

Creative Industries Master's Thesis

# Between Johannesburg, Maboneng and MOAD

Exploring the decline of the Museum of African Design

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## **Abstract**

The Museum of African Design was the first museum of its kind in Africa. It was located in Johannesburg in a creative cluster turned neighbourhood, called the Maboneng precinct. After four years, the museum was eventually forced to shut down in July 2017. This study looks at three seemingly unrelated subjects, namely Johannesburg, Maboneng and the Museum of African Design, and dissects different concepts, in an attempt to understand the core issues that drove the museum down a path of despair. A research was done to determine what the main contributing factors for the closure of the museum were, and whether this museum's decline could have been prevented. The methodology used for this study is based on qualitative research methods, namely triangulation. Thus, a combination of one semi-structured interview, thick description, literature analysis and data collection was used. The findings show that Johannesburg's history of segregation is still deeply rooted in Johannesburg's society, and has caused a separation in terms of people's cultural identity. These factors, along with the lucrative goal that accompanies the gentrification strategy executed in order to create Maboneng are only a few of the factors underlying the museum's closure. Finally, this study seeks to offer insight into a neglected subject, as no literature has been written on the Museum of African Design, and existing literature on the Maboneng precinct and other museums in Johannesburg is limited.

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## 1. Introduction

A young white male briskly walks through the hustling streets of down town Johannesburg. A few years ago this would have been considered an act of madness. His name is Jonathan Liebmann, and the only thing holding him back is the traffic on Commissioner Street. Taxis swerve and hoot, as other cars unpredictably stop to turn corners. Finally there is a gap. Once he has crossed the road I lose sight of him as he blends in with the other many pedestrians on Fox Street. This is the only area in Johannesburg where one finds multi-racial pedestrians, holding cell phones or laptops in their hands. Usually, this would only happen in shopping centres, but as people in Johannesburg say, this area is 'safe'. Welcome to Maboneng.

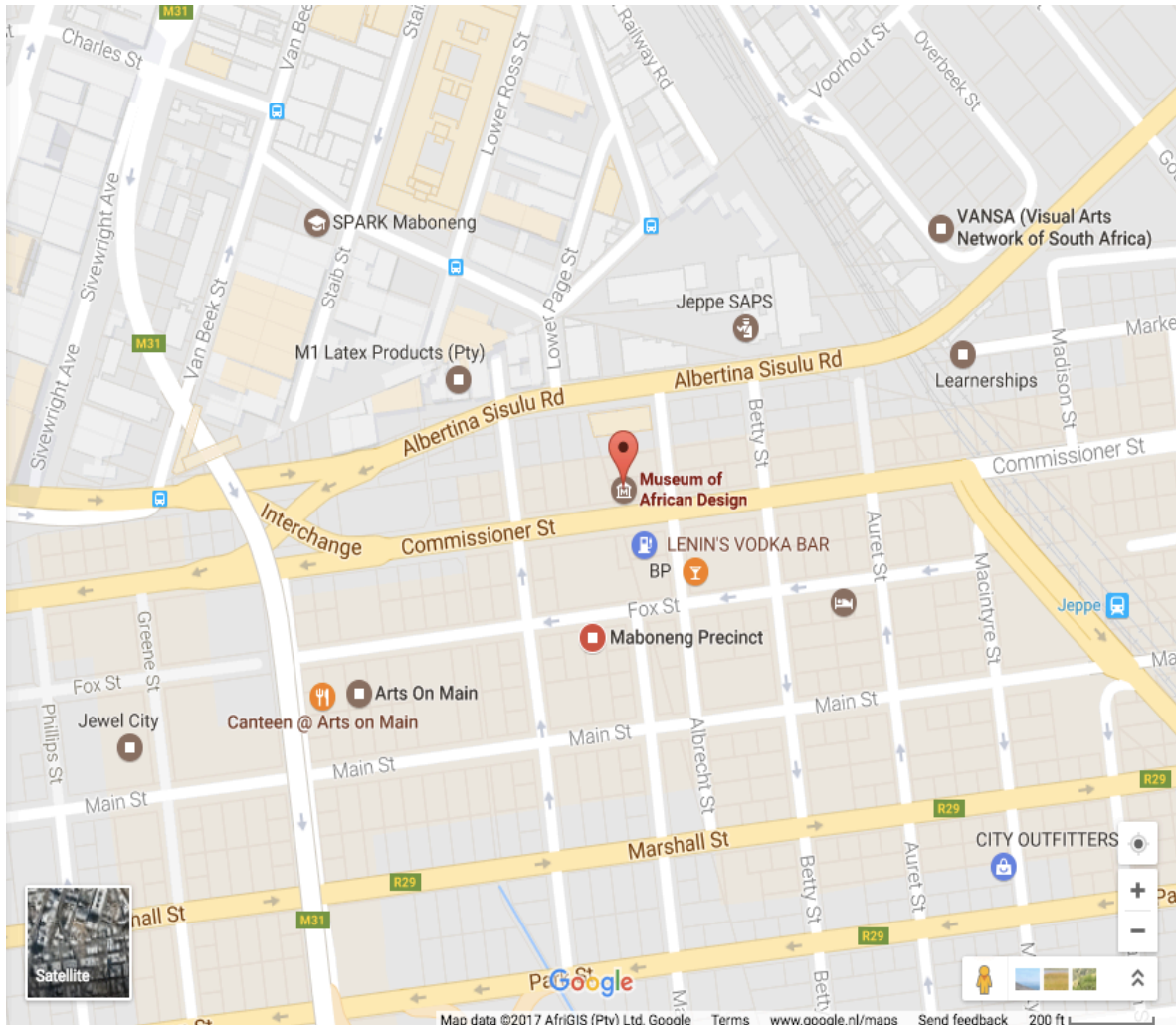


Figure 1. Google. (n.d.) Map of the Maboneng precinct showing the Museum of African Design, Commissioner Street and Fox Street. Retrieved 30/04/2017 from Google Maps.

To my right, on the corner of Commissioner and Albrecht streets, we find the object of this study: the Museum of African Design, otherwise known as MOAD.

MOAD was created as the first museum to show African art and design in the African continent. This idea of it being the first museum of its kind in Africa may seem strange, as one may wonder how African art and design is not a thing in Africa. However, Africa only seems to be fashionable outside of Africa. For this reason, the goal was to create a platform for African designers and artists to showcase their work in their own continent; not only internationally. Furthermore, the idea was to position South Africa as a desirable market in the eyes of already established artists and designers, as opposed to it only being the Western countries or the global North. For this reason, Johannesburg was the best fit for this vision to materialize in, as it is one of the largest, wealthiest and most cosmopolitan cities in Africa. The museum served as a stage that brought together many African artists from around the globe and enabled pan-African dialogues. Although MOAD focused mainly on design, fine art was also a constant. Additionally, it exhibited temporary exhibitions, as opposed to being a conservation institution hosting permanent collections.

Before I continue however, it is my ethical obligation to state that I worked at MOAD for one year between July 2015 and July 2016. That year, without me knowing, was essential to this study in many ways. On the one hand, it allowed me to realize what MOAD stood for and what it represented both on a national and on a pan-African level. On the other hand, realizing the threats that this institution constantly faced gave way to many concerns and issues that I intend to bring forward in this thesis. It is my belief that these threats kept the museum back and did not allow it to realize its full potential, although it made other significant achievements like positioning South Africa as a platform for African art and pan-African dialogues. However, I am aware that these issues that I have referred to but not elaborated on yet, along with my involvement in the museum, set the road for possible bias on my part. I will make a conscious effort to remain neutral and just, and have also interviewed Aaron Kohn, previously my boss and the only director of MOAD, in order to incorporate another perspective into this study. Detailed information concerning the methodology is found further on.

In terms of this thesis, the purpose originally was to look at MOAD's chronological timeline, and to understand why it went from being highly successful in the first year and a half, to virtually forgotten given that visitor numbers dropped significantly thereafter. My goal was to consider whether it was possible for the museum to remain open under the pressure of the circumstances it was facing, or if it would eventually be forced to move or shut down.

However, in the beginning of May 2017, Kohn informed me that the museum would be closing its doors at the end of July 2017 (Kohn, personal correspondence, 2 May 2017). At this point, the museum's fate had not yet been determined. During a Skype call that Kohn and I had on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2017, he stated that there was a small chance the museum would continue to be an online presence, or maybe move to another location. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 2017, during our interview, the decision of the permanent closure of the museum became a reality<sup>1</sup> (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017).

Since I had started writing this thesis when I received the news, the focus of this study was forced to take a new direction. It turned out that my original predictions regarding the moving or closure of MOAD had become real. As this outcome was something I had anticipated, the news, although sad, did not come as a shock. It did, however, force me to change the scope, which is why the spotlight will no longer be on the 'if', but rather on the 'why' and on the 'how'. This, in turn, will allow for a more critical and honest approach.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview Transcript is available under 'Appendix'.

21 April 2017

**NOTICE TO ADVISORY BOARD**

Dear Board Members,

On Thursday the 13th of April 2017 I informed our landlords, Property Management and Artisans Trust PTY that the Museum of Design PTY (t.a. The Museum of African Design) will cease operations on 31 July 2017.

I am happy with the decision and feel that over the last three and a half years MOAD achieved what it set out to create: large-scale exhibitions, and a pan-African dialogue in South Africa. MOAD has also become a main attraction in Johannesburg and point of interest for the design community globally.

Over the last year the vision of large scale projects became harder to fund, and the space became more restricted. The cost v. benefit of the museum became harder to justify.

Your participation and feedback in matters critical to the future of the museum has been truly important to me. I hope that you do not feel strung along or that you wasted any time for something that ultimately is ending—certainly that is not how I see your involvement. Instead, I think the formation of a "Board of Directors" has been one of the major accomplishments of MOAD. A strong "working board" is the crux of a strong non-profit institution, and something I continue to advocate with the African Institutions with which I interact.

Please do not distribute this announcement. The closure of the Museum is under a press embargo until the end of May when a formal Press Release will go out.

In the interim, "Unfinished City" is going well. The exhibit got off to a rocky start but more content has been compiled/installed, and the events have had a remarkable turnout. Please look at the authors, architects, and artists who are participating in the upcoming events.

Feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns. Again, thank you for your support over the past four years.

Aaron Kohn,



Director, Museum of Design PTY

Figure 2. Kohn, A "Notice to Board – Not for Circulation" Received by Aaron Kohn, 21 April 2017 and seen on 2 May 2017.

In order to approach the new circumstances, an analysis of the museum's dynamics concerning the internal and external factors is necessary. This will allow for a better understanding of what was affecting the museum as an institution, and



leading it down what seemed to be a path of despair. A vicious cycle had been established after all, as the museum had been facing economical constraints for some time, which had led to a decrease in exhibition quality, resulting in a general lack of interest from the public. Yet, in an attempt to be a space that was open to everyone, the museum did its best to remain free entry. By doing this, it hoped to attract the poorer part of the population, which was quite a statement, given that Maboneng is the product of gentrification. However, attempting to remain free seemed to be done in vain as the poorer population of Johannesburg was anyway not engaging with the museum. Additionally, the events revenue, which had once been an important part of the museum's income, had been lost due to a number of conflicting decisions that had been made in the past between Propertuity who are the founders of the Maboneng precinct, and MOAD. By bad choices I refer to many decisions that were made, yet I emphasise the choices and dynamics behind the construction of Living MOAD, which are the residential units added on top of the museum. Living MOAD seems to be the leading cause that resulted in the contraction of the museum, further affecting its economical status. By the same token, these units are considered to be essential to the museum as its funding would not have been possible otherwise (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017).

In general terms, the research question of this thesis aims to understand why the museum ultimately failed, and how this failure could have been avoided, if at all. Furthermore, the goal is to understand if the dynamics concerning MOAD's deterioration are in fact a part of a larger scheme, referring not only to the relationship between the museum and Propertuity, but also to Johannesburg's urban fabric and social dynamics, and if this could have been avoided. Ergo, the main research question is: Why did the decline and bankruptcy of the Museum of African Design occur, could it have been prevented, and if so, how? Other questions emerge such as whether there were any main contributing factors that led the Museum of African Design to have to leave the Maboneng precinct? If any of these factors were culturally oriented? And whether segregation and gentrification have become so socially accepted in South African society that they are a part of the norm? Finally, it is also important to understand if the museum's presence added any cultural value to Maboneng or to Johannesburg for that matter?

Regarding the structure of this thesis, it is divided into the introduction and three different chapters. In the introduction's following section is the Literature Review, followed by the Theoretical Framework and the Methodology that is used for the analysis.

In Chapter One, a detailed explanation about the history and the dynamics of Johannesburg is given, along with an overview of the Maboneng precinct and the story behind the Museum of African Design. Given how different and unrelated these three topics may seem at first glance, they each have their own section inside Chapter One. Indeed, a clear understanding of the underlying dynamics of the three subjects at hand is crucial in order to comprehend the rest of this study. More precisely, in the first section the reader is invited to focus on how Johannesburg was established, which offers insight into Johannesburg's urban fabric and social dynamics. Having this knowledge also contributes to a better understanding of section two, where the way in which the Maboneng precinct, a Creative Cluster turned neighbourhood, was established by Propertuity is explained. It is here, in Maboneng, where the past, present and future of Johannesburg seem to converge, at least under an idealistic view. Maboneng is far more than simply the museum's geographical location. Hence why Propertuity's role in the rise and fall of the museum is also examined here. Finally, the third section, which is dedicated to MOAD, is further split into two parts: one where the physical materiality of the building is explained, and another where the museum's dynamics are explored.

Chapter Two contains the analysis of the concepts defined in the Literature Review by following the schematic representation found in section 1.2. This chapter, however, is further divided into two sections. The first section contains the analysis of the general context surrounding Johannesburg and Maboneng, which is crucial as it provides the necessary understanding that the second part of the analysis requires. The second part contains the analysis of MOAD. Although it relates back to the first part of the analysis, the Framework given by Stylianou-Lambert, Boukas and Christodoulou-Yerali (2014) will be applied.

Chapter Three includes the answers to the study's main question and sub questions, and presents conclusions as well as possible observations that can be implemented in future research.

## **1.1. Literature Review**

This section will be used to explore and define several concepts as delivered by different authors. These ideas are relevant to this thesis and are the underpinnings of my Theoretical Framework and analysis. Given the length of this section, the broadest terms will be defined first, and then the ones that feel narrower, at least in the context of this thesis. Moreover, for the sake of clarity, this overview has been divided into two parts. The first part deals with the concepts more closely related to Johannesburg, and which have allowed Maboneng to be established in a certain way. Thus, these definitions refer more to city dynamics, which encourage certain social dynamics to occur. In the second part, focus is put on the terms that have a more specific role within the Maboneng precinct. The connections between the terms will become evident in the framework and during the analysis. Additionally, they all play a role whether direct or indirectly towards the Museum of African Design which will become more obvious further on.

### **1.1.1 Part One**

I will start by defining segregation, as it seems to be the broadest idea and the root that gives way to the concepts that follow. Segregation refers to the separation or division of people. In South Africa, due to the apartheid regime, whites and non-whites were separated, and different neighbourhoods were racially allocated (Wilhelm-Solomon, 2016). "While extreme forms of segregation are generally associated with the system of apartheid, all of this was happening before 1948." (Harrison & Zack, 2012: 559).

Similarly we find gentrification, which much like segregation, also separates people but by class as opposed to race (Slater, 2010). Gentrification has several definitions attached to it and other relevant terms that have developed from it. In order to understand the context in which gentrification is used in this study and the potential effects that it has had in the Maboneng precinct, I will first offer the original definition of gentrification. I will then mention what the current debates surrounding gentrification are, and then introduce the most relevant definition of gentrification for this study. The remaining relevant terms will follow.

In this order, Ruth Glass coined the term 'gentrification' in 1964 when she wrote:

“One by one, many of the working-class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes – upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages – two rooms up and two rooms down – have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant and expensive residences. Larger Victorian houses, downgraded in an earlier or recent period – which were used as lodging houses or were otherwise in multiple occupation – have been upgraded once again ... once this process of ‘gentrification’ starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed.” (Glass, 1964: xviii).

Simply said, Glass’s definition of gentrification referred to “the movement of middle- and upper-class households into neighbourhoods occupied by lower status (working-class) households”. (Bourne, 1993: 189). Many scholars started researching this concept, which fuelled several debates. In the 1980s gentrification was happening at a rapid pace, but slowed down in the 1990s due to the economic depression that had started towards the end of the 1980s (Hackworth, 2002; van Vliet, 1998). This window of opportunity allowed Bourne (1993) to suggest that gentrification had been overestimated in the 1980s and would continue to slow down, thus allowing suburban expansion to continue (Bourne 1993; Hackworth, 2002). Bourne’s opinion was relevant as the process of gentrification goes against typical European and North American models of urban change, being that these are thought to expand outwards, while gentrification does the opposite (van Vliet, 1998). Yet, by the mid 1990s gentrification was speeding up again (van Vliet, 1998). Other scholars had anyway resisted Bourne’s (1993) views. “Badcock (1993) argued ... that ... gentrification was already a spatially significant process, [and] Ley (1996) argued furthermore that gentrification would actually accelerate in the coming years.” (qtd. in Hackworth, 2002: 815-816). Although gentrification remains a contested field, praised by some and rejected by others, most scholars agree that it holds a major role in patterns of economic and urban restructurings (van Vliet, 1998). Moreover, there is also a consensus regarding gentrification’s changes. Although some dynamics seem to be the same as the ones originally established and observed by Glass

(1964), some seem to be new (Hackworth, 2002). Currently there seem to be four predominant beliefs amongst scholars regarding gentrification. In Hackworth's (2002) words:

"First, corporate developers are now more common initial gentrifiers than before. Second, the state, at various levels, is fuelling the process more directly than in the past. Third, anti-gentrification social movements have been marginalized within the urban political sphere. Finally, the land economics of inner-city investment have changed in ways that accelerate certain types of neighbourhood change." (Hackworth, 2002: 815).

Slater (2010) describes gentrification as being "highly desirable to policy-makers – a cure for abandonment, financed mostly by the private sector, and any displacement it causes would be trivial." (Slater, 2010: 303). Another aspect that will become central to this thesis, and that should be kept in mind especially regarding the history of Johannesburg and its segregational origins, is that "[c]lass – the essence of gentrification – is something experienced through race." (Slater, 2010: 301).

Moreover, according to Slater (2010), gentrification takes over more and more areas each time, making the low budget neighbourhood market smaller. Because of this, low-income working class families will try to stay put, and not lose what they already have, as it is harder to relocate to cheaper neighbourhoods, or areas that are affordable to them, precisely because of the narrowing margin of availability (Slater, 2010). As Slater (2010) says, "gentrification has removed so much affordable housing that poor people in gentrifying neighbourhoods are trapped." (Slater, 2010: 306). Moreover, the improvements brought on by the gentrification process bring added value to an area, which according to Slater (2010) is regarded as beneficial only by some people, namely the more privileged part of the population. However, although these improvements are visible, it is necessary to keep in mind, as Slater (2010) continues to argue, that these benefits also bring an increase in costs, which is precisely what threatens low-income families. Yet, scholars such as Winkler (2009) do not take into account or mention the narrowing margin of low budget housing available, and write that these low-income families do relocate to more affordable areas. Finally, Hackworth's (2002) definition of gentrification is ideal for the purpose of this paper, as he defines it as

“the production of urban space for progressively more affluent users.” (Hackworth, 2002: 815; Winkler, 2009: 369).

Gentrification is also related to exclusionary displacement, a term defined by Winkler as “households that are unable to access affordable housing because neighbourhoods are undergoing gentrification” (Winkler, 2009: 374). It is thought that as areas are gentrified and real estate increases in value, families who earn lower incomes are sometimes forced to leave due to economic pressure, while higher earning individuals or families become the new target market. In Slater’s words “exclusionary displacement is suffered by poor households in gentrifying neighbourhoods, where low mobility is also to be expected” (Slater, 2010: 305). Furthermore, when Marcuse (1985) explained exclusionary displacement he also spoke about another three terms.

Marcuse believes that “gentrification includes the danger of displacement” (Marcuse, 2016: 1263). That displacement however, happens for a number of reasons, namely four processes that all fall under the hypernym ‘gentrification’ (Marcuse, 2016). His four processes include: “demographic displacement, physical upgrading, economic upgrading and social upgrading” which is why he finds gentrification to be “a socially created problem.” (Marcuse, 2016: 1264-1265). Slater (2010) in his article “Missing Marcuse: On gentrification and displacement” explained and defined four ideas briefly but thoroughly. Although Marcuse (2016) also provides similar overviews in a more recent article, I will use Slater’s (2010) terminology and definitions:

“(1) *Direct last-resident displacement*: this can be physical (e.g. when landlords cut off the heat in a building, forcing the occupants to move out) or economic (e.g. a rent increase).

(2) *Direct chain displacement*: this looks beyond standard ‘last-resident’ counting to include previous households that ‘may have been forced to move at an earlier stage in the physical decline of the building or an earlier rent increase’.

(3) *Exclusionary displacement*: this refers to those residents who cannot access housing as it has been gentrified/abandoned.

(4) *Displacement pressure*: this refers to the dispossession suffered by poor and working-class families during the

transformation of the neighbourhoods where they live.” (Slater, 2010: 303).

Exclusionary displacement is the term that most scholars focus on and refer to when writing on issues of gentrification and its causes. However, as I will illustrate later in the framework and during the analysis, these four terms are different to one another and have all taken place in Johannesburg and within the Maboneng precinct.

Bad buildings, as classified by the city council of Johannesburg, are also informally known as dark buildings or hi-jacked buildings. These buildings have generally been abandoned due to the capital flight of an area. Once deserted, the poorer part of the population will inhabit them illegally. These are usually very poor people who cannot find homes through the private sector and are therefore forced to take up illegal shelter in these empty buildings (Wilhelm-Solomon, 2016; Winkler, 2009). Bad buildings, like the four previously defined displacement terms, are tightly linked to gentrification, as they can all potentially lead to dispossession. This is mainly because everyone needs a place to live, but illegal tenants technically have no rights over those spaces. Hence, the reasons and consequences of these displacements are different to the reasons for exclusionary displacement. In order to start upgrading a neighbourhood, bad buildings need to be evacuated. Most of the time, the residents who have taken shelter in these dilapidated buildings are the most vulnerable and poor fraction of the population, and yet, they usually get evicted without being offered any alternative living space (Walsh, 2013; Wilhelm-Solomon, 2016). Furthermore, it is not the government who evicts them, but private security companies that are hired by the private investors who are going to upgrade the area (Wilhelm-Solomon, 2016).

The previous definitions lead us to urban regeneration, which is about bringing capital investment back into previously neglected areas that deteriorated due to the lack of capital that neglect brings. Also known as urban renewal, urban regeneration is defined by Couch (1990) as “a process where the state or local community seeks to bring back investment, employment and consumption to enhance the quality of life in an urban area.” (qtd. In Hoogendoorn and Gregory, 2016: 400)”. Urban regeneration and gentrification are different. That is, while gentrification seeks to regenerate areas for the middle and upper classes to come back and usually causes displacements, such as the ones mentioned previously,

urban regeneration was intended to revitalize areas and benefit the local communities while attracting new communities into the area, making it, in theory, to be a more just system.

This previous idea creates a connection with Kopytoff's (1986) three phases of commoditization, as it implies that areas become commoditized, de-commoditized and then re-commoditized. Hoogendoorn and Gregory (2016), Walsh (2013) and Winkler (2009) all argue that different areas of the city go through these phases of commoditization in a cyclical manner. In other words, the same areas that may be considered upmarket today, may have been unfashionable before, and may become unpopular in the future again. However, urban regeneration, in the context in which it is used in Johannesburg, aims to sell an idea of maintained improvements to areas that have been "fixed". Yet, there is no proof that previously upgraded areas maintain their new standards as other areas go through urban regeneration. Additionally, there is also no conclusive evidence that shows that poverty decreases as a result of these improvements (Hoogendoorn and Gregory, 2016; Winkler, 2009). It is also thought that a key distinction between the urban renewal of the 1960s and today, is that currently "private sector involvement is now favoured", whereas before regeneration was funded by the corresponding governments (Winkler, 2009: 366). Therefore, a plausible hypothesis posed by different scholars is that "urban policy no longer aspires to guide or regulate the direction of economic growth so much as to fit itself to the grooves already established by the market in search of the highest returns, either directly or in terms of tax receipts." (Smith, 2002: 441, also qtd. in Winkler, 2009: 366). This implies that the end goal is always a lucrative one.

Thus, this section has dealt with the definitions of those concepts that relate mainly to Johannesburg. Yet, these ideas create the foundations for neighbourhoods such as Maboneng to exist under certain conditions, as opposed to others, which is why it is so important to keep the general context of Johannesburg in mind. However, it is equally important to also understand the ideas that relate to Maboneng more directly.



### 1.1.2. Part Two

I will now move onto the second part of this Literature Review, where I will define the terms that seem to be more related to the Maboneng precinct and its inner dynamics as opposed to Johannesburg's ones. As I will illustrate in the Theoretical Framework, all of these terms connect to each other and have an effect on the Museum of African Design. Although I will try to maintain a similar structure where I work my way from the broadest terms down, these terms seem to be more congruent. However, I will define the entrepreneur first and then move onto the Creative Industries, which, in the context of this study, seems to be the broadest concept and a good starting point.

According to Sawyer, "entrepreneurs are people who can recognize opportunities ... and have the motivation to pursue them, while remaining focused on value creation." (Sawyer, 2012: 254). Entrepreneurs play an important role in the Creative Industries, as they are people with certain personality traits who have the courage to fill a gap that they have seen in the market, despite the financial risks involved (Hartley et al., 2013). Entrepreneurs and innovation shape the Creative Industries. Regardless of the failures, when entrepreneurs succeed and break into the market, they create value and modify previous business structures. They do not earn a salary, but earn profit on the value that their creation brings (Hartley et al., 2013).

