



STUDIO PORTFOLIO 2020

www.urbanworks.co.za

Johannesburg
South Africa



URBANWORKS

ARCHITECTURE & URBANISM

UrbanWorks Architecture and Urbanism is an interdisciplinary design-research studio operating in the city of Johannesburg, South Africa. Founded in 2008 by architect, urban designer, and researcher Threshen Govender, UrbanWorks was borne out of a simultaneous frustration and curiosity around contemporary urban space and how it was being navigated in post-apartheid South African cities.

Through immersive, experimental, and interdisciplinary explorations and provocations around space as a political instrument, UrbanWorks engages critically with the cultural and economic infrastructures of South African cities. This is achieved using the four key pillars of urbanism, architecture, research and teaching, and interventions.

This urban architectural suite allows for a greater dexterity for UrbanWorks – to take on a problem and respond to it at various scales, temporalities and levels of criticality. While its pillars of urbanism and architecture allow the studio to approach projects on systemic and physical levels respectively, its interventions allow for more immediate and imaginative responsive design solutions. Similarly, a responsible urgency underpins much of the studio's projects in order to better respond to spaces of crisis or post-trauma in a timely manner.

Through drawings, lectures, talks, writings, and exhibitions UrbanWorks is constantly seeking to foster knowledge, literacy, and a greater criticality and accountability around urban architectural practice. The studio is involved in various academic, public, and private institutions and leads a design research unit at the Graduate School of Architecture at the University of Johannesburg investigating rogue, subversive spatial tactics. The practice also features a project space located in the Maboneng Precinct for local and international collaborative projects and experimentations, as well as think-tank sessions for contemporary urban issues.

Central to the studio's operation is experimental and interdisciplinary collaboration. Over the years UrbanWorks has worked with heritage practitioners, historians, engineers, environmental specialists, micro and macro-urban economists, curators, artists, and policymakers, always with the intention to experiment with alternate disciplines and to challenge and cultivate new ways of engaging with the architectural practice.

UrbanWorks' portfolio ranges from urban design master plans, urban renewal, and architectural projects to heritage restorations, research, exhibition design, knowledge production, and creative interventions. Whilst diverse in nature, these projects share a rootedness in space, a material expressiveness, and a tactical, efficient, and impactful set of solutions that's at the core of the UrbanWorks studio.

Significant cultural, economic, and political infrastructures such as Constitution Hill, Chancellor House, The Yeoville Recreation Centre, and the Vilakazi Street and Maboneng Precincts are just a few of the Johannesburg sites and spaces of urban intervention that form part of the UrbanWorks portfolio.

With its penchant for critical inquiry as well as a playful creativity that is rooted in the everyday realities of the urban world, UrbanWorks is steeped in the historical and contemporary culture, functionality, and human narratives of the city. Through the urgent and responsive application of architectural practice, urbanism, creative intervention, research, and social commentary, UrbanWorks continues to provide design solutions to the complex, inspiring, and rapidly evolving reaches of contemporary urban cities.



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MATTERS OF COMPLIANCE MEMBERSHIPS REFERENCES

MATTERS OF COMPLIANCE, MEMBERSHIPS

The studio has relevant legal statutory documentation to execute architectural and urban design projects in South Africa.

- Company Registration No: 2008 / 00539 /23
- VAT Registration No.: 4290 2466 53
- Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) Registration No.: 1884352/6
- South African Department of Labour Compensation Fund Compliance (COIDA) No.: 990001028866
- South African Institute for Architecture
- South African Council for the Architectural Profession
- Gauteng Institute for Architecture
- Urban Design Institute South Africa
- South African Revenue Services Tax Clearance Certificate
- Professional Indemnity Insurance R5m cover
- BBBEE Level 1

