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The invisible faith in democracy Ekas'lam: an exploration of public ethnography as a form of protest in an arts-based research methodology

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Abstract

The Invisible Faith in Democracy *Ekas'lam* is an exploration of public ethnography as a form of protest in an arts-based methodology. This exploration is from a South African context in the artistic medium of applied theatre making. The initiative stems from the need to have radical protesting alternatives, for those that are being failed by the system, precisely those from *ekas'lam* Ivory Park, township. To have ways that can expose and contest the democratic system when it is failing to serve its people as it is meant to, based on the Republic of South Africa's Constitution.

The exploration uses *Mr. President* - a composition that exhibits still and moving images to illustrate the conditions that suppress the mindset of *abantu base kas'lam*. Through the pictures, embodiment, and the voice, a collage is used to create an abstract image of the mindset that reflects the reality of *abantu base kas'lam*. To achieve this, it puzzled together the reality of the people from Ivory Park - to create a museum to explore public ethnography as a form of protest in an arts-based methodology to disclose the invisible faith in democracy towards *abantu base kas'lam*.

This project has achieved all its aims and objectives because of the 'fire' that is burning in the dialogues and conversations about its importance, urgency, and universal relevance. It reminds us that we are still building a tradition as South Africans and our situations change radically all the time. We are always plunged into new surprises that disguise the sameness of the old. That is the essence of why public ethnography as a form of protest is relevant, necessary, and fundamental because of how it is relevant to the current times (Democracy) and how it relevantly speaks to the times before (Apartheid). The combination of the practice and theory is what gave this study the acquired product (Theory + Practice= Praxis).