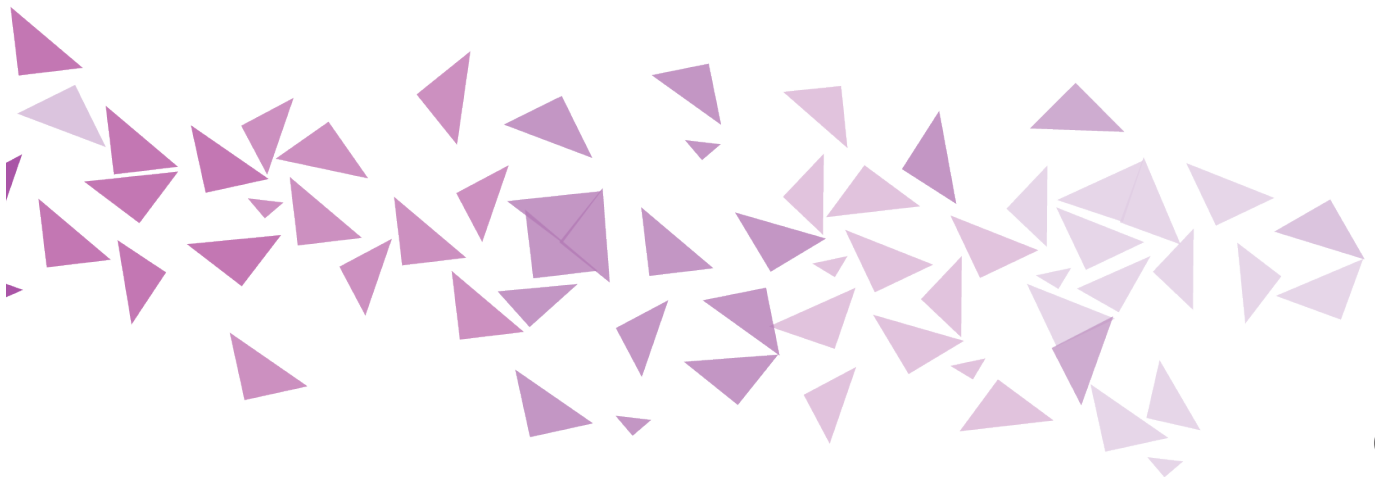
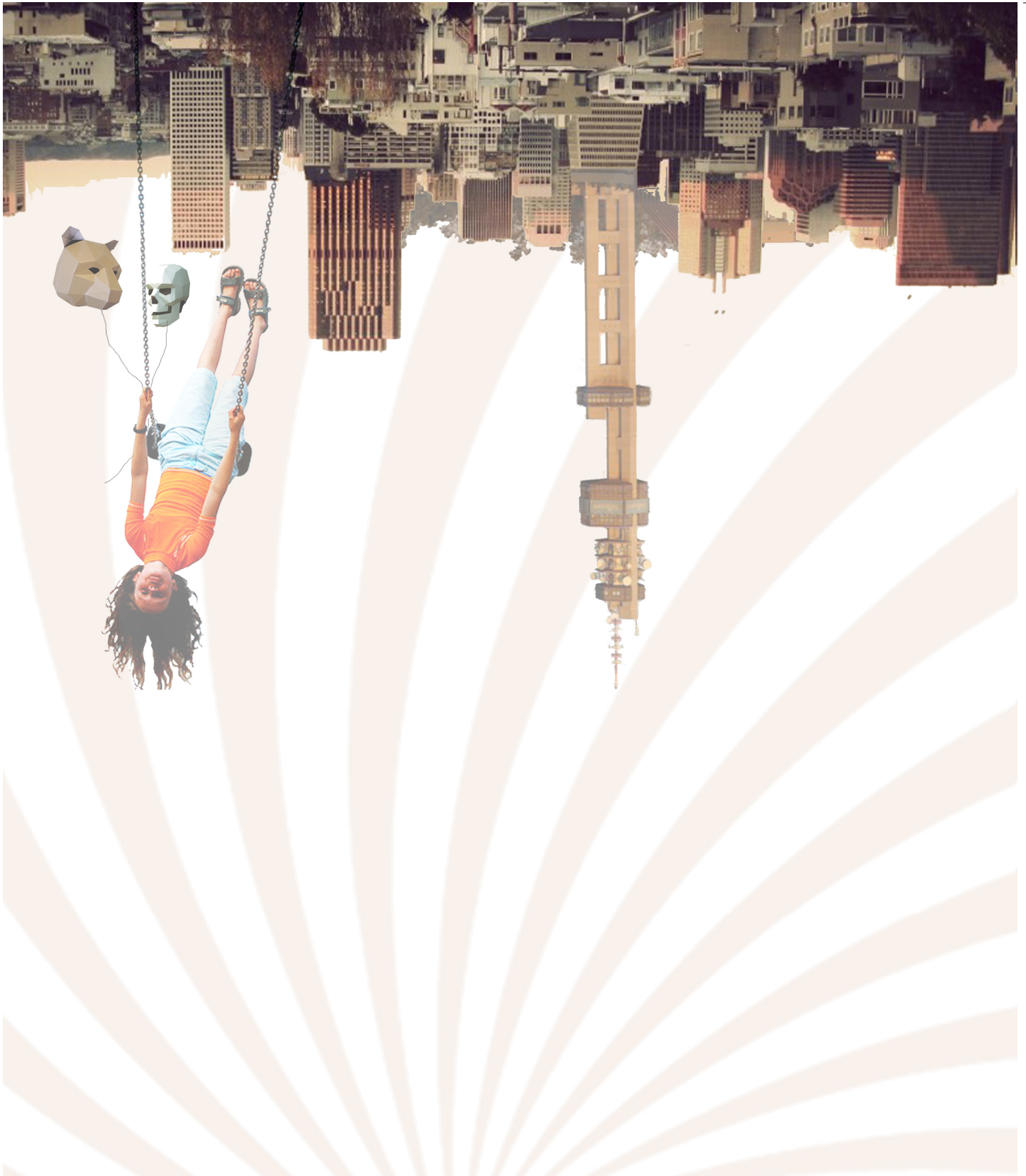


