



# WHOSE HERITAGE MATTERS

mapping ■ making ■ mobilising  
cultural heritage in Cape Town



A fieldwork report from the  
*Whose Heritage Matters* project  
July 2021



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This report focusses on *Whose Heritage Matters* in Cape Town, South Africa. If you are interested in learning more about the research in Kisumu, or accessing the final project overview, please visit [www.heritagematters-rc.org](http://www.heritagematters-rc.org) and [www.africancentreforcities.net](http://www.africancentreforcities.net)

The local research team in Cape Town have received permissions to use and reproduce images and quotes from participants.

Cover image: Miss Nkunzi by Feni Chulumanco. Credit: Barry Christianson

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# WHOSE HERITAGE MATTERS IN CAPE TOWN

It was windy, a chill in Cape Town's infamous South Easter as we gathered in Greatmore Studios' gallery for our first in-person meeting. One side of the gallery was partially open, good airflow for a meeting, with chairs positioned 1,5m away from each other in a circle, bottles of sanitizer strategically placed. It was the first time many of us had been in the same room as others for months. We spent the next three hours sharing positions, practices and politics of heritage in Cape Town, paying attention to invisibilities, marginalities and erasures as well as possibilities for the past, present and future of heritage in our city.

The *Whose Heritage Matters* project was designed to understand whether, and if so how, cultural heritage could be mobilised to support more sustainable and just urban futures in Cape Town (South Africa) and Kisumu (Kenya).

Our goal was to co-produce the project with local partners through

- **mapping** tangible and intangible cultural heritage meanings and values
- enabling the **making** of cultural heritage through active interventions and
- **mobilising** knowledge and partnerships to support the strategic role of heritage in policy and civic action.

The collaboration underpinning the project was supported by the Mistra Urban Futures network which enabled researchers in the UK, South Africa and Kenya, working on the intersections between culture, justice and the city, to form and test partnerships. Our action-oriented approach meant grounding the project in locally-produced understandings of critical challenges and opportunities to mobilise cultural heritage for sustainable futures.

This report tells the story of *Whose Heritage Matters* in Cape Town, South Africa

**Part 1 - LOCATING:** We start by locating the project in the context of Cape Town's rich and varied cultural heritage sector; situating the research in the African Centre for Cities' reflective and responsive research agenda; and placing the project in relation to our two main project partners: Greatmore Studios and the City of Cape Town (CCT). We also highlight the impact of COVID-19 on what it means to do embedded and engaged research during a pandemic.

**Part 2 - MAPPING:** In Part 2 we turn to mapping the terrain, paying attention to the different heritage actors and the values that shape their engagement with heritage in Cape Town. Plural values can create

tensions and contradictions. We identify some of the key intersecting challenges that shape the way heritage is understood, made and operationalized in Cape Town.

**Part 3 - MAKING:** Part 3 introduces the commissioned creative research projects and reflects on collaborating and co-producing action-oriented research during COVID-19. It highlights the role of experimental and creative heritage interventions in reckoning with the past in conflicted places.

**Part 4 - MOBILISING:** In Part 4 we look at what it means to mobilise knowledge, action and networks produced and nurtured in the project. We share how the project mobilized critical approaches to heritage in scholarship and in shaping public discourse, as well as showing how the project leveraged networks to identify plans for future action.

**Part 5 - LANGUAGE:** We reflect on the new language needed to understand the potential of mobilizing cultural heritage in the city: land, livelihoods, lives, liveability, and legislation.

**Part 6 - LAST WORDS:** We summarise the key implications and reflect on the value and impact of the project in Cape Town and beyond.

## Methods of mapping, making and mobilising

- Desk review of policies and state mandates
- Interviews with policy officials, academics, artists, activists
- Scan of heritage sector organisations
- Values, power and situational mapping with project partners
- Arts and humanities-based research using: performance, creative research, calligraffiti, video, painting and mosaic
- Co-production workshops at Greatmore Studios
- Reflective interviews
- Policy co-production
- WhatsApp groups for communicating, reflecting and sharing challenges
- Conference panels and proceedings
- Curriculum design
- Network development



Infecting the City is an annual art festival that interacts and intervenes in public spaces around Cape Town. Credit: Barry Christianson



# #1: LOCATING THE PROJECT

Although a popular tourist destination, the City of Cape Town remains stubbornly divided and socio-economically unequal. Of the approximately 4,6 million people, around 34% are unemployed. 12% of residents live in informal dwellings and in slum conditions. The spatial legacy of colonialism and apartheid still shapes the urban form, where the majority of residents live in precarious conditions due to poverty, gang violence and natural hazards. In addition, Cape Town recently went through a crippling drought, has erratic electricity load shedding, and since 2020 has had all forms of socio-economic inequality amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic.



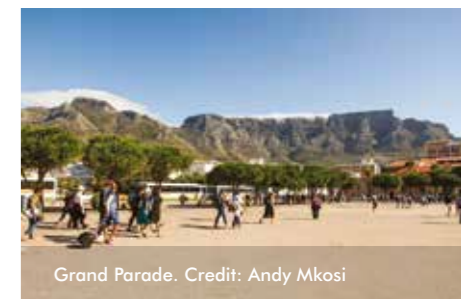
Despite these challenges, Cape Town also has a long history of cultural action – a rich political history of music such as jazz and Hip-hop; a vibrant visual and performing arts scene; and tangible and intangible heritage forms that shape narratives in and of the city in powerful ways. Cape Town has explicitly prioritised culture and heritage as key to its identity and branding strategy and has a rich and varied cultural heritage sector. However, instrumentalising heritage in cities has had unintended consequences, such as essentialising culture and imposing nationalist agendas, resulting in elite-centric urban development and neglect of the intangible, relational and fluid nature of cultural heritage. Although the importance of intangible heritage is recognised in the creative sector, it is less well acknowledged in urban and spatial development. In addition, it is unsurprising that unequal power dynamics play out in all realms of society, and particular kinds of heritage seem to matter more than others.

The heritage sector is multi-faceted and active in Cape Town, and although important critical debates circulate within the sector, these are not always shared in other spheres of government or civil society. While curators, museum specialists, artists, critical heritage scholars and many independent heritage consultants recognise and base their work on a nuanced and politicised notion of cultural heritage, politicians, urban developers, spatial planners and others may see heritage merely as tangible assets – e.g. Cape Town's City Hall – or as moral claims to particular cultural practices. These claims may be as



Cape Town. Credit: Alexia Webster

straightforward as how we eat, dress and pray, but also more fraught and discriminatory, impacting on women's place in society and the exclusion of minority marginalised groups (e.g. immigrants or LGBTQ residents). It was therefore important for the project to enrol a range of actors from the beginning. This included municipal officials, heritage scholars, civil society activists, and creative practitioners innovating at the intersection of culture, heritage and the city. These collaborations were anchored in three institutions: African Centre for Cities, City of Cape Town and Greatmore Studios.



Grand Parade. Credit: Andy Mkosi



Cape Town. Credit: Andy Mkosi



ACC Conference 2018. Credit: Andy Mkosi



Strand Street. Credit: Andy Mkosi

## African Centre for Cities

The project built on existing relationships of researchers at the African Centre for Cities (ACC), an action-oriented applied research centre based at the University of Cape Town. ACC's research focuses on 'collaborative research and developing imaginative policy discourses and practices to promote vibrant, just and sustainable cities' (ACC website). ACC's work is geared towards being both critical and propositional, placing emphasis on systemic responses to African challenges.

ACC has had an interest in the cultural dimensions of urban life since its inception in 2007. *Whose Heritage Matters* emerged out of the confluence of three processes.

- First, it built on ongoing work at the ACC and a research stream focusing on the role of arts, culture and heritage in cities. ACC has led several projects in partnership with civil society organisations, collectives and individual creative practitioners, exploring the role of creative practice in place-making and de-centering power in an unequal city (Sitas, 2020a and b).

- Second, it emerged out of a collaboration between different cities as part of the Mistra Urban Futures network entitled *Cultural Heritage and Just Cities* that focused on four interrelated themes: narratives of culture and urban development towards realising just cities, cultural planning and cultural impact assessment, culture and economic development, and art, culture and heritage practices. The Kisumu and Sheffield partners on this project collaborated with Cape Town on aspects of these themes over the course of five years (Perry, Ager and Sitas, 2019).

- Third, ACC had embedded a researcher in the CCT's Arts & Culture Branch from 2018-2019 as part of their *Knowledge Exchange Programme*, a knowledge exchange agreement where scholars and officials co-produced policy responses to leverage cutting edge and critical scholarship with the pragmatism of practice (Sitas, 2020b). Through this project, strong relationships were built with local government.

*Whose Heritage Matters* built on these projects and partnerships with civil society, city officials and scholars from elsewhere, and was born out of an interest in asserting the importance of:

- culture as the fourth pillar of sustainability spelled out in UCLG's Agenda 21 for Culture
- experimentation with creative forms of urban heritage research
- and experimentation with how cultural and urban policies may be better aligned.

## City of Cape Town



Image credit: Taken from the Five Year Integrated Development Plan<sup>1</sup>

Since the democratic transition in South Africa in the 1990's, **the City of Cape Town** has grown and evolved, and in 2000, saw the merger of 58 local and regional government bodies into a single municipality that covers around 2500 km<sup>2</sup>. This includes the built-up districts of the metropolitan area, the natural mountainous region of the Cape Peninsula and Table Mountain, the low-lying area of the Cape Flats, as well as almost all of the False Bay Coast and part of the Cape Winelands. Given its traumatic and segregated past, coupled with contested claims to the city, this makes it a complex municipality to manage. Additionally, it has undergone major restructuring on several occasions in the last 10 years, with departments reconfiguring at each moment of change.

Urban politics are sometimes thought of in unhelpful binaries where the state

and civil society are pitted against each other. Civil society is multi-faceted, and municipalities are not the sum total of their formal politics. Embracing an approach of 'radical incrementalism', the project sought to collaborate with like-minded civil servants trying to integrate just aims into their municipal mandates, and particularly those with deep civic roots.

Currently, the Heritage Branch is located within the Environmental Management Department. Through ACC's ongoing engagement with the CCT, an opportunity to collaborate was recognised with the intention of strengthening the way policy is informed and operationalised. The collaboration built on a shared interest in identifying ways to tackle siloed approaches to heritage conservation and management and see how heritage can be better leveraged for sustainability and place-making.



## Greatmore Studios



Greatmore Studios is an artist-led studio space that was established in 1988, and one of the few non-commercial art studios and exhibition spaces in Cape Town. It has a long history of supporting emerging, critical, and radical Black artists and holds an important position in the arts sector in South Africa. It has 12 studio spaces, a gallery and event space, offices and a central courtyard space. It is a vibrant hub of cultural activity, and hosts different length artists' residencies, encouraging engagement and collaboration between artists. The Director of Greatmore Studios, Ukhona Mlandu, shared an interest in exploring how creative research practices could engage with the contested values playing out in and beyond the neighbourhood.

Mlandu is interested in viewing this artist-led community-of-practice, which has existed for over 30 years and contributed to contemporary art history, as a heritage site - in the physical sense of the building - and in terms of its iterations and impact beyond the limitations of the physical site. She also places and negotiates the meaning of Greatmore Studios's continued existence in a gentrifying Woodstock as an act of resistance and necessity. It is for this reason that engagement with its immediate communities, particularly those who are marginalised within this community, needs to be deliberate and intentional in its alignments with a more inclusive and broadened understanding.



Greatmore Studios and Woodstock  
Credit: Barry Christianson

Greatmore Studios is in Greatmore Street in the historic suburb of Woodstock. Woodstock, named in 1882, is an old neighbourhood, rapidly industrializing from an agricultural zone to an industrial hub. Before the reclamation of sea through the expansion of the harbour, the neighbourhood had been sea-facing, a street called Beach Road: a living reminder of how urbanization re-shapes cities. Woodstock was built around a combination of housing and light industry, with many residents living and working in the same neighbourhood. Although other centrally located neighbourhoods, like District 6, were classified as White under the racist Group Areas Act, Woodstock remained a 'grey' area where the Act was not enforced. Many of the residents were classified as 'Coloured' under the apartheid regime, but residents have come from a wide array of backgrounds, including Black Africans from South Africa as well as from places across the continent. When the clothing sector collapsed in South Africa,

many residents' incomes were decimated, and the area hit an economic slump as job precarity increased. Despite challenges it remained a working-class neighbourhood with rare affordable and centrally located housing.

