A contemporary designer's insight into traditional African art: Exploring the role played by indigenous art and artefacts in contemporary South African design

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By

Buchanan Zwelibanzi Damba

Student Number: 198086091

Supervisor: Prof Nic Theo

Cape Town

DECLARATION

I, Buchanan Zwelibanzi Damba, declare that the contents of this dissertation/thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the dissertation/thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Signed

12 November 2020

Date

ABSTRACT

This study explores contemporary South African graphic designers' awareness and use of indigenous African cultural traditions and knowledge systems (especially South African) in their design thinking and practice. The basic question addressed concerns the extent to which design challenges are currently being solved by sourcing inspiration and solutions from indigenous art and artefacts.

Stephen Biko's Black Consciousness philosophy reveals the potential of post-colonial and post-apartheid South Africa by identifying the preconditions for genuine equality. The study takes its cue from this to propose a transformative outlook that is accommodative of all the many and various cultural codes available in South Africa.

The research process of coding qualitative data led to the emergence of four categories: colonialism and Western influence in South African design, embracing South African cultures for identity growth, slow transformation, and the notion that South African design history is unknown. Each of these was examined in terms of inspiration, practice, globalisation, progress and Africa. Inspiration refers to the sources on which contemporary graphic designers draw, practice deals with the incorporation in design applications of traditional cultural and indigenous knowledge systems; globalisation covers the influence of technology and world relations on South African graphic design, progress refers to the post-apartheid transformation of the country, and finally, Africa covers the graphic designer's knowledge and definition of what African art and artefacts actually comprise.

Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory approach is adopted for this research since it explores questions of both 'what' and 'how' in respect of a phenomenon or occurrence. The method proceeds without preconceptions to formulate generalisations from the data gathered. Qualitative data was assembled through interviews with a sample of graphic designers. The research established that graphic designers in South Africa are currently working towards a culture of inclusivity with positive acceptance of South African indigenous cultural and knowledge systems. Given the persisting global dominance of a European Modernist design aesthetic, this process of transformation is bedevilled by neo-colonial resistance, ignorance, and lack of confidence.

These obstacles are addressed through the paradigm of Biko's Black Consciousness, which is as pertinent today as it was in the 1970s. The vision informing the study as a whole is of a graphic design industry that is fully inclusive of all the cultural codes and traditions woven into South Africa's once fractured history and society.

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TITLE EXPLANITORY ANALYSIS

• **Contemporary graphic designer South Africa** – Graphic designers actively practicing post 1994.

• **African art and artefacts** – Creative works of paintings, scultures, murals, fashion and crafts like beads, curtlery, furniture, functional products made by indigenous Africans and in the African continent before and during the colonial years in the continent.

1. Background and purpose

It becomes more necessary to see the truth as it is if you realize that the only vehicle for change are these people who have lost their personality.

—Steve Biko (1978)

Black consciousness is the inspiration for my approach to this research. Stephen Bantu Biko's black consciousness movement stood for a South Africa that had neither a dominating nor a dominated population, only people. In order to achieve this in the context of apartheid and the legacy of colonialism, black consciousness aimed to inspire black people to recognise value in themselves and their community, with the aspiration of shaping a collective will on the economic and political fronts (Hill, 2005).

Pride in one's heritage, community and self is central to what black consciousness pursues in order to enable change in the social and political spheres (Hill, 2005). Biko used to make reference to a future "open society" in which, according to Fergusson (1996), white and black South Africans would stand side by side and maintain a social and political order to which everybody contributed equally. Black consciousness stood for the qualities of people, both individually and collectively, and in their right to use their talents as a unified group.

If South African graphic designers could adopt this approach in their practice, an approach in which South African cultural diversity plays an appropriate inspirational role in creativity, aesthetics and communication, they might begin to develop a design identity reflective of the complexity and flavour of the multitude of influences enabled by that diversity.

1.1 Background of the study

According to Helfand (2004), graphic design is everywhere and in every tangible thing. She argues that the value of graphic design inheres in its versatile ability to emerge from words, numbers, illustrations, photographs and symbols. Bringing clear thinking and organisation to bear on these elements in a way that creates meaning can be useful, fun, scary and hugely rewarding.

Elements and principles of design refer to matters such as line, form, shape, colour, value, texture, space, unity, balance, proportion and repetition. These make up the basic knowledge and analytical framework that designers use to complete their work or project (Tersiisky & Eames, 2004).

It is necessary for a visual communicator/designer to learn about these design principles in order to convey a message in an effective and appropriate way (Bulduk, 2010). Bulduk (2010) suggests that visual communicators can improve their skills of design expression through being reflexively aware of what they are seeing or observing and reflecting it in their work.

Ching and Hsieh (2014) maintain that design study should encourage students to recognise their local culture and explore meanings residual in their own cultural codes and symbols, thereby enhancing their identity. Cultural codes are systems of words, letters, figures or symbols with a particular meaning unique to a specific group of people or culture. These codes govern the sharing or exchange of information among people belonging to the specific culture, while serving to keep that information from being known by people outside of the culture (Hyatt and Simons, 1999).

For example, Wickler and Seibt (1995) note that the indigenous cultural artefacts and practices of the Nguni peoples (people of Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele and Swazi heritage), such as beadwork, were used to communicate information about a family's economic status, social relationships and age groups. Beadwork served as a marker of identity, in the same way that flags and badges do in the West (Wickler & Seibt, 1995). When cultural codes like this are coupled with design principles, they can help to develop creative ideas and shape the visualisation of design concepts.

The symbolic artefacts of a particular culture influence the outcomes of a specific design process through instilling into the logic or pattern of the design specific algorithms or protocols; that is to say, they communicate via the interpretation of certain cultural values (Cleveland, 2010). For example, the cultural meaning of colour in beadwork in the Msinga area, KwaZulu Natal (Wickler & Seibt, 1995), is codified in a comparative way by Gross (2015) in Table 1, below.

TABLE 1 – Colour and meaning

COLOUR	AFRICAN (MSINGA AREA)	WESTERN
WHITE	Love, spiritual, purity happiness and truth	Purity, simplicity, innocence and minimalism
BLACK	Evil, misfortune, sorrow	Sophisticated, formal, luxurious and sorrow
RED	Strong emotion, longing and passion of the heart	Danger, passion, excitement and energy
YELLOW	Garden or gossip (light yellow)	Optimistic, cheerful, playful and happy
PINK	Poverty (lover's inability to pay lobola)	Feminine, sentimental, romantic and exciting
GREEN	Virginity and young age	Natural, vitality, prestige and wealth
BLUE	Fidelity and faithfulness	Communicative, trustworthy, calming and depressed

According to Buchanan (2001), design shapes how we plan or perform actions and service human processes in life. It is especially significant in cultural life, informing the creation of artefacts and communication that make it easy to exchange ideas and information.

In Figure 1, on the next page, Oosthuizen (1993) proposes that design comprises process, outcome and facilitator. Design is both visible and invisible; it evolves from and is usually a response to a question or problem.

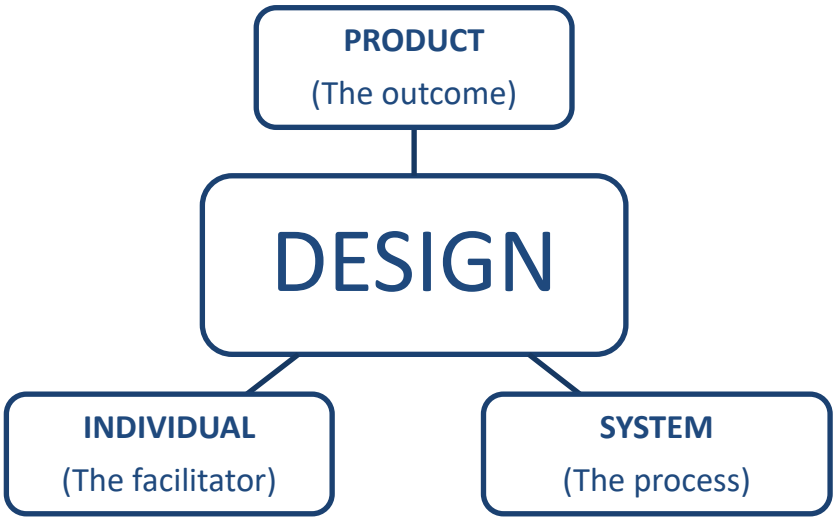


Figure 1. Design diagram

In summary, personal interests, values and experiences inform designers' work, from choice of subject matter to methodological approaches and conclusions (Fallan & Lees-Maffei, 2015). These sources are themselves shaped and made meaningful by specific cultural codes.

It is through the perspectives adumbrated above that the study will seek to establish how differences in culture influence the identity of South African graphic design, and how tapping into previously unacknowledged cultural codes might give a designer a competitive edge.

1.2 Statement of research problem

The basic tenet of black consciousness is that the black man must reject all value systems that seek to make him a foreigner in the country of his birth and reduce his basic human dignity.

—Steve Biko (1978)

Contemporary South African graphic design rarely reflects a non-colonial or transformed, post-apartheid aesthetic (Economou, 2003b). It can be argued that San rock art marks the beginning of graphic design in South Africa, considering that it existed years before Europeans settled in the country. Yet imported European technologies of print and communication have come to dominate indigenous forms of oral literature, performance, festival and image (Pretorius, 2015).

Carey (2011) observes that Africans had their own alphabets for communication, which they quickly let go with the introduction of European alphabets. He goes on to say that some of these symbols have survived and can still be seen in Ndebele art and decoration.
The arrival of missionaries in Africa made a massive contribution towards the erasing of indigenous culture (Frescura, 2015). Frescura (2015) points out that while some missionaries settled in the country for spiritual reasons, most settled for material advantage and psychological security. But for whatever reason, they set rules against indigenous beliefs, customs and ancestral practices, such a lobola (bride price), polygamy, beer drinking and so on, ignorant of the reasons behind these practices.

After centuries of colonialism, South Africa still seems unable to integrate its diverse cultures, continuing to promote colonial and imperial forms of communication and making half-hearted gestures at decolonisation. Sauthoff (2004) concurs that South African graphic design still aligns itself with Western paradigms, while arguing that it is important for South African graphic design to be accommodative of all viewpoints to widen its scope and allow other cultural codes to develop and influence the design outlook in the country.

South Africa has a unique and distinct design language in its indigenous cultural artefacts and practice, which is not widely incorporated in its contemporary graphic design look, feel and thought process. This resistance to change encourages the endurance of colonial and apartheid legacies of separation and oppression, and meaning making continues to be dominated by white/European visual codes. It does not seem currently known why this domination persists. Another way of putting this is to say that there appears to be little understanding of what indigenous cultural forms are available for contemporary graphic artists to draw upon, to what extent they do draw upon these, or even whether such a project of restoring cultural continuity is at all feasible.

1.3 Aim of the research

This research aims to explore the existing field of knowledge about what sources of inspiration contemporary South African graphic designers draw upon, with a focus on the possible ways in which these designers might refer to or incorporate indigenous African designs, artefacts or processes into their design and design thinking.

The study does not aim to approach the subject from a didactic perspective, but rather seeks to establish some understanding of what is known and what is possible in its field of enquiry. For example, it seeks to explore ways in which the design foundation (tertiary education) exerts influence on the professional field of design; that is, how certain codes and values are perpetuated by education. The aim in this regard is to ascertain whether and how indigenous cultural codes might be incorporated into design education at university level, in such a way as to have a bearing on professional practice.

1.4 Research questions

1. What artefacts and design practices do South African contemporary designers draw inspiration from?
2. How do contemporary South African designers incorporate or refer to indigenous, traditional African art and artefacts?
3. How has technology and globalisation influenced design in South Africa?
4. What importance do South African designers ascribe to post-colonial transformation, and what do they think it means?
5. What do designers think is traditional African design/art/ craft?

1.5 Challenges

Practical

It was a challenge to make contact with designers across the country for this project, because of time and economic constraints. Data was therefore collected in Cape Town and Johannesburg, on the assumption that those cities (together with Durban) are where the study would most likely find a culturally diverse (urban, cosmopolitan) sample of graphic designers. The data collection process was likely to be more convenient if one could reach designers from different backgrounds and cultural histories in one area.

Theoretical

Since there are no institutions that solely concentrate on South African design history, the absence of historical documentation poses a challenge to authenticating the meaning of traditional artefacts. Knowledge of indigenous art and artefacts was not properly recorded, and colonialism destroyed and exported some of the original works. Most of the conceptual meaning associated with the originators' artefacts has therefore been lost, with the exception of a few traces of surviving or recovered information. The absence of reliable reference material was clearly a considerable challenge for this research to face. It is inevitable that some traditional design had to be considered simply *as design*, shown of its original cultural import.

1.6 Significance of this research

The significance of the research lies in what it can add to knowledge about culture and design practices, knowledge that might inform the greater representation of African antiquity and indigenous practice in South African design.

Indigenous knowledge systems can contribute to an understanding of design principles and solutions of the past, which can help meet current and future challenges in visual communication. Such knowledge will presumably bring graphic design professionals closer to consumers in resolving design issues. It also affords South Africa the opportunity to export a unique perspective on the field.

The incorporation of all indigenous knowledge systems in South African graphic design would present the country with opportunities for transformation and cultural equality, in place of the current domination of Western trends and practices.

1.7 Summary

Chapter one brought attention to the relevance of a 1960's movement of Black Consciousness in today's contemporary graphic design practice and inspiration. It highlights that design principles cross across different cultural codes, which could serve as an advantage for South Africa's diverse cultural backgrounds. Whereas the problem statement lead the research to an investigation of what indigenous knowledge practice do contemporary graphic designers use, how they draw inspiration from it and the effects of transformation given South African history of apartheid and separation.

2. Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review summarises the current state of South African design with regard to the people, the practice and the process, insofar as these are applicable to concerns about indigenous cultural representation. The study necessarily considers in some detail the impact of colonialism and apartheid on contemporary South African design. The question of whether technology has a positive or negative influence in design is also considered. The influence of indigenous art and artefacts or crafts in modern contemporary design, locally and internationally, is explored, as well as the question of how the conversation about transformation has been received in the country's realm of design. Lastly this section reviews what problematic gaps in knowledge remain and what scholars think should be done to address them.

2.1.1 Graphic design / visual communication

Pettersson (2015) views graphic design as an undertaking and outcome of art and craft exposing the functional, aesthetic and organised construction of different kinds of text and illustration. Lee and Qadeer (2015) regard the identity of graphic design as twofold: as part of the greater body of art (fine art), and as the attractive surface of trade and mass production.

Graphic design concerns itself with consonance in the display of information (International Design Foundation, 2019). According to Economou (2003a) it sets the relevant stage for the presentation of information by incorporating aspects such as art direction, information technology, typography, page layouts, and many more creative media or platforms. These qualities make graphic design profitable.

The International Design Foundation (2019) asserts that even though image/graphic communication is an ancient proficiency, dating back to 17 000 year-old cave paintings and past Egyptian hieroglyphs, it only gained its identity and reputation as graphic design during the print industry in the 1920s, through the creation of logo designs, marketing images and copywriting. The field has subsequently evolved along with technology. For instance, competition in the emerging industry intensified with the introduction of bright colours and attractive packaging at the end of the Second World War (Ambrose & Harris, 2009).

At the centre of graphic design lies the concept of visual communication (Economou, 2003a). A visual communication medium is specially created to convey certain ideas and messages to its audiences via a combination of images, symbols and text (Zhao, Cao & Lau, 2018). It is in the context of visual communication that Chmela-Jones (2011) argues that graphic designers in the 21st century prioritise the consumer experience. At the same time, Chmela-Jones (2011) advocates a socially responsible design industry that is not propelled solely by the motive of commercial gain.

Concerning social responsibility, Bichler and Beier (2016) question graphic design's (visual communication) contribution in the realm of activism, but not in the sense of protest posters like that of the 1980s against the apartheid government, as shown in Figure 2, on the next page. Activism is seen here as an intervention or involvement on the part of visual communication, not for commercial purposes, but sincerely to bring about social change, raise awareness of good principles and moral codes, as well as aid people to cope with their everyday life challenges. Graphic design is generally not considered when a conversation about activism occurs, at least not in the same light as product design and architecture (Bichler & Beier, 2016). Graphic design has been perceived as a tool, rather than as an actual product of activism. Hence, visual communication is recognised for its persuasive abilities rather than its ability to inform. It may be argued that graphic design's artefacts play a role by placing it in the space of social activity. Unfortunately, these artefacts have usually served to propel a client's message, and graphic design rarely takes responsibility for the content of that message. Bichler and Beier (2016) claim that even when a design house or agency wins awards for pro-bono work or social responsibility, it is usually driven by mercenary factors, since winning awards leads to more clients and more business.

