

TRANSMATERIALS

Getting involved in a discussion on fashion and architecture is an educational experience in itself. KNOOP opened the opportunity for new technologies regarding both professions to be used to create a resource rich environment.

Technologies that are accommodated in the building include:

Sublimation printing, that involves large format printing on canvas and fabric;**3d Prototyping** of mainly fashion accessories that are then used as templates by craft workers at KNOOP and **Draping Software** that allows students to laser cut patterns from computer designed garments.

A sample library on site introduces students to the latest materials form all industries.



Redesigning design education in SA:

All designers are aware of the fact that a creative space enhances creativity. Some environments are more conducive to the process of creation and often these environments include nature and human interaction.

KNOOP intends to create an inspiring environment where there is ample opportunity for students to express their individuality.

There are many opinions on design education. In this project an attempt was made to create an 'African Bauhaus' where students learn from one another. This approach relates back to the theme of revealing the process of making.

Deleuze (as cited by Semetsky, 2003:17) suggests that "lines of connections" should be drawn within the "act of making."

KNOOP's building layout allows creative interaction among students by allowing them to view each other's actions throughout the working day. By doing this, they learn from each other in an environment that reciprocates skills development.

According to Myerson & Ross in their book *Space to Work* "academies are places where knowledge is shared more easily, where chance meetings, training and mentoring are built into the physical tapestry of the working day. There are venues where work is contained on a single site, with a high corporate presence, offering the benefits of an integrated and energized community that enables colleagues within the organization to move effectively across discipline divides" (Myerson & Ross, 2006:14)

KNOOP fits this description perfectly with its aim of cross-pollination between different creative disciplines.

According to Evans (1939:62) "both elements of artistry and business are necessary to the successful fashion leader."

KNOOP attempts a fresh approach towards design education in SA by aiding designers in their ventures.

In a discussion with Carla Wasserthal (personal communication, April 23, 2008) lecturer in textiles at the Pretoria Technikon, attention was drawn to the need for design consultants in South Africa. A design consultant takes responsibility for a young artist and aids him/her in regards to topics such as copyright and patenting. The concept is not foreign in countries such as Canada and great success has been achieved by young designers getting some guidance in the business side of an art profession.

Bongani Ntombela (SABS design manager) (personal communication, April 23, 2008) agrees with the concept of having a function, such as a client or sponsor, mediate between artists and the industry to take the strain off of the artists.

KNOOP will be a place where multiple information can be attained by artists attempting new endeavors in unconventional material use. This information will be resourced by the design consultants and collaborators.

Collaboration with SEDA and Tshumisano (Technology Station in Clothing & Textiles) ensures that although KNOOP only encapsulates prototypical designs, product development and textile testing services are available to all users.

To share native intelligence gathered at the school there will further be an Information Network and a System of Referrals among all collaborators to allow the sharing of best practices. KNOOP is part of NAD (Network of Africa Designers) that was established in 1999 and includes designers from South Africa, Kenya, Botswana and Zimbabwe. All stakeholders share a vision that all designers involved should aim to benefit the continent with their designs.

In September 2006 NAD held 'The Design for Development Lekgotla' at the Innovation Hub in Pretoria. All attendees agreed that young South Africans need to be informed that they can pursue a viable career in design.

With the innovations made at the S.T.A.R.T. precinct, the University of Pretoria will be a visual communicator for the design education in the Gauteng region

DEFSA (Design Education in South Africa) has recently started to challenge the boundaries of education methods in our design professions.

In 2007 they held a congress called FLUX: Design Education in a Changing World.

The aim of the congress was to “promote excellence in design education at all levels, both in the formal and informal educational environments;
Keep abreast of new information, research and development relating to design education and design practice, both locally and internationally;
Encourage the development and use of local design skills to enable the southern African region to develop its manufacturing industry at all levels and
Maintain the fundamental and reciprocal links between design education, the visual arts and art education in order to enhance the creative essence of the designer’s formative training.”

Many design educators contributed to the congress and all are in agreement that an integrated cross-campus model is the way forward for South Africa.

Daniels (Associate Dean - Faculty of ICT & Design, Cape Peninsula University of Technology) believes that a serious attempt should be made to establish common practices on different sites. He stated that “the creation of technology incubators for small business enterprises is an area that I believe needs to be thoroughly examined and assessed.”
(Daniels,2006)

8.1 DEFSA

assert
a.r.t.