LETTERS OF REFERENCE

- Dr Tanya Zack (Tanya Zack Development Planners)
- Dr Andrew Charman (Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation)
- Mr Joe Mazibuka (sp) (Joburg Market)
- Yasmeen Dinath (Johannesburg Development Agency)
- Adrian Khulman (Keithsons Property)
- Noemi Njangiru (Goethe Institute)
- Violaine Pattée-Suquet (Institute Français)
- Hlengiwe Mbonambi (Johannesburg Development Agency)
- Steven Hobs (Trinity Session)
- Celestine Mouton (Johannesburg Development Agency)
- Temba Ntuli (Constitution Hill)
- Lana Lovasic (Impact Hub)

CLIENTS PARTNERS COLLABORATORS ALLIANCE NETWORKS

CLIENTS & COLLABORATORS

Our clients vary in scale and influence across public and private sectors. Common to many of our clients is their curiosity, ambition and intention to affect change through design in their projects. Our clients include:

PUBLIC SECTOR

Provincial Government Gauteng: Dept. of Arts Culture & Recreation
Gauteng Provincial Government: Blue IQ
Western Cape Provincial Government
South African Cities Network
National Arts Council

Johannesburg Development Agency
City of Johannesburg : Department of Economic Development
City of Johannesburg: Department of Transport
City of Johannesburg: Department of Spatial Transformation
City of Johannesburg: Joburg City Parks and Joburg Zoo
City of Johannesburg: Joburg Market

ConDev (Constitutional Hill Development Company)

PRIVATE SECTOR, NGO's, FOUNDATIONS, ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

Investec
South African Breweries
Volkswagen B-BEBEE Initiatives Trust
Keithsons Property Holdings
Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation
The Trinity Session
Jozi Housing
Impact Hub (Johannesburg)
Resilient Civic Design Collective

Goethe Institute
Institute Français Afrique du Sud and Alliance Françias
Prince Claus Foundation
Rosa Luxemburg Foundation
The British Council
The Centre for the Less Good Idea
Woman In Informal Employment Globalising and Organising

African Centre for Cities (University of Cape Town)
WITS School of Architecture and Planning
University of Johannesburg (Graduate School of Architecture)
Johannesburg Inner City Partnership

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation
Dr Tanya Zack
The Trinity Session
Herbert Prins Heritage Specialist
University of Johannesburg (Graduate School of Architecture)

TALKS CONFERENCES

TALKS & CONFERENCES

- Key note address for the South African Urban Conference ' Undercurrents of Radical Possibility', October 2018.
- Lecture at the Graduate School of Architecture's International Lecture Series, 'Making/Insight', September 2018.
- Unit Leader at the University of Johannesburg Graduate School of Architecture, Johannesburg. Rogue Economies, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019.
- Presentation at Internal Forum on Urbanism (Emergent City), Hong Kong, hosted by Hong Kong Polytech, 2017
- Speaker at Architecture ZA (AZA) conference, 2016
- Teaching Assistant at ETH Zurich, Switzerland with Prof. Heinrich Wolff, 2014-2015.
- Speaker at University of Free State 'Dialogues' Conference ' Making Cents of Practice II: Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, August 2013
- Public Lecture at Hochschule Konstanz, Sensing Place: Spatial Alternatives Through Speculation and Inquiry in South Africa, June 2013.
- TedX Johannesburg talk, Imagination and the Politics of Space, September 2013 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=emWGfKbB6rs>)
- Tutor for Urban Design Module at University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg March - May 2013
- Speaker at Public Art Conference, November 2012, Johannesburg, "Re-imagining artists in City- Making."
- Speaker at Sustain our Africa Conference, September 2012, Cape Town. "Industrial Heritage."
- Speaker at Architecture South Africa Conference, September 2012, Cape Town, "Alternative Practice."
- Mail & Guardian Literary Arts Festival, September 2012. Panelist discussing Johannesburg as a City of Extremes.
- Talking Heads July 2012 Johannesburg. Invited to talk on matters of urbanism and Johannesburg.
- Public Lecture at University of Johannesburg 2011 'Making Cents of Practice: Johannesburg."
- Lecture, Public Art Conference, Johannesburg 2011.
- Low Income Private Inner City Schools Studio with Masters students at the University of Johannesburg, 2011, 2012.
- Presentation of paper at African Cities Centre, UCT, Taxi Geographies- Exploration and speculation on taxi phenomenon consequence in the built environment, 2011.
- University of Konstanz, Social Anthropology Department, Germany, 2010. Lecture on 'Johannesburg Urbanism'

