Does Southern African Design History Exist?

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There are numerous southern African higher education institutions, both public and private, which offer qualifications in a variety of design disciplines, including architecture, graphic, fashion, product, interior, ceramic, textile and jewellery design. The existence of these design qualifications indicates the need for students to have an understanding of southern African design history. However, no institutions in the region offer design history qualifications, few academics in these institutions self identify as design historians, and academic journals which overtly claim to contribute to African design history writing are scarce. Given the absence of design history courses and historians in the region one would be forgiven for asking the question, following Chipkin (2007): does southern African design history exist? The short answer would be yes, but with the qualifier that this history exists across a 'dispersal of sites' (Margolin 2002: 128) such as design, art history, visual studies, material culture, history, interdisciplinary studies, media studies, cultural studies and anthropology.

The aim of this chapter is to detect and outline a shape of southern African design history by examining how academic institutions form the field. This approach is informed by the design historiographical survey pioneered by Clive Dilnot (1984a; 1984b) and Victor Margolin (2002: 127–170). The development of design history in the USA and the UK is well researched and a number of excellent surveys exist. In 1984 two essays by Dilnot appeared in the journal *Design Issues* in which he reviewed the state of primarily British design history by firstly mapping the field, followed by a discussion of the problems and possibilities of design history. This was followed in 1988 by Margolin's survey of

the development of design history in the USA from 1977 to 1987. In 2002 Margolin (2002: 127–187) extended his earlier essay and updated it to 2000.

More recently Kjetil Fallan (2010: 1–54) surveyed the development of design history with an emphasis on the development of an 'industrial design history proper' and Daniel Huppatz and Grace Lees-Maffei (2012) conducted a multi-national survey on the state of design history in the UK, France, Italy, Scandinavia, Spain, Turkey and Greece, the USA, Australia and East Asia. This was followed by Huppatz's (2014) more in-depth examination of developments in Australian historiography and a review of the last quarter of a century of scholarship on Australian design history.

These surveys demonstrate a slow broadening in design history's initial concern with only the 'output of major industrialized, consumer-orientated societies' (Woodham 2005: 257) to an 'expanded geography' approach (Huppatz 2014: 2007). However, no similar surveys have been conducted on African design history in general and southern African design history specifically. There are many possible reasons for this; these include the vastness of the continent and its complexity and diversity, its levels of economic and industrial development and a preferred focus on African material culture as 'craft', 'art' or 'ethnic artefacts', as opposed to design. For example, an ostensibly simple question such as 'what comprises southern Africa' is not straightforward or easily answered.

The United Nations (UN) scheme of geographic regions defines southern Africa as consisting of five countries (United Nations 2013), while the southern African Development Community (SADC) views the region as comprised of fifteen countries (Southern African Development Community; retrieved 22 August 2014 from http://www.sadc.int/member-states). For the purpose of this chapter the UN scheme, consisting of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland with the addition of Zimbabwe, is used. While the UN insists that its scheme is purely 'for statistical convenience' (United Nations 2014) there are connections between these countries which justify their being grouped together when it comes to detecting the design history of the region. Using the SADC scheme would also broaden the scope of this chapter to an unwieldy size.

The first connection is geographical proximity. Lesotho and Swaziland are enclosed by South Africa whereas Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe border South Africa to the north. This is an enormous region[1] spanning over 3,066,858 km^2, which is only slightly smaller than India (3,287,590 km^2), the seventh largest country in the world. It has a total population of nearly seventy-five million people and a population density per square kilometre ranging from the sparsely populated Namibia (2.54 people km^2) to the more densely populated Lesotho and Swaziland (both 68.1 people km^2). The region is home to people who identify with a range of ethnicities and many languages are spoken; South Africa alone has eleven official languages. However, all the countries include English as an official language and this is one of the many legacies of British

colonialism in the region. As independent postcolonial nation-states, they are all relatively young, having gained complete independence only from the 1960s onwards.

South Africa is by far the largest in size, population and total GDP and has exerted a strong influence in the region. Namibia, for example, was directly controlled by South Africa from 1919 to 1990. Under successive Apartheid governments (1948–1994) South Africa came into conflict with many of its neighbours who supported the liberation organization, the African National Congress (ANC), but since 1994, when the ANC was voted into power, relations have improved. Despite such conflict the countries have historically collaborated with each other and continue to do so.

For instance, the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) created in 1910 consists of South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland, and with the exception of Botswana, all of these countries belong to the Common Monetary Area (CMA) which means their currencies are linked to the South African Rand (Krieger 2001: 787). People, goods, capital and ideas have always moved across the borders of the region, whether freely or illegally. This is evident in the earliest forms of material culture, such as rock art, which are widely dispersed throughout the region. Shared histories and relationships varying in terms of control, complicity, conflict and cooperation therefore bind the countries together and any design history of the region should be cognisant of these connections.

