↪ Roundtable 01 ↩

Race, Space and the City

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Abstract
In this roundtable three members of the research group, 'Race, Space and the City' discuss various components of their overlapping interest in the African built environment during the final year of their studies in architecture with the primary investigator of the project, and how the biweekly seminars of 'Race, Space and the City' set the basis for their understanding of coloniality within architecture at a previously White university. During the course of the discussion, they address how they developed various approaches to cope with, then overcome, some of the experiences of their education in architecture at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The roundtable offers an open and honest discussion of colonial practices amid a climate of decolonisation and the chastisement of Black students who ask questions on race, apartheid and the built environment.

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Introduction

In June 2014, as the director of the Centre for Critical Research on Race and Identity (CCRRI) at UKZN, I met four Black women who were studying towards their masters' degree in Architecture. Juan Solis-Arias, a contributor to this collection, suggested that I meet with the said women who had asked questions about African identity within the South African built environment that he as a foreigner to South Africa could not answer. At that stage, I ran several research groups that focused on critical race theory, Black consciousness, African social and political thought and had just hosted a Biko conference. I took the four women around the centre, and at each place where I stopped to talk about the particular African scholar whose image was on the wall, they indicated that they had not heard of that person. In our first meeting, we discussed what they wanted to achieve in their course of study and their shortcomings or obstacles. We discussed crucial items. Among them was the concern with not being able to draw from their existential experience as Black women and taking the history of their lived experience in KZN into their architectural projects because it was prohibited. After all, they did live in a built environment and yet was not allowed to reflect on it. The latter seemed peculiar to me, but the more I listened at that first meeting and the subsequent one, the more the realisation of architecture devoid of African knowledge, African lifestyle, African aesthetic, became a reality. Shortly after, we formed 'Race, Space and the City', a research group that met every two weeks. Juan Solis-Arias and several students at UKZN joined the discussions and presented on their research. The said four women also attended various research events at the centre, such as the Fanon workshops, the Biko Education project seminars, including Prof. Barney Pityana and Prof Mabogo More as guest speakers.

'Race, Space, and the City', was first started to address research questions students brought to the centre on land, race, space and identity. Students reported an absence of discussions on race in some disciplines where design, aesthetics, land, the city and geographical space formed part of the curriculum. Yet, an analysis of race was either absent or dismissed when raised by students. Somehow this is still left outside of the South African architectural textbooks, still steeped in apartheid narratives, aided and abetted by the beneficiaries of apartheid that still conveniently teaching architecture as though racialised living spaces were not the cornerstone of the policy of racial

segregation, the aftermath of which we are still living through today. For the Black lecturers as accomplices that were hard to fathom: what was in it for them, I always asked myself? What benefits did they derive from showing their colonisers how well they could put Black students in their place? Whilst I still struggle with addressing the many facets of this complex coloniser – colonised relationship, what we were able to accomplish in 'Race, Space and City', by far outweigh the concern I have with agents of complicity who pay dearly for their bond with the coloniser.

As news travelled across the city of Durban, and journalists read of our events, which were posted online, the formation of 'Race, Space and the City' made the national news. In an interview with *The Mercury*, I was told that no one in the school of architecture in a leadership position which was contacted was available for comment. I was asked by a journalist at *The Mercury* why it had taken so long for architects at UKZN to address the history of apartheid? The same interview was reproduced in the university's online newspaper, ndabaonline, Vol 2, Issue 32, June 04, 2014. Below is a small excerpt of my response to the question posed by *The Mercury* journalist:

> There is a belief that the construction of race takes place outside of the construction of buildings, which is erroneous. Every building has a history, every building has a foundation, and that foundation reflects the history of the country, the demarcation of the city, the soil upon which it is built, the history of those who till the soil, and the history of those who inhabit it (ndabaonline, Vol. 2, Issue 32, June 04, 2014).

Over the years, the members of 'Race, Space and the City' met up for various events, conferences, symposiums and discussions. We have all continued the research work in this area and remained in contact in various forms.

As part of an ongoing discussion, the three Black women (who have remained at the core of 'Race, Space and the City') and I got together to address the research group's history, their respective paths towards the completion of their masters' degree in architecture, and the question of decolonisation. In this issue on decolonisation, six years after our first meeting, and five years after they completed their masters' degree in architecture at UKZN, we unravel some of the salient features that marked their path towards obtaining their degrees and license as architects.

Methodology

For discussion and to ensure that all three of the participants in conversation with Rozena Maart were able to offer their reflections in their own capacity chose a question and response format in this written presentation. The approach was that each of the former students reflects on their experiences independently to show their individual and particular experience and address each of these.

Discussion

ROZENA MAART: Good afternoon, everyone. I am pleased that we can sit down and have this discussion today. As previously noted, I will put forward questions on the history of 'Race, Space and the City' and your journey within the school of architecture, as indicative of what you have shared with everyone in the research group over the period of six years. We can also discuss how the past six years have marked your engagement with your identity and the broader implications of decolonisation.

ROZENA MAART: Shall we start with how you entered university?

NANDIPHA MAKHAYE: I applied to two universities, namely UKZN, in Durban, and Wits (the University of the Witwatersrand) in Johannesburg. Unfortunately, when one is shortlisted after applying for undergraduate studies in architecture, a portfolio of work must be submitted for further assessment. Johannesburg was at the time too far for me to submit my portfolio. I then hand-delivered my portfolio to UKZN while awaiting my final matric examination results. At the end of December 2006, I obtained enough points to enter the architecture programme and was accepted to begin my first year in February of 2007.

NOMPUMELELO KUBHEKA: A brief history of my relationship with architecture started when a career guidance programme was introduced to our grade 10 class at my school. My art teacher at the time, Ms Leone Hall, introduced to us, her students, various careers that aligned with art and creativity. Architecture stood out for me. Upon choosing a possible career path, I was set on my first choice to study architecture and had no plan B. I applied to study architecture in various institutions and was accepted in all of them. I

chose to study at the University of KwaZulu Natal because of its reputation as a prestigious university and its proximity to my home. The biggest factor was that I was raised in a middle-aged family of four children, of which I'm the eldest. The option of living on campus wasn't possible as there was simply no money for it. For my undergraduate study, I applied through the Central Applications Office (CAO). When I completed the form, it was clear that I had enough points to study architecture. As a prerequisite to becoming a professional architect, I reapplied for a masters' degree, of which I was granted a conditional acceptance.

