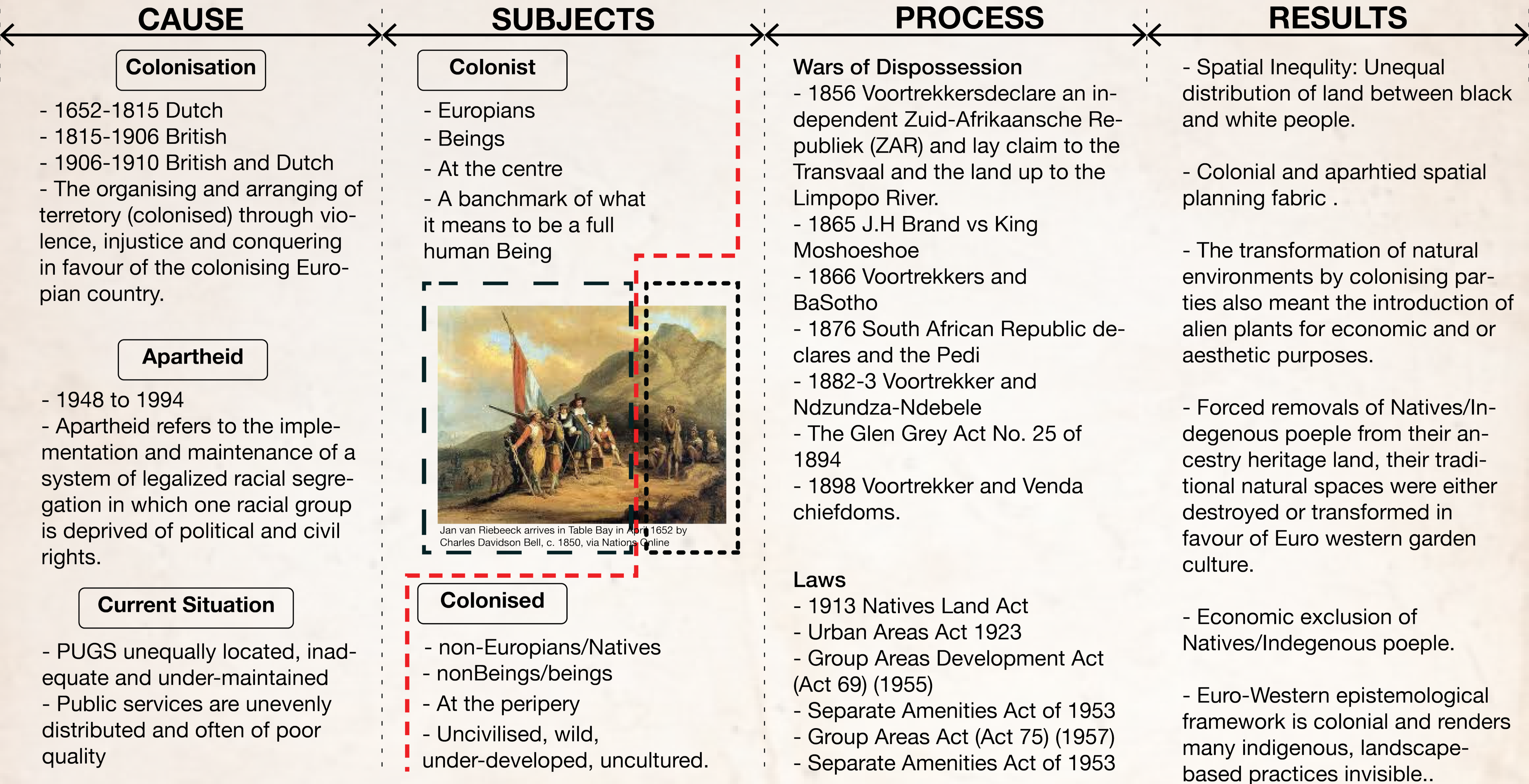


INTRODUCTION



The City of Tshwane is largely devoid of formally provided Public Open Space for afrocentric cultural activities related to nature and landscape – Which at present often take place in rural landscapes, this has implications for identity-making and feeling 1 in the city.

