city that consists of rolling-out legible and usable software to every single social domain in the city, so that in the design process you get slum dwellers, schoolchildren and their teachers, university professors and their students designing what they want to design? You see where I'm going? Effectively the grand project here becomes one of the same technology being made available to a multitude of communities.

RS: You have to distinguish what kind of technology you're talking about. The commercial smart city technology is predicative. That is the algorithms are written for how people should behave in a certain way. And, that's what sells. Great examples of these experiments are Masdar City in the United Arab Emirates or Songdo, near Seoul in South Korea. The algorithm does the thinking, and they tend to be stupefying to people who use this technology. They have no inductive field of their own. Another way to do this, which is smarter and more democratic, organises big data so that people have a lot of information that they couldn't get by an induction. They still make choices based on where they are. An example. If you were using Google Maps, the programme would say to you that this is the shortest means to get from point A to B, but this other route is more interesting sociologically. You're in a different kind of world of writing programming. Such and such a route to get from point A to point E is more democratic than taking the shortest route. You'll be exposed to more difference. We don't write technology like that, and to do what would require a totally different mind-set—and that mind-set exists. That's what open systems theory is all about: the understanding of complexity, and indeed the creation of complexity. It's not the kind of technology that IBM or Google is currently selling. In fact, to go to your kinds of themes, that's a technology of surveillance. It's much more Foucauldian, and much more expensive.

AA: Let's address your principle of craft—of crafting borders and crafting the city. The conundrum, in my mind, is in the multiple, multiplex, dispersed and decentred city. One way to bring the parts together is to have a kind of Jamesian universe, a pluri-verse of 1001 hands doing the crafting, wherever these hands are, and wherever these minds are. Does that encapsulate your thinking?

RS: I think that's too romantic. One of the practicalities of this is that most people, because they're not being pushed to develop their visual intelligence, create the most conservative designs—because that's what people know. This is a great irony of democratic design in The Netherlands. What the demos wanted was a version of 19th century Dutch housing. People have no experience of the research into form. One way out of that practically involves coproduction with a skilled designer. La Marqueta in Spanish Harlem comes to mind for me. You have a skilled designer build three or four different models, present it to the community, and talk. That sort of coproduction marries craftsmanship with democracy. I'm really interested in that as a model for planning.

I'm not interested in democratic planning, which assumes that people spontaneously go for good. I don't believe that. On the other hand, I don't think they should be foisted with a preferred model. The whole idea of coproduction is that you have a discursive realm in between, in which skilled designers—like myself—make proposals, which are then explored in the community.
AA: But the complex city, even when you're using expertise properly, given the multiple nuances, still produces conflicts of design: design against design.
RS: That's life.
AA: How do you reconcile these conflicts?
RS: Maybe you don't.
AA: Does democracy go a step up into the parliament of things in the city? What is the parliament of design in a city?
RS: Why do you need resolution?
AA: Some things need to be fixed: streets, highways, the boundaries of the neighbourhood, the form of buildings.
RS: That's true, but this is purely functional. This brings in another principle of all open systems—incompleteness. Sometimes the "resolution" is that the form is left incomplete, which is also true of democratic processes. The idea that we need resolution, catharsis, that things need to be finished, is tyrannical if it becomes the whole of the process. In planning of streets, we don't need to resolve everything. Building typologies should allow for indecisiveness. Does that bodega really go on the corner or in the centre of the street? For me, a lot of open systems planning—just as with Linux in your computer—is about leaving the domain of the unresolved intact, and deciding what gets unresolved and what gets finished. The issue here is about infrastructure. What kind of infrastructure has to get resolved and what doesn't? In my view, there are basic efficiencies, which have to be resolved—like clean water, and sufficient electricity and a grid. But what doesn't need to be resolved is applications of electrical grids, like where do you light the street, how bright is it. Once you've got the grid in place, you can be flexible about those indeterminates. And, that kind of difference is important to understand. There are the elements of infrastructure, like water, which have to be finished systems, and then there are those elements, like energy, which can be left more indeterminate. The issue here is to have, in some areas of infrastructure at least, a loose fit between form and function. What open systems theory does is try to research where the loose fit exists and where the tight fit doesn't. Almost all of capitalist planning is oriented to tight fit. It's how you get the kinds of efficiencies that you can drive surplus value out of. It is a mechanical fit and you can make it cost.
I'm very sympathetic to the idea of people, as they do in many slums, tapping into the electric grid to steal electricity. But I'm very unsympathetic to the idea that people tap into open flowing water. I've been arguing with UN Habitat that they should be putting their money into water pipes, rather than into fixed electrical delivery. But that's the level of specificity, programmatically, that thinking about open systems leads you to.
AA: This is a subterranean infrastructural urbanism, where you get the arterial system right, but not the injunctions that follow from it. Is that what you're getting at?
RS: Yes, that's part of it.
AA: The reason I ask that question is because a number of us urbanists agree that spontaneous urbanism is problematic.
RS: Yes, it's a recipe for weakness.
AA: We further agree that just interactive urbanism isn't good enough, and we agree to the need for design and controlling the arterial system. The question that begs is then, what remains of utopia in the urban context? Is your proposal a new kind of backdoor utopianism?
RS: Yes! [Laughs] I've never thought of that phrase, but that's what it is. The idea is that utopia is expanding both technologically and socially the level of indeterminacy. You can't do it infinitely, as with water. But, it's pushing the limits of the indeterminate. The more indeterminacy you have, the more coproduction you can have. It's the techniques of doing that, that matter.
AA: Does the utopian element here reside in the nature of the process, the democratic nature of things? Or, do you still want to bring back, again through the back door, a vision of the whole, a sense of the good city? Because so much of the city today is mostly bad, particularly for the poor and the marginalised and the excluded. So, in your scheme of things, there would be no notion of *ex novo*, as a sense of what a good city is?
RS: What I don't think you can do is draw a socialist city. That's what Mumford thought, that you could do it. I don't believe that. I think you have to think more like a modern artist, that is to think about collage and assemblage, think about fragments that are important to people. It's a different kind of socialism. It's a socialism that experiences events rather than totalised history, but in which people are free to experience those events. What I'm talking to you about is the logic, for instance, of working with people in slums, so that the slum can grow from within. It's the logic that Alejandro Aravena tried to practice in Chile with incomplete forms of housing. I think it's a way of working, which says that when we talk about the image. And what we're talking about is modern images: fragments, assemblages, collages. Sometimes they will be very abstract as in the work of Michael Sorkin, whose the images don't look like cities—they look like Barnett Newman, but they have a logic which is readable as urban.
A lot of visual urbanisation is so representational. It's like the 19th-century notion of art: this is what the good city looks like. We don't do representation anymore in other forms of visual arts, so why should we do it in urban design?

> **"The idea that we need resolution, catharsis, that things need to be finished, is tyrannical if it becomes the whole of the process. In planning of streets, we don't need to resolve everything"**

AA: Urban design still lays down some of the baselines of the urban commons. Then, the designers, planners and politicians have to make sure that these deliverables of the urban commons reach those that need it.
RS: This is a question I wanted to ask you: Is the commons actually a place in which people's ideas are enacted by representation politically? That is, does the commons look like a parliament? If you take what I was just saying before, if we don't believe in representation in active design, why should we believe in representation as a principle of establishing an urban commons? To make that very concrete: my idea of the urban commons is people going into unknown territory to talk with strangers. It's not having a city bureaucracy. It is about people coming back from experiences of going into foreign territory, places where they don't belong, doing things that they have done before. That's that commons. The commons is that experience of getting outside of the familiar. And, that's what a lot of visual art is about. It's about ways of seeing that you haven't seen before. Why shouldn't we adapt that same principle to politics?
AA: I'm entirely sympathetic to that view. Essentially you're spelling out the nature of an agonistic commons in an urban context, which is great, but at the same time, let's look at the darker side of the city, for instance—the city in which so many people live without, rather than with; the city where people are pushed to the margin; the city of the migrant who can't get work; the brutal side of urban living. We may also want to begin to think of the commons as those things that are actually supplied to everybody, or people have access to: the means to be able to participate properly in an agonistic arena. There I think your earlier notion of an arterial urbanism, in which access to water, electricity, schooling, healthcare, those things that are part of the shared commons, that's got to be complete?

> **Almost all of capitalist planning is oriented to tight fit**

RS: Yes. You used the word marginal and I think that's a very relevant word, because the way in which social and economic justice translates itself in urban form is through isolation, through literally making the poor invisible, marginal to the rest of the city. Every time I travel in very poor areas, what strikes me about it is that these are places in which otherness has become a form of isolation. When you look at a huge city of poverty, like Mexico City, the thing that is to me the most striking, urbanistically, is not that people are poor, but in their poverty they're isolated from people who are richer. As an urbanist, not as an all round social theorist, what I'd say about this is that combat against that kind of inequality requires dealing with marginalisation and isolation. I don't know if we urbanists are ever going to solve the problem of capitalist inequality, but what we can solve or deal with is the consequences of that inequality, which are isolation.
AA: One final question, Richard. We've agreed that a way forward is to construct a performative public sphere in the city. We've both agreed that in this process, design plays a very important role in making visible hidden connections and building across things. Do you think there is a pedagogic element to this as well? Do you think the occupancy of the turf also requires a certain pedagogy of civility, and who does this training?
RS: I've often thought that the next phase of urbanism is going to involve putting geographers together with the visual artists. There's so much of urban sociology, which is mindless and barely theorised that I've given up on that. In the domains that I was pedagogically raised in, which is Chicago School of Sociology, that's just come to an end. What I think is going to happen, that's vibrant now, is something that's like a third-generation Lefebvrian revolution, where you have geography, which is two-dimensional, and design, which is three-dimensional, come together. In most design schools that I've taught in, the attempt is to somehow marry visual practice with sociological and economic propositions—and the result is rather trivial. I don't think that's the way forward. I think a different kind of disciplinary discussion has to occur, which is what you do and what I do.
AA: Do you think there's something here that professionals, teachers like us, could learn from communities themselves, that are forced to make border crossings all the time?
RS: Yes, absolutely.
AA: A pedagogy from the poor and not of the poor?
RS: That was the old Chicago School idea: the poor are competent interpreters of their own condition. It was the noblest thing about the Chicago School: you didn't need to have a PhD in order to give a logical account or interpretation of your own experience in the city. It was stressed in community studies and so on. The notion that people are competent and can interpret their own conditions is something that's really disappeared. Survey research rules it out, by design, because you're looking for consistencies, not inconsistencies. You assume that you have a naive subject that's furnishing you data, which you then interpret. Very few survey researchers will go back to their subjects and say, "I found this pattern, what do you make of it?" In fact, I don't know any that do that. But, it's also true that a lot of urban ethnographies accentuate the suffering of people: look at what victims they are. I think academic urbanism is not in a good place.
Another project that interests me very much is what urbanists like us could learn from philosophers who specialise in ethics. What is a good city? What I'd like to learn from a philosopher is how do you construct the word "good" in there? What do we mean by that? Be very specific about it. I don't think a "good city" is one in which people behave to a high moral standard, but a city in which they can hold each other to account. There is a domain which spatially could be on the net, if you think of the net as a city, in which behaviour—moral or immoral—can be held to account, in which people are subject to recognition. That's a very particular kind of school of philosophical thinking; it's people like German philosopher Axel Honneth; it's not moralism in the usual sense. This is something that could happen in universities, but it doesn't. When I taught at Harvard University, I would say that people outside the Graduate School of Design who most seldom entered its doors were philosophers. There are economists and sociologists coming in all the time, but I don't think that's very productive anymore.*