LONDIWE SOKHABASE: My high school invited university representatives to speak to the matric class and advised us on which profession we could pursue. That is when I learned about the Central Applications Office (CAO), which accepts application for all KZN tertiary institutions. I then applied through that process, and I was conditionally accepted into the architecture programme and placed on the waiting list. When I received my final matric results, I went to the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) where I found that my results had catapulted me to the top of the waiting list, and I was accepted there and then.

ROZENA MAART: What were your expectations when you entered the school of architecture as an undergraduate student?

NANDIPHA MAKHAYE: As this was an arts programme, I expected a group of very diverse and unique students who embraced and celebrated their uniqueness. I did not expect to be pressured to 'fit in' but I expected that the lecturers would be as diverse as the students and that the lecturers would understand most of us, considering that we were all artists in our own right. My art teacher at high school encouraged me to apply to the programme, and as our art class in high school was mostly dominated by White students, I did not expect any less from the school of architecture. I expected to enjoy the course as much as I had enjoyed the subject of art throughout high school. I expected the curriculum to bring out the best in me while being taught a new dimension in what was to be my future career.

NOMPUMELELO KUBHEKA: One of my many talents is art (drawing and painting); I consider myself generally quite creative. I had expected studies in

architecture to offer a perspective on the contribution of art in the world of construction. The more I studied it, the more the sector became layered with environmental, social, and political issues that needed to be confronted. To put it bluntly, I did not expect to be fed European solutions to architecture as the main source of my education whilst being reduced to a lesser person, lesser of an academic student purely because of my skin colour and gender. For a notoriously White-dominated industry, the expectation would be for the institution to be geared towards grooming and empowering more Black women – at least that is what I thought and given the university's promotion mandate. However, it was the complete opposite.

LONDIWE SOKHABASE: I expected so much more than I was ever offered. I was prepared to work hard as I am a hard worker by nature. I expected new experiences and knowledge, in addition to the knowledge that I already had. I expected to enjoy the course at least. Apart from the tough academic training, which I was ready for, I didn't enjoy myself. I had to repeat two modules in year two and year three. I still came back, expecting something different, and I was disappointed each time.

ROZENA MAART: Everyone has expectations when we enter educational institutions. Did the programme meet your expectations?

NANDIPHA MAKHAYE: In terms of experiencing White domination, the architecture department at UKZN exceeded my expectations. Only a small percentage of the students in my class was Black, and an even smaller percentage was Indian. In terms of artistic diversity: there wasn't much diversity, it seemed all of us were trying to fit in rather than stand out. Most of the White students were addressed by their first names as some of their parents and relatives were either UKZN alumni or had strong working relationships with the lecturers. They also seemed quite familiar with students ahead of them in the programme. The White students seemed to be acquainted with one another and therefore formed a large collective leaving the rest of us feeling out of place and disoriented, to some extent, which lasted for the first couple of weeks until we found our little groups. In the first two years, I was less concerned with skin colour (and racialised identity, which is generally based on skin colour in South Africa) and more concerned with finding my feet in what seemed like a potentially enjoyable yet extremely demanding course.

Later, I started suspecting that maybe architecture was not meant for Black students because of the obvious treatment. This was highlighted during a 'crit' session (a session where lecturers critiqued our work) in my third year: a lecturer told the class that 'architecture is a hobby for rich people designing for other rich people'.

ROZENA MAART: Apart from being a racist statement, that was also incredibly insensitive. We know why the apartheid government only taught architecture and engineering at White universities in South Africa during apartheid – architects and engineers worked alongside and within the apartheid laws to maintain racial segregation and played along in all spheres as they provided the blueprints for building those townships. To say that architecture is a hobby for the rich is an endorsement of racism and an endorsement of the apartheid regime. Even saying this after 1994! This is just callous and completely inappropriate.

NANDIPHA MAKHAYE: At that moment I felt extremely out of place, not only was I not rich, but I was in the middle of trying to build a career and invest all my time and efforts into a so-called hobby. Another concern was that I could not think of anyone off the top of my head who was rich, well at least not from my circle of family or friends. My reasons for wanting to study architecture were purely to create a better physical environment than what I grew up in, and this was going to be my contribution to the world I thought, especially to the Black majority in South Africa who were in desperate need of a revamp of their living conditions and the built environment. For a Black student, certainly for this one, studying architecture really proved to be difficult. Firstly, many off-site locations are visited throughout the course. One of the prerequisites should have been vehicle ownership, especially because most of the locations we visited were not on the taxi route. As a Black student, you are then forced to ask or beg for lifts from your more fortunate classmates. The course is already time and cost consuming, printing alone made one extremely nervous, especially towards the final submissions. In contrast, Black students could only afford the cheapest, which were R40 per page for one print, while our peers stood out as so much more as professional with the fanciest paper on the largest pieces of paper taking up an entire wall at times. By the time it was our turn as Black women to present, we were already feeling inadequate even if our work was amongst the best.

NOMPUMELELO KUBHEKA: For me, learning about architecture was a pleasant experience on a very layman and somewhat naïve level. However, I gradually discovered more to architecture than mere creativity and aesthetically pleasing buildings – architecture framed time, politics and sociology. I became hungry for deeper critical thinking, which I believed was behind the design of the building. The experiential analysis of being a student taught me a lot about unpleasant and unspoken politics in the profession's real world. Architecture, particularly architecture taught within higher education, is for White men. Period. That is the harsh realisation I did not expect to discover early on, as was evident time and time again throughout my degree. I remember receiving a first prize corobrik award (corobrik is the leading South African supplier of eco-friendly bricks), in my second year for a project I was marked average for in class as it was hand-drawn, with my hands, and presented on a shoestring budget, and appeared by far less in presentation than most of my White male peers who, as it happens, excelled. They excelled because they had the gadgets, the funds to purchase equipment, and the networks to ensure that they could present the best drawings. Unchanged and unrefined, my project's uniqueness and conceptual depth captured the attention of external examiners and was deemed best with that of a fellow Black woman student, who was also an 'average' performer academically, according to the lecturers in our school. From this point, our eyes as Black students began to open.

LONDIWE SOKHABASE: Well, I wanted to be a professional architect; from the moment I made my decision; it took ten years, and I became a professional architect. There were hardships and the constant battle waged against me ... *that* I felt every step of the way. By the end of it all, I wished for a different profession. As a Black woman, I experienced learning about architecture very differently than my peers. I struggled more, there weren't enough hours in the days for me to use the computer, and I was exhausted travelling back forth from site visits to printing establishments. I was not equipped financially for this course. I had no laptop, no car and no bottomless pit of money to fund the endless printing that was required. Site visits were 10 to 15 km away from university, for which I needed transportation. Having to take taxis to get to the site on time with students who had cars was such a struggle. Having to walk at night to print drawings because public transportation was no longer available where I lived, also brought many different challenges. I am still exhausted, just thinking about it.