INTRODUCTION : THEORY



Key words: Decolonisation, ISK (Indigenous Knowledge Systems), Indigenisation, human-nature relationships, Landscape Design, Afrocentric, Bio-cultural Diversity.

Research Questions:

How can nearby nature narratives contribute to a place-based design approach of local community parks in the City of Tshwane, as a means to feeling at home in the City?

What emergent aspects from the data could inform a set of guiding principles for contributing to a nature informed, place-based way of designing community parks or Public open Space?

What design informants can be observed from current park use and adaptations, to inform a suitable design approach?

Design Objectives:

To honour the cultural traditions, knowledge systems, and identities of Indigenous peoples.

Fostering spaces that meet the needs and aspirations of Indigenous peoples.

To create culturally appropriate environments that promote safety, human-nature relationships, community well-being and sense of belonging.

To foster nature stewardship through a decolonial design approach

Key Words: Decolonisation, ISK (Indigenous Knowledge Systems), Indigenisation, Human-nature relationships, Landscape Design, Afrocentric

INTRODUCTION : COLONIAL VS INDIGENOUS LANDSCAPES



Burgers park (Author 2024)



Private and Public Colonial Landscapes

In the development of the urban green space in colonised territories, alien species from colonising countries are introduced into the landscape for sentimental, aesthetic or economic reasons in line with Euro-western values of nature. This approach directly impacts indigenous communities' identities as their traditional natural landscapes are transformed and or replaced by Euro-western garden culture (Shackleton 2021). The design, form and materiality also reflects ambitions of the colonisers.

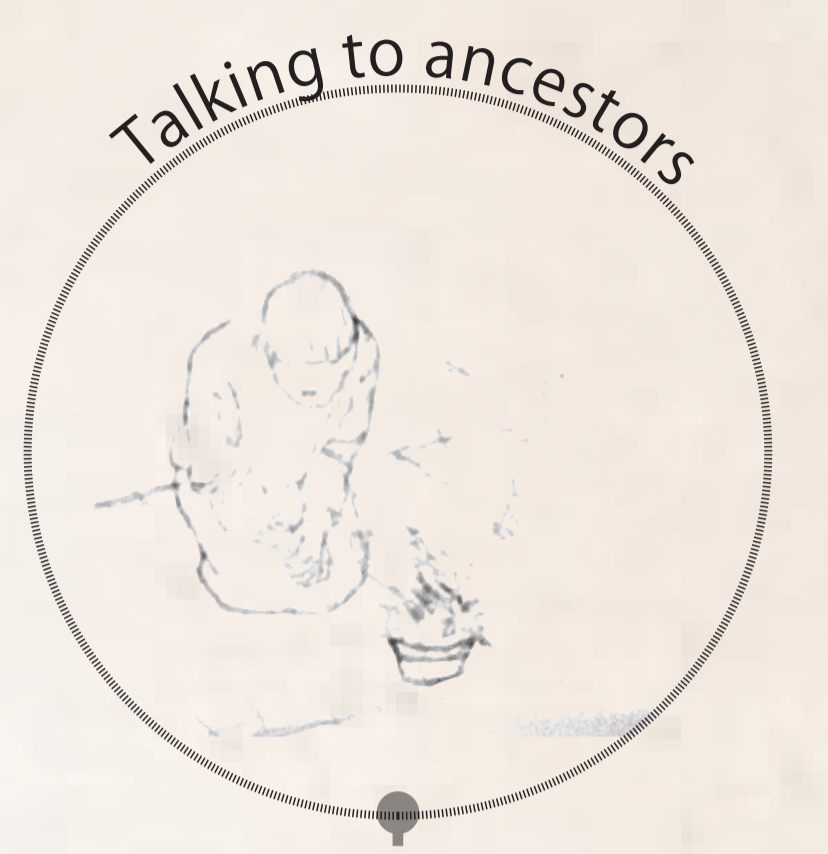
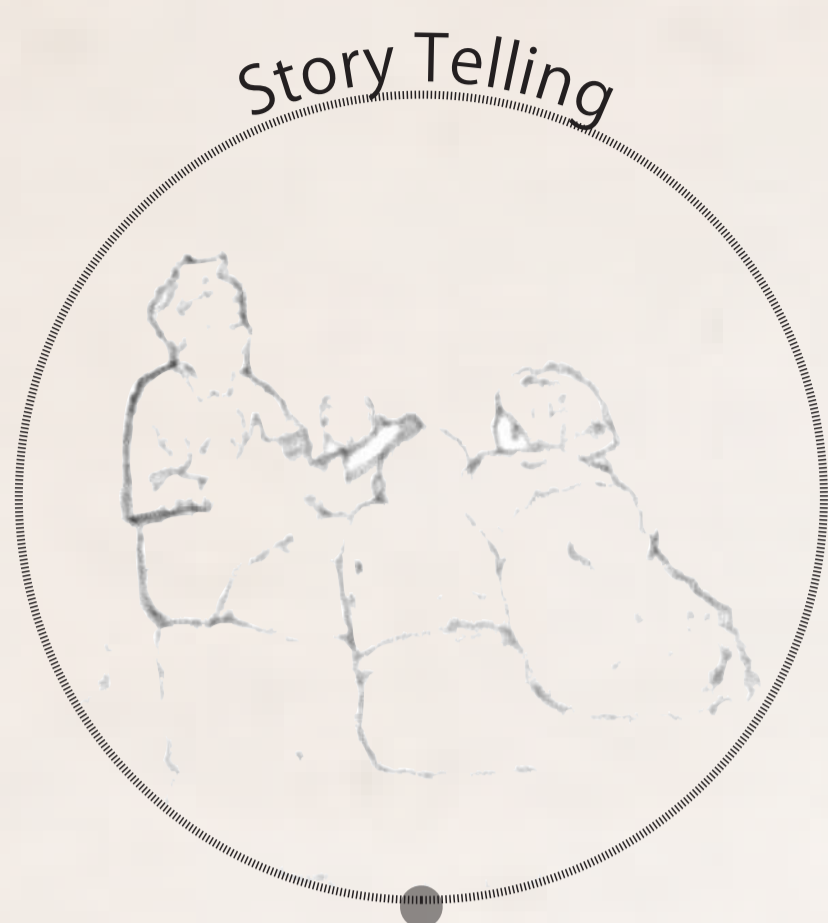