Huppatz and Lees-Maffei (2012: 311) offer a broad definition of design history as 'the study of designed artefacts, practices and behaviours, and the discourses surrounding these, in order to understand the past, contextualize the present and map possible trajectories for the future'. For them, 'design historians analyse [. . .] the material culture of everyday life and its production, mediation and consumption – to create narratives about the human condition'. The authors consider two differences which are important when asking what design history is, the first of which is based on John A. Walker's distinction between 'the history of design' and 'design history' (Lees-Maffei and Huppatz 2012: 311). The history of design, they argue, is 'a subject of study within design history' which begins with the separation of design and manufacture due to industrialization which has resulted in design history being preoccupied with 'the industrial era and . . . the output of Western industrialized nations at the expense of an adequate analysis of non-Western regions' (2012: 311).

This narrow view of design history has been criticized by a number of authors including Turner (1995: 79), Pacey (1992) and Woodham (2005). For example, Pacey (1992: 217) criticizes the view of design history as a modern activity practised only by a professional elite as 'misleadingly myopic' and argues for the activities of non-professional designers to be acknowledged as design. This broadening of scope, he believes, will free design history from 'a trap which it surely did not intend to set for itself, that of seeming exclusively

concerned with an activity associated with the industrialized, affluent West' (Pacey 1992: 217). In a similar vein I would argue that southern African design history cannot only be confined to industrially produced artefacts for mass consumption, but must also include artefacts and practices that are in southern Africa typically labelled as 'art' and 'craft', despite the many complexities around definition, boundaries and chronology that such a perspective entails.

The second distinction made by Huppatz and Lees-Maffei (2012: 311) concerns the offering of design history 'as contextual studies for design students, and design history as a discrete academic subject as taught in art history degrees and as researched by design historians'. The following survey touches on both these aspects, firstly by reviewing the provision of design qualifications in southern Africa and then by providing an overview of scholarship on southern African design history.

This overview of scholarship considers the output of postgraduate students at South African universities – as this is the only country in the region which offers visual studies and art history degrees at postgraduate level – and then refers to a selected number of academic journals and conferences which contribute to knowledge of southern African design history. In this way a southern African design history can be detected and outlined.

Due to limitations of space the role of academic and popular books, research centres, museums, libraries, archives, exhibitions, fairs, professional associations and government policy on the shaping of the field cannot be considered. Clearly, there is room for further work in this pressing area.

Design Qualifications in Southern Africa

The table shows the results of reviewing design qualifications offered in southern Africa.[2] State and privately owned institutions awarding undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications across eight design disciplines were considered, but not distance education institutions or those offering short courses. At undergraduate level all six countries offer diplomas or degrees in architecture: five of them in graphic and fashion design, four in product and textile design, and three in interior design. South Africa is the only country in the southern African region which offers ceramic and jewellery design diplomas and degrees as standalone subjects of study.

Swaziland is the only country which does not offer any form of postgraduate qualification in the design disciplines. In Lesotho and Botswana the Malaysian based Limkokwing University offers Honours degrees in Industrial Design and Visual Communication Design. The Polytechnic of Namibia and the National University of Science and Technology in Zimbabwe offer Honours degrees in Architecture. At Chinhoyi University of Technology in Zimbabwe students can graduate with an Honours Degree in Clothing and

Table 2.1 Design qualifications offered at southern African higher education institutions

QUALIFICATIONS OFFERED	Botswana	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa	Swaziland	Zimbabwe
Undergraduate:						
Diploma, Degree						
Architecture	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ceramic Design				x		
Fashion Design	x	x	x	x		x
Graphic Design	x	x		x	x	x
Interior Design	x	x		x		
Jewellery Design				x		
Product Design	x	x	x	x		
Textile Design	x	x		x		x
Postgraduate:						
Honours, Master, Doctoral						
Architecture			x	x		x
Ceramic Design				x		
Fashion Design				x		x
Graphic Design	x	x		x		
Interior Design				x		
Jewellery Design				x		
Product Design	x	x		x		
Textile Design				x		

Fashion Design. In South Africa students can pursue Honours, Masters and Doctoral degrees in all the listed design disciplines.