Figure 2. An activism poster of protest against the apartheid government.

(*'One Year of United Action' UDF, 1984 cited by Pretorius, 2015:302)*

Bichler and Beier (2016) point out that even campaigns that aim to spoof bigger companies in the name of raising social consciousness are usually not independent of the design codes associated with the main clients that they are imitating. They argue that such activist campaigns should be independent from the conceptual stage through to execution, and propelled only by the intention of being informative about social ills, pursuing educational goals or empowering consumers.

There have been some cases of pure design activism, where the intention was to inform and educate in the interest of the consumer: for example, campaigns that consider the culture of consumers and provide cues to help them get themselves through complex situations (Figure 3 on the following page). Some of these activist solutions were not so by intention, but nonetheless served consumers by providing them with choices instead of persuading them in one direction only. Visual communication should be governed by an ethical system requiring designers to be mindful that their work is not merely about the client's agenda or an individual's personal views, but also has a vital role to play on behalf of the reader's or consumer's interests (Bichler & Beier, 2016).

Figure 3. A use of visual communication for a human cause (an example of activism)

(National Geographic magazine, 2018)

Bennett (2006) proposes that graphic design adopt a multi-stranded strategy, because in past years design was informed by intuition in developing ideas to induce responses from consumers. But the current and future outlook of graphic design/visual communication seems to be involving research as well as people's experiences in its decision-making. The new graphic design research has identified five aspects or, considered temporally, phases:

Intuition in design is the aspect mostly concerned with aesthetics and talent. It is the facet of a design that measures its success, sometimes winning competitions and awards merely because of a look and feel rather than content. It is a side of design that unfortunately perpetuates the thinking that designers do not read or write.

The **visionary perspective** sees designers getting more involved in the content. Designers now realise that it is an advantage to involve the audience for whom they are designing.

Design inquiry encourages the collaboration of designers with their audience in solving problems, rather than just guessing or relying on instinct. This is advantageous in the sense that it protects all parties involved. Consumers are protected by the fact that the design decisions do not come exclusively from an elite group that cannot relate to their problems.

Design culture comes about as a product of globalisation. Designers realise that the world is multicultural and therefore it is always best to familiarise themselves to achieve a maximum outcome. By involving the consumer, designers alleviate the pressure of creating the correct cultural aesthetic.

Human-centred design, then, is the chapter of design that concerns itself with human rights, behaviours, experiences and tendencies. Through this type of design, designers get to understand who they are communicating to and boost the outcome of the communication process.

Benson (2007) points out another aspect or phase for the new graphic design research, **Sustainable graphic design**. For which (Benson, 2007) defines as the means to measure up economic needs while conserving the biological and ecosystems by using renewable, recylable and reusable material.

Benson (2007) draws attention to the point that graphic design education would contribute greatly in speeding up an environmental awareness, and getting Graphic designers to question the importance of using tangible presentations versus digital ones. The negative footprint of paper creation from wood pulp, which requires extinction of forests and waste of water. As well as inks made from petroleum products and high usage of water as well. **Sustainable graphic design**, motivates respect and care for the community, and improvement of the quality of life and minimize the depletion of non-renewable resource (Benson, 2007).

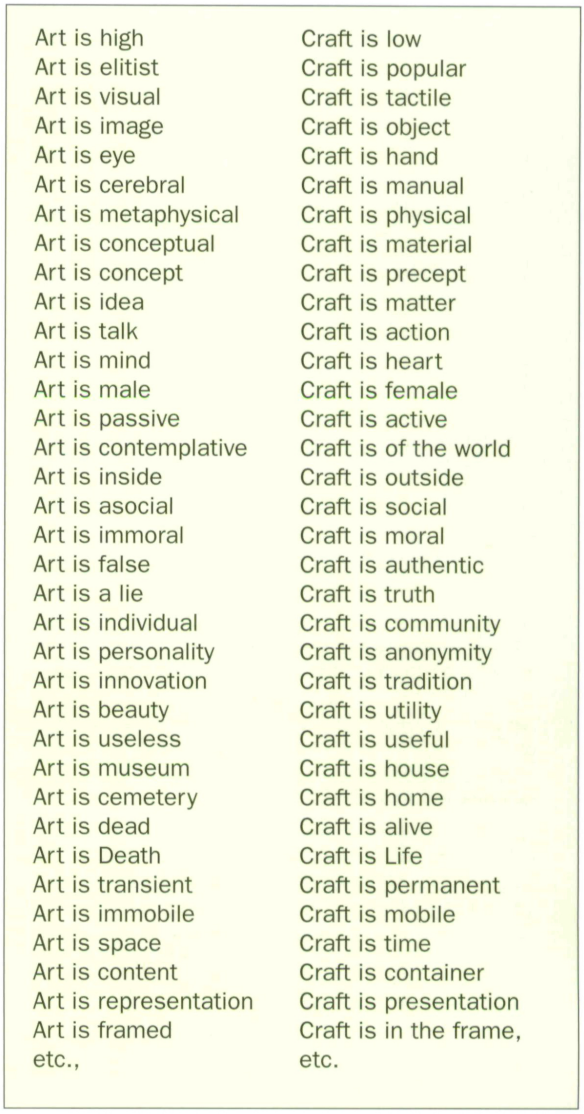
All things considered, design should be both intuitive and research-driven, for the sake of both the designer and the consumer (Bennett, 2006).

Chmela-Jones (2011) agrees that twenty-first century designers need to consider the experience of the consumer first in embracing a more socially responsible approach (Chmela-Jones, 2011). As much as money is important in the success of a business, social responsibility should be a primary motivating factor.

2.1.2 Art and craft

Moses (2018) finds it difficult to explain what craft is compared to art, but commits to saying that craft is usually three-dimensional, has the potential to be functional, and is mostly made from glass, ceramic, wood, fibre and metal materials. Most people perceive it as handiwork that requires skill, often a hobby of some kind (Moses, 2018). According to Moses (2013), it has actually become irrelevant to distinguish between art and craft in today's world. Art is seen as satisfactory to sight, making sight the most virtuous sense, superior to smell, taste and touch (Moses, 2013). Yet craft can offer a multi-sensory beauty and satisfaction. Moses argues that craft's ability to satisfy the sense of touch is essential and can be seen in how modern society constantly interacts with gadgets like phones and touch screen devices.

Courts (2010:10) notes that art is limited to spaces of practice while craft is available wherever there are skillful hands. Mathieu (2000) agrees that art is confined to the wall, galleries and museums, while the same cannot be said about craft. Art is found in craft but craft cannot always be found in art (Mathieu, 2000). Craft has always been relegated to a background role in comparison to art, compelling craft to associate with art for general recognition (Mathieu, 2000). Yet Mathieu (2000) argues for craft to forge its own respect and acceptance because conceptually craft is as different from art as painting is from photography. Craft is typically handmade and defined by traditions of function and ritual (Mathieu, 2000). The following conceptual table (Figure 4) broadens the distinctions made above.



Art is high	Craft is low
Art is elitist	Craft is popular
Art is visual	Craft is tactile
Art is image	Craft is object
Art is eye	Craft is hand
Art is cerebral	Craft is manual
Art is metaphysical	Craft is physical
Art is conceptual	Craft is material
Art is concept	Craft is precept
Art is idea	Craft is matter
Art is talk	Craft is action
Art is mind	Craft is heart
Art is male	Craft is female
Art is passive	Craft is active
Art is contemplative	Craft is of the world
Art is inside	Craft is outside
Art is asocial	Craft is social
Art is immoral	Craft is moral
Art is false	Craft is authentic
Art is a lie	Craft is truth
Art is individual	Craft is community
Art is personality	Craft is anonymity
Art is innovation	Craft is tradition
Art is beauty	Craft is utility
Art is useless	Craft is useful
Art is museum	Craft is house
Art is cemetery	Craft is home
Art is dead	Craft is alive
Art is Death	Craft is Life
Art is transient	Craft is permanent
Art is immobile	Craft is mobile
Art is space	Craft is time
Art is content	Craft is container
Art is representation	Craft is presentation
Art is framed	Craft is in the frame,
etc.,	etc.

Figure 4. Differences between art and craft (Mathieu, 2016:76)

2.1.3 History of design in South Africa

Graphic design seems never to have had a clear sight of its past in order to be able to cultivate its own history. Even though other disciplines like fashion, architecture and jewellery have managed to archive their history in the past, graphic design has not (Triggs, 2011). Instead, graphic design history has always been relayed through studies of art, typography and printing, rather than through a history of problem solving through visual communication (see Bichler and Beier [2016], as cited in paragraph 2.1.1, above). Triggs (2011) proposes that graphic design be seen as a tool for social and economic development rather than a succession of material and objects only, because of the fact that a narrative of graphic design history has always proved elusive. He suggests that this is mainly because of the difficulty in determining a starting point for graphic design history in cultures where oral-based traditions were and are the rationale behind the methods of communication. Fortunately visual communication's capacity for being diagrammatic helps enable an understanding of a subject searching for its past to be able to plot its future (Triggs, 2011).

Pretorius (2015) embraces the idea that the non-existence of a postgraduate qualification in design history in South Africa affords an opportunity to create a historical perspective based on rich elements of indigenous cultures and design. Pretorius (2015) argues that in order to understand the past, design historians need to follow a path of a future where design is a contemporary practice not only for the professional elite but also for a diverse body of designers who are not professional. This would mean a history not limited to the study of industrially mass-produced artefacts made for mass consumption, but one that acknowledges other practices such as (traditional) arts and crafts. The expansive complexity and diversity of the continent of Africa, with its uneven levels of economic and industrial development will broaden the field, and free design history from the unintended self-snare of exclusive concern with an activity associated with the industrialised, affluent West (Pretorius, 2015). Carey (2011) similarly insists that the inclusion of indigenous art practices and systems is important for the formulation of an authentic Southern African history of graphic design.

The following images portray examples of cultural murals and the design concepts embedded in these artefacts.

Figure 5. Urban community mural wall (Marschall, 2002:40)

a) Mural art deserves attention

Urban and rural murals are similar in that they are both representative of the community, whether their purpose is to decorate or spread a message of communication visually. These murals are mostly conceptual in their portrayal of ethnic clichés through symbolism and figurativism (Figure 5 above). Yet they seem to be flexible and adaptable (Marschall, 2002).

b) Pedi mural art

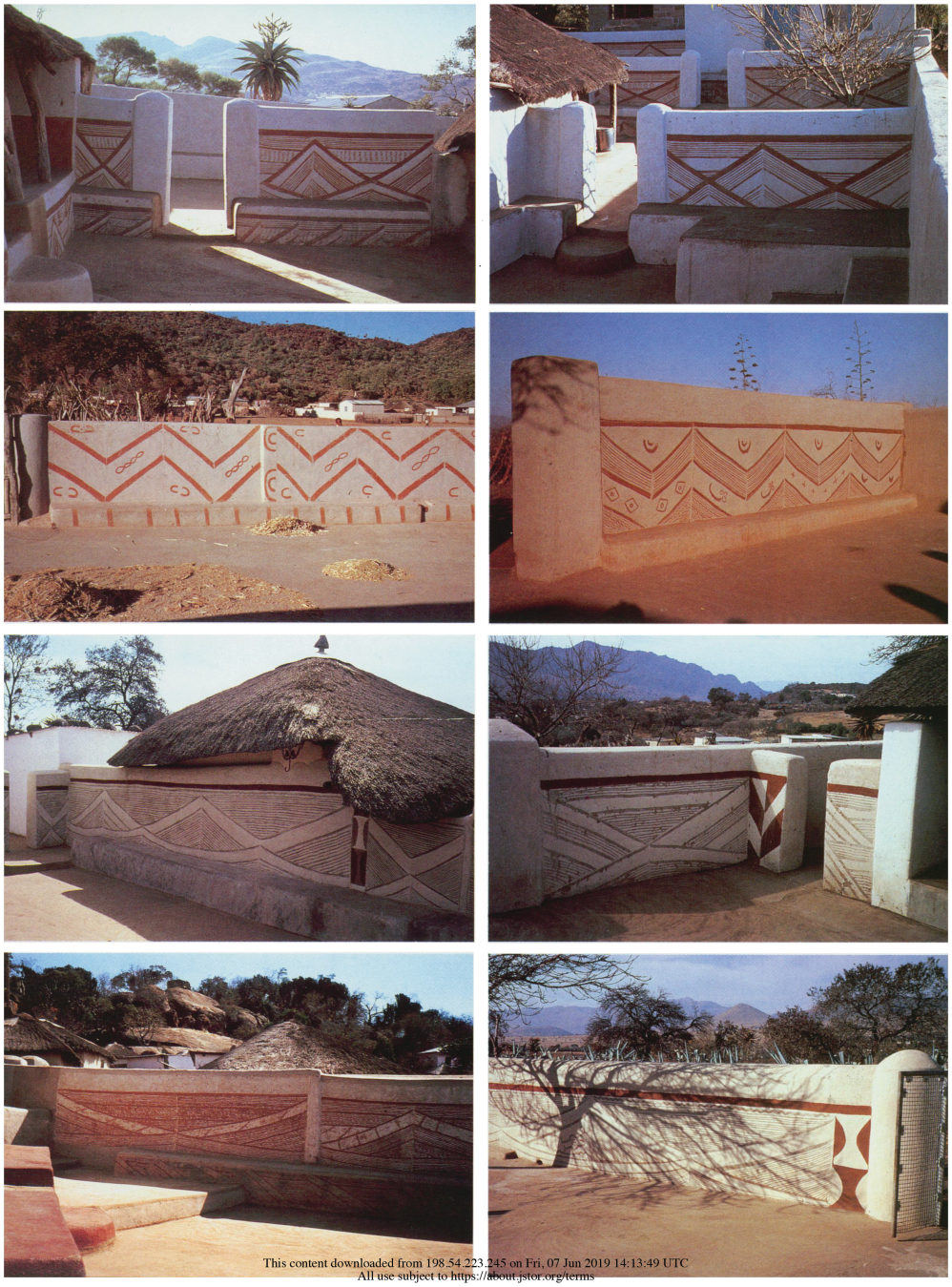


Figure 6 (Vogel, 1985: 79)

The Bapedi people of South Africa do not create murals just to beautify their homes as shown on Figure 6. These murals also serve as a technology to identify and distinguish one area from another. The murals are also decorated so as to show the women's point of view and interests and have a close relationship to items of their clothing well. The women's dress codes, such as the length of their skirts (Figure 7 & 8, next page), communicate different stages in life (e.g. pre-initiated or fertile and ready for marriage).

In terms of patterns, the leopard skin is a very rare animal skin to wear, symbolising strength and dedicated to royalty (see some examples of the variety of patterns, below).