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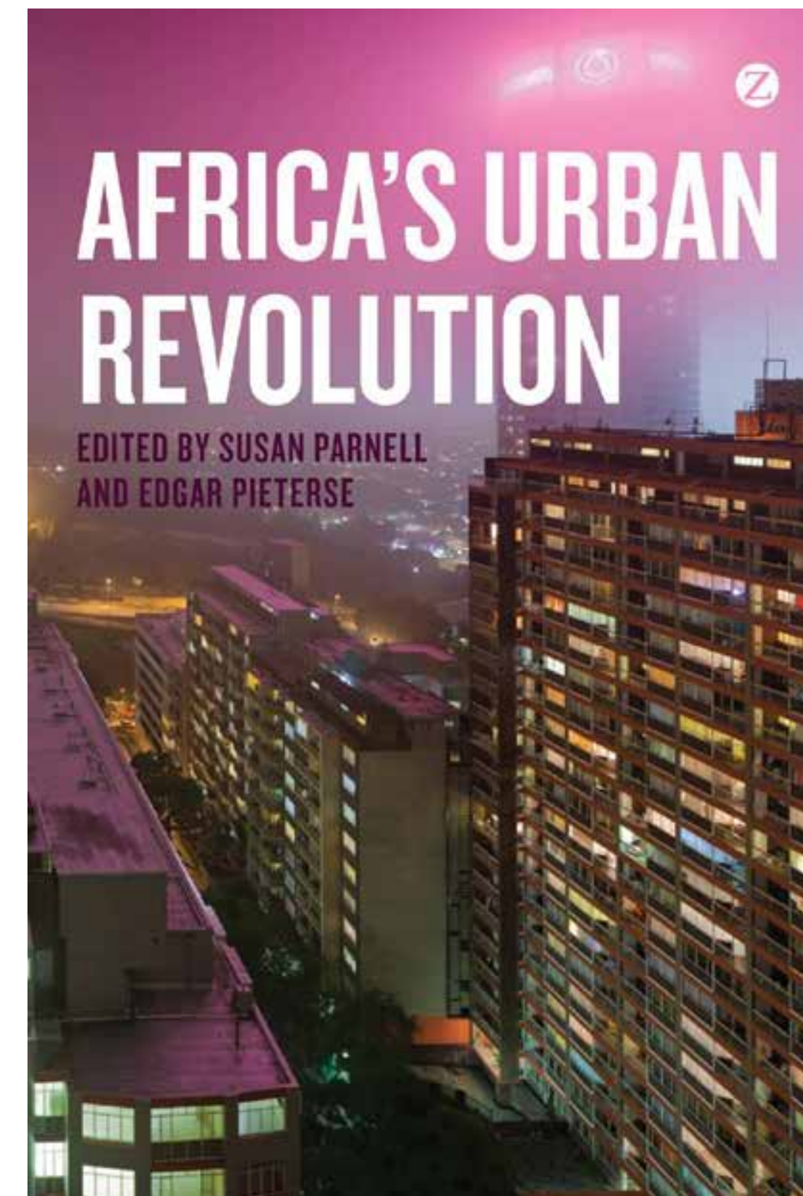

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Garth A. Myers, Distinguished Professor of Urban International Studies, Trinity College, Hartford

SÃO PAULO

THE CONNECTION PARADOX

For nearly a half-century, the Brazilian state, working with leading architects, has attempted to upgrade informal settlements in the country's biggest cities. We look at the context of this large-scale project as well as the efforts in two of São Paulo's largest favelas

Words: ***Fernando Serapião*** | *Photos:* ***Fábio Knoll***

The recent urban interventions and upgrades in São Paulo's two largest favelas, Heliópolis and Paraisópolis, prompt a question. What happens when the formal and informal city get together? What lessons, from both sides, can we take from this confluence? On the one hand, the formal city, can learn from the informal city particularly with regards to mixed-use, density and the synergy that exists between common and private space. On the other hand, social housing projects in informal areas need to endeavour not to facilitate unwanted social contagion that new apartment buildings can induce, such as segregation, for example, a commonplace occurrence in condominiums in the formal city.

"Since the early 20th century, there has been nothing left for the migrants who regard the city as a lifeline but the appeal to marginal behaviour," said Brazilian architect Carlos Nelson Ferreira dos Santos, a pioneer in slum upgrading, in the late 1980s. "The growth at the expense of the favelas, decaying areas and semi-regularised settlements on the outskirts of big cities, has become a commonplace." Ferreira dos Santos studied architecture in the polarised political context that followed the inauguration in April 1960 of Brasília as the country's capital and the 1964 military coup d'état, which saw Brazil governed by a military dictatorship until 1985.

The construction of the new capital tested, to the extreme, the idea of a modernist urban utopia. Its creators repeated ideas and expressions of early 20th century European and Russian avant-gardes, particularly those of the International Congresses of Modern Architecture (1928-59) and Le Corbusier, whose ideas responded to urban chaos of the post-industrial revolution. One strategy was to divide the city by functions: transportation, work, recreation and dwelling. In this scenario, the house was one of the central points, treated like a machine, with industrial components and minimal dimensions. Following this ideological playbook, the housing problem would be solved with apartment buildings raised above ground by reinforced columns (or *pilotis*) and served by schools and community centres—what the Russians called social capacitors, or society transformers.

These ideas found fertile soil in the tropics. One of the high points of modern Brazilian architecture is the Pedregulho housing development on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro, designed in 1946 by architect Affonso Eduardo Reidy. Pedregulho generated substantial editorial and was hailed by European critics as one of the best buildings on the continent. Pedregulho houses a school, day-care and gym, all surrounded by a green setting created landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx and art by Cândido Portinari, one of Brazil's most important modern painters. Its 570 apartments are spread over several blocks, the most surprising of which is a 260-metre-long building that snakes up a hillside.

A Le Corbusier-inspired utopian proposal for Rio de Janeiro, Reidy's design suggested a strong concept for replacing the shacks on the hills across the city.

But Pedregulho was not designed for favela dwellers: low-ranking officials from the city municipality occupied its apartments. In Brazil, most of the housing projects built between 1930 and 1960 were financed by the pension funds of different professional classes. Nobody associated favelas with housing finance. Consequently, the building programmes from this period did not cater to those living on the margins of society. Reidy did however work on a pioneering project for the population of Catacumba, a favela on a steep hill in the wealthy South Zone, between Copacabana and Ipanema on Lake Rodrigo de Freitas. Designed in 1951 and comprising 680 apartments, Reidy's unrealised project was innovative both in terms of its housing policy and maintenance regime. In an interview with a newspaper of the time, Reidy stated: "There are those who criticise the choice of such a beautiful residential area for the construction of social housing. They are mistaken because there should be social housing in each neighbourhood, as each neighbourhood has its workers."

The project was never built, and 20 years later local authorities settled the matter in the usual Brazilian way, forcibly removing 10 000 residents and transplanting them to degrading housing projects in the suburbs. If Reidy's blueprints ended up in shelves or filing cabinets, the consequence of this episode has not been filed: some of Catacumba's residents were relocated to Cidade de Deus, a favela whose cruel reality was described in Paulo Lins's 1997 book, Cidade de Deus, later adapted by Fernando Meirelles into the acclaimed movie, *City of God* (2002).

In the 1960s Carlos Nelson Ferreira dos Santos's ideas were still only crawling. Involved with the student movement, he collaborated with colleagues from medical school in social actions in Rio's hillsides. By getting to know the reality of the city's slums before engaging with architectural doctrines, Ferreira dos Santos was able to formulate a vision of the favela that was not solely grounded in modern pragmatism. In his view, government and society looked at the favelas with indifference. Until then, the government had not recognised these communities, nor were they part of any official city map. The favelas were regarded by everyone, perhaps even by their residents, as a temporary evil.

"It became a habit, a 'normality', to rely on housing typologies that, even subjected to systematic 'extermination' campaigns, had always been convenient," said Ferreira dos Santos. "They served as the decompression valve as well, and they solved contradictions located far beyond the urban borders."

Ferreira dos Santos planted the seed of favela upgrading in Rio de Janeiro over 45 years ago. Working with the favela dwellers of Brás de Pina, his team devised an alternative to the forced removal and transfer of residents to distant and anodyne housing, as envisaged by the municipality. His concept was based mainly on land tenure regularisation and the implementation of public infrastructure. Blending anthropology and architecture, he sought to understand built space by bringing together popular and erudite forms of knowledge.

> **"São Paulo has a dense, vertical central city surrounded on its periphery by horizontal sprawl that has been expanded by clandestine roads lacking public infrastructure"**

For the past 25 years—and now without the participation of Ferreira dos Santos, who died in 1989—favela upgrading has been a feature of Brazilian urban planning. Two actions in major Brazilian cities have been instrumental in advancing this process. In both cases, they adopted the model of land tenure regularisation and public infrastructure (advocated by Ferreira dos Santos). The first action, called *Favela-Bairro* (slum to neighbourhood), took place in Rio de Janeiro between 1994 and 2008, with the leadership of architects Luiz Paulo Conde and Sérgio Magalhães. The goal was to connect the formal and informal cities. The second action is more recent and took place in São Paulo in the last decade, largely under the leadership of the architect and urban planner Elisabete França.

São Paulo is the largest city in Brazil and has about 380 000 families living in favelas, about 13.7% of its population. Unlike Rio de Janeiro, where the best-known favelas occupy hillsides in prime neighbourhoods of the city, in São Paulo the plots occupied by these communities are nearly invisible to the wealthy and tourists alike. They occupy hillsides and floodplains on the city perimeter. A huge fringe, tens of kilometres long, these settlements are defined by their homogeneity: they form a perimeter of plaster and flat slab constructions settled between valleys and hillocks. If the first impression is one of poverty, the numbers show that most of the inhabitants on the outskirts of São Paulo have land titles and infrastructure.

São Paulo has about 1643 favela communities of various sizes, ranging from those with a few families to those as populous as small cities, with tens of thousands of inhabitants. Knowing the numbers and mapping out the problem was the first step in Elisabete França's management as director of SEHAB (Secretaria Municipal de Habitação), the housing department in the municipality. This data was then translated into a digital platform. Using a weighting system—sanitation, for example, is considered more important than asphalt—actions were prioritised.

Heliópolis and Paraisópolis are the two largest favelas in São Paulo and have both benefitted from large-scale urban interventions instituted by the city municipality. Aside from their colossal scale—each has more than 60 000 residents—they are both older than other favelas and stand out for their proximity to downtown. Heliópolis is located in the southwestern region of the city, less than 15km from downtown, and consists of old mixed-used

neighbourhoods that blend retail, middle-class residences and industrial warehouses. The favela is closer to the ABC Region, an area made up of eight industrialized cities in Greater São Paulo, than to the centre of city. Established in the second half of the 20th century, after the installation of car manufacturers in the 1950s, the ABC Region was the birthplace of the labour movement in the 1970s and generated political leaders of national expression, including former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, a former president of the Steel Workers' Union. Heliópolis grew in the vicinity of a Shell oil refinery (now closed) and a General Motors plant. The plot was purchased by an industrial workers' insurance fund for a proposed housing project before the favela's existence. The plan did not gain life and the institute used part of the farmland to build a hospital in the early 1970s. One version has it that Heliópolis came about when people occupied a set of sheds inhabited by masons during the hospital's construction. Another version links its existence to the removal four decades earlier of 150 families from Vergueiro favela, located about 3km from Heliópolis and later transformed into a middle-class neighbourhood: the eviction prompted the construction of wooden shacks on land in present-day Heliópolis. Paraisópolis is 20 years older and is located 15km south of central São Paulo. Like many other favelas surrounding the formal city it emerged as a subdivision created in the 1920s. During this period São Paulo acquired its polarised character, which it has retained to this day: a dense, vertical central city is surrounded on its periphery by horizontal sprawl that has been expanded by clandestine roads lacking public infrastructure. As with most of the subdivisions on the periphery, the layout of Paraisópolis was disastrous. Its main feature has been a grid of narrow, often steep streets with 100 x 200 metre blocks that defied the topography. Some of the lots were sold, but buyers did not occupy them. In the 1950s, when the area was still mainly rural, the first irregular shacks went up. It is possible that the land invaders were not evicted because of the amount of owners who did not know each other or rarely visited the site. Within two decades the population grew to about 20 000. Unlike in Heliópolis, which is in the city's industrial zone, the chief reason for the establishment of Paraisópolis was its proximity to the construction market and upper-class residential enclaves, which created domestic labour opportunities.

Over the past 20 years, Brazil's economic stability has transformed the morphology of both Heliópolis and Paraisópolis, along with many other favelas in the country: residents have replaced their wooden shacks with asbestos roofed brick houses. What was temporary, which looked more like a temporary encampment, has been transformed into something permanent. The internal distribution of the houses has few relations with the traditional home of the country. The Brazilian house, from its origins as the headquarters of a slave state property, still animates the dilemma between family environments (social and intimate sectors) and employee areas (service sector). This is even reflected in middle-class apartments, which have separate entrances and elevators. Fortunately, this situation has been changing, but its effect is still noticeable. For researchers like Carlos AC Lemos, some Brazilian domestic environments, such as the *copa*—a casual dining spot located between the dining room and kitchen—have served to mediate the interaction between family and employees, being a somewhat free territory.