In 1998, the United Kingdom was the first to define the Creative Industries as "those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent which have a potential for job and wealth creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property'." (DCMS, 1998 qtd. in Hartley et al., 2013: 59). Although defining the Creative Industries has brought many debates, it has also been useful in the sense that creativity is now considered to be a skill that makes a significant economical contribution to society (Hartley et al., 2013). The umbrella term that the Creative Industries fall under is used to cover different industries depending on each country. In the United Kingdom, the term covers thirteen industries that were previously thought to be unrelated: "advertising, architecture, art and antiques, computer games/leisure software, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, music, performing arts, publishing, software, television, radio." (Hartley et al., 2013: 59). In South Africa, however, according to the Cultural and Creative Industries Federation of South Africa (CCIFSA) website

there are “approximately 12 sectors and 45 sub-sectors”<sup>2</sup>. These sectors are not defined on their website, nor are they defined in the only other relevant policy paper concerning the Creative Industries in South Africa by Joffe and Newton (2007). This policy paper does state that for study purposes “South Africa borrowed the definition of the cultural industry from both UNESCO and the work of the Department of Culture and Media Services (DCMS).” (Joffe & Newton, 2007: 8). While the DCMS’s definition was given at the beginning of this paragraph, UNESCO defines the Creative Industries as “sectors of organised activity whose principal purpose is the production or reproduction, promotion, distribution and/or commercialisation of goods, services and activities of a cultural, artistic or heritage-related nature.”<sup>3</sup>. According to Joffe and Newton (2007) “the terms used – cultural industry, cultural sector, and creative industry – are fluid and lack definition [in South Africa].” (Joffe & Newton, 2007: 8). However, this document is now a decade old, which could indicate that several changes may have happened over the course of the years, as was the case when they wrote the paper in 2007 and noted that “South African research in the cultural industry [had] changed focus as international definitions [had] changed.” (Joffe & Newton, 2007:8). However, as Gregory (2016) points out, despite the changing definitions there seems to be a general belief that the “Creative Industries are touted as a catalyst for urban regeneration... with a recognition that many of the most dynamic of these activities form ‘Creative Clusters’.” (Gregory, 2016: 159). Stevens (2015) shares this previous thought, as he adds that cities around the world are increasingly implementing strategies to make them seem more creative. Joffe and Newton (2007) also acknowledge that while developed countries such as Canada, the UK and Australia have ample research regarding the Creative Industries, South Africa and other African countries in general, have little research to work with, if any. Finally, the Creative Industries are regarded as “high-risk activities which function in an uncertain business environment.” (Gregory, 2016: 160).

Similarly, the link between the Creative Industries, and the studies conducted in the global North as opposed to the lack of research found in the global South is an issue that has been noted by several other scholars (Gregory,

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<sup>2</sup> CCIFSA, “About us”, <http://www.ccifsa.org.za/index.php/template> (5/06/2017).

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO, “UNESCO office in Santiago”, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/santiago/culture/creative-industries/> (05/06/2017).

2016; Hoogendoorn and Gregory, 2016; Winkler, 2009). In Gregory's (2016) words, "[i]t is observed that most debates around Creative Industries and urban redevelopment have been rooted in cities of the global North." (Gregory, 2016: 159). Although no scholars seem to give a reason for this circumstance beyond pointing it out, it may be possible that developed countries started investing in their cultural capital before developing countries could or would. Hoogendoorn and Gregory (2016) give an explanation that is in line with the previous idea, as they say that "[a]fter the Second World War, urban policy in the global North largely focused on reconstruction, slum clearance and modernisation..." and that "[d]uring the 1980s and 1990s, several cities in the global North initiated cultural-led renewal projects to bolster city image and to stimulate city economy" (Hoogendoorn and Gregory, 2016: 401). In the global South however, "cities are [still] struggling to balance the needs of the poor with urban economic growth and renewal." (Hoogendoorn and Gregory, 2016: 402). As Gregory (2016) notes, the Creative Industries have become synonymous of urban regeneration on a global scale. Although "[t]he debates around Creative Industries and urban regeneration have been mostly presented from the perspective of Northern cities", cities of the global South seem to be implementing the Northern policies in order to establish themselves as creative cities too (Gregory, 2016: 168). This implementation can be seen clearly across Johannesburg, and more specifically in the Maboneng precinct, as will be discussed further on during the analysis. Much like urban regeneration, the discourse surrounding the Creative Industries is one closely related to policy interventions where the main priority is to bring capital back into neglected areas, making them attractive again to people with money. (Gregory, 2016; Hoogendoorn and Gregory, 2016; Winkler, 2009).

When the Creative Industries are successful and properly combined, it is thought that Creative Clusters are conceived (Gregory, 2016). Michael Porter (1990) defined a cluster "as a geographically proximate group of interconnected companies and associated institutions in a specific field based on commonalities and complementarities." (Porter, 1990 qtd. in Hartley et al., 2013: 17). Hoogendoorn and Gregory (2016) offer a similar but better definition for this study's purpose: "Commercially driven or property-led Creative Clusters can be defined as a certain geographic area with premises that host a substantial share of creative enterprises, usually through property leases." (Gregory, 2016: 160). In

other words, clusters are generally composed of multiple businesses that can either be in the same line of work or very different industries, where tenants who work in Creative Industries rent from a tenant. All these companies are competition and collaborators at the same time, which in turn also creates massive networks. Additionally, clusters are generally one big space, neighbourhood or areas that hold many smaller spaces, in which everything can be easily reached by walking. More so, clusters are generally places where people work, live and come to have fun. "The key idea [of clusters is] the role of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and their networks, both formal and informal; and also the idea of 'collective learning'." (Hartley et al., 2013: 17). Due to the potential they hold, "[s]ince the 1980s, the concepts of cultural and Creative Clusters have become popular in cultural and economic policy discourse as a means to boost urban and regional economic growth and as a catalyst for urban regeneration." (Gregory, 2016: 159-160).

In order to write about the Creative Class and the Creative City I will refer predominantly to Richard Florida (2005) but also to Charles Landry, who wrote about the Creative City alongside Franco Bianchini (1995), and to David Yencken (1988). I find that both ideas go hand in hand, and it is impossible to describe the one without the other. Furthermore, Florida's theories have been acclaimed, acknowledged and studied in many different fields, yet he has also been severely criticized (Florida, 2005; Gregory, 2016; Hartley et al., 2013).

When referring to the Creative City, Hartley et al., (2013) wrote: "'Creative' in this tradition means the generalised flourishing of human potential." (Hartley et al., 2013: 45). Yencken (2013) argues that cities and humans are both very complicated. People, irrespective of the fact that they may have been born in the same city and into the same culture, all have different needs and contexts surrounding them. These needs are constantly changing and need to be met by the city they live in. In other words, people need to work and have fun, but they also need to have spaces available to them where they can go to relax and heal (Landry and Bianchini, 1995; Yencken, 2013). Cities therefore, according to Yencken (2013), need to provide a structure that works properly and offers its citizens organization, while promoting flexibility and stimulating creativity. While Landry and Bianchini (1995) offer twelve steps in order to lay the foundations for a Creative City, Yencken (2013) proposes four. Given that this is important to this

research but not the most essential point, Yencken's (2013) four principles to achieve a Creative City will suffice: "variety and complexity; more holistic, intuitive approaches to our cities; order ... but the order must not be destructive of richness and complexity; [modifying our environments is natural, but] it is not only what we do that matters, but how we do it." (Yencken, 2013: 2-5). To sum it up, I will quote David Throsby:

"The concept of the Creative City describes an urban complex where cultural activities of various sorts are an integral component of the city's economic and social functioning. Such cities tend to be built upon a strong social and cultural infrastructure; to have relatively high concentrations of creative employment; and to be attractive to inward investment because of their well-established arts and cultural facilities." (Throsby, 2010 qtd. in Hartley et al., 2013: 45).

Regarding the Creative Class, Florida (2005) claims that his message is simply that "human creativity is the ultimate source of economic growth." (Florida, 2005: 22). He argues "creativity has become *the* principal driving force in the growth and development of cities, regions, and nations." (Florida, 2005: 1). Although his critics have labelled his term "Creative Class" as elitist, Florida contends he came up with it to include everybody and avoid using other terms that he finds are elitist and exclusionary (Florida, 2005: 4). After all, he maintains that he believes everyone is creative. Yet, he considers the social norms and standards that people are confined to, to be the main problem when it comes to unleashing creativity. Florida also speaks about "the three T's of economic growth: technology, talent, and tolerance." (Florida, 2005: 6). Although all three T's are important to his theory, tolerance seems to be crucial, as Florida (2005) implies it is not globally widespread. Tolerance is defined by Florida (2005) as "openness, inclusiveness, and diversity to all ethnicities, races, and walks of life." (Florida, 2005: 37). He therefore argues that people's creativity is more likely to flow when they are accepted for who they are, as opposed to being forced into conventional social standards. However, it is important to take into consideration how Florida defines the other two T's: "Talent is defined as those with a bachelor's degree and above. And technology is a function of both innovation and high technology concentrations in a region." (Florida, 2005: 37). Furthermore,

he argues creative people promote economic growth, and “prefer places that are innovative, diverse, and tolerant.” (Florida, 2005: 34). Additionally, he believes “[t]he distinguishing characteristic of the Creative Class is that its members engage in work whose function is to *create meaningful new forms*.” (Florida, 2005: 34). According to Florida (2005) talent, technology and tolerance are all crucial for economic growth; any city that lacks any one of the three T’s will cease to attract the Creative Class, which in turn implies economic stagnation. Hoogendoorn and Gregory (2016) point out that the turn of the twenty-first century brought popularity to Florida’s ideas, as policy makers viewed them as potential solutions to economical and urban problems faced by different cities. However, some scholars saw the downfalls in Florida’s theories. According to Bontje and Musterd (2009) the Creative Class can further contribute to gentrification as vulnerable parts of the population, who do not have the skills or the capital, are forced to leave (qtd. in Hartley et al., 2013; Winkler, 2009). Additionally, Hartley et al., (2013) point out that Florida (2005) was too broad when defining the Creative Class, and especially when talking about one third of the North American population who work in knowledge based services, or creative fields, as he does not offer any further details on what these people’s jobs actually entail (Hartley et al., 2013: 49). They also indicate that the concept of the Creative City is now more about promoting urban regeneration and economic growth, which causes a number of issues to arise. Firstly, that cities around the world are adopting these strategies to achieve the desired status, without considering or solving their original problems, and acting unjustly (Hartley et al., 2013). Secondly, and closely related to the previous issue, is the possibility that “city governments have adopted ‘Creative Class’ strategies with evidence that they have worked as a form of urban economic policy.” (Peck, 2005 qtd. in Hartley et al., 2013: 50). So instead of trying to achieve a Creative City to promote diversity, flexibility and a just structure for everyone, they simply want to attract the Creative Class with a lucrative end in mind. Thirdly, that the Creative Class promotes injustices within the Creative Class itself, as white-collar professionals are better paid than bohemians. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, certain Creative Industries, like fashion for example, exploit and underpay their workers (Florida, 2005; Hartley et al., 2013). Lastly, there is also no conclusive evidence stating whether the Creative Class has a positive or negative impact on “urban growth

and development.” (Gregory, 2016: 160). The Creative Class however, can also relate to the next concept I will introduce, which is the experience economy.

People value experiences, which is what gave rise to the idea of the experience economy, first conceived in 1998 by B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore. Although Pine and Gilmore’s (1998) theories have been resisted, especially in the tourism sector<sup>4</sup>, I intend to use the principals proposed in their paper by comparing them directly to Maboneng. While economists continued to consider experiences as an inherent part of selling goods or services in the 1990s, Pine and Gilmore (1998) argued that experiences were a “distinct economic offering” that needed to be thought of, designed and delivered in certain ways to make a positive impact amongst the public and ensure success (Pine & Gilmore, 1998: 97). They predicted that because of the rise of technology, consumers demands would increase and so would competition. In their words “experiences have emerged as the next step in what we call the *progression of economic values*.” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998: 97). Thus, they claimed businesses should create an experience that is appealing to the public that, if successful, would ensure sales of their goods or services. In their words, “[a]n experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage the individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event.” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998: 98). Furthermore, experiences are personal and, contrary to what was previously thought, not only about entertainment (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Experiences are made possible under different circumstances, meaning that “companies stage an experience whenever they engage customers in a personal, memorable way.” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998: 99). However, regardless of the fact that many companies provide experiences, the majority are still charging for the goods or services they sell, as opposed to the experiences that they provide the customers with. Thus, the experience can be seen as the attraction that engages people and boosts sales. By the same token, however, Pine and Gilmore (1998) mention that the companies focusing on selling their goods or services by staging an experience should also be charging for the experience that they provide people with. They mention this as part of “the immaturity of the experience economy” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998: 100). It is their belief and further argument that

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<sup>4</sup> See paper called “Measuring Experience Economy Concepts: Tourism Applications” by Haemoon Oh, Ann Marie Fiore and Miyoung Jeong.

companies only provide experiences when they feel the need to. Thus, they suggest that managers of places should ask themselves what they would need to do differently if they were to charge their customers money to partake in an experience their company offered. The experience economy after all works both ways: people want to have a memorable experience, and companies want to make profits. Yet, companies cannot charge their customers to be a part of an experience that they feel the customers might not be interested to pay for, as that could result in a lack of interest and declining sales. For this reason Pine and Gilmore (1998) elaborate on experience design in their paper. It is important however, to understand that they classify experiences into four categories: entertainment, educational, escapist and aesthetic. These experiences all take up one quarter of a circle, and between them opposite spectrums are found that include passive participation, active participation, absorption and immersion.

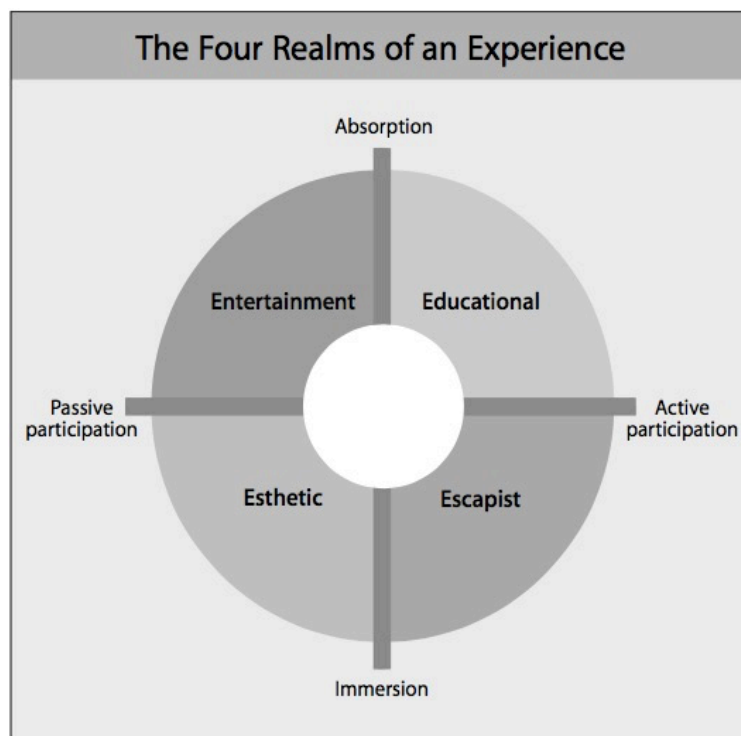


Figure 3. Pine II, B. J. & Gilmore, J. H. (1998) *"The four Realms of an Experience"*, [Figure]. From *"Welcome to the Experience Economy"* (pg. 102). Harvard Business Review.

According to Pine and Gilmore (1998) people participate passively in experiences they consider as entertainment – like concerts or watching television – and are absorbed rather than immersed. A more active participation is required by the



educational experience. However, Pine and Gilmore (1998) argue that the public continues to be absorbed rather than immersed. In terms of the escapist experience, Pine and Gilmore (1998) state that an active participation, along with an immersion in the experience takes place. In their words, “[a]cting in a play, playing in an orchestra or descending into the Great Canyon involve both active participation and immersion into the experience.” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998: 102). Finally, they argue that when immersion and passive participation are combined, the aesthetic experience happens, “like a tourist who merely views the Grand Canyon from its rims or like a visitor to an art gallery.” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998: 102). They conclude that the best experiences are the ones that include all four categories and spectrums, which is what the circle in the middle of the illustration represents. Circling back to Pine and Gilmore’s (1998) idea of experience design, they came up with five principals. First, the name of a place should contain the place’s theme. Thus, when hearing a place’s name, people should know what to expect, hopefully making a first memorable impression. Second, Pine and Gilmore (1998) explain that experiences are made up of signals. These signals all need to be in accordance with the experience that the company wants their clients to have. “It’s the cues that make the impressions that create the experience in the customer’s mind.” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998: 103). Having established the importance of signals, or cues as Pine and Gilmore (1998) call them, the third principle is to get rid off any signals that give customers a negative message, in turn enhancing their experience. Fourth, souvenirs become an important aspect of the experience economy as Pine and Gilmore (1998) argue that people buy these objects for the emotional attachment that they hold. Furthermore they indicate that places that are not giving people an experience to remember will see no demand for souvenirs. Finally, Pine and Gilmore (1998) explain that by engaging all the senses positively, experiences become more memorable. “Companies that fail to provide consistently engaging experiences, overprice their experiences relative to the value perceived, or overbuild their capacity to stage them will of course see pressure on demand, pricing, or both.” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998: 105).

To conclude this section, two last concepts will be briefly explained, namely cultural identity and cultural sustainability. Although both concepts enjoy several definitions associated to them, they are critical in order to answer the research question at hand. Additionally, they relate to each other in the sense that while

the first represents people's identities in the present, the latter strives to preserve the past, whether through tangible or intangible heritage, which contributes towards our current and future sense of cultural identity (Stylianou-Lambert et al., 2013). In Harrison's (2013) words, "heritage is primarily *not* about the *past*, but instead about our relationship with the *present* and the *future*." (Harrison, 2013: 4). Cultural identity, therefore, refers to a person's sense of belonging, to their self-perception, and to the labels that construct their identity<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, UNESCO defines culture as "a set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs." (UNESCO 2001 qtd. in Stylianou-Lambert et al. 2014: 568). This definition of culture, however, also highlights the issues that South African citizens have, as different ethnic groups share different values irrespective of the fact that they were born in the same city. Finally, cultural sustainability is defined by Stylianou-Lambert et al. (2014) as "the consideration, preservation, and presentation of tangible and intangible heritage, artistic production, as well as the knowledge and skills of various social groups, communities, and nations." (Stylianou-Lambert et al. 2014: 569). Furthermore, Stylianou-Lambert et al. (2014) have created a theoretical model that they argue should be kept in mind for the development of sustainable museums. This model has four intersecting circles, as opposed to three, given the "increased awareness of culture's role in sustainable development." (Stylianou-Lambert et al., 2014). Each circle represents one dimension of sustainable museums: economic, social, environmental and cultural. These dimensions are further divided into sub-categories. Keeping in mind that dynamics change from one institution to the next, they have allowed for added flexibility by intersecting the circles as this represents the possibility of overlapping concepts (Stylianou-Lambert, 2014).

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<sup>5</sup> Wikipedia, "Cultural Identity", [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural\\_identity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_identity) (15/07/2017).

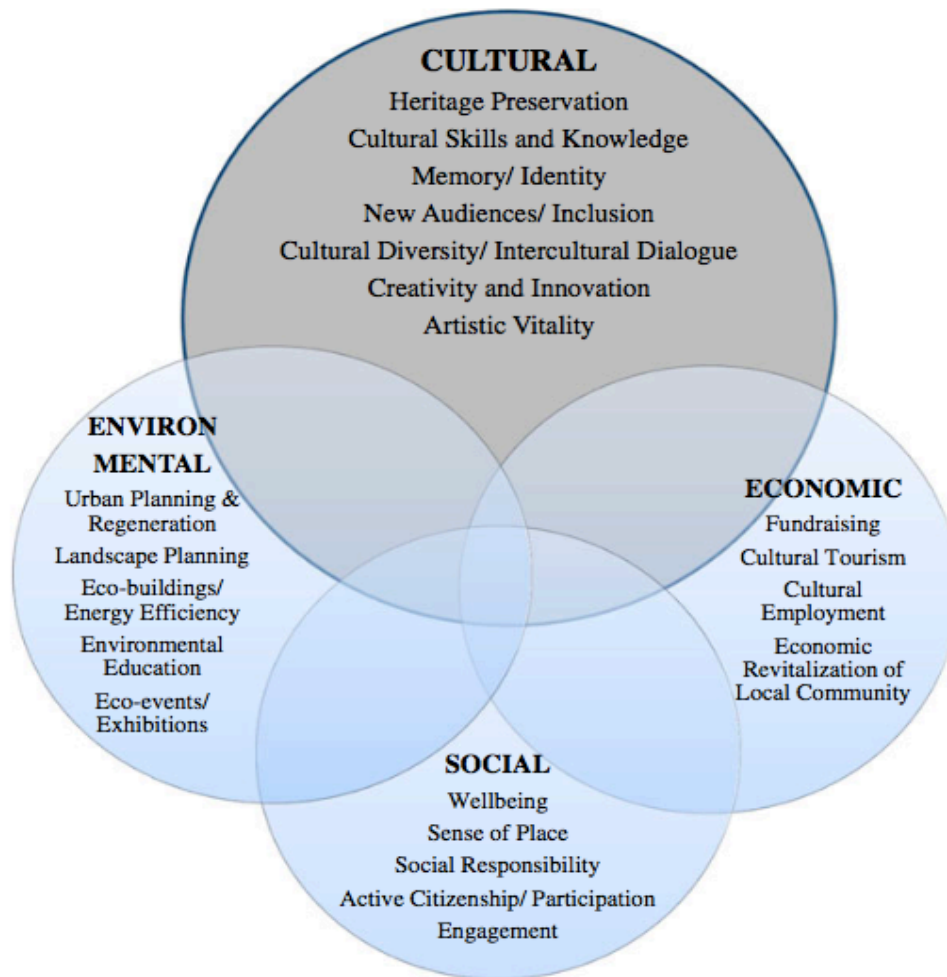


Figure 4. Stylianou-Lambert, T., Boukas, N., & Christodoulou-Yerali, M. (2014) *"Theoretical model for the sustainable development of museums"*, [Figure] From "Museums and cultural sustainability: stakeholders, forces, and cultural policies" (pg. 520). International Journal of Cultural Policy.

This section has defined the concepts that are the driving forces behind the Maboneng precinct. As it will become clearer further on, the Maboneng precinct would not exist or be as successful as it is without these ideas to support it. Yet, these ideas also affect MOAD as an institution in different ways and for different reasons. However, before we can get to that we need to first understand the potential relationship between these concepts, which is precisely what the next section is about.

## 1.2. Theoretical Framework

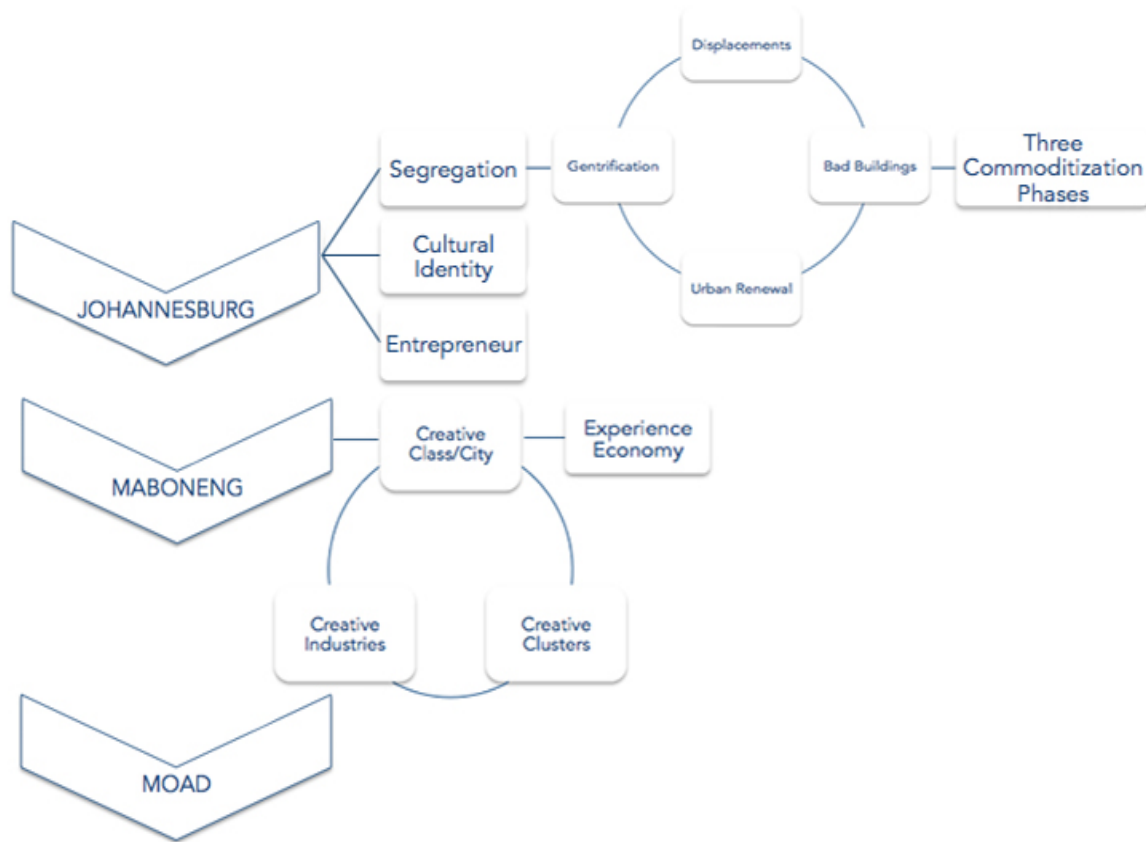


Figure 5. Aljure, P. (2017) The potential relationship between the concepts outlined.

The schematic representation found above, shows the way in which the concepts that were previously defined in the Literature Review are potentially related to one another in the context of Johannesburg, Maboneng and MOAD. I will use this schematic representation loosely to explain how these concepts are related to one another. This will bring forward potential connections and theories that may have contributed to MOAD's closure and which will be looked at in detail during the analysis. Furthermore, the concepts in this representation can and do relate to one another in other ways than those illustrated, which is why I use the term 'loosely'. These concepts are complicated and have no straightforward structure or approach. Thus, this schematic representation serves as a visual aid that seeks to give some structure to concepts and themes that are far more complicated than is illustrated here.