In line with many other regions of the world no standalone design history programmes are found in any of the southern African institutions (Huppatz and Lees-Maffei 2012). The majority of undergraduate design programmes in South Africa include a first-year level course called generically 'History of Art and Design' which in the second- and third-year levels becomes more discipline specific, e.g. 'History and Theory of Graphic Design'. However, this is a low credit bearing subject with no opportunity for postgraduate study. In some institutions, the 'History of Art and Design' subject offered to design students has undergone changes; for example at the University of Johannesburg it was renamed 'Contextual Studies' in the reconfigured Diploma programmes and 'Design Studies' in the newly introduced BA Design programme. This situation aligns with what Lees–Maffei and Huppatz (2012:311) describe as design history for the purpose of contextual study for design students as opposed to a separate academic subject as taught in humanities settings such as art history programmes.

South Africa is the only country in southern Africa where students can qualify with design, visual studies or art history degrees up to Doctoral level. Therefore, in the southern African region most scholarly research which can be described as design history has emanated from South Africa, particularly from Architecture, Visual Arts and Art History departments. Along with institutions

outside of Africa, Art History departments in South Africa have also seen a move away from the term 'Art History' to a preference for the term Visual Culture or Visual Studies with some universities opting to cover all bases with the nomenclature Art History and Visual Culture, or History of Art and Visual Studies.[3] It appears as if Margolin's (2002: 147) contention that '[w]hat may ultimately open up once and for all the relations between different approaches to the visual is the concept of visual culture' has been adopted to some degree in South Africa.

Postgraduate design history scholarship in southern Africa is principally conducted in and about South Africa. A review of theses and dissertations delivered in Masters and Doctoral programmes in South African Design and Architecture, Visual Arts and Art History departments over the last twenty-five years shows that studies which can be classified as design history revolve around five clusters of interest. The first cluster relates to the role of colonial and postcolonial representational practices and includes monuments and heritage, museums and practices of display. The next revolves around architecture and landscape and includes studies of architectural identity, architectural firms, regional architecture and architectural ornament. Another cluster can be categorized as graphic design and includes South African graphics for social justice and human rights, protest and resistance, design language, advertising, comics and cartoons, print media, illustration and murals. The fourth cluster encompasses crafts, and includes primarily studies on ceramics and beadwork. Lastly, a more recent cluster of studies has emerged from design departments specifically around fashion, product, furniture and interior design, some of which offers analysis which is relevant to design historical understanding.

From the above it becomes clear that although design history is overtly acknowledged in the southern African academy only by way of the naming of individual subjects on undergraduate level, it can nonetheless be detected within some of the output of postgraduate students at South African universities. In the following section a number of academic journals and conferences are selected for review to ascertain their contribution to knowledge of southern African design history.

Academic Conferences

A number of organizations convene academic conferences which offer the opportunity to present design history papers. In South Africa the Design Education Forum of Southern Africa (DEFSA) and the South African Visual Art Historians (SAVAH) host annual academic conferences. DEFSA was founded in 1991 and the hosting of conferences has been its most important function since its inception (Breytenbach 2009: 8). The DEFSA website (DEFSA; retrieved 22 August 2014 from http://www.defsa.co.za) holds some of the conference

proceedings from 2000 to 2013 and these show that DEFSA has tended to focus on teaching, learning and programme development issues. Only from 2007 have design history contributions started to appear on architecture, typography, fashion design and monographs of South African designers.

SAVAH 'is an organization of academics and professionals that seek to advance the professional practice of art history and visual culture in South Africa and to forge relations with practitioners from other disciplines and regions' (SAVAH; retrieved 22 August 2014 from http://savah.org.za/?page_id=5). The organization was founded in 1984 under the name the South African Association of Art Historians and the first annual conference was held in 1985. In 2005 the current name was adopted to show 'a move to become more inclusive and to adapt to the changing role of our discipline in South Africa'.

A review of the SAVAH conference proceedings from 1995 to 2013 reveals an ongoing interest in South African ceramics, monuments and archi-tecture, and the art and representation of the San people. In addition to these key themes, papers on comics, printed media, and clothing and fashion have also been presented at SAVAH. In recent years papers have been delivered on other countries in Africa including Kenya, Ghana, Cameroon, Zambia, Senegal, Morocco and Malawi.

Two international design history conferences, namely, the biannual conference of the International Committee for Design History and Design Studies (ICDHS) and the Design History Society (DHS) Annual Conference offer the opportunity for scholars from Africa to participate, and for papers on African design to be delivered. However, such participation and contributions have been limited, as shown by statistics published on the ICDHS website (ICDHS; retrieved 22 August 2014 from http://www.ub.edu/gracmon/icdhs/stats.html). During the period from 1999 to 2012 only two participants from South Africa and one from Nigeria presented at the ICDHS conference. The conference proceedings and programmes available on the ICDHS website indicate that papers related to Africa were delivered in 2006 and 2010 and covered fashion, craft and visual cultures in South Africa, Mali and West Africa respectively.