CHAPTER 2

CARNIVALESQUE





02.01 INTRODUCTION

In the current day, what is supposed to be free open space is threatened by surveillance or dereliction and crime, "corrupted by public commercialism" (Miles in Boros, 2014:13) and restricted by rules and regulations. The mall or its virtual equivalent, according to Miles (in Boros, 2014:12), becomes the public sphere - "yet this need not be the case". Habermas (in Boros, 2014:24) describes the public sphere and democracy as "a liberal and populist celebration of diversity, tolerance, debate and consensus".

"Active urban space", a phrase used by architect Søren Enevoldsen, is a space that is more democratic. Cities are organized systems where certain behavioural patterns are required and a person becomes passive. Design of public places should be approached in a more free and abstract way where various groups of people can co-exist (fakiehillbomb.wordpress.com).

In South Africa this is unfortunately not the norm. An analysis of open green spaces around the Loftus site reveals that public places restrict users and as a result, public space becomes derelict and not used.

02.02 CARNIVALESQUE AND HUMAN EXPRESSION

[kahr-nuh-vuh l] noun: any merrymaking, revelry, or festival, as a program of sports or entertainment



Figure 02.02: Painting of a Medieval Carnival (Sloane Letters)

As explained in the introduction chapter, carnival and sport both show potential for this free human expression and were investigated as a concept for this study.

The roots of carnival can be traced back to where the ancient Romans and Greeks celebrated the rites of spring. The medieval carnival preceded Easter and was celebrated by towns people and peasants with public festivals of feasting, laughter and joy. There were no passive spectators, carnivals were shared, participatory rituals (Langman in Boros, 2014:4).

The character of carnival is dualistic – the unity of two poles of change and crisis. Mikhael Bakhtin, a literary theorist, explains the term “carnavalesque” as not being a performance but that the performer and the spectator are not separated from each other and that “all people who take part in the carnival, live it” (Pan, 2012:52). It is also not an extension of the everyday

life, but it is the world standing on its head; dissolving hierarchy of status, making everyone equal – carnival promised voice, freedom and empowerment. What was restricted in the everyday life, was celebrated during carnival. That which was normally separated, was connected during carnival (Langman in Boros, 2014:4). The traditional respect towards the elites and authority became reversed, inverted and transformed into mockery and laughter through masks and behaviour (Langman in Boros, 2014:4).

Carnivals were held in a town’s square as it symbolised the idea of carnivalesque being universal and a shared ritual. Carnavalesque can then be seen as a tool that unites the ideas of human expression and public open space. An example of a current day



Figure 02.03: Midnight Robbers, some of the traditional characters of Trinidad Carnival (Photo taken by Ryan Kong)



Figure 02.04 :A demon and horde of imps slither across the smoke-shrouded stage at the Traditional Mas competition (Photo taken by Andrea de Silva)

carnival is the **Trinidad and Tobago Carnival** on the Caribbean Islands which is celebrated every year. In the past, slaves were restricted from walking on the pavement and attending the carnivals that the colonial French and British were allowed to attend at the start of Lent. After their liberation in 1838, the Carnival, which was known as a coloured and white event only, slaves could walk the streets and the carnival became a symbol for their freedom and a method for social protest and also the reason for the Trinidad Carnival (Burr in Picard and Robinson, 2006:88). Today, the music, food and traditions of the Trinidad Carnival is influenced by the diverse culture in Trinidad and Tobago. Limbo and stick-fighting competitions as well as a musical competition form a big part of the Carnival celebrations (www.discovertnt.com).