### 1.2.1. Johannesburg

Three concepts emerge from Johannesburg: segregation, cultural identity and the entrepreneur. Segregation sits at the top because it is the oldest concept, and one that gives life to other ideas that will be explained in the next paragraph. Cultural Identity, sits in the middle because it relates to Segregation and to the Entrepreneur, which sits below it. Thus, segregation and cultural identity are connected because segregation was instituted in Johannesburg right from the start, and cultural identity is how people define themselves as a culture according to their heritage. These concepts feed off each other as one of the possibilities is that if segregation had not played such an important role in Johannesburg's origins, Johannesburg's cultural identity would reflect that. Furthermore the urban fabric and social dynamics would not be tainted with the remnants from the past. In other words, cultural identity and segregation seem to feed each other as segregation paved the road towards having a cultural identity that holds onto the memory of segregation. The concept of the entrepreneur stems out of Johannesburg precisely because it is a city with a difficult cultural identity, which has led to tense social dynamics and a difficult urban fabric. Although, according to Hartley et al. (2013), entrepreneurs are usually risk-takers, with certain skills and personality traits, Johannesburg's characteristics seem to have also allowed different opportunities to arise than those available in first world countries where most things work properly. In other words, in Johannesburg people tend to have an entrepreneurial side to them because there is so much that still needs to be done, and yet a lot does not work in terms of the government<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, even though entrepreneur Jonathan Liebmann created Maboneng, he would not have seen the need to create Maboneng had Johannesburg offered the lifestyle that Maboneng now offers. It is for this reason that the idea of the entrepreneur stems out from Johannesburg. At this point it is important to keep in mind, however, that the entrepreneur is the main link between Johannesburg and Maboneng, thus its position in the schematic representation.

Segregation further leads to gentrification, which shares a circle with another three concepts. I will begin by explaining the relationship between segregation and gentrification, and why gentrification comes out of segregation.

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<sup>6</sup> CNBC Africa, (2012, November 13) "Jonathan Liebmann – Founder of Propertuity – Part 2" [Video File]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqLHNNUI88> (26/07/2017).

Although these two concepts are technically different by definition, they seem to be closely related in Johannesburg. While gentrification implies the division of people by class, in Johannesburg this division also happens through race (Slater, 2010). This issue is further seen in the rise of Maboneng and reflects onto MOAD as described in section 2.2 and 2.3. Displacements, Bad Buildings and Urban Renewal, as mentioned previously, share the circle with gentrification. As can be seen, the circle does not express a direction. This is because there is no strict order in which one concept gives life to another. Rather, it can work in many directions. The circle is simply used to represent the connection between the four concepts. By way of explanation, gentrification leads to displacements, which leads to more bad buildings because the dispossessed took shelter in other bad buildings, thus contributing to the further decline and deterioration of a neighbourhood, while urban regeneration happens in the neighbourhood they were previously displaced from. However, another way of looking at the same circle is that an area that is undergoing urban renewal can lead to the eviction of people who live in bad buildings, leading to displacements and further contributing to gentrification. Therefore, all four concepts can lead to one another. This cycle, however, leads to the three-commoditization phases, as regardless of the point of view that is taken, through this cycle areas will always be commoditized, de-commoditized or re-commoditized (Kopytoff, 1986).

### **1.2.2. Maboneng**

Maboneng is the conception of an entrepreneur. However, for Maboneng to exist, it relies on the driving forces behind the Creative Class, the Creative City, the Creative Industries and Creative Clusters, which give way to the Experience Economy to emerge. In other words, the Maboneng precinct is known for offering a lifestyle that is not available anywhere else in Johannesburg, and for having certain experiences and services on offer that cannot be found anywhere else in the city. The fact that there are many small and medium businesses in the Maboneng precinct, that are all walking distance from one another and offer a creative side to them is what has given power to the brand that Maboneng now is. Thus, the talent and Creative Industries jobs of the Creative Class, who have decided to locate in Maboneng is what has made this Creative Cluster become a

creative neighbourhood. Without the forces that make these concepts there would be nothing unique about Maboneng.

### **1.2.3. MOAD**

Finally, although MOAD is the object of this research, there are no visible links to it because every concept that has been defined and explained relates to the museum in ways that will become evident during the analysis. However, I intend to use the theoretical model proposed by Stylianou-Lambert et al. (2014) on Cultural Sustainability in order to shine light on MOAD's sustainability issues during the analysis (see end of section 1.1.2).

Now that a brief introduction has been made, the concepts have been defined and the Theoretical Framework has been established, I will move onto the methodology that is used for this study.

### **1.3. Methodology**

I will begin this section by briefly introducing some of the most relevant methods used by some of the scholars that I will be referring to throughout this study. I will do this in chronological order to illustrate how the different methodological approaches have developed. Additionally, although all the objects that have been researched are not the same, yet they are related and relevant for this study.

Amongst the forerunners are Landry and Bianchini (1995) who did ethnographic research, carried out in over 100 different towns and cities. Next is Hackworth (2002) who combines post recession gentrification and real estate literature into a new study. Then, Florida (2005), whose work reflects decades of researching and thinking, as he himself states, has an interdisciplinary theoretical approach that he relates to a self-reflexive ethnographical aspect, present in his work. Winkler (2009) uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyse Johannesburg, which she uses as a case study. Slater (2010) also used CDA. Walsh (2013) analyses the rise of the Maboneng precinct and the commoditization phases that city areas go through, as well as the effects that these have had on the underprivileged through Discourse Analysis (DA). Stevens (2015) does a comparative analysis between six different papers to understand the relationship between the Creative Industries, the formation of Creative Clusters, and the effects that these can have on their surroundings, depending on their

geographical location. Virani (2015) uses data collection, such as using open-ended interviews, web material and secondary data, to conduct his research on creative hubs. Hoogendoorn and Gregory (2016) did an online survey, which they posted to different social media platforms in order to assess urban regeneration in downtown Johannesburg, and the relationship it holds specifically with Instagram. Wilhelm-Solomon (2016) uses ethnographic fieldwork, particularly participant observation, in order to analyse urban regeneration in downtown Johannesburg through the dispossessions of abled and disabled Zimbabweans and South Africans. Finally, Gregory (2016) analysed the role that Maboneng has had in the Creative Industries and urban regeneration through interviews.

As can be seen, there are several methodologies that pop up in the previous paragraph. Although this thesis's central object is MOAD, there are two other major contributing themes – Johannesburg and Maboneng. In order to explain all three themes properly, and connect them accurately, using one methodology would limit this study. Therefore, the methodology I use for this thesis is based on qualitative research methods, particularly on triangulation. A combination of approaches is used, such as literature analysis, thick description, one semi-structured interview and other data collection (photos, official documents, personal correspondence in the form of e-mail). Furthermore, given that my question tackles why the museum went bankrupt, in order to answer this, which is in its very essence an issue of cultural sustainability, I will use the Theoretical Framework by Stylianou-Lambert et al. (2014) to cover another aspect associated to MOAD.

Triangulation enables me the liberty of switching between different methods, which allows me to analyse each aspect with more precision. Winkler's (2009) paper will prove to be crucial as it provides interviews with policy makers, saving me time. Like this, much of the literature I will be referencing will also have an important role. Thick description will allow for a better understanding of the architectural changes that I have mentioned previously, and which have played an immense role in the museum's success, but also towards its deterioration. Finally, the semi-structured interview with Kohn, my former boss and director of MOAD, provides another perspective to mine. Furthermore, it could be argued that participant observation is also a method used, although this is based on my memories from the year that I worked at MOAD, and not an active research



endeavour performed while working on this study. Therefore, I use much of my own experience and knowledge in order to write this. The experience allowed me to involve myself into the museum's natural environment completely, without being seen as an outsider at any point. For this reason I feel that the dynamics I experienced were real and characteristic of the museum, rather than slightly acted or modified by employees who knew they were being watched for research purposes. Furthermore, when I was working there I had no idea I would be writing a paper on this topic, and therefore the dynamics were also not living up or down to any expectations I may have had, had I known that I would be writing this thesis. Finally, data collection can be seen in the forms of the photos that I took on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 2017, as well as certain personal communications that are referred to.

There are a few limitations to this study. First off, not being able to interview Jonathan Liebmann, founder and CEO of Propertuity, has been a restriction in terms of analysing Maboneng's influence on MOAD. Like Aaron Kohn, incorporating Liebmann's voice into this research would have been beneficial, as it would have allowed for a better understanding regarding some of the dynamics considered and mentioned throughout. However, although it was not possible to interview Liebmann directly due to a lack of time and resources, in order to make up for this shortcoming, two YouTube videos where Liebmann is interviewed and talks about Maboneng and its growth will be used: 'Jonathan Liebmann – Founder of Propertuity – Part 1' and 'Jonathan Liebmann – Founder of Propertuity – Part 2'. Moreover, an interview with Stephen Hobbs, a South African artist who will be briefly mentioned further on in section 2.3.1, would also have been valuable for a couple of reasons. Firstly, he has seen Maboneng develop. Secondly, he got involved with the museum in 2011, and eventually became one of its board members. Therefore, interviewing him would provide another perspective, but more importantly, unlike Kohn and Liebmann, Hobbs is not a direct stakeholder in Maboneng or MOAD, which makes him impartial. Additionally, given that there are three converging objects (Johannesburg, Maboneng and MOAD), it seems that each topic is broad enough to represent a potential case study. However, in order to analyse MOAD, the other two components have proven to be essential. For this reason I have been forced to do a brief overview of Johannesburg and Maboneng, as opposed to a more in depth

analysis, which is why I rely on other scholar's studies, for example Winkler (2009). Moreover, given that both Maboneng and MOAD are less than a decade old, there is a limited amount of literature on them, an issue that has also been noted by Gregory (2016).

This study, however, aims to provide insight into what seems to be an extremely rejected topic, in terms of Johannesburg. It will also provide insight into the reasons why the only Museum of African Design in Africa could not survive in what is supposedly one of Johannesburg's trendiest areas, and a cultural hub.

Now that a brief overview of the topic has been given, where the focus has been put onto several areas concerning the development of this study, it is necessary to move onto the next section where the history of Johannesburg, the rise of Maboneng and MOAD's establishment, along with the museum's dynamics will be looked at.

## **2. Chapter One**

This chapter will deal with seemingly unrelated subjects, namely Johannesburg, Maboneng and MOAD, which will all be used to build on a common matter and the object of this research: MOAD. Finally, the last section of this chapter is divided into two parts. The first uses thick description to give a detailed explanation of the architectural changes that have happened inside the museum's building. This section is further divided into three sub-sections, where each one corresponds to one of the museum's three spaces, which it originally enjoyed. The second part lays out the museum's internal and external dynamics, and is only one section.

### **2.1. A brief history of Johannesburg**

Johannesburg was established in 1886 as a small mining town that was going to be despoiled off all of its gold, and abandoned. At least that was the original intention. Against all odds though, Johannesburg was proclaimed as a city in 1928 (Harrison & Zack, 2012). This happened due to the mining industry, as it provided a growing population, thus a steady market for "emergent industries in sectors including electricity, steel, engineering, chemicals, construction and clothing" (Harrison & Zack, 2012: 556). Mining, however, also left many complex social dynamics that remain in place to this day, as it put segregation into motion, which started as early as 1887 (Harrison & Zack, 2012).

Although segregation is no longer implemented by force or by law, it seems that it is still deeply rooted in South African society. "During apartheid, Johannesburg was divided into the central and northern areas which were mostly white and middle class, and the southern areas being mostly black and working class." (Crankshaw, 2008 qtd. in Hoogendoorn and Gregory, 2016: 403). Nowadays, and ongoing racial division between neighbourhoods can be seen, as areas still tend to be racially predominant: they are mostly white, mostly black, mostly Indian, or mostly Asian areas. The word 'mostly' is used here to express that change is happening, but it is a very recent process. When the 'mixing' began, tensions between people emerged. Furthermore, this change seems to be strongly tied to the economical status of people: "an emerging black middle class [has] left the townships and moved into previously white suburbs" (Harrison & Zack, 2012: 566). Although people's economic status falls outside the scope of

this thesis, it is precisely these complex patterns and social dynamics that are reflected in the rise of the Maboneng precinct, and which have had, and continue to have an effect on the object of this research, The Museum of African Design, as I will explain further on during the analysis in Chapter Two. To sum this paragraph up though, I will use Harrison & Zack's (2012) words: "[t]he socially and racially segregated and unequal nature of Johannesburg's development has been the central theme in many accounts of the city's development... [as] the patterns that shaped almost all future developments were firmly in place by 1904." (Harrison & Zack, 2012: 558).

To summarize this section, Johannesburg was informally established in 1886, and by 1887 segregation was in place. In 1948, with the rise of the apartheid regime, laws enforcing segregation became stricter. Segregation was finally abolished in 1994. However, this means that segregation was in place, at least partially, for a total of 107 years. Johannesburg is 131 years old.

Now that Johannesburg's origins have been established, we can move onto Maboneng's story.

## **2.2. The Maboneng Precinct**

Jonathan Liebmann, CEO of Property Development and entrepreneur, founded his brainchild, the Maboneng precinct, in 2008<sup>7</sup>. As it is located mainly between Jeppestown and City and Suburban, two neighbourhoods that were perceived as no-go areas just one decade ago, Liebmann knew that he had to come up with a great plan in order to attract people with disposable income back into the city (Murtagh, 2015; Walsh, 2013). These neighbourhoods had previously been a part of Johannesburg's central business district (CBD), which had "owed its economic prominence to its unrivalled position as the only business, retail and financial centre in the city." (Murray, 2011 qtd. in Hoogendoorn and Gregory, 2016). Therefore, these neighbourhoods were not only in the city's centre, but had once been sought-after, upmarket suburbs. With "[t]he mining boom of the 1930s [that] brought rapid growth to Johannesburg and dramatic urban transformations, [t]his was the time when the inner city went high-rise." (Harrison & Zack, 2012: 558) However, the 1980s brought their share of uncertainty as "early warning signs of socioeconomic stagnation and decline" became evident (Hoogendoorn and

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<sup>7</sup> Property, "Who we are", <http://property.co.za/who-we-are/> (27/04/2017).

Gregory, 2016). The final stroke came in the 1990s and continued well into the 2000s as, with the fall of the apartheid regime, white residents moved towards what they considered to be safer areas: residential suburbs in the North of Johannesburg (Wilhelm-Solomon, 2016). This series of events gave rise to a new CBD in a northern suburb called Sandton. Businesses that had previously existed in the old CBD either moved to Sandton or other areas, and this shift resulted in a general abandonment of the old CBD (Harrison & Zack, 2012). However, poor South Africans and illegal immigrants from other African countries, who had arrived in Johannesburg searching for better opportunities, started moving into these empty buildings in the old CBD. This caused a further deterioration of the area and crime started to rise. Moreover, these people were forced to live in sub-standard conditions, as most buildings did not have electricity or working ablutions, and the government did not show them any support whatsoever (Hoogendoorn and Gregory, 2016; Winkler, 2009; Wilhelm-Solomon, 2016). "Such buildings are known in policy discourse as 'bad buildings', and informally as 'dark buildings' [or hi-jacked buildings], invoking both a sense of development failure and spiritual insecurity." (Wilhelm-Solomon, 2016: 378).

However, as Walsh (2013) shows in her text, areas go through periods of success and failure as "the logic of accumulation will displace and re-accumulate [the] same territories in never ending succession" (Walsh, 2013: 404). In other words, "[t]he Johannesburg inner city has undergone numerous changes throughout its history, from being built-up to the economic centre of Africa, [to] decentralisation and ultimately undergoing sociodemographic changes during and after the fall of apartheid" to now being re-urbanized and re-commoditized (Hoogendoorn and Gregory, 2016: 399). In Walsh's words: "[w]hen the periphery has nothing left to accumulate, the city centre becomes interesting once again. Capital must continually find new frontiers of accumulation, even if this means re-commodifying what was hitherto been de-commodified." (Walsh, 2013: 404). Thus, neighbourhoods are cyclical, and can be seen through Kopytoff's (1986) phases of commoditization, de-commoditization and re-commoditization.

Jonathan Liebmann understood the power held by the concept of a Creative Cluster, especially in order to be able to re-commoditize the city centre and establish the Maboneng precinct as a neighbourhood designed by him (Walsh, 2013; Virani, 2015). So instead of leaving South Africa, he decided to use

the opportunities available to create the Maboneng precinct (Walsh, 2013). One of his earliest visions of the Maboneng precinct was one that included “restaurants, a movie theatre, clothing shops, galleries, office space and a yoga studio.” (Walsh, 2013: 403). In order to achieve his dream, Liebmann had a couple of factors on his side. Firstly, “since the 1980s, the concepts of cultural and Creative Clusters [had] become popular in cultural and economic policy discourse as a means to boost urban and regional economic growth and as a catalyst for urban regeneration.” (Gregory, 2016 :159-160). So although there is no single definition of what a Creative Cluster is, it is generally understood as something that holds enough power to change and benefit the economy (Virani, 2015). Secondly, the overall capital flight and the decreasing value of the buildings in the city centre of Johannesburg were what allowed Liebmann to make his dream come true and, above all, to make it profitable (Walsh, 2013). Adversely, obstacles that Liebmann had to face were the dark buildings. Clearly, this also represented an issue for the government, however, today “[t]he overall policy environment in Johannesburg favours private investment into upgrading and managing certain inner city districts as it relieves the burden of the local government to regenerate and maintain those areas.” (Gregory, 2016: 162). In other words, by allowing Liebmann to regenerate this area through his own company, Propertuity, the government does not feel obliged to help the evictees and dispossessed, as they have not evicted them themselves. This could be seen as one of the ways in which the government ignores the duties it should have towards the underprivileged. Thus, it can be said that the government justifies this neglect by arguing that the tax incentives for private investment that they have allowed to pass regenerate entire areas, and that therefore they should not be held accountable for the other injustices being committed on their behalf.

In 2008, Liebmann entered an agreement with an international financier, and “purchased old construction offices and warehouses and conceptualised ‘Arts on Main’ to create a mix of studios, galleries and creative office spaces” (Gregory, 2016: 163). Once the financial side was taken care of, his next move was to make a previously unappealing area seem attractive to the people with expendable income again. As a strategic move, in 2008, Liebmann joined forces with renowned South African artist William Kentridge, and persuaded him to take the largest studio available in Maboneng. This alliance proved to be fruitful when

several other artists followed Kentridge into Maboneng and a “creative community was established” (Gregory, 2016: 163). This was the first step of many that started attracting people with money back into the inner city. Currently, “[d]espite the lack of interaction with other parts of inner city Johannesburg, [Maboneng] has become a destination for arts consumption and entertainment mostly on weekends with thousands of visitors attracted from the city’s Northern suburbs as well as a steady flow of tourists to the area.” (Gregory, 2016: 167).

In terms of Maboneng and its origins, although race does not seem to be an issue in this area as there are people of all races living and working together, there is a class issue. Maboneng is a brand, and it is a rather elitist one (Gregory, 2016: 166). A clear example of this is that at the end of the day, those who do not ‘belong’ will either go home, or walk through Maboneng to get home. These people however tend not to interact with Maboneng as they feel like outsiders<sup>8</sup> (Gregory, 2016: 166).

Now that the story and the dynamics behind the Maboneng precinct have been established, I will move on to write about the Museum of African Design.

### **2.3. The Museum of African Design**

The Museum of African Design opened its doors on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October 2013 in a building that dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century. The museum was open for almost four years before closing down on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2017. The building still remains although it is very different to how it was when the museum first opened. During the museum’s four-year lifespan, significant architectural modifications were done to the building, which affected the museum on many different levels. This section has been divided into two parts: ‘MOAD’s Materiality’ and ‘MOAD’s Dynamics’. The first part, ‘MOAD’s Materiality’, considers the architectural aspects of the building. This part has a brief introduction where the buildings materiality is introduced up until 2013. Then, thick description following a chronological timeline is used in order to describe the architectural changes that happened between 2013 and 2017 in each of the museum’s three spaces: the mezzanine, the ground floor and the basement. This four-year period saw the largest amount of material changes done to the building, which seems to have

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<sup>8</sup> Mail & Guardian, “Not everyone sees the light”, <https://mg.co.za/article/2012-11-09-not-everyone-sees-the-light>, (12/05/2017).

challenged the museum's fate. The second part, 'MOAD's Dynamics', considers the museum's internal dynamics along with the relationship with Property. Here, patterns and relationships that may have also contributed to the museum's deterioration will become evident. Photographs are provided as needed and serve as visual aids of the architectural changes.

### 2.3.1. MOAD's materiality

Staying true to Johannesburg's origins, the building in which the Museum of African Design stood in had originally been a mining factory in the 1920s. Mr F. Peabody Rice and Mr C. Diethelm established this building in September 1922 (S.n., 1922: 37).



Figure 6. The Museum of African Design. *Untitled image of the original version of the building in which MOAD stood in, dating back to the 1920s when it was still a mining factory* [photograph]. Retrieved 4 June 2017 from The Museum of African Design private archives.

After the factory closed down, the building became a panel beater for a while, where cars were fixed. It was eventually abandoned for a few years before



Propertuity bought the premises in 2011 and renovated them<sup>9</sup>. At this point in time, Liebmann had already conceived the idea of having a museum in this space and residential units on the roof (Kohn, Personal interview, 2 May 2017).

In the two years preceding the launch of MOAD, two temporary exhibitions and a concert took place in the building. The first exhibition was in March 2012, when two well-known South African artists, Marcus Neustetter and Stephen Hobbs, had their '10-Years of on Air' exhibit<sup>10</sup>. In order to make the space ready, both artists had to literally help clean out the leftover car parts of the previously deserted panel beater that had once been in the building (Kohn, Personal Correspondence, 2 May 2017). Later on, between September and November 2012, The Bioscope, an independent movie house that is also located in the Maboneng precinct, brought Michelle Gondry's 'Make a Movie' project<sup>11</sup>. The concert happened in mid 2013, one day before Propertuity started refurbishing the old building to get it museum ready (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017).



Figure 7: The Bioscope. *The home movie factory* [photograph]. Retrieved 12 May 2017 from The Bioscope website <http://www.thebioscope.co.za/about/past-projects/thehomemoviefactory/>.

<sup>9</sup> CNN, "Africa's 'first design museum' stirs continent's creative pulse", <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/11/14/world/africa/africa-first-design-museum-creative/> (1/05/2017).

<sup>10</sup> David Krut Projects, "Trinity Session and Hobbs/Neustetter celebrate 10 years of collaboration", <http://davidkrutprojects.com/16899/trinity-session-and-hobbsneustetter-celebrate-10-years-of-collaboration>, (12/05/2017).

<sup>11</sup> The Bioscope, "The home movie factory", <http://www.thebioscope.co.za/about/past-projects/thehomemoviefactory/> (12/05/2017).



Figure 8. The Museum of African Design. *“Renovations begin. A new floor is added to the west half of the property”* [photograph]. Retrieved 12 July 2017 from The Museum of African Design’s website <http://www.moadjhb.com/blog/tempclosed>.

When the museum first opened in 2013, it was a 2 500 square meter space, with an imposing industrial look and feel to it. It had very high ceilings, and three levels: the mezzanine, the ground floor, and the basement. “The developers went on to add an extra floor, bathrooms and a cocktail bar but kept the building’s integrity largely intact – raw floors, metal bars and scaffolding ramps still dominate[d] the three-level space, creating a rough-edged atmosphere that echoe[d] the identity of the building and its urban surroundings.”<sup>12</sup>. This warehouse had nothing white cube about it, yet it was a great space to put African contemporary design and art in.

In order to have a clear understanding of the entire space, it is necessary to keep in mind that the original building from the 1920s (see Figure 6) has been expanded, meaning that although it looks relatively similar on the outside, it now has two additional spaces: Living MOAD on the roof and the mezzanine to the left of the original warehouse (see Figures 9 and 10 for evolution).

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<sup>12</sup> CNN, “Africa’s ‘first design museum’ stirs continent’s creative pulse”, <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/11/14/world/africa/africa-first-design-museum-creative/> (1/05/2017).



Figure 9. The Museum of African Design. *Untitled image of what the building looked like in 2011,* [photograph]. Retrieved 4 June 2017 from The Museum of African Design private archives.



Figure 10: Aljure, P. *The building in 2017 with Living MOAD on the top level and the mezzanine to the left* [photograph]. Taken 16 June 2017.



These new structures, Living MOAD and the mezzanine, are attached to the original building and can either be considered as one whole or two separate structures. For description purposes however, the building will be divided into two: MOAD (the museum) and Living MOAD (the residential units). These spaces will be treated separately because the museum's three main spaces will be described in detail, while the residential units will only be referred to. Also, the museum originally occupied the entire building, which consisted of three predominant spaces: the mezzanine, the ground floor, and the basement. It was only after, between 2014 and 2015, that Living MOAD was built. Furthermore, with the passing of the years, the museum became smaller. For this reason some sections will be written in the past tense while others are written in the present tense. It is also beneficial to keep in mind that at least the ground floor and the basement have labyrinthian characteristics, making them slightly more difficult to describe. Finally, out of the three levels, only the basement and the ground floor sit one on top of the other. The mezzanine is the highest space, but it sits to one side of the building, meaning that it can be completely separated from the rest of the building. Additionally, it is a new area, thus not part of the original structure. This is visible in Figure 10 where it can be seen that next to the original building's structure there is a taller warehouse, namely the mezzanine. The only element connecting the mezzanine to the rest of the building is a staircase that now leads to a door that can be closed and locked, thus separating the mezzanine from the rest of the building.



Figure 11 (left). Aljure, P. New concrete stairs leading to mezzanine [photograph]. Taken 16 June 2017.

Figure 12 (right). Aljure, P. *Door found between the mezzanine and the rest of the building* [photograph]. Taken 16 June 2017.

I will go on to describe the three spaces of the building separately, in a chronological timeline, and also provide photographs. Thus, I will start by describing the mezzanine and cover its history between 2013 and 2017. Between the description, photos will be made available. The same will be done with the ground floor, and finally with the basement. This will hopefully allow the reader to have a fluid feel of how each space has changed between 2013 and 2017. This will also allow the reader to have a chronological timeline of each space that can be referred back to easily. Moreover, the reason for doing a detailed description of the museum and the building's changes is because the museum will no longer exist very soon, which means that future researches and interested parties cannot access the museum any longer. Although the building will remain, its future is uncertain and future restorations of the architecture could also happen. Finally, floor plans of the oldest and newest versions of the building will be available for comparison.