Private and Public Indigenous Landscapes

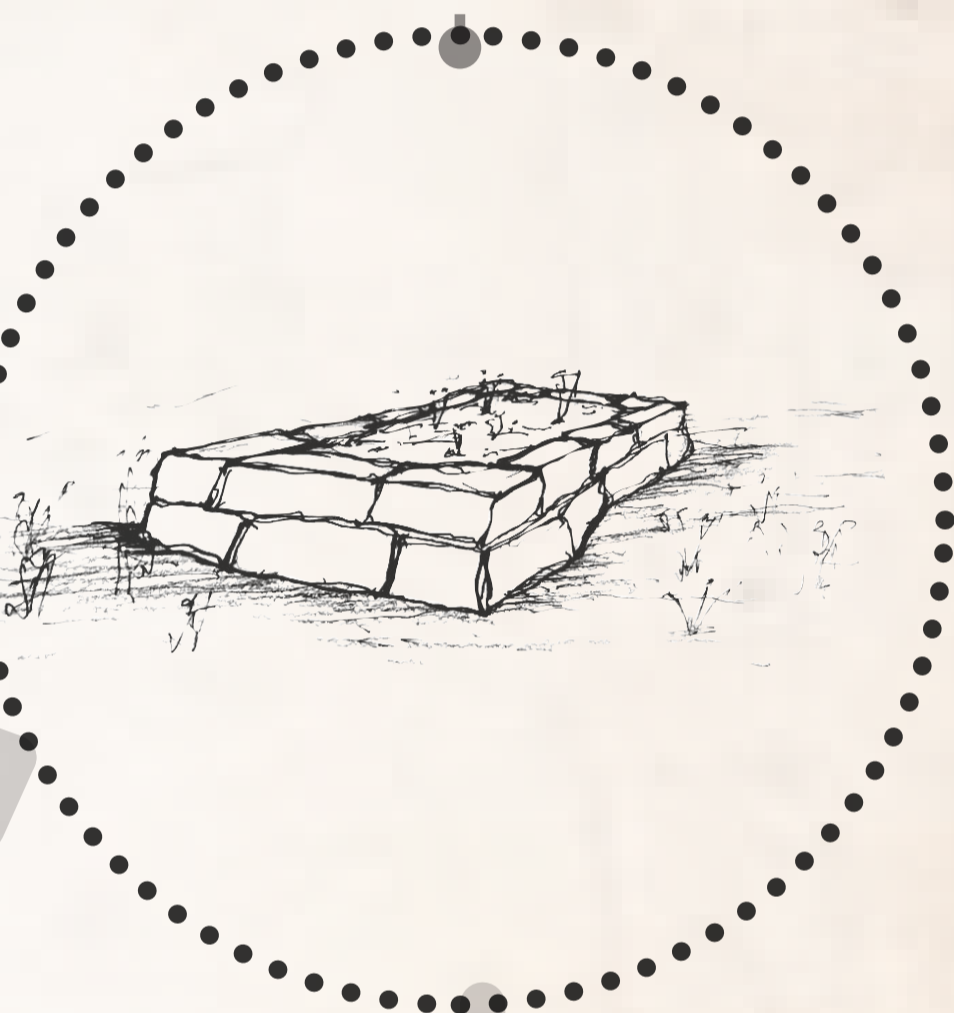
The entire existence of Africans are deeply rooted in the land (Lephakga 2012). Indigenous beliefs and cultural practices are deeply rooted in nature, in indigenous plants, mountains, valleys and rivers. Plants are not only valued for their sentimental, aesthetic and economic value but they are seen for their special healing capabilities, they are connected to rituals and cultural practices. Afrocentric cultural practices for different occasions and stages of life require certain plant species and nature settings.

