

The juxtaposition in making. My work was made outside due to the workshop having no space in the casting workshop because of its around 3ft height. The foundation is constructed in the wood/casting workshop. It is ironic that my work is presented outside but the building blocks of my work was made inside. Playing with public space as well as private because making my sculpture was quite intimate, like wise speaking about my work and relating it to my home(Lagos) makes it quite personal. Also, it just shows how privately Lagos owns useful and beneficial raw materials and can be as economically strong as China in my opinion but we aren't due to limited of our resources. We are exporting more than importing. Meaning that we are not helping with population rates because trade is directly proportional to our Lagosians. If there is essentially no space, how can they afford to live in places like Eko hotel? However, nobody in Lagos is actually homeless because of the thirst to survive. This idea of survival of the fittest, intrigues me. It is the hustle and bustle that makes Lagos what it is. Therefore, where to squander to land is not necessarily a problem because Lagosians tend not to settle.



Public spaces and democracy in African city making;

In the current discourse of possibilities for 'African Urban Futures', Lagos city is amongst the most highly contested. The preferred imagined future of Lagos is one which fronts a global, modern city, envisioned and realized through developments such as 'Eko Atlantic'[1]. However, there are implacable realities which exist alongside grand 'Africa Rising' narratives, and instead necessitate the provision of basic services and infrastructure.

[1] Eko Atlantic is a multibillion dollar residential and business development that is located as an appendage to Victoria Island. (Oduntan, 2015)

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The curvature of my work is representative of this. The fact that sometimes I question what my sculpture is? Is never racking but I guess the uncertainty adds mystery. Thus, the ghostly figure, white

Kaleidoscopic views characterised a recent engagement where Lagosians articulated how they imagined their city. For **urban planners**, Lagos would take the form of a **garden city** or preferably a Texas-like labyrinth of **highway bridges** distilling vehicular traffic for convenience: Yet, for the **poor** who daily navigate the **complexity and uncertainty** of a city in which basic services and **infrastructures** are a **luxury, clean water, electricity** and **security** of tenure are critical elements of their envisioned future city.

As **global investment** capital establishes itself in cities such as **Lagos** – often emerging in the form of **grand-scaled, glass high-rise developments**, devoid of contextual socio-economic or **socio-political obligations** – ‘inclusive’ urban **infrastructures** are often perceived as an optional retrofit to the utopian cities imagined. Against this background and with the **city government’s lack** of **deliberate investment** into public urban infrastructure, both **democracy** and the **populous (informal) city** is **colonized** and **dislocated**.

In contrast, the idea that democracy partially realizes its **social, economic** and **political values** through the **existence** of **infrastructure** in **urban spaces** can be

explored with perspectives from a **post-colonial** and **post-apartheid Durban**. The Nationalist (Apartheid) Government, in its **grand paternalistic** vision for

Unlike my work that entails freedom of interpretation but may be restricted due to the materials I used. This is due to the fact I initially wanted to use cement but I couldn't because of risk/health hazard

Why some peaks are high and others are low in my sculpture perhaps? Something I was influenced by

urban development, privatized the city, making it **exclusive** and optimally functional for the **minority 'white' elites**. Such forms of **dispossession** manifested in **unequal settlement geographies**, where the **poor were evicted furthest** from the city in which they worked, and **restricted mobility** through the city. The **disparaged, everyday experience** and **efficacy** of the city for the **mass population** was constrained by **limited infrastructure investment into public spaces**.

Proves park being suitable even if we had to present in a park. This is because infrastructure is build outside but practiced through modelling inside.

Warwick Junction case study on public space and democracy

In 1994, Durban's Warwick Junction Precinct, a critical transport interchange and key access point into the city for the predominantly **'African' workforce**, was deemed **'repulsive'**, an eyesore, and an **urban management nightmare** by **local city government**. **Street trading in public space (a newly permitted activity of the informal economy) initiated the city's local government "clean-up campaign"**. In light of the **socio-economic** and **political contextual** realities as well as the **post-apartheid energy** which challenged implementers to act differently. a **visual regeneration** of a modern and orderly **urban aesthetic** would not suffice. Instead, a nuanced response to the causes of the 'rouge' urban image of informality (a result **of informal urban**

work practices that had not been envisioned or designed into the spaces in which they **operated**) was preferred.



