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How much is the community of Joubert Park involved in the Johannesburg Art Gallery today?

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How much is the community of Joubert Park involved in the Johannesburg Art Gallery today?

Sizwe Cecil Radebe

A research report submitted to the Wits School of Arts in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand, in fulfilment of the requirements for the Masters Degree in Coursework and Research in Arts, Culture and Heritage studies.

Johannesburg, 2015

DECLARATION

I declare that this research is my own unaided work. A research report submitted to the Wits School of Arts in the faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand, in fulfilment of the requirements for the Masters Degree in Coursework and Research in Arts, Culture and Heritage studies.

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(Sizwe Cecil Radebe)

13 March 2015

ABSTRACT

One of the principal purposes of the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG), one of Johannesburg's public institutions, is to educate the public through the arts. The many changes, including political changes, in South Africa that caused the movement of people from one area to another have affected the audience participation at this museum. The Johannesburg Art Gallery is located in Joubert Park, the southern part of Hillbrow, which has been affected by the changes that have taken place from the time of the museum's inception to the present day, when the area is inhabited by black people from all over Africa. The concern is therefore to understand the relationship between these two. I plan to interrogate the mission of JAG, to find out if it is relevant to the community that it is located in, and if the community is aware and supportive of JAG's activities.

The purpose of this investigation is to challenge the methods that are used by JAG to obtain and maintain visitors to the museum, and to expand the target market group by shifting focus from the people that used to live within this community to the present-day inhabitants. This is done by finding out from the Joubert Park community what is it that they wish to see in this museum. By observing their everyday life and interviewing them, I explore why or how much the people of Joubert Park are involved in the Johannesburg Art Gallery today. To reach the conclusion of this research, observing the area and interviewing the community will be followed by interviewing the co-ordinators of the Joubert Park Project (started in 2000) that was designed for the purpose of involving this community in the public spaces and institutions around them, and finally the employees of the Johannesburg Art Gallery. In addition, studying recent successful exhibitions would possibly reveal the explanation of what people want to see. In this world of ever-changing technology and culture of cyber space, can a museum attract new audiences by using methods that are contemporary and interactive?

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1. Introduction

As we have gathered around with my friends for an afternoon that promises to be a pleasant one, guests keep on coming in slowly, the bar is opened and set outside in a courtyard. People are sitting in groups while others are going in and out of the building. It looks like something is capturing their interest inside but then they compose themselves as they sip from their glasses of wine and converse with each other. Laughter escapes as one of my friends spills a drink and the others joke that he is not used to these kinds of functions and wine glasses, that is why he spills the wine. He refers to the function as 'higher class' which means the other friend is used to 'lower class' functions. As we laugh we are interrupted by the voice from the microphone, "excuse me may I have your attention please". We all turn around to the direction of the speaker and we pay attention.

It is Antoinette Murdoch, the Director and Chief Curator at the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG). As she continues she mentions her disappointment in the turn-out at this exhibition opening. I look at the time and already it is 45 minutes later than the supposed opening time and there are hardly 100 people. The expected turn-out was 300 people and I know that since I also work in this building for The Friends of the Johannesburg Art Gallery, which has a database of just over 600 members that I send invitations to. This is not the first time the Director is disappointed at the turn-out. As time goes by some people start to leave and the remaining people start to enjoy more of the now large amount of wine which was catered for 300 people. In two hours the guests are requested to have their last glass of wine as the bar will be closing in 30 minutes. And so it does. Rochelle Keene, a former director of JAG, describes JAG as:

> a major metropolitan museum situated on the eastern fringe of the inner city of bustling Johannesburg. Located on the southern boundary of Joubert Park, the oldest public park in Johannesburg, the geographic location of the Gallery places it within a vibrant nexus of diversity and activity: dense urban populations and inner-city 'hustle and bustle' offer an appropriate setting for JAG – as much a fixture on South Africa's map of arts and culture sites today, as it always has been since its inception in the early 20th century. It is administered and funded by the City of Johannesburg and forms part of the Metropolitan Department of Arts, Culture and Heritage Services (Keene, 2004, p.13).