### **2.3.1a. The Mezzanine**

In July 2013, Propertuity started revamping the building that would house the Museum of African Design. For the residential units to be successful, covered parking became necessary, as street parking in Johannesburg is not secure or preferred, especially at night. The covered parking, found directly under the mezzanine, is on the same level as the ground floor and the street. In other words, the parking's roof is one part of the mezzanine's floor, which won Propertuity some space. Measuring 650 square meters in total, the mezzanine has its own street entrance: a ramp that goes up from the street level. This ramp is found on the other side of the space, opposite the staircase that joins the mezzanine to the rest of the museum's building. While the mezzanine was a part of the museum, the street entrance's ramp was used either as a loading door, or as an emergency exit.

Between 2013 and 2017, the mezzanine remained relatively untouched, except for one significant architectural change. In 2014 the mezzanine's roof, which had originally been around six meters high, flat and made out of IBR roofing sheets, was made higher and into a sawtooth roof shape, reaching a height of eight meters and a half. Using a combination of IBR roofing sheets and sash windows, which are made out of small glass panes, the new roof was made. In simple terms, the roof now has four sections to it. The vertical parts of the

structure have sash windows, and the parts that are tilted at a 45-degree angle continue to be made out of IBR roofing sheets. This new structure allows more daylight to come in, which in turn has made the mezzanine seem bigger. There are four walls in total, three of which are predominantly made out of IBR roofing sheets, and one that is made out of bricks with windows that look out onto Commissioner Street; the only exterior looking windows that the mezzanine currently has. No walls had to be physically extended when the roof went from being flat to a sawtooth structure. Instead, as indicated above, sash windows were added to fill the gaps. However, this only happened on three of the four walls. The longest two walls, made out of IBR roofing sheets, had four triangles each that were covered with sash windows, keeping the original aesthetic intact. On top of the brick wall a rectangle caused by the extension of the roof, was filled up with sash windows in the same way in which the rectangular gaps were filled in the other three vertical sections of the sawtooth roof. The last wall had no gaps that needed filling because the bottom part of the last tilted IBR roofing sheet met with the top of said wall, closing the gap.

The mezzanine was an important part of the museum. Many exhibitions were displayed in it, and it was also regularly hired out as an events space. Thus contributing to the museum's economic independence. In the beginning of 2016, the University of Johannesburg (UJ) signed a long-term lease agreement with Propertuity hiring the mezzanine for five years and using it as a part of their department of architecture. This change of tenancy will be discussed in detail further on in section 2.3.2, as it is not part of the museum's material changes, but rather of the dynamics between Propertuity and MOAD.



Figure 13. The Museum of African Design. *Untitled image of the mezzanine when the roof was flat* [photograph]. Retrieved 4 June 2017 from The Museum of African Design private archives.



Figure 14. The Museum of African Design. *Untitled image of the new version of the mezzanine, from the opposite side* [photograph]. Retrieved 4 June 2017 from The Museum of African Design private archives.



### 2.3.1b. The Ground Floor

The ground floor is one of the oldest parts of the building and the floor in which the biggest architectural changes happened. In the 1920s, as can be seen in Figures 15 to 17, tall structural columns and concrete beams on the ceiling were visible. The floors were made out of solid concrete, and steel rails had been laid out to transport mining parts throughout the factory with ease. The ceiling, measuring six meters in the lowest parts, had a central division that was eight meters tall and where sash windows were in place as can be seen in the photographs.



Figure 15. The Museum of African Design. *Untitled image of the original version of the building dating back to the 1920s* [photograph]. Retrieved 4 June 2017 from The Museum of African Design private archives.





Figure 16. The Museum of African Design. *Untitled image of the original version of the building dating back to the 1920s [photograph].* Retrieved 4 June 2017 from The Museum of African Design private archives.



Figure 17. The Museum of African Design. *Untitled image of the original version of the building dating back to the 1920s [photograph].* Retrieved 4 June 2017 from The Museum of African Design private archives.

By 2013, after Propertuity revamped the building for the first time to make it ready to have a museum inside, the ground floor's basic structure - dating back to the 1920s - remained intact. In other words, measuring around 490 square meters of only exhibition space, excluding office and bathroom space, the steel tracks from the 1920s were still visible, as were the columns, the concrete beams, the solid concrete floor and the sash windows in the ceiling's middle division. These windows were starting to play a significant role in the construction plans for living MOAD. The metallic shelving however was removed. Furthermore, a few additions had been made to the museum's ground floor. First, bathrooms had been built in the corner under the stairs and the door that joined the original building to the mezzanine. This was essential to the creation of a public space (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017). Given that there were female, male and handicapped toilets, a small area resembling a lounge or a waiting room had been created on top of the toilets connecting the mezzanine to the original building. The original metallic stairs, which were decades old, were eventually replaced by a concrete staircase, under which a storage room for cleaning supplies was made available in 2014. Second, the corner that touches the mezzanine and Commissioner Street has four offices, of which two are on the bottom and the other two on top. At least one of these offices is thought to date back to the 1920s, but there is some uncertainty. However, in Figure 17, the corner where the sash windows and the loading door are visible is the same corner where the four offices currently stand in. The mezzanine and the undercover parking, as indicated previously, eventually replaced the loading door, also visible in Figure 17. The sash windows are still partially visible from the mezzanine's side as they offer a view into the two top offices, but they have certainly undergone some serious modifications. Third, when the building was first built and photographed, one of its main entrances was through Albrecht Street, which became the museum's main entrance in 2013. As can be seen in Figure 24, this may have been a loading door as it was higher than the street level. For this reason, the museum had a metallic structure fitted, which to this day offers ramp and stair access into the building (Figures 24 to 27). Fourth, a bar was added inside, next to the museum's entrance in 2013. Lastly, in the centre of the ground floor a metal staircase led guests into the basement. Between the staircase and the main street's entrance a wall had been built between two of the supporting pillars. Here, the museum's reception

could be found. Another wall, identical to the one just described, had been built between another two pillars towards the back of the museum, partially blocking the view into the two offices found in the corner. In essence however, the ground floor was a big, open space.



Figure 18. CNN. *Enter the Museum of African Design* [photograph]. Retrieved July 5, 2017 from CNN website <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/11/14/world/africa/africa-first-design-museum-creative/index.html>.

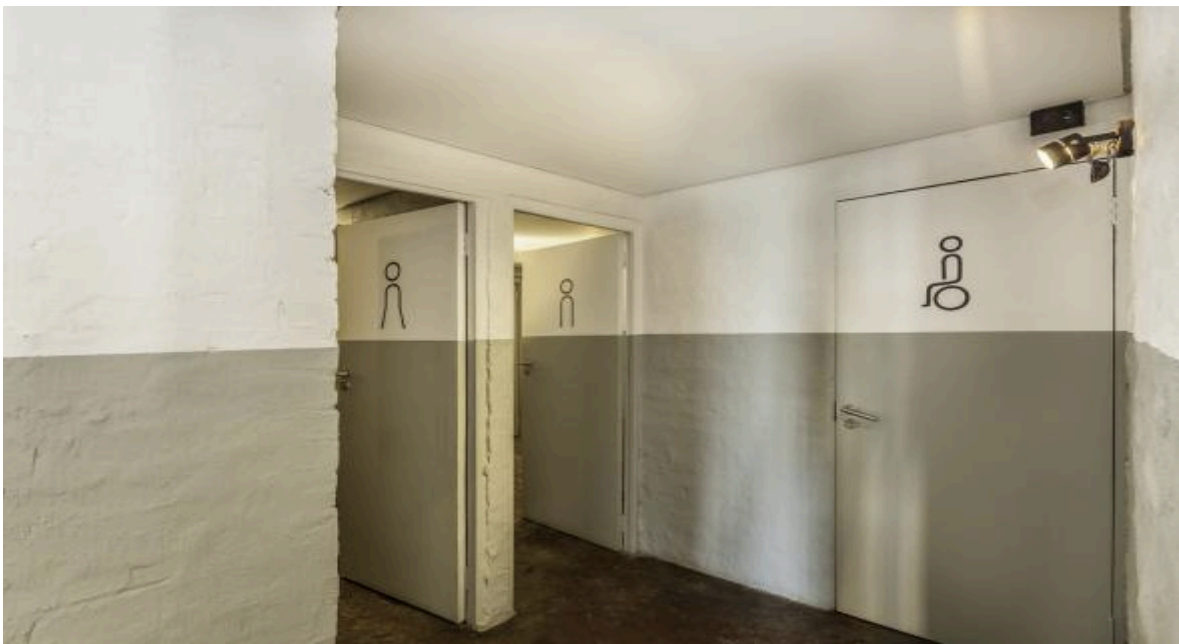


Figure 19. Aljure, P. *Bathroom entrances* [photograph]. Taken 16 June 2017.





Figure 20. Aljure, P. Lounge over the bathrooms connecting the mezzanine and the rest of the building [photograph]. Taken 16 June 2017.



Figure 21 (left). The Museum of African Design. *Untitled image of the original metallic stairs* [photograph]. Retrieved 4 June 2017 from The Museum of African Design private archives.  
Figure 22 (right). Aljure, P. *New concrete stairs* [photograph]. Taken 16 June 2017.





Figure 23. Aljure, P. MOAD's new entrance and office's new own entrance from the public atrium [photograph]. Taken 16 June 2017.



Figure 24. The Museum of African Design. *Untitled image of the original 1920s building* [photograph]. Retrieved 4 June 2017 from The Museum of African Design private archives.





Figure 25. Aljure, P. *The building in 2017; Living MOAD is visible too* [photograph]. Taken 16 June 2017 .



Figure 26. Aljure, P. *MOAD's entrance stairs on Albrecht Street* [photograph]. Taken 16 June 2017.





Figure 27. Aljure, P. MOAD's entrance ramp, on Albrecht Street [photograph]. Taken 16 June 2017.



Figure 28. The Museum of African Design. *Untitled image showing MOAD in 2013, with architectural characteristics dating back to the 1920s* [photograph]. Retrieved 4 June 2017 from The Museum of African Design private archives.

In 2014, one year after opening the Museum of African Design, Propertuity started building Living MOAD on the museum's roof. Although the construction was expected to be fast, it continued into 2015. When the new residential tenants started moving in, noise became a significant issue, forcing the museum to stop hosting events. The dynamics behind the events suspension falls under the next sections scope and will be dealt with in depth further on, however, it also brought severe changes to the ground floor's materiality. By 2015 it had been decided between MOAD and Propertuity that another construction would take place between October and December 2015. By this time I had already started working at the museum. It was during this construction phase that the museum was downsized from having the three spaces in question, to having half of the ground floor, and a smaller version of the basement. The mezzanine, as previously mentioned, was leased out to the University of Johannesburg for five years.

The ground floor was the level that was affected the most. The wall that had been used as the museum's reception was the first to go (Figure 28). The bar that had been installed next to the museum's main entrance was also demolished. Instead a space for a restaurant was built in that area (Figure 28). Another wall, making the museum smaller, was added through the middle of the ground floor between supporting beams and around the staircase. The museum went from having 490 square meters of exhibition space, to having 183 square meters on the ground floor in total, excluding the metallic staircase that leads down to the basement. On the other side of the ground floor, in the public atrium and next to the building's entrance, four small offices were built one next to the other.





Figure 29. Amazing Spaces. *Untitled image of MOAD's ground floor after the last revamp was finished and the museum's space was made smaller* [photograph]. Retrieved 10 June 2017 from the Amazing Spaces website <https://www.amazingspaces.co.za/location/lexington>.



Figure 30. Amazing Spaces. *Untitled image of MOAD's ground floor after the last revamp was finished and the museum's space was made smaller* [photograph]. Retrieved 10 June 2017 from the Amazing Spaces website <https://www.amazingspaces.co.za/location/lexington>.



Figure 31. Amazing Spaces. *Untitled image of MOAD's ground floor after the last revamp was finished and the museum's space was made smaller* [photograph]. Retrieved 10 June 2017 from the Amazing Spaces website <https://www.amazingspaces.co.za/location/lexington>.



Figure 32. Amazing Spaces. *Untitled image of MOAD's centre staircase leading down to the basement* [photograph]. Retrieved 10 June 2017 from the Amazing Spaces website <https://www.amazingspaces.co.za/location/lexington>.

Essentially, in 2013, when one walked into the museum through the street entrance of Albrecht Street, a wall with a desk in front of it was immediately present. Behind this reception wall there was a metallic staircase going downstairs. To one's left, there was a long bar, with a visible cold room in the corner which many photographers stood on to photograph the space from. Towards the back of the museum, to the left and touching on the wall that faces Commissioner Street, there were four offices. Two built on top of the other two. On the other corner, there were bathrooms and a staircase leading up to a small lounge, which led into the mezzanine.

Today, as one enters the building through the same door, to the left an empty space is visible. This is where the restaurant is, but it has not been rented out to anyone yet. To the right there are four small offices, of which two are empty, and two are occupied. Directly in front is a cube, enclosing a metallic staircase that can be seen through a thick glass. In order to reach the museum one needs to walk towards the back of what is now the public atrium, and find the door after the cube to the left. To the right, the stairs that lead up to the mezzanine are still visible. The small lounge and the bathrooms also remain untouched. The four offices that have always been there are now a separate area. Extending the wall that was previously described as being used to partially hide the offices away is what separates them from the museum's new area. These offices now also have a main entrance door, visible in Figures 23 or 37.



Figure 33 (left). Aljure, P. New restaurant's entrance [photograph]. Taken 16 June 2017.

Figure 34 (right). Aljure, P. *Inside the restaurant's space* [photograph]. Taken 16 June 2017.





Figure 35. Amazing Spaces. *Untitled image of building's entrance - now the public atrium - after the last revamp was finished. New offices are visible [photograph].* Retrieved 10 June 2017 from the Amazing Spaces website <https://www.amazingspaces.co.za/location/lexington>.



Figure 36. Aljure, P. *Untitled image of the public atrium in 2017 [photograph].* Taken 16 June 2017.

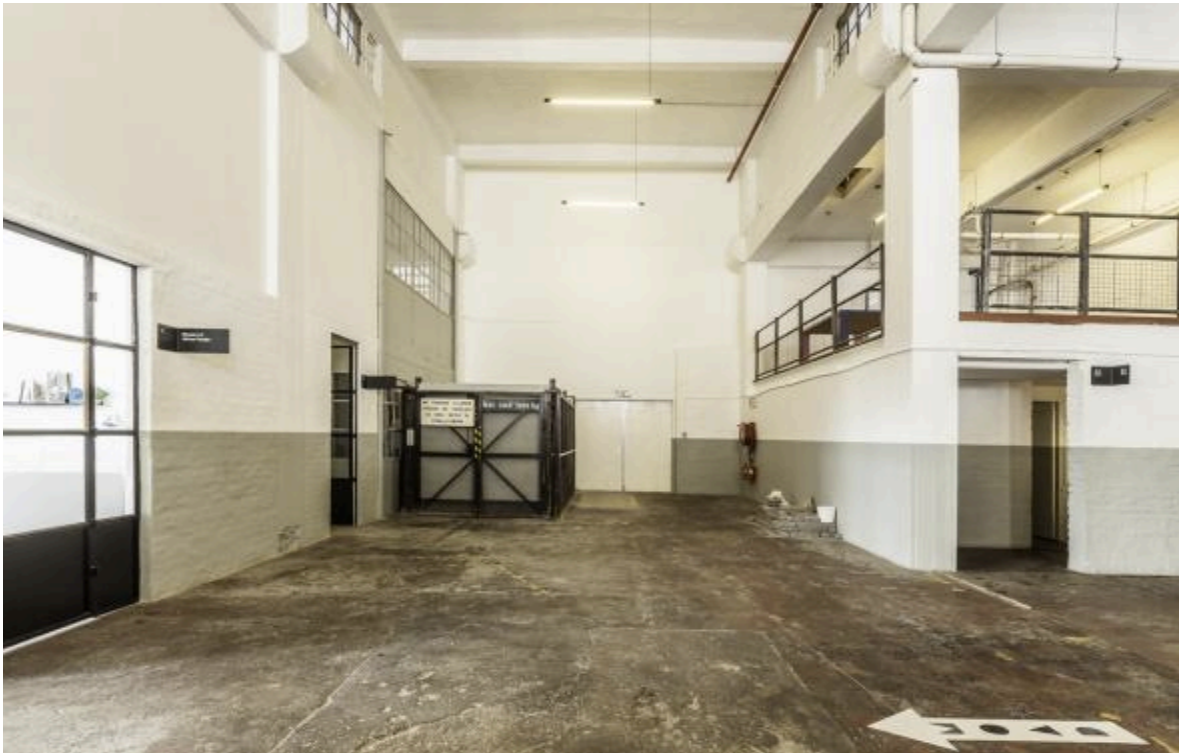


Figure 37. Amazing Spaces. *Untitled image of public atrium – toilets, lounge leading to mezzanine, private office entrance and MOAD’s entrance are visible [photograph].* Retrieved 10 June 2017 from the Amazing Spaces website <https://www.amazingspaces.co.za/location/lexington>.

### 2.3.1c. The Basement

The building’s basement, at least since 2013 and still to this day, has always been divided into two main parts. On one side there is a bar area, while the other side is the museum’s basement. Walls and a metallic fireproof door separate these two spaces from each other (Figure 38). The basement’s ceiling, measuring less than three meters tall, is lower than the ceiling in the mezzanine and in the ground floor. The industrial aesthetic, like in the rest of the building, has been maintained. Pipes and basic structural elements, like supporting beams dating back to the 1920s, are visible in the basement. The metallic staircase that leads from the ground floor down into the basement is not visible as walls enclose it, adding wall space in the basement for art exhibitions.

Originally, in 2013 when MOAD first opened, Propertuity had rented the bar area out to a small business called The March Hare<sup>13</sup>. The bar area measured 230 square meters, while the museum’s part of the basement, also one of the

<sup>13</sup> The March Hare were a café by day, and bar by night. They specialized in drinks.

oldest parts of the building, was 400 square meters of exhibition space. The bar's entrance was reached through MOAD's basement. This set-up indicated that a good working relationship was shared between the owners of The March Hare and MOAD, however this will be covered in the next section (2.3.2) as it relates to the museum's internal dynamics. Moreover, given that the museum's door leading into the basement and the metallic door separating the bar from the basement literally faced each other, there was always the option to join both spaces by opening the door. This was usually the case during opening nights, and for certain events. Additionally, the toilets found on the basement's level were shared by the bar and by the museum, and were also reached through the same pathway that was used to access the bar. The museum had two extra rooms available. One was inside, used interchangeably as a storage room or as a video room, and the other storage room was outside.

Towards the end of 2015, when construction started again and the museum's space was decreased, the basement did not suffer any major changes, however, it was made slightly smaller by an additional wall that was added in order to give the bar its own street entrance (Figure 41). Therefore the basement went from being 400 square meters of exhibition space, to 336 square meters. The owners of the March Hare left the space in 2016. After a few months a jazz bar rented the bar area. By this time the bar had its own street entrance, and was completely separated from the museum, although they shared the building, and technically the building's basement space. It was further decided that the metallic door would no longer be opened to join the spaces into one larger space.





Figure 38. Amazing Spaces. *Untitled image showing MOAD's basement entrance to the right, and the metallic door separating the bar from the museum's space* [photograph]. Retrieved 10 June 2017 from the Amazing Spaces website <https://www.amazingspaces.co.za/location/lexington>.

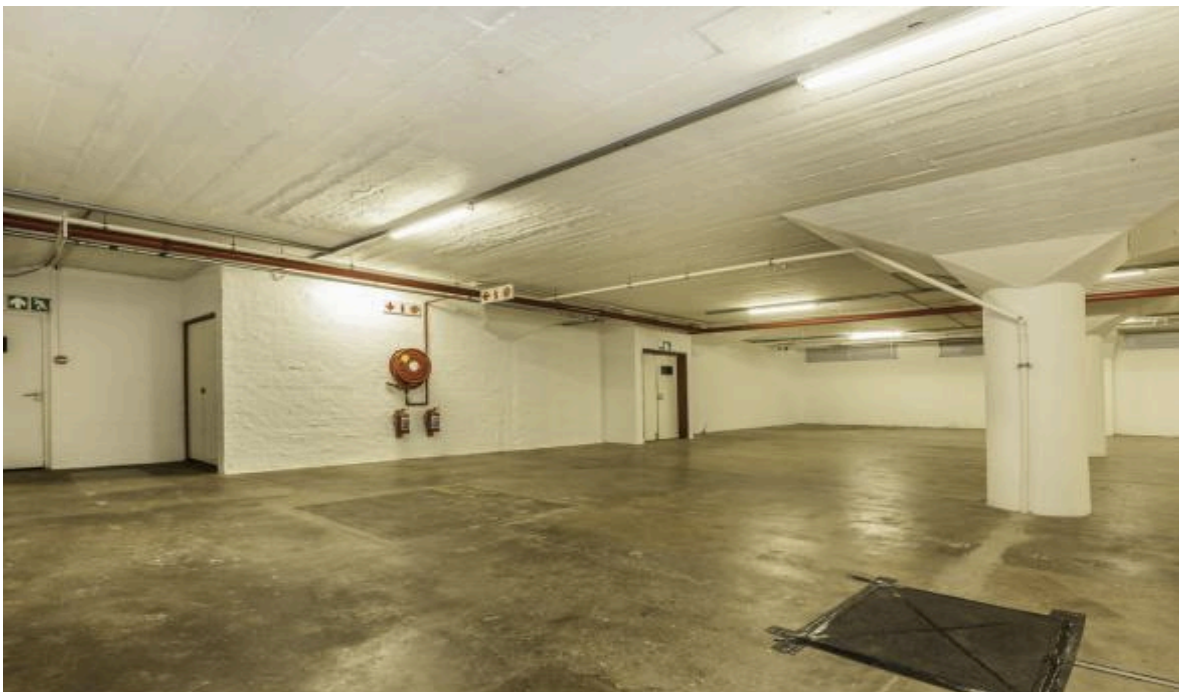


Figure 39. Amazing Spaces. *Untitled image showing MOAD's basement, with three doors, of which both side doors are emergency exits, and the middle door is the storage/video room* [photograph]. Retrieved 10 June 2017 from the Amazing Spaces website <https://www.amazingspaces.co.za/location/lexington>.



Figure 40. Amazing Spaces. *Untitled image showing MOAD's basement [photograph].* Retrieved 10 June 2017 from the Amazing Spaces website <https://www.amazingspaces.co.za/location/lexington>.



Figure 41. Amazing Spaces. *Untitled image showing the wall that was added into the basement to create a separate street entrance for the bar area and making the basement smaller [photograph].* Retrieved 10 June 2017 from the Amazing Spaces website <https://www.amazingspaces.co.za/location/lexington>.





Figure 42. The Museum of African Design. MOAD's old floor plans, showing how each one of the spaces looked after the museum first opened – from left to right: basement, ground floor, mezzanine [PDF floor plans]. Retrieved 4 June 2017 from personal correspondence.



Figure 43. The Museum of African Design. MOAD's new floor plans – the purple area shows the ground floor after the museum was downsized [PDF floor plans]. Retrieved 4 June 2017 from personal correspondence.

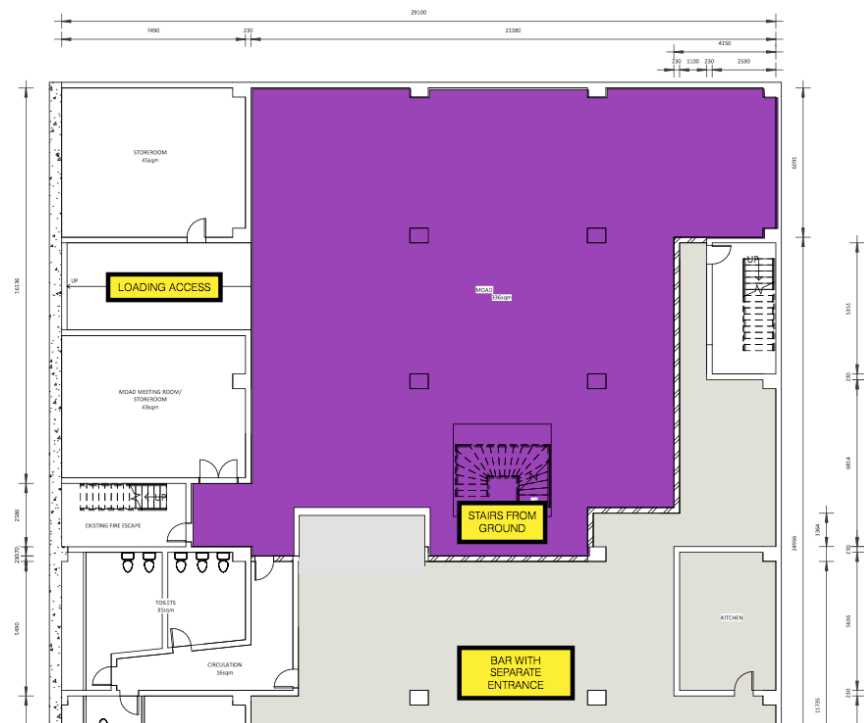


Figure 44. The Museum of African Design. MOAD's new floor plans – the purple area shows the basement after the museum was downsized, while the grey area shows the bar space and the new entrance [PDF floor plans]. Retrieved 4 June 2017 from personal correspondence.

### 2.3.2. MOAD's Dynamics

After Jonathan Liebmann conceived the idea of having the Museum of African Design, Aaron Kohn was hired as the director of MOAD in 2013, while actions were still being taken towards getting the space ready to house a museum. However, the main goal behind Kohn's job was to find a way of turning MOAD into an economically independent institution, as Propertuity had already earmarked what the museum was about and the first projects that would be displayed (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017).