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Favela dwellings have no domestic employees and there is no need for mediation. In general, the dwellers have their meals at the kitchen table and privacy (an obsession amongst Brazil's moneyed classes) is almost absent in the shack settlements: parents, children and other family members often sleep in the same room. Favela houses rarely have balconies, another typical element of the formal Brazilian home. The balcony is an open space used as a communal area by the family, since the living room is formal and typically reserved for visitors. As a substitute for the balcony, many favela dwellings have a peculiar element: a flat roof "slab" that is used as a recreational space on weekends, for example to host barbecues. The slab is also used as a service area and it also integrates the dreams of families: it represents the future, a space waiting for the further expansion of the home with additional new floors—there are houses with up to four or five floors. The extensions might be used to house married offspring or host tenants, a source of extra income for families.

It is not uncommon to see children playing in the alleys outside homes in favelas and adults using the community soccer fields. Unlike the formal city, the community lives and socialises more intensely in public areas, especially streets, in a manner typical of the atmosphere of hinterland towns. According to Brazilian anthropologist Roberto DaMatta, the street is a public space that belongs to everyone, but, at the same time, belongs to nobody, since authorities constantly monitor it; the

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Over the past 20 years, Brazil’s economic stability has transformed the morphology of its favelas: residents have replaced their wooden shacks with asbestos roofed brick houses

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house, in turn, is where this authority is fulfilled, established by the family or employer hierarchy. Community leaders, rather than the police or private security, establish order in the common areas of local communities. They are the ones who represent the various local stakeholders—individual and collective, drug traffickers and government—taking the lead in dialogues over favela upgrading, for example. This is another contrast between the formal and informal cities: there is little expression of community mobilisation in formal neighbourhoods.

The morphology of public space also differs in the favela. By its very nature, the winding form of the alleys of these irregular settlements contrasts with the formal city. The grid design of central São Paulo reflects a profited-orientated and market-driven design, where the organic passages of the favela demonstrate adaptation to nature and use of every available inch for a new dwelling (the only sacred place where no one dares to settle is the soccer field). The lack of respect for the rule of law means that even dangerous areas are occupied, such as steep hillsides or riverbanks. The effect is an above-average density when compared to the formal neighbourhoods of São Paulo. Paraisópolis, for instance, has about 606 inhabitants per ha and Heliópolis 401, as against the 145 of Jardim Paulista or 267 of Bela Vista, two populous neighbourhoods in the centre.

Notwithstanding their congestion, no one can deny the spatial richness of a favela, whose organic trace seems to result from spontaneous generation: the walkways, filled with surprises, defy sameness. While the organic form of favelas does present difficulties, especially of access for services such as garbage collection, ambulances and police, it is also positive in the sense that it is permissible to use "private" slabs to approach distant homes in hard-to-access areas or located in the middle of the block. Another common reality in the favelas is the diversified usage of space, primarily in the commercial streets: the ground floor is often adapted for retailing. This improves the dynamics of the favela, produces income, and minimises expensive travel between workplace and home. Another consequence of Brazil's recent economic stability is wider access to finance: credit has filled the interiors of favela homes with consumer goods—from flat-screen TVs and dishwashers to cars, the latter intensifying the character of life in chaotic Paraisópolis. The community, which has no monorail or railway network, is only accessible by bus. On the streets of Paraisópolis, the city's traffic laws are a fiction—because of their commercial value, street signs are also commonly stolen. By comparison, Heliópolis has subway, train, bus and Bus Rapid Transit transport systems, although this has not diminished the desire among residents to own a car.

Before França and her team began their urban upgrades in São Paulo's favelas, the only signs of public infrastructure were bus lines, along with schools, health centres and standardised apartment buildings. França increased the annual budget of the Housing Department 12 times in eight years, while municipal tax revenues grew 2.5 times over the same period.

At this rate, she estimated, the municipality would take 15 years to assist all communities. The funds, complementing the municipal treasury resources, came from agreements with federal and state governments (each, accounting for 20% of the total) and indirect resources such as municipal sanitation and urban operations funds (a legal instrument which allows for higher Federal Acquisition Regulations in exchange for private resources allocated to urban development and social housing).

> **"Another consequence of Brazil's recent economic stability is wider access to finance: credit has filled the interiors of favela homes with consumer goods"**

In Heliópolis and Paraisópolis, as in other favelas in São Paulo, the government has limited the construction of new housing units to residents facing resettlement, for example, because they live in geotechnical risk areas, on steep slopes or near a riverbank. In such cases, those who are in danger benefit from the social rent resources until the new unit is ready, preferably in the same community or surroundings.

One of the biggest hurdles of the operation is the lack of land for new constructions, which are financed by residents, although highly subsidised. Abandoning the standard designs, SEHAB commissioned projects from more than 80 architectural offices, many of which are well-known names in São Paulo, such as Brasil Arquitetura, Andrade Morettin and Marcos Acayaba.

The contrast between the new housing blocks, which are the most visible governmental actions in their setting, creates some paradoxes of the connection between formal and informal cities. One of them is the clash between modern and contemporary urbanism, or between Reidy and Ferreira dos Santos, whose legacy still affects the hearts and minds of many urban planning experts. A considerable number of architects designing social housing still use the modernist model and have Reidy's Pedregulho as a reference. Heirs of an architectural school with deep roots, Brazilian designers still believe in the ideals of linear blocks and it is difficult for them to dialogue with precariousness. Edson Elito, the architect of a large housing project built in Paraisópolis, does not agree with mimicking his design to the surroundings. For him—and many of his colleagues—shack settlements are a picture of misery and there is no reason to dialogue with them. A question remains: If one cannot consider the many positive aspects present in spatiality and materiality of the favela, like the organic environment, fluidity of common circulations and mix of uses, how can one not get inebriated by the collective life in their public spaces? And speaking of the internal morphology of the favela houses, why don't the new social housing typologies allow for flexible spaces like the slabs? "The São Paulo architect is still very modern," says Elisabete França.

In defence of São Paulo's architects, land scarcity requires that new constructions be concentrated, with up to nine floors. Elito's housing project in Paraisópolis, for example, which received 954 families, has a higher density than the favela generally: 800 inhabitants per ha (where Pedregulho housed 470 inhabitants per ha). Can density reach these levels without modernism as model?

Most of the new projects in São Paulo's favelas are still surrounded by shack settlements, composing a scene that, if viewed with a modern bias, is an affront. Faced with this dilemma, in which the newly inserted social housing block does not accept the favela as a neighbour, São Paulo architects, led by Héctor Vigliecca, have begun to explore another line of reasoning. Vigliecca, an Uruguayan architect born and educated in Montevideo, is the result of the postmodern debate that reassessed the virtues of the traditional city. His apartment blocks are set parallel to the sidewalk to help shape the city morphology. One of his most recent projects is in Heliópolis. This delicate operation, which involved an old and amorphous housing project, saw the architect restructure the block and, wherever possible, implement elements as mixed use and public passages in the middle of the block. When I visited the project a few months after its inauguration, the passages were fenced. An architect from the municipality who accompanied me explained that after the projects are delivered, residents had the right to do whatever they wanted. Vigliecca is aware of what happened and avoids visiting the project.

Whether in Paraisópolis or Heliópolis, the shock caused by the new projects is large enough to

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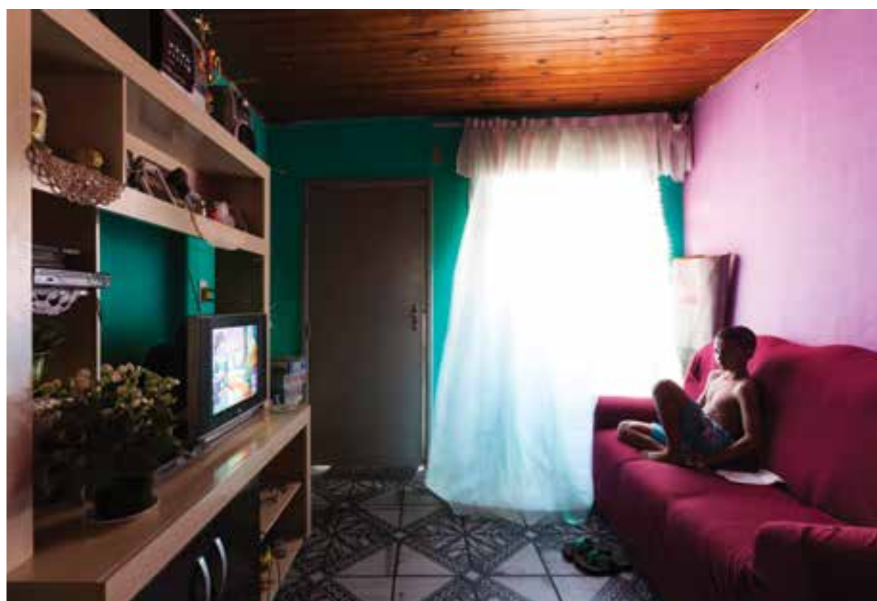
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Opening spread Residents enjoy a game of football at one of the public sports facilities in Paraisópolis
01. A young saleswoman, Paraisópolis
02. Now largely a subterranean stream, the Antonico Creek cuts diagonally across Paraisópolis and is the source of regular flooding, worsened by sewage and solid waste. The city government has initiated an urban project that includes the removal of irregular dwellings on areas of the creek unsuitable for construction
03. Heliópolis community leaders and municipal officials meet to discuss an urban plan
04. After 20 years of urban interventions in Heliópolis distinctive typologies have emerged
05. A vibrant mixed-use street in Paraisópolis shared by cars and pedestrians
06. The Pedregulho housing development on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro
07. The winding urban fabric Heliópolis
08. Interior of a self-built home

> **"Heirs of an architectural school with deep roots, Brazilian designers still believe in the ideals of linear blocks and it is difficult for them to dialogue with precariousness"**

affect the minds of the community. As part of the legal process of taking occupation, the city transfers ownership of the condominiums to residents, who organise themselves as a middle-class building. By paying for the property, they acquire a sense of ownership—and a sense of entitlement at odds with favela customs. Residents of the new buildings do not permit other members of the surrounding favela community to use recreational areas. This is a reason for the fences. Another effect of the connection paradox: the social exclusion typical of the formal city has become a feature of the favela, which once used to offer lessons in solidarity and use of public space to São Paulo.

The São Paulo municipality invited foreign architects to collaborate in the upgrades. The Swiss Christian Kerez, who is used to designing delicate museums in Europe, worked in collaboration with the Portuguese architect Hugo Mesquita and spent weeks immersed in the favela as a shadow of a community leader. In this dialogue, they sought to understand the spatiality of the place and how its population lives. As a result, the project mimics the landscape. It is hard to know whether the design, which was planned alley by alley, would have a positive outcome since it hasn't been built. Still, the design does raise the question of whether contractors involved in such projects have the sensitivity to implement Kerez's attentive design? For some São Paulo architects, this project by Kerez, and other similar ones by foreign practices emphasising the spatiality of the community, has an alien look. They are seen as almost folkloric visions that idealise the favela as something desirable.

In early 2013, after the election victory of the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores, PT), Elisabete França's team was demobilised. Since then, projects have been spinning, seeking to use credits from the federal government's housing programme, called Minha Casa, Minha Vida (My House, My Life). If 30 years ago the housing movements were part of the PT party base, after Lula's presidency (2003-11) they are out of step with federal housing policy. França's management was criticised by political parties and the government dismissed them: they were too radical for Lula's neoliberalism. The former president has handed over control of the Ministry of Cities to leftist parties and their federal programme for social housing is based on lines of credit that transfer the solution to the private sector. The Minha Casa, Minha Vida programme has prioritised the amount of new units, in general, on the outskirts, and is not focussed on favela upgrading.