Joubert Park is one of the most popular spots for lovers and other people that come to relax, maybe have something to eat and even take pictures. According to Nkosi Ndaba (2010), it is located in region F of Johannesburg alongside Hillbrow, an inner city residential area. The region is known for its population density, unemployment, poverty and crime. Hillbrow was a

designated 'whites only' area in the previous apartheid system but, from the late 1970s, black people gradually started to occupy it, driving the white population to the northern suburbs of the city. A huge influx of different ethnicities negatively affected infrastructure maintenance and by the 1990s, Hillbrow was an urban slum characterised by poverty and buildings in major decay (Clay, 1982; Morris, 1999). Today the majority of residents are migrants from townships, rural areas and other African countries (Ndaba 2010). The location of JAG in Joubert Park could easily be considered a misfit today but, looking on the bright side, it could be a perfect location to educate the public about art. The question in my mind is "Why does the gallery, situated in such a busy area, have a disappointing turn-out of visitors?" Hence this research was born, *How much is the community of Joubert Park involved in the Johannesburg Art Gallery today?* Where are they? Do they know about this place? Or are they merely not interested in coming in?

The focal point of this research is the immediate community of Joubert Park, people that use, live and work around the area. By observing the vicinity and interviewing these people I hope to find out how much they are involved in the activities of JAG, how much they know about this institution, and what is it that they would expect or like to see if they enter these premises. There have been a number of projects launched with an attempt to engage the Joubert Park community with their surrounding utilities and one of them was the Joubert Park Project (2000). By interviewing the supervisors who were involved in this project I aim to find out if the project was a success or not and possibly find reasons for that. Furthermore I will interview the JAG staff to understand what they think about the transformation, if there has been any, that has taken place and the involvement or non-involvement from this community.

I will then look at the history of JAG comparing the changes that have taken place over the years with what the community think they want to see at JAG today. In my findings I will summarise the interviews and observations of visitors, analyse different sets of visitor figures, and look at some recent successful exhibitions. The latter gives insight into what people may be attracted to now. I attempt to outline what people's expectations are and what type of exhibition and methods of marketing are successful. In conclusion, I would like to hear from a member of the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council what her or his views are about this relationship between JAG and its immediate community. Then finally I would like to give my suggestions based on the findings of what people think, the history of the museum, its present-day state and the future.

2. Observations of the vicinity

Shalini Venturelli (2009) writes that culture is more than a general body of the arts; it is a way of living. Cultural inquiry is a mission, she says, of "unlocking the unique hidden meaning system which holds together the turbulent forces of a particular society" (Venturelli, 2009, p.5). She discusses culture in relation to the industrial economy, a tradition which she traces to Adam Smith's assertion in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) that industrial institutions form the basis of social life and can be regarded as a new cultural system. This, she says, is the foundation of modern culture which, like industrial goods, is subjected to "the same forces of supply, demand, and economies of scale" (Venturelli, 2009, p.5).

One can see this on a micro-scale in Joubert Park, where one of the most popular activities is that of informal trading. How does this informal trading culture relate to the culture of the City of Johannesburg and to JAG?

To attempt to answer this question, we need to understand the history of JAG and of the park in which it is situated. Therefore I took my time to study the area, the people and the behavioural patterns. Observation can assist to get acquainted with the area and its activities, while interviewing can assess reactions of individuals.

I observed the community of Joubert Park during the first week of November 2013. It is 8:00 and I am standing at JAG's West gate, where JAG employees drive in (frustrated by the taxis stopping at the entrance) to start their day at work (Refer to appendix D). The security guard is standing at the boom gate greeting them and allowing them through. It is supposed to go up to 27*C as the weather forecast reported, sunny with clear skies and already hot. It is early summer in Johannesburg, one of the busiest cities in South Africa where most Africans come with a dream of improving their lives and the lives of their loved ones. Today the weather is perfect for going out or going to work so I decide to stand there and observe the life and culture of this neighbourhood. People look like they are all in a hurry to get to their destinations but as time passes by traffic starts to fade away and people start to walk more freely. I decide not to talk to people yet but study the area and the behaviour of the people. Taking my time to observe would help me in discovering the reasons for their engagement or non-engagement with JAG.