The **Notting Hill Carnival** is the biggest street festival in Europe, which takes place every year during the August Bank Holiday Weekend in London, England. The Notting Hill Carnival derived from the Caribbean carnival in Trinidad. The vision of the current day carnival is: "to foster the creative development and enhancement of diverse artistic excellence, thus transforming perceptions of London Notting Hill Carnival culture locally, nationally and internationally". The carnival day becomes a day where everyone can enjoy themselves and the streets are paraded by entertaining bands, Caribbean food and drinks can be bought all along the procession route and the culture of Trinidad and Tobago can be experienced.



Figure 02.05: People celebrating the Notting Hill Carnival (Photos taken by Donald Chambers, UK)

The **Carnival of Rio de Janeiro**, Brazil, is one of the largest carnivals in the world. The Brazilians rioted until the Carnival was accepted as an expression of culture by the government. The black slaves were free for three days and actively became involved in the celebrations. Today, the slum communities are the most involved groups in the preparations for the

carnival and to them the Rio Carnival also means the most. During carnival in Rio, instead of focusing on the streets and mobility, the focus shifts towards placemaking and the streets become meeting places. across the five days of celebrating carnival.



Figure 02.06: Parade in the Sambadrome (Around the Globe)



Figure 02.07: Samba school dancers (Funzine)

The **Feast of the Clowns** is a carnival held in Pretoria, South Africa. The festival was created to celebrate the diversity of the city, which is in contrast to discourse about the city being a place of decay. This festival has contributed to community upbuilding and social cohesion. The Feast of the Clowns is a day to celebrate life, arts and justice. The metaphor of the clown "brings laughter in a sad world, but also cry over that which makes the world sad". The Feast is in the playful spirit of the clown but also a protest against things that deprive people and their communities of life, while supporting local communities and showing its assets and beauty in all different forms.

The Feast of the Clowns have 5 purposes: celebrating the city, its diversity and its assets; facilitating an annual space for community-building, focusing on



Figure 02.08: Feast of the Clowns March (Photo taken by Jessie Davis, 2011)

celebration, arts and justice, providing a platform for emerging artists to perform on 3-4 live stages, hosting the March of the Clowns to create social awareness, and running youth workshops in communities around the City of Tshwane which encourages young people to make a change and run their voices.

The University of Pretoria, since 2013, has a **Feast@UP** where a collective of academics from various departments work together with the purpose of taking campus to the inner city as well as bringing the inner city to campus.



Figure 02.09: Group of workers dancing with a clown (The Tshwane Open)

A carnival in the form of charity is the **RAG of the University of Pretoria** which is held every year in January. It is a non-profit charity organisation which stands for "Reach out And Give". The RAG tradition of charitable contribution and public service, makes it the largest charity organization in South Africa, driven by students. The funds raised, are awarded to various charities to allow for their objectives to be met. Together with the sponsors Vodacom, Pick 'n Pay and SAB, many events are hosted in order to obtain the

funds, such as: UP Beat Festival, the Procession and Spring Day. Students are involved in short-term and long-term community projects (UP Official Website).

The Tuks RAG Procession occurs annually in January on the LC de Villiers (sports) campus. All students as well as the general public is invited to see how the students participate and display their floats. Floats are often built with recyclable objects and sometimes by folding many flowers to cover the float (UP Official Website)



Figure 02.10: People contributing money to the fundraising for charities (<http://english.cri.cn>)



Figures 02.11: Rag Procession of the University of Pretoria (<http://english.cri.cn>)

The Procession used to run from Lynnwood to Church Square, however unfortunately, in 2015, students were restricted to only participate within the LC de Villiers (sports) campus borders.

Another carnival was held in Pretoria this year, 2015, the **Gauteng Carnival**. On Heritage day, the Gauteng Carnival procession took place. The carnival was given the name "Pale Ya Rona" Carnival because it is an expression of "telling our story" (Gauteng Carnival, 2015). Various training done by artists and artisans take place in preparation for the procession in the streets. The Gauteng Carnival was launched in 2005 as part of the festivities in Heritage month.