The Design History Society explicitly aims at promoting 'the study of global design histories' and 'shaping an inclusive design history' (Design History Society; retrieved 22 August 2014 from http://www.designhistorysociety. org/). To this end its 2013 conference titled *Towards Global Histories of Design: Postcolonial Perspectives* was held at the National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad, India where papers were delivered on, inter alia, African textiles, car design, architecture and visual communication (NID 2013). It is difficult to locate all the programmes and conference proceedings from the DHS conferences as these are not kept on the Society's website, but from the available information it appears that before the Ahmedabad conference there were very few contributions from or on southern Africa.

The review of academic conferences shows that interest in southern African design history at local conferences has increased over the years; however, with regard to conferences convened by international organizations participation by southern African delegates and contributions on the region have been low.

Academic Journals

Because southern African design history exists across a 'dispersal of sites', each with their own methods, nomenclatures and journals, it is particularly challenging to trace the outline of this history. A number of English or bilingual academic journals, published in southern Africa and outside the region, contains articles which can be classified as southern African design history based on the theme, content and methodology of the articles.

What follows is a summary of the findings of a review of a sample of such journals drawn from the categories of design, art history, visual studies, material culture, history, interdisciplinary studies, media studies and cultural studies journals. The aim of this review is not to be exhaustive – many other journals could be added to the sample – but to indicate that the contours of a southern African design history become visible across and through the selected journals. The journals were scrutinized for articles dealing with and related to the design disciplines identified as being taught in southern Africa, namely architecture, ceramic, fashion, graphic, interior, jewellery, product and textile design. In line with my argument that southern African design history cannot be confined to the study of industrialization, mass production and professional designers, the review included hand crafted artefacts and the work of artists, craftspeople and non-professional designers.

Journals which focus on design are the first and most obvious place to look for southern African design history. However, apart from the Spring 2004 edition of *Design Issues*, which focused on South African design and visual culture, very few southern African design history articles appear in this US based journal or in the UK based *Journal of Design History*.

Image & Text (*I&T*) (Fig. 2.1 and Fig. 2.2) was founded at the University of Pretoria, South Africa in 1992 as 'Africa's first scholarly journal based at a local academic design and fine arts institution' around the 'common concern about the lack of published research sources, particularly in the field of South African design' (Lange 2012: 6). Although founded as a journal for design, from 2011 it 'has been repositioned as a multi- and interdisciplinary journal that orbits around the nexus of visual culture' (*Image & Text*; retrieved 22 August 2014 from http://www.imageandtext.up.ac.za/index.php/about-image-and-text).

From its inception a key concern of *I&T* was the move from 'European- and North American-centric' to Afrocentric approaches (Lange 2012: 8) and