WORKSHOPS / EXAMINATIONS

- External examiner at University of Johannesburg 2009, 2010
- Critic and Examiner at University of Witwatersrand 2006 - 2011
- Public Art and the City, 2011, Lecture at the Hub
- Imaginary Futures, 2010, Sutherland. Workshop and conference exploring ideas around how science and art can be brought together to benefit the town of Sutherland.
- External examiner at University of Cape Town, 3rd Year final design studio, 2009

PUBLICATIONS AWARDS

PUBLICATIONS

- Co-authored a book on "TOWNSHIP ECONOMY, People , SPaces and Practices in the Making of Informal Business", Published by HSRC 2020.
- Co-authored a chapter of "The Journey to Transform Local Government" on Post-Apartheid Spatial Inequality: Case Studie from Ivory Park, Johannesburg, of Enforced Infromalisation of Micro-Enterprises, 2019.
- Featured in ArchSA (91) May/June 2018 for Eveline Street Research in Katutura, Namibia.
- Featured in Leading Architecture & Design for the completed Dibuka Library for the Alliance Franciase, October 2018.
- Featured in Exhibition at the Japan Pavilion at the 2018 Venice Biennale, published in Architectural Ethnography, Rogue Economies Vol 1: Revelation and Revolution.
- Featured in MiniLiving, 2017 <https://creativeclub.co.za/exploring-joburgs-urban-moment-thireshe-govender/>
- Rogue Economies Vol 1: Revelation and Revolution, 2017 - Research publication of work undertaken in Unit 14, GSA.
- Rogue Economies Vol 2: InSecurity, 2018 - Research publication of work undertaken in Unit 14, GSA.
- Rogue Economies Vol 3: Concerning Risk, 2019 - Research publication of work undertaken in Unit 14, GSA.
- Rogue Economies Vol 1: Revelation and Revolution, 2019 - Research publication of work undertaken in Unit 14, GSA.
- Featured practice in Architecture SA (83), January 2017.
- Published project in 'Informal Market Worlds-Atlas. The Architecture of Economic Pressure, Mörtenböck, Mooshammer (eds), NAI, 2015
- Text on Highpoint in "Up Up, Stories of Johannesburgs High-rises". 2016. Dechmann, Jaggi, Marbach, Ruffo (eds).
- Academic paper on "The Creative Night-Time Leisure Economy of Informal Drinking Venues". 2015, in collaboration with Andrew Charman for IJURR.
- Article on informal drinking taverns and their relevance - 'Home Sweet Resilience' published in SLUMLab #9, February 2014.
- Text on "Sweet Home Resilience/Deviant Lea(r)nings, UrbanPaphleteer #3 Design and Trust, 2014, in collaboration with Andrew Charman for UCL.
- Paper on "Shebeens as Spaces and Places of Informality, Enterprise, Drinking and Sociability", 2012, in collaboration with Andrew Charman and Leif Petersen for the South African Geographical Journal.
- Design Indaba Magazine, April 2012, Where Its At - Emerging Architects. Featured as an emerging architect in South Africa with text by Janina Masajoda.
- South African Architect August 2011, Emerging Architects. Featured as an emerging practice in South Africa with article by Alex Oppen.
- World Architect Magazine June 2005, New Architecture in Post Democratic South Africa, co-editor with Henning Rasmuss.

