



# BASELINE STUDY

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## Baseline study

### Introduction

The baseline study for this discourse is a theoretical investigation into the understanding of how art can be made accessible to the majority of the people who have previously perceived art as being elitist, through architecture. The study will assist the designer in understanding why art and Art Centres are seen as being elitist and also assist in the formulation of the design through understanding the users of the building, which will hopefully result in an appropriate building.

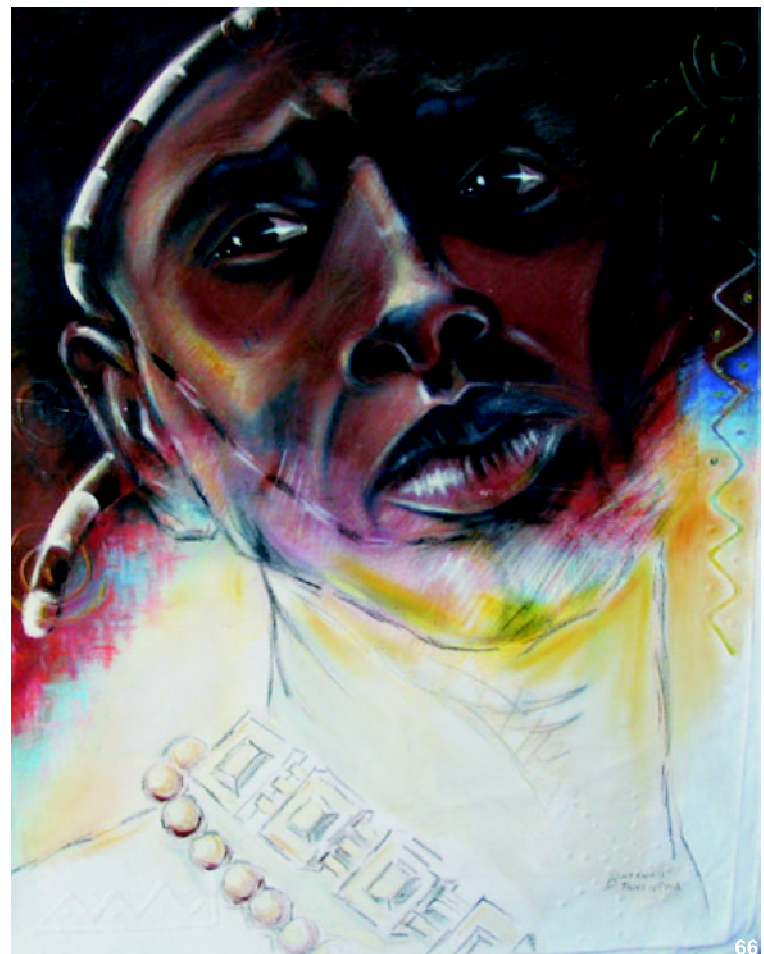
The subject matter of this study was inspired by the advancement and the need for the protection of African Contemporary Art, and the desire to see the area reclaim its previous glory of being the cultural hub of Pretoria.

### Contemporary Art.

Contemporary art is recently produced visual art. When it ages, it loses this status of being contemporary. Ideally, the term is applied to art produced in the present. According to (Magnin and Soullieu, 1996,10) in Africa the term contemporary seems to have two aspects to it: "on the one hand, it is an art that benefits from institutional support through the system of commissions and exhibitions of national talents".

On the other hand, this is an art that cares little for the processes of legitimization, deliberately sidestepping the official circuits, an art that prefers to ignore its possible claim.

**"The creation of local nodes of cultural and artistic activity is the most effective way of making artistic production, education and reception widely accessible, and of stimulating the arts at grassroots level" Policy presented by the Performing Arts Workers' Equity at the Culture and Development Conference 1993**



as “contemporary,” an art often practiced by artists without any formal schooling.” Ibid

In South Africa various efforts are made to introduce art to the people. The Africa Remix held at the Johannesburg Art Gallery from July to October 2007 is an example of such initiatives. The Africa Remix: Contemporary Art of a Continent features the work of more than 85 artists from 25 countries on the African continent and the Diaspora. Art is largely perceived to be elitist by most of the locals around the proposed site of development.