Post democratic transition in 1994, the Victorian architecture and proximity to the central city piqued the interest of typically White residents and investors. Increasingly, Upper Woodstock has transitioned into an elite suburb, while Lower Woodstock has clung to its roots. Similar to other cities, Woodstock has been undergoing several waves of gentrification, with the third wave accelerating over the last ten years. Albert Street is littered with elite creative industries enclaves, design shops, and edgy street art murals. For many, the most recent evictions, displacement of resident housing and replacement of local businesses are a tragedy that is even more pronounced: the property market is doing the work that not even the apartheid regime succeeded at.

As a result, Woodstock is a neighbourhood of juxtapositions: historical row housing, overshadowed by new hip apartment blocks; cell phone shops and barbers next door to artisanal bakeries and home brews. Although there are elite encroachments, there are also vibrant long-standing cultural heritage places and practices in every street: churches and mosques; parks and playgrounds; kitchens and clinics. There is also resistance: with social movements, housing activism and everyday social activism playing an important role in social and cultural solidarities. Woodstock is a microcosm of contestations and coalitions of cultural heritage values in South African cities, with a wide range of actors vying for prominence and priority.

It is within this context that *Whose Heritage Matters* sought to interact and intervene; explore and experiment; connect and collaborate. The project brought together the urban research expertise of the African Centre for Cities; the grounded and imaginative skills of local artists and activists at Greatmore Studios; and the technical savvy of activist officials from the City of Cape Town.

## COVID-19: Research projects in pandemic times

At midnight on the 26 March 2020, in response to the global pandemic and a declaration of a state of emergency, South Africa went into one of the strictest lockdowns witnessed in the world. Everyone was confined to their homes, except to buy essential goods at their local shops. A full prohibition on alcohol and cigarettes was instated and the lockdown was heavily enforced by the police and armed forces. All workplaces and schools were closed, all public transport stopped; essentially it was a country at a standstill. From 1 May, restrictions were eased and two hours a day, from 7-9am, were allocated to leaving the house for fresh air and exercise. From 1 June, the lockdown was further eased, allowing some part of the economy to re-open, and the lifting of prohibition, and a phased and restricted opening of schools.

In July, infections intensified, and the country was once again placed in stricter lockdowns with a reinstatement of prohibition, strict curfew and closing of schools again. Only in August did lockdowns ease to a state where some semblance of normality ensued, and in September the country was opened up to functioning almost at normal capacity. This meant that for the first nine months of 2020, the country, much like elsewhere in the world, was, if not at a standstill, at a crawl. It was in this context of crisis that the bulk of the *Whose Heritage Matters* was intended to run. Each wave has brought more intensive lockdowns, and at the time of writing this report in mid 2021, the third wave is in full force. Given the global inequalities linked to vaccine distribution, we are in another strict lockdown, with a fourth wave predicted before the country is adequately vaccinated. What does this kind of precarity mean for research projects?

Projects based on collaboration and co-production are usually full-on, hands-on, intense and interactive. What happens when this is not possible in the midst of a global pandemic? What if this way of working is not appropriate given the intimate, interior and politically contested dimensions of cultural heritage and urban being? Taking these sensitivities into consideration, the collaboration between ACC and Greatmore Studios explored how to collaborate without making an announcement, co-producing without a plan, based on an ethics of

stepping aside, treading lightly, and not meeting in person. It unfolded as opposed to being prescribed. It required agility, flexibility and patience.

Prior to the pandemic we had wanted to work intensively together: making, mapping and mobilising in collective mayhem, but we needed instead to work more tentatively. Our first meetings were socially distanced walks in our allocated walking hours, making sure we were back home in time for curfew. We decided that we would need to work at different proximities and intensities: finding ways to work independently; together; online and on WhatsApp; collectively at a distance; one-on-one where appropriate; and ultimately with an ethic and ethos of caution and care.

According to the laws of lockdown, we could not be in the same room at the same time, so we left traces for each other to talk to. For example, we taped big sheets of paper to the gallery wall and started with a drawing of Greatmore Street, project themes radiating out as a way to analyse what we were seeing across the creative research. Anyone could add and elaborate. We circulated doodles, tables, and voice notes on WhatsApp. We interviewed each other, made small films on our phones to share. In these ways we could stay connected to each other with minimal contact. Although frustrating at times, we persevered cautiously and with utmost care.

This report gives an overview of what and how we mapped, made and mobilised.

*Whose Heritage Matters* project was underpinned by a relational and responsive approach to research.

■ **Relational research** is interested in how people, places and policies intersect and the kinds of values and power dynamics that exist within the arrangements that shape cultural heritage. This requires surfacing how debates, discourses, individuals, collectives, institutions, places, and spaces interact and overlay. Understanding a multi-dimensional situation involves mapping as an identifying and analytical tool – mapping and making meaning out of what is surfaced at different thresholds and interstices of encounter.

■ **Responsive research** is reflective, reflexive and iterative – it is doing something in response to what is unfolding. Engaged and action-oriented research in the context of this project meant paying attention to, experimenting, and intervening.





Woodstock graffiti. Credit: Barry Christianson

Heritage does not mean the same thing for all people. It is as much personal - how people speak, pray, eat, dress - as it is monumental - how our cities have been designed and built. There is a well-established heritage sector in Cape Town, robust and plentiful policies, yet things still get stuck - in time, space, place, and the tip of people's tongues. In order to move through the maze that that can be confounding and confusing, it was important to map where values, power and decision-making lie.

This part of the report:

- introduces the actors and their respective responsibilities within the heritage sector nationally, provincially and locally;
- provides an overview of the policies that shape the ways in which different actors are mandated or permitted to act;
- and drawing on the fieldwork, concludes by clustering the challenges to leveraging cultural heritage as a driver of urban sustainability and justice.

### Methods of mapping

- Desk review of policies and state mandates
- Interviews with policy officials, academics, artists, activists
- Scan of heritage sector organisations
- Values, power, and situational mapping activities with project partners



Mapping at Greatmore Studios. Credit: Rike Sitas



## Actor mapping

As with most cities, Cape Town’s heritage sector has a wide range of actors and operators, and this means it is a complex terrain to navigate. There are different public institutions at national, provincial and local scales, often with very different mandates. There are also private and civic entities operating across these different scales, with different intensities within the city – from a city-wide focus to intensely local site- or neighbourhood-specific interests. Here we provide an overview of some of the main actors.

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>National government</b>   | <p>Department of Sports, Arts and Culture National • National Heritage Council • South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) and the SAHRA council • Geographical Names Council • National Archives Advisory Council</p> <p>These institutions and bodies draw their power and legitimacy from the Constitution and the relevant legislation that brought them into being such as the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 which sets out SAHRA’s mandate and other levels of government. Their role is to provide guiding principles for the regulation of heritage across the country. The South African Heritage Resource Agency in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 is responsible for the identification and management of the national estate which includes resources such as places, buildings, structures, and equipment of cultural significance; places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage; historical settlements and townscapes; landscapes and natural features of cultural significance; geological sites of scientific or cultural importance; archaeological and palaeontological sites; graves and burial grounds, sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa; and movable objects. The differing agencies and council function under separate legislative frameworks which have resulted in an artificial separation of living heritage and culture from tangible resources. Tangible heritage resources and the associated intangible cultural heritage significance is managed within a three tiered system of governance: National (SAHRA, Provincial (HWC) and local (The City of Cape Town).</p> |
| <b>Provincial government</b> | <p>Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport - Heritage Western Cape</p> <p>Provincial heritage bodies act in compliance with the Constitution and national legislation. Provincial government recognizes the intrinsic value of the importance of religion, spirituality, oral traditions, and indigenous knowledge systems. Much of its mandate is protecting landscapes, sites, artefacts, buildings, and structures associated with these values, such as, structures associated with slavery, paleontological and archaeological artefacts. It is mandated to promote cooperation between different tiers of government. The built form is therefore instrumental in preserving intangible values.</p>  |
| <b>Local government</b>      | <p>Heritage Branch in the Environment and Heritage Department, Spatial Planning and Environment Directorate • Arts and Culture Branch in the Social Development Directorate</p> <p>CCT is responsible for identifying and managing heritage resources in its jurisdiction, where it is competent to do so. Their primary mandate is the management of resources of local metropolitan wide significance, known as Grade III resources. The CCT also has an established tool within its planning by-law which makes area-based heritage management possible. A tangible heritage value can be ascribed value because of the intangible heritage significances which may be associated with such a resource. The Arts &amp; Culture Branch are mandated to promote, enhance and develop opportunities for the cultural and artistic expressions of residents of Cape Town. These overlap with the built environment at times. There is still a disconnect between functions of the two branches as they fall under two very different directorates in the CCT: the Heritage Branch is in the Spatial Planning and Environment Directorate with a strong built environment and spatial visioning focus, whilst the directorate and the Arts &amp; Culture Branch is in the Social Development Directorate.</p>   |
| <b>Private</b>               | <p>Private development companies • Social housing development companies • Built Environment firms including architects and town planners • Developers and property speculators</p> <p>Private developers are agencies that are primarily in the business of developing private and commercial buildings in the city. These include investment opportunity buildings such as apartment blocks or multi-use commercial spaces that may involve retail or business rental spaces. Social housing development agencies are also often private entities but focus on the provision of housing. Private Architects and Town Planners are often in the employ of private development companies to aid them in fulfilling legal obligations for development applications. They also work within the public sector as consultants. At times these consultants sit on decision-making committees within the varying government agencies. Independence is hard to maintain and many private practitioners need to recuse themselves from many discussions where decisions need to be made on built environment development applications which may have social impacts.</p>   |

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Private</b>       | <p>Arts &amp; culture organisations: • private theatres • galleries • privately run museums</p> <p>There is a wide range of for-profit arts and culture organisations. These organisations have some measure of autonomy from state mandates, and they do tend to be market-related. For example, Zeitz Mocaa and Norval Foundation and A4 are art galleries which have their own archives and showcase emergent and prominent artists. There are also many commercial galleries such as Michael Stevenson, the Goodman Gallery, and smaller galleries such as Whatiftheworld and Blank Projects. They play a role in shaping whose culture is represented.</p>   |
| <b>Civil society</b> | <p>Trusts • Non-profit organisations (NPOs)</p> <p>Civil society organisations are many and diverse, representing a plethora of interests. Trusts and NPOs generally rely on public funding and donations and often have precarious funding streams. Greatmore Studios is a trust.</p>  |
| <b>Civil society</b> | <p>Civic associations • residents associations</p> <p>Built environment development applications are often scrutinised by ratepayers and residents associations as registered heritage bodies who must be consulted during the development process. These lists are not inclusive of all heritage interest groups, even though a group with an interest in heritage in a particular area can be registered with the provincial authority. The CCT has its own registered list of associations that are consulted through formal engagement processes.</p>   |
| <b>Civil society</b> | <p>Activist organisations • social movements</p> <p>Activist groups and social movements in the area of heritage are growing. Housing activists have identified intangible cultural heritage as a crucial concern for urban justice as it intersects in places of rapid gentrification and displacement. Social movements are growing in the area of the First Nations heritage as well and there is a deeper conscientising taking place within the official structures. There are also a lot of arts, culture and heritage collectives that experiment with creative initiatives such as Gugulective, Burning Museum, Theatre Arts Admin Collective and iQhiya.</p>   |
| <b>Civil society</b> | <p>Heritage and conservation societies</p> <p>There are a number of heritage and conservation societies with varying interests and who have been benefactors for the preservation of tangible heritage resources, and especially public monuments. These include organisations such as the Simon Van Der Stel Foundation which prides itself in being the oldest lobby group, founded in 1959. New conservation bodies are being established at a neighbourhood level which are concerned with the enhancement and promotion of marginalised heritage within their own neighbourhoods, including the Salt River Heritage Society and the Wynberg East Heritage Society. Heritage interest groups have also been formed around neighbourhood memory projects in places of forced removals such as the Claremont Histories Project and the Constantia Environment and Heritage Programme.</p> |
| <b>Civil society</b> | <p>Museums</p> <p>There are many museums in Cape Town, including the Iziko Museums, the District Six Museum, the Castle of Good Hope Museum, the Slave Lodge, the Robben Island Museum, the Lwandle Museum, Simonstown Museum and many other specialist museums with diverse focuses from gangsterism to vintage cars. The purpose of these museums is to archive particular histories, stories, interests and artefacts.</p>   |
| <b>Universities</b>  | <p>University of Cape Town • University of the Western Cape • Cape Town University of Technology</p> <p>Universities in Cape Town play an important role in heritage studies in a range of faculties including the Social Sciences, Humanities, Arts &amp; Design and Engineering and the Built Environment. UCT runs multi-disciplinary programmes to incorporate heritage and culture into post-graduate studies. This includes the Architecture department’s Mphil: Conservation of the Built Environment and the African Centre for Cities’ Mphil in South Urbanism. The Centre for Humanities Research at UWC plays an important role in shaping critical heritage studies.</p>  |





## Mapping policy and governance

**The City of Cape Town holds that all cultural values, sites and landscapes of historical importance and value, areas of scenic beauty and places of spiritual importance must always be taken into account before any changes are made to our city**

City of Cape Town, 2021<sup>2</sup>

**Africa is self-confident in its identity, heritage, culture and shared values and as a strong, united and influential partner on the global stage, making its contribution to peace, human progress and welfare**

Point 7, Agenda 2063

Cultural heritage is governed and managed by a number of different national, provincial and local policies, and reflects an engagement with global aims found in the African Union's **Agenda 2063** and UNESCO's **Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage**, **World Heritage Convention**, **Convention of the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage**, and **Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions**. Increasingly, there is a desire to leverage cultural heritage through the **Sustainable Development Goals**, the **New Urban Agenda** and **UCLG's Agenda 21 for Culture**.