Joubert Park is situated in the central business district (CBD) of Johannesburg in the Hillbrow area (Refer to appendix B). According to Ndaba (2010), it is a public park that is meant to serve its location and areas beyond such as Doornfontein, Bertrams and Braamfontein. Joubert

Park is bordered by Wolmarans Street to its north, King George Street to its west, Klein Street to its south-west, Twist Street to its east, and JAG to its south (Refer to appendix C). It is one of the first open spaces in the inner city, planned in 1887 but only proclaimed in 1906, and is named after the South African (Anglo-Boer) War hero, Commander-General P. Joubert (Ndaba, 2010).

Today across the street from JAG's West gate is a little shopping mall, The Bridge Mall (Refer to appendix C), with one of the most popular grocery stores. I walk across to buy a bottle of water. Although the mall is approximately 60 metres away, it takes me about 30 minutes to complete the trip back to the gate, which shows how busy it is inside that store and how busy this area of town is. Next to that little mall there is Park Station (Refer to appendix B and C) where taxis and buses from all over South Africa drop off people who are coming into the City of Johannesburg and pick up those who are leaving the city. Other buses are from neighbouring Southern African countries; as a result the area is congested with people from all over Africa who are here to look for a better opportunity in life. One of the biggest taxi ranks, Noord or MTN taxi rank (Refer to appendix C), is situated about 100 metres south of JAG, across the railway cutting, and about 200 metres from Park Station. Noord taxi rank has more than 100 taxis delivering people in and around Gauteng to their destinations on a daily basis. As I observe the commotion and try to figure out how I am going to conduct these interviews in such a busy and noisy place, many of the vendors are trying to sell me their merchandise. This is undoubtedly a very busy area that simply defines the trading culture of Johannesburg and the heart and soul of hopes and dreams of poor Africans.

The second entrance, which is on the perimeter of the Park, Park's South gate (or JAG's northeast entrance, Refer to appendix D) has a different atmosphere compared to the other gate. My observations are of less busy and calmer people, a few groups of people, some with children, walk past from the JAG side, noticeably having used JAG's West gate, and through the park straight to the clinic. The clinic is also inside the park and seemingly busy compared to the people in the park itself. Some park people are in groups and smoking and I cannot get too close to them, they appear homeless and somehow dangerous. Other than those, there are a few scattered individuals and couples who are more approachable, including the photographers that are looking or waiting for clients, and chess players, who seem to be focused and friendly towards one another. The park has a huge television screen situated at the centre of the park with the aim to provide the public with entertainment at no cost to the people. At the time of the interviews it was not on but it is usually on between 2pm and 5pm and broadcasting different channels on different days. You can hear and see the TV, even when standing at JAG's door. The name of the company that is responsible for the TV is Township TV

which has a contract with City Parks of Johannesburg and 22 other Parks in South Africa.

There are a number of buildings on the site of Joubert Park. Besides JAG and the clinic, there are the Green House Project and the Lapeng Child and Family Resource Centre (Refer to appendix D). The Green House Project is located on the north-western part of the park. It was established in 1993 by Earthlife Africa in conjunction with the City of Johannesburg and the Danish Cooperation for Environment and Development (DANCED), with the aim to become an environmental resource and development centre in the park. The project intended to develop a clear, practical knowledge base for making the greater Johannesburg area green. It was formed with the criteria for agenda 21 of the global plan for sustainable development adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio De Janeiro 1992 (Ndaba, 2010). Outside the East gate leading to Twist Street are stops for the Rea Vaya bus station which picks up and drops off passengers from as far as Soweto (Refer to appendix D). The East gate area near JAG appears to be very promising for an intertwining between the relaxation of people from the park and the peacefulness of exhibitions inside the museum. With this study I hope to identify the similarities and differences between the two, starting by finding out how much do they know or think about each other. Is the culture of JAG similar to the culture of the community it serves?