The first Gauteng Carnival was hosted by the City of Johannesburg in partnership with the South African Police Service, addressing the high crime and vandalism rates in the vicinity of Hillbrow. In September 2004, the first Gauteng Carnival was held with 3000 participants comprising of 15 troops made up of the five municipalities within Gauteng, moving a big street party. The procession started at the Johannesburg Stadium in 2007 and ended at Newtown Square. The Gauteng Carnival was held in Soweto from 2010-2012, due to more people wanting to participate and other logistical requirements.

The slogan of the carnival this year, was *Social Cohesion*. About 20 000 participants took part in the procession - from embassies, to schools, to the Jewish community to show their identity, culture and where they come from. The day was full of excitement and around 23 000 spectators attended the day.

The procession started on Church Square, up Stanza Bopape street and ended at the foot of the Union Buildings. The Union Building's grounds were buzzing with young and old. Parents with children, school children, teachers and leaders and even pensioners.

The day was a truly colourful and uplifting day, where people could express themselves in different ways - dressing up, dancing, singing, wearing masks, parading through the streets and at the same time, meeting new people. People were given the opportunity to come



Figure 02.12: Gauteng Carnival (Photos taken by Author, 2015)

forward with confidence and to show what they believe in, who they are and where they come from. Floats from countries such as: Greece, Catalonia, Croatia, Gabon, Jews and other also attended the procession and shows that people from all cultures have the need to express themselves.



Figure 02.13: Gauteng Carnival (Photo taken by Author, 2015)

02.03 CONCLUSION

From the investigation above, it is clear that carnival is a well-known concept throughout the world and people interpret it in their own way and make it their own. It also indicates the need of every human being to express themselves in some or other way. Many of the carnivals, especially those in Pretoria, aim to create awareness of something, giving to charity and for people to show off their identity. During the workshops given the week prior to the Feast of the Clowns, young people are taught to make a change but public space has to be provided where young people are able to make a change, for example. Langman (in Boros, 2014:12) believes that carnival, public spectacles, has power to offer alternative visions of approaches to public space and cultural protest. Some of the carnivalesque transgressions as spectacles of resistance can foster more liberal cultural values, progressive cultural changes and/or reforms.

Five characteristics were identified that were evident through all the carnivals and that also relate to sport:

- Daily routine is turned on its head,
- Hierarchy is suspended - all people are equal,
- Ritual of events/proceedings
- Inclusiveness
- Adapted to change

On carnival days, the daily routine is turned on its head: people take off from work and instead attend the carnival, roads are used for pedestrians instead of cars; people sometimes wear costumes and have “fake identities” and being bold and bright about it - anonymity, equity and no rules.

Whereas in their daily life people might have to wear a suit and tie people are able to express themselves in different ways when it comes to sport or carnival. For example someone with paint all over his face and some horns on his head, might just be a lawyer or doctor and one would not expect that it could be the same person.

A sense of ritual exist within these events. All carnivals are organised to an extent and occur on specific, pre-determined days and times. Just like carnivals, sport matches are also pre-planned activities. Carnivals parade on a specific route and certain activities are planned for the day - similar to sport events. Always during sport events at Loftus, only people with tickets can enter the stadium area around specific event times and streets are closed off around Loftus before and during sports games.

Just as people have adapted during carnival, people have adapted to urbanisation over the years and people who move to urban centres in future, will also have to adapt. When the carnival was introduced in Rio de Janeiro, people made the carnival their own by changing the music to South American music and wearing costumes and doing dances that relate more to Brazil and their culture. The carnival changes over time. It is also present in the Gauteng Carnival - people have a need to express themselves in order to find themselves and adapt to the change our country has undergone.

Carnivals are universal and inclusive of all people, like Mikhael Bakhtin described. Everyone who wants to, may attend the carnival, and the same goes for a sport event - this happens all around the world. “Playgrounds, the stadium or whole ensembles of sports arenas, facilities and landscapes serve as places of social transformation dissolving the boundaries between the actors and the spectators, social classes and ethnic groups” (Katzner, 2010:252). It is the same principle that carnivalesque is based on - dissolving the boundaries between actors and spectators - this can be seen in real life as race, gender, religion, age, economic class, etc.

If an urban landscape design is approached in a way that it can provide for carnivalesque or spectacle on any day, more groups of people will be able to express themselves in various ways. It will be used by more people on more occasions, preventing the ‘white elephant’ scenarios such as Loftus Versfeld stadium. The inclusiveness of these rituals can also foster a sense of belonging and ownership that is renewed and adapted through time. Designed urban spaces should provide for new possibilities around the city.

The rest of the dissertation will focus on ‘carnivalesque’ and turning things on its head. Three scales of turning things upside down will be looked at, such as: the urban environment of Pretoria, the extent to which people are able to express themselves within a public park and how carnivalesque influence the design of a multifunctional landscape surface.