INTRODUCTION : AFROCENTRIC ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITIES



ACTIVITIES



BIRTH

CHILDHOOD

INITIATION

MARRIAGE

DEATH

IMBELEKO

PLANTS



AFROCENTRIC ACTIVITIES : SPATIAL IMPLICATIONS

ACTIVITIES

IMBELEKO



Imbeleko is a cultural ritual that introduces the new born child both to the ancestors and into the community. This cultural practice includes the burying of **Inkaba** (Umbilical cord), in the land of the new born child's ancestors and the slaughtering of a goat, goat's kin is used to make imbeleko, an the meet is prepared and cooked for the community as members of the community will come and be introduced to the child. Impepho is burnt and the child is introduced to the ancestors.

Plants: **Imphepho** *Helichrysum aureonitens*, **insikane** sedge grass, **ugobo** *unnera perpensa*, **umThombothi** *Spirostachys africana*

HOBOLELA LE BADIMU



Talking to ancestors is a common cultural practice in most African cultures, they are believed to lookover the living and they provide guidance. Ancestors also have the ability to call one into the practice of being inyanga (traditional healer) or isangoma (fortune teller). It's the practice of talking to ancestors is usually a private practice, done by the family for specific reasons, it can be done inside the home, in the kraal or in a natural element like a river or mountain.

Plants: **Imphepho** *Helichrysum aureonitens*, **imithombo yamabele** *Sorghum bicolour*