ROZENA MAART: I hear what you're saying. The materiality of race is still very real, especially when it comes to life as a student when no one in your family has followed that route. Even when I entered UWC in 1981, I had no idea what the costs would be. But let me ask you, for the record: what urged you to want to look outside of architecture and be part of 'Race, Space and the City?'

NANDIPHA MAKHAYE: What led me to 'Race, Space and the City' and being part of a group with three of my peers and a professor who spoke about African identity, was firstly the lack of information in our architectural library with regards to African literature and also, the lack of support from the lecturers within the school. My chosen topic of African identity was deemed very controversial by the Black lecturers who were teaching me. On many occasions, lecturers told me to change my topic, even the African lecturers. The reasons for their insistence ranged from the topic being too big for a master's dissertation . . . Another White lecturer actually said that we are all Africans: White, Coloureds, Indian and Black. Therefore, she did not understand what I meant in saying that there is a lack of African identity in the architecture of African countries post colonisation. This White lecturer made this comment publicly, and it was geared at reducing the relevance of African identity within the architectural realm, not just the school. The lack of support and information forced me to look elsewhere for information. As much as my topic was relevant, I needed supporting literature that was nowhere to be found in architecture. A lecturer told me about Prof Maart, who was at the Centre for Critical Research on Race and Identity (CCRRI) as its director. A trip sparked my interest in African architecture I made during my internship years to Rwanda. This was a business trip, but in my spare time, I was fortunate enough to visit the local attractions in Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda. I learnt a lot about Rwanda on my trip, and that was when it dawned on me that I was extremely ignorant of Africa in general. After completing a whole degree in architecture, I was still unfamiliar with African architecture. I realised how much I knew about European architecture to the point that my two favourite architects were of German descent. To this day, I still do not have a favourite African architect as so little is said about African architects who, interestingly enough, place enormous emphasis on vernacular aesthetics. This may be due to my ignorance or lack of research in the area, but I strongly feel that they systematically conditioned our minds to solely focus on European architecture.

NOMPUMELELO KUBHEKA: Having voiced my experiences earlier, this meant that as a student, I had to prove myself more than other students. My talent and academic capabilities were no longer sufficient, and my academic success was mostly out of my control. My dark skin colour determined my chances of surviving the course; this is certainly how I was made to feel. Several events happened to my peers and me to confirm the narrative that Black students were not welcome. Upon graduating from my undergraduate degree, my marks were short of the aggregate needed to qualify for the masters' degree. Therefore, I had to work longer than the prescribed twelve months between a bachelor's and a master's degree. I worked for three years as an architectural intern to build enough financial muscle to survive the course to follow, whilst building a stronger architectural portfolio. Re-entry was hard when I returned to pursue my masters' degree; new management and new faces in the staff stood out in management as a Black man in the field (I will elaborate later). My fellow Corobrick award winner (Corobrick is a company that builds clay bricks and offers awards to students around the country each year) was never accepted within the school of architecture at UKZN and never returned. After much consultation with this new management, my application was finally accepted on a bogus conditional offer. To cut a long story short, I was kicked out of school six months into the semester following my results and was told never to return. I had not failed any modules, and yet this was happening to me. After another round of begging, then banished for twelve months into 'exile' and subjected to scrutinising the terms under which I was expelled, my application was accepted again. This time I was given an ultimatum that I should not get too comfortable, as the course was not for me. I needed a support group that understood my position without fear of confronting my academic flaws whilst creating a healthy environment for critical thinking on race in the spaces we find ourselves at university and within the country and the larger global world. At the point, I was introduced to Prof. Maart at CCRRI. I was battling depression while trying my best to not upset the system (within my school) with my decolonial and 'emotive' approach to architectural theory. The latter label – emotive – was put upon me each time I tried to express myself. My study's focus was the design and role of church buildings on South African colonisation as symbols of conquership and the shape it had taken in recent post-colonial times while proposing a modern African inspired model of the church. I was passionate to evoke critical thinking on the subject and understand the intent behind its funding and preservation that continues to this day.

LONDIWE SOKHABASE: As a group of Black women who started working together, we were introduced to the centre by one of our lecturers. The first session, upon meeting Prof. Maart, was a breath of fresh air. After that, our small group of four Black women started attending group sessions with Prof Maart and the students she supervised and worked with at the Centre for Critical Research in Race and Identity (CCRRI) where she was the director. This was a long-awaited journey in my development not only as an architect, but a Black woman trying to navigate a world that is systematically trying to push me out and away from it. The day I realised, and understood systemic racism through a session at the centre hosted by Prof Maart, was the first time in my university career that I felt sure of myself and what I was doing in my studies. I was determined to fight until the end. I was not on equal footing with the rest of my classmates: I was Black and simultaneously a woman. The only way I was going to succeed was if I worked twice as hard. And workshops at the centre motivated me every time I attended the seminars and the talks.

ROZENA MAART: During the course of your study at UKZN many of you tried to address the absence of a discussion on the African built environment. Can you talk about the responses you received?

NANDIPHA MAKHAYE: The lecturers ignored us, to say the least. They strategically diverted our thoughts to other issues which had absolutely nothing to do with the African built environment. The suggestion would throw you off so much that you ended up more confused than what you started with. One guest lecturer told me that, 'African architecture is too basic; it lacks the complexity needed to be explored by a masters' student'. In all my years in architecture school, I only remember one lecture where we discussed anything closely related to African architecture. It was a lecture presented by Professor Peters who was telling us about the Zulu beehive hut, which was an introductory lecture to other more sophisticated native inventions around the world. I only discovered Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe's ruins when I was researching out of the UKZN architecture school's confines. And this came as a shock to me, as I was conditioned to believe that nothing of significance in architecture could be found in Southern Africa.

NOMPUMELELO KUBHEKA: An African built environment? This was deemed 'not an architectural question'. The subject matter was simply not

entertained, at all. The narrative of being a successful student was geared towards just producing high budget designs and presentations reinforced by current issues without delving into writing that reflected lived experience of the built environment, such as race and how race affected and influenced social and political theory. For most Black students, including myself, that was very restricting and literally unavoidable.