More than a state housing policy, the government programme has helped create a new real estate product (small houses and apartments) for a new market (the so-called emerging C class). Without qualifying the location, the construction techniques or even the urban and architectural quality of the projects, the current federal programme is funding misguided projects that further swell the periphery. In Paraisópolis and Heliópolis, the interruption of the slum-upgrading programme has put off finding a solution to the problem of social housing, leaving the paradox of the connection between formal and informal cities up in the air. ⁕

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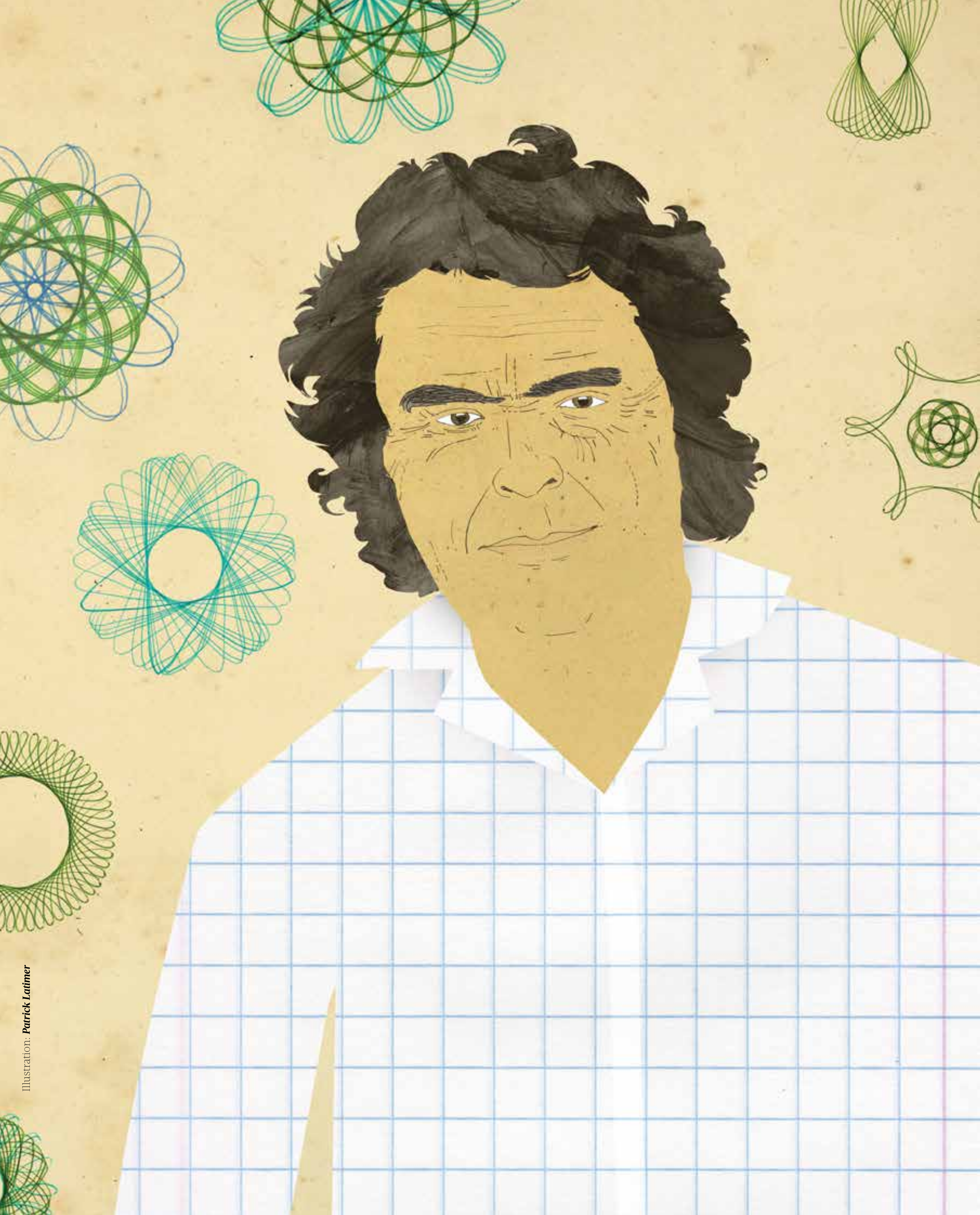
Illustration: *Patrick Latimer*

MEDELLÍN

MATHS & THE CITY

Sergio Fajardo is the public face of change in the Colombian city of Medellín. He speaks about the origin and focus of his ambitious political project, which brought infrastructure, beauty and citizen entitlement to areas once ravaged by cocaine wars

Words: ***Juan Diego Mejia***

Built in a valley bisected by the Medellín River, and surrounded by mountains giving a small taste of the rugged geography of the entire province of Antioquia, the city of Medellín has a population of 2.5-million and is the second most important city in Colombia for trade and industry. Founded in 1675, Medellín pretty much retained its village character well into the 20th century, growing slowly until the 1920s when hundreds of rural families arrived in search of work in the textile mills. In the 1950s, this urban migration was accelerated by the outbreak of partisan violence that ravaged Colombia for more than a decade. On the hillsides of Medellín, entire neighbourhoods were built and slowly began to replace the green of the mountain with the red of bricks. Medellín was the birthplace of large manufacturing companies that eventually succumbed to the competition from international markets. The Coltejer Tower, owned by one of the most important textile companies from that time and resembling the form of a weaving machine, is the tallest building in the city. Today, Medellín is a highly regarded Latin American fashion hub hosting large events and attracting experts from all over the world. The city is brimming with optimism, which is in stark contrast to the 1980s and 1990s, when Medellín was the epicentre of the drug war involving crime boss Pablo Escobar and other members of what became known as the Medellín Cartel.

Amidst a battle to control the cocaine trade, the city experienced years of terror resulting in the interruption of its development. Fear dominated Medellín, until a social engine comprised of business owners, cultural promoters and social activists began to explore ways to move past this dark chapter in the city's history. The efforts of this broad-based social movement were capped by the election, in 2004, of Sergio Fajardo. Following a successful three-year term in office, marked by urban and moral transformation, Fajardo became the governor of the province of Antioquia. Now 57, Fajardo was raised in a highly demanding academic environment. He graduated as a mathematician from the University of Los Andes in Bogotá where he also completed his post-graduate studies. Later, he studied at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he received his doctorate and also achieved high recognition for his work. His life looked set to be one involving research, scientific publishing and scholarly work to solve ancient enigmas. There was no sign he would shift to a political life.

Interviewed on the 12th floor of the Antioquia Government Building, Fajardo spoke about the difficulties his movement, the Grupo Compromiso Ciudadano (Citizens Commitment Movement, also sometimes translated as Citizen Engagement), faced in the two elections before his resounding victory in 2003. It is a story of how Medellín was able to exit the deadly alley it had ventured into two decades earlier.

Juan Diego Mejia: Your movement came to power with no previous political experience. How did you manage to secure citizen support?

Sergio Fajardo: We started by wearing the city on our skin. It was the result of walking each and every corner of Medellín for years. The city permeated our flesh from all that walking and talking. We felt it, smelled it, touched it, heard it. I remember the first time we went up to Santo Domingo Savio [an informal settlement] in 2000. I found a group of people lined up who would only look to the ground. I had never been anywhere in Medellín where people looked down. They had clearly been oppressed and we took a chance by making direct contact without intermediaries. We would give them flyers, put up banners, spend time with residents on the street corners. That's how we established a relationship.

JDM: Is that what distinguished you from traditional politics?
SF: I believe that addressing people with respect is one of the powerful tactics that set us apart. I have a profound love for Medellín; it is not simply a project. The way we have entered politics is different from conventional practice. Generally, the first step is to aim for a seat in the city council instead of going for the mayor's office directly. We decided to go for the mayor's post at once and began to build a city project. Then we worked to convene the people who had been thinking of and working for a new Medellín amongst different sectors.
JDM: How were you able to unite such a diverse group?
SF: I remember sitting in a tango bar called Homero Manzi with journalist Alsonso Salazar and novelist Laura Restrepo in 2000. We spoke about Medellín, about its inequalities, the need to offer the city an alternative, and Laura said why not build a tape or ribbon going from El Poblado, a wealthy neighbourhood in the south, to Moravia, a former dumpsite in the north, from the neighbourhoods of the rich to those of the poor, a tape uniting the city. That night we simply reflected and dreamed out loud but the following day, she wrote me a note on one of her books: "You are the tape." I understood that I could be that binding factor throughout the city, talking to the rich and the poor. I would be that tape.
JDM: What did you know about the city at that point?
SF: Alonso took me to places I had never seen. I always speak of our first visits to informal settlements. I remember meeting Froylán, with Adolfo and Juan de Dios Graciano at District "12 October". There we learnt politics one-on-one and connected with the city in a special way, so that when we took office we already carried Medellín in our heart and were able to convene around our project those working and studying the city. I stopped lecturing at the University of Los Andes and moved to Medellín. We worked with discipline. I was at the office by 8am every day; I attended each meeting and participated in addressing all issues. That encouraged the rest of the movement.
JDM: Traditional politicians speak to multitudes. Your party speaks to small groups.
SF: Thinking of that period I recall specific anecdotes. Once, we attended a meeting in Altavista, one of the five small rural counties within the municipality of Medellín, on a Saturday afternoon. When we arrived only four women were there because on that day the conservative party had sent buses to the area to pick people up and take them to a free concert at the Pablo Tobón Uribe Theatre. The women apologised on behalf of those who had left but we delivered the programme as we would have done to the most influential business owners. We treated each individual the same. If we hadn't done things that way we would have never achieved change in Medellín. That is very important for us. It was the way in which we established a relationship with people that broke the electoral machinery.
JDM: What was the reaction of the traditional political class of the city to the popularity of your proposal?

> **"Fear enslaves, it divides and leads everyone to think about saving themselves at any cost, which goes against building citizenship"**

SF: We won without paying for a single vote. We defeated the opposition without negotiating with them. In 2003, a month before elections, the opposition offered to withdraw and support us but I thought that accepting this state of affairs, after four years of campaigning against corruption and politicking, would mean death. We didn't take it and were therefore free to govern. We had a clear agenda—it was anti-corruption and in favour of education and citizen culture—and so we started to work.
JDM: Why did you decide to first tackle the physical city?
SF: The city needed a new skin because it had been deeply touched by violence. Fear enslaves, it divides and leads everyone to think about saving themselves at any cost, which goes against building citizenship. Citizens ought to encounter each other in public spaces. We knew that to fight fear we needed to come together again, but our public spaces were charged with death. We knew we needed to convene around education, science, technology, innovation, entrepreneurship and culture.
JDM: In your government, a strategy for Integral Urban Projects was promoted with a focus on investing in certain areas. How did you prioritise areas for spending?
SF: The expression Integral Urban Projects (Proyecto Urbano Integral in Spanish, or PUI) came about as a strategy to deal with areas hardest hit by violence and neglect. We made the decision of targeting the northeast zone for the first PUI. At the same time, however, we built library parks in other parts of the city, we went into schools across all sectors, intervened in all communities and were always communicative about our activities. That was the case of the San Javier Library Park. We announced that a library park would be built there and when architect Javier Vera won the bid we said, "Here are the plans, and here is the architect." We then organised group workshops so people could understand the process. That is how we were able to ensure each step was coherent with policy and that people felt our intentions were genuine.
JDM: You always said that public works in popular neighbourhoods must be beautiful. What is the role of aesthetics?
SF: For us everything was exciting. We were changing the skin of the city under the premise "the most beautiful to the most humble". Every word we spoke was linked to the things we were doing on the ground. It was a thrill for us. The children's science museum Parque Explora was growing, the botanical gardens were transforming, library parks were being built, and in that process the city's history was transformed through public works.
JDM: Did you ever consider public service during your life as a scientist?
SF: There are events that mark one's life. In 2001 I noticed a small spot on my right arm. I went to see a doctor who had been a classmate and I was diagnosed with Cutaneous Lymphoma type B. I had to undergo twenty sessions of radiotherapy. My personal situation was also very difficult as I was separating from my wife. One day, while I was on my bicycle going down the beltway near Colegio Nueva Granada, a high school in Bogotá, a tube blew up. I fell, scraped my skin. With a wound resembling a third degree burn and a damaged rotator cuff, I still managed to get into a taxi. In these precarious conditions I went to the radiotherapy session alongside other patients in advanced stages of cancer. It was during that session that I heard, while I was lying on the stretcher, that the World Trade Centre towers in New York had been struck. I thought they had made a mistake—those twin towers could never be toppled. I thought about my books and my bicycle, which encompassed all my belongings. Amidst the difficulties I had the strength to carry on; there couldn't be a bigger calamity. Then we won the mayoral elections in Medellín.
JDM: Is Medellín laying out a duplicable model?
SF: For me the model starts with politics. Urban planners can outline how to carry out a project in a community, but the model is reaching out to that community. Public space must serve as a place to come together and that entails a number of conditions. When we speak of "the most beautiful to the most humble" we are fighting inequality, which begins at a cultural level. Thus, as we intervene at the physical level we are explaining each step of the process. It is no coincidence that in Medellín not a single person has been killed in the library parks, the botanical gardens or Parque Explora. Why? Because of what these spaces mean to the community. The gardens are free. At the beginning people thought things would be stolen—the plants and everything else—but to this day no theft has been reported. And if we go to any of those places, we will find they are well kept because they were built with the community. That is powerful. ⁎