“The arts, whether painting, architecture or even cooking, are involved with ‘raising’ material matter. In this sense, art has to do with imbuing matter with spirit, and it is this spirit that the user unconsciously experience. It is this experience that reminds us that all activities can achieve a sense of art.”
(Righini.2000:301)

Socio analyst Burgess agrees when he says that “shared schools and other institutions will be most effective in bringing people together as South Africans.” (Burgess, 2002:119)

Through its collaborations with other tertiary institutions such as TUT and TEKO and business partners such as Tshumisano and the SABS Design Institute, KNOOP is attempting such an ‘integrated cross-campus model.”

Berger from Vega (the Brand Communication School) believes that the curriculum at tertiary level inform the choices that designers make in their working capacity and these choices then inform their designs that get mainstreamed.

The idea of an integrated educational system can be drawn back to ideas formed at the Bauhaus; where Gropius reminds us that “the Bauhaus felt it had a double moral responsibility: to make its pupils fully conscious of the age they were living in; and to train them to turn their native intelligence, and the knowledge they received, to practical account in the design of type-forms which would be the direct expression of that consciousness.” (Gropius,.1935:59)

It is important to keep in mind that KNOOP is situated in South Africa. In this small realization lies the potential of creating an African richness instead of yet another European example.

The concept of ‘native intelligence’ should be accentuated as it is this element that distinguishes a Fashion and Design School in Tshwane from one anywhere else in the world.KNOOP attempts to embrace its context, without compromising the quality of design in a non European country.

Berger from Vega (the Brand Communication School) raised a valid point at the Flux congress in regards to the fact that care should be taken not to dilute South African cultures too much when she said that “much energy has been expended in recent years on preoccupations with what links us as opposed to what separates us, an understandable position to take due to our history. Undeniably we are all driven by very similar needs and desires, the need for love, security, and community, to belong, to be happy. Culturally however, in terms of our everyday habits and practices, how these desires can be fulfilled or even manifested can be radically different.”

By creating an environment where adverse ideas can be supported and evolved, KNOOP is bringing together creative people from different backgrounds and adding to the richness of the urban identity of the Hatfield area.

All discussions thus far regarding the project has been of academic value, but the real test for the success of such a project lies in the implementation of a long term funding and management strategy plan.

KNOOP is in line with the Johannesburg Fashion District's realistic strategy that focuses on small businesses that produce smaller quality runs for niche markets.

According to socio analyst Livingston, "an investment in higher education and further education is now seen as an investment in the future potential of the nation." (Livingston, 1998: 2)

Based on the University of Pretoria's vision for 2007-2011 (<http://www.up.ac.za/vision> and mission) where they address the 'Innovation Generation', the assumption was made that the University shares Livingston's opinion.

In the vision mention is made of support for endeavors to establish the campus as a centre for the Arts and to stimulate creativity. The vision also refers to scenarios where partnerships and collaborations should be made if academically appropriate.

The willingness of UP and TEKO to fund KNOOP on the Intersite owned site has allowed the project to become a reality.



A similar business approach to the Johannesburg InnerCity Business Coalition Initiative will be implemented in the S.T.A.R.T.. precinct.

As with City Improvement Districts in Johannesburg, an additional levy will be charged to all tenants by the property owner Intersite. The income gained will be used for supplementary services such as safety and security patrol officers, pavement cleaning, litter collection and maintenance of public space.

Businesses in the S.T.A.R.T. precinct that fall within the creative industries can be marketed by Intersite and by all tenants to their own advantage.

KNOOP will offer students training at institutions linked with the Department of Labour and KNOOP will collaborate with the Fashion District in Newtown, Johannesburg to achieve their vision for Gauteng to become the 'Urban Edge of African Fashion'. In this context fashion is understood as a broad concept that includes accessories, product design, food and entertainment.

Organisation	Role	Activity
Intersite	Main Investors	Property investment
UP	Main client	Membership role in S.T.A.R.T.
TEKO	Project Partner	Design, production and business training
Sanlam SA Fashion Week	Project Partner	Funding
dti	Project Partner	Funding
Tshumisano	Project Partner	Advisory services
SEDA	Project Partner	Advisory services
DEFSA	Project Partner	Design education advise
CSIR	Project Partner	Product development
SABS Design Institute	Project Partner	Product development
Fablab	Project Partner	Surface design
SAPS	Project Partner	Sectoral policing
MAC make-up	Investor & Beneficiary	Business investment
Headboys hairdressers	Investor & Beneficiary	Business investment
Tribeca	Investor & Beneficiary	Business investment
Design Box	Investor & Beneficiary	Business investment
Sappi	Sponsors	Funding
Woolworths	Sponsors	Funding
Design Indaba	Sponsors	Funding