over the years themes which have been addressed include design, craft, art, popular culture, the vernacular and indigenous, design education, stereotyping, advertising, identity, cartoons and comics, sustainability, ethics, architecture, and political graphics, mostly with a South African focus. Art History and Visual Culture Journals which concentrate on Africa include the South African focused journals the *South African Journal of Art History* (*SAJAH*) and *De Arte*. *African Arts*, *Critical Interventions: Journal of African Art History and Visual Culture* and the *Journal of Material Culture* all have a broader sweep over the continent.
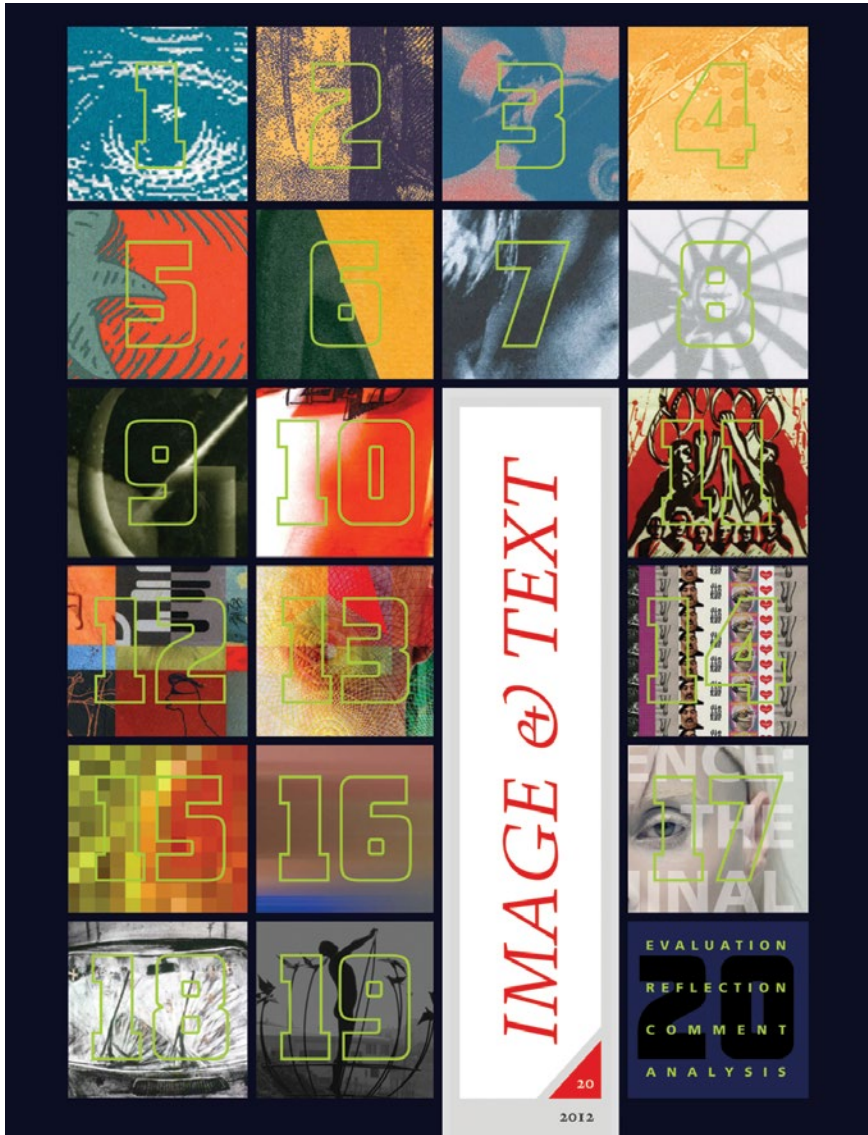

Figure 2.1 Cover of *Image & Text* 20, 2012. Image courtesy of *Image & Text*.

Figure 13: Cover and text spreads from *Image & Text* number 13 (2007). This is the first edition that is only published in digital format. Editor: Marian Sauthoff. Assistant editor: Jeanne van Eeden. Designer: Jacques Lange.

Figure 2.2 Page 19 of *Image & Text* 20, 2012. Image courtesy of *Image & Text*.

It should be noted that the *Journal of Material Culture* does not focus exclusively on Africa.

SAJAH is published by the Art Historical Work Group of South Africa and both the journal and group came into being in 1983 (SAJAH; retrieved 22 August 2014 from http://www.sajah.co.za/index.php). Currently the journal aims to publish articles on a range of topics including art and architectural history and theory, aesthetics and philosophy of art, visual culture, film and photography and the history of craft. Contributions focusing on design have been made mainly since 2006, particularly with regard to architecture, building

and spatial planning, as well as national monuments, museums and heritage sites. The journal further includes papers on a wide range of topics including pottery and ceramics, graphic design, advertising, branding and media, landscape design and plants, ethics and intellectual property, furniture, illustration, historical maps, and colonial and postcolonial discourse. Although the focus is firmly on South Africa, articles dealing with Zimbabwe have appeared.