Although not always coherent, there is a robust set of guiding legislations in South Africa. The **National Heritage Resources Act (HRA)**, No 25 of 1999 is the overarching legislation providing for the management of heritage resources since the drafting of the Constitution. It is based on the principle that heritage resources should be coordinated by those levels of government closest to the community. To this end, the Act established the **South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA)**, a statutory organisation and national administrative body responsible for protecting South Africa's cultural heritage and for setting norms and standards for the governance of heritage resources.

The drafting of this legislation responded to the proposal of the **1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage**, which noted that there was a need for policy to address 'the shortcoming of the past and

the challenges of the future'. Implied in the 1996 White Paper is the symbiotic relationship between heritage resources and establishing a transformed, democratic polity which respects the culture and dignity of all. The 1996 White Paper has been redrafted and amended since 2015 and currently remains in draft form as the Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage. The revised version also emphasises the relationship between safeguarding heritage resources and sustainable development, aligning with goals of the National Development Plan, where it is noted that arts and culture presents an arena for small business development, job creation as well as urban development and renewal.<sup>3</sup>

Another key piece of legislation affecting heritage resource management is the **National Environmental Management Act (1998)**. This states that environmental management must remain consistent with people's physical and cultural needs, and that disturbances to land and sites that constitute people's cultural heritage must be minimised. In this act, the environment is construed as part of South Africans' common heritage (*National Environmental Management Act 107, 1998*). Although not always reflected in the Heritage Branch's mandate in Cape Town, the **Protection, Promotion, Development and Management of Indigenous Knowledge Systems Act 2019** (Indigenous Knowledge Systems Bill) is also an important instrument for the protection and promotion of indigenous knowledge rights, access to indigenous knowledge, and recognition of prior learning.

Provincial and city heritage plans must retain consistency with the HRA, and the CCT

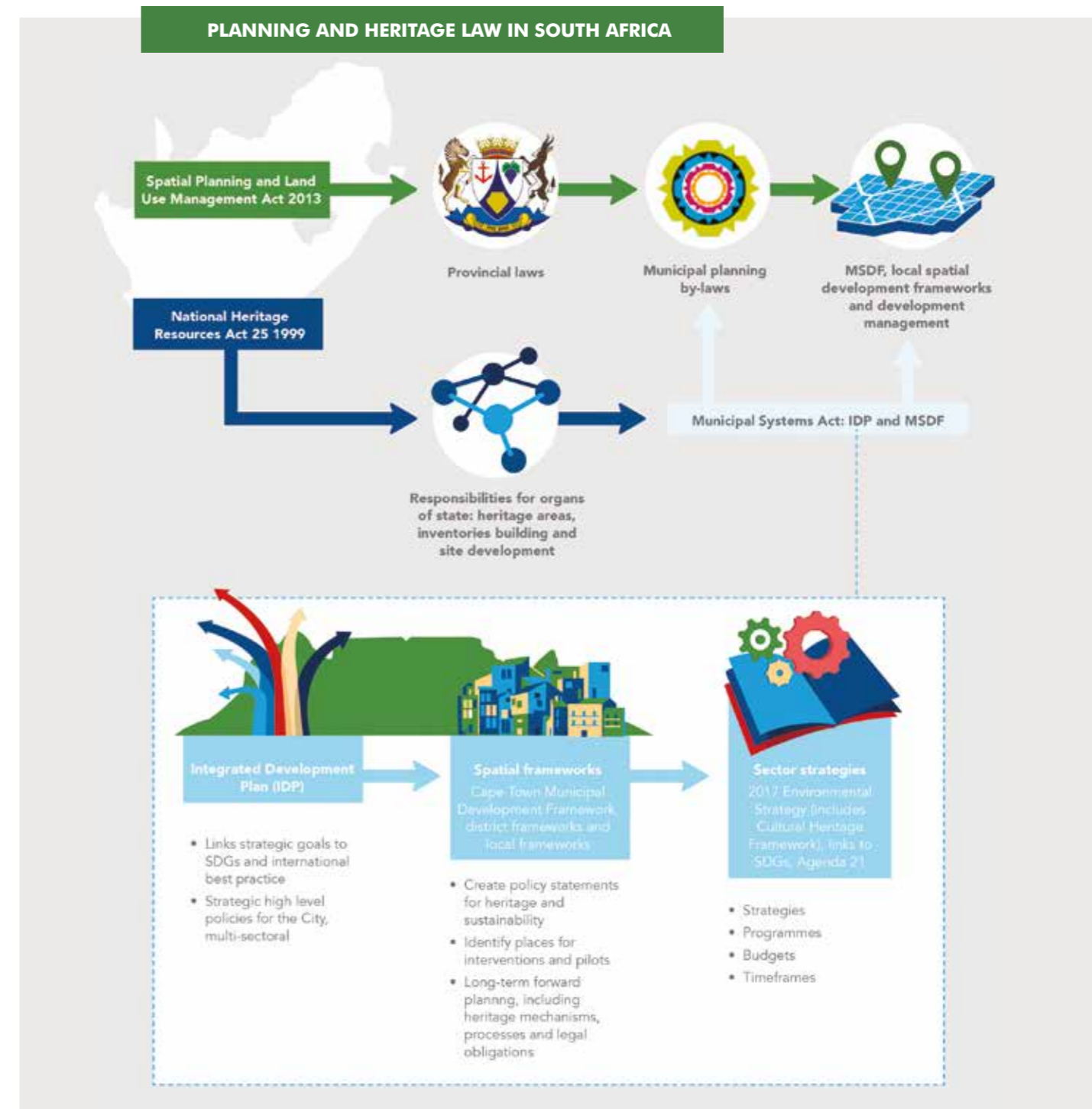
maintains that sites of cultural, spiritual and heritage value must always be taken into account before changes are implemented in the city. Each district has an **Environmental and Heritage Management District Office** where the public can seek heritage advice. Between 2005 and 2020 the CCT has published a series of guidelines for the management of heritage resources.

The CCT's **Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Policy 2014** recognises the importance of cultural heritage but also points to limitations: 'There is no shared framework for the inclusive protection, promotion and interpretation of Cape Town's cultural and heritage resources. The value and significance of cultural and heritage resources is not always self-evident; these resources often require interpretation to explain their significance, and these interpretations can be complex, multi-layered and even conflicting. There is currently not a shared understanding of the "story of Cape Town", nor of how this relates to priorities for the cultural future of the city. This creates challenges on a range of fronts, more especially in the area of decision-making in respect to allocation of resources, and short- and long-term strategy development. Currently, many of the city's cultural and heritage resources are under-represented. A shared understanding must be developed within which the full spectrum of significant heritage resources resulting from Cape Town's long and rich history can be identified, interpreted, promoted and protected, for the benefit of all the residents of Cape Town' (CCT, 2014). The Heritage Branch and the Arts & Culture Branch rarely interact which exacerbates these challenges.

The Heritage Branch needs to interact with other CCT policies. The CCT **Municipal Planning By-law (2015)**, delineates rules and procedures for development applications, including the designation

of heritage protection overlay zones (*Heritage Resources Management, 2020*). The **Integrated Development Plans (IDPs)**, **Spatial Frameworks** (Cape Town Municipal Development Frameworks,

District Frameworks and Local Frameworks), and **Sector Strategies** are all important to engage with in order to land heritage objectives.



This infographic was designed by KANDS Collective as part of an ACC and CCT policy note entitled 'Heritage, sustainability, and urban development: valuing tangible and intangible heritage as drivers of place-making in Cape Town'



## Tensions and contradictions

Our interviews and mapping exercises have revealed the multiple actors, interests, and policies which shape how heritage is valued in Cape Town. We identified a number of challenges which were often echoed across conversations with city administration, civil society, and critical heritage scholars.

### #1 Heritage is often misunderstood

👤👤 *People see heritage as something fixed when it actually isn't, it's a construct. It's something we've decided to give meaning in a particular way. That's not always a terrible thing – it can be used in very productive ways. I think it's just to be aware that it's not some haloed singular thing that you hold up*

Zayd Minty, Policy Expert and Scholar

👤👤 *Most of the time we think about the built environment and often we think about it as being something that's immobile and has to be permanent, it has to be preserved. In South Africa, particularly, because of colonialism, we have inherited that built environment in such a way that it conceals whatever histories might have been*

Nomusa Makhubu, Scholar, Artist and Curator

👤👤 *Our heritage has always been mixed, it's such a fluid thing, in fact. History is fluid, it's not something that just happened way back when, it's something that happened yesterday. And much like culture and identity, heritage is a constant moving thing*

Shamila Rahim, City Official and Museum Practitioner

There is a disconnect between tangible and intangible heritage, and the legislative bias favours the tangible. Heritage, as a result, is often thought of in narrow frames: as fixed as opposed to fluid. Heritage is built, it is felt, it is owned, it is invented, it is passed along, it mutates, and it is messy. Seeing heritage as singular and static and unchanging over time runs the risk of commodifying and packaging heritage without taking into account how practices are living in the present. Seeing intangible and tangible heritage in binary terms, as completely separate, is not helpful. These binaries can result in artificially separating personal practices on the one hand, and material artefacts on the other.

These can limit the ways in which heritage is governed by foregrounding the primacy of conserving the tangible built environment. This runs the risk of preserving more visible heritage (which tends to be monumental and colonial) and neglects the more intangible and ephemeral aspects to heritage (for example pre-17th century, slave, First nation, and the heritage of displaced persons in more recent times) which are often also linked to places. Some go as far as saying that a focus on heritage erases history and memory, re-orienting the emphasis onto what is thought of as palatable and able to be preserved, as opposed to reckoning with the past.

### #2 Heritage is contested

👤👤 *If we look around at the architecture, it is only the colonial heritage that is embedded in our minds. When we look at buildings we do not see a hut or the few cows on the hill as a heritage site, but we see the Waterfront as a heritage site... the reason being, our kind of heritages that we strive to preserve does not put money in the pockets of the authorities*

Eddie Thompson, Activist

👤👤 *Heritage is always a political issue because it depends who is at the helm of power. Those that are at the helm of power want to articulate their own heritage, their own interests... each administration that comes in wants to mark its territory by some development and the approaches to marking it are usually linked to heritage*

Luvuyo Ndzuzo, Museum Practitioner

Given the personal nature of heritage and a violent historical past, heritage can be highly contested. There are many different claims, interests, priorities and lobby groups. There is a wide array of organisations working in the heritage sector, including government departments, museum heritage practitioners, architects, private developers, and a robust and diverse civil society. Oftentimes

personal and community interest and private commercial interest are at loggerheads. There are wildly different values, and for example, the interests of ratepayers associations may not align with activist groups' claims to land – especially in a context where forced removals have had such profound effects on the urban fabric and form. Given the wide range of meanings attached to cultural heritage, it is unsurprising that it is contested.

### #3 Heritage can be violent

👤👤 *Here "family" and "traditional", terms closely associated with heritage, are spoken about in a context of pain and rejection. Clearly, in this context, heritage is experienced as violent, rejectionist, and non-inclusive. How does this transgender individual buy into the fight for "Xhosa" and "African" heritages, when these heritages are the source of her misery and homelessness?*

Lwando Scott, Scholar

Cultural heritage was used by colonial and apartheid powers to subjugate the majority of the population in South Africa. The trauma inflicted by the violence of heritage persists. The toppling of the Rhodes statue and other monuments around the world attests to how the materiality of cities continues to exert a violent force. Contemporary heritage contestations are about more than mere controversy – they can be violent and violating. Heritage is shaped by race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality and all the

intersections in between. What if one kind of heritage priority results in the subjugation of or violence to the other? Women and queer residents are not always afforded the same access to, or vocalisation of, heritage. Sometimes claims to histories, heritage and narratives of the past by marginalised people are violently squashed. A fixed notion of heritage steeped in patriarchies can limit the possibility of becoming an ancestor future generations will be proud of.