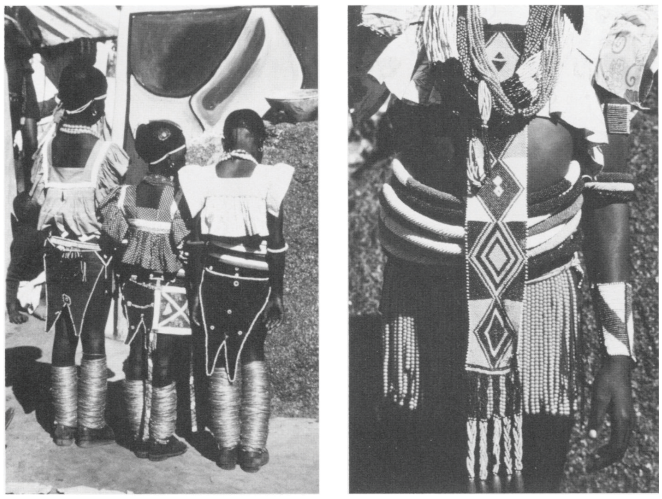


Figure 7. Rear view of pre-initiates (left) and the beaded neckband 'Ditolo' (Vogel, 1985:81)

Figure 8. Women in traditional dress, holding replica weapons. (Vogel, 1985:83)

c) Mural art of Basotho women

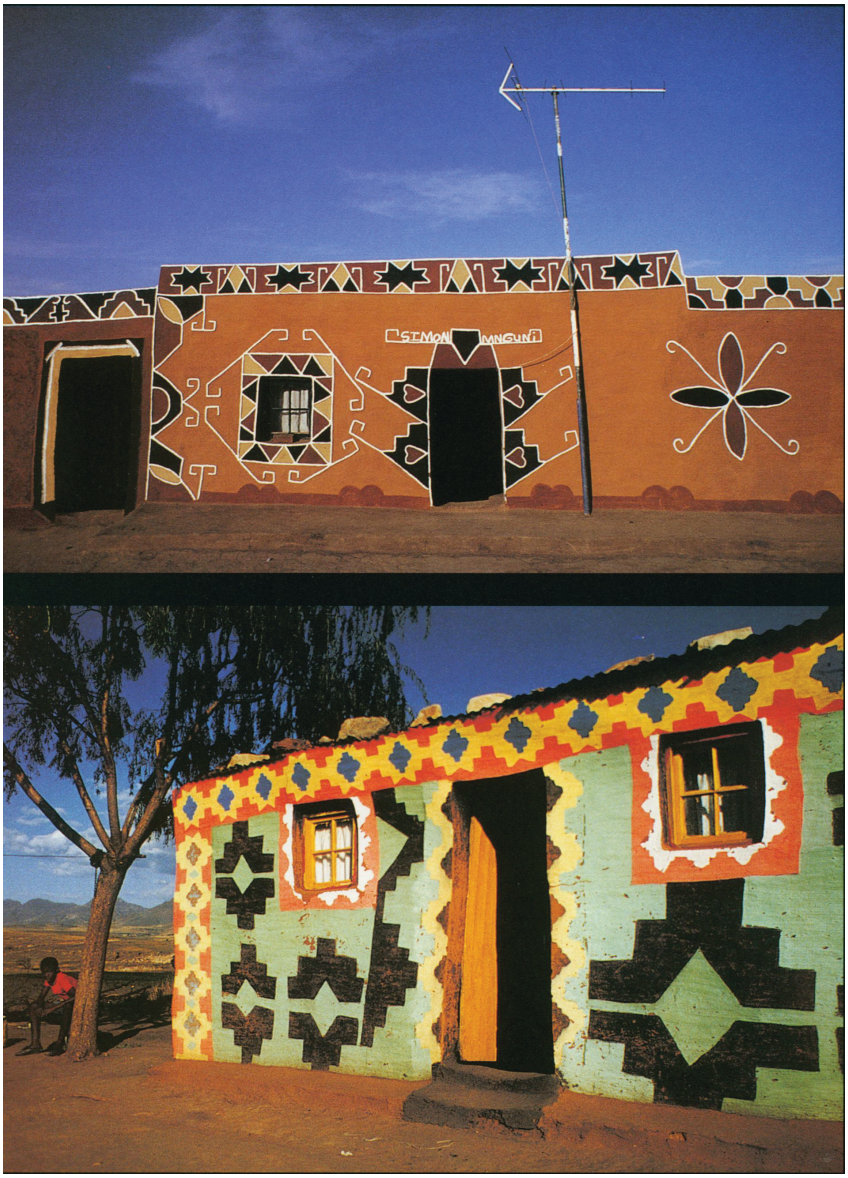


Figure 9. Painted Basotho homes (Vanwyk, 1998:62).

Basotho murals (Figure 9) are painted not only for decoration but also for communication with the ancestors, mainly pleading for rainfall. Colour choices are meaning-bearing: for example, **red (known as letsoku)** means fertility, lifeblood, sacrificial and menstrual blood; **white** stands for spiritual purity, calm and enlightenment, while **black** invokes the ancestors and dark rain clouds. The experience of drought in the Free State convinced the Basotho that it was a sign of the ancestors' grief and anger because white people had forcefully removed them from their dwellings. Some no longer painted murals to communicate with and sacrifice to the ancestors. Some of today's artwork includes Christian symbols, indicating the extent of that religion's influence in the communities (Van Wyk, 1998).

d) Venda court arts

Figure 10. Woodcarvings of doors. (Nettleton, 1989b: 75)

Venda relief carvings on wooden doors (as shown in Figure 10) and drums were similarly not only decorative but also communicative. They made use of symbolism to communicate meaning and shared understandings among the people. Alas, the introduction of Western institutions displaced the meanings and functions of these materials, to the extent that they are now seen solely as artwork (Nettleton, 1989b).

e) Township art: context, form and meaning

Figure 11. (Verstraete, 1989:163)

Township art came about without any cross-cultural collaboration (Figure 11). In so doing it expressed how alone and out of touch with themselves black people were. The art highlighted the two traditions and heritages that black people were trapped in, existing in an environment of urban culture away from the homelands where another part of their culture exists. Township art also reflected the realities of hardship and poverty the artists endured in their habitat (Verstraete, 1989).

Huppatz (2015) accepts that globalising history develops beyond the scientific and technological achievements of the West, remaining open to other advances and disciplines. An investigation of how design objects are utilised in various contexts, including new executions, themes or categories, can add to existing comprehension of the field (Huppatz, 2015). Crucial to this is the understanding that globalising design history is not a singular project: it serves as a tool for association across cultures, and it mostly shows an appreciation of diverse design cultures in the world as equivalent to or matching that of the West.

On the other hand, Selby Mvusi, an exiled South African artist, has claimed that it is useless to study the past in terms of art as it holds no relevance to the present (Magaziner, 2014). He believes that it is impossible to define Africa since it is perpetually in a process of self-definition, and men and women have the right to define their own reality.

Zara (2013) claims that design in South Africa is as young as its freedom, whereas parts of the world like Europe and America have been participants in the global design field for a long time. This actually puts them at a disadvantage in terms of design and innovation, because there is a huge chance of their work being too predictable due to a lack of diversity in the culture – unlike that which South Africa boasts.

On the other hand, Coetzee (1999) submits that colonialism has made it impossible to ignore European history when dealing with architectural history in South Africa. Even though there are settlements that do not reflect a Eurocentric approach and practice – like the Bantwane settlement at Kwarriela Agte – Eurocentrism seems to be sustained in the favouring and elevation of European architecture, which legitimises social differences and class hierarchies (Coetzee, 1999). Coetzee argues that the study of European architectural history is nevertheless necessary, as it will provide accounts of how the present day came about over time. These considerations suggest that architecture in South Africa is influenced by both African and European history, and it thus makes sense to allow our interests to be shaped by both African and European design influences.

The late 19th and early 20th century, missionaries' writing represent South African black people as artless and contributing nothing in the visual communication realm (Nettleton, 1989a). Nettleton (1989a) claims that this is mainly because they judged South African artists against the aesthetic benchmarks of European art and its definitions.

The European missionaries focused on the aesthetic rather than the functional, going so far as to declare the Nguni people of South Africa primitive fighters rather than creators. In turn they crowned the Batswana as having an artistic edge over the Nguni people, failing to realise that South African black cultures have a past firmly placed in the timeline of visual communication history (Nettleton, 1989a).

The inclusion of all cultural codes has long been overdue in South Africa (Berger, 2007). Yet design educational institutions' efforts to attract students have been very slow in affecting the shortage of diversity among professional designers. Berger (2007) proposes that 'multiculturism' (a culture that aims to understand instead of condemning, one that embraces diversity instead of resisting it) should be central in the education system of South Africa. Furthermore, South Africa's indigenous (meaning originating or occurring naturally in South African history) culture is at risk of being lost if it continues to be ignored. Berger (2007) suggests that we should plant a seed for a new culture while granting respect to what was, with the wisdom to move towards a more African approach.

2.1.4 Design, culture and technology

Oosthuizen (1993) argues that design is a carrier of culture, noting that South African design currently accords prominence to Western rather than African values. Pretorius (2015) asserts to the notion that South African graphic design has been influenced since the 18th century by colonial literature, art, and other forms of communication in popular culture. When it comes to the global market, South Africa's success is dependent in part on having a competitive edge or a unique aesthetic appeal, and this can only be achieved if all the cultures of the country are embraced (Oosthuizen, 1993). Oosthuizen (1993) contends that apartheid kept the white population in isolation, resulting in their not being influenced by South African indigenous cultures. Consequently, the South African fraternity of design has not been integrated, which has undermined world trade opportunities. He further explains that South Africa should not try to emulate the West, because South Africa's advantage for economic growth lies in its being Afrocentric rather than Eurocentric.

In Table 2, Oosthuizen (1993) summarises his interpretation of the differences between Africa and the West

TABLE 2– Difference between Africa and the West

AFRICA	WEST
Land	Technology
Warm Climate	Cold Climate
Process	Outcome

According to Harrison (2005), colonialism had a negative impact on the development of indigenous creativity. Pre-colonial communities did not consider indigenous makers of functional products artists. These makers nevertheless showed great innovative and problem-solving abilities: for instance, potters could transform soft clay into hard ceramic with heat, and the objects they made served the function of bringing communities together (Harrison, 2005). African masks were created to serve a more significant purpose than that of simply being looked at as art. They played an important role in various ceremonies, with their design making it easy to identify the type of ceremony taking place, while also serving as a tool of communication with the ancestors (Bagby, 2004). Bagby (2004) argues that it is important to know that masks are not meant to be exalted in isolation from movement, music and sound. Colonisers reduced the value of these objects by not recognising or appreciating their functions, and rather viewing them as nothing more than art/artefacts, which they used for decorating walls in their houses.

It would serve South Africa greatly to recognise the significance of crafts' ability to capture and carry a culture, owing to the fact that they incorporate indigenous materials in their creation (Gower, 2012). Crafts have the potential to enlighten design scholars about the history of and distinctions among the diverse cultures that exist within South Africa. The capacity of craftsmen to convert natural materials into artefacts to serve a unique human need or perform a function in resolving a human problem makes crafts and craftsmen significant in any community.

Rowe (2011) concurs that in terms of communication, traditional and cultural values are carried through artefacts, thus making it is easier to distinguish an African artefact from an Asian one, or an Asian one from a European one. Graphic design serves as an essential instrument of interpretation and communication through its ability to use signs and symbols as a means of communication and expression, even though technology and globalisation has shifted the way that design conveys messages and information.

The divisions among South Africans mean that their respective cultural experiences of the country were and still are different (Sutherland, 2004). One of the major problems caused by this is that most black designers have no role models who are influenced by the use of indigenous art and artefacts – so much so, that in black communities design is still not seen as a sustainable career choice by a majority.

South Africans tend to see crafts as basic artisanal work instead of professional design. Even though the country is internationally known as a leader in "slow design" (a movement fusing design and crafts to create diversity and pluralism), the notion of combining design and crafts is still difficult for South Africans to accept (Simanowitz, 2016), especially because of the extent to which technology and industrialisation have taken over. Figure 12 being the exception of this combination of craft and technology.

Figure 12. Image depicting Laduma's fashion line (Maxhosa) inspired by Xhosa people's patterns and beadwork and other crafts (Kdanielles Media, 2018)

According to Sutherland (2004), design in South Africa was redefined by technology, and technology's introduction into graphic design is the reason why there are questions like "where are the black designers?". The engineering of qualifications in apartheid South Africa made sure that only white people got the education required to keep up with change in the global world. Black people were subjected to a lower standard of education (Bantu education), which kept them away from opportunities that could empower them, including access to art/design education.

Sutherland (2004) claims that in the early 1980s institutions like Peninsula Technikon and ML Sultan Technikon offered design courses to disadvantaged communities, but these were somewhat basic due to a lack of funds. This then limited students' access to new forms of technology. When computers were introduced into the field of design, most entry-level design jobs were taken over by the machines, leaving many less qualified black designers stranded and unable to contribute to the creative field of design.

In the 1980s most institutions were forced to admit "previously disadvantaged" students based on potential rather than merit, because they came from educational backgrounds that never provided them with opportunities to explore their talents.

Simanowitz (2016) notes that economic and other sanctions during apartheid limited South Africa's engagement with the global world. Originality and independence in thinking and approach were thus indirectly encouraged. But because of apartheid, South African citizens were segregated, with whites embracing and enforcing a European culture and most Africans maintaining some of their indigenous culture. Simanowitz (2016) suggests that this situation showed in the approach of mainstream South African design, as it was mainly industrial, and engineering orientated. The production of swimming pool cleaners and camping equipment were evidence of a country more concerned with catering for a minority market of whites and ignoring the large population of black people, since most black people had no homes with swimming pools in the apartheid era.

2.1.5 Transformation of South African design

Sauthoff (2004) asks whether graphic design in South Africa has made any worthy strides in its development since 1994. He recognises the need for an exclusive look and feel in South African graphic design and deplores how South African designers tend to identify with international design solutions, instead of appreciating what is happening locally. He also claims that a unique design identity in South Africa is slowly being expressed in some works. Zara (2013) indicates that at first there was a lack of acceptance of different ideas abroad, but that in recent years there have been hints of a breakthrough as South Africans keep sending their distinctive design language, look and feel out to the world.

An exhibition called "After the Thrill is Gone" in September/October, 2016, brought together fourteen artists who began their careers after the end of apartheid. If the 1994 elections marked the transition toward a new South Africa, the exhibition exposed how South Africa continues to embrace colonial and apartheid legacies (Hennlich, 2016). Hennlich (2016) argues that fashion has the ability to prophesy what each season brings or what is to come, and in this way it has the power to craft the future and transform design. But instead fashion perpetuates the old as new, making it essentially circular in South Africa, exposing the supposed novelty of post-apartheid as untrue.

Michaelis School of Art (2014) describes an experimental, non-commercial design magazine called *i-Jusi* (juice), published in 1995 by graphic designer Garth Walker from an agency called Orange Juice. The magazine encouraged a design language rooted in South African experience, with the question of what being African looks like in design at its core. Even though the magazine had input from both South African and international designers, it dealt with themes associated with the discourse of representation and identity in South Africa, especially regarding graphic design (typography, illustrations, writing and photography). Pretorius (2015) argues that the magazine contributed to bringing South African design into the mainstream because of its multi-racial South African visual language, even though a predominately white male canon of South African designers had already been established. Efforts to achieve greater racial inclusiveness remain essential.

According to *Presentations…* (2004), an initiative of the government in South Africa to monitor and assist in the process of transforming the advertising and marketing industry, current/recent design institutions are making good strides in producing designers from previously disadvantaged backgrounds.

But the fact remains that the design industry cannot be “transformed” while the number of black students choosing design as a career remains so low**.** *Presentations…* (2004) believes that real transformation will happen not through big firms hiring black designers, but through black designers starting small businesses and contributing to the South African creative space.

Kurlansky (1992) argues that design in South Africa has always been seen as an all-white area of special knowledge, while black people have mainly chosen art, music, sport, dance and theatre as forms of expression. They have tended to see design as an economic, political and social system that excluded them, as a result of the notion of design as controlled creativity (Kurlansky, 1992). Hence Moys (2004) agrees that graphic design is a form of cultural production with challenges and long debates in its practice. Kurlansky (1992) suggests mounting a design-based initiative to:

- *Attract investment*
- *Improve export products’ quality and saleability*
- *Promote harmony across cultures*
- *Upgrade living conditions and job opportunities.*

Kurlansky (1992) reminds us that South Africa would not be the first country to rebuild: Italy is the world leader in fashion because of design, Germany did it in Industrial design and technology, while Japan – which serves as a great example to South Africa by incorporating European and American styles – also rebuilt through design in companies like Sony, Toyota, Sharp and Panasonic. The proposal is for South Africa to shift its cultural orientation to explore an African visual field, and thus emerge with a competitive edge (Oosthuizen, 1993).

Harrison (2005) challenges us to imagine how Africa would be if colonialism had not happened. He assumes there would at least be ownership of the creative process, and a unique solution to problems based on an indigenous cultural background (Figure 13 on the next page).

Figure 13. Thabo Makhetha, a South African designer who uses the indigenous Basotho blanket for her design solutions (Kdanielles Media, 2018)

2.2 Summary

The review has showcased debates around the process of transformation, which some feel is slowly taking place, while others point to a reluctance to embrace it. The literature indicates that modern South African design has to adjust its approach if it is to compete in the global arena and makes a strong case for reference to indigenous art and artefacts. The literature shows that there is a great need for original thinking and uniqueness when it comes to design and innovation in South Africa.

That there remains a gap in how South Africans relate to each other's cultures is what inspired this study's research into the sources of South African designers' ideas and concepts.

"In time we shall be in a position to bestow on South Africa the greatest possible gift – a more human face"

– Steve Biko, (1978)

3. Methodology

Introduction

This chapter gives an account of the research methods used to conduct this study. It describes the focus of the research, the procedures and instruments for data collection, the research design, and sampling and data analysis.

This research is framed within the **constructivist-interpretative** epistemological paradigm, which has its roots in twentieth century phenomenology. It aims to give an account of the domain of human experience by suggesting that reality is socially constructed. Research in this area depends on the participants' views of the situation under investigation, recognising the importance of their background and experience, and relying on **qualitative** data collection methods and analysis (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

In the context of the experiential emphasis of the qualitative method, it seems appropriate to quote Biko again in support of the choice of theoretical framework and methods of analysis, bearing in mind that this research seeks to explore the inspiration behind design ideas from all South African designers, regardless of race or historical background. As well as give clarity to the detail that the concept or philosophy of black consciousness is for a union of all South Africans participating harmoniously without prejudice.