UKUSOKWA

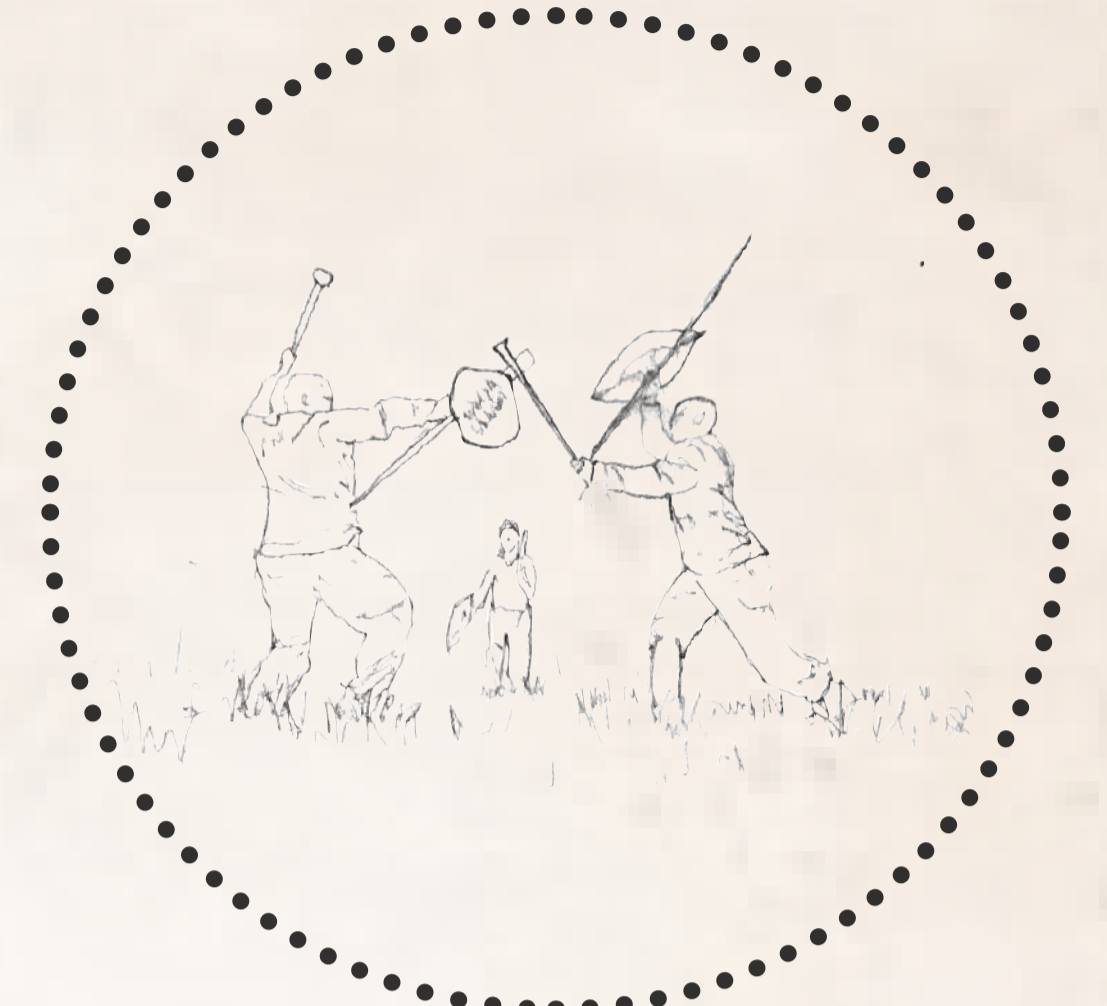


The cultural practice of Initiation is also common in most African cultures, its a process of initiating a person into adulthood, binding them to their ancestral clan as an adult.

The process begins at home transitions to a place of seclusion where the initiates spend time before returning home where an animal is slaughtered and the community celebrates their return.

Plants: **iNhlaba** *Aloe ferox*, **ithethe elimpofu** *Bulbine frutescens*, **buchu** *Agathosma crenulata*