**👤👤** *How do we actually claim our heritage when our heritage is overlaid by the psychic damage that has been done to us by our heritage? What have we inherited? We've inherited significant intergenerational trauma. We've inherited significant direct trauma, exercised on us and our parents*

Heritage Practitioner

#### #4 Heritage economies can be limiting

**👤👤** *We see the same master/servant relationships again: black people will be sweeping the floors and pouring the tea, white people will be running the tour companies and there will be an overseas tour company that has the wherewithal as to whether they bring or don't bring people in... Heritage is not ever going to soak up unemployment. I do wish this government would not say these kinds of things. It doesn't. And when it does, what you get is low skilled jobs*

Shahid Vawda, Scholar

**👤👤** *There's this absolutely awful thing called the creative industries. It's all about packaging that little bit that is palatable and selling it in some form or the other. I mean, from states parties to big donors, it's all about how you translate this heritage value into something that can be sold. And there are very misleading conversations with communities about the possibilities for economic kind of benefits to it*

Deirdre Prins-Solani, Heritage Practitioner and Scholar

Although there is a recognition that cities rely on cultural heritage tourism, the economic benefits of heritage have not been fully explored, have been overestimated and sometimes rely on a narrow focus on foreign tourism and the built environment. Although the central city relies on tourism and the hospitality industries, these economies do not favour those already marginalised in the city, with benefits concentrated in particular parts

and populations of the city. The overstated link to tourism, and particularly tourism economies that rely on international elites, can run the risk of side-lining locally relevant practices and sites of heritage that are so important for the wellbeing and belonging of locals. Although heritage tourism is important, there is a missed opportunity for recognising and creating other sustainable and durable forms of decent work in neighbourhoods outside of the City Bowl.

#### # 5 Heritage is not adequately connected to urban sustainability

**👤👤** *Cultural heritage is as much about culture, as it is about nature, as it is about buildings, places, parks and every green space in our city*

Resident

The role of heritage in urban sustainability is not yet clearly connected to the four pillars of sustainability (environmental, social, economic and cultural). The United Cities and Local Government's (UCLG) Culture 21 makes a strong case for culture as the fourth

pillar of sustainability alongside environmental, economic and social perspectives. There is a missed opportunity: valuing the role of tangible and intangible heritage in sustainable urban systems and a reduced carbon footprint is important for the wellbeing of a city and its residents.

**👤👤** *Not enough is being done to connect heritage to the Sustainable Development Goals. There is a clear connection, and there is a lot to still be done to link heritage to carbon neutral renovations, public green spaces and pedestrian friendly cities*

City Official

#### #6 Heritage is seen as an obstacle and heritage governance is siloed

**👤👤** *There is a real blind spot in how heritage in the city gets managed – it's about what can you do with the building, what walls can you break down, can you replace these windows or not, and it is not that those things are not important, but there is so much more at stake, and this is not the only conversation that can be had*

Naomi Roux, Scholar and Heritage Practitioner

**👤👤** *So much of our time is taken up with legal compliance*

Maurietta Stewart, Municipal Official and Heritage Activist

**👤👤** *It was very confusing to me when I came to work at the city, as well that heritage is divorced from arts and culture*

Shamila Rahim, Municipal Official and Museum Practitioner

Although the value of heritage is widely recognised, how this is institutionalised in the CCT has led to heritage being seen as a hindrance. Heritage is often seen as 'red tape' and an 'application process', rather than an integrated part of development management – especially in relation to how the CCT is mandated to manage heritage. In addition, narrow application of technical and regulatory frameworks limits the potential and efficacy of attempts to integrate cultural heritage into urban development and place-making.

Cultural heritage mandates reside in two distinct and disconnected departments, and are run from completely different directorates. This increases the risk of preserving the past as opposed to building the future. The Heritage Branch is largely mandated with tangible heritage in the built and natural environment, while the Arts & Culture Branch is interested in the intangible dimensions of heritage, linked to arts and cultural practices as both in the past and lived in the present.

Ultimately our research has highlighted that new ways of working in collaboration and across siloes is crucial for recognising the intrinsic values of heritage while leveraging cultural heritage instrumentally for objectives beyond the market, and in ways that value the interests and lives of urban residents.



## #3: MAKING HERITAGE MATTERS

Cape Town has a well-developed and highly skilled heritage sector, boasting museums that protect and preserve both the grand narratives of struggle and independence, such as the Robben Island Museum, and everyday memories and stories, such as District 6 Museum. Cultural heritage organisations persist despite funding and resources constraints. *Whose Heritage Matters* never intended to replicate the already prolific work of heritage colleagues and was interested in experimental and interventionist practice outside and between formal heritage spaces. We were particularly focused on what we can learn about, and how we can act around, cultural heritage in the interest of more just and sustainable cities.

### Arts and humanities-based research

Arts and humanities-based research, socially engaged art, and creative forms of enquiry are good at troubling the status quo, while being provocative and propositional in imaginative ways. In these kinds of artful research initiatives, the process is as, if not more, important than the product. Heritage that can be grasped – that we can see and turn into something tangible – is easier to manage than the ephemeral emotions, the messy memories, and the lingering traumas and aspirational fantasies so necessary for thinking towards the future. In the absence of being able to work consistently together, we decided to commission eight creative research projects, prompted by the following questions:

- What is the role of tangible and intangible cultural heritage in realising more just cities?
- What kinds of social solidarities are enabled by tangible and intangible cultural heritage?
- How do COVID-19, and crisis more generally, intersect with tangible and intangible cultural heritage?
- How can creative practice contribute to valuing cultural heritage in cities?

We felt it was important to have a mix of emerging and established artists, creative practitioners from different disciplines, some more explicitly activist than others, and provocateurs not necessarily squarely in the art world. We also felt strongly that we needed to amplify the voices of women and queer cultural producers. Some of the creative researchers are resident artists at Greatmore Studios, others are affiliated to different organisations, or work independently. Although the starting point was Greatmore Studios, the heritage interventions radiated within and out from Greatmore Street and connected different parts of the city and urban psyches: individually, cumulatively and in conversation with each other. Common to all the projects was that they started with a question, a provocation, a call to reflect; they then engaged creative tactics as ways to deepen conversations and tempt thought; and produced a trace of the project to share.

The following pages introduce the creative researchers, their thoughts, tactics and traces.

👤👤 ...everywhere, artists working right now may be onto more far-reaching ways of communicating what contemporary city life and cities are about. The city is always suspended as a case of 'heres' and 'elsewheres', connected yet – yet ...and that is why artists may be doing a better job than southern, or northern, theorists in 'painting', 'composing', 'dancing' and 'writing' cities into being. 👤👤

Mabin 2014:32

### Methods of making

- Arts and humanities-based methods
- Creative research
- Performance
- Calligraffiti
- Video
- Painting
- Mosaic
- Co-production sessions with Greatmore Studios partners
- Reflective interviews with participants



## Heritage Interventions

The purpose of these small research commissions was to use creative and experimental approaches to urban research as a way to challenge dominant heritagization practices – bringing practices closer to the ground. Arts and humanities-based research are adept at confronting difficult urban issues in less-threatening ways than formal political processes. This section of the report draws on the thoughts, tactics and traces of the creative researchers, often in their own words.

### Adiel Jacobs



Adiel Jacobs with one of his graffiti pieces. Credit: Rosca van Rooyen



*Art is very personal. It shapes you as an individual and artist and it gives form to a formless emotion. Therefore, it is important. Art is something that is beneficial and can affect myself, my environment and my future positively*



Adiel's calligraphitti kit. Credit: Ukhona Mlandu

**Bio:** Adiel Jacobs has lived in Walmer Estate, District Six, Grassy Park, Tamboerskloof and now Woodstock. He studied Biotechnology and has a great interest in graffiti and Arabic calligraphy. Because of a lack of access to hand-crafted bamboo pens, he carves calligraphy pens for himself and sells them to other calligraphers. His fascination for art came from graffiti tags on the city walls. His biggest interest was in the look and feel of the letters, font and style. He began tagging through trial and error, first on the back pages of his schoolbooks and then onto the Cape Town walls.

**Traces:** Jacobs' project resulted in a calligraphitti mural, a garment, performances and a series of videos reflecting on the personal as political. The mural is temporary and eventually must be painted over and its memory lies in the mind, the documentation as a thing that once was. It is both tangible and intangible in its life and afterlife.



Adiel Jacobs working in his calligraphy studio. Credit: Rosca van Rooyen

**Thoughts:** Jacobs has been grappling with the loss of his father's house as he was unable to hold onto the property due to rising rates due to gentrification. While grappling feelings of being a failure, loss and grief, the circumstances demand of him to interrogate intangible forms of heritage that can still anchor his identity and carve a role for himself in his own meaning-making of his heritage. His grandfather and father were carpenters: using their carpentry tools to make the bamboo pens becomes a pathway of heritage for future generations and an expression of his inheritance. His hope and plan are to merge his traditional graffiti roots with his Arabic calligraphy and pass this heritage to the youth.

**Tactics:** Jacobs lives and has a studio in Greatmore Street, and for this project extended his existing practice and engagement with the neighbourhood, asking the question 'whose heritage matters?' at the intersection of people, places and artistic practices. For Jacobs, heritage is personal and political – it is about making a decision to preserve one's heritage, and collective heritages of people and places.



Video still of mural painting performance

### Christie van Zyl

**Bio:** Christie van Zyl is an activist, sangoma (traditional healer), writer, speaker and poet originally from KwaZulu-Natal but living in Cape Town now. She is passionate about understanding the human condition and focuses on the effects our surroundings have on how we see the world. Her calling to be a sangoma began her journey of heritage specialisation, where she learned to discover what it means to be a healer.

**Thoughts:** Van Zyl's practice is in the pursuit of physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually healing the traumatic psychological damage inherited by herself, people around her, and the city at large. She is fascinated by the role of Indigenous knowledge and understanding of wellness and disrupts simplistic understandings of pre-colonial and post-colonial heritage on the body, mind and spirit of all people.



*There is a need to understand how we see ourselves outside of oppression, and how do we see ourselves outside of trauma? For true wellness to occur there needs to be a break of cycles of trauma to change the way one views themselves. Therefore, there is a need to be appeased. There is a need to mend these wounds perpetrated daily. We need to live as mended beings not constantly triggered by the built environment or psychological violence*



**Tactics:** For *Whose Heritage Matters*, van Zyl was interested in the relationship between urban development and spaces and practices of spirituality. She was particularly interested in the impact of gentrification on spiritual connections to land and the social and cultural lives of urban residents. For this project, she mapped religious sites and spaces in and around Woodstock, making visible practices that cannot be easily mapped – spaces of ritual and spirituality that exist on the pavement and in public spaces.

**Traces:** Van Zyl's research project culminated in a series of performances exploring the practice of healing in reforming narratives of psychological trauma in the city. Her performance response became a marker for that which cannot be mapped.



Sacrificial lamb, Christie van Zyl [stills from video piece]



### Eddie Thompson



Eddie Thompson. Credit: Rosca van Rooyen

🍌🍌 We need to move from feelings, to what are we going to do about those feelings, and then do it, and after that, there should be a positive outcome 🍌🍌



**Bio:** Uncle Eddie grew up in Hout Bay and Woodstock. He became an activist at the age of 17 in order to make a pathway for the freedom he states he still cannot see. He was a wood collector for others, but now he collects and recycles timber to make furniture and frames for his well-known family run business, Rustic Frames in Woodstock which he opened in the 1980s. His Upliftment Project NPO seeks to feed and create a space for the hungry and the homeless in the city. He continues to scout out for opportunities to fight for those oppressed and silenced in Woodstock.



**Thoughts:** Uncle Eddie unapologetically proclaims that some people's ideas of heritage dominate, and that those in power tend to put their interests first. He is deeply concerned about the impact of gentrification in Woodstock and would love to find ways to reinvigorate heritage practices such as street music, local cuisine and the social life that comes with culture in public space. He is particularly concerned about how those living on the street have little or no claim to cultural heritage rights.