3. Interviews

3.1 Joubert Park community.

The two methods of primary sources that are used in this research are observations and interviews, that is, collecting indirect and direct data. Observation, as discussed in chapter two, is a good way of understanding how people behave, what their body language conveys, but it lacks depth of inquiry which is covered by the interviewing method (Ndaba, 2010). After the observations I had done outside the museum it became clear that the vicinity is hectic with people's routines, and some people did not want to talk to the interviewer as they felt they were being disturbed on their way to work.

Most direct data was from the people in the Park that were relaxed and not in a hurry or fear of their employers. One enters Joubert Park from any of the four gates, one from Twist Street (East gate) next to a Rea Vaya bus station, another from King George Street (West gate) facing towards Park Station, the third one is from Wolmarans Street (North gate) from the Hillbrow side, also next to a Rea Vaya bus station, and the fourth is from the Klein Street gate (JAG's West gate) used as the vehicle entrance to JAG, which leads to the Park's South gate (Refer to appendix D).This is a full-of-activity park. You can immediately tell that it is a properly designed space, with chairs scattered around for people to sit

and relax, a water fountain, big trees, a children's playground with slides and swings, flowerbeds and grass all well maintained. It gives one a sense of relaxation until you realise that you are in Joubert Park which borders on Hillbrow where crimes and scams are witnessed every few minutes. Things that happen in this area are the reasons why your parents never wanted you to be there, especially if you are from outside of Gauteng. You always do not know what to expect next, who to trust or who not to trust, is it safe to be here? These were the things going on in my mind as I was looking for a starting point to conduct park interviews.

The first person who was willing to converse with the interviewer was passing the main West gate of JAG (Refer to appendix D). He was a 28-year-old male from Zimbabwe who had been staying in Johannesburg for a year and passed this museum almost every week to do his errands. He admitted to loving the arts but had never been into JAG. When asked about his reason for never going inside JAG he said he did not know what the building was for but assumed that it was one of the government offices, but not a museum. He spoke passionately about the way the building is not hospitable to those who do not know about the exhibitions inside. The security at the boom gates illustrates that entrance is restricted to certain people. When asked what is it that he expects to see if he goes inside, he assumed that there were sculptures and paintings. He made the point that since this is JAG there should be lots of artefacts that describe the life and culture of Johannesburg. He did not expect to see European art but South African art and specifically art from Johannesburg.

I noticed that on this day of interviews the streets were much clearer, with less traffic and fewer people walking up and down. I realised that there were police officers patrolling the area, some were parked inside the museum yard others just across the street. The area was being revamped, in actuality, Johannesburg has been under refurbishment for a while. There had been an increasing culture of informal street traders. Now the situation was changing, illegal vendors were no longer allowed and the place looked decent, if I may say so. My expectations of commotion, traffic and amount of people on the streets were the same as what I saw the last time I was there, but to my surprise, the area was far less busy. The presence of the police changed everything. I thought it would be a good idea to interview the people nearest to the museum, the police themselves. I spoke to two ladies in their police uniforms, one was 33 years old and the other was 41. As I had anticipated, they first did not want to say much. When I pointed at the museum in front of them, unwillingly they started telling me that they knew nothing about it. They agreed that they had been working here in front of JAG every day for the past three months but never took much notice of the activities. After I had told them what the building was, it became clear that they were simply not interested in the arts. When asked what their expectations

were if they decided to visit the place, they divulged that they had children and husbands that they would like to invite to see the art inside. But first they would use their lunch break to take a glance and then they may come back with them. The interview started unpromisingly and finished with optimism. They claimed that no one had ever invited them inside therefore they did not want to intrude.

