



PROLOGUE

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Introduction

The purpose of this study is design through exploration of a Community Art Centre in an area of the city that is neglected. Although the design discourse is idealistic, the aim is to explore the creation of a local node of cultural and artistic activity within an appropriate site located in Marabastad in the city of Tshwane in the Gauteng province. It is the view of the author that this is the most effective way of making artistic production, education and reception widely accessible and of stimulating the arts to a community which perceives art as elitist.

The establishment of an art centre is relevant because a report from the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) indicates that the contemporary visual arts sector makes an important economic contribution to Gauteng's creative economy through direct creative, innovative and experimental activity. In addition, and according to DAC, contemporary art communicates more effectively across cultures.

Marabastad is an area with both positive and negative attributes. The negative attributes are: crime, unemployment and the fact that the area is derelict. The positive attribute of Marabastad is its vibrancy and is also a busy area in terms of human movement. This is because of the existence of a railway station, taxi and bus terminals in the area. The idea is to capitalise on the positive attributes of the area. The theme of the discourse will be the **accessibility**, which will be further explained.

The attempt would be to create an environment, which will be a nexus for artists locally, nationally, and internationally and for work that has been inspired and influenced by local culture. The proposed centre will be a site for the dynamic exchange of ideas about art and society. At the heart of the discourse is the question: can architecture be instrumental in making art accessible to the people and can that architecture be appropriate?

Key issues to be reflected in the architectural design are education and the arts.

Building schedule:

- Gallery
- Multi functional hall
- Cafe
- Subject specific library
- Reading room
- Computer lab
- Offices
- Studio
- Workshop
- Seminar rooms

For this project the designer will investigate the site in terms of the physical context through the urban environment, the social context of the buildings, the physical constraints, planning limitations and the climatic context.

The Brief

- To design an appropriate and relevant community art centre in an area characterised by urban decay.
- To design a building that would serve as an investment to the community at large.
- To design a building that will provide space where talented local artists can showcase their skills and cultural heritage to the local, national and international audiences, through contemporary arts.
- To design an art centre accessible to local residents and visitors, with views directly from the street into the gallery lobby in order to entice passersby and visitors to enter the centre.
- To provide public access to art through the creation of a gallery dedicated to local contemporary art.
- To design a prominent and visible building, through a creative façade that will emphasise the centre as the cultural cornerstone of the area.
- To enhance education and public programmes by designing a multifunctional hall and exhibition spaces. According to Price (Price, 2003, p.36) "Education, is not just for one set of age group but a continuous necessity for all members of the community throughout their entire life. Thus educational facilities, like a social service, should integrate through all areas of life in the form of media.
- To enhance the professional artist training programmes and education facilities by designing seminar rooms and a subject specific library for technical art historical research, a reading room and computer lab.

Clients

The centre will provide facilities for by: families, students, teachers, senior citizens, local community members, artists, curators, collectors, critics, theorists, tertiary education students and lecturers, art professionals, and art centre members and donors. An opportunity for job creation will be provided through public programs where skills will be transferred through apprenticeship to locals with talent. The centre will also run internship programs for high school and tertiary education students.

The DAC and the City of Tshwane will be regarded as clients.

The services rendered by the DAC 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 one of their programmes: 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

Funding

It is envisaged that the Community Centre will be supported in part, with public funds provided by the Department of Arts and Culture, and the City of Tshwane local government. Additional support will be sourced from the private sector, e.g. Standard Bank and non governmental organisations.