City stories, Eddie Thompson [video stills from Rosca van Rooyen's video]



**Tactics:** Uncle Eddie used his research commission to support the work of the Upliftment Project and collaborated with Rosca van Rooyen, a doctoral student from ACC on a series of videos. As a social activist, Uncle Eddie carries the history of Woodstock in his memory, he embodies the struggles in and for the neighbourhood, and is active in the creative, economic and political life of the area.

**Traces:** Viewing Uncle Eddie as a living archive, Warries captured his stories about the neighbourhood, overlaying past and living heritage stories on places in the neighbourhood, in a video piece challenging the growing 'White-ism' in Woodstock. Warries is a doctoral candidate at the African Centre for Cities, an independent curator, and a cultural activist. She worked on *Whose Heritage Matters* as a project assistant.

### Feni Chulumanco



Feni Chulumanco. Credit Barry Christianson



Miss Nkunzi. Credit: Ukhona Mlandu

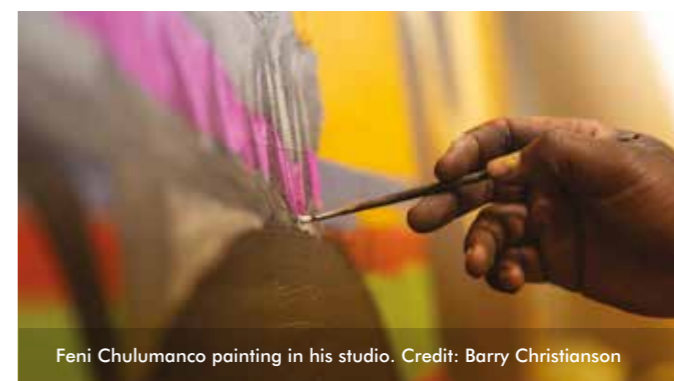
🍌🍌 Feni challenges simplistic ideas of the individual, and wonders whether in the context of a pandemic, the individual is allowed their own 'zone' where self-isolation can lead to self-identity, sense of fulfilment and self-growth 🍌🍌

**Bio:** Feni Chulumanco was born in 1994 and was inspired by art and culture from an early age. Based in Langa, he works with mixed medium and oil paintings and captures the real and surreal of everyday life. His school years with Miss Nkunzi were formative, and, since leaving school, he has been growing his practice and exhibiting more and more locally and internationally.

**Thoughts:** Chulumanco is interested in exploring the role of individualism in a fast-paced world, and in the aesthetics of using colour and painting as a medium to make sense of and represent the world around him.

**Tactics:** Chulumanco's project involved exploring and documenting the story of his high school art teacher, Miss Nkunzi, in Langa who played a crucial role in the lives of many artists who went on to build prominent careers in art. His research argues that we need to recognise the important role of living heritage makers – people who are shaping the cultural heritage of the future in quiet ways.

**Trace:** Chulumanco's work culminated in a story and a portrait of Miss Nkunzi, memorialising her contribution to an under exposed cultural ecosystem in Cape Town.



Feni Chulumanco painting in his studio. Credit: Barry Christianson



Close up of Miss Nkunzi painting. Credit: Barry Christianson



### Lwando Scott

**Bio:** Dr Lwando Scott is a Next Generation Scholar at the Centre for Humanities Research (CHR) at the University of the Western Cape and is currently working on the Transformative Constitutionalism platform at the CHR, engaging law, humanities, and technologies, to think about the complexities of South Africa’s transition and transformation. Dr Scott’s other research focus is on what he loosely terms “queering the postcolony” by incorporating, engaging, challenging, and stretching concepts such as decolonisation, sexuality (queerness), gender, and culture within the post-colonial South African context.

**Thoughts and Tactics:** “Through the *Whose Heritage Matters* project, I wanted to engage questions about heritage that were critical about the way heritage has been conceptualised and deployed in the post-apartheid period. I wanted to ask questions about the well-meaning critiques against gatekeepers of what is considered heritage, a gatekeeping that is done through a complex intersection of money, power, policy and social influence – all of which is embedded in historical racial politics. While I am supportive of the critiques towards the Eurocentric ideas of heritage, that render black lives and cultures invisible in heritage considerations, I am more interested in expansive ideas of heritage, that traverse the normative, even within the margins. My intervention desires a critical reading of heritage, where it’s not only those who are normative and respectable within the margins, who get to be enveloped in heritage. How do we think of a heritage that includes the marginal within the margins? How do we think of black women and their contributions to South African heritage? How do we think of sex workers and their contributions? How do we think of transgender people and the struggles to be recognised as part of the fabric of our society? My intervention is interested in expansive ideas of heritage, where the complexities of marginality, here particularly gender (and by extension sexuality), are not a political afterthought.” (Words by Dr Scott).

**Trace:** Dr Scott produced a written reflective paper (extract reproduced above) and recorded sound pieces.



Dr Lwando Scott. Credit: Rosca van Rooyen

**🍎🍎** We need to think critically and expansively about heritage. What is the place of women in heritage? What are we to think of the heritages of those whose genders do not align with the normative standards? What is the role of the very heritages we are fighting for, in oppressing others on the margins, others like transgender individuals? What would it mean for us as a society to start thinking about ways of honouring, remembering, and placing at the centre those whose lives are rendered insignificant? **🍎🍎**

### Sethembile Msezane

**Bio:** Sethembile Msezane was born in 1991 in KwaZulu Natal and now lives and works in Cape Town. She is an inter-disciplinary artist using performance, photography, film, sculpture and drawing to explore processes of mythmaking which are used to construct history, calling attention to the absence of the black female body in both the narratives and physical spaces of historical commemoration.

**🍎🍎** I use dreams as a medium through a lens of the plurality of existence across space and time, asking questions about the remembrance of ancestry **🍎🍎**



Sethembile Msezane- Portrait



**Thoughts:** Msezane provided a poem as a way to articulate her thoughts

#### On Her Bed She Wept (2020)

*She lays awake, poked by the thorns under her marital bed*

*He wakes up, leaves and for a brief moment She is alone and the thorns allow her tears to water them.*

*Her knees are raw from the prayers she delivers on her bedside  
When she has exhausted all the candles in the house  
Again, the bed envelopes her while she mourns*

*Her mother did the same but they never spoke of it  
Her aunt told her that her story is not unique  
This is the story of many a woman who chose to join the life of matrimony*

*She read a lot fairy tales  
But  
She wondered why never read about these stories in history of making the world*



### Ukhona Mlandu

*I am for everything that disrupts and complicates held beliefs and ideas of legitimacy, belonging. The people we invite into any room should complicate preconceived notions. Because these preconceived notions are almost always either problematic, incomplete or biased in their service of existing power structures that are fighting for their own survival at the expense of the marginalised and excluded. We have got to represent the complexities of our identities, and reject anything that refuses to try through self-examination and an openness and teachability*



Credit: Ukhona Mlandu



Sbwl\_kos, Ukhona Mlandu [Instagram screenshot]

**Bio:** Ukhona Mlandu, originally from the Eastern Cape, attempts to create space for the marginalised and displaced to find acceptance and safety through her work as an artist, arts administrator and ideas engineer. In her work she finds glaring the many ways in which white founding father/mother's syndrome permeates leading to erasure and distorted histories that are normalised unchallenged. Her previous artistic projects have included work in public open spaces that challenge and/or are in conversation with the built environment and spatial dynamics in terms of inhabitation and movement.

**Thoughts:** In response to the question of 'whose heritage matters?' Ukhona was gripped with a longing for all the things she was forbidden to experience. She was also grappling with the need to feel connected to something beyond the walls of her own home. Although she is not one to attend funerals, the fact that those who cared for the burial rituals and culture of black South Africans did not have that option during lockdown led to immense grief and she began to long for her version of connection. In essence she just craved community. "Something had to be done to satisfy the craving for kos, community, my late mother, my friends, life as I knew it".



Curator Ukhona Mlandu and artists Adiel Jacobs and Feni Chulumanco

**Tactics:** When the lockdown levels eased up with a bit more movement being permissible Ukhona set out to avenge the food FOMO she had been experiencing. This project was an attempt to bring to the fore this part of the heritage of township life that is linked to a vibrancy, adaptability and innovation. A drive from the suburbs to the suburbs to the township to seek out its culinary delights, its vibrancy and acceptance is part of the movement that characterises the dynamism of black existence. This is not to be mistaken for the brand of tourism that sees white people taking voyeuristic tours of townships, but rather seeking respite from white centric spaces that young black professionals occupy that are both violent and inadequate for their needs. With this project Mlandu visited various sites to simply eat and be in community.

**Trace:** Instagram handle: sbwl\_kos. SbwI means "I am craving" in a derivative of isiXhosa written in social media shorthand, and Kos means food in Afrikaans. Put together they mean "I am craving that food in that FOMO type of way".



Credit: Ukhona Mlandu

### Ziyanda Majoji



Ziyanda's mosaic. Credit: Ukhona Mlandu

**Bio:** Ziyanda is originally from Eastern Cape but is now based in Cape Town. She studied Graphic Design but fell in love with mosaic at the Spier Art Academy. Ziyanda has become a prolific mosaic artist, producing work that is intimate and political. Ziyanda's passion is to work with communities to discover what will make them feel appreciated and bring about togetherness through conversations or laughter.

**Thoughts:** Portraits are a powerful form of archiving one's heritage, from the glimmer of a smile or the light or spark in the person's eyes. Ziyanda uses mosaic portraiture as a way to explore the intimacy, and in particular, her own familial heritage.

**Tactics:** Ziyanda started the project with a desire to work with Greatmore Studios' neighbours to produce a series of works, a story of sorts, permanently installed down the road. She found the question 'whose heritage matters?' a provocative starting point for conversation. The various lockdowns made this level of deep engagement impossible, but the question of whose heritage matters really struck Ziyanda as an important one to project into public space.

*At this point I am honouring myself, honouring my parents and the people before them*



Whose Heritage Matters mosaic in the making. Credit: Ziyanda Majoji

**Trace:** Her mosaic piece is intended as a permanent provocation to the neighbourhood on the outer wall of Greatmore Studios. It is a provocation to the public who pass by the premises in a fast gentrifying Woodstock where Greatmore's homeless neighbour has disappeared during the lockdown without a way of tracing their whereabouts. It is a provocation to a neighbourhood who raised an objection on a neighbourhood watch group about an event that Greatmore hosted that saw a number of black activist youth attend and take up space in the premises in an act of joy and release during a difficult time.



Ziyanda Majoji. Credit: Rosca van Rooyen



Ziyanda Majoji's studio. Credit: Ukhona Mlandu



## Heritage experimentation and urban justice

The projects introduced in the previous section were built on engagement with local residents and grounded knowledge in context, and have enabled their own effects, affects and afterlives. The creative researchers each leveraged the project to mobilise creative practice for what felt urgent and relevant as an exploration while grappling with the provocation questions. Ultimately, they challenged normative ways of understanding heritage values, particularly in relation to urban development in the following ways:



### Aesthetic values:

the aesthetic value of cultural heritage is often linked to limited notions of urban beauty – utopian visions of clean, tamed and ordered cities that are often devoid of people, grit and certainly grime. The projects challenged this, arguing for a situated and stretched notion of urban beauty. Jacobs' tactic of drawing a close parallel between calligraphy and graffiti celebrates alternative urban typographies. Chulumanco's unique painting and his tactics and techniques celebrate ordinary people whose actions in the now shape possible cultural futures.



### Cultural values:

it is unsurprising that power dynamics in society are shaped by, and in turn shape what kinds of cultural heritage is given priority. Majozi and Chulumanco assert the importance of ordinary lives and everyday cultural heritage, inheritances and legacies. Dr Scott reminds us that cultural heritage can be violent and violating and this is not only interpersonal but built into the urban form. He calls for amplifying queer stories and lives if we want liveable cities.



### Economic values:

the argument for the economic value of cultural heritage is stuck in a narrow focus on tourism, largely focused on the interests of international elites. Mlandu's focus on local cuisine is as much about socio-cultural connection, as it is about creative-based livelihoods – promoting local practices for local people. It is also about de-centering focus from the central city, putting a spotlight on cultural practice in Cape Town's townships without pandering to an elite White gaze. Hand-making calligraphy pens, Jacobs is creating new avenues for heritage economies.



### Environmental values:

urban spaces are often seen as the antithesis of ecological wellbeing. Drawing on her practices as a sangoma, van Zyl's work brings indigenous approaches to socio-ecological wellness, and firmly connects environmental concerns with access to land. Mlandu's project used food as a tactic for linking social and ecological resilience – connecting local food systems to community building under COVID-19.