LONDIWE SOKHABASE: African built environment? There was no discussion. None. Having been raised in the rural villages of KZN I watched my grandmother build the beehive hut from the ground up. I was proud of the tacit knowledge that my dear grandmother had passed on to me, but I was not allowed to share this knowledge as valid, as architectural knowledge. I experienced first-hand the tradition and planning hierarchy that was followed in the hut. From the *Umsamu* area to the *Hearth* and the women and men sides of the hut. I was always shocked when lecturers would come with information contrary to what I knew and teach it as the gospel truth. In my first year, I soon learned that what I had lived and learned was not correct, but what some researcher wrote about my culture was an unquestioned truth. I remember a guest lecturer who came to present a series of photographs depicting Black women's lives in hostels, in one of the pictures there was a representation of a dead body covered in a white a sheet. She explained how the sheet is used as a sacred covering for the deceased in the Black culture. When we tried to explain to her that this is incorrect and it was, in fact, a blanket which was used as a sacred covering, she told us her research proved otherwise. It became apparent that the little literature about African built environment and culture came from second-hand sources and sometimes inaccurate observations. The African built form topic was always palatable when presented by a White student, who will throw in a few Zulu words here and there for effect but was never a subject worth pursuing if you were a Black student.

ROZENA MAART: Despite the resistance, it sounds as though you could do your work on African identity? If not, how did you proceed?

NANDIPHA MAKHAYE: After many sleepless nights and questioning my decision for even considering this topic, I was able to put together a comprehensive dissertation on African identity. I doubt that I would have been able to do it without the support and help from the UKZN Centre for Critical Research

on Race and Identity (CCRRI), headed by Professor Rozena Maart. When I first visited the centre, I was a wreck because, in all honesty, I could not understand why my chosen topic was causing such a stir within our architectural learning space – a university. A lecturer even asked me, 'why are all Black students seeking this African identity?' It was not until I was presented with tons of literature on African discourses by Prof Maart, who together with us created the 'Race, Space and the City', research group, and had endless discussions on systemic racism hosted at the centre, did I understand the magnitude of the problem. At some point, I really thought I wasn't going to make it to graduation because of disregarding my lecturer's advice and going ahead with a topic that made everyone so tense. Since Prof Maart's main specialisation was expertise in political philosophy and psychoanalysis (Black Consciousness and critical race theory), she would unpack everything psychoanalytically we were going through as Black women in architecture and tell us why it was happening. Having heard all her theoretical unpacking and explanations it became clear that we had defied the most important rule in architecture, 'it's Europe first and Africa last' syndrome that we had decided to fight against. We had shown the highest form of disrespect by seeking to solve African problems with solutions which would benefit African people, and as a result, change the African discourse in architecture – how dare we!

NOMPUMELELO KUBHEKA: Doing work on African identity wasn't easy; we had to stand our ground and believe our points were valid and revolutionary. Until that point of working within the research group, 'Race, Space and the City', all we had been fed for years through our syllabus was European theories of creating meaningful architecture in the world at large. Very little on indigenous African content was ever recommended to further groom us into being well-rounded South African and/or even African architects. The disappointing part of it all was that even Black lecturers shied away from embracing our proposal on African Identity. We only had ourselves as students and many healthy interactions with comrades at the CCRRI, who offered us peer support and helped curb our mental breakdowns. At CCRRI, with Prof Maart as director, we felt heard and triumphant whilst in our architecture classes, we were made to feel like failures.

LONDIWE SOKHABASE: No, I could not do work on African identity: I could not! That is one of my biggest regrets. In my fifth year, I submitted a

proposal for my research, and it was returned with a statement, 'this is racist'. Imagine how ignorant a lecturer has to be to say this to a Black woman from South Africa. This was actually the written commentary. The paragraphs that were deemed racist were paraphrased from an article I found in the Architecture library that reported apartheid South Africa, and apartheid planning. I was confused how an event that had taken place not 20 years ago could be so quickly be forgotten to a point where no mention of it is to be present in a student's assignments in the year 2015. I was surrounded by lectures who were suffering from selective amnesia, and who could only remember everything good and nothing bad about South Africa – known for the system of apartheid from which they benefitted enormously. This demotivated me. I was being called a racist! I ended up doing a somewhat politically correct version of my original idea, including an African literature floor in my proposed library.

ROZENA MAART: Can you share some of what happened during your final year of the architecture masters' degree?

NANDIPHA MAKHAYE: It was very fortunate that we all dealt mostly with our supervisor in the final year, so I never had to present to my other lecturers who were clearly very underwhelmed with my persistence in continuing with my topic. I remember on my last presentation in my final year of the masters', I presented to an all-White panel (in 2015, in the 'new' South Africa) who were vocalised that they were impressed by the work presented in front of them. They sang my praises and noted how clear my presentation was and how well it flowed from the beginning until the end. The problem arose when I elaborated on my topic and thoroughly explained what it was that I meant when I spoke of a 'lack of African identity in our African cities', namely Pietermaritzburg, which is still littered with statues and buildings from the colonial era, of which the all-White panel had nothing to say. My dissertation was not published or placed in the architectural library like all dissertations, as per the university regulations. This was even though I submitted it on time together with many of my colleagues. I guess I just had to be grateful for the fact that I passed the course, and everyone can now move on swiftly with their lives, and with the knowledge that they were somewhat able to punish me.

NOMPUMELELO KUBHEKA: We were treated like amateurs and often made to question our sanity. We were belittled and sometimes ridiculed for our

outspokenness and our 'left' approach to architecture and architecture education. The worst attacks were personal and displayed extreme abuse of power from some lectures and the powers that be – the White lecturers they tried to please. I remember one instance during my 'twelve-month exile' where whilst pleading my case, realising that two other Black women were in more or less the same boat. All three of us were dismayed by the experience and felt unfairly treated and needed answers. This conveniently happened concurrently with the school's accreditation and evaluation by the South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP) officially. Clearly, the last thing the school needed was Black women weeping over the flaws in the system in the corridors. So, we were 'silenced'. _____ (name removed) often called us all into his office to offer solutions we couldn't resist. These included international trips with internship programmes. The whole proposal was enticing to poor students struggling with depression and very little ability to question a Black man of high stature at the university or contemplate making live phone calls to his 'international connections'. I was assigned to South Korea, the others to the USA and Brazil. In excitement, we were deterred from our mission of further attending classes and advised to prepare our visas and ready ourselves for the once in a lifetime sponsored trip. As soon as the accreditation process was over, so were our trips, immediately. Unprepared and unaware, we were suddenly thrust into many disciplinary hearings planned by _____ (name removed) and put on display, where we were depicted as unruly, incompetent students. And that our trips were stories we invented as no one had tangible proof of this person's proposal. Never was the deep-end more hurtful and confusing, but once again we fought immediately, on the spot, and cried later. As a result of this, many painful consequences produced horribly low grades no one could prove. I missed two graduation ceremonies due to this level of incompetence that was set on inflicting Black suffering.