AWARDS

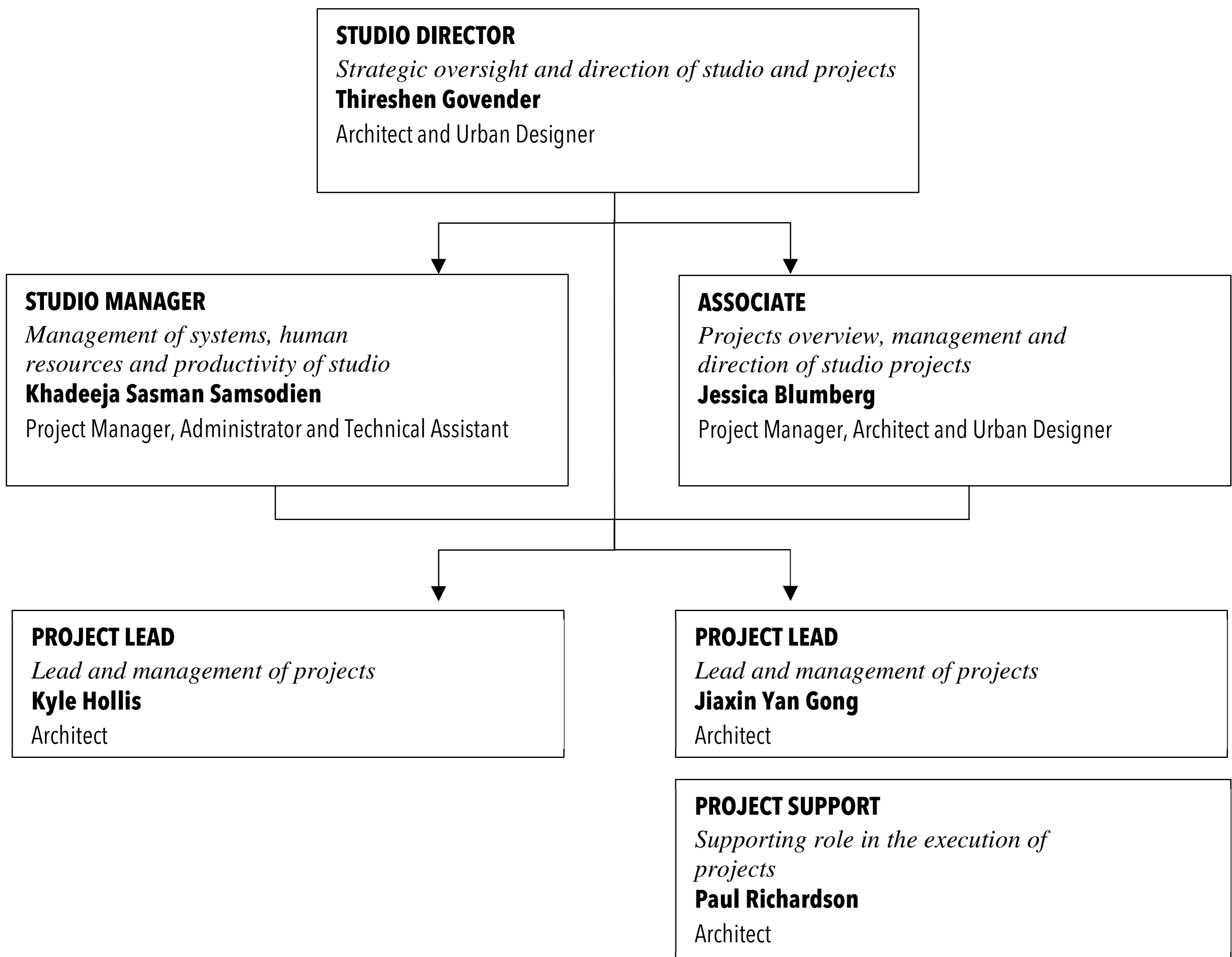
- World Architecture Festival, Winner Power and Justice Category, 2018
- South African Planning Institute National Award for Academic Research, for *Cross Border Shopping in Johannesburg's Inner City*, (2018)
- GIFA Award for Research, *Ivory Park Street Life*, 2015
- Chevening Scholarship to study Urban Design at UCL, 2005
- Helen Gardner Travel Prize for travel through India, 1999

TEAM PRESENT PAST & FUTURE

The UrbanWorks team has been developed to suit the specific business and skill needs of the studio. The model is based on a core team supported by ad-hoc specialist practitioners that we call upon on a case-by-case basis to undertake larger works. This keeps our team agile, focused and continuous in volatile market conditions.

