

Wealth for those who create: an exploration of intellectual property exploited by visual artists based in Johannesburg.

Abstract

The research report is a culmination of exploring how intellectual property exploited by visual artists works. This is part of seeking insights into an existing phenomenon in the Johannesburg cultural and creative industries. An understanding of intellectual property makes it easier for businesses to then commercially exploit their intellectual property to both promote growth and gain competitive advantages (Caplan and Ullo, 2013). This research reveals how intellectual property works for an individual visual artists thereby contributing towards local context specific knowledge generation, information upon which trends are read and rethinking a shift towards wealth for those who create. The research acknowledges that there are institutions like the Dramatic, Artistic and Literary Rights Organisation (DALRO) but they do not feature in detail based on their work not reflected at the individual visual artists' interviewed for the purposes of this research. This also extends to the underway 2017 Copyright Amendment Bill as it is a work in progress thereby not yet reflective of how IP works for individual visual artists based in Johannesburg. The research study is situated within the wider Cultural Policy and Management discipline with a focus on cultural entrepreneurship as part of the Creative Economy therefore it should not be treated as a study of law although IP is best understood in technical terms that are legal in nature. The research is interdisciplinary in nature and great consideration has been taken to create a balancing act without taking away from the Cultural Policy and Management field. Three methods were used to collect data; purposive sampling, semi-structured interviews and documents review for credibility and reliability considering the existing phenomenon not being fully understood. The researcher sums up the exploration by arguing that:

The three categories of intellectual property exploited by visual artists based in Johannesburg, their commercialisation, policing, and negotiations for IP agreements reflect South African IP approaches that privilege the corporate over an individual who creates.