### Historic values:

the label of 'historic neighbourhood' has often been used as a term valuing colonial architecture under the guise of Victorian charm. Woodstock's gentrification has been rationalized through an historic neighbourhood argument – suggesting that the value of the area is in the buildings and not the socio-cultural fabric. Thompson's work asserts the importance of the lived and living history and heritage as crucial to the identity of a city. Majozi's mosaic is a permanent provocation to protect heritages, histories and memories as an anti-dote to the 'White-washing' of gentrification.



### Political values:

cultural heritage is not neutral, and all the creative research projects saw the importance of mobilising cultural heritage for urban justice. Colonialism and apartheid were political and cultural projects and therefore cultural heritage can play a role in their undoing: recognizing queer voices and lives (Dr Scott); everyday stories and ordinary heroes (Chulumanco and Majozi); and challenging elite-centric urban development (Thompson and van Zyl).



### Social values:

development cannot only be seen as a technical fix, and cultural heritage can play a role in humanizing urbanization. Thompson argues for the preservation of the social fabric in relation to the material form of the city – preserving parks, and pavements as much as buildings. Mlandu foregrounds valuing living heritage as important for social connection – especially in the response to and recovery from COVID-19.



### Spiritual values:

both Msezane and van Zyl argue that the spiritual is always side-by-side the spatial and therefore cities cannot be seen without spirituality. They show how, in cities traumatized by brutal pasts and brutalizing presents, ritual is important in both reckoning and repair. van Zyl's mapping identified the erasures and obstructions enforced by by-laws, pointing out how there are many 'unspokens' that make undesirability possible.

## #4:

# MOBILISING IN A TIME OF COVID-19



Credit: Barry Christianson



### Methods of mobilising

- Desk review of policies and state mandates
- Interviews with government officials and heritage practitioners
- Policy co-production
- Conference panels and proceedings
- Curriculum design
- Network development

The mapping and making processes undertaken in our research have demonstrated multiple meanings of and values for cultural heritage. Mobilising cultural heritage is therefore not a straightforward or linear process. Our research in Cape Town revealed the importance of political over economic mobilisation of cultural heritage, in a context of trauma, violence and a city grappling with its past, present and future.

In Cape Town the focus on mobilising was a tactical move to build alliances, leverage scholarship to shape public discourse and open up different imaginaries and spaces for policy-making.

- Mobilising alliances for heritage, justice and belonging
- Mobilising scholarship and public discourse
- Mobilising policy

*Heritage is the baggage we carry with us as we travel towards the kinds of cities, communities, collective values and identities that we want to build. This is why we cannot talk about heritage without talking about justice and belonging, and without reckoning with the really hard questions around whose heritage, whose voices and what we really want to carry with us into the future*

Roux, Stewart and Sitas, 2020

## Mobilising alliances for heritage, justice and belonging

Whose Heritage Matters played a role in galvanizing the interests of a group of critical heritage scholars from the University of Cape Town and the University of the Western Cape, independent heritage practitioners, City of Cape Town officials and activists from Ndifuna Ukwazi. Out of these conversations, an emerging network (of primarily women) from public, private, civic organisations began meeting to identify key areas of intervention. There were five initial goals in mind:

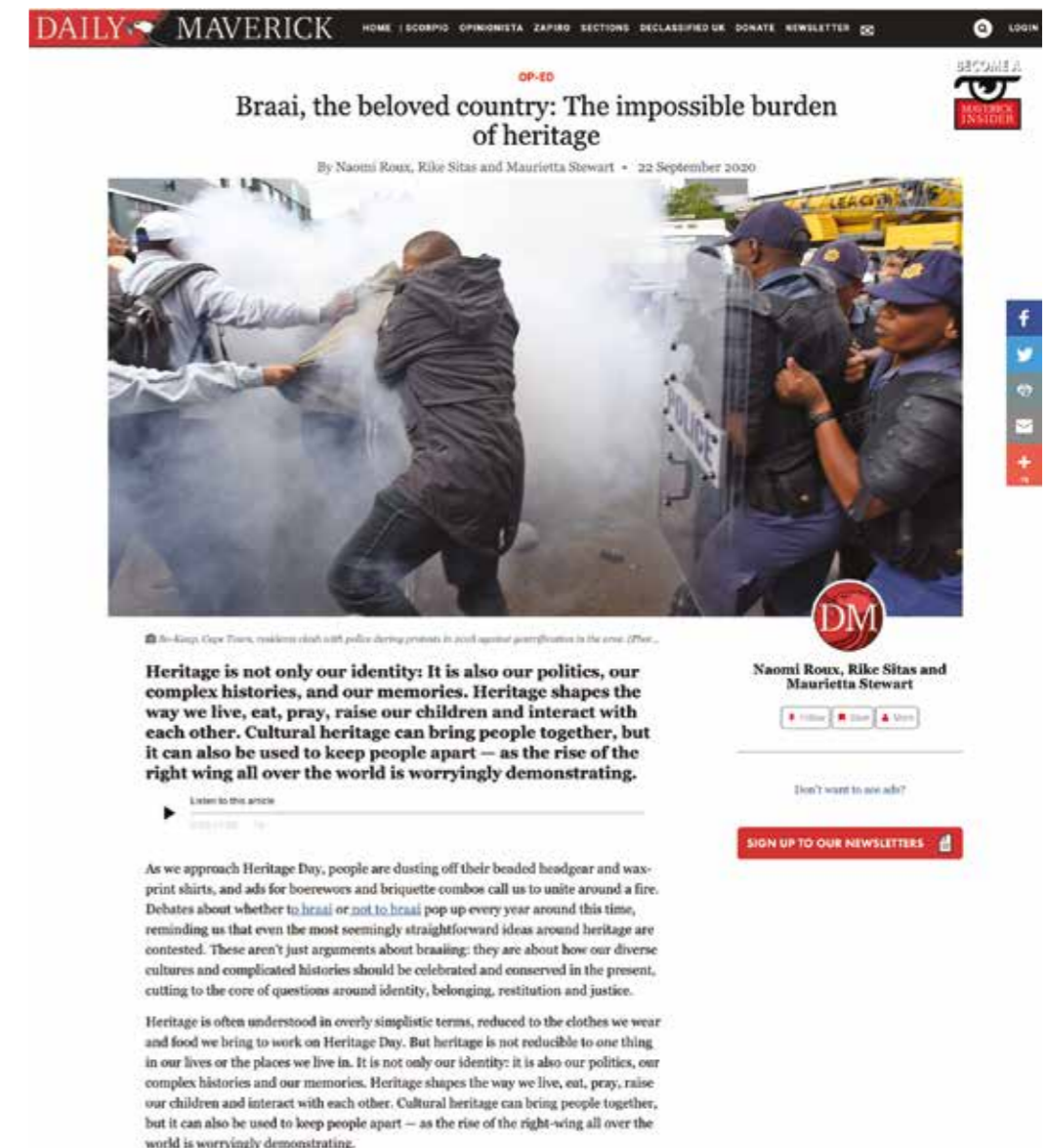
- offering a counter-point to the dominance of White male voices in the heritage and conservation space;
- contributing to the development of civil society tools and strategies for leveraging claims to urban justice through the lens of heritage;
- consolidating research on thick and counter forms of mapping to enrich heritage decision-making;
- developing a research agenda;
- and contributing to more relevant and responsive policy development.

## Mobilising scholarship and public discourse

Out of the budding alliance, two actions are worth mentioning.

The first was directed at influencing public discourse and debate. Published in heritage month (September 2019), Naomi Roux, Maurietta Stewart and Rike Sitas wrote an OpEd entitled 'Braai the beloved country: the impossible burden of heritage' in Daily Maverick, a widely read local online news site.

The second was directed at contributing to scholarship. A double panel conference proceeding was hosted as part of the Southern African Cities Studies Conference in 2020, entitled, 'Culture, heritage, justice and belonging'. It involved eight of the alliance members presenting on their research linked to the politics of heritage and place in Cape Town. In addition, Rike Sitas, has presented the research at several other academic, policy and practitioner conferences, symposia and strategic meetings.



Link to article:  
<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-09-22-braai-the-beloved-country-the-impossible-burden-of-heritage/>



## Mobilising policy coalitions and collaboration

In order to mobilise around policy institutionalisation and implementation, we collaborated with the City of Cape Town which resulted in a policy positioning note entitled 'Heritage, sustainability, and urban development: valuing tangible and intangible heritage as drivers of place-making in Cape Town'. The purpose of the note was to highlight the importance of valuing tangible and intangible heritage in sustainable and just place-making in Cape Town. The note was compiled by city official, Maurietta Stewart, and ACC researcher Rike Sitas, and involved interviewing and reviewing with officials in the Heritage Branch, Environmental Management Department, Land-use Planning, and the Arts and Culture Branch.

The note posits that the argument for the role of heritage in meeting the objectives of and commitment to the SDGs, Agenda 2063 and UCLG's Culture 21 cannot be overstated - it is vital to recognise how

heritage can help mitigate against climate risk, foster more inclusive societies and encourage vibrant place-making. In order to do this, the specificity of place is vital. Drawing on innovative examples initiated by the CCT, the note makes several concrete suggestions for how heritage can be better integrated into planning, processes, conservation management and relevant and responsive place-making. A brief summary of some of the content is included here.

**People and participation:** heritage can play a role in deepening participation through cultural mapping and planning, where citizens identify significant sites and practices.

**Processes and programmes:** developing sustained and programmed engagements around heritage issues can bring different values and priorities into conversation with each other and onto development agendas.

**Places and planet:** connecting natural and cultural heritage, factoring resource efficiency in restorations, and planning accessible and

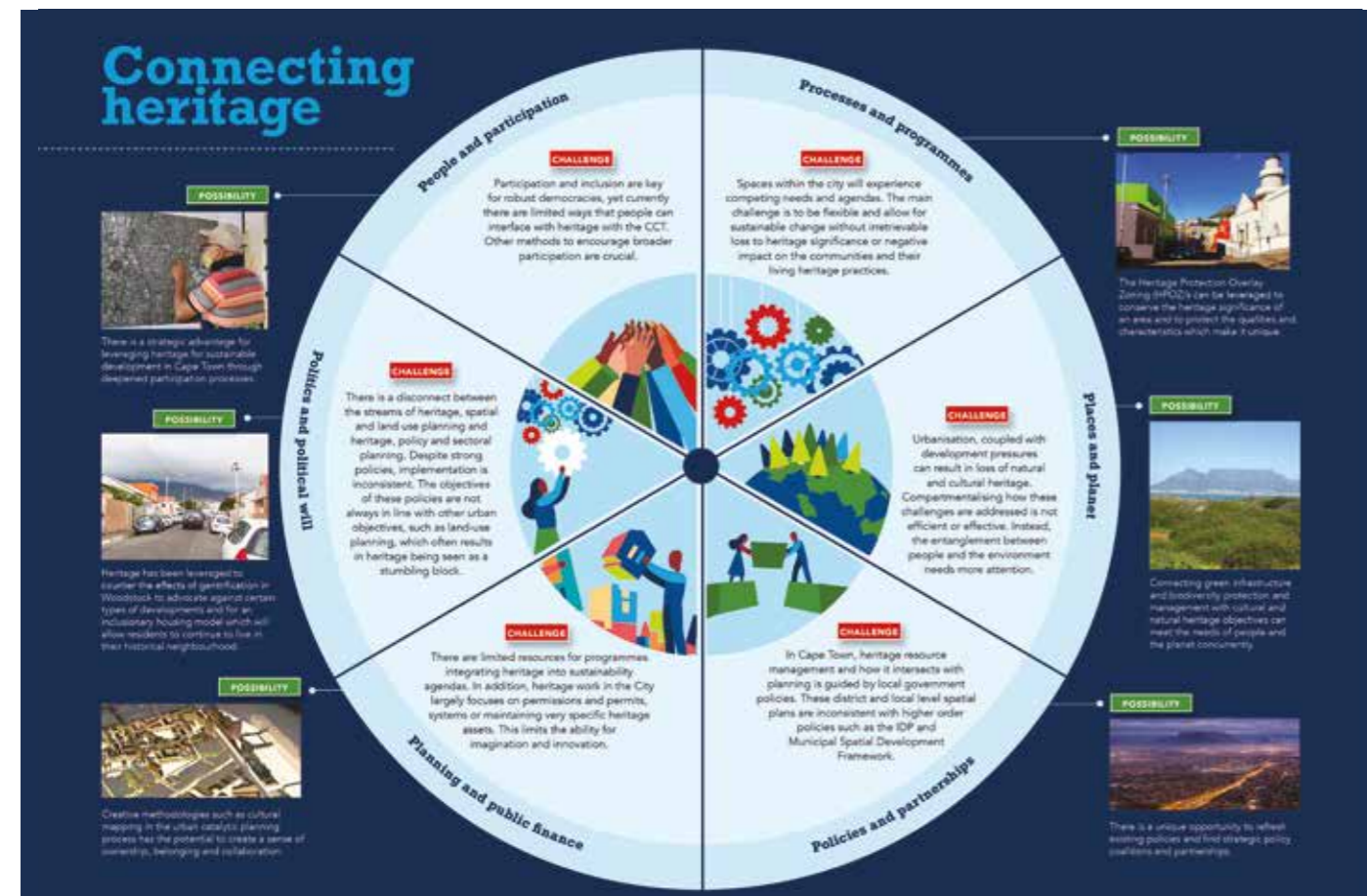
safe green public spaces can create more liveable and sustainable cities.