> "*The revolutionary sees his task as liberation not only of the oppressed but also of the oppressor. Happiness can never truly exist in a state of tension*.
>
> – Steve Biko, (1976)

3.1 Theoretical Framework

3.1.1 Critical constructivism

Constructivism is a theory that emerged in psychology in the early 1920s and that sought to explain how people acquire knowledge and learn. It phrases humans as actively constructing knowledge in specific ways in their own subjective and inter-subjective realities (Hershberg et al., 2014). It is argued that the empathy that it embodies means that when this theory is practised in research, it has the potential to reduce oppression, broaden dialogues around human compassion, increase cultural sensitivities and pave the way for continued collaborative action, with the aim of creating more viable futures.

Critical constructivist theory is the specific choice for this study, because it proposes that there is no knowledge without interpretation, and that interpretation is culturally and contextually specific and tied to histories and inter-subjective group experiences (Steinberg et al., 2014). The following points are crucial:

- ***Point 1***. *Critical constructivism is grounded in constructivism. Constructivism asserts that nothing represents a neutral perspective—nothing exists before consciousness shapes it into something perceptible.*
- ***Point 2***. *Knowledge of the world is an interpretation produced by people who are a part of that world. Thus, understanding the nature of interpretation is essential.*
- ***Point 3***. *Interpretations cannot be separated from the interpreter's location in the web of reality —one's interpretive facility involves understanding how historical, indigenous, social, cultural, economic and political contexts construct our perspectives on the world, self and other.*
- ***Point 4***. *The 'critical' in critical constructivism comes from critical theory and its concern with extending a human's consciousness of herself as a social being—critical theory promotes self-reflection in relation to social power, and its ability to align our self-perceptions and world views with the interests of dominant powers.*

This study adopts a constructivist model known as the 5Es, originated by Karplus & Their (1967), according to *Enquiry, the learning cycle* (1996). This is a model that creates meaning via an individual's existing knowledge and background recurrently measures or evaluates their comprehension of an idea. The 5Es refers the phases of exchange, the name of each phase starting with the letter 'E': Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate.

Engage: The 5Es process starts with the "engage" activity, which is when one becomes involved in the process of learning about a situation through prior knowledge, experience and meanings.

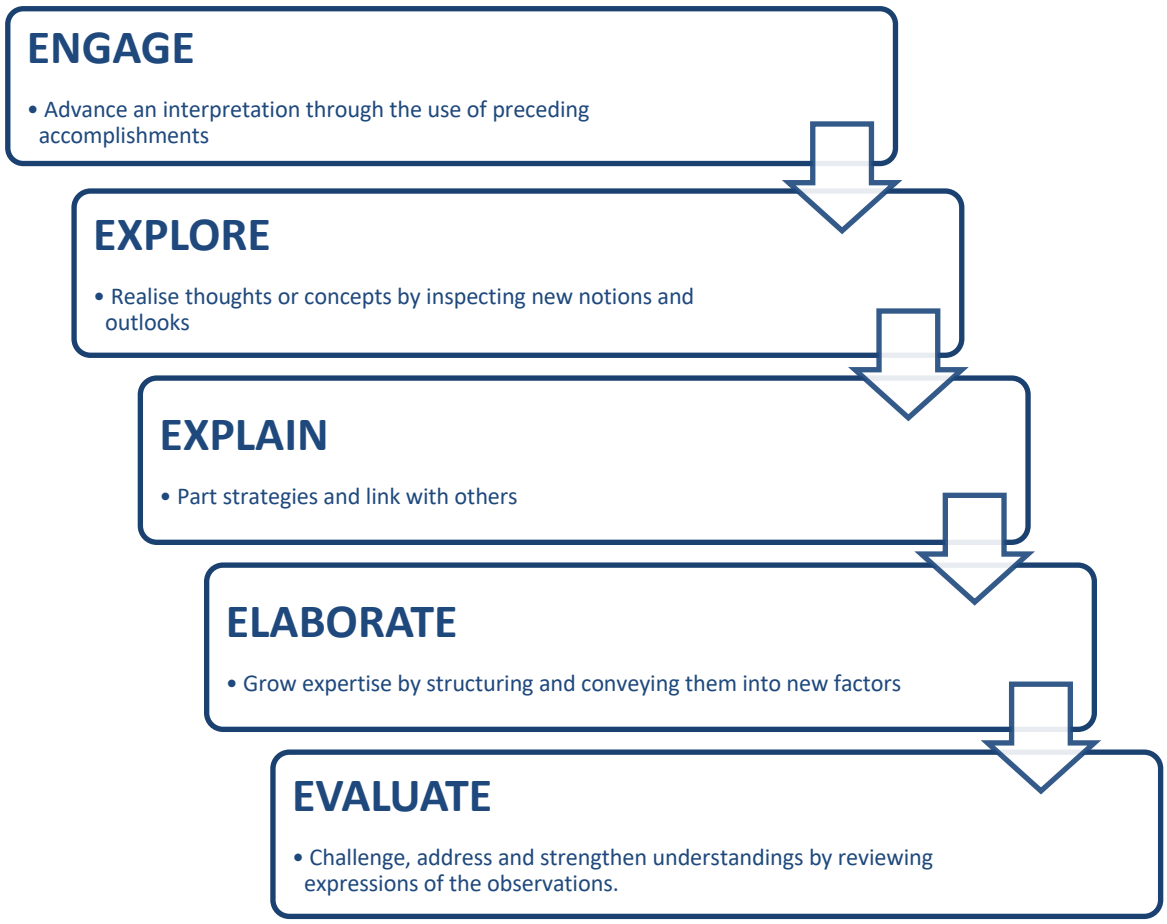
Explore: The process of familiarising oneself with an experience through questions, experiments and observations.

Explain: One describes one's understanding of concepts, experiences, and acquired skills from both learnt and earlier knowledge.

Elaborate: This stage involves the development of a detailed concept from the experience of a new situation or circumstance, using prior knowledge as well as knowledge newly acquired from observation.

Evaluate: The last of the five is to formulate an idea, then to measure this idea or current comprehension against where one was before the new experience, observation or lesson.

FIGURE 14



3.2 Research Design

This research proceeds according to the principles of qualitative grounded theory. Wilig (2013) defines grounded theory as a method that allows researchers to move from data to theory, thus providing for the emergence of new theories. Such theories are 'grounded' in the data from which they emerge, rather than relying on analytical constructs, categories or variables from pre-existing theories. Grounded theory is a research tool which enables one to seek out and conceptualise the latent social patterns and structures of the area of interest through the process of constant comparison (Scott, 2009).

The purpose of a grounded theory research design in this context is to develop, without preconceptions, a theory to make sense of how a number of individuals experience the process of graphic design (Creswell, 2006). This is an appropriate approach for this study because the research explores both 'what' and 'how' questions (Creswell, 2006) that can only legitimately be asked through an open-minded inquiry without the sort of preconception often built into other analytic lenses. This study attempts to know '**What artefacts and design practices do South African contemporary designers draw inspiration from?**' and '**How do contemporary South African designers incorporate or refer to indigenous traditional African art and artefacts?**'

3.2.1 Types of grounded theory

Grounded theory made a methodological mark by providing explicit guidelines for theorising from data, from the original contributions by Barney Glaser, Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin to the recent major statements by Clarke and Kathy Charmaz. This has resulted in a clear conceptual split (Charmaz, 2012):

(Objectivist) Glaser, Strauss and Corbin – The grounded theory method assumes an external reality independent of the observer, a neutral observer, and the discovery of data.

(Constructivist) Clarke and Charmaz – Grounded theory assumes that social reality is multiple, processual, and constructed. It takes the researcher's position, privileges, perspective, and interactions into account as an inherent part of the research reality.

Table 3, below, displays the dichotomy between objectivist and constructivist grounded theory approaches (Charmaz & Bryant, 2012).

TABLE 3 – Dichotomy between objective and constructivist grounded theory

Objectivist Grounded Theory	Constructivist Grounded Theory
Assumes an external reality	Assumes multiple realities
Assumes discovery of data	Assumes mutual construction of data
Assumes conceptualisation emerges from data	Assumes researcher constructs categorisations
Views representation of data as unproblematic	Views representation of data as problematic, relativistic, situational, and partial
Assumes the neutrality, passivity, and authourity of the observer	Assumes the observer's values, priorities, positions, and actions affect views
Views data analysis as an objective process	Acknowledges subjectivities in data analysis, recognises co-construction of data, engages in reflexivity
Gives priority to researcher's view	Seeks participants' views and voices as integral to the analysis
Aims to achieve context-free generalisation	Views generalisations as partial, conditonal, and situated in time, space, positions, action, and interactions
Focuses on developing abstractions	Focuses on constructing interpretation
Aims for parsimonious explanation	Aims for interpretive understanding

With reference to the contrasts between objectivist and constructivist grounded theory displayed above, this study will follow a constructivist grounded theory option.

3.2.2 Reasons for choice of method

Constructivist grounded theory looks to comprehend the differences among research participants as well as to formulate meaning with them (O'Connor, n.d.).
In constructivist grounded theory, both the research process and the studied domain are seen as socially constructed through actions that are to a degree determined by historical and social conditions; it is a method that offers new theoretical insights developed by engaging with epistemological issues, and so providing more sophisticated accounts of induction and deduction (Charmaz & Bryant, 2012). Charmaz and Bryant (2012) call attention to the vital role of the researcher in developing a dialogue between themselves and the data, from which codes and categories and eventually grounded theory should result.

Mills et al. (2006) concur that our sense of truth and view of the world in general are influenced by our history and cultural context. Realities are socially constructed in the mind, and there are as many constructions as there are individuals.

3.2.3 Population

Litt (2012) suggests that a population is the entire collection of entities one seeks to understand or about which one seeks to draw an inference. Fritz and Morgan (2012) argue that even though identifying a population of interest is an important step in designing the sample, there is no single straightforward answer regarding how large a sample (a non-biased selection of participants representative of an entire population) should be to represent an entire population of interest.

The eligibility criteria or sampling frame in this study are that the participants, both men and women, have to:

- be South African citizens
- work in the design and advertising industry.

The participants in this research are therefore all South African citizens of different ages, gender, race and experience (refer to the table 4 below). Even though interviews where conducted in both Johannesburg and Cape Town, the participants themselves come (where born and raised) from different parts or provinces of the country. Eastern Cape, Western Cape, North West, Gauteng and Kwazulu Natal.

TABLE 4 – Demographic of participants

PARTICIPANTS	AGE GROUP	GENDER	RACE	EXPERIENCE
AM	MID 20s	MALE	BLACK	2 YEARS
JC	EARLY 40s	FEMALE	COLOURED	25 YEARS
ML	LATE 30s	MALE	BLACK	18 YEARS
EG	MID 40s	FEMALE	WHITE	30 YEARS
EQ	EARLY 20s	MALE	BLACK	2 YEARS
BM	LATE 30s	FEMALE	BLACK	18 YEARS

3.3 Sampling

Theoretical sampling was used for the selection of participants in this research. According to van den Hoonaard (2012), theoretical sampling is a tool that allows the researcher to generate theoretical insights by drawing comparisons among samples of data. Corbin and Strauss (2012) assert that theoretical sampling is about discovering relevant concepts and their properties and dimensions. They describe a theoretical sampling researcher as like a detective, following the leads of the concepts, never quite certain where they will lead, but always open to what might be uncovered.

Theoretical sampling prescribes that the researcher chooses participants who have experienced or are experiencing the phenomenon being studied (i.e. choosing 'experts' to provide the best data) (Thomson, 2011). Each interview with a participant provides a selection of data on which the researcher can build, with the flexibility of moving back and forth through the data in order to find, compare and verify the patterns, concepts, categories, properties and dimensions, in a process called **iterative analysis**. This technique helps the researcher to formulate a theory that answers the research questions.

Corbin and Strauss (2012) explain iterative analysis as a process in which data collection leads to analysis, which leads to concepts; concepts lead to questions, which lead to more data collection. The process circulates in this way until the research reaches a point of **saturation** (when all the concepts are well defined and explained).

3.4 Data Collection

Approaches to qualitative research generally claim that the perspective and behaviours of humans are essential to understanding and explaining the social world (Clark, 2008). Clark (2008) adds that qualitative research should attempt to collect data in the right setting with appropriate participants, while being guided by the research question.

In grounded theory, theoretical sampling guides data collection, and interpretations are drawn from the natural world of the participants by seeking out the places where the issue occurs and reviewing documents, observing and talking to the people involved, and sometimes reviewing visual media (Milliken, 2012). Cohen and Crabtree (2006) point out that common methods used in a grounded theory approach include:

- Observation
- Interviewing
- Collecting artifacts and texts.

These are the methods used in this study.

3.4.1 Observation / field notes

The researcher made notes during interviews and make use of information observed outside of the sampled group. The observation method gathers information without asking the respondents for it. Subjective bias can be controlled through accuracy (Statistics Canada, 2010).

Cohen and Crabtree (2006) identify a number of reasons for collecting observational data, including when the research is focused on a 'how' or 'what' type of question, and when little is known to explain the behaviour of people in a particular setting. They also add that observation data collection cultivates an in-depth and rich understanding of a phenomenon and is an essential part of gaining an understanding of naturalistic settings and participants' ways of seeing.

One of the ways that these observations were made, was by documenting some of the examples that the participants would point at to get a point across. It gave insight as to how they viewed and formulated truth. These observation notes contributed to the memoing stage of the research.

3.4.2 Interviews

Interviewed participants were initially asked broad, open-ended questions to elicit their own interpretations and understandings of what is important in their experience (Milliken, 2012). A relative lack of explicit direction in the questions represented a conscious effort not to bias participants' responses toward what they might assume the researcher wants to hear. However, as the study developed, the interview became more structured through the posing of more specific questions aimed at better understanding concepts that were to emerge out of the data, or to seek agreement from participants that the emerging theory accounted for their experience.

Personal interview

The researcher conducted personal interviews face-to-face with respondents (Kothari, 2004). Statistics Canada (2010) argues that the main benefit of this method is that it has a high rate of response, unlike the questionnaire method. Another advantage of this method is that it contributes indirectly to observational data since the interviewer has the advantage not only of recording the answers given by the participant but also of perceiving the manner or behaviour of the respondent. A disadvantage of this method is that it cannot capture a large number of participants because it is costly and time consuming (Chmiliar, 2012).

The interviews conducted allowed participants to express themselves in their mother tongues and not limit them to yes or no answers. Yet the above statement became apparent during data analysis because these interviews where very long and time consuming for transcribing. This was also a contributing fact to a small sample. The advantage being that it was very informative and provided unexpected information.

3.4.3 Collecting texts and artefacts

When studying a culture, social setting or phenomenon, collecting and analysing the texts and artefacts produced and used by members of the target population can contribute to understanding (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). These include documents in the public sphere (e.g. pictures, articles, documentaries, educational material, books) that may have been produced by participants in a culture or social setting, as well as more personal materials such as memos. When analysing texts and artefacts, the researcher focused on how and for whom the artefact is created**.**

Participants were encouraged to keep a journal or diary to write and sketch their thoughts and experiences over time. These often reveal how the journal or diary holder and writer ascribes meaning to things in the light of the research topic. Like interviews, this method is time consuming, but it is more reliable to the extent that it minimises the problem of bias (Coxon, 2011).

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Grounded theory analysis

In a grounded theory approach, data collection and analysis go hand-in-hand (O'Reilly, 2012). According to O'Reilly (2012) a key and initial stage in analysis is coding. The grounded theory data analysis process involves three levels or types of coding, namely:

- **Open coding:** the researcher begins to segment the data into similar groupings and forms preliminary categories of information.
- **Axial coding**: the researcher begins to bring together the categories identified into groupings.
- **Selective coding**: the researcher organises and integrates the categories and themes in a way that articulates a coherent understanding or theory of the phenomenon under study. (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006)

This study used these coding methods in the analysis stage, based on the explanation by Kovalainen and Eriksson (2011).

3.5.2 Open coding

First the researcher breaks down, analyses, compares and categorises the data, to enable the study to describe what is happening. During this stage the researcher looks for keywords, phrases and sentences (through line-by-line analysis), which can lead to formulating codes that are not related, but will nevertheless provide an initial understanding of the material being studied. All events, processes or incidents occurring are labelled and grouped together with the help of **constant comparison,** for the sake of identifying categories and properties.

3.5.3 Axial coding

In this coding stage the researcher sought to find incidences or events that related to each other in a non-apparent or non-obvious way. In this way, the analysis shifted from description towards linking codes together, and in turn to explanatory categories, while working towards theory construction. Categories created from axial coding provided wider explanatory capacity and combined the earlier-identified concepts in the material. The constant comparative method discovered the latent patterns in the expressions and words in the text. Constant comparison is therefore the key to the process, revealing latent patterns and conceptualisation.