In October 2013, when MOAD was first opened, it boasted the benefits of having the building's three areas, approximately 2500 square meters of space, to itself. In the museum's first year, Kohn's position as the director of MOAD proved to be successful. He managed to establish the museum as a platform for African art and design, which further contributed to a pan-African discussion between African countries, but also between Africa and Western countries. Furthermore, the museum managed to become financially independent. This was achieved by promoting the museum as a space that allowed events and art to coexist. Its industrial nature also broke with the ideologies associated to the white cube, which became a big aspect of the institutions discourse. Although a few other museums around the world had already been establishing themselves as institutions that went against the white cube, there were few – if any – spaces like this in Johannesburg. MOAD established its identity by being an art institution that broke with the white cube current. Additionally, being located in the Maboneng precinct was an added benefit that guaranteed foot traffic given that it was already in an established touristic spot, and a in a Creative Cluster, which had become one of Johannesburg's trendiest areas. Moreover, in its first year the museum caught the attention of big companies such as Google, Mercedes and Grolsch, who all got involved with MOAD at some point and paid large sums of money over to the museum for different reasons. The agreement with Grolsch for example, was that no other beer could be consumed or sold inside the museum, especially during events. Mercedes, on the other hand, paid for students to come to the museum (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017). The support offered by Mercedes allowed MOAD to focus on promoting an educational side that was always a concern.

The March Hare, the only other tenant to have a space in the building from the very start, namely the basement's bar, had a good working relationship with MOAD. Like the museum, The March Hare had been one of the building's 'original' tenants after Propertuity had taken ownership. This relationship proved to be mutually beneficial in many cases. For one, The March Hare, a café by day and cocktail bar by night, proved to be an added benefit for the museum's visitors, while also attracting new people who may not have visited the museum otherwise. In terms of exhibition openings this relationship brought two major benefits, namely an in-house bar, but also additional space as opening the metallic door could join both basement spaces, turning them into a much larger area. Furthermore, as MOAD was constantly being booked for events, one of the clauses was that the people hiring MOAD's space would also have to use The March Hare's bar services. Thus, these two businesses had managed to create a collaboration that brought benefits to both parties.

Although Kohn had achieved MOAD's financial independence and establishing it as a pan-African arts platform in South Africa, the museum was still not autonomous. The building was still owned by Propertuity, and the museum as such was still an idea originally conceived by the CEO of Propertuity and the founder of Maboneng, Jonathan Liebmann. This meant that although Kohn had creative liberty to run the museum, Propertuity was the owner, and therefore held the last word. In December 2014, after having been open for just over one year, MOAD was temporarily closed for the second phase of construction to take place. More specifically the construction of Living MOAD, the residential units built on the museum's roof. This construction had started already in November<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Museum of African Design. "Closed for renovations".  
<http://www.moadjhb.com/blog/tempclosed> (13/07/2017)

# CLOSED FOR RENOVATIONS /DECEMBER 1, 2014

Click [here](#) to subscribe to get the latest updates. **Details on our re-opening in April 2015 will be announced shortly. Thanks for your continued interest in African design and creativity!**

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## RE-OPENING IN APRIL



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As many of our visitors know, the Museum of African Design has been in various states of construction for the last year and a half. For the final stage of construction, we have decided to close our doors to the public. In April, we will re-open with a finished building.

We are excited to complete MOAD with Propertuity, the developers of the Maboneng Precinct. In 2015, our block between Commissioner Street and Albertina Sisulu will open new residential and retail experiences with the completion of MOAD, Living MOAD, Artisan Lofts, Rocket Factory, and Poolside Cafe.

Figure 45. The Museum of African Design. Screenshot of the museum's website, where they announce the temporary closure of the museum for Living MOAD to be built [photograph]. Retrieved 8 July 2017 from MOAD's website <http://www.moadjhb.com/blog/tempclosed>.

Living MOAD involved the construction of 32 residential units on top of the museum. According to Kohn the construction of Living MOAD had always been an intentional and planned expansion of the building. As he explained during his interview, the residential units were part of the necessary funding for the entire

project around MOAD to happen (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017). However, certain aspects of the construction were overlooked. First, the construction took longer than anticipated, which resulted in a loss of the initial momentum and hype that the museum had managed to create immediately after it was first opened. Second, and perhaps on a more important note, the construction was not properly thought out, nor was it executed properly. In other words, although the sales of residential units were crucial for the projects overall funding, logistical aspects of the construction, such as noise proofing, temperature control and fire escapes were overlooked. In Kohn's words "the apartments were built without thinking of the repercussions from sound in the museum, but also about the repercussions for services for the apartments: plumbing, electrical work, building in the ceiling and sort of damaging parts of the building in the process all had creative limits on what we could [do] right below." (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017).

When MOAD reopened in April 2015 the idea was to continue housing exhibitions and renting the space out to host events. This idea had been assumed from before the repercussions of the construction became evident. By that time the apartments were ready and residents started moving in, noise became an issue. The museum's space was vast, as I have explained previously. This meant that due to the open spaces and very high ceilings, the sounds echoed. Containing the sound was impossible, unless a generous amount of money was invested into soundproofing. By the same token, even though The March Hare's bar was in the basement, had lower ceilings and did not come close to any residential units, the noise issues also affected them.

In July 2015, when I started working at MOAD, I joined a team of five full time employees and one part-time assistant. At this point in time The March Hare was still renting the bar space from Propertuity. Although noise was a big problem both for the bar and the museum, losing the events revenue essentially meant bankruptcy for both establishments as events represented the bulk of their income, and basically their livelihood. MOAD and The March Hare, despite the noise issues they were facing, both tried to continue collaborating and having events in both spaces. The residents however pushed back just as firmly. Eventually Propertuity realised that they had to keep the residents happy, and they implemented security guards to work during the night shutting parties down

and asking people who spoke loudly to keep it down. These guards are still around and are referred to as 'the noise police' in the Maboneng precinct. Their job technically starts at 23h00, which is when people are usually expected to keep quiet in Johannesburg's residential areas. However, the noise police in Maboneng would start shutting parties down much earlier. Eventually the issues between the noise police and The March Hare escalated, and the last straw was when the bar had an important paying event shut down by 19h00 one weekend.

In the meantime, the museum was also realizing that smaller events, which in any case were not much quieter than large ones, were not worth the money that they made. The museum, up until now, had relied financially on having a few big scale events every month. Now that that option was no longer viable, MOAD tried to re-design the previous formula that had worked so well before. The museum tried to have only daytime events, meaning that they would finish no later than 23h00. This seemed like a viable option, as Johannesburg is a city where a lot of daytime parties happen. In Maboneng these parties are especially popular. However, the locations where these daytime parties usually take place are either outdoors in the sun or have a view over one of the cities two skylines (the old CBD or the new CBD) or a mixture of both. MOAD was indoors and did not offer a view. So although this was not a bad idea on paper, in practice clients did not seem to be as interested in using the museum's space for daytime events. Essentially, it could be said that up until this point MOAD's success in events had been due to its big space, industrial feel, possibly the location and maybe even the fact that events could happen in a space where art and design was displayed, feeding the aura of prohibition, but most important was the fact that events did not have time restrictions.

By September 2015, two of the full time employees and the part-time assistant were let go due to the financial pressure that the museum was facing. A team of four people, including myself, was left. Furthermore, at this point MOAD was functioning mainly as a museum with no real event prospects, which meant that there was no significant form of income. The March Hare was also changing its trading hours often. The people who owned and run The March Hare had other businesses, and since the bar was no longer producing what it did, they had lost interest in keeping it open for the few walk-in clients that would come per day. This set-up also affected the museum slightly as The March Hare's erratic hours

created uncertainty, meaning that often they would be closed when guests would want to have a coffee or a drink in the museum. By October 2015, MOAD was forced to close its doors in order to start construction phase three. This new restoration had never been part of MOAD's construction plan. Rather, it became a reality after Living MOAD was built and the tenants strongly opposed any events taking place inside the museum's building. Although Propertuity and MOAD discussed the plans leading up to this unexpected revamp, it was during this renovation that MOAD's space was significantly decreased.

After the museum could no longer host events, it became financially dependent on Propertuity. In other words, Propertuity paid the salaries and took care of the building's expenses. In the past, Propertuity had been receiving rental money from the museum and from The March Hare. Once the museum could no longer pay rent, another agreement had to be made. The idea behind this final restoration was to downsize the museum's space, essentially turning it into a creative hub, so that new spaces could be built inside the building and rented out. The new rentals would, in theory, cover the museum's share of rent. Thus, the mezzanine would no longer be a part of the museum, one restaurant and four new offices would be built, the four old offices would also be rented out and the bar downstairs would continue to generate an income for Propertuity. When this was first decided a few clients had expressed interest in hiring the mezzanine. One of them was UJ, who did eventually get the space. This was also the option that interested the museum the most, as a potential creative alliance was possible between MOAD and the UJ students. Additionally, the idea of having a restaurant space on the ground floor and next to the museum was advantageous, at least on paper. This meant that Propertuity would get their rent, and that the museum would have the added benefits of having a restaurant in situ without having to deal with the admin. Furthermore, the four new offices, immediately visible as one walks into the building, were conceived as small working spaces for small to medium businesses related to the Creative Industries or the creative sector. The other four offices were older and hidden, so although they were also bigger than the new ones, the rent was lower. The idea was to have all the spaces, old and new, rented out by the time the building reopened after the last construction phase, essentially depicting the set up of a smaller creative hub. The idea was better than the practice.



In reality construction started in October 2015 and went on until late January 2016. During this time MOAD closed its doors to the public once again. The March Hare, unhappy with the building's general situation, returned the bar space by the end of 2015. Although Propertuity did everything in their power to keep them as tenants, The March Hare did not see a viable future as long as events were not an option. By the time the museum reopened its doors with a new exhibition in late January 2016, there were only three tenants, as opposed to a possible twelve. In other words, the mezzanine had been taken by UJ, a tailor had rented an old office to use as her factory and MOAD remained. However, seven of the eight offices were still empty, as was the restaurant and the downstairs bar.

In March 2016, MOAD facilitated a design workshop inside the museum after a client requested a team building experience for employees. The workshop included a guided walking tour of the Maboneng precinct, snacks, water, tea and coffee, and a two-hour design-thinking workshop. This workshop was charged per person at ZAR900, approximately €59. Still struggling financially, and seeing an opportunity, MOAD tried to promote design-thinking workshops for individuals and businesses alike. However, these workshops involved cooperation between four different parties: the caterers, the company running the tour guides, the designers who taught the workshop, and the museum. By the time all the costs were covered, the museum was not making much of a profit, yet MOAD was doing most the work in terms of finding the clients and coordinating all the logistics. Additionally, the designers made a slight price increase. Taking all these factors into account, MOAD had to reprice the workshops. After the reprice had been done the full day workshop came to ZAR2000 per person, approximately €131. A half-day workshop was also created. This one came to ZAR1400 per head, approximately €92. The workshops received interest, however, they were too expensive for anyone to participate. Thus, companies were not willing to spend that amount per employee on team building experiences, and individuals were not willing to spend that much on a workshop that they may or may not have enjoyed<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> These workshops were still being advertised on MOAD's website in mid-July 2017. <http://www.moadjhb.com/workshops/> (09/07/2017).

After The March Hare left, the bar area stood empty until June 2016. Between February and May, MOAD rented the bar to people interested in having daytime events. This made the museum a little bit of money, but nothing significant enough for the museum to consider renting that space and incorporating it into MOAD. In June new tenants occupied the basement bar area. By the end of July, when I stopped working for MOAD, the tenants were refurbishing the space and adding soundproofing and air conditioning. This was going to be a jazz club.

In June 2017, when I last visited MOAD, the building's tenants had changed again. Three of the four new offices, directly by the entrance had been occupied, while the last one stood empty. In terms of the older four offices, the tailor who had previously occupied one space had left. However, another two clothing studios, owned by separate people, had moved in. A printing studio occupied another one of the offices, while the fourth one was empty. The restaurant was still vacant. Finally, the Jazz bar that had moved into the bar area downstairs, previously occupied by The March Hare, after having invested in soundproofing and some restorations, also left. A new tenant called The Matt Cigar Lounge currently occupies the bar.

Thus, to conclude this chapter, the history of each one of the three subjects has been delivered. Additionally, the downsizing that the museum underwent and the museum's dynamics, both external and internal, have been explored. Having this understanding is important in order to comprehend this thesis, as this is the chapter that offers clarity regarding the links created between the three themes and the reasons behind certain decisions and their consequences. After all, although MOAD is the object of this research, it is in fact a very small part of larger subjects that all affect the museum in different ways. Thus, although the museum has responsibility for closing down, other factors have been present from the start and therefore they share responsibility in the deterioration. Having said that, we can now move onto the analysis of this study.

### **3. Chapter Two**

This chapter contains the analysis, which is divided into two parts. The schematic representation found under the Theoretical Framework in section 1.2, will be used for the first part. This section is the longest and most detailed part, as it analyses the concepts explained in the Literature Review. These ideas are responsible for enabling Johannesburg's urban fabric and social dynamics to be a certain way. This is further echoed by the rise of the Maboneng precinct. Together, Johannesburg and Maboneng's contexts pave the path for the dynamics surrounding The Museum of African Design. The second part of this analysis will focus exclusively on MOAD's sustainability issues, as a museum needs to have certain strategies in place and meet certain prerequisites in order to be a sustainable institution. In order to assess MOAD's cultural sustainability, the schematic representation offered by Stylianou-Lambert et al. (2014) and found at the end of section 1.1.2 will be applied. This section is shorter, however, as several of the observations made come from my experience while employed at MOAD.

#### **3.1. Analysis - Part One**

The first part of this analysis looks at the concepts defined in the Literature Review, and uses the schematic representation from the Theoretical Framework as a guideline to follow. Special attention is given to the concept of gentrification, however, segregation and cultural identity play an equally important role as these concepts bounce off each other and create the foundations that contain and significantly affect the other concepts within Johannesburg's society. Additionally, it will become clear through the analysis that segregation and gentrification are variations of the same thing.

To start, a few words about Johannesburg's layout are necessary, in order to offer the reader an image regarding the city's urban landscape. Thus, Johannesburg is a city that is often referred to as being 'spread out', meaning that the city covers a large area. Additionally, buildings are rarely seen, with the exception of the old and new CBD's. It is otherwise more common to find houses or complexes in the suburbs. Outside of the middle and upper class suburbs, informal settlements, also referred to as squatter camps, are common. Although these were usually found in Johannesburg's peripheries, they have started popping up in and around Johannesburg's city centre and the suburbs, especially

after 1994. This has resulted in an urban landscape where poverty stricken areas surround well do to neighbourhoods, making the contrast between the privileged and underprivileged people more noticeable.

Johannesburg's current urban landscape is the result of segregation. Given that segregation was implemented as early as 1887, and further strengthened after the apartheid regime came into power in 1948, there were certain invisible barriers, such as highways, that marked the separation between areas and therefore between races back then (Harrison & Zack, 2012; Hoogendoorn and Gregory, 2016; Murtagh, 2015; Wilhelm-Solomon, 2016). These barriers are still visible today, and new versions of these barriers have appeared too. One example is that although neighbourhoods continue to be racially inclined, now that they are becoming more mixed, a class issue has become evident. For this reason, I argue that although segregation is no longer in force, it still exists but in the form of gentrification with an undercurrent of hidden racism. In Slater's (2010) words: "[c]lass – the essence of gentrification – is something experienced through race." (Slater, 2010: 301). Meaning, it is no longer visible in terms of legalized race division, but rather in terms of class, which, in South Africa, ends up being a racial issue.

To illustrate the previous point further, the city's urban landscape – with its dividing highways – is an example of how these invisible barriers, previously used to separate areas based on people's race, now separate them by class. Yet, in this class division, racial undertones are observed for several reasons. To begin, these barriers now demand the use of motorized vehicles, which not everyone can afford or has access to. By way of explanation, this dynamic has resulted in the formation of a city where walking is not common, especially in the suburbs. Yet, most of the population does not have the acquisition power to own a car. Therefore, in the inner city, in industrial areas and close to certain informal settlements, it is common to find predominantly black people walking from the taxi ranks to their jobs or houses. This is generally the poorest part of the population, and it is these people who rely on taxis and a little bit of walking as their means of transportation<sup>16</sup>. These people are also the ones relying on informal

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<sup>16</sup> Taxis in South Africa are unconventional as they are not like taxis anywhere else in the world. These are minibus taxis that pick up several strangers along the way, predominantly people who cannot afford a car. There are no specific routes assigned to them, nor do they have signs stating

trade and minimum wages in order to survive (Winkler, 2009). As indicated in Winkler's (2009) text, "39 percent [of inner city residents] are formally unemployed; 62 percent earn less than \$500 per month; and at least 10 percent (approximately 11,200 residents) rely exclusively on the informal sector to survive." (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2006; Leggett, 2003; Winkler, 2006 qtd. in Winkler, 2009: 372). Additionally, she writes that "in April 2003, the executive mayor of Johannesburg stated that citizens earning less than \$500 per month [would] not be able to live in the inner city" (Winkler, 2009: 374). The equivalent of \$500 is approximately €430 in today's currency exchange. On the contrary, the middle and upper classes drive themselves door to door. Thus, the option to move around in Johannesburg comfortably is directly related to one's financial assets, which highlights the division between people, mostly seen in terms of class. This lands up being about race, as most white people have the education that land them the jobs that allow them to have cars and privileged lifestyles, while many black people do not – this is something people tend to blame on the past<sup>17</sup>. In more specific terms, "[w]hites account for slightly less than 9 percent of the population of 50 million; yet 70 percent of top managers are whites. Among blacks in South Africa ... the unemployment rate is 28.8 percent, compared with 5.9 percent among whites."<sup>18</sup> This inequality creates tension between people of different races and needs to be taken into account in order to analyse the context surrounding MOAD as an institution. Additionally, although most people tend to live far away from their jobs due to the stretched out nature of the city, the poorest part of the population is usually the one that lives the furthest from their jobs as they are pushed out further into the peripheries (Winkler, 2009). This reality sets the undertone for what is to come, because Johannesburg continues to be a city where its citizens live two very different realities; one of privilege and one of disadvantage.

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what destinations will be reached. Rather, people need to learn a certain sign language in order to get a taxi to stop for them. These taxis cost about €0.50 per trip, depending on the route. They are perceived to be dangerous, and are not generally used by middle and upper classes.

<sup>17</sup> The New York Times, "Raw Tensions Over Race Fester in South Africa"

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/02/world/africa/raw-tensions-over-race-fester-in-south-africa.html> (26/07/2017).

<sup>18</sup> The New York Times, "Raw Tensions Over Race Fester in South Africa"

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/02/world/africa/raw-tensions-over-race-fester-in-south-africa.html> (26/07/2017).

Gentrification is a term that most people have heard, and yet, it is generally misunderstood and oversimplified, as more often than not people do not understand the full consequences that gentrification can bring. Additionally, in Maboneng's case, gentrification and urban regeneration go hand in hand as it will become clear in the following paragraphs. Briefly said, however, the stimulant behind Maboneng's development, Arts on Main, was the first step towards the gentrification of the area, which, after causing the displacement of many people, eventually led to the urban regeneration and re-commoditization of the area.

This study relies on Hackworth's (2002) definition of gentrification (section 1.1.1). To recap, he defines it as "the production of urban space for progressively more affluent users." (Hackworth, 2002: 815). This definition is essential to Johannesburg, and specifically to Maboneng's context, as it illustrates the vision that municipal officials, policy-makers and politicians have of achieving "their 'cultural capital' and 'world class African city' vision." (Winkler, 2009: 364). To enable the development of this vision, certain policies have been implemented in the past years that allow the displacement of the underprivileged to the peripheries of Johannesburg, while attracting a more prosperous crowd back into gentrifying or gentrified areas of Johannesburg (Winkler, 2009). Maboneng is a fitting example, as just under one decade ago, this area was avoided by those who would have been considered as the more 'affluent users' (Winkler, 2009). Now, however, Propertuity is bringing them back into Maboneng by re-commoditizing that part of the city (Kopytoff, 1986). However, part of the population is excluded from this 'revitalization' project for a couple of different reasons. The first is that evictions are happening as many of Propertuity's buildings have residents who live there illegally (Walsh, 2013; Winkler, 2009). Additionally, not everyone has the means to live or spend time in Maboneng, again making way for another invisible barrier to exist between classes. Furthermore, although gentrification is generally reflected through a class struggle, the fact that this concept is highly debated on an international level, but mostly studied in the global North, makes it harder to apply to Johannesburg and Maboneng, as the dynamics between the global North and the global South vary significantly (Gregory, 2016). This is because we are talking in terms of developed and under-developed countries, where the latter adopt and apply policies and strategies from developed countries without considering their own social,



economical and political issues and limitations (Gregory, 2016; Winkler, 2009). Gentrification, however, is happening in Johannesburg and some see it as a solution to many problems, while others consider it to be a threat. For this reason, I see the need to break gentrification down further and analyse it in the contexts of Johannesburg and, more specifically, Maboneng.

Those in favour of gentrification tend to believe that it contributes towards economic and urban restructurings (van Vliet, 1998). They argue that the only two options are gentrification or decay, and that, consequently, bringing the middle class back into areas undergoing the process of gentrification brings vast improvements (Slater, 2009).

Naturally, gentrification will alter the character of a neighbourhood. This happens because wealthier people come back into areas that are inhabited by the underprivileged, causing certain neighbourhood dynamics to change. In Johannesburg this statement goes even further as part of the underprivileged population lives below the poverty line and cannot find housing through the private sector (Winkler, 2009). This brings heightened security issues (Wilhelm-Solomon, 2016). However, gentrification in Johannesburg usually happens in areas where people have “unlawfully appropriated buildings”, labelled as bad buildings by Johannesburg’s City Council (Wilhelm-Solomon, 2016: 381; Winkler, 2009). These areas, before becoming gentrified, see significant disinvestment, as people with money avoid these neighbourhoods at all costs, because of the insecurity associated to them. This was the Maboneng precinct’s case specifically. In 2008, when Arts on Main had just been opened by Jonathan Liebmann, the area was not yet known as ‘the Maboneng precinct’, and that one building was surrounded by many dilapidated structures, where people lived, most of them illegally; bad buildings. Since 2008, Propertuity have purchased several buildings in the neighbourhood and evicted the illegal tenants (Walsh, 2013). By 2012, Propertuity owned around 25 buildings in the area (Walsh, 2013). Currently, Propertuity own around 50 buildings (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017). Once capital investment had been injected back into the area and more buildings were regenerated, security was increased which caused crime rates to decrease, spiking the interest of potential business owners. Thus, increased economic activity was brought back into the neighbourhood. As Simon Rubin, one of Propertuity’s property managers says: “[W]hen developing in a secondary area such as the

CBD, it is difficult to put up one building and create just a small island. One has to, as Jonathan Liebmann has done in Maboneng, create an entire area offering with it a nightlife, places to eat lunch, a hotel, offices, security in and around the streets – basically creating a neighbourhood.”<sup>19</sup>. Thus, in general terms it could be argued that urban and economic restructurings are visible, yet, in Maboneng’s case, displacement is also apparent.

In addition, some gentrification supporters claim that low-income households will try to stay in the newly gentrified area, in spite of the increased costs. In Slater’s words “Freeman and Braconi (2004) ... hypothesised that such households appreciate the improvements in services and amenities brought about by gentrification.” (Freeman and Braconi, 2004 qtd. in Slater, 2009: 300). In terms of Maboneng, this is an interesting statement as Liebmann has mentioned how property prices doubled in the first four years. In his words, “prices in Maboneng [grew] from an average of ZAR5000 per square meter in 2008, to ZAR10 000 per square meter [in 2013].”<sup>20</sup>. According to today’s exchange rate, the equivalent would be that of €327 and €654 respectively. Considering that Winkler (2009) wrote that the average low-income worker earned around €430 per month, it seems unlikely that these low-income households could afford to stay in Maboneng. This is without considering those households who are either unemployed or rely on the informal sector in order to make a living. However, if this was in fact the case and low-income households did remain, it is further argued that “housing databases cannot capture the struggles low-income and working-class people endure to *remain where they are* in the face of [gentrification].” (Slater, 2009: 299). Thus, gentrification results in the displacement of some people, as they are usually low-income households who can no longer afford to live in the newly gentrified area – regardless of the fact that they were a part of the neighbourhood before renovations took place. In Gregory’s (2016) words, “[f]ollowing the rise in popularity of [Maboneng], local property prices have escalated. The city has revalued many of the properties in

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<sup>19</sup> CNBC Africa, (2012, November 13) “Jonathan Liebmann – Founder of Propertuity – Part 2” [Video File]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqLHNNUI88> (26/07/2017).

<sup>20</sup> CNBC Africa, (2012, November 13) “Jonathan Liebmann – Founder of Propertuity – Part 2” [Video File]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqLHNNUI88> (26/07/2017).

the surrounding area and the higher valuations have increased the rates and taxes charged on the buildings forcing many owners to sell.” (Gregory, 2015: 168).

Accordingly, those who oppose gentrification tend to feel that it causes displacement, which according to Marcuse (2015) “is a socially created problem” (Marcuse, 2016: 1263). Additionally, these are the same people who believe that basic housing is a right, not a privilege, and therefore should not be treated as a commodity (Slater, 2009). To this last statement, Winkler (2009) points out that the City Council of Johannesburg argues that they will

“provide affordable housing for lower income earners on the urban edge. [However], at least 62 percent of the inner city’s current residents will, therefore, need to move as a result of exclusionary displacement. This policy of displacement to the urban fringe is corroborated by an inner city ward councillor who is of the opinion that ‘location does not matter for the unemployed, so they can be [displaced to] Orange Farm [on the urban fringe]’.” (Participant interview, cited in Bénit-Gbaffou, 2006 qtd. in Winkler, 2009: 374).

As expressed in section 1.1.1, Slater (2010) spoke about four types of displacement, namely: direct last-resident displacement, direct chain displacement, exclusionary displacement and displacement pressure. All four types of displacement have been visible in Maboneng.

To start, direct last-resident displacement, is generally carried out in two ways. The first is when rent prices are increased significantly and the tenants are forced to move out because they cannot afford to live there any longer (Slater, 2010). This is one of the cases in Maboneng, where improvements have been carried out in the neighbourhood, thus causing prices to escalate. The area, now being fashionable again, can afford to charge higher prices, thus attracting and targeting a wealthier crowd, which is what we see when Liebmann indicates that prices per square meter doubled in just four years<sup>21</sup>. The second is seen in the dark buildings, when landlords such as Propertuity, or private security companies hired by them, cut off the water or the electricity in already dilapidated buildings, making the living conditions even harder (Slater, 2010; Winkler, 2009). In

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<sup>21</sup> CNBC Africa, (2012, November 13) “Jonathan Liebmann – Founder of Propertuity – Part 2” [Video File]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqLHNNUI88> (26/07/2017).