There are many reasons given for this perception, one of them being the fact that art is expensive and only a few people can have or have access to it, especially in a country like South Africa where most people are poor.

In South Africa and African continent artists have come up with creative ways of making art accessible to people. Artist like Bruly Boubabre’, who view writing as having a civilizing effect, make their graphic works the privileged vehicle for the transmission of knowledge related to both his ethnic group and the world. Boubabre sits in front of his house and exhibits his works in full view of the community. Other artists exhibit their works on the walls of their studios, attracting crowds and provoking unending discussions.” (Magnin, 1995, p.10)

### Conclusion

The author is of the opinion that a few initiatives have to be embarked upon to make art accessible to the majority of the people.

Suggested initiatives are:

- Art should be introduced to young people in schools and



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67. *The room of tears.* by *Bill Bidjocka*

68. *Townshipwall.* by *Antonfo Ole*

69. *1967 Cairo, Egyptian Cairo Noise.* by *Sabah Naim*

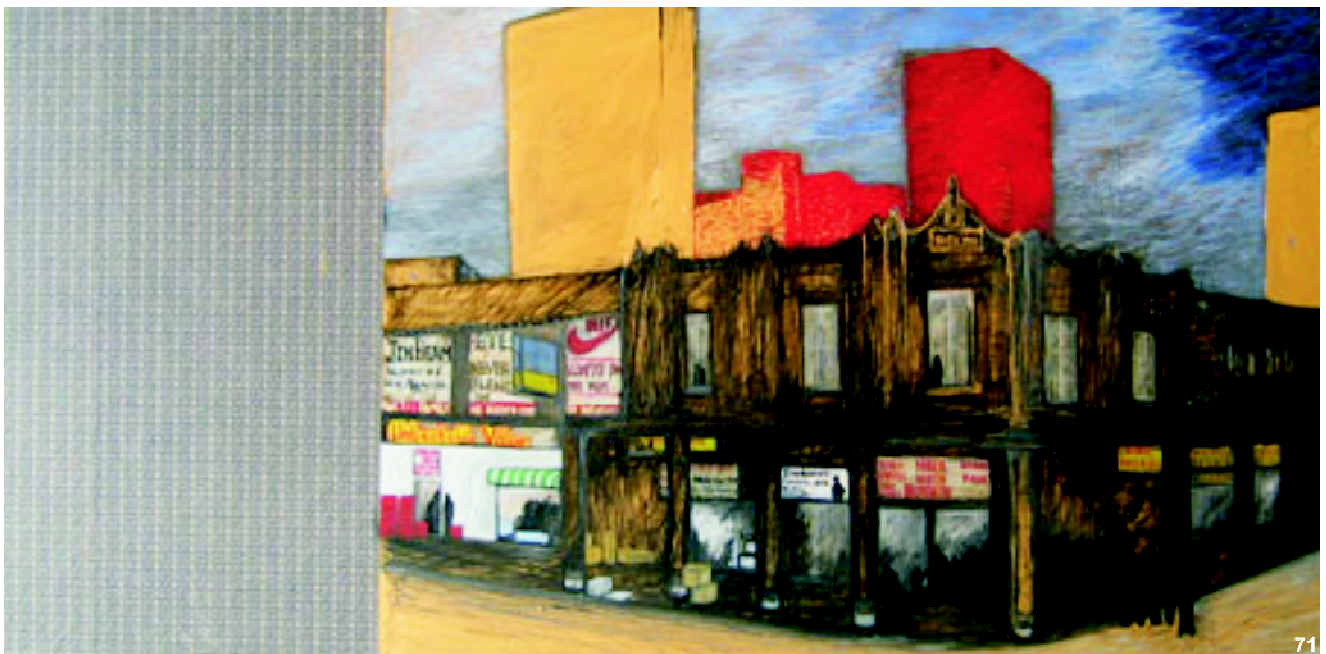


- tertiary art education facilities have to be involved with community art centre programmes,
- there should be programmes that are targeted towards the community members, families and senior citizens.

**“To have someone tell you ‘you have changed my life’ is a pretty amazing thing to be told, especially when the person is well into their sixties. We saw people arrive to the workshops as shy crafters and leave as confident designers-amazing!” David Kappo**



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70. Propaganda, by Kudzi Chirawo  
71. Since 1900, by Kudzi Chirawo