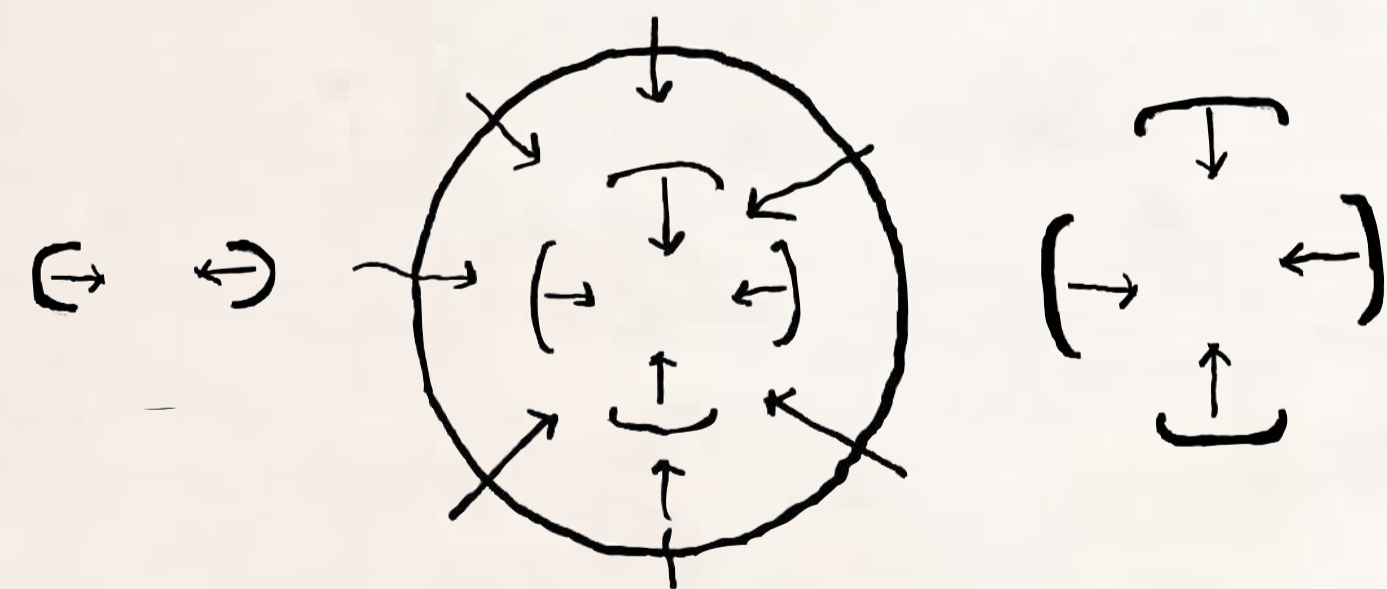
UKUNCWENGA



Stick fighting is a game of adults, it commemorates indigenous combat techniques while teaching about discipline and self defense, it's a community event and usually takes place in community common spaces, open fields or by the mountains.

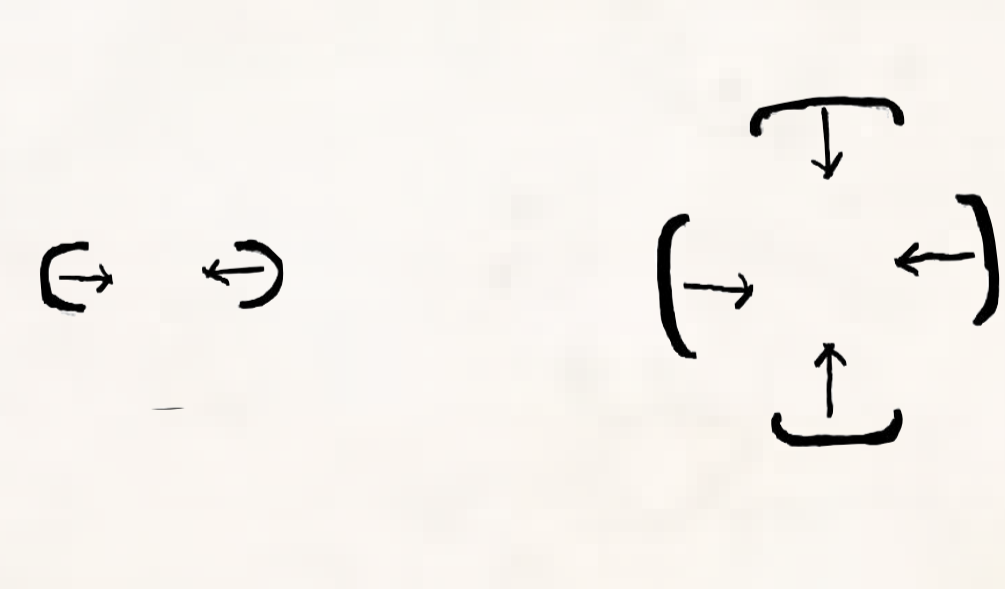
Plant: **hlokoa-la-tsela** *Dianthus basuticus*, **iShinga** *Xysmalobium undulatum*, **ihlukwe** *Zantedeschia aethiopica*.