Johannesburg, although these living conditions are unsanitary and dangerous, this approach does not work, as these people do not have alternative living solutions. Additionally, given that they are living in these buildings illegally, they cannot place formal complaints or enforce their rights to the full extent, as private investors find and exploit the loopholes in the system, just like the illegal tenants do. On rare occasions, evictions happen through court orders, however, alternative living arrangements need to have been made, which is rarely the case (Gregory, 2016; Wilhelm-Solomon, 2016). To emphasise this previous point further:

“[W]e identify bad buildings [that] are physically in a shocking state. Those buildings are also in arrears [and] the value of the arrears is much more than the value of the building. This has led to classic market failure. The City then writes-off the debt. [However,] new developers want empty occupation because they cannot fix a bad building unless we get rid of the people. For [the City] the big issue is to decant existing tenants to other buildings, because judges often only grant eviction notices [based on] alternative [tenant accommodation]. And that’s a tough one because the city doesn’t always have alternatives. I’m a great believer in market forces, and the market is profit-driven. I say to those developers wanting to make a profit: come in, we want you on board; we’re trying to create a world-class city. So, we need to attract the right people to live here.” (Interview, BBP manager, 2004 qtd. in Winkler, 2009: 370).

Moving forward, direct chain displacement usually takes place after an area has been gentrified (Slater, 2010). To serve as an example, in the Maboneng precinct, this displacement is seen amongst the shop owners who survived the transition from being a no-go area into the upscale neighbourhood that it has become. Their customers were originally a part of the local community that lived or worked in Jeppestown or City and Suburban before it became the Maboneng precinct. However, as new people moved into the newly redeveloped Maboneng, the character of that part of the inner city changed. As Salym Fayad explains, “I was speaking to some of the shop owners who [said there used to be] people working in these buildings which were their clients, but now ... they say many of

the people here prefer to shop at Spar and they can drive elsewhere.”<sup>22</sup>. These shop owners rely on their monthly sales to make an income. If they do not see their finances improve, they will eventually be forced to move or close down.

Exclusionary displacement refers to households that have been vacated by families at their own discretion. However, the landlords, instead of leasing these units out to new families of the same status –that is to say low-income or moderate-income households– gentrify or abandon the units (Slater, 2010). In other words, the rental price is increased, and if no one moves in, then it is left empty, until people who can afford it, rent it. Although it is difficult to come by statistics that express exactly how much vacant space Propertuity is sitting on at the moment, my last visit to MOAD serves as a good indication that Propertuity would prefer to keep empty spaces, rather than rent them out for less than what they believe the spaces are worth. I say this because the restaurant next door to MOAD was still vacant after eleven months, as were a number of empty commercial spaces around the neighbourhood. More importantly, however, the museum was forced to shut down because of economic constraints where it could not pay Propertuity rent, and yet MOAD was the brainchild of Liebmann, founder and CEO of Propertuity. Moreover, in terms of Johannesburg in general and Maboneng specifically, a couple of observations are in order here. First, Slater (2010) implies that the availability of low-income or modest-income housing decreases as areas become gentrified. Although this may be true in the global North, in Johannesburg there is a lack of research to corroborate this statement, which is perhaps the reason why Winkler (2009), based in Johannesburg for several years, makes no mention of this (see section 1.1.1). Additionally, this may be a matter of global geography and each city’s circumstances. By way of explanation, while some countries may have an increasing margin of gentrified areas that maintain their new status, other countries might not feel the same effects of gentrification, meaning that the same areas that go through gentrification and gain status, may lose the status gained relatively quickly. Thus, areas that become re-commoditized may fail and become de-commoditized

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<sup>22</sup> Mail & Guardian, “Not everyone sees the light”, <https://mg.co.za/article/2012-11-09-not-everyone-sees-the-light> (12/05/2017).

again, contributing to the cycle of commoditization, de-commoditization and re-commoditization (Kopytoff, 1986; Walsh, 2013). Furthermore, these low-income households are not evicted or illegal tenants. Rather they leave of their own accord, because they cannot continue to afford buying into the market of the newly gentrified area, which, at the same time, is the area they had previously been a part of (Slater, 2010). However, in Johannesburg empty spaces only remain empty if there is someone to look after them. Therefore, if an area with empty spaces has been gentrified and has security, like Maboneng, then those spaces will remain vacant. Whereas, if an area has been abandoned and there is no one to look after it, then people will move in illegally, thus creating bad buildings and contributing to the depreciation of the neighbourhood (Wilhelm-Solomon, 2016).

The last of the four is displacement pressure, which is when people see the character and nature of the neighbourhood around them changed so much that they no longer want to live there because they no longer feel a sense of belonging (Slater, 2010).

“When a family sees the neighbourhood around it changing dramatically, when their friends are leaving the neighbourhood, when the stores they patronise are liquidating and new stores for other clientele are taking their places, and when changes in public facilities, in transportation patterns, and in support services all clearly are making the area less and less liveable, then the pressure of displacement already is severe. Its actuality is only a matter of time. Families living under these circumstances may move as soon as they can, rather than wait for the inevitable; nonetheless they are displaced.” (Marcuse, 1985 qtd. in Slater, 2010: 303).

Again, Slater (2010) described gentrification as being “highly desirable to policy-makers – a cure for abandonment, financed mostly by the private sector, and any displacement it causes would be trivial.” (Slater, 2010: 303). Additionally, the word ‘trivial’ used in the previous quote is crucial. The lack of quantitative evidence showing exactly how many people have been displaced from areas undergoing gentrification or urban renewal processes in Johannesburg or where they go to after they have been evicted indicates how true Slater’s (2010) statement is (Winkler, 2009). Additionally, it gives rise to a problem broached by



Winkler (2009) when she says: "a lack of quantitative evidence regarding the number of displaced residents from the inner city results in a lack of policy to address displacement." (Winkler, 2009: 370).

As a final thought on gentrification, most scholars agree that it has changed since Ruth Glass originally coined the term in 1964 (Hackworth, 2002; Marcuse, 2016; Slater, 2010; Winkler, 2009). Hackworth (2002) illustrates these changes by stating that "gentrification is now more corporate, more state facilitated, and less resisted than ever before." (Hackworth, 2002: 839). Maboneng is the reflection of this previous statement, as it is the product of private financial investment and corporate developers that have merged together under the company name 'Propertuity' and transformed an entire neighbourhood. In Gregory's (2016) words, "[t]he Maboneng precinct development is exclusively privately driven with limited public sector investment to enhance the area." (Gregory, 2016: 167). Furthermore, Maboneng has seen the state's support through tax incentives that have been put in place to encourage regeneration by these private investors (Winkler, 2009). In Winkler's (2009) words: "[t]wenty-five years of capital and white flight from the inner city of Johannesburg recently prompted the City Council to implement a plethora of investor friendly policies to re-attract private capital and middle-class households." (Winkler, 2009: 364). Furthermore, she added that, "partnerships between private capital and the local state have intensified over the past decade resulting in larger, more expensive, more expansive, and more symbolic development projects." (Winkler, 2009: 366). Gregory (2016) supports this idea too, as he has noted that governments, in order to alleviate the pressure put on them, promote private investment by giving private investors tax incentives to inject money into neighbourhoods that need the investment (Gregory, 2016). Some examples can be seen when Gregory (2016) states: "[o]ne important step the city took to stimulate private sector investment in the inner city was the introduction of the Urban Development Zone (UDZ) tax incentive in 2004. The current Integrated Development Plan (2015) Urban Regeneration Charter (2007) and Spatial Framework (2008) highlights the importance of establishing partnerships with private sector players to regenerate the city." (Gregory, 2016: 162). Therefore, although the state has not invested directly into the Maboneng precinct, it has promoted its redevelopment through certain policies and by cancelling certain debts, such as unpaid municipal accounts (Winkler, 2009). This

has also led to the fact that although gentrification had always occurred on smaller scales, in the grand scheme of things, by turning it into a corporate driven mission and adding incentives, it is now much larger than it was before. In addition, gentrification is now less resisted than it was before. An example is that in 2013, illegal tenants were evicted from one of Maboneng's buildings that have since been renovated. These dispossessed people lingered around for a few days, as they did not have anywhere else to go, and no alternative plans were made for them. Yet, as Walsh (2013) wrote, "not a single article or news piece was written about the eviction." (Walsh, 2013: 408). Additionally, gentrification is a term that is largely avoided by gentrifiers and policy makers, and it is generally disguised by using other terms such as "revitalisation, renaissance, regeneration, renewal, redevelopment, rejuvenation, restructuring, resurgence, reurbanisation and residentialisation." (Slater, 2010: 294). This leads me to the following point.

Urban regeneration, in essence, does not seek to displace communities. Rather, the idea behind urban regeneration is to inject capital back into areas or neighbourhoods that need it, thus contributing to a revitalization of which the current communities could, in theory, benefit from. In other words, Couch (1990) defines urban regeneration as "a process where the state or local community seeks to bring back investment, employment and consumption to enhance the quality of life in an urban area." (Couch, 1990 qtd. in Hoogendoorn and Gregory, 2016: 400). Yet, it is argued that the way in which urban regeneration is sometimes executed brings the same consequences as gentrification does, namely, dispossession instead of empowerment. In Winkler's (2009) words, "[i]nner city regeneration in Johannesburg is nothing more than a euphemism for underlying gentrification." (Winkler, 2009: 364).

To argue this point further, in Maboneng urban renewal has been brought on by gentrification. As Propertuity found ways of capitalizing on low property values and acquired more buildings, former occupants were dispossessed. This displacement resulted in an ever-increasing influx of more "affluent users", which changed the character of the neighbourhood due to the class transition it experienced (Hackworth, 2002: 815; Slater, 2010). The previously mentioned changes, associated to gentrification, spiked urban regeneration to happen within Maboneng as investment, employment and consumption have all been brought back into the neighbourhood. However, given that the urban regeneration

process has not empowered the underprivileged communities, it is resented and considered as another way of gentrification by some. Thus, the results of urban regeneration that affect the underprivileged negatively are the same ones regarded as benefits and improvements by the more prosperous part of the population (Hoogendoorn and Gregory, 2016). Additionally, and contributing to the conflict at hand, "policy-makers and politicians are inspired by international, 'best practice' regeneration precedents where market-led redevelopments, tax incentives, public-private partnerships, flagship projects, intensive urban management, middle and high income homeownership, and the disintegration of concentrated poverty are deemed essential for the successful revitalization of urban centres" (Winkler, 2009: 376). Therefore, it becomes clear that the urban regeneration happening within Maboneng is in fact a variation of gentrification, as it seeks to displace the disadvantaged instead of improving their lifestyles and livelihoods. To make matters more confusing, in order to diffuse a potential feeling of segregation, "[u]rban regeneration is performed in different cities under various guises, including, 'renewal', 'rejuvenation', 'reinvestment', 'revitalization', 'renaissance', and, more recently, 'smart growth'." (Winkler, 2009: 365). While some believe that urban regeneration leads to economic growth and job creation, others reject this idea and believe that "there is no ... link between economic growth and social equity." (Winkler, 2009: 365). Instead, they believe that like gentrification, "urban regeneration is not perceived as a means of reducing inner city poverty, but as creating economic growth, inflated property values, and higher tax revenues." (Winkler, 2009: 366). In Maboneng, instead of seeing a significant decrease in poverty, what has become evident is the displacement of poor people to other areas where they are not in the way of urban regeneration, but also not present enough to be thought of as a pressing issue that needs to be solved (Winkler, 2009). Thus, it could be argued that the disadvantaged are in fact pushed from one unfashionable area to another, but due to the lack of statistics it is very difficult to prove this theory (Winkler, 2009). Moreover, the idea of decreasing poverty through urban regeneration could be possible when applying a bottom up approach where the underprivileged communities are not displaced but worked with. However, at the moment it seems that very little help is provided to them (Hoogendoorn and Gregory, 2016; Winkler, 2009). Furthermore, the vision of Johannesburg's enhancements that policy makers and government

officials have, seems to have paved the way for the ruthless implementation of policies adopted from the global North. In Winkler's (2009) words: "[i]n Johannesburg ... an explicit policy link between inner city regeneration and economic growth is, possibly, more blatantly executed than in contexts from where these policies are imported." (Winkler, 2009: 376).

The previous ideas lead to the analysis of the concept of the three-commoditization phases (Kopytoff, 1986). Originally this referred to ongoing cycles where areas went from being fashionable to unfashionable (Hoogendoorn and Gregory, 2016; Walsh, 2013; Winkler, 2009). These cycles remain, however, as it has been established, developers buy cheap land, and after a process that entails various steps including displacement, they sell or rent that same land out for higher prices. Thus, in Maboneng, the re-commoditization of the neighbourhood is experienced through gentrification and urban regeneration. In Walsh's (2013) words: "[w]hen the suburbanites decide to come back, as is underway in Johannesburg ... the idea of a Right to the City ... is redefined within ongoing processes of capitalist accumulation and dispossession." (Walsh, 2013: 401). In other words, in 2012, an online article came out stating that the Maboneng precinct was intended to be a neighbourhood where people from different "backgrounds and incomes [could] live, work and play."<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, this same article stated that in contrast to the high-end housing market offered in Maboneng, rooms for ZAR1200 (approximately €77) per month would be available for "relatively low-income people."<sup>24</sup> This article, however, also mentioned that the poorer communities living around the Maboneng precinct do not integrate with the neighbourhood<sup>25</sup>. Although Kohn further corroborated the existence of the low-income buildings in Maboneng during our interview, he mentioned that Propertyu does not own these buildings. In his words, "next to this building are affordable rent controlled houses that are run by other companies and provide services; those buildings are not going anywhere." (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017). Gregory (2016) has also highlighted this fact; "[Propertyu] does not

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<sup>23</sup> Mail & Guardian, "Not everyone sees the light", <https://mg.co.za/article/2012-11-09-not-everyone-sees-the-light> (12/05/2017).

<sup>24</sup> Mail & Guardian, "Not everyone sees the light", <https://mg.co.za/article/2012-11-09-not-everyone-sees-the-light> (12/05/2017).

<sup>25</sup> Mail & Guardian, "Not everyone sees the light", <https://mg.co.za/article/2012-11-09-not-everyone-sees-the-light> (12/05/2017).

own all of the buildings within the precinct, thus there is little protection to stop other private property developers from acquiring property and to alter the creative theme of [Maboneng]" (Gregory, 2016: 167). However, Liebmann indicated that prices within the Maboneng Precinct had doubled in four years, while he made no mention of low budget housing being available in Maboneng<sup>26</sup>. Yet, in the online article, Liebmann says:

" 'To make a good city ... the middle income and the rich must also be looked after in addition to the poor'. Controversially, Liebmann questions whether the emerging neighbourhoods of the inner city are the right place for everyone. 'Maybe some people should be in the inner city and others should be on the outskirts of the city.' "<sup>27</sup>.

At this point it seems necessary for me to indicate that both the YouTube video and the online article that I am quoting were published in November 2012. Regardless of who owns the low-budget housing in the area, it is necessary to circle back to the notions of displacement, and more specifically of displacement pressure. If moderate and low-income households can even afford to live in Maboneng, it is just barely as the prices keep rising. In terms of integrating, it becomes very difficult for the poor, as the experiences offered by the neighbourhood are expensive, and over and above that, the Maboneng precinct's existence has changed the character of the area, making the poorer part of the population feel alien to the neighbourhood and the lifestyle it offers. To make matters worse, even if there were rooms available for €77 a month, some of the inner city residents would still not be able to afford that sum of money, which is the leading reason why there are bad buildings in the first place. As Wilhelm-Solomon (2016) indicates, "stratification occurs even among low-income communities [in Johannesburg]". (Wilhelm-Solomon, 2016: 391).

Thus, the end goal of re-commoditizing an area is purely lucrative, and gentrification and urban regeneration are the tools used in Johannesburg and in Maboneng to reach said goal. This has further been acknowledged by scholars, as

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<sup>26</sup> CNBC Africa, (2012, November 13) "Jonathan Liebmann – Founder of Propertuity – Part 2" [Video File]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqLHNNUI88> (26/07/2017).

<sup>27</sup> Mail & Guardian, "Not everyone sees the light", <https://mg.co.za/article/2012-11-09-not-everyone-sees-the-light> (12/05/2017).

has the reality of the displacements caused, given that the poorer and most vulnerable part of the population's needs are ignored in order for the privileged to make a profit (Hackworth, 2002; Marcuse, 2016; Winkler, 2009). Thus, while gentrifiers disguise gentrification as one way to promote economic growth, this does not equal more job opportunities or less poverty (Winkler, 2009).

Furthermore, there is a general issue in South Africa in terms of cultural identity. In 1994, after a statue of Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd was taken down in Bloemfontein, Nelson Mandela said: "We must be able to channel our anger without doing injustices to other communities. Some of their heroes may be villains to us. And some of our heroes may be villains to them."<sup>28</sup> This statement is an indication of the division between South Africans, which continues to happen. While some consider certain monuments to be an important part of their heritage, others see them as a painful reminder of an unjust past. Moreover, while some consider history and cultural capital to be important, others do not see the value in it (Rankin, 2013). More specifically,

"[a] challenge ... is the need to transfer cultural capital to give recognition to those who were long marginalized. ... [T]his is made all the more difficult in the South African context because it is not considered important by those still struggling with basic issues of survival." (Rankin, 2013: 73).

This conflict has created animosity and has allowed different scenarios to arise. Some people may find that the solution is as simple as keeping all the cultural capital intact and displayed, thus respecting the different community's heritages, and also owning up to a history that existed up until just over twenty years ago. Yet, there are several disputes between South Africans, and no foreseeable solutions. In Rankin's (2013) words, "the state of civil war is still too recent and raw to be viewed with historical detachment, and there is some awkwardness about how to represent the opposing sides." (Rankin, 2013: 75). Cultural institutions, therefore, have a difficult time deciding what to show and what to hide, which is why most institutions tend to focus on apartheid and avoid everything else. To summarize, in Rankin's (2013) words:

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<sup>28</sup> The New York Times, "Apartheid is Demolished. Must Its Monuments Be?"

<http://www.nytimes.com/1994/09/25/world/apartheid-is-demolished-must-its-monuments-be.html> (23/07/2017).



“Both sites and displays have focused strongly on the travail and torment of the apartheid era, which has a resonance shared by all South Africans, even if in vastly different ways. It is a history that has to be confronted and understood. Yet there is something inherently troubling about forging a sense of shared identity on negatives alone.” (Rankin, 2013: 96).

Thus, the point of this section of the analysis is simply to show that South Africa’s history has shaped people’s cultural identities, or, to say the least, the divide that currently constitutes this identity. Given that segregation was implemented from Johannesburg’s start, it can be said that before 1994 people did not know what it was like to not live in a city that was divided. As I have argued, this pattern is still present. However, Johannesburg’s urban fabric, complicated as it is, also brings advantages in the sense that people are more accustomed to looking for opportunities and taking the risks involved in pursuing them. This gives rise to the entrepreneurial spirit.

To briefly restate what was written in section 1.1.2, entrepreneurs are people who perceive gaps in the market and act on them, in spite of the potential risks involved (Hartley et al., 2013; Sawyer, 2012). After living abroad, Liebmann decided to try and implement a lifestyle that he felt was lacking in Johannesburg. Accordingly, due to the success that the Maboneng precinct has received, Liebmann has created value and modified previous business structures (Hartley et al., 2013). However, although Liebmann has been successful as an entrepreneur and falls into the definition and prerequisites of entrepreneurship perfectly, this concept gives way to other ideas. Namely, the Creative Class and City, the Creative Industries and Creative Clusters, which have all contributed towards the existence of the Experience Economy in Maboneng. Thus, the entrepreneur, Jonathan Liebmann in this case, gave rise to the Maboneng precinct. This area attracted the Creative Class, who saw opportunities and engaged with the area through different skills that fall under the Creative Industries umbrella term. This led to the expansion of Maboneng, which then became a Creative Cluster, leading us back to the idea of the Creative Class and the Creative City. These concepts and the ties they represent lead to the Experience Economy in Maboneng.

By way of explanation, the Creative Industries stem from human creativity, and are thought to make a significant contribution towards the economy and job creation (Hartley et al., 2013). It is also believed that the proper execution and combination of the Creative Industries can lead to the conception of Creative Clusters and urban renewal (Gregory, 2016). As I have said previously, the urban renewal process within the Maboneng precinct followed gentrification, thus not empowering but displacing the poor. In terms of Creative Clusters emerging from the successful implementation of the Creative Industries, Maboneng is perceived as a Creative Cluster and has the spatial and geographical characteristics to go with this idea (Hoogendoorn and Gregory, 2016). Accordingly, Stevens (2015) names three characteristics that are associated to Creative Clusters, all of which can be seen in the Maboneng precinct: inner city location, size and the constant evolution of these spaces.

To elaborate, the first idea, namely that Creative Clusters tend to form in the inner city, or in previously industrial areas, is true for Maboneng (Stevens, 2015). Due to the capital flight experienced in the 1980s, Johannesburg's inner city is seen as low risk for entrepreneurs to buy into and for Creative Clusters to emerge. Yet, this is also a contributing factor to gentrification and urban renewal, as people who have no other means of housing have moved into buildings illegally, and there are loopholes in the system that allow their rights to be vulnerated in the name of regeneration (Gregory, 2016; Hoogendoorn and Gregory, 2016; Winkler, 2009).

Second, Creative Clusters are generally characterized by their "smallness of scale" (Stevens, 2015: 3). To recap, Creative Clusters are defined as "a geographically proximate group of interconnected companies and associated in a specific field based on commonalities and complementarities." (Porter, 1990 qtd. in Hartley et al., 2013: 17). As an example, Maboneng is constituted by small and medium sized businesses that are all walking distance from each other. The size of the Creative Cluster holds importance, as this is what gives the notion the strength that it holds (Stevens, 2015). Thus, it is precisely the easy accessibility between spaces, which also contributes to the feeling of intensified creativity. In Maboneng, this has resulted in the formation of one of the very few areas where people can walk in Johannesburg. More importantly however, networks are

established between companies because people compete and collaborate at the same time (Hartley et al, 2013; Stevens; 2013).

The third notion is that these places are in constant transformation (Gregory, 2015). In terms of Maboneng, since its establishment it has not stopped expanding and changing. More precisely, the neighbourhood itself has grown significantly, but the experiences, such as restaurants, shops or cultural attractions available within the precinct are also constantly evolving. New ideas are always emerging, and while successful ideas live on and grow, the unsuccessful ones are forced to close down, making space for more new ideas to emerge.

However, Propertuity have created a real-estate business around their Creative Cluster. Therefore, although according to Walsh (2009) they curate the neighbourhood by deciding who gets in and who does not, I argue that their business lies in claiming rent from tenants, thus making them more flexible in terms of who can break in, or rent a space, than Walsh (2009) implies. Hartley et al., (2013) write: “[t]hose with ... poorly governed clusters, can lead to reliance on low-value products; often this translates into a business strategy supported by profit from tourism, rent and land speculation.” (Hartley et al., 2013: 19). By way of explanation, in MOAD’s specific case, Kohn was hired by Propertuity to run the museum and convert it into a financially independent space. Within the first year he had managed to achieve this goal by allowing events to take place inside the museum at the same time as exhibitions were showing. This was an innovative idea that allowed customers to have an experience that they otherwise would not have been able to engage in. Thus, although the system forced certain conditions onto the museum, such as having to showcase temporary and more modest exhibitions, it also made the museum a good income while saving it money in terms of high insurance costs and other logistical expenses that come into play when museums have permanent or very expensive exhibitions. To elaborate a bit further, the museum did not have UV filter windows, or a controlled temperature environment, thus there were certain limitations on the loaned collections that could be displayed. This, however, did not affect the importance of MOAD as the exhibitions it showed were important to its original discourse and played an important role in uniting people of different backgrounds and cultures in the same space. Living MOAD, however, had been part of the project from the start because the sale of residential units was going to help fund the entire project

surrounding the museum. Yet, no measures were taken during construction to ensure that MOAD would be able to continue operating as before, or at least as a museum. "The apartments were built without thinking of the repercussions from sound in the museum, but also about the repercussions for services for the apartments: plumbing, electrical work, building in the ceiling and sort of damaging parts of the building in the process all had creative limits on what could be right below." (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017). In the year that I worked at MOAD, events were no longer viable because of noise issues, and leaking pipes played a role in the curation of art works. When talking about the original restoration that took place in 2011, Kohn says that the residential units were what "enabled the financing for everything else to happen on the construction" (Kohn, personal interview, 8 June 2017). Furthermore, he questions whether investing the necessary money into soundproofing would have been worthwhile, or if it would have been an economical loss in the long run, referring to the possibility of losing out on events because of them moving to other fashionable areas (Kohn, personal interview, 8 June 2017). However, it is worth contemplating the idea that if the museum had been given an infrastructure that allows a fully operational museum to exist, that it would not have battled economical issues and constraints which ultimately led to its reduction, creating the issues that Kohn mentioned in a letter: "[o]ver the last year the vision of large scale projects became harder to fund, and the space became more restricted. The cost [versus] the benefit of the museum became harder to justify." (Kohn, personal correspondence, 21 April 2017) (see Figure 2). Although finding capital to fund a project is important, it seems that Propertuity missed the larger picture from the start. More explicitly, had they considered the prerequisites needed for both the museum and the residential units to work and coexist, constructions plans and certain specification would have been different and may have been met. Instead, they focused solely on dividing the space up as much as they could to get money out of every corner. When the museum could no longer host events, the solution was to make it smaller to get more tenants in and collect the rent. However, attempting to create a small Creative Cluster inside the MOAD failed because the prices they were asking for versus the benefits they were offering were not equal in people's eyes.

In accordance with the previous ideas, Hartley et al., (2013) point out that "[i]deally a cluster will attract workers with specific and specialized skills" (Hartley

et al., 2012: 17). This leads me to the next concepts, namely the Creative City and the Creative Class.