Warwick Junction, pre-1994, Informal trade of traditional medicines, the equivalent of a 'pharmacy' on the pavement — [Image Credits](#)

Key to the success of the Warwick Junction Regeneration Project was an Area Based Management governance approach, which leveraged interdepartmental engagement and action between local government representatives in response to context specific issues. As a result, local government could be held to account by local community governance organizations. This affirmed the right to the city for informal traders by acknowledging their presence in the city fabric, through the deliberate design of public space such as pavements, the allocation of securely leased space through a painted square from which one had a legal right to trade, and the building of shelters and designated market spaces.



Warwick Junction, 1996. A designated Herb Market, designed on a disused freeway spur — [Image Credits](#)

For Durban, designing public space as communal property challenges historical forms of urban government, subjecting autocratic, nationalized governing systems to the realities of local community governance. In a sense this illustrates the gradual realization of democracy at every level of society—right down to street level—which represents a learning curve for democracy in a South African city.

My work challenging who is in power? Lagosians or government? Who has more of a right?

Local complexities under global pressures

As pressures of economic and social urban development mount, Durban faces the challenge of engaging in global markets, whilst bridging the disparities of rising unemployment rates and the resultant needs and dependency of the poor on the state. As the socio-economic inequality gap widens in both Lagos and Durban, the value of the informal economy cannot singularly be measured by its tax contribution, but rather by its response to place-specific complexities. In the absence of State provision, the informal sector carries the social responsibility of local governance through micro economies which absorb a displaced workforce, enabling economic participation.

In light of insufficient hospitals, access to education, and basic services, the contribution of the informal economy to the development of the city should be

How to move forward?

valued **holistically** as a workforce, to the extent that it subsidizes what government should be spending on the provision of public services. Other values of the **informal economy** include its response to niche cultural needs emerging from local **cultural values, aesthetics, and identities**, which are often undervalued as they are not easily quantifiable. Furthermore, the informal economy is a way in which cultural preferences are able to embed themselves into post-colonial urban form.

Apartheid city planning as a continuation of **colonial ways of asserting power** is still alive in **Durban's young democracy, contextualising the urgent need for spatial and socio economic transformation**. Similarly, if democracy in Nigeria is understood to be **merely political freedom from colonial/military rule**, then the true ideals of democracy have been forgotten. If instead, democracy is seen as a comparison **of historical** circumstances and can be **evaluated** through the **quality of urban livelihoods**, then the work at hand transcends the simple inclusion of the informal sector into the **vision of Lagos' urban future**, to heed instead to the urgent, **united demand for democratic change in light of Nigeria's historical context**.

Path towards the inclusive city and neoliberal decolonialisation

As Lagosians look to **"bridge the gap"** between civil society's needs and centralized **government's development aspirations**, defining the middle ground – which holds in tension colonial realities and democracy against future visions of modernity and **neoliberal democratization** – is paramount. The danger of **isolating the poor** is that we may miss that they could be at the forefront of a political fight for freedom, challenging boundaries of **legitimacy** in culture, class **and economics**, rather than bringing disorder.

In this regard, reassessing what **'modernization'** and **'development'** mean is crucial. Ideas of order and progress that overlook the necessity of basic infrastructure and service provisions as a step towards **development** in pursuit of an **inclusive vision** of the city, must be challenged. **This pursuit** could be seeded through documenting and sharing local ideas and examples of systems which are made to **function optimally**. Identifying alternative, **de-colonial aesthetics which respond to critical functional needs** is also a powerful tool for **moving towards an inclusive city**.



Warwick Junction. Brook Street Market. The roof covering was developed through public-private investment — [Image Credits](#)

For **Warwick Junction**, the stepping stones towards urban transformation and expressed democracy were **small scale infrastructural interventions** through **local government**, which responded to contextual infrastructural needs through transforming traditionally-held **aesthetic ideas about space**. This provoked the emergence of other perspectives on informality as an access point to a **shared economy**, and as a form of **social capital** in a democratic society which values **equity across class** and race. The lesson from the Warwick Junction experience is, perhaps, that **de-stigmatizing informality** makes room for **multiple city narratives, which bridge the polarized discourse on the city yet to come.**

Functionality scrapped while aesthetics overshadows test sculptures