

BRIEF



Fig.1 Youth larking in Kolze street (Author 2006)

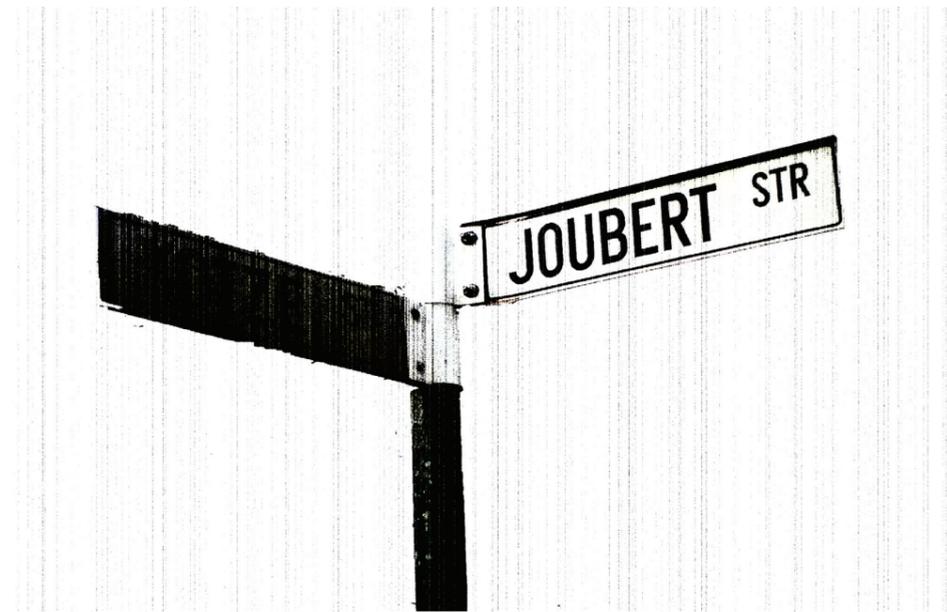


Fig.2 Corner Kolze and Joubert Street sign (Author 2006)

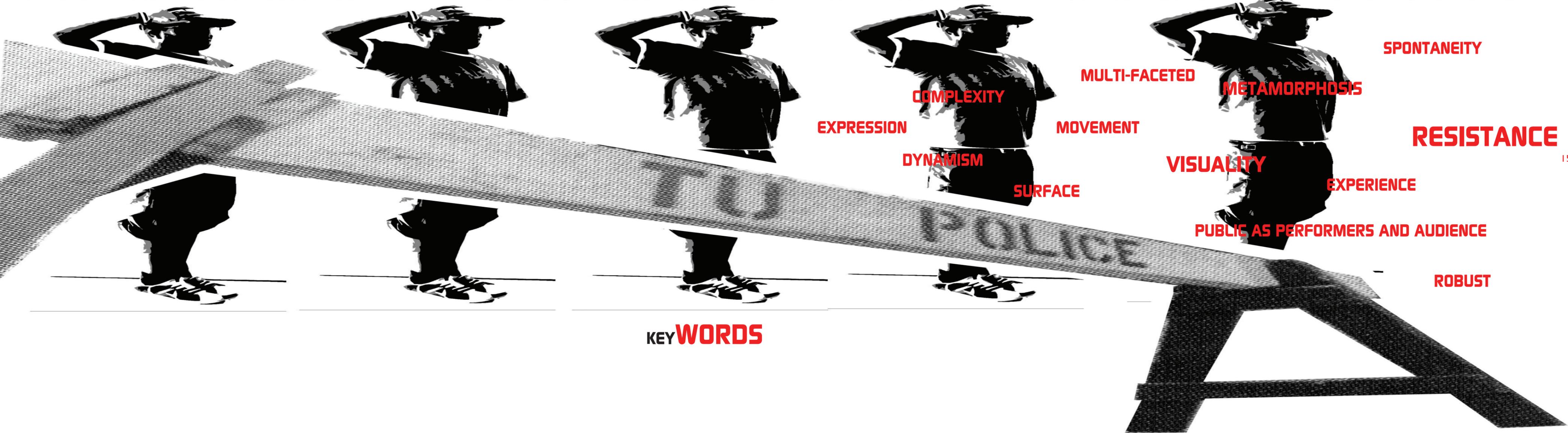
INTRODUCTION

Young people's experience of space resonates with an emerging sensitivity for socio-cultural geographies of 'other' human groupings. Public space is produced as adult space, hence studies of teenagers suggest that the space of the street is often the only autonomous space that young people are able to carve out for themselves and that hanging around, and larking about, on the streets, in parks and in shopping malls, are forms of youth resistance to adult power.