LONDIWE SOKHABASE: In my life, I don't think I have cried as much as I did during my final year of University. I was admitted to the hospital for a week, and the doctor demanded that I get rest. It was just one terrible critique of my work after another. I am glad that I was part of 'Race, Space and the City' by then. I henceforth approached all negative comments with a background of knowing why this was happening to me.

ROZENA MAART: What are you saying? That you were able to understand

the mechanisms of racism much better and the complicity of some of the Black lecturers who played along ... those who also fought you?

LONDIWE SOKHABASE: Architecture was a fight, a fight that at the beginning, I was not aware of, but in the end, my eyes were opened, and I came prepared for the fight. And I knew that if my classmates submitted four A0's, (an AO is the largest sheet of paper used for Architectural drawings), I had to submit eight A0's for all presentations. I was not expected to succeed, but I was determined to go down swinging if I was going down.

ROZENA MAART: When did the question of decoloniality come into your life, your studies and your work as an architect?

NANDIPHA MAKHAYE: I was once asked, whether people respect me more than before, now that I am a professional architect. And the answer is no; people will always judge you by what they see; in my case, a young Black woman is what they see before seeing any of my accomplishments. Being a professional just helped me give me the confidence to respond to whatever is thrown at me. As much as being Black and a woman is not favourable in the architectural realm, I have embraced my Black identity, and therefore, I wear it with pride in whatever life throws at me. As an architect in training, I was presented with an opportunity to work at a prestigious Durban-based company where I met other aspiring architects who had studied all over South Africa. I vividly remember having a one-on-one encounter with a colleague who unapologetically told me, 'you do not look like an architect'. I came from a poor background, where I could not afford the latest apple gadgets owned and carried around by most architects. I was not shocked by this statement since most architects worry more about their aesthetic appearance, which makes them 'look' like an architect rather than *be* an architect; I was more concerned with the latter. It was a fact that both this Indian woman who remarked and I had completed our undergraduate degrees in record time, and we're now both working for the same company. I was not the only Black woman who had studied at a mainstream university employed at this firm; I was just the only woman who carried my Blackness and was aware of my Blackness and embraced it. I was not trying to fit in with the 'norm' in that setting. The architectural dominion is quite a harsh environment for a Black woman. I remember countless engagements, especially White men, where they disre-

garded my opinion and did not even recognise my professionalism. What makes it worse, though, are the White women who make you feel insignificant because of their insecurities, since they see themselves as inferior to White men. In their attempt at recognition, they desperately feel the need to reduce the significance of other women trying to occupy the architectural space; it is so obviously most of the time. Unfortunately for us Black woman, we have always been at the bottom of the food chain, we, therefore, become targets and somehow the more we express our Blackness, the less we fit in and the more targeted we become. I cannot remember a specific point in my architectural career where I had to deal with decoloniality; looking back, the 'Race, Space and the City' research group offered this on so many levels. Once I became conscious of racism and the related issues of the lack of transformation in architecture at UKZN, things progressively became worse. Conversations with White peers became extremely uncomfortable as the traces of their reliance on White supremacy always seemed to be present at all times. The architectural monarchy has made it so comfortable for racism to exist unapologetically. It has become a lifestyle, and the perpetrators are no longer even aware of their contribution to racism nor that their behaviour is toxic.

NOMPUMELELO KUBHEKA: Decoloniality came as we were growing as students and becoming more aware of the alarmingly scarce content on African literature and Africa architecture in the country's context. Our final project in our undergraduate semester was to design a city for the city of Durban. I remember an obvious instruction to never reference African artefacts such as spears and calabashes as a basis for our designs as it would result in a definite failing grade. Decoloniality was further cemented during our discussions at CCRRI and our 'Race Space and the City' research group. It was not only in architecture where African excellence was restricted but also in other studies at the university. Given my experiences, ranging from being the top achiever at school to being treated like scum in architecture at university, I learnt why I should not be surprised that the country has so few Black women in architecture. We are a handful. Systemic racism is designed just to have us as Black women just give up. It takes lots of money, extra resilience and mental strength to become an architect. And in the end, the pay isn't even worth it. For us as Black women, we are not considered 'connected' in the field (there is no history of friends of parents who are architects, etc.), and even if we manage to be connected, we are never granted the opportunity to be in the forefront of

dismantling the colonial structures in our African landscape which are foreign and resistant to us thriving as Africans. Those who are, like so many Black lecturers who trained with the same White racist lecturers they work with and remain indebted to, even in racism, the feat is simply not worth it. For us as Black women, the few of us, the current saving grace is a government job: not much room for creativity as we have to abide by the policy, but the pay is good, thankfully. Our revolutionary spirits have to be shelved for now, and it hurts. It hurts because I would like to put into action everything that got me to the finish line.

LONDIWE SOKHABASE: On the question of decoloniality: in architecture, we were taught about Classical Architecture and the symbolism of the gothic and renaissance architecture. However, no one speaks about the symbolism of colonial architecture in African countries. At the research meetings for 'Race, Space and the City', Prof Maart introduced me to several authors that explained the purpose of colonial architecture in Africa and its main purpose, which was to transform the continent to suit the European settler. Within the school of architecture, we are taught classical architecture in a revered and respected way. The emphasis is always put on how much we must preserve colonial architecture for future generations. But no one speaks of the indignities experienced by Black people in buildings like the Durban post-office, where they checked Blacks to see if they had a disease before entering the city and signs were placed on warning White people, such as 'beware of Natives'. No one speaks about how land surveying was introduced in South Africa when the European settlers started taking land from native South Africans. It's all just conveniently okay; it is not a topic of discussion and therefore, not knowledge.

ROZENA MAART: I remember us having this discussion several years ago. Nandipha, and Nompumelelo, you both talked about how particular Black lecturers were complicit in carrying out the colonial programme. At UKZN there has been a lot of discussion post-2008 about Transformation. Do you think that transformation was in place when you entered the university, in whichever form, and visible to you?