De Arte (Fig. 2.3 and Fig. 2.4) is published by UNISA Press in Pretoria, South Africa and contains articles on 'visual arts, art history, art criticism and related disciplines' (*De Arte*; retrieved 22 August 2014 from http://reference. sabinet.co.za/sa_epublication/dearte). As such it contains valuable information
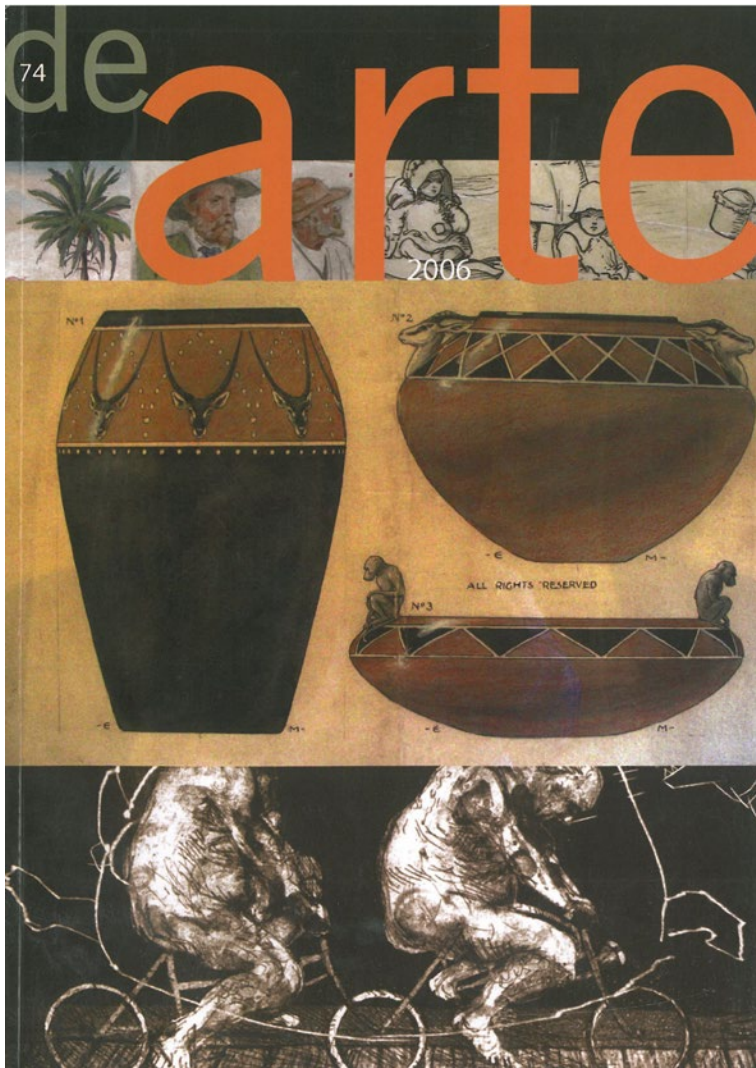

Figure 2.3 Cover of *De Arte* 74, 2006. Image courtesy of *De Arte*.

Figure 2.4 Pages 12 and 13 of *De Arte* 74, 2006. Image courtesy of *De Arte.*

on South African visual and material culture exhibitions and collections, as well as book reviews. It is particularly useful for its engagement with South African craft, including needlework, beadwork, weaving and ceramics, often written from a feminist perspective. Articles on architecture and architectural ornament further contribute to an understanding of South African design history. *African Arts* has been published since 1967, is based at UCLA (the University of California, Los Angeles) and covers 'traditional, contemporary, and popular African arts and expressive cultures' (*African Arts*; retrieved 22 August 2014 from http://www.mitpressjournals.org/loi/afar). Article titles generally refer to 'Africa' although in a few instances a distinction is made by identifying countries (for example 'South Africa', 'Ghana', 'Mali', 'Sierra Leone'), areas ('Eastern Cape', 'Sub-Saharan Africa'), ethnic groups ('Dogon', 'Makonde', 'Yoruba', 'Baule') and language ('Xhosa-speaking'). This type of emphasis on the African continent over its constituent nations or regions appears less in the African-based journals than those published and edited elsewhere. While 'art' rather than 'design' is the preferred term used in *African Arts*, articles are included on pottery and ceramics, beadwork, cloth and textile, fashion and clothing, metal art, decorative arts, and comics. The journal reviews books on, and collections, exhibitions and museums of, African art. Most of the collections, exhibitions and museums reviewed are situated in Europe and the USA with South African based collections and institutions occasionally appearing.

More critical in nature than *African Arts*, *Critical Interventions* 'focuses on the arts and visual cultures of global Africa, which encapsulates African and African

Diaspora identities in the age of globalization' and considers aspects such as 'value and African cultural patrimony' (*Critical Interventions*; retrieved 23 August 2014 from http://www.aachron.com/editions/critical_interventions/index. php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=11). The journal has published a number of special issues of which *Fractals in Global Africa* (Issue 1 2012), *Transformations* (Issue 1 2010), *Africanity and North Africa* (Issue 1 2009), *Visual Publics* (Issue 1–2 2008) and *Is African Art History?* (Issue 1 2007) are particularly relevant to design historians. Pertinent topics include the influence of Western art education on expressions of culture in Africa, modernity, ownership of African visual culture, Pan-African manifestos and festivals, posters and textiles.

The Journal of Material Culture, edited by academics from the University College London, 'is concerned with the relationship between artefacts and social relations irrespective of time and place and aims to systematically explore the linkage between the construction of social identities and the production and use of culture' (*Journal of Material Culture*; retrieved 23 August 2014 from http:// mcu.sagepub.com). Similar to *African Arts* and *Critical Interventions* the journal covers topics such as pottery, museum collections, heritage and monuments, but the emphasis on material culture, rather than art, allows it to broaden its scope to include themes such as domestic appliances and weapons. African regions covered include Saharan Africa, West Africa, South Africa, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, Namibia, Botswana and Zambia.