As there were few people in the park that day I had to walk into the shops nearest to JAG's West gate (Refer to appendix D) to get people's views on the building that is in front of them every day. From the 28-year-old Zimbabwean, to two lady police officers, to all the interviews that followed, observing how people react to questions revealed not only knowledge about JAG but also emotions they have about JAG. The following are examples of both direct and indirect data collection that went beyond my expectations. A 28-year-old male working as a shop assistant was from KwaZulu Natal and had been working in the shop opposite JAG's West gate (Refer to appendix D) for the past year. When I pointed at the museum building he pretended he could not see the building and then reacted with laughter saying that he did not know anything but saw it every day. His body language, lack of eye contact and laughter revealed that he was embarrassed not to be aware of the activities that take place in that building. He did not know exactly what the museum did but promised to visit it soon, especially after learning that it was open to the public and for free. A 31-year-old South African female, also working as a shop assistant, was very keen to talk. She had been to the museum before but said she was embarrassed that she did not know it until she was taken there by her Nigerian boyfriend who loves art and taught her a few things. Her direct answers were interesting as she said she would expect to see more of South African art like sculptures of our presidents. She feels like she does not belong there but she is thankful to have known the place. The next few interviews were opposite to the previous ones. The body language and the faces were firmly insisting that they were not interested in the building. Their attitudes towards the building and the interviewer were vividly unreceptive.

The day of the interviews ended on a bad note as the interviewer was exposed to further groups of people, deep inside the park, away from the West gate where the police were more visible. They started noticing that they were being interviewed before I could even ask for their consent. When they were approached they started moving away before the interviewer even spoke to them. The more the interviewer tried to approach them the more difficult communication was, the language barrier became more evident with these groups of foreigners. People seemed suspicious about what the interviewer's intentions were. It was intimidating to be surrounded by people who were communicating in a strange language, neither English nor any of the South African languages. The interviewer felt unwelcomed and scared even though he was also a

black man amongst other black people, but the fact that they did not speak indigenous black South African languages would make anyone feel not at home. I assume that a white English-speaking woman would feel far more threatened. The distance is approximately 50 metres from the West gate of JAG but the language had completely changed. Many refugees and immigrants to South Africa, faced with the uncertainties of housing, employment, foreign languages, and harassment from authorities, form communities based on their areas of origin and language, usually with tightly structured mutual-aid societies (Nuttall and Mbembe, 2008). This appeared to be such a community, which can be threatening to outsiders. That was the end of the interviews for that day.

It seemed like a good idea to start with the clinic on the next day, but the minute I stepped inside the clinic gate it was observable that this is not a location to conduct interviews, people are unwell and waiting for their turn for consultation. I did not even want to start asking for permission to interview people from the nurses, they had more pressing issues there, matters of life and death.

Right in front of the entrance from a Rea Vaya bus station, East gate, (Refer to appendix D) are various informal businesses. There are street vendors selling sweets, fruit and loose cigarettes, while inside the gate there are photographers that make a living out of people passing by, by taking their pictures and supplying their clients a same-time photo. Some of these photographers use JAG sculptures as props in the courtyard inside JAG premises.

In front of the East gate (Refer to appendix D) I pretended to be buying fruit and I started asking questions from the vendors as they started opening up thinking that I was lost and perhaps looking for directions. I introduced myself and started asking about the JAG building. To my surprise, they started laughing pointing at the photographers saying that they are the ones who should know about that building not them. I spoke to three vendors, all Zulu speaking, all three of them individually had been in Johannesburg for approximately six years, they were between the ages of 25 and 30 and had worked in Joubert Park for three years. One admitted visiting JAG when there were functions like openings of exhibitions, but cannot remember the names of the exhibitions even though he confessed that they had food and wine and that’s what inspired him to attend. He did not understand what truly happens after exhibitions as he mentioned that he thought that artworks were sold and rich white people with lots of money buy them. At this stage the other two were laughing and one commented that not only white people but anyone with money can buy them. When I asked him if he has ever been inside, the second guy replied, with more laughter this time, saying, “We went to use toilets with some other guys and I noticed that there were selling books

and t-shirts, art was displayed on the walls and I just knew that they are selling art as well". After I told them what the building was for and what takes place inside and that the art is not for selling, there was even bigger laughter as they could not believe that people would just look at the works and not buy them or be allowed to touch or use them. They appeared to be opening up to me and even the third guy mentioned that it must be a place for lovers since he had seen people taking pictures inside there. When asked what is it personally that they would like to see when visiting this museum, they mentioned drawings and sculptures, but one thing stood out, they thought they did not belong there since they knew it is a place for rich people. Would they like to come and visit someday? Yes they said, they could bring their girls and they could have wine too. The conversation was flowing at this time as I asked them if the place did anything for them. No was their reply, they are simply waiting for their customers to come buy their merchandise but, mentioned one of the three, maybe it helps the photographers as their clients sometimes walk through to the building with them to take pictures.