**Policies and partnerships:** refreshing existing policies and building policy partnerships can strengthen heritage management and conservation.

**Planning and public finance:** re-thinking financing models and developing transversal partnerships can leverage budgets from different departments to accelerate and amplify heritage's strategic role.

**Politics and political will:** identifying champions and allies to advocate for heritage as a driver for sustainability is important for securing heritage in the minds of politicians and for influencing political will.

Through these different mobilisations, *Whose Heritage Matters* in Cape Town worked practically to understand how the challenges identified through the interviews, mapping and making exercises might be addressed. This resulted in a series of recommendations.



| Challenge   | Recommendations   |
|---|---|
| <b>Heritage is often misunderstood</b><br>                              | <p><b>Communicate diverse heritage values clearly:</b> there is a need to share and communicate a coherent and nuanced definition of heritage that takes the tangible and intangible dimensions of heritage into account.</p> <p><b>Collaborate with Arts &amp; Culture Branch:</b> The Heritage Branch is not currently geared towards integrating intangible heritage into their work. Collaborating with the Arts &amp; Culture Branch can open up opportunities to meet mutual objectives of valuing the tangible and intangible, and intrinsic and instrumental.</p>   |
| <b>Heritage is contested</b><br>  | <p><b>Build relationships and partnerships:</b> although some of the contestations are inevitable and values incompatible, strong relationships between different tiers of government, the private sector and civil society can provide the opportunity to work through discomfort productively.</p> <p><b>Build capacity:</b> working with an integrated and entangled approach to heritage requires a range of skills that include technical know-how and social sensitivities. This means building capacity within CCT, as well as building heritage savvy in civil society.</p>   |
| <b>Heritage can be violent</b><br>                                      | <p><b>Value diversity and advocate for cultural rights:</b> the interests of those who have been and remain excluded from claims to cultural rights need to be actively advocated for for example, amplifying queer and non-conforming resident needs.</p> <p><b>Recognise and dismantle material and non-material forms of violence:</b> South African cities are littered with reminders of violent colonial and apartheid pasts, and this means identifying what can be removed, what can be reconciled, and what can be repaired.</p>   |
| <b>Heritage economies can be limiting</b><br>                           | <p><b>Build stronger economic arguments:</b> if the current economic arguments being used are insufficient, better arguments for the economic benefits of heritage are needed. This requires further research – particularly if economic benefits are focused on well paid, decent and sustainable work.</p> <p><b>Re-think public finance systems:</b> response to and recovery from COVID-19 is the primary focus in cities. Budgets are understandably being redirected. There is a unique and pressing opportunity to rethink how heritage is budgeted, and what the priorities could be. In addition, fiscal levers, such as cultural bonds, and heritage incentive zones, may offer alternative resource streams, but more research is needed to fully understand how these could work.</p> <p><b>Leverage common budgets:</b> what CCT has learnt is that intersecting and complex urban challenges require collaboration. Identifying ways to work transversally, such as with the Urban Catalytic Projects, can offer new ways of leveraging budgets and working with heritage management to better serve sustainability goals.</p>  |
| <b>Heritage is not adequately connected to urban sustainability</b><br> | <p><b>Advocate for heritage as a driver for sustainable development:</b> this requires clearly communicating how heritage can connect to social, economic, ecological and spatial objectives within the city. For example, heritage conservation and its potential to contribute to sustainability and a reduced carbon footprint should be better researched and more can be done to quantify the benefits of the practice including that of adaptive re-use, the natural climate controlled design of heritage buildings and how demolition of tangible resources contribute to waste. Local skills and traditional building practices are also in danger of being lost within the development industry. This may include artisanal building skills, joinery work, carpentry, brick making and more.</p> <p><b>Strengthen evidence-based decision-making:</b> ongoing research is needed to ensure the decision-making is underpinned by relevant and responsive evidence. Although there is a generally accepted understanding that heritage is important, less is known about the specifics about heritage's contribution to environmental, social, and cultural sustainability. There is a unique opportunity to collaborate on research on how to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063, UCLG's Culture 21 and the New Urban Agenda.</p> |
| <b>Heritage is seen as an obstacle</b><br>                              | <p><b>Review and reform policy:</b> there is a unique opportunity to review the policy frameworks that govern heritage management. There is an opportunity to review and strengthen the Cultural Heritage Strategy and create a strong stand-alone policy for Heritage Management in the City which speaks to the SDGs, sustainability and the legal responsibilities of the City. Clearly aligning heritage policies with other policy instruments and municipal agendas can amplify the effects of heritage in sustainable urban governance. Currently heritage management is governed by the NHRA and the MPBL/HPOZ. It would be useful to apply the values, benefits and goals of heritage as a driver of place making to the tools that already exist (NHRA and MPBL) and demonstrate clearly how those goals can be achieved in relation to the existing tools.</p>   |



# #5: A NEW LANGUAGE



Hair salon. Credit: Barry Christianson

International frameworks presume an unproblematic and linear relationship between cultural heritage and sustainable livelihoods. Our research shows what hangs in the balance between culture, heritage, sustainability and justice in the city. A different language is needed to understand how these issues play out in respective contexts. This is the language of land, livelihoods, lives, liveability, and legislation.

*We need to change the language. And by the language I mean it's the words that we use, because the words that we use they segregate and separate and cause more harm. We need to find or use language that everybody understands*

Shamila Rahim, Municipal Official, Museum Practitioner

*Heritage sites and memories act as complex resources for (re)constructing personhood and providing coping strategies. Access to and engagement with heritage have salubrious effects, which can help to address mental health issues, reduce social isolation, provide a sense of place, or create opportunities that enhance the meaning and value of life<sup>5</sup>*

*We need to facilitate opportunities for people to also be affirmed as knowledge makers and knowledge bringers*

Bonita Bennett, Museum Practitioner

When we started the project, one of the questions that arose was whether the word heritage is helpful, given that heritage is so entangled with histories, memories; so caught up in tangibles, intangibles and all the ephemerality in between. We wondered whether the question 'whose heritage matters' was indeed a good question, because in many ways it can be so easily answered in theory – of course everyone's heritage matters! We debated what other words and questions could be; what we win and lose by using different terms and turns of phrase.

As the project progressed it became clear that the question provided a useful provocation to ask more questions, and a reminder to keep asking them. As conversations intensified and

we collectively reflected, it became apparent that it not necessarily the term 'heritage' that needs attention, but rather what it is associated with. If we are to reckon with, reconcile, and repair what we have inherited, and hold and mould what we would like to see in and for our futures, then we need to frame heritage in ways that create space; that are at once expansive and specific; and ultimately always imaginative, provocative and political.

There is a great opportunity to recognise that heritage is plural, political and a powerful force in society. This research has therefore led us to develop an alternative vernacular or language which frames heritage around the following interconnected ideas: land, livelihoods, lives, liveability and legislation.

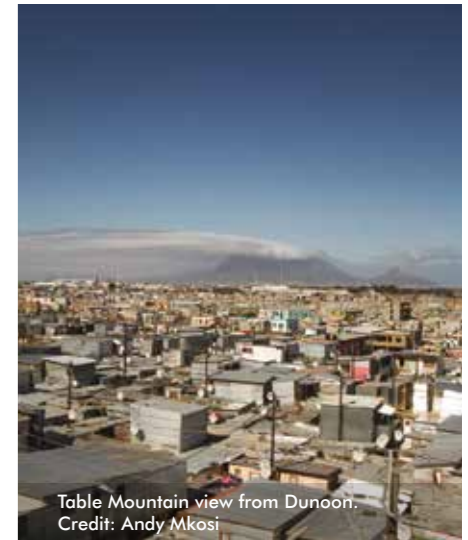


Table Mountain view from Dunoon. Credit: Andy Mkosi



Same colonizers different ship. Credit: Ukhona Mlandu

<sup>5</sup> Labadi, S., Giliberto, F., Rosetti, I., Shetabi, L., Yildirim, E. (2021). Heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals: Policy Guidance for Heritage and Development Actors. Paris: ICOMOS.



## Land: cultural heritage is linked to land

*Heritage is not just a koe'suster and it is not only about bricks, mortar and plinths: it is about land. Land is an inheritance – something that can be passed down. In contexts with deep scars from forced removals, it is also about what has been taken away*

Heritage has tended to focus on sites, but it is impossible to think of sites, places and spaces in Cape Town without thinking of land. Hundreds of years of colonialism embedded in apartheid spatial planning (Group Areas Act and forced removals) has resulted in multiple dispossessions and exclusions. This apparatus systematically took away land from people and access remains limited. It is therefore unsurprising that heritage in built and ecological forms are linked to contestations over land. Despite the best intentions of authorities, current heritage practices can merely protect colonial heritage in the built form, often at the expense of a critical engagement with pressing urban issues

linked to urban sprawl, spatial segregation and ongoing unequal access to the city.

Connecting heritage to land also puts the environment squarely on the agenda. Claims to land are also claims to protecting the natural heritage of the city; to the historical, spiritual and therapeutic connections to the natural world; to recognising the inextricable relationship between people and the planet. Land is thereby not only linked to property in an individual capacity of ownership. It is as much linked to ancestral connections in the past as it is to collective commons in the present, looking forward to more sustainable and socio-ecologically responsive and responsible futures.

## Livelihoods: cultural heritage is linked to labour

*Heritage plays a huge role in the economy... it's not only the people that would be employed by the heritage site; it could be other people whose functions may be unbundled from the heritage institution itself'. But 'the terrain is not level*

Luvuyo Ndzuvo, Museum Practitioner

*In every neighbourhood there are cultural heritage side hustles – that auntie makes the koe'susters, that one the roti, that one the amagwinya*

Resident

Around a third of Cape Town is unemployed and jobs are therefore crucial to socio-economic development broadly, and the everyday lives and livelihoods of residents within the city. Tourism accounts for over 8% of GDP and approximately 1.5 million jobs (Reuters, 2021), but cultural heritage tourism initiatives should be wary of overstating the impact this has on sustainable livelihoods. COVID-19 hit the tourism industry hard – especially given the reliance on international tourists which can be up to 70% for some museums which demonstrates how relying on external demand is not sustainable. There are also concerns that the tourism industry follows the same trends as the general labour market which tends to provide poorly compensated

and precarious work. This is not conducive to sustainability and urban justice. But creating economic opportunities are vital for people to make a life in cities.

Heritage work opportunities are not only in the formal economy – there are many other experimental hustles in the so-called informal economy that can be leveraged for more sustainable value chains. They are locally oriented and relevant and can take a more expansive notion of livelihood into account. While tourism instrumentalises heritage for the market, there are many missed opportunities to mobilise cultural heritage for livelihoods – which are not only about jobs and money, but about social connection, strong networks and wellbeing.

## Lives: cultural heritage shapes the urban lives of people

*They just want the koe'suster; they don't want the kneading of the dough and the making of that community*

Bonita Bennett, Museum Practitioner

*It doesn't mean that if I don't speak loudly, that I'm not powerful*

Deirdre Prins-Solani, Heritage Practitioner and Scholar

*It's about saying we need a new social contract. And that the new social contract needs to do new things...It's those new things which are liberatory, which are designed to undo the injustice*

Shahid Vawda, Scholar

Many critical heritage practitioners caution that focusing too much on the heritage object denies the importance of the making of the item – the koe'suster, the carving, the wire work. When craft is manufactured for the market, it becomes something to be sold, removing the cultural life behind the product. The making of food is as important as its eating, and meals are almost always a collective act. Cultural heritage is not only about artifacts, it is as present in beaded baskets as it is in the lived everyday practices of people; it is in buildings, but also in feelings of belonging. As urban residents our lives are fundamentally shaped by where we do and don't feel comfortable. A welcoming neighbourhood to some may be alienating to others: leafy suburbs and graffitied ghettos have atmospheres that people recognise or are repelled by.