The Creative City, in essence it is a place that creates the necessary conditions for people to be able to think creatively and act accordingly (Landry and Bianchini, 1995). The public sector is generally responsible for promoting the necessary motivations that people need for creative cities to emerge (Yencken, 2013). This is not easy, however, as cities and people are complicated, but it is precisely this complexity that holds the power to generate creative cities. Thus, people have different needs that should be met by their city (Yencken, 2013). Yencken (2013) proposed four principles to achieve a Creative City: "variety and complexity; more holistic, intuitive approaches to our cities; order ... but the order must not be destructive of richness and complexity; [modifying our environments is natural, but] it is not only what we do that matters, but how we do it." (Yencken, 2013: 2-5). The idea then is to encourage a city to form where there is variety and complexity but also order. Additionally, creative solutions to problems should be encouraged. Under these terms, however, Johannesburg is not a creative city. Although there is diversity in terms of human characteristics, people do not want variety, which is why there is currently an issue surrounding cultural identity, where everyone seeks to preserve their own and do away with the others (Rankin, 2013). Additionally, instead of trying to find solutions to Johannesburg's problems from within the city, policy makers are turning to other countries and implementing their ideas and solutions without customizing them to Johannesburg's needs (Winkler, 2009). Hence, tax incentives are being implemented to promote the revitalization of areas that need it, while underprivileged people's needs are being neglected (Gregory, 2016; Winkler, 2009). Naturally, this is not to say that incentives should not be granted to those who have the power to revitalize areas, but that both sides of the scope should be catered to. In Gregory's words: "[p]ost-apartheid Johannesburg carries the scars of decades of apartheid city planning and currently is struggling to balance the new pressures of establishing a new urban image that seeks to elevate it as a world class city against the demands of meeting the basic needs of the poor." (Gregory, 2016: 161-162). Therefore, implementing policies that benefit only part of the population in a city that is planned around division creates resentment, which causes further division to occur between people.

In terms of the Creative Class, according to Florida (2005) everyone is creative. However, people's creativity can sometimes be limited or stagnated by the environment surrounding them, which is why this concept is directly related to the Creative City. When speaking about economic growth, Florida (2005) emphasises that the three T's (technology, tolerance and talent) are indispensable, and that any place lacking one of the three can ultimately fail. However, Florida (2005) defines talent as "those with a bachelor's degree and above", and tolerance as "openness, inclusiveness, and diversity to all ethnicities, races, and walks of life." (Florida, 2005:37). On the one hand, when looking at Johannesburg as a whole, it lacks tolerance. As has previously been stated, there is no sense of a unified cultural identity, or tolerance for the different identities to live unanimously (Rankin, 2013). In terms of Maboneng, as a neighbourhood there is more tolerance as people of different backgrounds, ethnicities, ages, and so forth work, live and entertain themselves there, yet, a class issue is present (Walsh, 2013). Furthermore, Florida's (2005) definition of talent is difficult to live up to in Johannesburg, at least currently, and although Maboneng may represent an area that could attract people with symbolic capital, such as a bachelor's degree or higher, this neighbourhood is an echo of Johannesburg. In other words, Joffe and Newton (2007) explain that in the 1980s, arts education was only available for white schools, and focused on a Western art curriculum. Very few schools that taught children of colour had an arts syllabus, and the few that did had copied the white school's curriculum. Thus, arts education in South Africa was limited. In Joffe and Newton's words, "[i]n 1994, for example, out of 72 schools in Soweto, serving over 70 000 learners, only two offered matric ... arts curriculum." (Joffe & Newton, 2007: 76). They go on to add that at a "tertiary level there were a number of institutions with arts programme, however the focus ... was Eurocentric and very few black students had access to this form of education." (Joffe & Newton, 2007: 76). In order to counter attack the lack of arts education amongst people of colour, several "community based arts centres that operated outside of the formal schooling framework" appeared, funded by international organizations. (Joffe & Newton, 2007: 76). Consequently, many artists received informal training and therefore did not receive any accreditations or symbolic capital. This also prevented them from furthering their studies through institutions that require the recognition in order to admit new students (Joffe & Newton, 2007). Although



progress has been made after 1994 in terms of arts education in South Africa, the reality is that many of the people that compose the Creative Class do not have a bachelors degree or higher, although they have the skills to carry out the work that is generally done by the Creative Class.

The sum of the previous concepts, namely the Creative Industries, the Creative Class and the Creative Cluster all compose and shape the Maboneng precinct. This leads to the next concept, the Experience Economy. As seen in section 1.1.2, Pine and Gilmore (1998) speak of the rise of the Experience Economy. To rehash, goods and services have become increasingly commoditized, which has brought on the need of engaging people through experiences. This concept is important to analyse in terms of the Maboneng precinct and MOAD because it is experiences that attract people both to the neighbourhood and to the museum. Pine and Gilmore (1998) have divided the experience economy into two parts.

On the one hand, they categorize experiences into four groups: entertainment, educational, escapist and aesthetic. These are further broken down into passive or active participation and absorption or immersion. According to Pine and Gilmore (1998) the most successful experiences encompass all the spectrums. On the other hand, they provided five principals behind successful experience design, which will become clear further on.

Maboneng has become a brand that is best known for the different experiences it has to offer, which is why it attracts around 2000 visitors every weekend (Gregory, 2016). These experiences, however, are comprised of smaller experiences that engage people with different interests. They fit all four realms offered by Pine and Gilmore (1998). In other words, some consider Maboneng as an escapist experience since it offers a lifestyle that is not usually available in Johannesburg. It also has educational and aesthetic experiences, being that people are encouraged to take guided walks into areas of the city that are generally avoided, while enjoying various street installations and famous graffiti. Additionally, there are several art galleries within the Maboneng precinct. In terms of entertainment, there are several options ranging from destination restaurants and daytime parties, to an independent cinema and a hotel that holds one of Johannesburg's largest hidden art collections, and more (Gregory, 2016). These

different experiences require passive or active participation, absorption or immersion from the visitors.

MOAD, however, holds one of the four dimensions, namely the aesthetic experience. Occasionally, when workshops, tours of the exhibitions or events happened inside the museum, the educational and entertainment spectrums were covered, yet this was not a constant. For instance, after the downsizing of the museum had finished, events were no longer a part of the experiences on offer. MOAD tried to promote the educational side by promoting design-thinking workshops, but these ended up being too expensive for people, thus resulting in a lack of participation.

In the following paragraphs, the five principals that Pine and Gilmore (1998) consider important about experience design will be explored in terms of Maboneng and MOAD. Pine and Gilmore (1998) emphasised that the name of a place, people's impressions, the signals they receive, their desire for souvenirs and the stimulation of their senses all contributed toward a positive or a negative experience.

Thus, The Maboneng precinct was launched after Arts on Main, incidentally a more relatable name than Maboneng, was inaugurated and became successful. It was only after Maboneng became a brand, that people became aware that it means "place of light" (Gregory, 2016: 163). In terms of the Museum of African Design, the name explains what the museum is about, so although it has showcased more mediums than only design people still understand what the experience comprises at its core. Thus in both cases, the first principal is fulfilled.

The second and the third principals are related to each other in that they both refer to the cues customers get. However, the second refers to positive signs while the third refers to negative ones. In Pine and Gilmore's (1998) words, "[t]o create the desired impressions, companies must introduce cues that affirm the nature of the experience to the guest." (Pine & Gilmore, 1998: 103). In Maboneng's case, security guards are strategically positioned covering every inch of the neighbourhood. Their job is to ensure the safety of the people walking around, and of the cars parked on the streets, which in turn gives visitors the feeling of being safe in the neighbourhood; the promise of a lifestyle that is otherwise hardly available in Johannesburg, especially to the middle and upper classes as they generally do not walk anywhere other than shopping centres.

Additionally, Maboneng was established around the experiences offered on Fox Street (Gregory, 2016). Although the neighbourhood has grown substantially since 2010, it has simply added more experiences to its repertoire. However, gentrification is one of the cues that people tend to accept as positive, as the privileged view the revitalization of the inner city, or parts of it, as valuable and generally ignore issues of displacement encouraged. In Walsh's (2013) words "[i]t is the reclamation of Johannesburg's downtown by those who had been displaced, or more accurately that had fled, the city after the end of apartheid." (Walsh, 2013: 400). Others, however, understand those same signals as negative. Thus, while some are brought back into the inner city and shown cues that allow them to feel welcome, people who were living in the same area just over one decade ago are pushed further away due to the higher prices and character change of the area, thus causing tension although Maboneng's discourse is one of inclusion (Winkler, 2009). As for MOAD, its goal was to be open to everyone regardless of the person's social status or background, which is why it was free entry (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017). Additionally, it sought to be a platform that encouraged acclaimed African artists from all over the continent, whether they still lived there or not, to see South Africa as a desirable market to break into, and not only the Western world. Moreover, it aimed to inspire pan-African dialogues internationally. Although it was successful in catching the attention of artists, the press and prominent people in general, along with serving as a platform that contributed towards the pan-African dialogue, it did not manage to truly engage the poorer part of the population. In other words, the people who walked past the museum everyday on their way to work did not engage with it, and possibly did not know that it was free entry (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017). Being located in a gentrified area made it difficult to attract the part of the population that avoided Maboneng. Additionally, some exhibitions were harder to understand than others. Although there were signs in English that explained the art works, it would have been beneficial to have Zulu and Afrikaans signs too, as it would have provided a more rounded sense of inclusiveness. In the beginning of 2016, volunteers were brought in mainly on weekends and public holidays to offer guided tours of the exhibits.

Mementos are the fourth principal mentioned by Pine and Gilmore (1998), who write that if there is no desire on behalf of the public to buy a souvenir after

their visit, they were not truly engaged by the experience. In terms of Maboneng, it has so many shops on offer, that mementos can be picked up almost anywhere and associated to the overall experience. Having said that, however, during my last visit, in June 2017, I was made aware that Propertuity are bringing a book out called "Maboneng. Developing a Neighbourhood Economy" (Meek, 2016). The book was available at MOAD's final exhibition before closing its doors, and was ZAR600, approximately €38. The PDF, I found out later, can be accessed and downloaded for free from Propertuity's website<sup>29</sup>. After MOAD opened its doors, a small museum shop was in operation where t-shirts with the museum's logo, phone covers with African patterns and caps made out of African wax print material, amongst other items, were available. By the time I started working at the museum, however, the shop had been interrupted indefinitely, and an independent shop had taken its place. This shop was separately run, and only sold bags and jackets made out of Basotho blankets. One jacket was priced at ZAR3500, approximately €221. Although they were visually interesting, sales were rare.



Figure 46. The Museum of African Design. *Independent shop, operating from inside MOAD* [photograph]. Retrieved 4 June 2017 from The Museum of African Design private archives.

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<sup>29</sup> Propertuity, "Maboneng. Developing a neighbourhood economy", <http://propertuity.co.za/downloads/Maboneng-Developing-a-Neighbourhood-Economy.pdf> (2/08/2016).

Finally, Pine and Gilmore's (1998) fifth principal is to positively engage all five senses. In Maboneng this is an easy task to achieve given the variety of experiences available. In MOAD, however, this was becoming harder with time. Although there were restaurants and cafés in close proximity, a place to have coffee or something to drink inside of MOAD was lacking, which further highlights how important the relationship between MOAD and The March Hare was. To make matters worse, the building was very cold because it had originally been a factory for mining parts. Due to the size of the spaces and the height of the ceiling there was no way to control the temperature inside. Again, this was one of the issues that should have been considered during the restorations. Thus, the sum of MOAD being mostly a visual experience where three senses were mostly left unstimulated, and the museum usually felt cold, especially during winter, did not contribute in a positive way to the overall experience visitors had. Additionally, audio guides were not available, meaning that the only real opportunity of engaging people's auditory sense was either through personnel who explained the exhibition, or through artworks that relied on audio.

On that account, so far we have established that Johannesburg was segregated from the start, laying the foundations for the city to be developed in a certain way, which is why Johannesburg's urban fabric and social dynamic is the way it is currently (Harrison & Zack, 2012). Additionally, although law no longer enforces segregation, gentrification is a variation of it. Yet, gentrification is generally a class issue but in Johannesburg it is experienced through race (Slater, 2010). Furthermore, gentrification contributes to the displacement of the underprivileged, which leads to the rise of bad buildings, as a large number of people who are in need of homes have no economical capacity to find houses through the private market (Wilhelm-Solomon, 2016; Winkler, 2009). The cycle created by gentrification leads to urban renewal, which, in Johannesburg's context, is a term used to disguise gentrification as it is not used to empower the underprivileged but to revitalize areas that target the privileged, thus giving it a lucrative goal as opposed to a goal that tends for a social wellbeing while being economically viable. Thus, the three-commodification phases, which this all eventually leads to are cyclical, as observed by Walsh (2007), but are abused in Johannesburg's context as everything is done with a lucrative goal, instead of balancing social needs with economical profits (Kopytoff, 1986). Furthermore,

although the entrepreneur made the idea of Maboneng possible and paved the path for people to realize the vision, it is the Creative Class, Creative Industries and Creative Cluster that make this vision a reality. As for the Creative City, it does not exist in Johannesburg. The experience economy however is a driving force in Johannesburg for the privileged part of the population as people interact with the city based on the experiences they get, as predicted by Pine and Gilmore (1998). Having said that, the underprivileged part of the population does not engage with experiences in certain places due to a financial insufficiency and a need to cover their basic needs (Rankin, 2013). Indeed, the establishment of certain notions surrounding Johannesburg and Maboneng was crucial, as the analysis on MOAD cannot be properly done without having clarity concerning the contexts that surround it. Having said that, the second part of this analysis will look at the model of Cultural Sustainability as delivered by Stylianou-Lambert et al. (2014). This section will be much shorter as it will have a more personal approach about the way in which MOAD relates to each of the four circles found in the model.

### **3.2. Analysis - Part Two**

Sustainable development was previously considered to have three main pillars: social, economic and environmental. In recent years, a fourth pillar has been added, namely Cultural Sustainability (Stylianou-Lambert et al., 2014). This pillar involves the conservation of past forms of tangible and intangible heritage, referring to cultural expressions from the past, which are maintained throughout the present and into the future (Stylianou-Lambert et al., 2014). This "sense of heritage is constructed and used in the present to advocate for national, local, and individual identities." (Stylianou-Lambert et al., 2014: 567). In order for sustainable development to occur, all pillars need to work. However, in terms of the theoretical model proposed by Stylianou-Lambert et al. (2014) "Four intersecting circles, one for each of the pillars of sustainable development, contain parameters that ideally should be considered when drafting cultural policies for the sustainable development of museums." (Stylianou-Lambert et al., 2014: 570).

Additionally, Stylianou-Lambert et al. (2014) write that "[w]hat museums collect, preserve, and exhibit form the tangible links between the past, present, and future, and form the core of cultural sustainability." (Stylianou-Lambert, 2014: 566). Furthermore, museums have an active role in defining cultural identity by



preserving tangible and intangible forms of heritage. Yet, museums choose to display certain things, while concealing others (Stylianou-Lambert et al., 2014).

To illustrate the previous point, museums in Johannesburg have had a difficult time redefining what to show after 1994, as most of the museums were established while South Africa was still under the apartheid regime (Rankin, 2013). Moreover, many of the existing museums have tried to break away from the Western traits that generally characterize museums (Rankin, 2013). However, given that South Africa's history is still very much a part of the present, tension exists between different races and cultures as history has affected each side differently. Thus, people of certain backgrounds reject what others consider their cultural capital to be (Rankin, 2013). This has put museums in an uncomfortable position, as they cannot seem to find a way of representing "the opposing sides" (Rankin, 2013: 75). For this reason, it is becoming increasingly common to see museums in Johannesburg focus on showing what apartheid did or its consequences, rather than focusing on good artists of different backgrounds (Rankin, 2013). To serve as an example, Rankin (2013) writes that the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG) sent its Impressionist paintings to Italy in 2001, as "they no longer had a place on the walls" given that the gallery decided to take a new direction and exhibit "historical artefacts ... alongside more conventional paintings and sculptures." (Rankin, 2013: 77). She then provides an example concerning Museum Africa, when she writes: "most of its ethnographic treasures were packed away in favour of a more contemporary emphasis, such as an exhibit on the first free elections, and displays that focused on urban workers rather than historical artefacts." (Rankin, 2014: 78). In Rankin's (2014) words, "while diverse attitudes and misunderstandings may abound, it nonetheless seems a curious aberration that, in both Johannesburg's museum and art gallery, many of the finest works of black and white cultural groups in their respective collections have been concealed, with a singular focus on new directions at the expense of old." (Rankin, 2013: 80). However, the fact that sides are obscured by institutions in an attempt to remain politically correct and not take sides, forces people of all different backgrounds to try and shape a new cultural identity based on the negative aspects of history, namely the apartheid regime, as opposed to learning from the past and moving forward onto a better future (Rankin, 2014). In Rankin's words, "[t]he most demanding task in building cultural capital at memorial museums is to reconcile

an acknowledgement of past iniquities with a sense of achievement and future possibilities.” (Rankin, 2013: 97).

Furthermore, museums are not important to everyone. Thus, there are certain underprivileged communities who feel that museums are a waste of space and budget when some people’s basic needs are not yet catered to (Rankin, 2013). Yet, the existence of museums or cultural institutions should not imply that some people’s basic needs should not be met. Museums hold value precisely because of their goal to preserve heritage for present and, more importantly, for future generations to be able to access and learn from the past (Stylianou-Lambert et al., 2014). Therefore, there is a need to create spaces, such as museums or art institutions, where the different perspectives can all be exhibited and married as part of one cultural identity. MOAD was a space that encouraged and promoted this idea. However, the circumstances surrounding MOAD created a hostile environment that did not allow it to be culturally sustainable. In order to elaborate on the previous idea, MOAD will be analysed against each pillar in the next paragraphs.

To start, the environmental dimension considers aspects of urban planning and regeneration (Stylianou-Lambert et al., 2014). MOAD, as has been previously established, is located in the Maboneng precinct, a neighbourhood that is the product of gentrification (Gregory, 2016; Walsh; 2013). Due to the nature of the area, those who have either been displaced, or cannot participate in the experiences that the neighbourhood has to offer due to financial constraints, avoid Maboneng in general which reflects on MOAD. This already poses a challenge for the museum, as it means that parts of the underprivileged communities are either inaccessible or not interested in the museum. Thus, at its core the environmental and social dimensions repel each other. Moreover, the museum was not involved in any environmental initiatives. However, MOAD tried to bring awareness to certain subjects through the exhibitions it hosted. Thus, environmental awareness was an issue that was tackled through the exhibit ‘Think Global, Build Social!’<sup>30</sup>. The goal was to create a sense of social and environmental responsibility by showing ways in which architecture can offer solutions to current problems.

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<sup>30</sup> The Museum of African Design, ‘Think Global, Build Social! Architectures for a better world’, <http://www.moadjhb.com/new-page/> (06/08/2017).

Second, when considering the economic dimension, several aspects of MOAD must be taken into consideration, namely its establishment concerning the stakeholders and their motivations, fundraising, job creation and “the development and creation of cultural tourism” (Stylianou-Lambert, 2014: 571). Thus, Liebmann, CEO and founder of Propertuity and the creator of Maboneng, conceptualized MOAD, and Kohn was hired by Liebmann to direct the museum and to turn it into a financially independent institution (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017). The stakeholder’s motivations for creating MOAD can relate to the creation of a neighbourhood that revolves around art. Therefore, considering that Maboneng is a neighbourhood that fits the characteristics of a Creative Cluster, it requires the skills of the Creative Class and the Creative Industries in order to work. Additionally, it is a neighbourhood that Walsh (2013) argues has been curated by Liebmann, which could explain why he conceived the idea of having a museum there in the first place. Yet, Maboneng is operated mainly as a real estate business (Gregory, 2016). Thus, given that Maboneng is a brand associated to the Creative Industries that offers the possibility of networking, the Creative Class orbits towards it. However, Propertuity creates spaces for the Creative Class to rent; yet they hold no stake other than to collect the rent on a monthly basis, which indicates that Propertuity’s business model has a lucrative goal. This is further reflected in terms of MOAD’s fundraising, which was originally done through events. Once Living MOAD had been built and tenants had moved in, events were no longer viable as established in section 2.3.2. However, Living MOAD was built so that the sales of the residential units could finance the project revolving around the museum. Thus, Kohn argues that the residential units were essential towards MOAD’s overall project, as the original restoration of the 1920s building had to happen in order for a museum to be possible inside of that specific building (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017). However, the bottom line remains that after the residential units were built the museum was forced to downsize so significantly that eventually it was not worth staying open, as the benefits were becoming less, and it was not generating an income, which led to a decrease in exhibition quality because of a reduced budget, and decreasing visitor numbers. Thus, this business strategy was not viable because the necessary precautions to make both the museum and the houses work were not thought out properly, and if they were, then they were not implemented (Kohn, Personal

interview, 8 June 2017). Rather, it seems to have been done to make more money out of that building. Moving onto cultural employment, another subcategory that fits inside the economic dimension, when the museum hit a serious financial crisis mid-2015, jobs were lost. The team went from having six full-time employees and one part-time assistant, to having four full-time employees and volunteers on the weekends, budget permitting. Thus, the financial crisis not only prevented job creation, which was something that had been happening up until events were no longer viable, but also put additional pressure onto a smaller team because the museum's quality had to, in theory, be maintained or improved with an uncertain budget. Additionally, although Propertuity helped MOAD financially by paying salaries and financing the building's costs, they were also adding pressure for the museum to become financially independent again. Therefore, the museum was facing internal and external financial pressure. Yet, Propertuity had conceived the museum. On a positive note, however, MOAD became a point of interest for tourists, as Johannesburg saw a rise in tourism after Maboneng was developed, and MOAD was a part of that (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017).

Third, the social dimension considers the local community's wellbeing and the creation of a sense of space, as well as social responsibility, the encouragement of active citizenship, participation and engagement (Stylianou-Lambert, 2014). Moreover, museums must be open to locals and internationals. Again, this dimension is difficult to fulfil in terms of engaging the local community because of MOAD's location and the gentrification of the neighbourhood. However, it must be said that this was perhaps one of the dimensions that the museum put the most effort into. As an example, MOAD made a conscious effort to get out of the museum and to engage the poorer communities in open spaces that were less alien to them (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017). Efforts were also made to engage the schools that were close to the museum. Eventually, school trips from private and public schools would show up unannounced, which was a sign that MOAD was somehow engaging these communities (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017). However, as Rankin (2013) wrote, some people do not see the value in having art institutions or museums because their basic needs have not been met yet. Moreover, some exhibitions required more explanation than others, and due to the budget constraints and already small teams, it was difficult to have personnel available all the time to explain the

exhibitions to visitors. Yet, despite pressing financial issues, the museum tried to hire volunteers to engage and explain the exhibitions to guests during the weekends and remained free of charge so that everyone could have access to MOAD.

The last dimension is the cultural dimension, which considers aspects that touch on preservation, collective memory and artistic stimulation. For instance, museums are responsible for deciding what they will show, and how they will show it, as this plays an important role in terms of how the collective memory or history of a place will be received by future generations. Thus, in Johannesburg institutions tend to focus on showing the apartheid era and events associated to it (Rankin, 2013). Yet, this approach is perceived as being one sided and does not engage wider audiences, or help in the remaking of a cultural identity (Rankin, 2013). MOAD was different from other museums in Johannesburg because instead of focusing on the apartheid only, it served as a platform that enabled artists of different backgrounds to use their voice and to talk about issues that concern them currently, whether these relate to problems that come from the past, or new issues. In Yencken's words:

"When people are preoccupied with burning social issues, racial discrimination, poverty, unemployment, isolation and alienation, we should help them to find creative expression for these concerns because it is likely that this is what is most culturally relevant to them. We should also help them to dignify their local histories, environments and work experiences. And when we create institutions that might help them to do these things, we should not have low expectation." (Yencken, 2013: 7).

The museum showcased a variety of exhibitions that focused on creating awareness around different important topics that touch people's lives in Africa on a daily basis, regardless of their backgrounds. Thus, although MOAD hosted temporary collections, it was through these exhibitions that it could touch on issues of a different nature, such as education, sustainable architecture, political awareness and also continuing issues that stem from the apartheid era. In essence, MOAD understood that African artists and artisans are a dying breed, in the sense that if they do not break into the Western markets, then they are likely to have to change careers. For this reason, it encouraged diversity. By doing so, it

also became a much-needed space where intercultural dialogues were encouraged and opposing visions were married, thus creating a space where different views were made possible within the same space. It was this nature that encouraged and succeeded in creating international pan-African dialogues, and in attracting distinguished artists and designers with African backgrounds back into Africa (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017).

Thus, Johannesburg's origins still play a significant role in current social dynamics. Indeed segregation is no longer legal, yet, in practice the city continues to witness a divide between classes that is generally felt in racial terms (Slater, 2010). Additionally, the government continues to implement policies that only benefit a select group of people, while neglecting others basic needs (Rankin, 2013; Winkler, 2009). This further contributes to a sense of division, and a lack of shared cultural identity. Thus, opposing perspectives are constantly surfacing and causing tensions. This has affected museums and cultural institutions in that they do not know what to preserve and how to show that which they preserve (Rankin, 2013). Yet, these institutions have a social responsibility in the way that they showcase the art, and the relationship they hold with the past, as they are the keepers of tangible and intangible heritage, and therefore hold immense power in passing collective memory onto future generations, as those will relate to the past according to what they have learned and how they have come to learn it. However, in terms of cultural sustainability, Stylianou-Lambert et al. (2014) propose that ideally all aspects of their model should be met in some way. However, MOAD's reality is very different in that many of the dimensions were either partially or completely neglected. As I have argued, there are both internal and external contributing factors to this reality; however, it becomes a difficult task for a museum to survive when it is not culturally sustainable.

#### 4. Chapter Three

In conclusion, when taking everything into account, it becomes clear that Johannesburg, Maboneng and MOAD are related. To break this down further, Johannesburg's history has left some dynamics in place that have an important role in the creation of Maboneng as an area. These, in turn, have had an effect on MOAD not only because of its location, but because the social dynamics that have surfaced due to Johannesburg's past, play a big social role in the way in which people in Johannesburg engage with museums.