3.5.4 Selective coding

At this final coding stage, the researcher integrates and refines the analysis in the service of a larger theoretical plan, and then selects one category to form the basis for theory. The study's objective with respect to selective coding is to explicate the story by finding a core category to which the other categories can be linked.

3.5.5 Memoing

Memoing is an act of tracking notes about one's own lessons learned from the data, an indication of concepts drawn from the data through diagrams and textual forms (Groenewald, 2012). It is best used as a reminder that when memories fail, memos are most advantageous for analytic rather than descriptive accounts of the researcher's feedback to their process (Corbin, 2011).

3.5.6 Writing

Finally, a grounded theory approach involves writing, which should not be seen as the last stage of research, but as part of the process of analysis. Writing enabled the researcher to share ideas and work in progress with others, and finally articulate the developed theory (O'Reilly, 2012).

3.6 Ethical considerations

A letter seeking access and approval for the research to be carried out, including non-face-to-face interactions between the participants and myself (telephone interviews, email interviews and surveys), was drafted and submitted to the university for signing off. Approval was also required for participants' practical exercises. The researcher was obligated to protect participants from harm, to preserve their dignity and rights, as well as to safeguard their anonymity and protect confidentiality. All research was conducted under competent supervision, in full awareness of any health and safety and insurance issues that could apply. No research was carried without the informed, free, express, specific and documented consent of the person concerned. Information and an explanation were also given to the participants before their participation in the research. There was no coercion in the recruitment of participants.

If participants at any point felt in any way obligated to participate in research for which they volunteered, they had the right to withdraw from the project at any time. They could also choose to withdraw their data from the study. All information given was treated with the utmost confidentiality and will not be disclosed to anyone else unless otherwise determined by law.

3.7 Delimitations

Even though this research aims to explore the world of South African graphic designers, the number of graphic designers in this country renders it impossible to contact them all. It would be just as impossible to ask every graphic designer what inspires his or her ideas and concepts individually. So, to narrow the field down required the flexibility of picking a few representative experts for a more focused study (hence the reason for the theoretical sampling methods).

3.8 Summary

This chapter reflected the adoption of **constructivist-interpretative** epistemological paradigm. A critical constructivism Theoretical framework suited this research because it phrases humans as actively constructing knowledge instead of knowledge being an entity that just in existence. This therefore lead to a choice of a qualitative method of constructivist grounded theory. For the reason that constructivist grounded theory aims to understand and compose meaning from the differences among research participants.

A Population of South African graphic designer citizens was chosen as an important step in designing the sample of participants, since they are experiencing the phenomenon being studied. Three methods of data collection being observation, personal interviews and a collection of artefacts and text (memoing) were acquired. Ethical considerations were adhered to

4. Data Analysis and Findings

The blacks are tired of standing at the touchlines to witness a game that they should be playing. They want to do things for themselves and all by themselves.

– Steve Biko (1978:)

The apposition of this quote is directly connected to the outcome of the data being analysed and the findings in this chapter. It reflects the observations of graphic designers currently active in the visual communication domain. Instead of black being seen as a pigmentation, it is meant in the way that Biko defined in his black consciousness movement "*Being black is not a matter of pigmentation – being black is a reflection of a mental attitude.* – Steve Biko (1976)"

4.1 **Introduction**

This chapter describes the process followed to analyse the collected data, and then offers a discussion and interpretation of the research findings. The data was analysed to explore South African contemporary designers' use of indigenous artefacts and cultural knowledge in their design practice. Data was collected using video interviews, to include the recording of gestures and body language. Most designers felt uncomfortable with formal interviews, and as a result a more conversational approach was adopted. Both the questions asked and the sequence in which they were asked differed from interview to interview.

Since grounded theory allows for memos (refer to 3.5.4 above), such memos will also be presented to show what guided some of the decisions made during the data collection stage.

The data was obtained from six interviews. The demographic profile of participants is presented in the Table below.

TABLE 4 – Demographic of participants

PARTICIPANTS	AGE GROUP	GENDER	RACE	EXPERIENCE
AM	MID 20s	MALE	BLACK	2 YEARS
JC	EARLY 40s	FEMALE	COLOURED	25 YEARS
ML	LATE 30s	MALE	BLACK	18 YEARS
EG	MID 40s	FEMALE	WHITE	30 YEARS
EQ	EARLY 20s	MALE	BLACK	2 YEARS
BM	LATE 30s	FEMALE	BLACK	18 YEARS

These participants represented different spheres of visual communication. EG is in the Cape Town advertising industry as a graphic designer. ML is also in advertising, but in Johannesburg. JC is in the book-publishing sector, based in Cape Town; she is more of a creative director even though she still practises as a designer. Both AM and EQ are in the Cape Town retail sector, AM is specialising more in illustration and EQ in the online division. Lastly, BM works in corporate Johannesburg as a graphic designer.

It was the aim of this research to involve participants from three major South African cities, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. Regrettably the Durban plan did not work out, mainly because of the difficulty associated with finding a time that was convenient for all involved.

While the questions in all the interviews were similar (being directed by the research questions and literature review), only the first question was the same for all participants. Thereafter the questions followed the direction of the unfolding conversation.

4.2 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

A standard grounded theory process was followed to analyse the data. Initially, provisional codes were formulated from the interview transcripts. At this stage codes were labelled in relation to the research questions, on the assumption that the analysis would be a way of answering these questions. Then a more focused analysis was performed, a stage known as the axial coding. This is where the researcher starts to create categories based on the similarities between and comparability of the data within the initial codes. Lastly, categories were determined according to the themes that cropped up repeatedly in the analysis of the data.

This process was followed until data saturation was reached, that is, until there was no new data emerging from the reiterated comparisons. Based on the data analysis the study established four categories out of the codes identified in terms of their relevance to the research questions.

4.2.1 PROCESS OF ANALYSIS

RESEARCH QUESTIONS yield CODES

RESEARCH ANSWERS yield CATEGORIES

The process of analysis followed the above formula. Data was collected in the form of video recorded interviews. The questions asked were based on the literature review and the research questions, as formulated in Chapter 1. The interviews were transcribed into editable text, after which the initial coding stage began. The codes were formulated as follows:

- Placing a label against each research question

  e.g. The main question, which is: ***What artefacts and design practices do South African contemporary designers draw inspiration from?***

- The main question's label for this was **INSPIRATION.** This meant that any text in the data that seemed to be answering or relating to the main research question would be labelled **INSPIRATION**, followed by the code / interpretation of the answer.

• After all the **initial codes** were established, **axial coding** ensued, the process in which codes that relate to each other are grouped together. This then led to **selective coding** (a stage of integrating the codes into categories).

• As the formula above has shown, the data was reduced to codes, and the codes were labelled with reference to the research questions. The research answers thus produced were compared and grouped together into categories. These categories can serve as the basis of a theory.

TABLE 5 – Code labels

LABEL/CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION
INSPIRATION	What artefacts and design practices do South African contemporary designers draw inspiration from?
PRACTICE	How do contemporary South African designers incorporate or refer to indigenous traditional African art and artefacts?
GLOBALISATION	How has technology and globalisation influenced design in South Africa?
PROGRESS	What importance do South African designers ascribe to post-colonial transformation, and what do they think it means?
AFRICA	What do designers think is traditional African design/art?

Table 5. The labels linked to the research questions for coding

The table above displays the labels given to the research questions, to enable codes to be formulated from the participants' responses.

• **The first question was whether South Africa had a unique identity in design**

TABLE 6 – Unique design identity

	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
YES	2	33%
NO	4	67%
TOTAL	6	100

The results suggested that South African graphic design has still not created an identity unique to itself in the global arena. This is the beginning of the supporting evidence for the first category.

• **Use of indigenous knowledge and artefacts in contemporary design work.**

Another question posed to the participants was whether they used indigenous knowledge or artefacts in their everyday design work.

TABLE 7 – Conscious use of indigenous knowledge

	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
YES	2	33%
NO	4	67%
TOTAL	6	100

The table above also shows how the majority (67%) of these designers do not consciously use any indigenous knowledge. This amounts to a direct answer to the main research question under the **INSPIRATION** label, as well as the first sub-question labelled **PRACTICE** (refer to table 6).

• Opinion on the foundation or education phase and inspiration

In the series of interviews, it became important to the researcher to find out what the designers perceived to be the influence of education on what they were doing in their respective fields. Although the research is not directly concerned with what is happening in educational institutions, the researcher was interested to see whether the respondents' approach to their work was drawing inspiration from their educational backgrounds or whether they depended on something else.

In this instance we will look at whether most saw education as a contributor towards encouraging an African approach or whether they deemed it rooted in the Western perspective and heritage.

TABLE 8 – Encouragement of African solutions

	Encourage South African design history	Concerned with Western design history
ML		✓
BM		✓
EQ		✓
EG		✓
JC	✓	
AM		✓

The results displayed in the table above indicate that, even though South Africa is a democracy, these designers do not look to South Africa for design solution but rather the West for their design solutions. As mentioned before, this study is not concerned with the running of education affairs. Yet this finding is a good indicator as to why some designers make the choices they make.

Most of the other questions were more open ended yet nevertheless led to more focused codes, making it easy to create themes or categories. Below is a table portraying all the categories that emerged from the data.

Table 9. The study's categories constructed through the data analysis process.

TABLE 9 – Categories

CATEGORY	LABEL
CATEGORY 1	Colonialism and Western influence in South African design
CATEGORY 2	Embracing South African cultures for identity growth
CATEGORY 3	Slow transformation
CATEGORY 4	South African design history is unknown

The above table details the four categories that emerged from the process of constructivist, grounded theory data analysis. Seeing that this study follows a qualitative approach, these categories are the most applicable to the study. Charmaz and Bryant (2012) note that constructivist grounded theory focuses attention on the integration of categories in the construction of an abstract structure of analysis. The categories are therefore used in combination as the information necessary to provide for a significant and conclusive analysis. Though these are individual or segmented notions, it is together as a unit that they address the research questions.

4.2.2 CATEGORY 1

Colonialism and Western influence in South African design

This section explains the creation of the categories through the responses given by participants during data collection. The first category, which became apparent in all the codes, is that there appears to be a great colonial and Western influence in South African visual communication. Some respondents conceded that this was unavoidable.

Below are some of the answers to open-ended questions from various codes/labels (e.g. inspiration, practice, transformation and so on) that pointed to category 1:

4.2.2.1 INSPIRATION

- *I think 'mna' (me) because design is a foreign practice 'kuthi' (to us). So, inspiration will always come from what Europeans define, as this is design. Be it industrial, be it art.*
- *So, you're not going to, to advertise that Audi in a in your clichéd, South African thing, if there is a clichéd South African thing, you're not going to do that. Because it's not aspirational, your aspirational thing is an international thing.*
- *I'm at an institution that is extremely corporate. And for them corporate is not indigenous.*
- *Even ii… look at what we value, like brand wise, it's from ii, we need validation from (Europe)*
- *Yeah, yeah, yeah, in South Africa, iskakhulu (mostly) like siyazithanda into zabelungu yho! (We like European's things yho!)*

4.2.2.2 PRACTICE

- *Because baleqi Western (they're chasing the West). I feel like sileq'iWestern (we're chasing the West)*
- *But kaloku (actually), there's no problem angasebenzisa (he can use) i-influence ye…European but sibone uk'ba (we should see that) this is local*
- *Nor do I see indigenous inspiration being utilised? Not at all.*
- *Yes, we abandon who we are. And we have to we bring the outside in as… as… as something better than us, instead of actually celebrate, our own.*
- *Which goes back then to our design and our learning's and because I was told 'ukuthi' (that) Bauhaus. This is a 90 degrees angle; if you want this building to stand it must be this way. Does that make it 'ukuthi' (that) no 'u-rontabile wam' (my rondavel) can't stand the way? You know…*

4.2.2.3 GLOBALISATION

- *But you'll never wear a Stoned Cherrie or Sun Goddess design or 'lentwana lezi zaseSoweto' (these kids from Soweto) Amasmarties kids who are just like (***Amakip kip***) can make the same designs make it cool just for us. But then the debate is, okay this jacket is 5000 and it's a Sun Goddess {to his right} and this jacket is Gucci 5000 {to his left} I'm gonna buy Gucci.*
- *Whereas in South Africa it's a nice to have. It's seen as a purely marketing advertising sphere. So, in order for us to change the dominance of one particular race I think as a country we need to shift our understanding of what we think creativity is and what creativity can do for our country.*

4.2.2.4 PROGRESS

- *Because we wanna be white! Because now that's the thing kaloku (though) ones you… 'cause I see it there where I work.*
- *also, iiGucci, okay yeah, 'cause it would be a Gucci jacket but then what matters to the South African is not how the jacket looks, it will be the brand*

4.2.2.5 AFRICA

- *And it takes overseas newsletters and the art world and things as to do? Yeah, that comes into my inbox now read about if I have time, which I normally have.*

Codes were created from these responses using the research questions. The coded responses that resulted in the definition of the other three categories follows below.

4.2.3 CATEGORY 2

Embracing South African cultures for identity growth

The emergence of this category shows that South African graphic designers are in favour of using South African indigenous knowledge systems as influence in their practice. This is supported by the following excerpts:

4.2.3.1 INSPIRATION

- *But for 'mina' (me) I think it starts off with if you teach people their identity and who they are. Not teach but kind of enlighten of 'grand-grand bafethu' (Really-really my brothers) according to me and what I've learned this is where we come from as a people, this is where we get our ideas as a people. And then how you apply that into your everyday you know… It's a simple thing*
- *And not like just in graphic design, almost like fashion and clothing design as well I mean, the fact that people are using traditional clothing material, to bring that into the design that you get now.*
- *But I just remembered there are different markings and symbols that that had that, said something that one would say Blessings to you. And another one would say newly married couple Congratulations, and things like that. But in itself, it's completely abstract. Yeah, but it's beautiful.*
- *From my surrounding like ibhanti, on ii uronta (thick line of paint around a rondavel), for instance. Yeah, yeah, yabo (you see), iimibhaco yabo (their cultural clothing). So ezanto zihlala zikhona (those things stay there), because you already see it. So you just like draw on it, okay. But in terms of ii-like patterns as well. Even if I'm doing an illustration yabo, lanto (you see, that thing) I just feel like it's already present.*

4.2.3.2 PRACTICE

- *Yeah (iDrawings), like into ezifana (things similar in) ne-colour, ii-shades because ii-colours ze-Africans are very nice.*
- *For example, you use i-pattern, enje (like this) i-pattern yeshweshwe or whatever, then you can say uba (that) Okay, that is from South Africa. Otherwise, I don't think there's a certain style that speaks South Africa.*
- *Zulu culture, and all sorts of things. And then there's shape patterns and colours are fantastic. Like the Lesotho blanket that has that this is the who was that designer?*

- *I do, I like to do it. I remember when we went to one of the Design Indaba conferences and there was one who did car design for Porsche (I don't know if you were there?* ***No, I missed that one****). And she used the Kalahari to bring the colours into the leather and the interior of Porsche cars. And that is still going global but keeping it local. So, she would take a picture of like the Kalahari or take photos of the Karoo, I think it was the Karoo, and then she would pull colours out and that's where you get like sandy leather in the inside of the cars.*
- *You have to go back, you have to do more than just design, you have to go deeper than just this is how it's supposed to look. First understand the purpose of why is that guy 'afake isiphandla' (goat skin bracelet), you know. Why is that colour used? Why is a certain shape used?*

4.2.3.3 GLOBALISATION

- *I think internationally people appreciate the fact that you bring your own culture into it.*
- *And people are going "this is cool" no need to have this fancy thing coming from another country. It's like learn to appreciate what's in front of you. You know.*

4.2.3.4 PROGRESS

- *Certainly, does exist. It's just not understood yet. But it has a distinct South African flair.*
- *And the trending term at the time was Afrocentricity and that's why we look the way we look.*
- *What it does when you think in English versus thinking ngesiXhosa with isiZulu yabo it affects your chemistry as well.*

4.2.3.5 AFRICA

- *Mural art and patterns*
- *Face design*

4.2.4 CATEGORY 3

Slow transformation

The slow motion of change in the industry of graphic design South Africa has negatively impacted the progress for an identity unique to South Africa. The fragments below show minor evidence of this country's potential should all cultural codes be supported:

4.2.4.1 INSPIRATION

- *As a vision or like a dream. So, and then how you then use it or you assimilate it into like the people in of that area then it becomes different. Then it becomes iShweshwe instead of iiGerman being whatever they call it that side.*
- *And what it is, it's in your head and your influences a new understanding of the world, where you are coming from that will come out in your art and in your design.*
- *But there was that Ndebele lady that did the design on the BMW. I mean when she did that, I mean it was the whole thing of having the house painted, and it was to show the clans and stuffy vibes not saying it correctly and this BMW went international. And was going back to our roots of this is the culture that we have these are our different cultures. We've got so many different cultures in South Africa.*

4.2.4.2 PRACTICE

- *Fashion is actually doing what we speaking about now. Okay, so they, they are doing something that is South African but it's still European but it's evolving.*
- *Uniquely South African because the light is different. The interactions are different the... Yeah, the landscape and your environment is different. So, it had a similarity, but it was different. So, in a way, there's no reason why no another.*

4.2.4.3 GLOBALISATION

- *we like to keep it real*
- *Zulu culture: I'm like but beads, we don't have factories that makes plastic. (Yeah) You know, but maybe the colours, maybe the patterns.*
- *In a cultural context because like izinto zethu (our things) they are being redesigned already.*

4.2.4.4 PROGRESS

- *Mzansi magic, look at Mzansi differently. A white boy waking up 'emkhukhuwini' (in a shack) (**I remember that**) going through that. You kind of… It was a start of…it was a simple message just look at it differently, look at it from our point of view, you know.*
- *Everybody just needs to get into the same kind of thing first. And then things start rolling out, yeah, I mean no power plays and the ehh authority and things.*
- *Like countries' identity, and what binds them together are common, commonalities.*

4.2.4.5 AFRICA

- *With what we were given we tried to create something out of… that we can identify with.*
- *Uniquely South African because the light is different. The interactions are different the... Yeah, the landscape and your environment is different. So, it had a similarity, but it was different. So, in a way, there's no reason why no another.*

4.2.5 CATEGORY 4

South African design history is unknown

The fourth and last category did not contain material emerging from all the labels, yet that which did emerge seemed too important not to use. The material is presented in a format similar to the three categories above. It shows in the extracts below that the lack of knowledge for what South African creative history is and looks like, has made things difficult for these designers to not look to the Western culture for solutions.

