TANGIBLE - INTANGIBLE HERITAGE(S) – DESIGN, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CRITIQUES ON THE PAST, PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
The Story of Now:
Exploring the social face of urban policy making and development.

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• Presentation Method. I would like to:
  i. present in person (with/without a written paper)

• Abstract (300 words):
In developing urban environments toward a future vision of thriving cities, the contribution of historical details is crucial to the planning process. Not just as recognition of a period, but as an indicator to the context and contemporary.
Heritage is more than just the story of where we came from that is fought to be memorialised and contained as a story of where we are going.
It is also the fundamental informant of the story of now.
In Noordgesig, a small marginalised community on the Johannesburg urban periphery, in an attempt to reimagine the spatial scars left behind by the inherited Apartheid, separatist planning, we placed heritage firmly into our planning and design process in a way that went beyond telling the story of the past. The Corridors of Freedom policy was a stimulating spatial vision for the City introduced as a solution to re-stitch the fragmentation left behind by its historical segregation systems. Guided by the programme, Noordgesig was identified as a precinct to be developed due to its strategic location and based on corridor Transit Oriented Development. A radical piece of policy that would transform the lives of the majority of the population. But, in considering people, one needs to go beyond frameworks, and consider the stories. And within these stories, lies a heritage that bridges the gap between the politics, the physicality and the social face of our urban policy making and development.

This investigation seeks to share:
- Methods of coproduction and placemaking initiatives undertaken in Noordgesig, Johannesburg;
- Methods of centralising heritage to the design process;
- Resultant urban design, architecture and public art interventions currently being implemented for, and with the community;
- Lessons on the importance of empowering communities to reflect their social dynamics onto their environment and magnify their voices, thereby creating Human-Centred cities of places, not spaces.
- Lessons on heritage as a story of where we came from, guiding where we are going, but also, as a tool to address the social, environmental and economic concerns of the now.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Shaakira is a Professional Architect and Urbanist who uses her qualifications and experience to bring excellence in design back to city and local government projects. Through her work, she has changed the way the City interacts and engages with its communities. By introducing new participatory processes and co-producing solutions with the communities that she works in, she has committed her work toward bringing City and Citizen planning together. Shaakira is passionate about responsive and co-productive design. She has led the transformation of the City’s approach to design and the manner in which it services its citizens. She has introduced new practices to ensure that communities are empowered through their direct contribution and participation in
their spaces. This allows for the design to be a reflection of the social environment within which it is situated.

Based on her leadership within her field, Shaakira is a 2017 Mandela Washington Fellow as part of the Young African Leaders Initiative. She has also been nominated for the Pioneer in Innovation for Women in Construction Award and the Standard Bank Rising Star Award.