Therefore, on a basic level, two observations must be made about Johannesburg. The first is that the city's urban fabric is the direct result of segregation. This means that although segregation is no longer implemented by force, Johannesburg's layout is the result of segregation and, continues to be divided. Proof of this is that low-income households are getting pushed out further into the peripheries or displaced, while the privileged are making their way back into the inner city (Walsh, 2013; Winkler, 2009). Thus, "the way [in which a city is] laid out, affects how people feel about it and that in turn shapes their attitudes, motivations and behaviour." (Landry and Bianchini, 1995: 13). The second is with regards to Johannesburg's social dynamics, which is directly related to people's sense of cultural identity. Thus, due to segregation being implemented right from the city's beginnings, people have based their cultural identities on beliefs they have according to their race, which in Johannesburg's context defines their past. Therefore, while some consider certain historical figures to be an important part of their heritage, others do not. These social dynamics have caused more division to happen in an already divided society. Additionally, this is further reflected in the fact that museums do not know how to represent the opposing views in the same space (Rankin, 2013). Therefore, instead of attempting to marry and reconcile these contending perspectives and contribute towards the creation of a new and shared cultural identity amongst citizens, cultural institutions in Johannesburg have taken the easy route by focusing on exhibiting the apartheid era and the injustices committed (Rankin, 2013). This, however, only contributes towards "forging a sense of shared identity on negatives alone." (Ranking, 2013: 96).

Additionally, policy makers are trying to cut corners and become what they call a 'world-class African city' by implementing policies that have worked in the



global North (Winkler, 2009). However, they have not modified these policies to fit their city's own issues, which has resulted in the frustration of many underprivileged people who feel that the post-apartheid promise has been broken, as their basic needs have not been catered to (Rankin, 2013; Wilhelm-Solomon, 2016). This sentiment further affects museums in general because some people do not see the need for these institutions to exist. Thus, while disadvantaged people find cultural institutions to hold no value because the budget and space could be used to house and feed people, some privileged people do not recognize the value that these institutions hold because the cultural capital associated to their cultural identity is not exhibited (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017; Rankin, 2013).

By the same token, when areas like Maboneng emerge, tension and a failure to marry the needs of both the privileged and disadvantaged happens again. In other words, Maboneng was established on the foundations of gentrification and relies on the Creative Class to push the neighbourhood forward. Thus, financial backers favour gentrification, as it represents lower economical risks than areas that are expensive to redevelop (Yencken, 2013). Additionally, Liebmann realized that art was the way to attract a crowd with disposable income back into the inner city after it had been neglected for over two decades, which is why he got artist William Kentridge on board in the first place (Gregory, 2016). Thus, although Propertyu promote a discourse that encourages an integration of races, the reality is different. Racial integration does not equal class integration. Maboneng has displaced many people in order to be able to establish itself as a creative cluster that has evolved into a fashionable neighbourhood. Therefore, when policy makers and Propertyu argue that gentrification and urban regeneration lead to a decrease in poverty because jobs are created, one must question whether these new jobs are meant to be fulfilled by skilled people, namely the Creative Class, or if unskilled labour can suffice, and if that is the case, whether exploitation in terms of low wages will occur. It is acknowledged, after all, that the Creative Industries can sometimes encourage exploitation (Florida, 2005; Hartley et al., 2013). To sum up, "[m]uch research has gone into examining the negative impacts of the creative class and creative city movements; it has been widely criticised for exacerbating socioeconomic

polarisation, causing displacement and gentrification in cities.” (Hoogendoorn & Gregory, 2016: 411).

In terms of MOAD, different aspects must be considered. To start, Liebmann conceived it. Thus, Propertuity understood the museum as another destination to form part of their creative neighbourhood. Yet, their intention was a lucrative one as Aaron Kohn was hired with the sole purpose of getting the museum to be financially independent (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017). Moreover, although Kohn was one of the museum’s stakeholders, the Museum of African Design was not his idea. This could indicate that although he had a lot at stake, the museum was not his brainchild or a dream of his. Therefore, after trying to keep it open in spite of Propertuity, Kohn eventually gave the fight up. However, MOAD held cultural and social value that Propertuity failed to see. The museum was the first institution of its kind in Africa. It set out to establish an international pan-African dialogue and to engage African designers and artists who had broken into the Western art world to look at South Africa through new eyes; as another possible market. Furthermore, its goal was to create a platform where people of different backgrounds could use their voices to raise awareness through art, irrespective of the medium they chose to use. All this while seeking financial independence. Yet, the museum managed to achieve everything it set out to do in its first year. Thus, MOAD was not only the first museum of its kind in Africa, but also the first museum of its kind in Johannesburg. It served as a space where Johannesburg’s different cultural identities were explored. MOAD had also managed to find and create a balance between people’s different social needs and the institutions financial needs. In other words, MOAD was offering the privileged people experiences they could not get anywhere else, namely having events inside a museum, and at the same time it was using the money it made to gain territory in terms of its cultural sustainability. The museum made constant efforts to engage a broader audience, to remain free and to increase the quality of its exhibitions, while growing the museum’s team. However, the construction of Living MOAD, which was the result of a badly executed business plan, cost the museum everything. Although its decline was gradual, the fact of the matter is that after Living MOAD was built, the museum could no longer focus on becoming more culturally sustainable and providing more engaging experiences to carry on attracting visitors. Instead, it had to focus on figuring out how to

become financially independent again, which stalled the progress it had made in the first year.

Therefore, to rehash, the main research question of this thesis is: Why did the decline and bankruptcy of the Museum of African Design occur, could it have been prevented, and if so, how?

In a nutshell, MOAD went bankrupt because of a badly executed business plan to put residential units on top of the museum. This decline could have been prevented had the necessary measures been taken. By way of explanation, Living MOAD was thought to be the main source of the entire project's economic sustainability. By the entire project I refer to the funding of MOAD's building, and Living MOAD. In practice, however, it turned out to be the opposite precisely because of the poor construction execution, which was the direct result of a lack of clear planning. Had measures been taken to ensure that events, MOAD's main source of income, and good living conditions for the new tenants were met, the museum would still be open today. What happened instead was that events were no longer viable because of noise issues that affected the people living in the new residential units. This caused the museum to lose an important business ally: The March Hare. This loss was significant, as having a space inside the museum to enjoy something to drink was part of the client's overall experience and an important aspect of MOAD's business strategy as MOAD and The March Hare were collaborators. The March Hare also had their own following because they were a café by day and a praised bar by night, which helped attract other people into the museum. More importantly, however, MOAD could never afford to have another café inside the museum, which resulted in a diminished customer experience. Yet, Propertuity also lost financial income after their longest tenant in the bar space, The March Hare, left. To indicate the space's instability, after several months of the bar area standing empty, a potential Jazz bar signed a five-year contract. However, they left before the first year was over although they had done upgrades to the space. It has now been rented by another Jazz bar. While facing increasing financial pressure, MOAD continued to explore other options that could potentially lead the museum back towards financial independence, namely daytime events and design thinking workshops. Both these ideas failed. Daytime events are only successful if they are outside, as people want to enjoy the sun and overlook the CBD, and the workshops were too expensive for people and

companies to afford. Thus, although MOAD was not completely culturally sustainable in its starting days, its economic stability and business alliance with The March Hare allowed it the flexibility it needed to continue expanding each of the cultural dimensions explored in the second part of the analysis. However, as the financial pressure increased and the museum was made smaller, the experience MOAD was able to offer customers decreased, and a lack of interest from the audience followed. This was further reflected in the museum's cultural sustainability, as it lost the progress it has made in the beginning.

Having said all of this, Johannesburg and Maboneng naturally played a role in the museum's decline, in the sense that it is impossible for an institution to operate within a certain context and not be affected at all by it. Yet, they were not the main factors that caused MOAD's closure.

Thus, in terms of Johannesburg, the city's layout and the divided cultural identity that exists represented a difficult challenge in terms of engaging different people and attracting them to MOAD. Yet, it also represented opportunities for MOAD, as other cultural institutions tend to shy away from their responsibility of engaging and marrying people's opposing views (Rankin, 2013). MOAD, however, did use its space to join these opposing views, thus actively contributing towards a changing cultural identity in Johannesburg. Moreover, in an attempt to ensure that everyone could access the museum, it was one of the few museums that made an effort to remain free (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017). Culture consists partly of beliefs, which are constantly evolving and changing (UNESCO 2001 qtd. in Stylianou-Lambert et al. 2014: 568). To blame these beliefs, or the lack of a joined cultural identity, for the museum's closure would be to imply that these things are a constant. Thus, although they are difficult factors and characteristics to overcome, they are a part of Johannesburg's present, and a reflection of the past, which means they need to be embraced and learned from, as opposed to blamed and ignored.

Moreover, being located in a newly gentrified area possibly did not make it any easier for the museum to attract certain communities. However, there are certain indications, such as schools showing up unannounced and the successful efforts that MOAD made to engage people by doing activities outside of the museum, that show that this was changing (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017).

MOAD added significant cultural value to both Maboneng and Johannesburg. In terms of Maboneng, it was the only museum in the neighbourhood, and a tourist attraction (Kohn, Personal interview, 8 June 2017). This also contributed to Johannesburg, as tourism is one of the economy's driving forces. However, MOAD was also actively contributing towards a changing cultural identity that will hopefully become more unified in time, while acting as a platform for artists and encouraging pan-African dialogues. In this order, it must be noted that although Propertuity runs Maboneng, Maboneng in this case, is only a geographical location, whereas Propertuity had the power to actively act on MOAD, which they did. Had Propertuity had a more holistic vision of what MOAD stood for on a social level, and what it represented, maybe better business plans would have been implemented. However, it seems to be a difficult task to ask a company who has purely lucrative goals in mind to balance economic and social aspects, in this case of the Museum of African Design, but also in terms of Maboneng.

Thus, the importance of this research is divided into a few aspects. First, by focusing on the Museum of African Design, the causes behind the institutions decline have shed light on different matters that need to be considered and, hopefully, changed. At a basic level, Propertuity are running a business that has a lucrative end, as opposed to balancing social and economical aspects. This issue has also highlighted certain dynamics concerning urban planning and the implementation of policies that favour the advantaged and neglect the underprivileged. These issues urgently need to be addressed, as they are perpetuating the negative dynamics that have contributed to Johannesburg's overall division: segregation, gentrification and an overall cultural divide in terms of cultural identity. Additionally, there is a lack of research concerning the creative industries in the global South (Gregory, 2016). Yet, strategies used in the global North are being adopted in the global South as solutions to problems that, at their core, are very different to those present in the places where they adopt the strategies from in the first place (Winkler, 2009). In other words, Johannesburg, in an attempt to become a 'world class African city' is implementing strategies that have worked in developed countries without modifying them or taking into consideration the problems that Johannesburg has. Thus, this study seeks, in part, to also show that the problems faced in underdeveloped countries cannot be

fixed by cutting corners and implementing solutions from other countries, where the social dynamics and urban fabric are different at basic levels. Additionally, there is little literature concerning cultural institutions in Johannesburg in general, and there was no literature focusing solely on the Museum of African Design. Now that the museum will no longer exist, it is important to have a record of its achievements and the issues it faced, as it can serve as a reference point for future cultural institutions that emerge in Johannesburg and have to learn how to handle its context in order to survive.

#### **4.1. Recommendations**

This study has dealt with three parallel subjects that have had an effect on each other. Yet, the main object of this research, namely the Museum of African Design, will no longer exist. Therefore, some of the recommendations emerge from dynamics observed that contributed towards the museum's decline, but refer to dynamics seen in broader contexts such as Johannesburg or Maboneng. First, in terms of Johannesburg's society, it is necessary to start focusing on ways of exhibiting and engaging the opposing views that exist amongst people. This can either be useful as a way of merging the various cultural identities that exist into one, or in allowing a new one to develop by embracing and learning from the past. In turn, this could create more empathy between people, which could further contribute to more effective social movements where class and racial integration could occur more naturally. Second, policies need to be considered from multiple angles before being implemented into Johannesburg, especially when done without considering the city's own problems. At the moment, the implementation of policies that look good on paper and that have worked for developed countries is bringing gentrified and unjust consequences to modest and low-income families. The road to achieving a world class African city does not lie in cutting corners and abusing the poor, but rather, in seeking bottom up approaches where the underprivileged are empowered. Additionally, researchers need to also ask where the dispossessed go in Johannesburg, and understand whether they simply move into other abandoned buildings, or if implementing global North strategies does in fact have a positive effect on alleviating poverty. Third, the combination of the experience economy and cultural sustainability seems to offer cultural institutions the independence they need in Johannesburg.

Relying on the government for funding or on stakeholders with lucrative interests is not advisable. Having said that, however, MOAD had a good business plan, in the sense that it had something unique it could offer clients. This made it financially sustainable, and also socially aware, at least in its origins. Thus, if MOAD or any other institution with its same vision were to emerge again, it could use the same business strategy, but consider a different location and remain independent. Museums are fundamental to society, but they can only contribute under the right conditions, thus, it is necessary to create a balance between fulfilling social needs and necessary economic gains.

## 5. Interview Transcript

This interview took place at Hallmark house, a building located in the Maboneng precinct, on June 8, 2017. The interviewer is Pascale Aljure and the interviewee is Aaron Kohn, the director of the Museum of African Design.

Interviewer: Thank you for meeting me.

Interviewee: Of course.

Interviewer: There are a few things that I would like to get your take on. As you know, I worked at MOAD for one year, and my views may be a bit biased and, well, my own. So I would like to add your view on a few matters, as it is important to my thesis. So firstly, I'd like to understand how you landed up at MOAD. Secondly, what is your take on MOAD? As in the evolution of MOAD, and by this I refer not only to the material sense, like all the architectural changes that happened between 2013 and 2017, but also to the dynamics that could have affected MOAD. Where it started, what you had envisioned and where it is now, and why you think all of this happened.

Interviewee: So, I got involved because I had met the developers of the neighbourhood (Propertuity) and was importing African design to the USA. I had some sense of, I think, what was cool in the kind of museums around the world that the developers –who had the idea for MOAD– thought was exciting. So museums that had cool shops, and cafés and were open at night and were more than just white cubes with stuff you cannot touch behind glass. So I was living in New York, and we decided that I would spend 18 months trying to get the thing (MOAD) to pay its own bills, and that was how I came out here basically. The projects had already been earmarked by them, from the day that they bought the building...

Interviewer: By Propertuity...?

Interviewee: Yes, so they bought the building in 2011, and called it the Museum of African Design for two and a half years before it officially opened. Made the logo. Different galleries had pop up exhibitions. There was a movie activation, like make your own home-movie thing that was very successful, and in that sense it was the right time, as there were many people in Cape Town especially who were interested in Johannesburg and needed a place to have a pop up exhibition, or an event and that's kind of what it was. And in 2013 they started to develop the



project and the plans for the development were sort of in place by the time I got here, but I was here to sort of see it all happen. There was one massive concert with 2Chainz the day before construction started and the next day they started clearing things out, building walls so that part of the floor space could be used for the studio apartments next door...

Interviewer: For living MOAD? Oh so living MOAD was also sort of conceived from the beginning?

Interviewee: Yeah... the wall where the scaffolding ramp used to be...?

Interviewer: Yeah?

Interviewee: That used to go another 8 meters back and that's where the apartments are now.

Interviewer: OK.

Interviewee: And then the big floor was laid in the newer part of the building to create a parking lot below, and yeah, I mean, in a purely sort of planning perspective it's a lot more complicated than it would seem to take an industrial building and repurpose it purely for visitors and events... you need the basics like toilets and entry points for people who are disabled, but because you are also suddenly bringing a lot more people into a building that was designed purely for big machines and storage and a handful of people it means creating fire exits and ... yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, I suppose making sure that the facilities and the safety regulations are all complied with.

Interviewee: The parking has to be self-contained from a fire perspective from the rest of the building...

Interviewer: In terms of living MOAD, when they actually built it on top of the museum, can you tell me from your perspective about the repercussions, do you feel it was a good move? Or could it have been planned better? What is your take on it?

Interviewee: I mean the apartments enabled the financing for everything else to happen on the construction... I mean there is no way... I mean I think the whole project so far has cost 14 or 15 million rand, that cannot be justified just over the museum's rentals... so selling apartments, which is something that a lot of museums are doing, including the new Zeitz museum in Cape Town, is a really smart move, but all of the planning happened without any definition of what kind

of business plan would take place at the museum... so the events that brought in revenue, also there were never thoughts about sound proofing or how many fire escapes were built to figure out how many people were allowed in at a time, the heating and air-conditioning... we never really defined what the temperature requirements were for the art or for events... and so the apartments were built without thinking of the repercussions from sound in the museum but also about the repercussions for services for the apartments: plumbing, electrical work, building in the ceiling, and sort of damaging parts of the building in the process all had creative limits on what could be right below.

Interviewer: Interesting... one of the first revenues of the museum were events, and that was very successful... so, as you just explained you needed the apartments, but just like they brought a good side, they brought negative aspects too. One of the biggest problems caused to the museum was the loss of the events revenue, right?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: So in terms of that loss, do you think it could have been prevented?

Interviewee: Yeah. I think there are really expensive ways to mitigate that problem. Would you ever be able to soundproof something perfectly? No. But someone could also make the argument that events is a very trendy thing... like for the year and a half that the museum was booked pretty regularly, Maboneng was also hitting a tipping point in Johannesburg... so maybe... and I am just playing devil's advocate here... but maybe if we had spent a lot of money on sound proofing in the end nothing would have come of it, or it would have died out in the end... the nature of events is that people always like something that's new and undiscovered. This neighbourhood at the time... I mean it's still under the radar... but there could easily be something else. I mean all the events have moved elsewhere since then.

Interviewer: Do you feel like Maboneng is no longer as popular?

Interviewee: It's still popular, but the kind of regular visitors know that there are issues like traffic and events in the evening during the week. There is terrible traffic in Johannesburg between 16h00 and 19h00 and the way that the city is laid out, it is pretty divisive. If you live like on the East side of town it's easier to get to (Maboneng), than if you live in the North, or the West, or the South. So, I mean a lot of people have suggested that the museum move to the Northern suburbs

where a lot of businesses and sort of new suburbs have been developed. So yeah. A lot of different factors.

Interviewer: Do you know how many buildings Propertuity has at the moment?

Interviewee: it's on the website, it's not private information... but I think it's about 50 in Maboneng.

Interviewer: Are they still trying to develop the place so that people can work live and play?

Interviewee: Yeah, and I think there are people who work, live and play to an extent. There are a lot of different types of office spaces, from super kind of commercial spaces across the street here, to manufacturing spaces and loft-esque kind of designer spaces.

Interviewer: Do you think it's a creative hub?

Interviewee: I don't know. I think the creative hub in Johannesburg moves around a lot, it's often the first to go to a place but also the first to move onto the next place... but yeah, I mean these are the kinds of spaces that anywhere in the world that Creative Class gravitates towards. Big, cheap, urban warehouses and pretty spaces that maybe other people are not willing yet to move to or to play with. I mean William Kentridge has just bought at least another two other new studios in Maboneng, spaces that were up for sale, and yeah...

Interviewer: Do you think that Maboneng is the product of gentrification?

Interviewee: Yeah of course it is. I mean, I don't think the gentrification topic is inevitable and it doesn't have to be a solely bad thing, but to just... I mean a city of this size should have a lot more gentrification going on... than what it does have. There are other places in town that if you are a student you may feel compelled to move into and then leave once you are sort of a young professional. Because it is one of the few places that a much broader demographic can move to live and work in, and with all that will come business and will come jobs... and these 50 buildings are just like a tiny piece of what's in the city at large.

Interviewer: OK. But in terms of gentrification, if you gentrify areas, do you think that you are in a way enabling the local people to find jobs that the entrepreneurs and the gentrified areas bring in, or do you think that those are the people who get displaced and then basically jobs just move around from one fashionable area to a new fashionable area. And I mean this simply in your perspective concerning Maboneng, obviously not in an urban planning scheme.

Interviewee: Well I don't know (laughs). I mean... next to this building are affordable rent control houses that are run by other companies and provide services, and those building aren't going anywhere... so I think that the people who are likely to get displaced are either squatting or have terrible sort of thieving landlords who are waiting to take a deal to sell a building, or the real owner is going to come back and try to sort things out... and yeah... that is a sort of grey residential area, and it's a large portion of what's going on... but, increasing the number of buildings where services are controlled and numbers are up to date with the city, and people have access to water and electricity and security, I think can only be a good thing... I mean the city and the community have to deal with the lack of safe housing and the lack of affordable housing... each one of these buildings has retail on the ground floor and a lot of the businesses that are here are hiring entry level positions from people who live in the area, but yeah, at the same time, City Deep is two kilometres away, and thousands of people work there everyday and walk through this neighbourhood everyday and don't stop or don't feel welcome, and that's really a challenge. They probably commuted from Soweto or Alexandra even before they got here...

Interviewer: Circling back to the museum, you said that you guys are closing down at the end of July. What does closing down mean, do you know what the future holds, if there is a future... are you literally going to shut own, or maybe be an online space? Maybe re-open in the northern suburbs like you said some people suggested? Have you got a plan?

Interviewee: No. I think it means it's all over. I would say everything. There are still exhibitions that are offered by various organizations and they might find, via us, local homes at the local universities or museum's. But I think that's kind of the long-term plan.

Interviewer: Do you think that MOAD played an important role in Maboneng and Johannesburg?

Interviewee: Yeah. I think it played a number of important roles. At the most basic level there wasn't a design space for exploring or discussing design, whether that's fashion, architecture, industrial design... and a lot of talks and workshops and exhibitions have been presented in that space. Having the University of Johannesburg take a long term lease in half of the space is sort of proof that that came full circle in a sense, but museum's also play a big part of tourism, and in the

last 4 years, the same time that MOAD has been around, tourism in Johannesburg has grown, and we know that a lot of our visitors are international visitors to Johannesburg who wouldn't normally have stopped off here... they would go straight to Safari, or Cape town, or somewhere else in the region, and having one more offering here and a sort of anchor point in the neighbourhood is a sort of destination in its own right... and to an extent, being able to push the discussion about museum's as a destination in Johannesburg generally, I think, has helped support the Wits Art Museum, the Standard Bank Gallery, the Johannesburg Art Gallery, just in growing interest, and hopefully visitors who came to MOAD and had a good experience, and live in the area or have subscribed to the newsletter, started to see what else was going on in the area, and that's why the bar, the events, some of our own stuff has been really important in changing the perception of what it really means to visit a museum, to support a museum... yeah, be comfortable with that idea. And then, the last thing, which is more about the pan-African idea of the museum, as a destination for artists and designers and leaders from other parts of the continent to have a place to exhibit in Johannesburg, or a place to do a residency, both the neighbourhood and the museum have played a role in facilitating a lot of cultural exchange that wasn't happening, and I think that those kind of trade roots are changing in a bigger picture so designers and artists from other parts of the continent, who would normally go to New York or London or Paris are seeing South Africa as another option, another market, another place to practice and to work.

Interviewer: So basically you find that in its most essential way it contributed to the new national identity that SA is trying to build seeing that we have only been a democracy for the past twenty odd years...

Interviewee: Yeah, I mean, I don't know about South Africa specifically, but there is a developmental role in being able to be a platform for preserving and sharing what is going on and whether that is in South Africa or Lagos or Nairobi, having that infrastructure locally and not just overseas is important. And there are plenty other spaces that have jumped on the bandwagon for that, so I don't sort of feel that MOAD closing down is closing the doors to any of that.

Interviewer: Certainly, it did serve as a platform and opened many other doors. Is there anything you would like to add?

Interviewee: The only other thing that sort of got lost in the mix, which is important, is how do you define an audience in a place like this? Because it's a free museum which I think is important...

Interviewer: Yes, thank you for bringing that up. Why is it a free museum? What was the intention behind that?

Interviewee: There really shouldn't be any barrier to entry for people who cannot afford it, or even people who can but wouldn't feel like it's something they need to do ... and on a larger discussion, most museum's that do charge an entry fee don't find this to be a very intricate part of where they make money. It usually costs them more to account for ticket sales, and hire people to sell tickets than what they end up making at the end of it, so ideas to campaign around our own neighbourhood and the surrounding areas was sort of the next step. Like how do we actually integrate the people living in a two-kilometre radius to feel welcome in this sort of old notion of a museum?

Interviewer: You held a few workshops and events for underprivileged kids that were quite successful weren't they? Was that an initiative you wanted to keep doing, or what is the story behind that?

Interviewee: I don't think there are very many museum educators in South Africa and that is one of the needs, without a doubt, is sort of more interpretation and education specialists who can help define what an experience for a school group is, how does it plug into the national curriculum, so that teachers feel like they have a reason to come to a museum. How do you tick all the right boxes so that students can get something out of the experience and yeah... There have always been trials or ongoing experiments to have a full time education program but it takes a lot of work, and just sort of doing it half way is never successful. Google got involved at one point, Mercedes Benz paid for students to come at another point, but, yeah, the idea of having a field trip curriculum is a much bigger problem in the area, but it's good that there are now schools popping up in the area for young kids, and they know that they have access to the space and often show up as a class without really any warning, and they keep doing that, so it seems to be a space that they are interested in.

Interviewer: Did the underprivileged population, at any given point, interact with MOAD, or was it always the same crowd that visits Maboneng?

Interviewee: I don't know. I mean from time to time we have done things outdoors and definitely gone out of our way to go out of the space, and that is always interesting, but I think you are probably right in that the majority of the people living very close to the museum don't even realise that it's free, that it's intended for everyone, that they can get something out of it even if they cannot follow the English writing or the curatorial theme, they will get a visual sense, or something... I don't know what I am saying...

Interviewer: In general terms and in my perspective, and I am not sure whether you agree or disagree with me, but I find that people in Europe or the USA seem to be more interested in arts and culture and their national identities, than South Africans are, and that is something that concerns me, because I am obviously an arts student, and very passionate about it, and find it to be a great educational platform, so do you feel like this is the case in South Africa?

Interviewee: Yeah, I mean to an extent that is the case, the way that the national institutions are sort of beleaguered and not supported very well... has an onward effect that affects the whole of society, but I don't think that in many places of the world the general population cares much about arts and culture in a real meaningful way. It's the kind of projects and visitors that go to the big museums in London, New York, wherever, that paint a disproportionate picture of what the reality is like in rural America or rural parts of the UK or Europe... but to the extent that in those places it's more practiced to like go to the museum as a kid or more normal to socialize at an event that happens on a cultural level, because there are more of those happening, that's different. But would 50 Dutch people be able to talk about great Dutch painters of the mid-twentieth century? I don't now if they would do any better than South Africans, but yes, it's a good question.

Interviewer: Ok, well thank you for your time. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Interviewee: No. Thank you.

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