After having such a nice laugh, I felt it was time to ask the photographers themselves. Again, they were also busy greeting people passing through the East gate (Refer to appendix D) to get their attention so they could take pictures of them. The minute I introduced myself, something a little different from the other interviews happened, two other males joined us to make a group of four photographers. They seemed very interested in what was going on. One looked over 50 years old with lots of grey hair while the other three were between the ages of 25 and 40. They all seemed to be knowledgeable about the building but they were not sure why they were being interrogated since they knew that it was a public building and could be used by anyone. That was unexpected after I had interviewed a number of people. One guy that was present during the introduction explained to the other two guys who I was and what I wanted to know. They started talking about the gallery, as it is well known amongst them. It is for the public to come and view art they explained, and they continued describing what takes place inside the gallery without waiting for any of my questions. Obviously they were comfortable with the building and also familiar with what goes on inside it. One of the guys kept on staring at me inquisitively; that is when I decided to pose a question directed straight to him. "So what would you like to see inside if you were given a chance to decide?" I asked as I was looking at him. To everyone's surprise he replied, "I saw you the other day inside there, is that your real hair?" while touching my hair without fear or even asking for permission, "Yo! It's beautiful" he added. All five people in this little circle started laughing. The guy who introduced me to the late arrivals saved the day by interrupting the laughter saying that I was busy and I needed to go and they also needed to work, and that is when he answered, "I would like to see more sculptures, I love sculptures they are nice to take pictures next to them". That was a good enough

answer as they regularly use sculptures to take pictures with their clients. About the hair, it seems like he just wanted to know the truth and feel it. When I asked them if they ever use technology and new media, there was some excitement about Facebook and WhatsApp, which some of them confessed using if they are not busy with clients. Even though they were confused when I asked them about using these new media inside the museum, they were understanding of that the community did not go inside JAG and JAG was doing good work to try and educate the public about art. In summary, they liked the idea of having this museum in Joubert Park.

The park is popularly known for lovers spending their time relaxing on benches and on grass for long hours. When I approached a couple for an interview, naturally it would feel like an interruption, but I did. After a short period of time and anxiety between both me and the couple, we loosened up the questions and the answers started to come out and it became clear that they were not very familiar with the building as they were still a new couple, self-confirmed, and had been inside few times. When I asked them about their expectations and wishes about that museum of art they mumbled some words like drawings and sculptures. Even though they were speaking Zulu it was clear that it was not their home language and English was not an option as the interview started in English and it was not easy to communicate.

People in Joubert Park are there for different reasons and sometimes they do not like to engage in other people's businesses, so they also do not like being disturbed. A number of people literally pulled away as I was approaching them, they either did not know what that person was about or they just did not want to be one of the victims of crime if not a scam. A woman can have a negative attitude towards a man who wants to talk to her without even knowing what he might be bringing to her life, sixth sense perhaps? In this community, or should I say this country, even men can have the same attitude. Possibly it is a universal behaviour, but some people were willing to converse like two ladies who happened to be passing through inside the park. Both of them were holding and punching their cell phones but without hesitation they paid attention to the stranger that asked for a moment of their time. They both looked like they were dressed by a stylist with their hair done with, assumingly, long extensions. I could not help noticing that the photographers, from the West gate (Refer to appendix D), were still following them begging to take photos of them but without success. I started talking to them, they knew the building in question and one had been inside with a school group for her first time and she sometimes visits with friends when they are bored. That was interesting. But does she ever go there for the reason of being interested in the art, you may wonder. She knew for certain what occurs at JAG and when I asked her about what was it that she would like to see in addition, with a vivacious personality she replied,

Beyoncé, Rehanna, Chris Brown, Lady Gaga etc. If that did not make someone express amusement nothing else would. The second lady had never been inside and her companion promised at that moment to introduce her that day, when they came back from their journey.