***Juan Diego Mejia** is a novelist based in Medellín*

CAPE TOWN

THE ROAD

A LITERATURE REVIEW

The road is a ubiquitous and common feature of daily life. Seldom viewed as more than utilitarian infrastructure connecting here with there, South African roads have nonetheless generated a substantial literature

Words: ***Hedley Twidle***

A 1950s postcard showing Settler's Way near Hospital Bend, Cape Town

You see them all along the N2: a red circle bisected diagonally, the universal code for no, not allowed, don't, though in this case the line is drawn not through a cigarette or a knife but a thumbs-up. The sign means "no hitchhiking", but if you are lucky enough to be flashing by in a vehicle it can produce an instant of cognitive dissonance (anti-good times, anti-like?). In 2014 the sign is hardly true to life—it has been outstripped by rising petrol prices and hard-nosed financial logic. Most people waiting on hard shoulders on the N2 hold currency in the air: ten, twenty, fifty rands. It is also a simple lesson in semiotics: even the simplest, most programmatic signs—whether pictographic, linguistic or property of the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL)—can be infiltrated by unintended and contradictory meanings.

N2. Curled up in that tiny alphanumeric are thousands of kilometres, hundreds of service stations, millions of tons of concrete. N2 can mean a London bus route; an intelligence officer in the US Navy; an anti-nuclear song by the Japanese indie group Asian Kung Fu Generation. But for my purposes it is the longest highway in South Africa, which starts at an unfinished flyover near the docks in Cape Town, follows the eastern seaboard of the country (roughly) for over 2000 kilometres, then bends west below Swaziland to end at the town of Ermelo in the province of Mpumalanga.

Major highways like the N2 are not liked, or at least, not thought about much. Writing a hidden history of the UK's motorway system, Joe Moran suggests that this bland corporate terrain of tarmac, underpasses and thermoplastic road markings is "the most commonly viewed and least contemplated landscape" in Britain. "The road is almost a separate country, one that remains underexplored not because it is remote and inaccessible but because it is so ubiquitous and familiar." Sometimes people (generally men) might discuss a particular route as a great "driving road". In general, however, these are zones of dead time, sameness and forgetfulness—a physical and psychological space to be endured on the way to somewhere more interesting. At worst, they are spaces of antisocial behaviour, injury and death.

"Why would you do a thing like that?" is a common reaction when people hear that I am trying to write a "cultural history" (for want of a better phrase) of the N2. Often they confuse it with the N1, which is inexplicable, given that they are such different propositions: one strikes inland through the arid Karoo to Johannesburg in straight and deadly lines; the other labours over coastal platforms, fold mountains, river after river.

The first section of any respectable research project is the literature review. Still holed up in Cape Town, waiting to make my escape, I assembled a range of materials and checked into the Nelson Mandela Boulevard Holiday Inn, expressly asking for a room with a view—of the N2 outbound, that is. No Table Mountain and no Wi-Fi required: I knew that to make it through some of the urban planning "literature" I would need to be entirely offline. The following represent notes toward a bibliography of the N2, and also an enquiry into how the road might figure in our cultural imaginary.

> **"Road passes might be imagined as the asphalt equivalent of what translators call lexical 'rich points': complex and vulnerable sites where much attention and labour has been concentrated"**

Looking down at the Boulevard through a tinted sliding door, with rush hour slowly draining under wind-tormented palms, I opened the *Norton Anthology of Poetry*:

> *...light-hearted I take to the open road,*
> *Healthy, free, the world before me,*
> *The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.*

Walt Whitman's lines stand near the beginning of a huge and by now international road literature—the archetypal American trip under big skies, refracted into a thousand road novels and road movies. The long brown (unsurfaced) path evolves into the tarmac of Route 66, Highway 61 and many other iconic routes—an open-ended, unfurling ribbon of text, celluloid and song.

But I invoke this tradition only to dispense with it as soon as possible, since such road literature is in fact about anything but the road itself. "I took the first opportunity to lose the N2 and made for Nature's Valley," writes Justin Fox in his 2010 journey around the perimeter of South Africa, *The Marginal Safari*. The book quotes Whitman in the opening pages and breathes a sigh of relief whenever it can exit the main highway for its crinklier precursors, those ghost arterials running in parallel through the coastal forests. "The R102 was how a road should look," writes Fox, "a sympathetic meander, two lanes humbled by trees, twisting to reveal a new delight at each bend, never allowing the car to become a projectile."

Most travel writing is eager to get as far away from a highway as possible. *Lonely Planet*, *Getaway*, *Weg*—the names of these publications all imply that the post-Beat voyagers following most closely in the tracks of Kerouac's *On the Road* should really be *off* the road. Or at least, well away from any major, national route.

This is all part of the interminable tension basic to the late 20th century travelogue: a desire for singular, authentic experience set against the mass mobility and vast trans-

individual infrastructures that enable the genre in the first place. Switching on a lamp fixed above my small, businesslike desk, I reached for three quick correctives to the narrative of the open road:

1) My clippings file of the *Cape Times* and *Cape Argus*: "Chaos as N2 Shut Down", "Corridor Crisis", "City Vows to Tackle N2 Protest Menace". Again and again in the last years, the N2 has made the front page, registering social discord. A major highway, as many protesters have realized, may be the Achilles heel of the modern state. "If our freeways are going to become a battle scene," commented one transport official, "Then this very painful breakdown of law and order could have frightening consequences."

2) A City of Cape Town Special Minute of 12 September 1946 found in the National Archives and secretly logged on my camera phone. There are thousands of documents detailing Cape Town's various urban planning disasters–from the Foreshore scheme to the N2 Gateway housing project–but it was this particular page that stayed with me. The document uses the word "fly-over" in inverted commas throughout, still feeling its way into the new vocabulary. A foldout diagram shows a sketch of the proposed Grand Boulevard East (now Nelson Mandela Boulevard), "sweeping down" into central Cape Town, shaded in blue pencil. The swathe of blue cuts through the narrow tenements of Woodstock and Walmer Estate, outlining condemned plots and blocks as it goes, then describes a generous curve through District Six.

3) A caption in David Goldblatt's *The Transported of KwaNdebele* (1989). This photoessay from the 1980s documents workers who are forced to spend up to eight hours a day on buses driving between a now defunct "homeland" and Pretoria. "I think that I have been catching such full buses for nine years," says one of the commuters who give their testimony at the back, a woman referred to only as "Domestic worker, 37-years-old, mother of seven". "It is dark when I get up, two o'clock in the morning," she says. "Not two o'clock in the day. Two o'clock in the morning I must wake up." Whereas most of this photographer's work is shot outdoors and soaked with light, these pictures are very different: principally photographed in dark PUTCO bus interiors, blurry figures are thrown back or slumped forward in what looks at times like religious devotion or even ecstasy, but is actually extreme exhaustion. At a recent exhibition of his work, the octogenarian photographer remarked that apartheid is gone, but those buses are still running–"and they will be for the next hundred fucking years". Goldblatt is known for his punctilious captions, and the one on page 22 reads as follows:

> *Wolwekraal-Marabastad route: In the hope of sleep, many, after sitting down, cover their faces with cloths or rugs or caps; some try to cushion their heads against the bumping of the bus with pieces of foam plastic.*

"The freeway is a space where two divergent but interlocked impulses of South African literature coincide: one is a reaching for great physical space, the other a realisation of intense socio-economic confinement"

Guidelines for the Safe and Responsible Handling of Bitumen. Handbook of Highway Curves (Revised Edition). *Fourth Conference on Asphalt Paving for South Africa.* Narrow the definition of road literature too much and you reach shelves of titles like this. I scan them for technical terms that can be made to bear larger metaphorical loads. "Concurrency" or "coincidence" is road planning speak for when two different routes occupy the same stretch of tarmac. Craning through the bathroom window, I can see how the N1 and N2 concur for their first few kilometres: the four-lane elevated expressway of the Foreshore that runs alongside a media corporation's headquarters and the international conference centre nearby. At either end are the unfinished flyover stubs that have collected around them many urban myths. There are eight in total, ramps to nowhere facing each other across the CBD–"like star-crossed lovers", says the *TimeOut City Guide Cape Town* (2005)–ready for extra lanes that were never built.

The freeway, it seems, is a space where two divergent but interlocked impulses of South African literature coincide: one is a reaching for great physical space, the other a realisation of intense socioeconomic confinement. Transport as aesthetic freedom; transport as a daily imprisonment. To watch the N2 verge from here to Cape Town International Airport is to encounter a 21.9 km demonstration of the paradox that those who live next to major highways generally enjoy the least mobility.

And just as there are always and only two directions to a highway, there are also two different historical vectors embedded in the N2. From west to east it is an undeniably colonial trajectory, the subject of many antiquarian histories that follow in the footsteps of early European travellers. SETTLER'S WAY. The concrete plaque, its white paint worn, is just visible as one funnels downhill from Hospital Bend and the highway begins in earnest.

In the other direction, the N2 is the movement of Xhosa-speakers to the southern metropolis in search of economic and educational opportunity: from Mpuma Koloni (Eastern Cape) to Ntshona Koloni (Western Cape), and of long minibus taxi journeys back the other way over December holidays. Imraan Coovadia's novella *The Institute for Taxi Poetry* (2012) imagines an alternate South Africa in which "transport poetry" is a venerated form, with well-loved verses stencilled onto the exteriors of Toyotas:

> *He is a Hi-Ace which is the only thing gleaming*
> *On Boxing Day*
> *On the long road to Bisho*

In many cases, the east-west trajectory is also a movement from rural to urban, and it is often in the noman's land of the road reserve–empty tracts owned by parastatals like SANRAL–where "traditional" practices have reproduced themselves in and adapted themselves to the metropolitan area. Cattle on modernist concrete overpasses; luxury sedans hurtling past initiation huts concealed in the brush near the Athlone cooling towers–by the 1990s these roadside scenes had become signifiers of how the codes of tradition and modernity were being scrambled in the port city.

Driving back to Cape Town, the protagonist of JM Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999), a novel that strings itself out along a west-east-west axis, watches a child with a stick herding a stray cow off the road. "Inexorably, he thinks, the country is coming to the city. Soon there will be cattle again on Rondebosch Common: soon history will have come full circle."

In a short story by Zoë Wicomb titled "N2" (1999), an unlikeable couple who have been lunching in the winelands break down on the roadside with a flat tyre. They are watched and then helped by Themba, who has been secluding himself in the bush at the side of the highway as part of his initiation into manhood. But not before the woman panics, draws a gun and then apologizes: "Yes, sorry, you know what it's like on the N2..."

The east-west vector is also registered in South Africa's substantial canon of prison writing. Historically, this was the route to which Xhosa leaders resisting British imperialism were consigned, en route to imprisonment on Robben Island. Mtutuzeli Matshoba's 1979 short story, "Pilgrimage to the Isle of Makana", registers its other name, commemorating the man who died in 1819 while trying to escape over the waves. "The journey linking the prison with the expanse of the land (and vice versa) is, I would venture, the most compelling national pilgrimage of apartheid South Africa," writes the literary scholar Rita Barnard, tracking

the complex dialectic of spaciousness and entrapment threaded through the work of poets like Ingrid Jonker, Mongane Wally Serote and Jeremy Cronin.