According to Skelton(1998), there have been efforts to revitalize or aestheticise public space as part of initiatives to symbolically and economically revive North American and Western European cities. These efforts have been identified as contributing to the privatization or 'annihilation' of public space, by using private security forces and close circuit television to squeeze undesirable 'other's - notably youth - out of these locations.

These types of activities lead to young people's disconnection from the city and their lack of access to public space results in their 'attempts to resist adult orientated urban space through neighbourhood environmental activism and public art'. (Skelton: 8)

URBAN GUERRILLA TACTICS



SPONTANEITY

MULTI-FACETED

METAMORPHOSIS

COMPLEXITY

EXPRESSION

MOVEMENT

RESISTANCE

DYNAMISM

VISUALITY

EXPERIENCE

SURFACE

PUBLIC AS PERFORMERS AND AUDIENCE

ROBUST

KEY WORDS

"When street-involved youth use the arts to express their views, their dreams, their fears, they are in the new position of moving and affecting the lives of others, and perhaps, promoting change."

PROBLEMATIC

Youth subcultures are increasingly producing artistic content that are not permitted at institutions. The content they produce are normally labeled 'non - institutional' due to the fact that they do not address the mainstream market. Paradoxically, subcultures feed the mainstream market. They are entrepreneurs themselves, they create their own market and they are economic generators of their own content.

There is a need to provide a place that accomodates these artists so that they can gain a sense of recognition. The viability of the arts in South Africa has stagnated and needs to be booted up by a fresh and youthful injection of ideas, meduim, and content. Furthermore, the conventional art market can benefit from this initiative since it becomes a platform for recruiting young artists that possess creative abilities that are expressed on an informal level.

An establishment of a new framework for the arts is needed, far removed from the dominant forms, formulated within

the context of urban culture, critical of the status quo, inspired by social, economic and cultural imbalances. Bringing about a new language of communication, pushing the boundaries of coding and decoding messages through mediums that are urban centred.

A complete environment for the arts would be deemed healthy for regeneration culture.

PROPOSITION

The revitalization of our spaces within the city is a positive gesture, as architects we are blessed with the ability to transform a city to abide with the evolution of culture and passing trends. The social engineering of Apartheid segregated cultures physically, this seperation of different cultural groups preserved indigenous cultures. The abolishment of Apartheid attracted an influx of previously marginalized races into our cities, expressing more free-

dom and more multicultural communities - this exemplified a better example of the demographics of South Africa. This physical manifestation generated more opportunities and expressed the celebration of a true democracy; the sanctions that excluded South Africans from the rest of the world now exposed our cultures to global trends.

In the communication era, accessibility to global media has lead to people, especially youth, losing their cultural identities and adopting eclectic identites. This identity contestation can be identified as a collection of practices, ideologies and values from which different groups draw to make sense of their world.

Young people actively construct identities with the tools of cultural production made available to them in a post-modern world

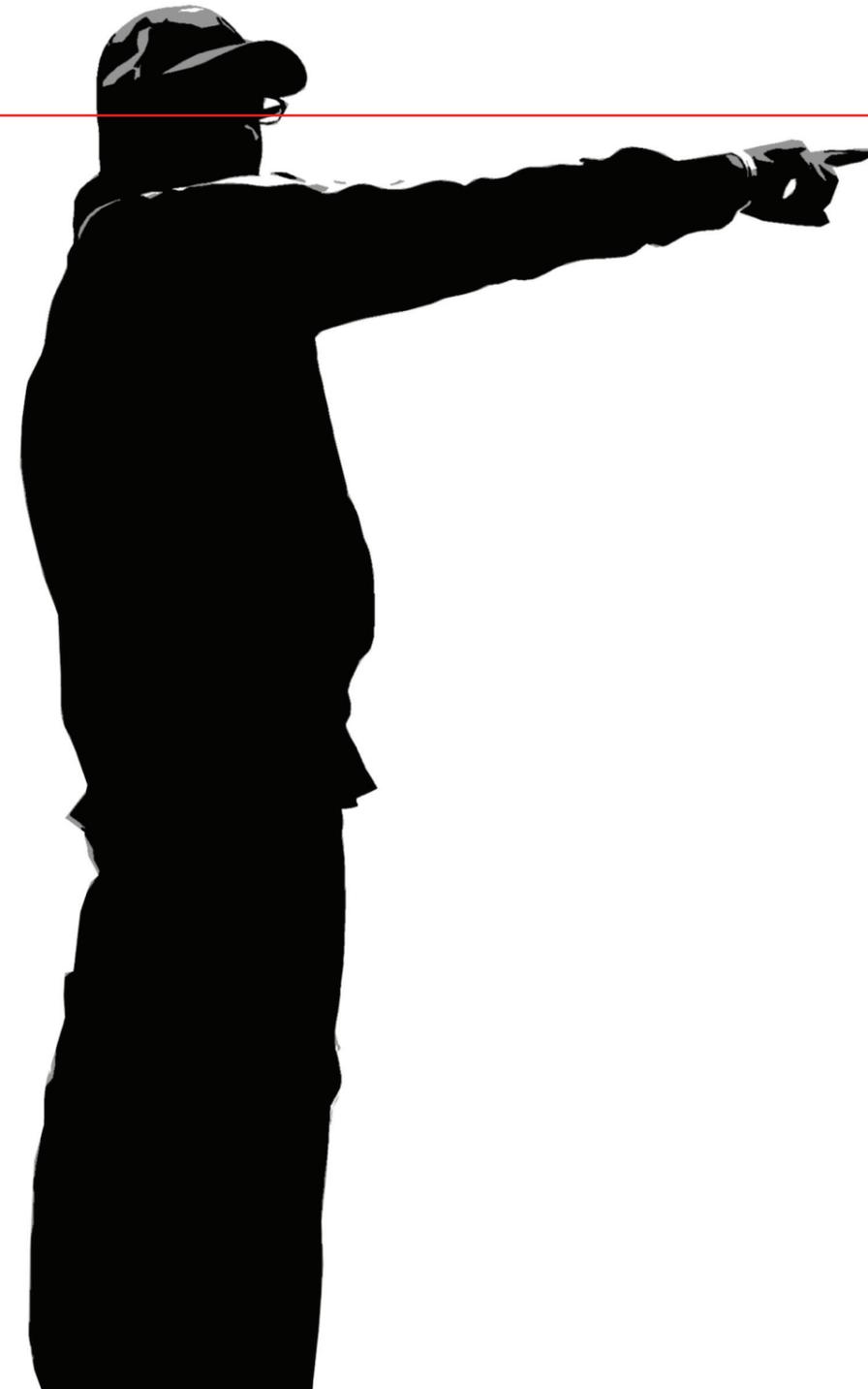
Cultural theorist, Dr Karen Malone(2006) states that culture can be constructed in local and global environments or