Crucial to urban lives is having agency through citizenship and solidarity. Citizenship here does not refer to the legal right to the city, but to the power people have to shape the lives they lead. Fundamental to this is solidarity and strong civil society. Given that many of the divisions in society are embedded in fixed and exclusive notions of cultural heritage, it makes sense that a more fluid, flexible and inclusive approach to cultural heritage can be unifying. Although cultural heritage can be divisive, it is also often the glue for solidarity. If people feel their lives are valued and represented, there is a greater chance for cohesion.



### Liveability: cultural heritage shapes liveability in cities

*The spiritual and sacred, in my view, are critical for understanding the complexities of how people can bring intangible and tangible heritage together into being*

Deirdre Prins-Solani, Heritage Practitioner and Scholar

*If you go to Woodstock and walk into Woodstock Exchange, you might as well be in New York somewhere. So, if every building along Albert Road is going to look like that, you can be anywhere in the world... we don't want a generic city, we don't want smart, first world whatever they call it that's taking over everywhere else. This is Cape Town*

David Hart, Municipal Official

*We're not dealing with a stage set, we're dealing with a living community*

Maurietta Stewart, City Official and Heritage Activist

If heritage is thought of as lived and in the lives, lifestyles and aspirations of people, there is a greater chance of focusing attention on how urban living can be improved. Cape Town's vast inequality has resulted in some parts of the city being more liveable than others. Much like elsewhere in the world, there is also an increasing encroachment into historic neighbourhoods through culture-led gentrification where claims to heritage come into conflict: where built heritage preservation trumps the lived protection of social heritage.

Liveability is felt and shaped by how welcoming a place is. This is inextricably linked to belonging. People find a place not

merely tolerable, but inviting, inspiring and invigorating depending on how well their material and emotional needs are being met. Wellbeing is more than money – it is how comfortable and comforting the places are where people make home. Finding inclusive approaches to leverage heritage for liveable spaces is vital. In addition, liveability in cities is fundamentally linked to being attentive to the relationship between people and the planet. Cities with clean air, safe green spaces to take a break and a breath, with healthy water and waterways are cities that are liveable - places where people don't only survive, they have the capacity to thrive.

### Legislation: the law plays an important role in how cultural heritage is managed in cities

*Technical built environment legislation is one of the heritage management tools available to us. But this form of "management" often neglects the intangible and everyday lived realities in the present, shaping decisions about what is kept, conserved and cast away*

Roux, Sitas and Stewart, 2020

*I'm really ambivalent about the role of government in heritage, because actually heritage is something that government and the state should not get involved in is my thinking on the one side. On the other side, they have a role to play in providing an enabling environment and that is what I think we would all like to see, an enabling environment*

Jo-Anne Duggan, Heritage Practitioner

Despite the challenges with competing priorities, policies are important. Although South Africa has a well-developed set of cultural policies in place, how these are operationalised in cities ranges from city to city and neighbourhood to neighbourhood. In Cape Town heritage is managed through the Heritage Branch and the bulk of the workload is reviewing applications and giving or denying permission to develop. Technical and regulatory frames, coupled with a perception that heritage is a stumbling block for development, limit the possibility to integrate heritage into urban development and place-making, which runs the risk of preserving the past as opposed to building the future.

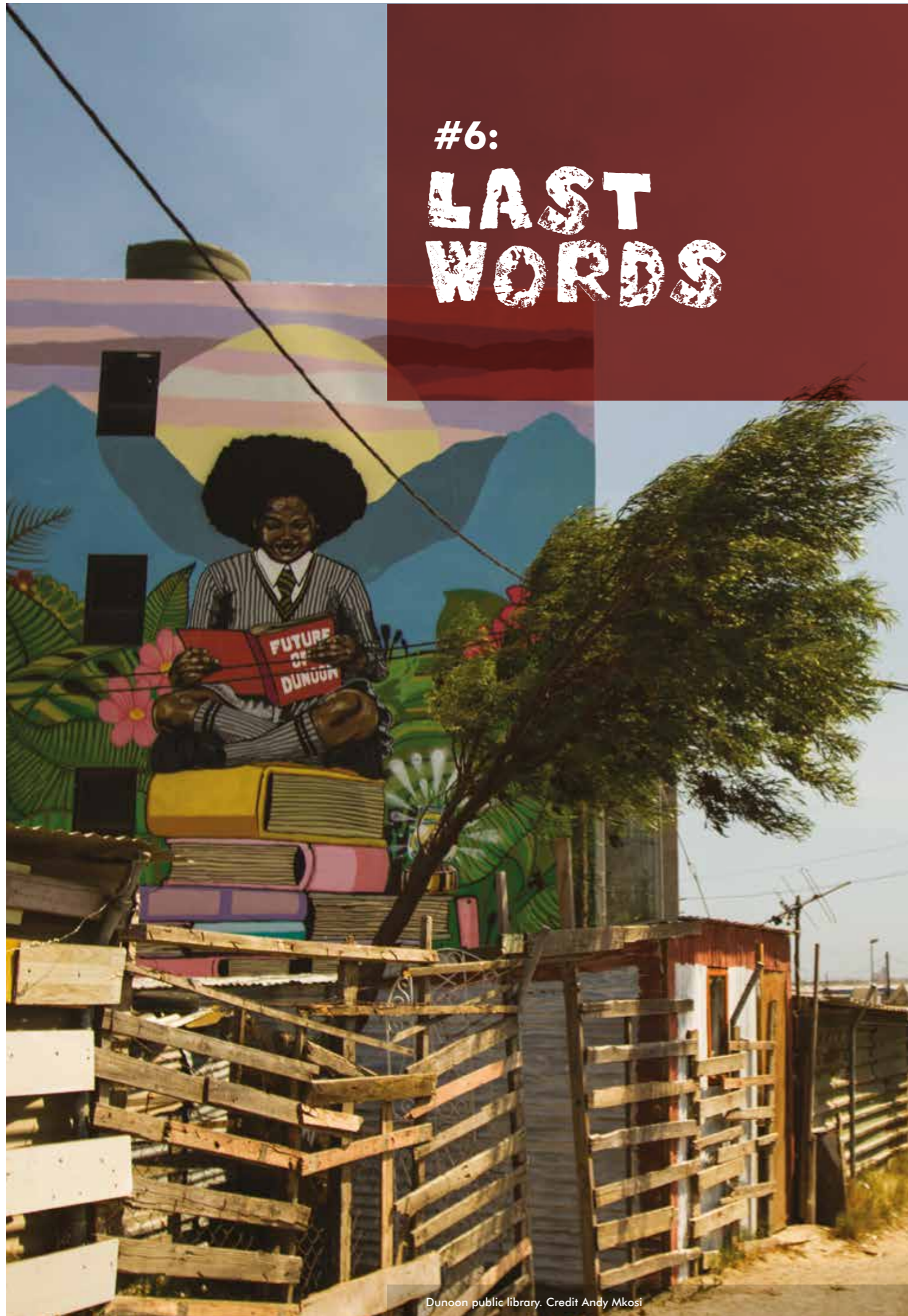
One of the biggest challenges is the siloed ways in which the CCT works. Identifying potential collaborations and coalitions is vital to asserting the role of cultural heritage into other urban agendas. Working together can bring seemingly incompatible values, logics and mandates into conversation with each other. The policy research showed that there are already initiatives within CCT to learn from.

The state has limitations and therefore a distributed approach to governance is necessary. Policy is important for providing an enabling environment. An active civil society can hold policy accountable and can be seen in initiatives like Ndifuna Ukwazi, Reclaim the City and neighbourhood-based organising such as the Salt River Heritage Association.

- Cultural heritage can create better relationships between people, places, and the planet through an emphasis on the importance of **land**
- Cultural heritage involves **labour** and can contribute to **livelihoods** conceived of both decent work and socio-cultural wellbeing
- Cultural heritage shapes the urban **lives** of people and paying attention to peoples' **lives** can point out how urban life can be improved
- Cultural heritage plays an important role in the **liveability** in cities and includes refuting a simplistic binary between either people or the planet
- Cultural heritage is governed through **laws and legislation** and therefore re-thinking the legal landscape can provide an enabling environment for sustainability and justice



## #6: LAST WORDS



Dunoon public library. Credit Andy Mkosi

**Whose Heritage Matters aimed to understand how cultural heritage could be mobilised to support more sustainable and just urban futures.**

Mapping, making and mobilising activities revealed a plurality of values for cultural heritage, in a complex policy and governance landscape, and a well-developed and diverse civil society, resulting in tensions and contradictions in the meaning and use of cultural heritage.

**Whose Heritage Matters in Cape Town** demonstrates that cultural heritage can play an important role in the following:

- **Reckoning:** facing head on complex, violent and traumatic pasts
- **Redressing:** tackling the injustices of the past – particularly linked to the dispossession of land and fragmentation of communities
- **Redistributing:** restructuring and reallocating of power, agency and voice – which can also involve the redistribution of material resources
- **Repairing:** working to repair the socio-cultural and material fabric of the city to take plural values into account

In Cape Town the project built on existing relationships with the municipality and civil society to experiment with heritage interventions in the pursuit of just and sustainable cities. The African Centre for Cities has a great deal of experience holding productive spaces for discussion between public, civic and private actors and acted as an interlocutor and intermediary between different actors that do not ordinarily interact. *Whose Heritage Matters* held the space for tricky conversations between cultural heritage practitioners and city officials in non-threatening ways.



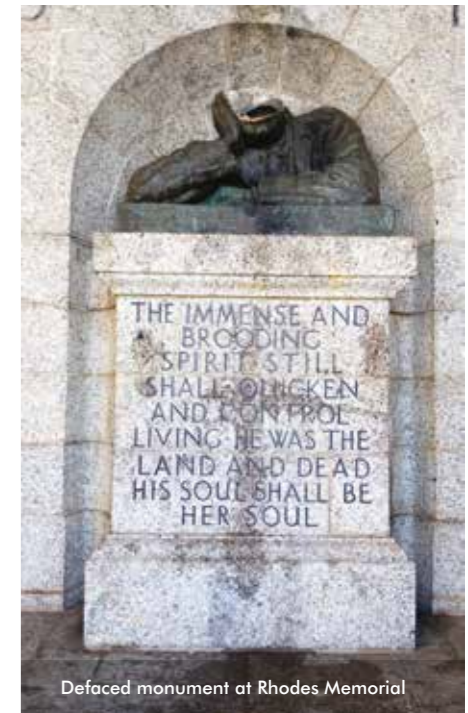
The project recognised the importance of working in collaboration and tactically co-producing activities in order to catalyse change at intensely local and broader urban scales. The heritage interventions tackled how cultural heritage time travels between the past, present and future and emerges at a neighbourhood level. The policy interventions took locally relevant knowledge and inserted it into responsive policy recommendations that have found traction within the CCT.

The creative researchers each leveraged the project to mobilise creative practice for other things. For example, Uncle Eddie used his research grant to support his COVID-19 response feeding scheme; Adiel amplified his existing cultural work in Woodstock; and the conversations happening as part of the *Whose Heritage Matters* events at Greatmore Studios, catalysed an exhibition on Arabic art.

Co-producing the heritage policy note resulted in a set of clear recommendations for the CCT, but it was the process itself that was most generative. The collaborative practice of developing the note opened up spaces for discussing heritage across different departments and has had ripple effects that extend beyond the life of the project.

The ever-expanding networks and alliances radiating out of and around the project are growing momentum, with feminist and queer politics at their core.

Whilst funding ends, and projects close, commitment goes on. The collaborations and partnerships strengthened as part of *Whose Heritage Matters* will endure and we will continue to mobilise this work in the service of more just and sustainable urban futures.



Defaced monument at Rhodes Memorial



Care more graffiti



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This report tells the story of the *Whose Heritage Matters* project in Cape Town, South Africa.

Set against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic, the report documents mapping, making and mobilising activities carried out in partnership between the African Centre for Cities, the City of Cape Town and Greatmore Studios.

Showcasing the work of creative researchers, we show how arts and humanities perspectives can reveal, disrupt and remake heritage values that matter for urban development.

Strategising with city officials created an opportunity to work towards institutionalising plural cultural heritage values to shape sustainable and just place-making.

We propose a new language of land, livelihoods, lives, liveability and legislation to show how cultural heritage could intersect with the sustainable city in complex ways that function to reckon, redress, redistribute and repair urban trauma and historical, deep-seated inequalities.