Matshoba describes a train journey south from Johannesburg, but in *The Island*, the 1973 play devised by Athol Fugard, John Kani and Winston Ntshona, the remembered journey is west from Port Elizabeth along the N2 in a crowded prison van:

> **JOHN:** Drank a gallon of water thinking of those 500 miles ahead. Jesus! There was the bucket in the corner! But we were packed in so tight, remember, we couldn't move … So I held on—Humansdorp, Storms River, Blaaukrantz … held on. But at Knysna, to hell with it, I let go!
> *[Gesture to indicate the release of his bladder. Winston finds this enormously funny. John joins in.]*
> **WINSTON:** Never!
> **JOHN:** Okay, let's say that by George nobody was dry. Remember the stop there?
> **WINSTON:** *Ja.* I thought they were going to let us walk around a bit.
> **JOHN:** Not a damn! Fill up with petrol and then on.

To parse. With a sodium glare rising from the floodlit docklands below, this outdated phrase keeps occurring to me. To parse a sentence is to resolve it into different components, describing the syntactic function of each: tense, mood, case. So how would one parse a highway? The obvious answer is to slice it up using towns on the route, something done by roadmaps when they print distances between each dot, or sometimes between little splinters or arrows stuck into the highway. Service stations practise a wildly optimistic version of this, calculated according to their next franchise. Next Shell Ultra: Mpumalanga, 745 km.

But this is a highway parsed anthropocentrically (or auto-centrically): by fuel tank, farm stall, capacity of bladder. There are other ways, more determined by the landmass. According to river crossing: Eerste to Kuils, Palmiet to Bot, Breede to Kompanjes. Or according to mountain pass: Sir Lowry's to Houwhoek, Kaaimans to Groot Brak. Passes might be imagined as the asphalt equivalent of what translators call lexical "rich points": complex and vulnerable sites where much attention and labour has been concentrated.

There is a whole sub-literature, I soon realised, devoted to the subject. *The Romance of Cape Mountain Passes* (2002), *Colossus of Roads* (1984), *So High the Road* (1963). The last text even has a foreword by Dr The Rt Hon HF Verwoerd. "The mountain passes!" intones Verwoerd. "They helped to unfold the beauties of nature, the grandeur of some scenery formerly known only to few. They overcame the natural barriers to progress." In these celebratory, photo-rich texts, civil engineers loosen their ties and hardhats, take the time to reminisce and tell anecdotes; amateur historians wander away from blasted cut-throughs to trace the scored tracks of old wagon routes.

But again, the literature of passes "opening up" the interior summons a counter-history of enclosure. Following a decree from Colonial Secretary John Montagu in the 1840s, it was largely convict labour that built the first mountain passes. Looking for textual traces of this enormous 19th century project of road making, you can turn to the |Xam narratives that make up the Bleek and Lloyd Collection, one of the richest archives of indigenous orature in the world. Intruding suddenly into the "traditionary" and mythological narratives there are personal testimonies of being caught up in colonial modernity: via a complex chain of transliteration and translation, the master narrator ||Kabbo speaks of being forced into a road gang when taken into captivity in the northern Cape:

> *We came to roll stones at Victoria, while we worked at the road. We lifted stones with our chests; we rolled great stones. We again worked with earth. We carried earth, while the earth was upon the handbarrow. We carried earth; we loaded the wagon with earth; we pushed it. Other people walked along. We were pushing the wagon's wheels; we were pushing; we poured down the earth; we pushed it back. We again loaded it, we and the Korannas. Other Korannas were carrying the handbarrow. Other people (i.e. Bushmen) were with the Korannas; they were also carrying earth; while the earth was upon the handbarrow. They again came to load the handbarrow with earth.*

Telling his stories in suburban Cape Town of the late 19th century, ||Kabbo speaks of wanting to take that road back north, asking for the boots and the gun which were promised to him for his services as a "giver of native literature". "For I have sat waiting for the boots, that I must put on to walk in; which are strong for the road … For a little road it is not. For, it is a great road; it is long."

In the decades post-1994, '||Kabbo's Intended Return Home' has come to be seen as a central moment of South African literary history, one that has been reworked and reimagined by many artists, most recently by one of Coovadia's taxi poets:

> *I did wish for some boots, strong like Dunlop rubber,*
> *To walk the road back north, to where there is a parking lot*
> *Beside my heart which I buried there,*
> *To where there is an empty spot, Audi-shaped*

|Xam is no longer spoken by any living person and neither are the indigenous Khoi languages of the Western Cape, but their words linger on the mountain passes: Gantouw, Tradouw, Kareedouw—respectively, the way of the eland, the women, the karee trees. The narrow range of geological options through the Cape fold belt funnel together the deep past and the ultra-modern again: the concrete stilts and crash barriers touch on ancient ways of moving through the landmass, routes taken by game herds and the hunter gatherers who followed them for thousands of years. That is why if you stop on a mountain pass in southern Africa, then not far from those thick-set picnic tables under the bluegums, there are likely to be secret, fecund places: river pools and overhangs with a view of the mountain flanks, rock shelters with stick figures or antelope etched across them.

The human figures on the national crest are traced from one of these painted surfaces: a section of rock now on display as the Linton Panel in the South African Museum. Speculating on the metaphors of trance and shamanic potency that the pigments on this rock surface seem to hold, the explanatory notes also tell us that it was removed because of road blasting in the Eastern Cape in 1917 and then transported to Cape Town (east to west) by ox wagon. National symbolism and pilgrimage, transport, technology and the indigenous trace combine and recombine in unexpected places.

Apart from the odd Doppler drone of a boy racer, the highway below was now dark and subdued, with a yellow moon overtaking from Devil's Peak. After all the rational engineering prose, the lumbering national allegories and the Verwoerd, I needed to do the mental equivalent of washing my mouth out before going to bed. There was also that larger anxiety that haunts any research project: that after all the reading you have still not come any closer to isolating precisely what it is that interests you.

On the bedside table of my standard surcharge suite were some examples of a larger, transnational literature that probes the simultaneous banality and strangeness of highways: Iain Sinclair's *London Orbital* (2002), an account of hiking round London's much-hated ring road, the M25, always within the "acoustic footsteps" of the route. *From One Second to the Next*, Werner Herzog's short 2013 documentary on texting while driving, where the camera lingers on everyday bends and verges where life-changing accidents happened, but which are soon returned to their daily-ness. "The car crash is the most dramatic event in people's lives apart from their own deaths," wrote JG Ballard in a 1971 piece titled "Autopia". For many, he added, the two "will coincide". Two years later, his novel *Crash* unleashed a relentless marrying of road injury, sex and technology that is still difficult to read without wincing. Its near sequel *Concrete Island* (1974) imagines a driver who breaks down on London's Westway and is marooned in a triangular fenced-off area between three motorway intersections, with nobody willing or able to stop for him. This modern take on *Robinson Crusoe* has been rewritten again just a kilometre away from here, on the lip of the funnel down to Settler's Way. At the top of a concrete stanchion, wedged in between the pillar and the underbelly of an onramp, someone has arranged their bedding and possessions, deliberately isolating himself or herself from the city below.

Within this literature that stays with the road as a physical and cultural artefact—that remains devoted to it, so to speak—there is a balancing of the outlandish and the pedestrian: a dual carriageway system where the extraordinary (all those skids and scrapes on the road surface testifying to loss of control, trauma, concussion) coexists with what Georges Perec called the "infra-ordinary". In *Roads: A Hidden History* (2009), Moran acknowledges this avant-garde French strain within his work—one that seeks to anatomise minutely what seem to be the most untoward and quotidian dimensions of daily life—while also drawing inspiration from the mock-serious proposals of the British social research organisation Mass-Observation. Its opening 1937 manifesto announced that, along with such topics as "Behaviour of people at war memorials", "The private lives of midwives", "Distribution, diffusion and significance of the dirty joke", it planned to study "Shouts and gestures of motorists".

Might such an "anthropology of the

> **He is a Hi-Ace which is the only thing gleaming On Boxing Day On the long road to Bisho**

near", wonders Moran, permit "a direct line to the nation's collective unconscious"? Could observing the mass movements of highways and the intense behaviours they call forth provide insights into our hidden collective life? To crack through the normality of tarmac and asphalt, he recalls the eerily empty highways that accompanied the funeral of Princess Diana, and also those archaic postcards celebrating newly constructed and impossibly empty roads: "The M1 near Newport Pagnell", "The Underpass, Croydon", "A40 Traffic". These weirdly haunting images with their deadpan captions are a reminder, he suggests, that motorways are beginning to acquire a cultural history, "but of a rather unsettling kind that evades the secure meanings of the heritage industry or the easy consolations of nostalgia".

In South Africa, any such cultural history of the road remains considerably more unsettled and evasive: the N at the front of N2 insisting on the idea of nation even as the carless highway is more and more the sign of protest, closure and crisis. Beyond the newspaper headlines, though, it is a short story by Henrietta Rose-Innes that touches most powerfully on the hauntedness of the empty highway, its uncanniness up close and its post-human scale. In "Poison" (2007), most inhabitants of Cape Town have fled the city due to some unspecified environmental disaster, but the protagonist lingers in a deserted service station on the N2, looking back at the city as toxic clouds boil above Table Mountain:

> *Standing alone on the highway was unnerving. This was for cars. The road surface was not meant to be touched with hands or feet, to be examined too closely or in stillness. The four lanes were so wide. Even the white lines and the gaps between them were much longer than they appeared from the car: the length of her whole body, were she to lie down in the road.*

Lying down not between the white lines of the N2 but at least within its acoustic footsteps, I set my subconscious to work on future methodologies, mentally noting a list of research tasks for the coming weeks:

1) Get stuck deliberately in rush hour traffic on Nelson Mandela Boulevard outbound; time this exactly so as to photograph the abstract expressionist panels formed by impacts with concrete crash barriers;
2) Using archival footage, identify the exact spot where a speeding police reservist struck Denise Darvall on 3 December 1967, prior to her being the donor in the world's first heart transplant performed at Groote Schuur hospital;
3) Employ related circulatory and transplant metaphors to compile a comprehensive psychosocial profile of the notorious Hospital Bend interchange, both prior to and after 2008 upgrade. Factor in data about how much of the traffic flow is composed of nervous and/or reckless first-time drivers, curving around the mountain to the university residences;
4) Comparative analysis *of Road Atlas and Touring Guide of Southern Africa* (Automobile Association, 1960) and *Southern and East Africa: Road Atlas.* (Map Studio, 2007), suggesting that the genre is on the way to obsolescence. Note hardcover, encyclopaedic reach and high production values of the former. Contrast with softcover and desultory introductory text of latter: "SOUTH AFRICA. What to buy: Decorated ostrich eggs. Famous citizens: Human rights icon and former president Nelson Mandela; author Wilbur Smith";
5) Count the number of sharp stones set in concrete below the unfinished flyover on Buitengracht to deter the homeless. Commission photographic essay comparing this large-scale municipal installation to a) spikes placed on window ledges to repel pigeons; b) the work of sculptors Joseph Beuys, Anthony Gormley and Andy Goldsworthy; and c) the photo essay *Van Riebeeck's Hedge – A Voyage Around an Object* (1992) by Roger Meintjes;
6) Investigate precise psychological dynamics of looks exchanged between men sitting in open-backed trucks (facing opposite to the direction of travel) and the drivers of luxury sedans; show how this is an archetypal South African exchange;
7) To interview: sellers of mobile phone chargers at N2 traffic lights in Somerset West; writer of the prayers recited prior to Intercape Mainliner journeys; men who paint white lines and straighten buckled crash barriers; women manning the STOP/GO signs at a Boland roadworks, a lone figure pinned to the highway under a big sky; women manning Storms River toll plaza over Easter, still point in the holiday season rush; woman manning the Toyota Hi-ace which is:

> *... the only thing gleaming*
> *On Boxing Day*
> *On the long road to Bisho.* ❋

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"OUR HIGHEST ACTS OF CREATIVITY ARE IN THE EMPTY SPACES, IN THE AIR, IN DREAMS, IN UNSEEN REALMS. THERE WE HAVE OUR CITIES."