SPATIAL IMPLICATIONS



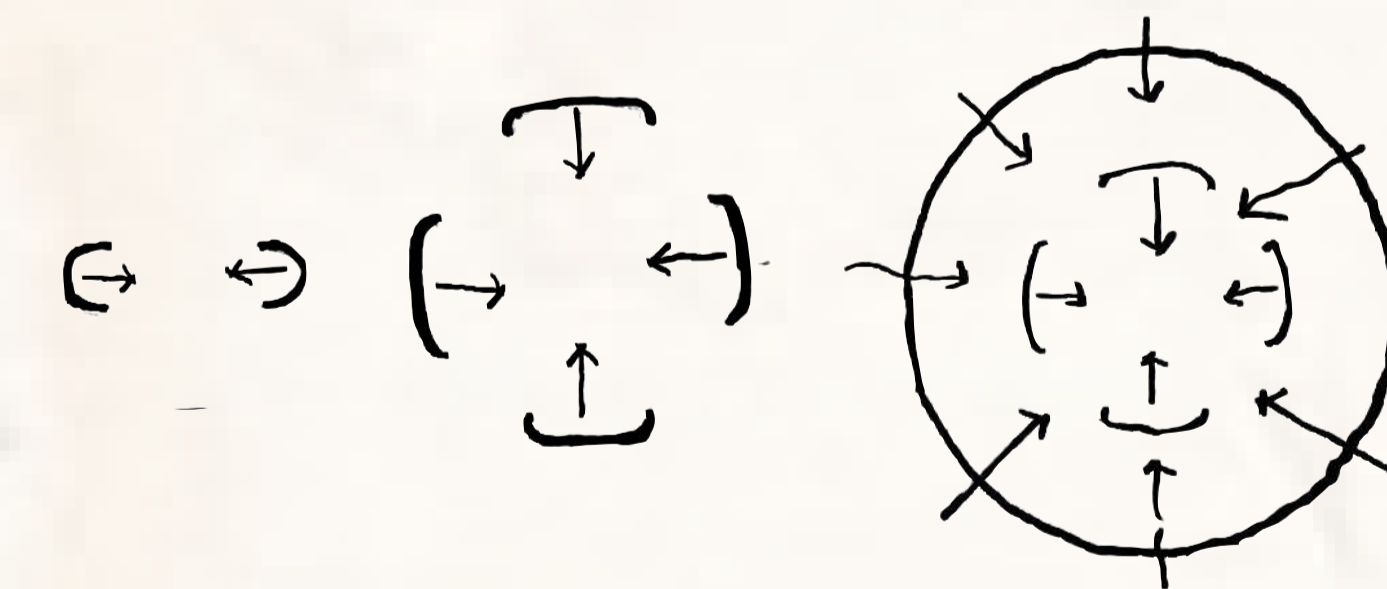
Intimate Community Family

Venue: Indoors, outdoor open space
Materiality: Cow dung floor, gravel
Needs and Props: Cow dung floor, gravel, and goat for slaughtering.