History journals which contribute to southern African design history include *Kronos: Southern African Histories*, the *South African Historical Journal*, the *South African Journal of Cultural History* and *Southern African Humanities*, all of which are published in South Africa. No other history journals published in the region were identified which contribute to knowledge of southern African design history.

Kronos has been published annually since 1979, initially under the title *Kronos: A Journal of Cape History*, which focused on the Western and Eastern Cape areas in South Africa. Earlier editions are primarily of interest to the design historian with regard to research on archaeology and rock art, but later editions include a variety of topics including building and architecture, festivals, the automobile industry and industrial development, clothing, print media, propaganda and coverage of issues of representation in southern Africa. This development coincides with the transformation of the journal and its renaming in 2008 'to indicate its expanded regional focus to southern Africa as a whole' (*Kronos* 2014). The journal focuses on 'southern African history, visual history, social history, cultural history, history and anthropology' (*Kronos*; retrieved 21 September 2014 from http://www.scielo.org.za/revistas/kronos/ iaboutj.htm).

The *South African Historical Journal* commenced publication in 1969; however, design historical themes only started appearing in the past decade,

principally with regard to printing and printed media, museums and archives, town planning and some architecture. The *South African Journal of Cultural History* is published by the South African Society for Cultural History and a review of issues since 2001 shows that it includes studies on the material culture of the colonial period in South Africa. While the emphasis is on Afrikaner culture – and the link between Dutch colonialism, trade and consumption within the colonial Cape is made clear in many articles – contributions on other groups and time periods are also included.

Southern African Humanities is a journal of the KwaZulu-Natal Museum and originated in the Annals of the Natal Museum published 'almost without interruption from 1906 to 2000' (*Southern African Humanities*; retrieved 23 August 2014 from http://www.sahumanities.org/ojs/index.php/SAH/about/history). An online archive is available stretching back to 1970 and is useful to design historians especially with regard to ceramics and pottery, beads, stone-age material culture, metalworking, building and settlements, architecture and identity, memorials and other forms of material culture, not only in South Africa but also Uganda, Lesotho and Zimbabwe.

Interdisciplinary journals offer a rich resource of southern African design history and a review of examples from South Africa, the UK and Botswana show a shared concern with architecture and town planning, heritage and museums, print media, material culture and craft. In addition design production is addressed by way of articles dealing with industrialization, labour, manufacturing and technology.

The oldest of the three journals reviewed, the journal of the Botswana Society, *Botswana Notes and Records*, has been published annually since 1969. It covers a wide range of subjects, including architecture and town planning, heritage and museum studies, media, publishing and handicraft with a focus on Botswana (*Botswana Notes and Records*; retrieved 21 September 2014 from http://www.botsoc.org.bw/bur/bur01.htm).

Social Dynamics is the journal of the Centre for African Studies at the University of Cape Town, South Africa and has been published since 1975. The journal describes itself as covering 'the full range of humanities and social sciences including anthropology, archaeology, economics, education, history, literary and language studies, music, politics, psychology and sociology' (*Social Dynamics*; retrieved 23 August 2014 from http://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=rsdy20). While its focus is on South Africa, its coverage includes articles on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Kenya and Zimbabwe. Themes addressed generally include colonialism, modernity, globalization and representation and identity.

One year older than *Social Dynamics*, the UK based *Journal of Southern African Studies* stretches back to 1974. The journal seeks to produce 'fresh schol-arly enquiry and rigorous exposition in the many different disciplines of the social sciences and humanities' and covers 'South Africa, Namibia, Botswana,

Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Angola and Mozambique; and occasionally, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar and Mauritius' (*Journal of Southern African Studies*; retrieved 23 August 2014 from http://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope &journalCode=cjss20#.U_hBbsW1Y6w). Design history related topics only started appearing in the past decade and are structured around identity issues of race, class, and gender, modernity, the precolonial and colonial, culture and politics. The emergence of these topics can most probably be ascribed to the 'visual/pictorial turn' and the emergence of the academic discipline 'Visual Studies' which in turn influenced various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences to consider visual culture seriously (Jay 2002: 267–268).