BEN OKRI

WIDEANGLE

Dhaka
Mohammad Rakibul Hasan on Bangladeshi park life

Maputo
Filipe Branquinho on work and self-definition

Cape Town
Dillon Marsh on trees that refuse to budge

Mogadishu
Mark Lewis on a city reclaiming its pleasures

PARK LIFE

Photos: ***Mohammad Rakibul Hasan***

"Documentary photographers are like visual sociologists," says Mohammad Rakibul Hasan (b. 1977, Dhaka), a Bangladeshi film school graduate who in 2002 started making photographs. His essay Park Life was made in Suhrawardy Udyan, a historic park in Dhaka formerly used as a military clubhouse and horseracing course. A popular meeting place for locals, this park is also a roofless home and place of business for some. Aware of the growing influence of fine art practices on photography, he summarises the virtues of documentary photography as "honesty, truthfulness and patience."

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01. Man posing for photograph, 29 August 2012
02. Sohrowardi Park has a large homeless population who use the lake for bathing, 15 August 2012
03. A volleyball team warming up before playing in the park field, 19 October 2012
04. Sohrowardi Park has a large homeless population who use the lake for bathing, 15 August 2012
05. Mother and child, 27 November 2012

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PEOPLE AT WORK

Photos: ***Filipe Branquinho***

Trained as an architect, Filipe Branquinho (b. 1977, Maputo) grew up with the black-and-white photographs of Ricardo Rangel and Kok Nam, distinguished Mozambican documentarians who recorded the many joys and agonies of their country. In his portrait essay Occupations, which shows ordinary Mozambicans at work, Branquinho however assumes a more formal approach than his predecessors. Interested not only in showing what people do, but where they do it, Occupations portrays Maputo as a place of work and enterprise, of civil servants and athletes, also firemen and hawkers.

SALAS ANEXAS

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01–05. A selection from the *Occupations* series

WIDEANGLE

OPEN CITY

Photos: ***Mark Lewis***

For the past decade, photojournalist Mark Lewis (b. 1954, Klerksdorp) has worked as Africa correspondent for various German publications, travelling to the Somali port city of Mogadishu four times since 2001. It is, he says, a city marred by global perceptions of squalor and anarchy. Not so, insists Lewis. After a ruinous civil war (1991-2010), expatriate Somalis are returning home to help rebuild their capital city. "Now for the first time people have begun to return to the beaches and to walk freely on the streets," he says.

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BOB

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01–04. Excerpts from a work-in-progress essay on Mogadishu

WIDEANGLE

SAME, BUT DIFFERENT

Photos: ***Dillon Marsh***

Since graduating in 2003 with a fine art degree, Dillon Marsh (b. 1981, Cape Town) has photographed—all in multiple—termite mounds, abandoned farmhouses and mining compounds, well-worn footpaths used by factory workers, oversized and kitschy public sculptures, quarries and landfills, electrical pylons and the colony-sized nests created by social weaver birds. Interested in how photographs record particularity and kinship when presented serially, his essay Limbo shows dead trees standing in the yards of various working-class Cape Town suburbs, including Bridgetown, Bonteheuwel, Ruyterwacht, Windermere and The Hague.

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WIDEANGLE

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01–05. A selection from the *Limbo* series

ELSEWHERE

The Feminist
Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti was an activist, a wife, mother, and the first woman in Nigeria to drive a car

ONLINE ONLY

Lagos Photo
Nigeria's youthful international arts festival of photography

Rise & Fall
Relooking at South Africa's archive of apartheid photos

New York Perspective
Review of Alexandros Washburn's book The Nature of Urban Design

Hate Radio
A theatre group restages a grim radio show from 1994 Rwanda

ABEOKUTA

THE FEMINIST

Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti was the western-educated wife of a reverend whose son became one of Africa's foremost musicians. A friend of Kwame Nkrumah, her transition from society lady to uncompromising champion of women's rights and self-determination is also a story about the birth of modern Nigeria

Words: ***Tanya Pampalone***

The announcement, which came out of the Central Bank of Nigeria in August of 2012, would mark a historic move: Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, the activist and mother of Afrobeat musician Fela Kuti, was to be memorialised on the new 5000 naira note, alongside two other notable Nigerian women activists, Margaret Ekpo and Gambo Sawaba. The response from the family was swift. In a Google+ hangout with Channels Television, Seun Kuti, Funmilayo's grandson, demanded the government first apologise for the death of his grandmother before deciding to place her image on their new currency.

"It's ludicrous to say the least," said Kuti, who maintains the family musical legacy and is currently the lead singer of his father's legendary band Egypt 80. "She was murdered by the federal government of Nigeria. They have to accept they were the cause of her death."

With all four of her children now deceased, including Seun Kuti's father, Fela, who died in 1997, the youngest of Fela Kuti's sons spoke on behalf of the family. And his response was right on key.

His grandmother, an educator, a feminist and national and international political activist, had fought government officials–from the colonial era right through the early days of independence–much of her life. Kuti was not going to allow his grandmother to be silenced by her death.

According to Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Nina Emma Mba, who wrote the only existing biography on Funmilayo, *For Women and the Nation* (1997), the woman who was known as the "Lion of Lisabi", after an 18th century Egba warrior, and compared to Madam Tinubu, a prominent trader who opposed colonial as well as local leaders, was the great granddaughter of a freed slave, Sarah Taiwo. Both sides of her family were western educated: her father, Daniel Olumeyuwa Thomas, was a tailor, and her mother, Lucretia Phyllis Qmoyeni Adesolu, a seamstress. They wore western clothing, were married in an Anglican church and spoke fluent English as well as Yoruba; her father would later take a second wife, Rebecca Olushade Thomas.

"From all indications," write Johnson-Odim and Mba, "they were as proud of their Africanness as of the privileged status that western education accorded them in a colonial setting." Funmilayo would enjoy a similar standing. She was born on October 25, 1900, as Frances Olufunmilayo Olufela Abigail Folorunsho in Abeokuta, 100km north of Lagos, where she would spend much of the rest of her life. Originally settled in the early 19th century by the Egba, a Yoruba clan who fled the Oyo Empire, it had been a walled city, with the palace of the Alake, the traditional ruler of the area, appointed with a generous courtyard and an arched entrance topped with an elephant as its guardian.

Abeokuta was the first Yoruba town to receive missionaries, in 1846, and was early on at the vanguard of Yoruba educational efforts. By 1850 its population numbered 100 000–four times greater than Cape Town at the time, or roughly a fifth of the people living on Manhattan Island. The expanding railway network out of Lagos reached Abeokuta in 1895,

Illustration: *Patrick Latimer*

connecting its agrarian economy, which concentrated around the production of palm oil, palm kernels, kola nuts and later cocoa. Women traders were a hallmark of the local economy. They sold their wares—from rice to traditional medicines—in a bustling marketplace, and the streets were lined with bicycle repair shops, barbers and sewing schools.

Funmilayo's parents were "comfortable", not wealthy, and were respected in the community. She and her sister, Comfort Harriet Oluremi, often played with her half-siblings. Her parents believed girls were as entitled as boys to an education—something she would embrace as a defining cause in her adult life.

She met her husband-to-be when she was just 12. Israel Oludotun Ransome-Kuti was nine years her senior. The son of a well-known reverend, who was credited with opening more than a dozen churches in the area, he added "Ransome" to the family name due to the influence of a British missionary, a common custom at the time. The two endured a long, highly chaperoned courting, and it was only after her schooling in London (where she would drop Frances Abigail from her name and be known only by Funmilayo, meaning "give me happiness" in Yoruba) and his studies in Sierra Leone, where he received his BA and a degree in theology through the University of Durham in England, that they married. It was 1925.

The Reverend took a job in a nearby town as principal. It was in Ijebu-Ode that Funmilayo organised a "ladies club". Made up of mostly middle-class, western-educated women, it focused on handicrafts and social etiquette. When the couple returned to Abeokuta in 1932, where the Reverend was appointed principal of the Abeokuta Grammar School, she set up a kindergarten class, and started up her ladies club yet again.

The Abeokuta Ladies Club (ALC) held picnics and lectures and athletic games until 1944, when Funmilayo was introduced to a "market woman" who wanted to learn to read. Grace Eniola Soyinka, a successful trader and mother of Nobel literature laureate Wole Soyinka, was a niece of the Reverend. She served on the executive committee of the club and would drag her son to the early meetings. Soyinka places the Reverend at the centre of the change in direction of the club.

In his memoir *Ake: The Years of Childhood* (1981), Soyinka described how one afternoon the Reverend was "strolling past" the group and said: "You've been meeting now for some time and all I see all the time are *onikaba* (gown wearers). The people who really need your help are the *aroso* (wrapper wearers), yet they are not here. Forget the problems of social graces for newlyweds. Concentrate on the *aroso*. Bring them in on your meetings. They are the ones who need your help."

Regardless of the details of the transition, from this time on, everything would shift for Funmilayo. "The movement," wrote Soyinka, "begun over cups of tea and sandwiches to resolve the problem of the newlyweds who lacked the necessary social graces was becoming popular and nationwide. And it became all tangled up in the move to put an end of the role of white men in the country."

She stood five feet four, and in the photographs collected over the years, a slender, dark-skinned woman with high cheekbones, wide-set eyes, a gap tooth, and round, wire-framed spectacles stares intently back at you. Those who knew Funmilayo described her as "aggressive" and "stubborn". Her biographers note that she "abhorred the flaunting of material wealth".

"Several informants described her as always eating 'on the go', having little patience with those around her, exhibiting a 'military' discipline, being 'bossy' in her desire to get things done yesterday. Diplomacy was not, in fact, her strong suit. In both public and private, her no-nonsense approach was not particularly tolerant of incompetence, dishonesty, pettiness, or disagreement, once she'd made up her mind."

Many years later, one of the women from the ALC said: "She was like a goddess. We hung onto every word she said, even if we thought it was wrong, but hardly any of her words were wrong anyway. There was nothing hypocritical about Funmilayo. She just did not know how to pretend."

Sandra Smith, the Black Panther activist who met her son, Fela, in Los Angeles in 1969, and was known to have a major influence on him politically, met his formidable mother in Abeokuta not long after she first met Fela. Moore succinctly described her to Fela biographer Carlos Moore as follows: "Fela's mama didn't take no shit!"

The Abeokuta Grammar School was founded in 1908 as an all-male school, where the young Oludotun was among the first class of 44 students. By the time he took the reigns in 1932, the school had 100 boarders and 300 commuters. The grounds also served as the family's home, along with their four children—Dolupo, Olikoye, Olufela (Fela), and Bekolari—until the Reverend's retirement in 1954. It was co-ed, admitting students from different religions and ethic backgrounds. Funmilayo was "especially adamant in enforcing a ban on the use of derogatory names or epithets based on ethnic origin", one former student told Johnson-Odim and Mba.

The family poured their meagre resources into educating their children; all would eventually be schooled in Europe. Soyinka wrote that they had one of the four phone lines in the town at the time, but their only major material possessions were small plots of land, inherited and purchased, as well as an old car. Fela would brag to Moore that his mother was the first woman in Nigeria to drive a car—it may be truer that she was the first woman to drive a car in Abeokuta, which, at the time, was witnessing significant infrastructural upgrades, including a new intercity road connecting it with Asha.

Some of those interviewed felt Funmilayo "wielded the most power in the relationship". Those who knew them well disagree, telling her biographers that "the difference in their public personas—she the firebrand, he the rock—was the foundation of a complementary union built on honest communication, mutual support and deep respect".

"He was a woman's man," stated Funmilayo. "He hated women being exploited. Many times he was sent for and told, 'Come and see what your wife is doing, O!' He merely smiled and told them to leave me alone as I had my own mind. He never went against anything I did."

But her extensive travelling, teaching and political involvement over the years did weigh heavily on their children. Though both Dolupo and Olikoye respected their mother's choices, they both lamented the fact that they did not have an intimate relationship with her. Each of her children also confirmed that their parents were strict disciplinarians who were strong believers in corporal punishment.

"Caress their children?" said Fela, who the other children said was his mother's favourite. "They wouldn't indulge in that shit-o. They called it indulgence. Hold us in their arms? Never … My mother was a motherfucker, you know. She would flog you like a man."

Funmilayo recalled to her biographers her "mounting anger" as she became increasingly aware of the market women's concerns which, in addition to the grind of poverty, was exacerbated by the ill treatment at the hand of government and an unfair taxation system. Under the colonial system, a "head tax" was imposed on girls from the age of 15, while boys were not taxed until they were 16; wives were taxed separately from their husbands whether or not they earned income. Non-payment of taxes resulted in jail time. But it

“ She stood five feet four, and in the photographs collected over the years, a slender, dark-skinned woman with high cheekbones, wide-set eyes, a gap tooth, and round, wire-framed spectacles stares intently back at you ”

was the methods sometimes used to enforce collection that caused the most offence: officials would march into homes and order women to strip so they could assess their age.