NANDIPHA MAKHAYE: No, there was no transformation whatsoever as far as I am concerned. For the longest time, I felt that I was trying to fit in or be

'normal' to be accepted. I am just grateful that it never reached the point where I started changing myself to be accepted by 'the troop' (acting White). I guess that is due to my rebellious nature of never wanting to be considered part of the crowd. I have never been White or even tried to act that way, so when White people failed to understand my perspective, I was neither surprised nor phased by it. The only thing that concerned me was my grades and passing university as knowledge had always been an essential part of my upbringing and life as a whole. My concern with doing well academically almost led me to accept defeat and live as if architecture will never see a transformation in my lifetime. It was not until we spoke about these issues, as a group, that I realised how many of us (as Black women) were suffering in silence and were constantly accepting things as they were. Successfully continuing with the topic of African identity even though it caused my final year marks to be lowered, was extremely worth the effort. It opened a long-overdue conversation regarding transformation, and hopefully, it educated other Black students as to their relevance in the architectural space. Having the dissertation published and placed in the architectural library would have been first-price. This would have formed the basis for the decolonisation and transformation in African literature in architecture, which is still lacking in many ways.

NOMPUMELELO KUBHEKA: Transformation at UKZN, in architecture? Well, it seemed so, at face value, when I first entered in 2006: the diversity in student enrolment and diverse racialised and gendered representation in teaching staff was something I noted. However, given our experience as students on the ground as the years progressed, transformation is a fallacy in the school of architecture at UKZN.

LONDIWE SOKHABASE: The majority of my lecturers were Black, and my year coordinator was Black. But I do not think that helped me at all. I actually think it worked against me. I got the feeling Black women were really not liked in architecture; we were clearly a threat. Transformation is more than putting Black people in spaces; we should go a step further. As people who understand the struggle and are aware of racism's systemic and structural aspects, we know exactly how the Black African child is dissuaded from entering the university. The university, and definitely architecture, was historically a Whites-only space and now a White-dominated space. Nothing much has changed, as far as I can tell.

ROZENA MAART: Can you address some of the obstacles that stood in your way?

NANDIPHA MAKHAYE: There were many obstacles that I had to deal with in my years in architecture school, which increased in magnitude as I reached the completion of my studies. Despite my consistent marks from my first year of study, my ideas became so vast and out of the box that it gradually became harder for the lecturers to believe that I was working alone and not receiving external help, even though I consulted with them at every step. There were two very comparable problems which both happened in my final year of study. The two problems came in the form of two White women, one was a lecturer at UKZN, and the other was an external examiner who was brought in for my final examination. I encountered the first problem during our many 'crit' (critique) sessions held in the studio. This came as a shock to me as I had never experienced a design lecturer who was so uninterested in my work in all my years of studying architecture. This White woman wouldn't even lift a pen during our one on one 'crit' (critique) sessions. This was very clear because she would give all her attention and endless references for supporting works with other students of a preferred colour. It got to a point where I doubted that she understood me as a person or was even interested in having me as part of the class. As time progressed, I realised that I was wasting my time in consulting with her. In a conversation with her and another student, all of us were engaging with one another, not even once did she look at me or acknowledge my presence. If her eyes were not on a student, they were wandering off into the distance.

ROZENA MAART: It sounds like she performed a form of shunning, a tactic used by White women to inflict one-on-one racism (what I often call, 'racism in the flesh', and make Black women feel insignificant. Is that more or less what happened?

NANDIPHA MAKHAYE: It was like I ceased to exist in that very moment when she made be invisible. She effortlessly disregarded my presence. Fortunately for her, I am not a confrontational person, so I just ignored her too. I didn't acknowledge her at all. As much as this was very much against my upbringing and culture, I honestly did not see the need to beg for her attention. Besides, she was not benefiting my life in any way. Our views and approach

in architecture differed a lot, to the point that I was convinced that she was deliberately going against whatever I was saying. Of all the Black women in the class, she only showed favouritism to one particular woman, black in skin colour but acted extremely White. This particular Black woman was very well-spoken in the English language and always seemed to introduce herself with her English name rather than her first name, her Zulu name, which most of us knew her and addressed her by. It took me the longest time to figure out that she was actually articulate in a *vernacular* since she constantly spoke in English even when she was engaging with a group of African women. Somehow this woman was the most 'relatable' amongst the Black students to this White lecturer. I guess because these White folks saw so much of themselves in her; she was exactly what their racism had done; she did not identify as African. As I had already alluded to the fact that my fifth-year final presentation panel was an all-White panel, there were three White men and one woman who was the only one who had read my document. This woman, who was my second problem, was from the University of Pretoria, one of the most patriarchal and least transformed universities in South Africa. She seemed to be on edge the whole time I was presenting, but she kept her comments until the end. The rest of the panel seemed to have enjoyed the presentation quite thoroughly until this University of Pretoria woman gave me the feed-back she had so reluctantly held back for the twenty-minutes I had been given to present my work. From the anger in her voice to the sneer on her face when she addressed me, I could tell that my work extremely angered her. The words that came out of her mouth made it clear to me that she hadn't fully grasped what I had said in my dissertation. She went on and on about racism even though my dissertation concentrated more on colonisation and preserving the European-city model. She even quoted a few Black authors who had written on racism to seem knowledgeable to the panel members. Unfortunately, this was irrelevant to my work and the fact that the rest of the panel hadn't read my paper, counted against me as she had now convinced them that my paper was a racist attack on White supremacy, which to a point it was. When I finally received my documentation for corrections, there were no corrections to be found. Rather there were very personal comments such as; 'is this true', 'really', 'this is your personal opinion'. My paper had not been evaluated or marked academically, but rather it felt like a reprimand for defying the White set rules of architecture. It was quite a disappointing ending to what had been an inspiring journey on self-realisation and discovering my layered identity. I really felt that my

supervisor had let me down. He knew the turmoil I had been through in conceiving my dissertation, yet he did not protect me from the vultures sent to destroy me.