The core team is structured in the following manner.

Thireshen Govender
Khadeeja Sasman Samsodien
Jessica Blumberg Musiker
Jiaxon Yan Gong
Kyle Hollis
Paul Richardson



THRESHEN GOVENDER BIO

Name: **Threshen Govender**
Position: **Director, Architect & Urban Designer (UrbanWorks); Unit Leader (Graduate School of Architecture, University of Johannesburg)**
Hometown: **Johannesburg, South Africa**
Qualification **B.Arch (UCT), MScUD (UCL)**
Registrations: **PrArch. SAIA. UDISA**
Email address: **thiresh@urbanworks.co.za**

Threshen Govender is an architect, urban designer, and researcher working in Johannesburg, South Africa.

A keen observer of the urban world, Govender is interested in the speculative nature of architecture and its ability to put forward necessary provocations and possibilities for post-traumatic sites and cities. Underlying this, is his understanding of space as a political instrument – a tool to organise, shape, and make sense of societies – and his penchant for seeking out narratives through a set of spatial tactics and strategies in order to make sense of, and build literacy around, these troubled sites.

Following his graduation from the University of Cape Town, Govender trained in local practices in Cape Town and Johannesburg before being awarded a Chevening Scholarship and advancing his studies in Urban Design at The University College of London (Bartlett) in the United Kingdom.

Education and knowledge production around space and design form a crucial role in Govender's efforts to develop a more widespread understanding of the architectural practice. Exhibiting work at the Venice Biennale, teaching at ETH Zurich, and presenting lectures in Hong Kong, Germany, Namibia, Netherlands, and the UK are a few of the shapes that these efforts have taken. Govender also leads a design-research unit at the Graduate School of Architecture at the University of Johannesburg investigating rogue, subversive spatial tactics.

Collaboration and the deliberate choice to work across various disciplines in order to challenge architectural practice are central to Govender's navigations of the craft. UrbanWorks Architecture & Urbanism, Govender's design-research studio founded in 2008, employs innovative and responsive design strategies to more critically engage with, and provide solutions toward, radical transformation in South African cities across cultural and economic infrastructures.

Govender's recent research and teaching outputs include delivering the keynote address for the South African Urban Conference 'Undercurrents of Radical Possibility' (2018) and presenting a lecture at the Graduate School of Architecture–Boogertman+Partners International Lecture Series (2018). In addition to co-authoring articles for various peer-reviewed journals, he has recently co-authored the book *Township Economies: People, Spaces and Practices* which collates and distils nine years of research and insight into 11 townships across Southern Africa, published by HSRC Press (February 2020).

PREVIOUS TEAM MEMEBERS

Adam Osman
Alexandra Cunningham
Beke Mchunu
Blain van Rooyen
Bronwyn Kotzen
Catherine Walker
Daniel Lyonga
Eduardo Cachucho
Holger Deppe
Izak Potgeiter
Jhono Bennet
Kegan Stokes
Kyle Hollis
Megam Tennant
Mthembeki Ngema
Naadira Patel
Namon Freeman
Pandeani Liphosa
Rudi Benade
Sarah de Villiers
Sebastian Fischbeck
Tammy Ohlson de Fine
Taryn Micheal
Tova Lubinsky
Valentina Manente

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The experimental and academic nature of our works attract a diverse range of talented interns through our Internship Program. The program hosts interns for a period of 3-6month. Interns come from various local and international institutions originating from Switzerland, The United States of America, Germany, Namibia, France, Belgium, India and Australia. Interns that have been part of our team include:

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Aeron Stipanov
Akilesh Sihing
Amy Lieibrandt
Anna Sango
Julien Thiney
Lebusa Selepe
Marie Czabaum
Moso Molepo
Pauline Portefaix
Raul Biehrer
Tarika Pather
Victor Hazan
Yolande Kluth
Zakeeya Kalla

Through the course of production and speculation, our team changes based on skills, interests and capacity. Space often becomes available for collaborators to engage on short or medium term projects. Should you be interested, drop us an email on info@urbanworks.co.za to set up a conversation.