4.2.5.1 INSPIRATION

- *Ahhh do we have clichés yet?*
- *The symbol? What would? Yeah, conclude to something, and what are they? So, we have a lot of things. So, what now, what do we have, what do we have, what do we have?*

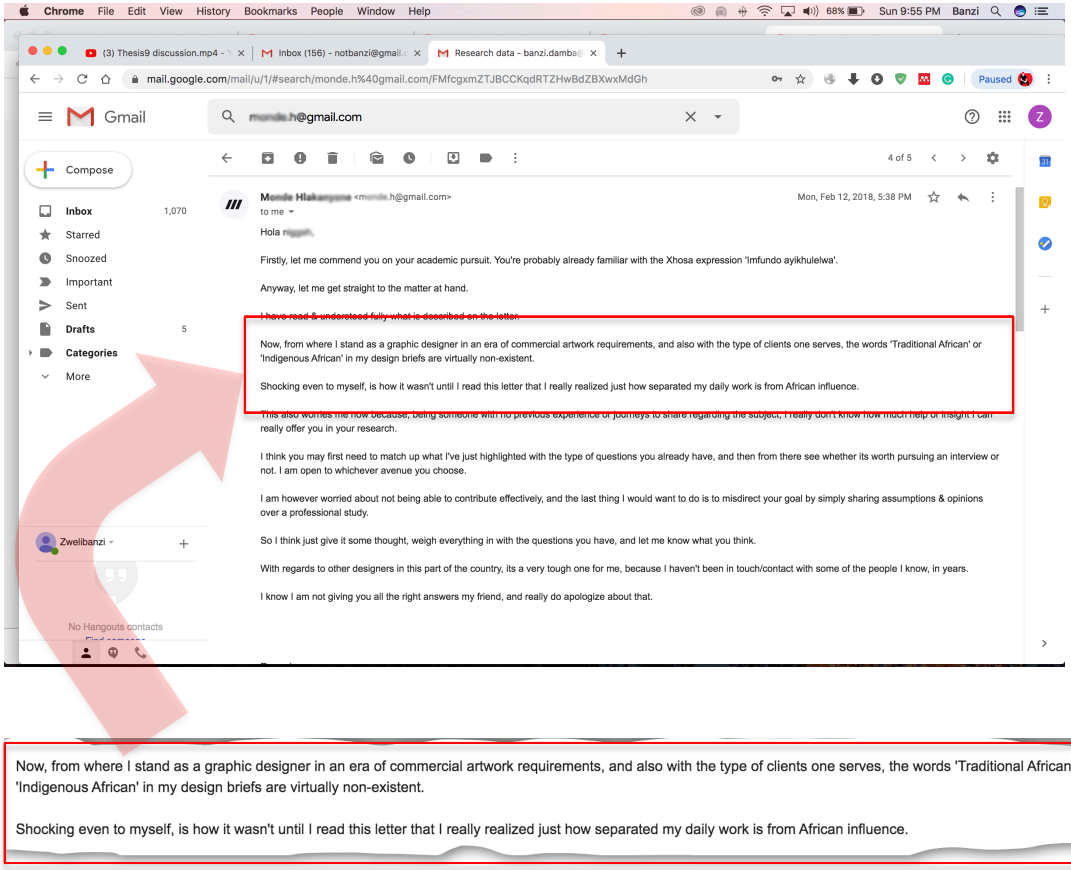
4.2.5.2 PROGRESS

- *We it's like we do so South Africa is a thing with 100,000 arms and no body yet.*

4.2.5.3 AFRICA

- *Yeah there is because it helps abantu (people), it helps us like siyazi u'ba siyaphi (know where we are going), cause like we're slowly losing our ways because we don't really know ukuba (whether) what's happening.*
- *I don’t know*

4.3 MEMOS AND OBSERVATIONS



Figures 15 & 16. An extract from an email response from one of the participants.

MEMO 1, 24th February 2018

MH's response (Figure 15 & 16) on email should be enough to use in the research, because he already answers the main question that he does not use any indigenous African artefacts to influence his work. In fact, he uses the word **separated,** which is very interesting. Even though he is reluctant to participate I think he has a lot to offer to the study.

Figure 17. African doll with' Shweshwe' print dress. (Researcher's personal picture, 2018)

MEMO 2, 3rd August 2018

Interesting enough ML keeps referring to this doll (Figure 17), and sees it as not African. Refuses to see the pattern on the dress as original or indigenous to Africa, instead acknowledges the Germans for originating the patterns. Is not interested in what Africans have done with it to make their own. But ML says it's a fake version of what is African. He also mentions his own identity as a '*Pantsula*' (A movement from the 1950s, which served as a secret code reflecting shared experiences under apartheid), and sees that as authentic. Another captivating thing is that in another interview, the interviewee identified '*Shweshwe'* (which refers to indigo pattern cloths that German missionaries brought with) pattern as African.

Figure 18. A beaded Nguni cattle trophy/award design. (Researcher's personal picture, 2018)

MEMO 3, 7th October 2018

The use of Nguni cattle (Figure 18) fits very well with the aim of this research of wanting to know what sources of inspiration designers use. The fact that it was for a Nelson Mandela function makes its relevance even greater, seeing that he is of the Nguni people himself. The designer could have chosen to use a commercialised trophy made of glass or crystal. Instead it is rooted in South African symbolism, since cattle symbolise wealth, life and more in the Nguni culture. I think it is a great symbol (maybe I'm biased since I understand the culture) but it is fitting with this country I believe.

Figure 19. Energy, form, time and santeria series. (Mncayi personal photo, 2018)

MEMO 4, 12th June 2019

During the data collection stage, I asked the designer to show me his process for inspiration in his work, since he said he draws inspiration from his culture and traditions. The artwork above (Figure 19) represents his interpretation of his dreams and visions. For reasons of confidentiality, I'm unable to mention his clan name. But he symbolises it a lot in his artwork by using a snake. The way he mixes colours is inspired by the bead decorations of his people or culture (according to him), which he says he observed in his childhood. These images have stayed with him and feed his creativity.

The artwork on the next page (Figure 20) won the Absolut competition out of entries from all over the continent. Great to see how these interpretations can be adapted into contemporary spaces.

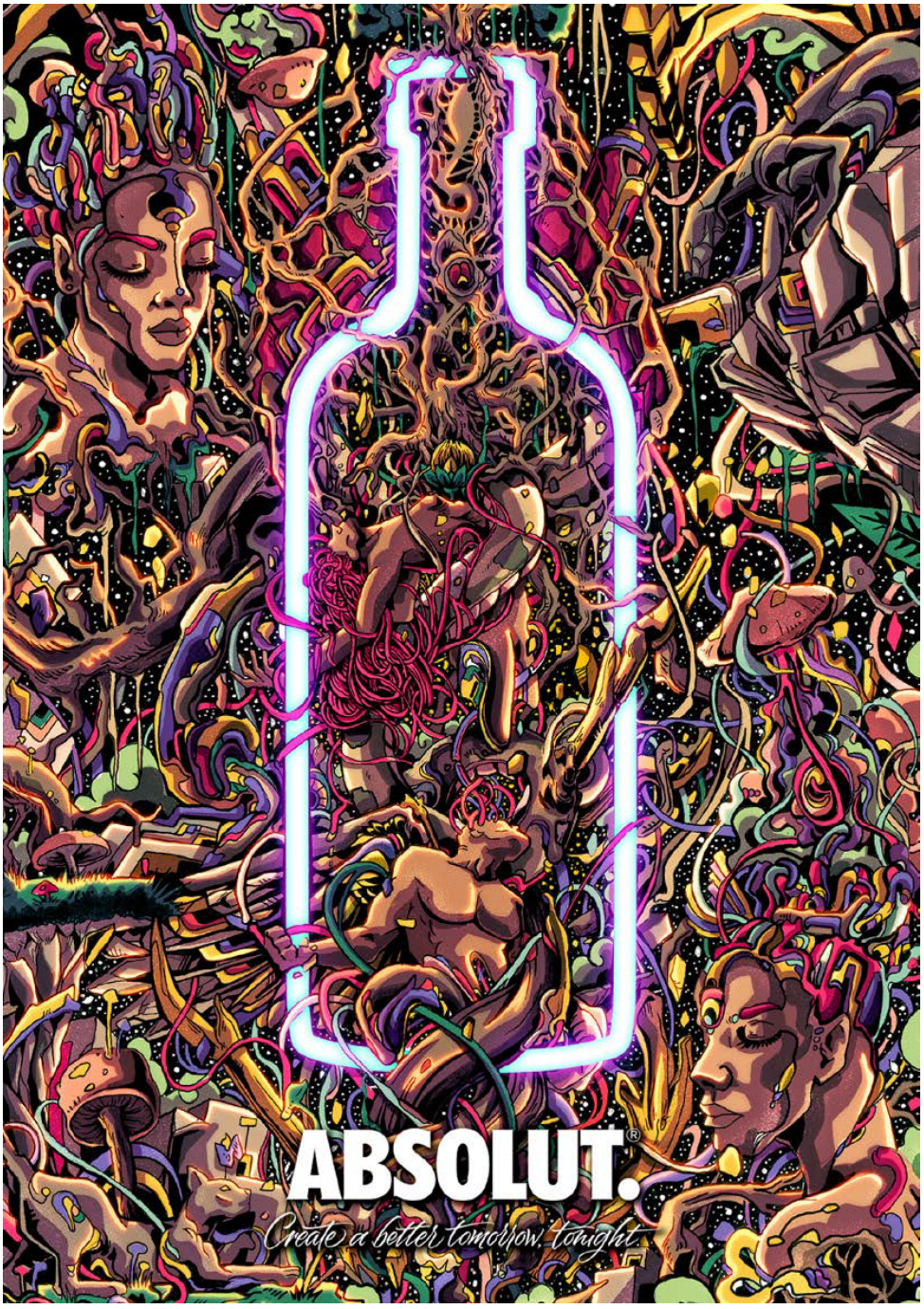


Figure 20. First prize winner of the Absolut 2019 South Africa competition. (Absolut, 2019)

Figure 21. African decorated boxes. (Researcher's personal picture, 2018)

MEMO 5, 21st July 2019

EG refers to these boxes as beautiful and African (Figure 21, above), yet she is not inspired to use these types of designs in her professional work. Made a comment that the closest she's come to doing South African was place the flag in her artwork. What is interesting is that in the artwork with the flag referred to on Figure 22 below, the rendition of the flag is in the same style (making use of dots). In protecting the client, the flag artwork is cropped very tight, but what I'm referring to should be clear.

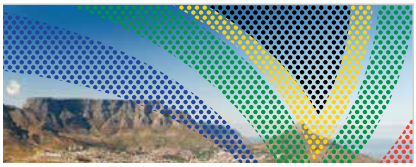


Figure 22. Artwork featuring South African flag (EG personal picture, 2018)

5. Literature review (Part 2)

As angry as we have the right to be, let us remember that we are in the struggle to kill the idea that one kind of man is superior to another kind of man.

– Steve Biko (1977)

INTRODUCTION

This part of the literature review is based on grounded theory's propensity to generate theory from the data gathered. Now that the data has produced four categories, it is time to explore what the literature says about them *qua* theoretical generalisations. The central theme will be the influence of the West and/or colonial history on South African contemporary design. I will focus mainly on the use of the Bauhaus movement in South African design, since this came up in almost all the responses in company with the categories identified, which is a connection to the conversation of decolonisation of higher education. The chapter will also look at what is referred to as South African cultural/traditional artefacts, as well as literature on transformation issues facing professional graphic designers in the workspace, and their implications for social change.

5.1 Western influence in South African design

Lerner (2019) views Bauhaus as a movement whose leaders knew they were participating in a historical experiment. It reflected patient perseverance in combining art, design and architecture. In the years 1919 to 1933 Bauhaus aimed at the creation of *modern* design, by forging an aesthetic they considered universal, through mediums like metal, print, bookbinding, cabinetry, mural painting, weaving as well as sculpture (Lerner, 2019). Because of the Bauhaus's ambition to develop a standardised visual education, it encouraged students to terminate all preconceived knowledge for the purposes of opening their minds to creativity (Lerner, 2019). According to Lerner (2019), combining life and art was one of Bauhaus's priorities: their principles led to the formation of reform, resistance and debate throughout Europe between the World Wars.

This continued until Hitler's rule closed the institution in 1933, which forced its experts (lectures and architects) to migrate internationally and spread the newly standardised design environment alongside the advancement of technology. Meggs (1992) highlights that after the 14 years the movement or institution existed in Germany, its closure produced 33 faculty members and 1250 students.

Yet the shutting down of the Bauhaus institution in Germany did not stop the migration of its influence and philosophy. It spread worldwide and inspired the creation of institutions like the Ulm School of design in 1968 (Markgraf, 2012). Admittedly, compared to the Bauhaus principle of pursuing a combination of life and art, the Ulm school of design took a more organic route of combining society, culture, science and theory. Daichendt (2010) asserts that the impact of the Bauhaus philosophy cannot be underestimated, because their theories continue to be reproduced in high schools and colleges around the world, today. A hundred years later.

Serumaga-Musisi (2016) suggests that creativity, outlook and aesthetics in Africa might have something in common with Bauhaus principles, while in no way echoing them. While the historical Bauhaus was a space of experimentation that looked to fuse creativity with functionality, African art has always sustained itself in this mind-set (Serumaga-Musisi, 2016). Yet Serumaga-Musisi (2016) points out that even 50 years after Africa's independence the country's designers do not deliberately recognise and promote this feature of their heritage. For example, raw materials continue to be exported for the promise of infrastructure, which makes it look as though Africans are incapable of doing things for themselves. Serumaga-Musisi (2016) declares that, because of Africans' lack of self-support, investment, networks and collaboration with creative minds, they must blame themselves for fearing to take the first step towards the continent's own creative development.

The power of the German Bauhaus movement in the grooming of designers across the world cannot be over-estimated. Black consciousness cautioned against the assimilation of black people into standards already set and institutionalised as codes appropriate for Europe. This would clearly not be the best way of solving their problems or even allow them to fully encapsulate who they are. At the same time, as the brief discussion of the form/function principle above indicates, a simple rejection of modern Western design protocols would be self-defeating. This leads to the dialogue of decolonisation in education.

5.1.1 Decolonisation of higher education

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) defines decolonisation as a pursuit for pertinency, because colonial language and literature placed the colonised far from their world perspective and to the perspective of others (colonisers). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) submits that the epistemological battle of decolonisation in higher learning institutions is about a liberation of education systems from a Western model. It is of this reason that Fataar (2018) calls for knowledge pluralisation, an absorption of all diverse ways of knowing from all previously excluded groups.

Heleta (2016) makes the observation that the conversation of decolonisation in universities comes with questioning the lack of transformation. That Colonialism and apartheid did not only exert its influence in politics and economic freedoms only, but in all facets of life, with its consequences firmly fixed in South Africa (Heleta, 2016). According to Heleta (2016) South African universities have done very little to open up to different traditions of knowledge and knowledge making. Whilst Fataar (2018) affirms that South African sciences clearly calls for educators to fuse indigenous knowledge in the curriculum, sadly with miniature guidance about how to implement this.