It was through the market women that Funmilayo began to learn the stark realities of what was happening around her: "We educated women were living outside the daily life of the people." It was at that time, in the early 1940s, that Funmilayo abandoned western clothing in favour of the traditional Yoruba wrapped cloth—in order to "make women feel and know I was one with them"—and often began using Yoruba in public speeches, which meant that British officials required translation.

In 1945, after the market women complained to the ALC about their rice being seized without compensation, representatives from the group went to the local government office to demand an end to the practice. After this, and a campaign of letters to the newspaper, the confiscation practices ceased. The win gave the group—and Funmilayo—the encouragement that they needed.

The ALC despatched a list of demands to the government: no increase in taxation on women, an end to government-controlled trading, the building of health clinics, improved sanitation, access to clean water and financial assistance for adult literacy programmes. The ALC, together with the market women it supported, developed into an opposition to the local traditional government, and the colonial authorities who controlled it. In response, officials began to squarely aim their growing frustrations at the instigator of it all.

In August of 1947 Funmilayo formed part of a seven-member delegation of the political party of which she was one of the founders, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, which went to England for several weeks. They were sent to protest the Richards Constitution, which was drawn up as a response to nationalist demands for democracy, albeit without the consultation of the Nigerian people.

Before she left England, Funmilayo was asked to write a piece for the British *Daily Worker* on the condition of Nigerian woman. Among other things, she noted that these women were "poverty-stricken, disease-ridden, and malnourished" and appealed to British women to "help free the women of Nigeria from 'slavery—political, social and economic'".

Soyinka, who had been drawn in to the activities of the ALC through his tutoring work for some of the market women (along with the elder Ransome-Kuti children) recalled the fallout and the outraged letters in local newspapers. "It was a disgrace and [she] was a traitor to her own country-women … Mrs Ransome-Kuti was advised to stick her nose in whatever business took her to England, and leave the concern for the welfare of Egba womanhood to the one man who had always made it his benevolent concern, the father of all Egba himself—the Alake of Abeokuta." But it would be the Alake, the local ruler who sat under the colonial administrators of the time, who would soon discover the power of the women of Abeokuta.

The ALC's first major demonstration unfolded on November 29 and 30 in 1947, amidst the backdrop of the disassembly of the British Empire, which was in the midst of their withdrawal from India. An article in the *West African Pilot* reported that 10 000 women held a 24-hour vigil outside the Alake's palace. A second protest, in December that same year, apparently lasted for 38 hours. By then, the ALC had become the Abeokuta's Women's Union (AWU), and the protests were always led by Funmilayo. She held training on mass resistance at her home, showing women how to protect themselves from tear gas, and even how to throw the canisters right back at police.

During one of the actions, Soyinka recalls a confrontation with the local colonial administrator who instructed Funmilayo to "shut up your women". Funmilayo shot back a response: "You may have been born, you were not bred. Could you speak to your mother like that?" Soyinka notes that the district officer's "open-mouthed retreat was accompanied by a welling of the women's angry murmur. There were shouts on the Alake to get rid of the insolent white man at once, within minutes. If he was not out, they would come in, cut off his genitals and post them to his mother."

The ongoing protests escalated and were accompanied by letters to newspapers, petitions, press conferences and documented complaints of the Alake's abuse of power; the women were relentless, making the town, at times, ungovernable. Soyinka further recalls: "The women now dug in for a long siege. Shock squads roamed the city, mobilising all womanhood. Markets and women's shops were ordered closed. Those who defied the order had their goods confiscated and sent to the field before the palace … They held meetings with the Alake's Council, most of which ended in deadlocks. At the end of each meeting they reported back to the assembly who responded with songs and dances of defiance."

Funmilayo's biographers recorded a few of those songs, some remarkably raw in their messaging, a testament to the unabashed feminist spine that ran through the movement: "[Alake], for a long time you have used your penis as a mark of authority that you are our husband. Today we shall reverse the order and use our vagina to play the role of husband on you … O you men, vagina's head will seek vengeance."

After months of protest, the women eventually won. In January 1949, the Alake abdicated. In an interview with *New Breed* magazine years later, Funmilayo commented on the protests that drove the Alake out: "What people are saying is that I attacked [Alake]. I didn't really attack [Alake], I attacked imperialism. Those Europeans were using him against his people … I was attacking Europeans indirectly and they know it. Attacking a ruler who abused his power was not an imported ideal but very much a part of Egba tradition."

Funmilayo adopted an increasingly anti-colonial stance, as did the nationalists who were intensifying pressure on Britain for greater autonomy. But independence was far from being her sole driving force. She knew that Nigerian women would not be freed from a deeply ingrained patriarchy just because they were granted an independent state.

In May of 1949, the AWU went national, morphing into the Nigerian Women's Union. At their second annual conference, in 1954, Funmilayo addressed her audience: "As women we still feel that we are inferior to men, we inherited this feeling from our mothers whose spirits had been subdued with slavery and we have to join hands together to shake off this feeling so that the forthcoming independence may be of reality to us."

Funmilayo's work had gone national, and not long after, she would be heavily involved in women's rights on an international scale. Six years later, on 1 October 1960, Nigeria would be independent. But Funmilayo's work was far from complete.

Shortly after her London visit of 1947, the Soviet-inspired Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) asked Funmilayo to join their group. Years later, she was elected vice president. Her involvement with the WIDF and other international women's groups would take her to China (it is said that she met Mao Tse-tung) as well as Vienna, Poland, Algeria, Benin, Guinea, Liberia, Togo, Britain, Germany and Ghana (she personally knew Kwame Nkrumah).

Funmilayo's impressive travel schedule is matched by her tireless correspondence. Throughout her papers, her biographers found correspondence from women's groups from around the world: South Africa, the United States, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Trinidad, Korea, China, Bulgaria, India and Vietnam.

At different times throughout her travels, the newly independent Nigerian government would refuse to renew her passport or give permission to travel due to her

> **“Fela Kuti would brag that his mother was the first woman in Nigeria to drive a car”**

affiliation with some of the groups, which they considered communist. But it didn't slow her down much. Despite her husband's illness–in 1952, he was diagnosed with prostate cancer–she continued her extensive overseas trips. In her diary that year, she referenced a dream on her birthday where she had "seen insects coming out of pieces of cake that she was eating. She later expressed guilt and regret at not having stayed more closely by her husband's side during his illness."

Her biographers also noted a story about when the Reverend was visited in hospital by a member of the teacher's union who asked if his wife would be coming to see him soon. His reply: "My wife is eaten up with her concern for women's affairs and I leave her to it." The visitor reported that this was said "not with bitterness but in resignation". When he died in 1955 they had been married for 30 years.

Funmilayo would outlive her husband by 23 years. During these later years she was dogged by financial constraint, but remained heavily involved in national and international politics. She built her own schools on land she had inherited from her father, as well as a two-story house for the family. She also purchased 30 acres of land down the road, using much of it for a new secondary school which opened in 1962–the Reverend Ransome-Kuti Memorial Grammar School–which, eight years later, would have 12 classrooms, chemistry and biology laboratories, a library that had more than 2000 volumes and staff quarters. But running the schools became more difficult as she got older and, by many indications she ran them as a micro-manager, alienating staff; she also struggled with financial affairs, sometimes paying salaries late.

Funmilayo spent much of her later years fighting a lawsuit over a piece of land she and her husband purchased years before. After beginning construction on the land near Lagos, a man placed a court order against her. It turned out he was the legal owner and her ownership papers were worthless. But she continued the court battle; each time the judgment was upheld, and each time she would contest it. Funmilayo went through so many lawyers, say her biographers, that when her daughter was asked if she "had any men friends" after her husband's death, she replied laughingly, "Her only men friends were her lawyers."

In the 1970s Funmilayo added the Yoruba word Anikulapo to her name–it means "hunter who carries death in a pouch"–and dropped Ransome completely. Fela, who became increasingly politically radicalised in this decade, did the same. By 1977, Fela was one of Nigeria's best-known musicians, as well as an extremely outspoken political agitator, his music and lifestyle representing an affront to the independent government.

Funmilayo was a regular visitor to 14 Agege Motor Road in Lagos, where Fela lived with his band members, many of which were girlfriends (in 1978 he would marry 27 of his band members in one ceremony). He dubbed the compound the Kalakuta Republic, naming it after the cell where he was first imprisoned in the early 1970s, likely under a charge of drug use. Fela faced continual government harassment for his critical political views ("We fear to fight for freedom/ We fear to fight for liberty/ We fear to fight for justice/ We fear to fight for happiness/ We always get reason to fear," he intones on his 1977 song "Sorrow Tears & Blood", which likens the situation in Nigeria to South Africa and Rhodesia).

Police raids became a constant, both at his compound, as well as his famous nightclub, the Shrine. On 18 February 1977, more than 1000 soldiers are said to have stormed the compound. Many who were there that day were brutally beaten; women had their clothes torn off and some would later claim they were raped. Fela was badly injured, as was his brother Bekolari. The compound itself was burnt to the ground. Funmilayo, who was nearly 77 at the time, was thrown "by the hair" from a two-story window. She would never fully recover from the injuries she sustained that day.

The raid would become known popularly as the "Kalakuta War" and eventually resulted in the military government convening a tribunal–the government distanced themselves by saying the attack was undertaken by "unknown soldiers". According to Funmilayo's biographers, the incident nearly made international news, until the *New York Times* correspondent, who attended the first tribunal sitting, was arrested and deported. For the next year, Funmilayo was in and out of the hospital. In February 1978, after a lawsuit for damages from the raid was dismissed by the courts, Ransome-Kuti reportedly moaned, "Why are they doing this to us?" On April 13, she went into a coma-like state and died.

Fifty-thousand people turned out for her burial in Abeokuta. It was, however, on 1 October 1979, when then-president Olusegun Obasanjo finally was stepping down that Fela fashioned a coffin, along with a song, "Coffin for Head of State" (1981), which he left on the steps of Obasanjo's residence. "Them steal all the money," he would wail. "Them kill many students/ Them burn many houses/ Them burn my house too/ Them kill my mama."

Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti did not go quietly, and neither will her legacy. She will soon feature prominently in *October 1*, a movie by Nigerian filmmaker Kunle Afolayan, which follows on a successful run of *Fela!*, a Broadway musical produced by Jay Z, Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith, where her image literally took centre stage. Like many women leaders, and indeed many working and travelling mothers, Funmilayo's children and her husband would suffer from her long absences, both in body and in spirit. Her attention was focussed elsewhere. But Fela adored her, and took to worshipping his mother in ceremonies after she died, believing her spirit would enter one of his wives to speak to him.

What would she have made of her favourite son's polygamy, his abusive behaviour (he told Moore he slapped his wives when he needed to), the misogynistic beliefs reflected in "Mattress", a song appearing on his 1975 album *Noise For Vendor Mouth* in which he describes a woman as something on which a man is to sleep upon? One wonders, too, what she would have made of the glamour, the commercialisation of her life and that of her son; if she would believe her message was lost on the obsessive material world that both of them seemed to have shunned. But one doesn't have to wonder so much about what she would have said about that banknote. Certainly, she wouldn't have kept her mouth shut. ⁕

"As women we still feel that we are inferior to men, we inherited this feeling from our mothers whose spirits had been subdued with slavery and we have to join hands together to shake off this feeling so that the forthcoming independence may be of reality to us"

Tanya Pampalone *is the executive editor of the* Mail & Guardian *where she oversees print and digital narrative projects, in-depth features and the publication's special editions. Her own writing has been widely published in the United States, the Czech Republic and South Africa*

EXIT

Since 2001, Michael Wolf (b. 1954, Munich) has devoted himself to creatively documenting life in megacities. Like all the photographs in his *Architecture of Density* essay, this image was made in Hong Kong. Wolf, who moved to the world's skyscraper capital in 1994, initially photographed Hong Kong's buildings as whole structures set against land and sky. Dissatisfied with the results, he zoomed in. His essay records, as Wolf puts it, the "illusion of unlimited size" that humans experience in megacities.

Photo: ***Michael Wolf***

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