Joubert Park has a group of people that spend their time playing chess. From afar you can conclude that they are in a peaceful state of mind and without an aim of causing harm to either each other or anyone. Looking at them, I was drawn to the other non-players who were waiting for their turn to play or they were just spectators. I did not expect it but a small group moved away as I was approaching. After the conversation started they moved back to join the group and the group became bigger but without all of them participating, others wanted to eavesdrop on a conversation but with no intention of contributing. The important point about this group is the way in which they felt at home in this space, Joubert Park, but when responding to the questions about JAG they did not feel the same way and most of them did not even bother answering me. Things did not get better when I moved further to couples that were sitting on the benches. They gave the impression that they did not want much to do with something they did not know much about. Their answers were uncertain and as an interviewer it felt like I was hitting a brick wall, to an extent that a young lady rolled her eyes and swung her wrist to-and-fro and pronounced the famous word "whatever", showing blatantly that I should just leave her alone with her man and her life. With that said and done, it was time to put up the shutters for the day. Walking down towards the museum gate facing the gallery (Refer to appendix D), I stopped and took another look around and I thought; "People are doing their personal things and others are having problems of health, love, money, drugs etc. Whatever change in this place that could move in a better direction, it would take some time."

3.2 Joubert Park Project management.

To unpack all the possibilities regarding a relationship between the Joubert Park community and JAG, I looked back at what other people have done, or not done, to try and create, maintain or destroy a relationship between the two, and therefore I spoke to Bie Venter (2014). Venter was involved in the Joubert Park Project that was launched in 2000. She explains that the project was originally conceived by a Dutch artist Jack Mensink. He received funding from the Department of Arts and Culture in 1999 and approached her to project manage it. She says the original project involved large scale images of the surrounding area of Joubert Park to be displayed on the roof of JAG as a window to the community. She then approached several artists, including Dorothee Kreutzfeldt, to work with her on the project. They formed a team and

extended the scope of the project to include workshops with the Joubert Park photographers and other organisations based in the area, including the Lapeng Child and Family Resource Centre and children from surrounding communities. Though she did not give much detail in her explanation, she did say that their first Joubert Park Project event in 2000 was hosted by JAG and involved various artists' projects which included children, photographers and the general community. The response was very good she said, and she also mentioned that a large number of people participated in the events.

Venter's answer when she responded to the question of whether the Joubert Park Project was a success or not, was clear and specific to a certain time, 2000-2001,when she thinks one could say that it was, yes. Large amounts of people were involved in the project and attended the events in the art gallery. It is difficult to say how many people directly benefited from the project, but many skills were transferred and many young people were exposed to various art-making processes and techniques. I asked her that, if the Joubert Park Project was not a success, what did she think could have gone wrong and what could have been done better, both by the project managers and the community? Sustainability is always a problem Venter explained, adding that projects can only be kept alive if the people who manage and run the programmes are present, and if funding is available.

I then asked Venter what she thought about JAG's programmes and exhibitions, if they still relate to the Joubert Park community, and also her opinion on what she thought people would like to see when they went inside JAG. She said she could not speak for JAG programmes at present as she has not been involved for many years now, but she did mention that people want to see artworks that relate to their lives. Things they can associate with and understand. My last question to her was based on ever improving technology, if she thought it was in competition with gallery users or could they be combined? She responded:

> Technology can definitely be used to the advantage of the art gallery. Social media could be used to keep people informed as to events taking place at the gallery. Websites could be used to explain projects in more detail. Displays in the museum itself can utilise technology to great effect. Touch screen displays, or headsets with explanations of artworks or displays in various languages could be utilised. Technology could not ever entirely replace the experience of viewing an original artwork like an oil painting or a sculpture (Venter, 2014).