Heleta (2016) contends that after 20 years South African universities are ingrained in colonial and apartheid arrangement. Seemingly indigenous knowledge was concealed and granted no attention by universities (Fataar, 2018). Heleta (2016) pointed out two approaches for the decolonisation of education. First being an addition of new items to the existing curriculum, which is proving to be disruptive (Heleta 2016). The second being the one that Heleta 2016 asserts as the ideal solution, this is to rethink the focus of the study itself, then reconstruct it.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018, concurs that history should be written from an African-centred position, and in service of the nation as well as introduce oral traditions as a new methodology. Fataar 2018, advocates for institutions of learning to respect all people and their cultural systems. Decolonisation is not about shutting the Western and other traditions out, but establishing clearly that Africa is at the centre (Heleta, 2016). Heleta (2016) proclaims that even though there is no longer a colonial rule in South Africa, the economic, political, cultural and knowledge based tyranny still exist. This might serve as the reason why current designers don't include South African indigenous art and artefacts in their design practice

5.2 Embracing South African cultures for identity growth

This part of the literature review concentrates on the third category, 'embracing South African cultures for identity growth', while also dealing with the fourth category ('South African design history is unknown').

San rock art painting and engraving has attracted major interest because it conforms to the European figurative style of art. There are apparently over 200 pieces of the rock engravings and paintings of the San people in museums overseas (Van der Walt, 1999).

Klopper (2004) asserts that with the isolated case of the San rock mural paintings, South African art was never brought into the light. English missionaries collected artefacts in the mid-nineteenth century, but were prejudiced in favour of figurative art forms. Most of these artefacts ended up in London's flea markets and charity shops, unlike West and Central African art, which was preferred to South Africa's mainly functional carvings and artefacts. Klopper (2004) calls attention to the fact that for decades a completely Eurocentric perspective of art was offered, introducing African art only in the late 1970s. Unfortunately for South Africans, this was West and Central African art. It was only in the 1980s that attention was drawn towards South African art, when an exhibition was held on South African household objects and weapons (Klopper, 2004).

Povey and de Jager (1987) observe that art is judged not only for its look or beauty but also for its ability to communicate socio-cultural issues. However the 1980s art of South Africa, labelled 'Black art,' expressed the reality encountered by these artists, the environment forced upon them of living in tightly packed townships (Povey & de Jager, 1987). Although it was a form of social realism, it did not imitate European art. It used versions of human figures as a form of identity expression and assertion.

Van Eeden and du Preez (1996) encourages the practice of arts and crafts, in the belief that life can be transformed through design and that good design depended on societies producing ethical systems. An appreciation of local and traditional or indigenous arts and crafts helps build a symbolic national identity. Mawere (2015) argues for an understanding of craft as a form of indigenous knowledge, because peoples around the world use their indigenous knowledge to decipher their day-to-day socio-environmental and economic challenges.

Indigenous knowledge is the native's way of knowing, involving local residents' understanding of themselves or traditional knowledge (Mawere, 2015). Mawere (2015) claims that traditional African knowledge produced communities that put the well-being of others first. Indigenous knowledge is conceptually different from conventional or Western knowledge/science. The table below illustrates the distinctive differences between the two concepts.

Table 10. Differences between indigenous knowledge and conventional science/academic knowledge

TABLE 10 – Difference between indigenous and conventional science knowledge

CONVENTIONAL SCIENCE	INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE (IK)
Generated by planned procedure and rules	Generated by societal members through trial and error as they seek solutions to their daily problems
Drawn from set-out principles, theories, and laws	Drawn from existing societal wisdom and other local resources and a sense of creativity
Passed on through documents and other stores of knowledge	Passed on orally (though this is changing) from one generation to the next
Found in school curricula	Normally not found in school curricula (though this is changing)
Generated in the academy	Generated in specific local contexts, though influenced by knowledge generated in other contexts (which means IKs are dynamic and not static)
Found in packages, i.e. with labels such as chemistry, biology	Normally not found in packages
Normally found in permanent form such as theories and in print	Constantly changing, produced as well as reproduced, though perceived by outsiders/external observers as static
Emphasises competitive individualism as it eliminates students through failure of tests	Emphasises cooperative communalism as it strives to include all children in the community

The learning of indigenous knowledge cannot be taken for granted for the African descendant. If indigenous knowledge is not accorded proper acknowledgement and real integration into the mainstream knowledge conversation, the values of self-reliance, self-sustaining development, and economic growth will remain an illusion (Mawere, 2015).

Stevens and Munro (2009) affirm that it should be a central concern of the government to develop 'vernacular' arts and culture (traditional artefacts and indigenous art), because these vernacular arts customarily have socio-political as well as intrinsic benefits. Stevens and Munro (2009) share the perspective that South Africa's fragmented history has refused its people a chance to create a visual language unique to the country. Inferior copies of European crafts were produced by the colonisers, while their warped perspective blinded them to the unique style and quality of indigenous artefacts. This caused a cultural segregation that intensified the disregard of African traditional crafts (Stevens & Munro, 2009).

The South African government has taken it upon itself to coordinate the systems of indigenous knowledge, having decided that indigenous knowledge is the intellectual property of the community as well of as its custodian (Gila & Officer, 2004). Mosimege (2004) points out that the South African department of indigenous knowledge acknowledges the importance of fostering an atmosphere for innovation and research as well as constructing the means required for the future creation of knowledge.

Finally, Castiano (2005) asserts that in the process of seeking indigenous knowledge-based solutions for the African continent and the world, studies should be move beyond the reporting of facts and the existence of artefacts. It should not be limited to clay pots or crafts for tourists, but extend to the solutions or ideas responsible for the practices and the manufacture of artefacts.

5.3 Slow transformation

This section aims to analyse the literature on the South African graphic design industry, the main players and their perspectives, the types of imagery and symbolism used as well as the settings or environments. The intention is to explore the spaces of inclusion and exclusion, transformation and integration, design and culture, and to anatomise the direction in which the South African graphic design is going in the global arena.

Although this study has made no use of quantitative methods, the following statistics will serve a useful purpose here. They adumbrate the situation that designers face in the employment market in terms of transformation and equity. This is motivated by the data conducing to the first category, on transformation being slow in South African design.

Daya and April (2014) provide statistics for the South African population and work distributions in the workplace, as of 2010. They maintain that South African black people are underrepresented in the workplace, since the black population makes up 74.1%, against a white population of 11.9%. Yet the private sector employs 18.5% blacks and 65.4% whites, with 21.8% blacks versus 59.1% whites in top management, and 36.3 % blacks and 42.3% whites in senior management.

Pooley (2018), a 34-year-old managing director at Umuzi in Johannesburg (an academy providing youngsters a year of training for jobs in advertising, photography, videography, and coding and data analysis), asserts that the design indaba conference in held in Cape Town caters for a privileged white minority. After taking a picture of the Design Indaba auditorium during the conference, he realised that the audience was 90% white. He notes that ticket prices for the conference are very expensive, which makes the event accessible only to the privileged. Pooley (2018) describes how the inaccessibility of the Design Indaba became apparent when one of his students was chosen as one of the up-and-coming talents in the country. Yet he could only watch the conference on a simulcast screen rather than experience it in the auditorium. The conference ticket costing about R9000 compared to the R1700 simulcast makes it clear that in as much as it is beneficial and enlightening to attend the conference in terms of networking with people in the industry, the amount of money it costs is only affordable to the privileged few.

The South African adverting industry is another example of how the country continues to perpetuate the exclusive ways of colonialism and apartheid (Makhathini, 2017). Even after 24 years of democracy, advertising agencies for companies like Dove and Outsurance use words like 'missing the mark' to apologise for their controversial campaigns (Makhathini, 2017). Outsurance painted a white male and put him in a dress to act a black female (when they could have hired a black woman), and featured only white fathers in a Father’s Day promotion (Figure 24, next page).

Dove drew inspiration from white supremacist, colonial soap advertisements where black women transform to white when they use the product (Figure 23). Makhathini (2017) agrees with Daya and April (2014) that, despite the national race demographics, the black creative is still outnumbered in the advertising industry. Even though these companies apologised, in South Africa's democracy one still sees advertisements portraying black people dancing at almost everything and shows no transformation, with international clients (mostly European) still entrusting big campaigns to white creatives, under the assumption that they are attuned to international norms (Makhathini, 2017).

Figure 23. Two Dove advertisements that portray black women as dirty and white women as clean. (Defender network, 2017)

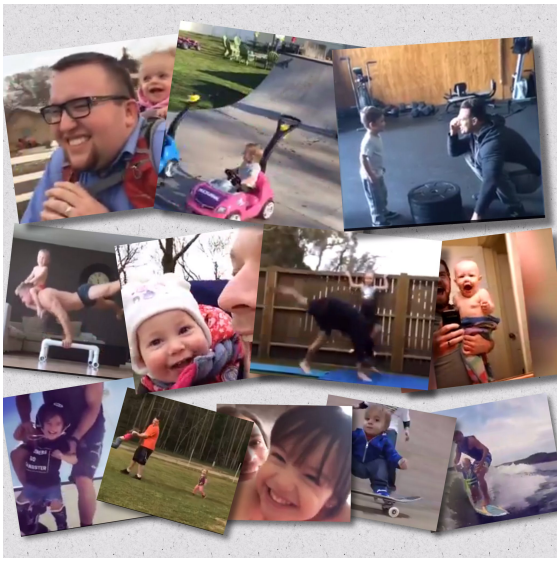


Figure 24. An Outsurance Father's Day advertisement celebrating white fathers only and ignoring the roles played by black fathers in their children's lives. (Salik, 2017)

Conversely, Lange and van Eeden (2016) argue that the post-apartheid government has made a concerted attempt to eliminate a colonial or Eurocentric look and feel in design, so as to embrace a more Africanized perspective through images. Lange and van Eeden (2016) paint a picture of South Africa graphic design over time, from the early twentieth century up to the present. They begin with the period between 1910 and 1948, naming it *'A white man's land*,' the era of segregation when the South African Railways (SAR) established a publicity department, which was in charge of newspapers, magazines, advertising posters and so on. This gave the government the power to regulate the identity of the country to tourist and potential investors. It promoted a common white identity, favoured the Afrikaans language and promoted the orange, white and blue flag of Union (Lange & van Eeden, 2016).

Lange and van Eeden (2016) follow with a section on the years 1948 to 1990 that they dub *'Communication design under apartheid*.' During this period political leaders resisting apartheid were being sent to Robben Island to serve life sentences, the Black Consciousness movement was being born, black people were placed in the homelands, tertiary education was segregated and black media in the form of *Drum*, *Bona* and *Zonk* were created. The adoption of Western media of communication empowered liberation movements to adapt, create and print struggle posters, magazines and newspapers.

Lange and van Eeden (2016) close with the period from 1990 to 2013 under the rubric *'Today I live in a country of the free: The creation of the rainbow nation*.' This phase sees South Africa inaugurating its first democratic president in Nelson Rholihlahla Mandela and, symbolically important, the changing of the national flag. Designed by Fred Brownwell (with final design decisions involving both past and current presidents), it stood for the inclusion of *all* citizens, not just the whites who had created first the Union and then the Republic. This era posed new challenges for South African designers, because it meant finding commonality in the diversity of cultures within the country. President Thabo Mbeki's time in office saw the initiative of changing the design of the national coat of arms from a Eurocentric to a more Africanised approach (Figure 25, next page). The national motto became !*ke e:/xarra//ke*, meaning '**diverse people unite**' written in the language of one of the original people of this land (the San) (Lange & van Eeden, 2016).

Figure 25. South African coat of arms design, inspired by indigenous knowledge
(Wikipedia, 2019)

Lange and van Eeden (2016) nevertheless emphasise the need for indigenous and inclusive ventures in South African contemporary design, suggesting that even though there are positive examples of the government making the effort to be inclusive in the design approach, more work still needs to be done, especially in the private sector of business and in the global arena.

Dempers et al. (2016) concur that South Africa's diversity of multicultural codes makes it a *'world in one country'* and justifying its nickname of the *'Rainbow Nation.'* Yet they argue that it is not only its ethnic diversity, but also the spirit of positivity and happiness filtering through the communities, *ubuntu* (humanity towards others), that drives South Africans (Dempers et al., 2016).

Porteus (2003) claims that there is a lack of agreement amongst South African analysts about the meaning of social inclusion and exclusion and how the concepts are to be applied to the space of dominance and desirability. This space is where the included control access and the excluded await submissively or challengingly to be let in. Who is the included and who is the excluded? Given South Africa's history, it is probable that South Africa's space of inclusion is defined by and serves the interests of the old dominant systems of colonialism and apartheid. Porteus (2003) rightly points out that it is not enough for the excluded to be included in desirable spaces if no effort is made at transformation to accommodate their interests and differences. In other words, it is pointless to be included if the only way to be accepted is to not be yourself but change to be like the already included (i.e. whites). This would be assimilation rather than transformation.

Daya and April (2014) maintain that inclusion in an organisational culture engages everyone in participation by giving them the feeling of being valued as important to the organisation's prosperity. A fair distribution of work amongst all races and cultural fabrics of the country is essential to the success of decolonisation and transformation.

Even though Sauthoff (1998) advocates the incorporation of indigenous influence in design and highlights designers that took it upon themselves to pioneer this – such as Roy Clucas, Kees Schilperoort and Garth Walker of *i-jusi* magazine – she celebrates a vibrant agency called *Tin Temple*, founded in 1996 by 3 white male students who studied at Wits, for their ability to blend indigenous iconography with Western formats, as well as their subscription to the everyday vocabulary of the local scene. Yet one must mourn the absence of black designers in such attempts to capture the authentic spirit of a diverse South Africa. South Africa continues to host a fragmented creative industry of small and large design studios and agencies, where some pursue creative freedom while others use design as a tool for money with no regard to contributing positively towards socio-cultural change (Garman & Schildt, 2008).

Summary

The categories discussed in this literature emerged as answers to the research questions of this study during the coding of data documents, which reflected that the South African contemporary designer looks to European design and artefacts for inspiration. That the colonial history in this South Africa influences their practical solutions to reflect a Western stance.

The study's analysis of the literature has shown that the Bauhaus or Modernist philosophy continues to dominate design in South Africa and the world at large. Nonetheless Africa has always had its own solutions, somewhat compromised or aborted by the lack of support for developing them. The literature revealed that graphic design in South Africa is still not inclusive in its developmental thrust, and that old colonial and apartheid codes of representation continue to dominate. Although fortunately there are South Africans who have initiated design solutions for an authentic South African design identity, South African design must be perceived as still in a process of finding itself.

Even though the process of transformation and change in design approaches is moving at a snail's pace, the government has also taken an active role in regulating indigenous knowledge systems and is very encouraging of them. It is apparent that most indigenous South African artefacts and knowledge were ignored in the past and have been lost. The question of inclusion and exclusion persists as a problem in both design and society, and inevitably leads to the conversation about transformation and assimilation. The fact is that, in as much as parts of the industry seem open to participation by all , there seem to be a lack of real transformation or change.

The literature shows that some use of indigenous knowledge has made a helpful start in building a design identity accommodative of everyone's differences and beliefs. In terms of numbers, the industry seems to favour the white minority in positions of power and decision making, both **positively** (where designers have attempted to blend indigenous factors with traditional Western ways of design, the use of local vernacular as well as creative magazines like *i-jusi*) as well as **negatively** (where there are still advertising agencies creating racist advertisements).

6. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

To add to the white-oriented education received, the whole history of the black people is presented as a long lamentation of repeated defeats. Strangely enough, everybody has come to accept that the history of South Africa starts in 1652 [when the first whites arrived] … We must seek to restore to the black people a sense of the great stress we used to lay on the value of human relationships; to highlight the fact that in the pre-van Riebeeck days [before whites arrived] we had a high regard for people, their property and life in general; to reduce the hold of technology over man and to reduce the materialistic element that is slowly creeping into the African character. In this age and day, one cannot but welcome the evolution of a positive outlook in the black world.

– *Steve* Biko, (1978)

6.1 Summary of the study's significant findings

The aim of this qualitative, grounded theory study was to identify what artefacts or design practices South African contemporary designers draw inspiration from. This chapter offers a discussion of the main findings relating to graphic design, the history of South African arts & design, culture and technology, as well as the issue of transformation post-1994. The chapter also includes some reflections on the implications of the findings for the graphic design industry as well as tertiary training for the profession. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the limitations of the study, recommendations for future study, and an overall summary.