NOMPUMELELO KUBHEKA: There were many obstacles, including the ones I named above. 'Not performing', as I was told (along with several Black women), was mostly dependant on how deep our pockets were, and they were very shallow I might add. We had to take on odd student jobs to survive because we knew our lecturers would not support us. I was once asked why I even chose this course since I was broke (not financially able to afford it) by a Black lecturer. At the time, the school was under renovation and access to resources was limited, and we all had to rely on private computers or hand sketches if all else failed. Apart from the financial fields not being level for all students, there was active gatekeeping that was frustrating. The constant misfortunes and food starvation were all we knew. Constructive criticism is good, however blatant soul-crushing from the lectures was the tactic that they use, and rendered as unfit for architecture as a whole. My saving grace was always external examiners who saw potential in me and encouraged that I stand my ground. I would literally go from a dismal failure to an excellent pass on the same project depending on who evaluated it. The school has questionable agendas with students that need to be highlighted and addressed. Most of us should write books and articles as a means of healing. Architecture schooling at UKZN was traumatising!

LONDIWE SOKHABASE: Though it's been 5 years, I still get very anxious when I have to write something in the form of an assignment. During my first year of my masters' degree, a lecturer told me I could not write in English. Maybe that assignment was not the best I could have written. But I had a degree and managed to secure a spot in the master programme, yet I could not write English. That statement still shocks me even now in 2020, when I am about to complete my second masters from UP. How did I make it so far, not being able to write English?, is a question that sometimes comes into my mind It always leaves speechless and unable to respond.

ROZENA MAART: By all accounts, what you have gone through required you to strengthen your mind, as well as to have to acknowledge, perhaps painfully, the degree of complicity that Black lecturers were involved in. I

remember at one of the sessions at CCRRI shortly after we formed 'Race, Space and the City', one of you mentioned how shocked you were to see one of your Black lecturers go out of his way to please his colonisers and carry out their programme of putting Black women down. I was quite taken aback myself. Take us through how you fought back and strengthened your mind and your commitment.

NANDIPHA MAKHAYE: I did not have a Black lecturer until the second year of my studies, and I really feel that it was a blessing. My first Black lecturer was one of the worst lecturers I had ever encountered, not from the lack of knowledge but from the lack of guidance he provided during the crit-session. After observing him for a while, I realised that he lived in fear. He needed to gain approval from the other white lecturers before making any major decisions despite being the head coordinator. He somehow gave harsher remarks to the Black students to prove that he was worth his position. He never quite gave a clear direction when he was advising on a way forward in the fear that someone would judge him for helping Black students get ahead. Instead, he gave White students unnecessary advice, which went unused as the white students never quite valued his inputs. According to Ngugi in his book, Decolonising the Mind, he alludes to the fact that colonisation of the mind is harder to detect and to eradicate than other forms of colonisation. Most of our Black lecturers were colonised and as a result, were subordinated by their white counterparts.

NOMPUMELELO KUBHEKA: Mr _____ (name removed) had been employed as head of department by the time I had returned to study in postgrad architecture. He was a thorn in my flesh, to say the least. He was at the forefront of my demise as a student followed by his fellow Black staff members' complacent behaviour. I remember many episodes of being let down by Black lectures that seemingly had a façade of empathy. One of them blatantly, upon approaching me about my lack of financial means to make the design task, looked back at me so cavalierly, and asked what I was thinking in studying a course I couldn't afford. I had no reply to that question and simply walked away. I remember one particular Black lecturer who had mercy on me during my episode of being kicked out of school, would secretly meet me in his office to give pointers of how to challenge the system using university policy (AKA The Bluebook). That lecturer, for reasons unknown to me, was persecuted and

thereafter ousted from staff as a lecturer, a fate he foresaw when he chose to help me. What's even more alarming was that a White man and former lecturer became very instrumental in my readmission as he knew my calibre as a student and saw the unfairness in how I was treating. Coincidently and to my knowledge, he also never lectured again.

LONDIWE SOKHABASE: I would have rather faced the disdain of the white lecturers than for me to go to my Black lecturers, whom I felt were not confident themselves in my design crits. But also, for their lack of support in my presentation when I had to present my design which had been born from crit sessions I had had with them. It was refreshing to have a Black professor, (a clearly confident person in his space in the architecture profession and academic space) as an external invigilator in my masters' year. He was unapologetic in his support for my design and encourage me in my organic architectural forms, something that had been looked down on for most of my architecture academic career.

ROZENA MAART: We have now taken our discussion to a second session. In some of the comments, you asked that I discuss a hands-on understanding of decolonisation. This is generally what I say: Decolonisation is about removing the coloniser from your being as the colonised ... from your thinking, your actions ... it is about undoing what the coloniser had done and also what you need to do to think through who you are and how you wish to live in the world. Again, all of you show this very clearly in all of your responses. Is there anything, in particular, you want to emphasise?

NANDIPHA MAKHAYE: The language of power in most if not all previously colonised African countries is some form of European language, in the case of South Africa - English. This often makes African languages insignificant, making English the language of 'intellect' or 'superior civilisation'. Thus, a person or individual who is fluent in this language is considered a superior being, especially if their skin colour is black – English somehow becomes the measurement of intelligence according to European standards or at least the minds of the colonised. Living in a township and studying architecture made me aware that I was coexisting in two very different worlds. When I was in the township, I was somehow celebrated by the township for having gone to a White school and having the opportunity to study

architecture which was not popular amongst Black children. Whereas in university, I was frowned upon for coming from a poor and disadvantaged background. This made me very conscious of colonisers from quite a young age, as I constantly felt as though I did not belong anywhere. I was stuck in limbo which was accentuated by my shy and reserved nature. The only time that I felt as though I belonged, was when I was alone buried in my thoughts. It was not until I started doing research on identity and colonisation that I realised how colonised black people's minds are, that they have been conditioned to believe that the whiter your actions and way of life is, the better you are. They somehow desired and accepted those who seemed to be closer to Whiteness. In architecture specifically, as soon as a student showed an inferior understanding of the English language whether in articulation or written, they failed almost immediately and never recovered from that failure.

On the other hand, no matter how White you act or perceive yourself to be, white people are not ready to accept you as part of their world. And thus, constantly make you feel inferior always to know your place as a Black scholar. Even those who spoke English better than their white counterparts were judged more on their skin colour and appearance than their so-called 'intellect'. I slowly realised that the only time one gains full control of their existence in this world is by accepting their existential being and acknowledging the fact that one can be a superior being regardless of the colour of their skin.

NOMPUMELELO KUBHEKA: I sensed earlier during my undergraduate degree how much of a variety we were at school as students. Our different backgrounds ranged from 'rich' kids to 'poor and unresourced' kids. However, the common denominator was that we were all high school top achievers. As our stay progressed, we realised that much as we had all the potential to be great, we were treated and somewhat schooled differently. For example, the less 'English fluent' black kids seemed to have a tougher time proving themselves due to 'substandard' English. Observing from outside of my marginalised classmates' experiences, I realised how torn I had become with conflicting feelings of relief and shame within myself. Relief because I was privileged to have been sent to a 'white' high school, which then sharpened my English vocabulary and subsequently sheltered me from being deemed a lesser scholar compared to other black kids. Shame because it created an unspoken divide between us.