both, glocalisation. For many youth, this engagement is a way of connecting with a global youth culture and engaging through forms of hybridization, as glocal subculture. Subcultures are cultural groups within a larger culture, often having beliefs or interests at variance with those of the larger culture and these subcultures often grow out of suppressive environments like the United States of America with the evolvement of Jazz, Blues and currently Hip Hop.

A space that accomodates youth sub cultural activites would become a stepping stone for youth expression, promote sub cultural art forms and become an on going exhibition whereby the youth can interact with each other. They will forge their identities within this space and become the artists and not just viewers, they become part of the art. They become the subject, content and theme; leading to greater appreciation and understanding of various cultures.

This initiative will hopefully mark South African youth sub

cultural art on the world stage and enable the youth to gain working experience in managing galleries, event organizing, and marketing. Students drawn from various fields, for example, would run a large portion of this space - which would cater for design, fine arts, graffiti, poetry and music. The opportunity to establish a media company thus employment creation through the arts.



CLIENT

The Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) in collaboration with the Tshwane Municipality will be the client for this initiative; the services rendered by the department are as follows:

- Facilitating, initiating and implementing international co-operation agreements on arts and culture.
- Ensuring the representation of South African arts and culture on the international scene.
- Managing and administration of arts, culture and heritage institutions.
- Promoting arts, culture and heritage festivals.
- Supporting informal arts education and training.
- Supporting development and access to the arts.
- Supporting excellence and sustainability in the arts

[www.dac.gov.za.]

Their service delivery target or milestone with reference to programme 2: arts, culture and language in society on their strategic plan for the period 2003 - 2006 is to

- promote excellence in the arts
- create an opportunity to fund all forms of the arts
- promote equity in the distribution of the arts resources
- mobilise business sponsorship for the arts
- promote moral values and social cohesion through the arts
- promote all forms of creative arts and
- introduce arts and culture programmes in community art centres

[www.dac.gov.za.]



Fig.3 Arts and Culture logo.

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

The thesis proposal, as any architectural endeavour, forms part of the external environment. The environment is the all encompassing expression of forms, movement and users that confers a specific place with character. On a psychological perspective, character is identified through visual communications that one expresses towards others. Although the visual character expressed in this case relates to that of human relations, so too should character in architectural terms relate or communicate visually to its external environment.

The architect is the expresser of how the building functions, how it is perceived by its users or observers on the street. The movement patterns within the building are also expressed in terms of how the different spaces flow into each other, and connections that they make with the external environment.

Architecture should express what it functions; it should be a sculpture within the built environment that positively emphasizes its own unique identity. This identity should then signify the function and the built form as one entity in communicating its position within the urban environment. The current urban environment is constituted with visual deficiencies; there is an absence of buildings that are visually stimulating in contributing to the urban concept of the city as an exciting and vibrant environment.