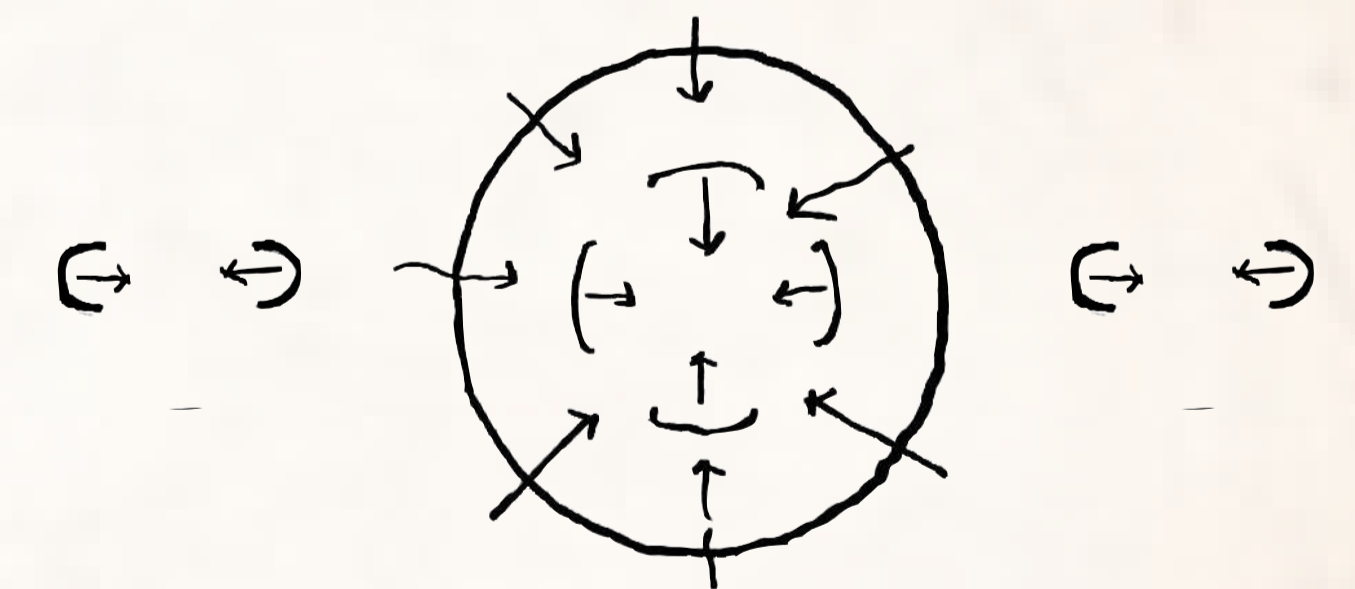
Intimate Family

Venue: Indoors, outdoor open space, by a river or a mountain
Materiality: Reed mat, gravel, boulders
Needs and Props: Ukhamba (clay pot) for mqombothi (traditional beer), candles, clay pot to burn imphepho, animal for slaughter.



Intimate Family Family

Venue: Indoors, Kraal, outdoor open space
Materiality: Gravel, grasses, compacted earth, cow dung floor, fire place
Needs and Props: Medicinal plants, induku (stick)



Intimate Family Intimate

Venue: Outdoor open space
Materiality: Gravel, grasses
Needs and Props: Medicinal plants, shields and sticks

Current De-colonial Interventions



Timeshighereducation.com. (2015). Available at: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/sites/default/files/rhodes.jpg>



The Paul Kruger statue in Pretoria has joined the list of defaced statues around the world. Picture: Oupa Mokoena/African News Agency (ANA) Published Jun 14, 2020

“Although the statue became a centre of contention during the decolonization debates and student uprising in 2016 in Pretoria and had to be protected by barb wire to prevent its demolition...” (Landman & Makakavhule, 2021).



In 2015 a student movement #RhodesMustFall erupted at the University of Cape Town, the movement was calling for the decolonization of the university and the university’s curriculum (Raxworthy 2018)

Current Decolonial Approaches



Green point urban park, khoi memorial



Mfuleni Urban Park
PARK Circular Bench with community art installation

“Although this project represents the history of the Khoikhoi herders in an attempt to decolonize space, in a critical review, it can also be regarded as the ‘makeshift’ of decolonization, where indigenous communities are exoticized and presented in a way to fashion their primitiveness and brand it for tourism purposes” (Landman & Makakavhule, 2021)



Freedom park, City of Tshwane



PRECEDENT

Marsh Arab Project, Houston USA

CLIENT: Rice University

PROFESSIONALS: Archaeology and architecture

LOCATION: Fukuoka, Japan

YEAR: 2003-2013

TYPOLOGY: Educational

OBSERVATIONS:

- Indigenous people live on artificial islands built of reeds and mud, in houses made from the same reeds.

- Arab-American Educational Foundation developed the Marsh Arab Project for the sake of cultural preservation and ecological education.

- Director Becky Lao and her team at Archaeology Now wanted to bring awareness to the Marsh Arabs under a simple belief that **“people need to experience a mudhif.”**

- “I remember the beauty of nature, but I also remember looking down upon people who were barefoot, walking in the mud, wearing dirty clothes,” Alwash said. “Today I look at these same people as people who live in complete harmony with their environment,” he said.

<https://www.texasmonthly.com/style/mudhif-houston-rice-university-iraqi-marsh-arabs/>