The study attempted to answer these research questions:

A) What artefacts or design practices do South African contemporary designers draw inspiration from?
B) How do contemporary South African designers incorporate or refer to indigenous traditional African art and artefacts?
C) How has technology and globalisation influenced design in South Africa?
D) What importance do South African designers ascribe to post-colonial transformation, and what do they think it means?
E) What do designers think is traditional African design/art?

These questions were answered via four categories:

a) Colonialism and Western influence in South African design
b) Embracing South African cultures for identity growth
c) Slow transformation
d) South African design history is unknown.

The categories mentioned about serve as answers to the research questions posed in this research, by showing that the South African contemporary designer looks to European design and artefacts for inspiration. That their practice is still influenced by the West because of the colonial history in this country. These graphic designers acknowledge that embracing South African cultures might be the solution to creating an identity influential enough for contemporary design. Unfortunately, the slow pace of transformation has a great impact on the progress of change. Including the detail that most South African history is unknown among graphic designers. These items refer to designers, the industry of graphic design, and the cultural condition of South Africa post-1994.

6.2 Interpretation of the significant findings

Although experience in the industry differed from one participant to the next, each of the above categories featured in every designer's account of where they drew their inspiration from. Although the categories thus appear to be closely interlinked in the data gathered, they are discussed separately below.

6.2.1. Colonialism and Western influence in South African design

This study's verdict that Western tendencies and the after-effects of colonisation in South African design continue to exercise a dominant influence in designers' decisions is borne out by the literature . Imported European technologies of print and communication have come to dominate South Africa's indigenous forms of oral literature, performance, festival and image (Pretorius, 2015). South African graphic design continues to align itself with Western paradigms (Sauthoff, 2004). Even though some participants felt that there are glimpses to be had of a fully South African influence in look and feel, all agreed about the extensive Western influence on their own work, whether it is because of the brief, or manifested in the conceptual brainstorming or execution phases of their projects.

In this research, most participants mentioned that the brief was the main reason why they failed to explore options outside of the Western paradigm.

Even though the reasons given were different, when it came to practice, the verdict of the literature and the result were the same for the main question. The influence of the Bauhaus movement and European Modernism generally continue to be present in graphic design institutions in South Africa almost 100 years later (Daichendt, 2010). It therefore cannot be taken for granted that South Africa's potential in creativity has not peaked or explored well enough considering that not all its creativity has not been explored. What most South Africans have come to embrace as a standard look and feel for creative visual communication in the media and everyday life does not truly or fully represent them. Instead it portrays South Africa as a country that conforms to Eurocentric, white norms instead of setting the tone or making its own rules.

This is the legacy of colonialism and apartheid, which perpetuates the notion that the true and best knowledge emanates exclusively from the West. This false consciousness is a principal target of Black Consciousness, which aims to demolish structures that continue to preserve social and economic inequalities in South Africa.

6.2.2. Embracing South African cultures for identity growth

Although not all participants actively use indigenous artefacts in their professional work, they all agreed about its significance for the growth of the South African design identity and a repertoire of 'clichés' (clichés here meaning the use of recognisable symbols, icons and artefacts for communication). They all concurred that it is important to preserve and use indigenous art and artefacts in the design process to create meaning and a common language for South African visual communication. Among the responses that stood out were the following:

> **(1)** *And that's the thing, and people appreciate this. And that's the thing people love that you, that you're proud of your culture, you're proud of where you come from*
>
> **(2)** *That's an interesting thing, because I think what Africa has, Africa is, is its organic-ness that no other place in the world has*
>
> **(3)** *And the trending term at the time was Afrocentricity and that's why we look the way we look.*

It is from such comments in the interviews that this category materialised. This associates the research in situ with work by scholars like Berger (2007), who claims that the inclusion of all cultural codes has long been overdue in South Africa. Similarly, Sauthoff (1998) endorses the incorporation of indigenous consciousness in design by paying tribute to designers like Roy Clucas, Kees Schilperoort and Garth Walker, for their pioneering attempts at formulating a South African visual identity. This study acknowledges that for a solid South African identity in design to emerge, all the cultural codes of South Africa need to be granted some recognition.

A related requirement is that graphic design should no longer concern itself exclusively with individual desire and economic gain, but adopt an approach that is aligned with the wellness of people or human activism (Bichler & Beier, 2016). Mawere (2015) recommends the use of indigenous knowledge (IK) because it generates solutions through trial and error, which means that people get to design solutions based on their lived experiences instead of reading about it in a book that was written outside of their immediate context. Mawere (2015) warns against not including indigenous knowledge in school curricula. Indigenous knowledge is dynamic enough to adapt to change through succeeding generations, more so that the conventional knowledge system that mostly validates academic knowledge as the main or only correct source. Indigenous knowledge systems are communal and inclusive of all, and even though some of the information is orally passed on, this is seen as a positive because it allows for producing and reproducing “tailor made” solutions (Mawere, 2015).

The unfortunate thing is that most of this knowledge is usually not packaged for people to learn or even draw inspiration from. It is usually viewed as old and static.

6.2.3. Slow transformation

The issue of transformation in South Africa is necessarily generated by the country’s history of colonisation and apartheid. The political system succeeded in separating the country’s citizens at almost all levels of interaction on the grounds of race. Following the democratic elections in 1994 it became apparent that a conversation about inclusion and exclusion needed to take place. Porteus (2003) simplifies this situation as being about how the included have the power to determine who gets to be included, while the excluded beg or fight to be part of the included.

In the context of South Africa, the dominant systems of inclusion remain those of colonial and apartheid times. This is apparent in the data and in the literature, and pertains to conditions of change and shifts in power, as well as the whole question of how the enterprise of design should be approached and executed. The transformation process in the design industry is demonstrably slow because there are still elements within it that perpetuate colonial practices. Fortunately, this is not true for the whole industry, since there are parts of South African visual communication that have embraced change and see it as fitting to forge a way forward that integrates and blends different cultural codes and sees diversity as a positive rather than not.

Controversial advertisements like those for *Dove* or *Outsurance* show that the creative industry in South Africa has not fully accepted the concepts of inclusion and transformation (Makhathini, 2017), the notions of *ubuntu* (humanity towards others) and the *'rainbow nation'* (Dempers *et al.*, 2016). South Africa's multicultural diversity of codes has also made it unique in being "a world in a country" (Dempers et al., 2016).

This study has argued that the condition of transformation is a vital one for the growth of South African design identity. Regrettably instead of its being pursued in the spirit of *ubuntu* by all active players in the design sphere of South Africa, a minority still holds and refuses to share the power, which is damaging to the country's world trade opportunities, and not least to black people, who are still not fully recognised. This is another reminder that Stephen Biko's Black Consciousness aimed to inspire black people to shed themselves of the sense of inferiority they were born into as a result of more than three hundred years of white rule.

This study argues that the creative industry in South Africa is currently *integrated* rather than fully *transformed*. It is not enough for the excluded to be included in desirable spaces if there are no efforts at transformation to accommodate everyone's differences: it is pointless to be included if to be so means not being your true self (Porteus, 2003).

A more transformed visual communication industry in South Africa is going to require an effort from more than just the designers, in view of the fact that designers are not always the decision makers, and most briefs depend on clients who are not always visual communicators themselves. Some of the interview data indicated that the use of indigenous concepts depended on whether the briefs specifically asked for creativity in that orientation.

Lange and van Eeden (2016) presents examples of where the government deliberately created a brief that required the used of indigenous knowledge and promoted the idea of transformation: the creation of the South African flag during President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela's time in office, and of the national coat of arms during President Thabo Mbeki's tenure. These two examples involved exchanging a Eurocentric design for a more Africanised one. The country's flag has served as an agent of unity for all the citizens of South Africa. The coat of arms adopted the visual style of the original people of South Africa (the San), and changed the slogan from a European language to an indigenous language, *!ke e:/xarra//ke meaning* (diverse people unite).

These examples notwithstanding, the category of "slow transformation" is still very much a reality, despite the frustrations of black people.

6.2.4. Design history is unknown

The study discovered that a major contributor to the predicament that South African graphic design finds itself in is the fact that it is not informed by its own history and origins, which is in part why it has not created its own clichés, symbols and meanings. Carey (2011) insists that the inclusion of indigenous art practices and systems is important for the formulation of an authentic Southern African history of graphic design.

The visual communication industries have not been promoting an identity outside that of a colonial one. There is still an influence of Eurocentric undertaking. The expansive complexity and diversity of the continent of Africa, with its various levels of economic and industrial development, will broaden the field and free the design industry from an unintended self-snare of exclusive concern with practices associated with the industrialised, affluent West (Pretorius, 2015).

The data indicates that most design clients view good design as Eurocentric, yet a hunger for the opportunity to explore indigenous approaches is prominent in their responses. Unfortunately these approaches are not conveniently available for them to confidently claim it as South African, because they are not well packaged enough to be easily accessed and mastered. Hence Mawere (2015) observes that if indigenous knowledge does not get granted proper acknowledgement and real integration into the mainstream knowledge conversation, the values of self-reliance, self-sustaining development and economic growth will remain an illusion.

It is then dependent on South African visual communication institutions/establishments to create an archive, to document and organise the indigenous knowledge for a design identify in keeping with the country's diverse cultural codes.

6.3 Implications of the Study

6.3.1. Implications for practice

The research findings produced four prominent categories from the data collected. It is instructive to examine the implications of these categories for the future of visual communications in South Africa. The first implication has to do with the finding that South African design is influenced by colonial and Western design methods. The ostensible corollary of this is that if South Africa is looking to gain an advantage in the world trade arena of design, it has to have a more unique look and feel. It makes sense to start looking within instead of copying what is out there.

The study also found that it would be best to embrace traditional art and artefacts to grow the visual communication identity of this country, which implies that the South African graphic design industry can now forge its own history and make the industry accessible to more creative people. This will enlarge the archive of symbolism, iconography, clichés through the knowledge that traditional and indigenous concepts can contribute. Cleveland (2010) comments that the symbolic artefacts of a particular culture influence the outcomes of a specific design process through the conversion of specific algorithms; that is to say, they communicate via the interpretation of certain cultural values (Cleveland, 2010).

The field of South African graphic design appears to be changing gradually, at a very slow pace. This study does not have the capacity to gauge what would qualify as a moderate or even fast pace of transformation. Yet the data and the literature consulted identify this as a source of frustration in the professional graphic design industry. The inclusion of all cultural codes through transformation would grow the industry and contribute to the quest for equality bequeathed by the history of South Africa.

If South African design could become acquainted with its own visual communication history it would be able to as package its own sources of intelligence to serve as a foundation for future projects and solutions in design.

6.4 Limitations

As social research, this study encountered certain challenges. Factors such as time constraints, difficulties with access to data, conflicts as a result of cultural bias as well as personal issues were among these challenges. This section acknowledges these factors so as to enlighten and caution future researchers in the field. These limitations will be divided into two parts: methodological limitations and the researcher's limitations.

6.4.1. Methodological limitations

Sample size

This study had a small sample but a diverse one in terms of gender, race and work position. The size of the sample was not in itself a limitation, indirectly enabling people to speak in greater detail as well as be re-interviewed (Charmaz, 2006). Nevertheless, since visual communication is a broad industry, the study might have benefitted from the inclusion of a larger sample.

Lack of prior research studies on the topic

The literature on this topic is quite limited and not current. It might be because there is little to be found online about the history of South African design; more material is available on art and crafts and advertising. Another possible avenue of enquiry would have been to approach the research from the perspective of education in visual communication, but the main aim of the study was not to research the pedagogy of graphic design but to explore the relationship between professional designers and the influence of traditional artefacts and practices on their work.

Measures used to collect data

Interviews and memos or observations were settled on for this study. It proved very difficult to get participants to keep to appointments made and grant the interviews. The study could have adopted other means of collecting data like email interviews, with a questionnaire to help increase the size of the sample and get some response from all major cities in the country, as initially proposed. Memos and observations could also have been made from emailed data.

6.4.2. Researcher's limitations

Access to data

The first challenge was getting participants to agree to be interviewed. Issues of confidentiality and fear of their current employers finding out how they felt about their workplace. The struggle began with getting consent letters on company letterhead, with most participants declining, on the ground that their employers might associate their opinions with their companies. This could lead to their losing their job and gaining a bad reputation in their field. Nonetheless, the significance of the research – in adding to knowledge about culture and design practices as well as increasing the representation of African indigenous practice in South Africa – was sufficient to encourage them to participate.

Longitudinal effects

There is no chronological timeline of events pertaining to this research and its connection to black consciousness philosophy. It would also be hard to maintain continuity with participants. The knowledge of being observed would make participants act unnatural.

Cultural and other types of bias

This limitation is hard to recognise while one is engaged in the process of research. Completing a study in visual communications and being a visual communication artist can present some challenges when one is collecting data during interviews. When the first interview was compared with the remainder, it became clear that there might have been some bias in how questions were phrased as well as the length of the interview. Fortunately, this was detected early on (*grounded theory allows analysis from the first interview*) and the rest of the interviews were adjusted accordingly.

Financial resources

The study required some travelling for data collection, but the institution's structures for financial assistance are not easy to understand, require action at an awkward time of the year and are not well communicated. So, all the travel was paid for out of personal financial resources, which is one of the reasons for modest size of the sample.

Transcription is a time-consuming process. The unavailability of funds meant this had to be done by myself, under pressure to finish in time. Had there been enough finance to cover the transcription, and then more time could have been spent in growing the sample for more interviews and data collection.

6.5 Recommendations

The recommendations below are based the findings from the data and other sources consulted. They are organised in terms of three designations: Strategic (top management), Tactical (middle management) and Operational (most workers). Although ostensibly directed at management and the government, it must be understood as a wish list of sorts that requires mediation through further academic research.

6.5.1 Recommendations

• More research to be conducted in how top management and clients in the graphic design industry could learn the ways of the people in the communities they wish to engage in business relations with.

• Further studies into the education of Visual communication about indigenous South African arts, crafts and artefacts, in addition to an abbreviated syllabus on Western art movements.

• Research methods on how Government can provide more support for ideas and concepts around local creative movements, like those that exist in the West (e.g. Bauhaus).

• An exploration of design institutions creating curricula fully encapsulating South African ways of design and design solutions.

• Inquire into Visual communicators starting and packaging indigenous symbols, icons and more for use as memes to grow a South African design identity.

• An investigation in whether awards and other ways of (annually) recognising indigenous-based design solutions and creations could promote the use of indigenous art, crafts and artefacts in South African contemporary graphic design.

6.5.2 Suggestions for further study

• The results of this study should not be seen as a complete and general pronouncement on visual communication in South Africa, the sample being drawn from only two major cities in two out nine provinces. The sample size was also too small to be representative of the entire industry. More research should therefore be conducted to broaden the scale, timeframe and perspective of the current study.

• Research needs to be conducted on the pedagogy of visual communication at South African institutions, especially in relation to traditional art and artefacts. Tertiary institutions can serve as perfect spaces to store and create a depository for the history of South African art, crafts and artefacts. At the same time serve out a South African inspiration to young designers before they impact the industry.

• Quantitative research in the area will help to firm up the conclusions reached in this study.

6.6 Conclusion

The most significant finding of this study in the field of visual communication in South African is that even though most designers wish to embrace and use traditional indigenous systems and knowledge, industry practice is still influenced immensely by Western, even colonial approaches to solving design problems and challenges. This is mainly because a conversation on transformation and inclusion is long overdue, and its absence is frustrating progress towards equal participation. Another contributing factor is that even though most South African visual communication artists have the desire to use of locally inspired artefacts, there is the problem of differentiating original South African artwork from other African artefacts. This is partly because there is no archive or repository of information or organised place to find accurate information about the authenticity and origins of South African artefacts.

The implication of these results is that the contemporary visual communication industry needs to become more open to indigenous knowledge systems, which will allow it to be more communal and open to innovative solutions involving consumers, instead of presuming to know what solutions they desire. The study's results also encourage the industry to be more accommodative of all who live in this diverse society ("world in a country"), more open to different perspectives as well as creative and innovative solutions. We should be attempting to create equal planes of trade internationally, rather than following and forever being the consumers of others' trends. In doing so we would be introducing indigenous designs and solutions in South Africa to the world, while at the same time helping to preserve our history and heritage.

The history of graphic design in South Africa has not been told. Given the rifts that history has created in the society, perhaps it cannot be told. This research sought only to explore how contemporary South African designers dealt with indigenous artefacts and what sources fed their inspiration.

The study has proposed that institutions develop curricula more oriented to including indigenous South African design and art. The graphic design industry should seek to learn from indigenous ways and become more cooperative with their consumers, and creating more socially responsible solutions instead of concentrating on profit only. The study as a whole is framed by the ideology of Black Consciousness and its determination to examine, expose and challenge structures of power. It has sought to promote traditional African benchmarks and values, advocating a society where the ill-treatment of man by man is eliminated.

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