LONDIWE SOKHABASE: Coming from a multiracial high school, an Afrikaans high school to be exact, I thought I understood the dynamics of being in a multicultural setting. In high school I was acknowledged for my academic achievement. I thought everything was okay in my context; we were a rainbow nation, after all. There is something to explore there, with first-generation multiracial schooled black children. Yet, the school environment creates a distorted view of the real dynamics in South Africa. I am grateful for the education my parent was able to afford me, but there was a gap in my education that did not touch on the systematic racism in South Africa. So much so that if I had known the fight ahead of me in the profession I chose, I might have chosen a different career. Experiencing systematic racism at university was extremely painful for lack of a better word. At first, I did not know what it was, I just felt overwhelmed and inadequate, however in my post-graduate years I was able to get tools that enabled me to recognise what I was going through and get tools to assist me in defending not only my academic studies but myself as an Architecture student and future Architect.

ROZENA MAART: The processes of the mind, strengthening the mind, strengthening your identity, and your physical and intellectual being ... this was clear with all of your responses to the questions that I posed close to the end of your master's degree. Our sessions just before your last critical appraisal were focused on you learning to assert your confidence. I think you all did incredibly well, considering what you shared at the time, and what I learnt more and more over the years. Can you talk a little bit about this process?

NANDIPHA MAKHAYE: In undergrad we were not too certain or confident about our architectural space presence. We were competing against White students who had enormous confidence regardless of the standard of the work they produced. It took me a while to realise how unhelpful the advice given by white lecturers was during crit-sessions – they would strategically lead you astray with their advice. As much as in your gut you were aware that you were being led astray, you would listen and implement the advice as best as possible because as a young student you look up to your lecturers and trust that they want the best for you. White teachers/lecturers naturally gave preference to white students over black students; it seemed like such a natural phenomenon which happened spontaneously. Later on, during my studies, it became clear that my books were my only true source of support and guidance. Books never

lied or led me astray, as limited as our architectural library's information was – always providing European solutions and celebrating European excellence. After having worked in black-owned architectural firms reassured me of my talent and presence in the architectural realm, I was able to gain confidence and stand up for what I believed in, which in turn, gave me the strength to excel in my studies and obtain the marks I always knew I was capable of. After realising my potential, very little criticism was able to hold me back.

NOMPUMELELO KUBHEKA: During my undergraduate degree, many of us were not so sure about ourselves. It's natural for students of all races to mingle, however the system was adamant in creating a divide. I was very oblivious to how institutionalised racism had preceded us, Black kids. We slowly adopted a culture of proving ourselves by putting in longer hours and engaging in more crits to pass all modules. We were subconsciously taught to think less of ourselves and our capabilities. We survived on cracked confidence, hope and very few financial options. Given most of our modest financial backgrounds, the strategy was to make the most of this degree as there were no means to consider other career choices. All of our parents' monies were invested in making this particular degree (architecture) work. In hindsight, we were academically better. This is proven because, personally, all work that had been marked average by internal powers was praised as outstanding by external moderators. In postgraduate studies, we had grown a backbone and learned to stand up for what we believed in and the ideas we presented. This is mostly due to a combination of excelling in the real world workplace and meeting and engaging with fellow 'woke' students at the CCRRI headed by Prof Rozena Maart and the subsequent introduction to great literature from the likes of Franz Fanon and Steve Biko and interactions with various professors and veterans of the Black liberation movements.

LONDIWE SOKHABASE: The university setting always made me feel I had to constantly prove myself. Which I did not mind, however, it became clear that the measuring device for my credibility was warped. I was reserved and accepted that I was just not good enough as an architecture student in my undergraduate years. However, in my masters' years, I felt confident in myself and in the work I presented because of the growth I had experienced both professionally and individually. Understanding the system that I was in and how it was designed to keep people like me out of it, helped me fight for my

space in architecture academia and the profession. I remember a talk/ discussion we had at the institute with Professor Barney Pityana. He spoke about his experience in the apartheid days. It was very eye-opening hearing the cruelty of the apartheid system from first-hand experience. This inspired me to read Steve Biko. Reading on Black identity has been very liberating for my growth. I am proud of the person I have become and am still becoming.

ROZENA MAART: In the second decade of the twenty-first century, the focus has been on decolonisation and Africanisation in almost all of our universities in South Africa. Are you concerned that your honesty may offend readers because you speak very openly about being put-down by Black men in the academy? Most people who study relations of colonisation and coloniality will understand the mechanisms of colonisation and coloniality.

NANDIPHA MAKHAYE: The entire architectural system in South Africa was designed only to benefit a few and to permit a small minimum to flourish within the field. This is very evident in schools where students are conditioned to think in a particular manner and in the workplace where the former students have successfully learned the functioning of the system and will thus put it into practice. We blame only the White lecturers for ensuring that the system has remained in place till this day, yet the Black lecturers who are also architects and have been through the same challenges continue to exert the same stigmas onto a younger generation of Black students. If the Black lecturers wanted to stop the system or were against the results it produced, they would have made a change by now, but instead, they continue with the same colonial attitudes that they suffered through. It is as if their minds have been conditioned to believe that Black students need to suffer to claim the title of being called an 'Architect'. A part of me wants to believe that systematic racism is so deeply rooted in these Black lecturers that they do not realise how much torment they are causing to Black students, which in turn gives White students the upper-hand as well as the confidence to believe that they are superior even if it is far from the case. In conclusion, the entire architectural realm requires extreme transformation. This should begin with the decolonisation of the minds of architects who so eagerly train upcoming protégées to follow a system designed years ago and has been kept alive by systems routed in colonialism and racism.

NOMPUMELELO KUBHEKA: What I took away from my experience of

architecture at UKZN and understood what was shared by my peers on the Black lecturers' question is that it's a combination of circumstance and exceptionalism. I saw a first-generation Black elite wanting to make it as hard as possible for us to achieve the same status they fought to achieve. This may be because they reflected on their own past experiences or were bowing down to unknown 'powers that be' who control their position in significant roles at the school. If it is the latter, then I feel their means to survive is counter-productive for the industry at large.

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