The last set of journals reviewed comprised Cultural and Media Studies journals. *Communicatio* is a South African journal for communication theory and research founded at the University of South Africa which in recent decades has welcomed contributions on visual communication (*Communicatio*; retrieved 23 August 2014 from http://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation? show=aimsScope&journalCode=rcsa20#.U6vB8JSSw5A). Its primary value for southern African design history is in the study of print media. A particular area of concern for *Communicatio* is health communication and numerous articles explore HIV and AIDS messages. *Critical Arts; South-North Cultural and Media Studies* is affiliated to the University of KwaZulu-Natal and contains studies which examine representations of San, rock art, election campaigns, mural art in South Africa and mass media and representation from a variety of perspectives, including postcolonialism and nationalism. The journal *Agenda* is published by a 'feminist media organization' of the same name which 'aims to achieve the goal of eradicating gender inequality and empowering women (*Agenda*; retrieved 23 August 2014 from http://www.agenda.org.za/about/ vision-and-mission/) and its value to design history lies primarily in contributions which study the relation of media to the representation of gender, commodification and consumption in Africa. The *Journal of African Cultural Studies* was so named in 1998 after being established in 1988 under the name *African Languages and Cultures* at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. The focus of the journal is on 'dimensions of African culture' and this includes, inter alia, an interest in the media, popular culture and culture and gender (*Journal of African Cultural Studies*; retrieved 23 August 2014 from http://www. tandfonline.com/action/ journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode =cjac20#.U7PEHpSSw5A). The journal contains a few articles on cartoons, advertisements, clothing, monuments, textiles, and media in Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania, South Africa and the East African coast respectively.

This journal review indicates that design historical research is being done about most of the sub-Saharan African countries, however not necessarily from within them, and shows the emergence of a number of common themes in the scholarship on southern African design history. The predominant theme

materialized as an interest in architecture and building and the related themes of monuments, museums and heritage. The next prominent theme revolved around graphic design and includes the study of political graphics and propaganda, advertising and branding, cartoons and comics and print media. Lastly, the study of 'craft' and 'art' such as beadwork, pottery, dress, furniture and cloth, appears to be preferred to studies of 'design', such as jewellery, fashion, interior and product design.

Conclusion

This chapter set out to answer the question whether southern African design history exists by examining how academic institutions form the field. A review of design qualifications offered in the region showed that at undergraduate level all the countries offer qualifications in architecture, five in graphic and fashion design, four in product and textile design, three in interior design, and one in ceramic and jewellery design and that most offer postgraduate qualifications in some of these design disciplines. The existence of these design qualifications would indicate the need for students to have an understanding of the region's design history. However, no postgraduate design history qualifications exist, and instead it was found that postgraduate design historical research is being conducted in some design and many architecture, visual culture and art history Masters and Doctoral programmes, primarily in and on South Africa. The overview of scholarship on southern African design history in the form of postgraduate output, academic journals and conferences shows that this history is found in a number of sites and brought to the fore the contours of a southern African design history shaped around architecture, monuments, museums and heritage, graphic design, and various artefacts from everyday life including beadwork, pottery, dress, and furniture.

While it has been shown that a body of southern African design history exists, albeit primarily with a South African focus, I would argue that access to this body of knowledge is hampered by its wide dispersal and compounded by the difficulty of accessing conference papers, by the fact that most postgraduate research remains unpublished and buried in institutional repositories, and by the low conference participation of southern African delegates to international design history conferences.

This then raises the question to what extent southern African design history is included in the curriculum of the design programmes offered at institutions of higher learning in the region. The barriers to accessing this knowledge would indicate that it is probably low, but further research is required to confirm this assumption. Such research would form part of a larger research agenda which is required to enable southern African design history to become visible.

At the outset I acknowledged that this first survey of southern African design history writing will inevitably be incomplete and much research remains to be done, particularly with regard to the design history content taught in design programmes in the region, and the role of academic and popular books, research centres, museums, libraries, and archives, exhibitions and fairs, professional associations and government policy in the development of the field. In addition, the history of design of the region can be made visible by publishing survey histories and readers and by increased contributions on southern African design history at design history conferences and to established design journals.

Notes

1. All statistical information was obtained from the relevant country's page on Wikipedia.

2. The websites of the following institutions offering design qualifications were reviewed: Bulawayo Polytechnic, College of the Arts, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Chinhoyi University of Technology, Durban University of Technology, Gweru Polytechnic, Harare Polytechnic, Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, Mutare Polytechnic, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, North-West University, National University of Science and Technology, Polytechnic of Namibia, Tshwane University of Technology, University of Botswana, University of Cape Town, University of the Free State, University of Johannesburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Pretoria, University of Stellenbosch, Vaal University of Technology, University of the Witwatersrand, Walter Sisulu University and Zimbabwe Institute of Digital Arts.

3. For a South African perspective on the contested relationship between art history and visual culture studies see Lauwrens (2005).

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