Other projects during and after the Joubert Park Project that were directly dedicated to the Joubert Park area included projects managed by Terry Kurgan and Jo Ractliffe, recorded in an exhibition and their publication *Johannesburg circa now: photography and the city* (Kurgan and Ractliffe, 2005). In the introduction they record:

> Jo had spent the past five years documenting Johannesburg's transforming inner city, alongside various teaching and curatorial projects she was involved in. Terry's art practice had included work in media and social communications for both development agencies and the corporate sector. And although our interests have been located in relatively distinct contexts, we recognised that there were interesting links between the two and common ground in a complex and contradictory environment that is the inner city. In particular, it was interesting to discover that the work we were currently developing emerged quite directly from the work we had presented on the *Joubert Park Public Art Project* in 2001. This led to a thought about what could happen in a coming together of our two projects, and we began to talk about collaborating on a new project that we believed would find the most appropriate home at the Johannesburg Art Gallery (Kurgan and Ractliffe, 2005, unpaginated).

They continued to try to involve the community with JAG, describing their discussions:

> When thinking about inviting the public to participate in this project we wanted something that went beyond the usual "walkabout / talkabout" ... We wanted visitors to be able to register their contribution and response to the exhibition in a material way, in the actual exhibition space alongside the other works on show... we had to find a process that would be accessible to all. We also wanted it to be playful (Kurgan and Ractliffe, 2005, unpaginated).

There were three parts to the project: an exhibition at JAG, an interactive public involvement, and a catalogue with contributions from a number of people from different fields. The public involvement was exceptionally productive and popular, with workshops facilitated in collaboration with the Curriculum Development Project, the Wits School of Arts 'Artists in Schools' Partnership Project and the Imbali Visual Literacy Project. But perhaps the most popular part of the exhibition was the mock photographic studio, set up with props, where anybody could take photographs of themselves and each other. Photography is a form of art that allows individuals to feel special, the one who is in front of the camera can pretend to be anyone they want to be. The photographic participation reminded people that they can be playful, beautiful, serious or whatever that they feel like being at that moment, that moment is theirs and as they are watched by the camera and others around them, they feel like actors, musicians and any celebrity. As any member of the

public could take pictures, they all felt involved in the project. The only requirement was that they should print two photos with the facilities provided, one for the exhibition – accompanied by a short text – and the other to take home. Is not that special? Some of the photos can be seen in the book today.

Rory Bester, in his essay in the book, concludes that such projects play a pivotal part in the social transformation of inner cities and the nation as a whole. They are centres that attract different communities and allow the space for negotiating the differences that apartheid imposed, a legacy which still continues today. According to him:

> The fundamental challenge facing the city is developing the means to allow the spatial tactics of consumption effectively – in the sense of building shared networks of meaning – to negotiate difference (Bester, 2005, unpaginated).

Interaction between JAG and the Joubert Park community is of huge importance in this building of shared networks. The challenge is to keep it a sustainable project, which sadly does not always seem to have been the case.

3.3 Johannesburg Art Gallery staff

These two formal interviews (Director and Education Officer), unlike those with the people in the community of Joubert Park, were pre-arranged, therefore the interviewees were prepared and knew what they were going to say on the subject. Antoinette Murdoch is the Director and Chief Curator of JAG. After having heard her apologies for poor attendance at the openings which lead to this research, I was eager to listen to her thoughts about this disappointing number of visitors and find out precisely who is the target market of JAG and where does the community of Joubert Park belong.

Murdoch was not around during the Joubert Park Project hence she opted to discuss only events which took place since she has been in office. She gave details on whom to communicate with to receive valid information regarding the Joubert Park Project and suggested documented information in the JAG library and archives. She suggested that she talk about The One Square Mile (or 1 Mile Squared) project, that started when she was at JAG. This was a two-month (1 October – 30 November 2009) intervention in the Joubert Park area, part of a three year global arts programme that asked communities to map the biodiversity, cultural diversity, and aesthetic diversity of their local neighbourhoods, working in collaboration with an artist and an ecologist. Communities were linked across the world through an internet platform that shared and challenged their findings, perceptions, ideas, experiences and creativity and encouraged new connections between people. The performance artists

Anthea Moys and Kyla Davis undertook the 1 Mile Squared project, in and around Joubert Park, in collaboration with other artists (Moys, 2009).

The idea of the world being small as communities are linked globally through an internet platform was vivid when entering Murdoch's office area, where lap tops, computers, phones and other gadgets were exposed on and around the office tables. The popular device was a cell phone which was also fashionable when I was inside the park outside. People walking past or sitting in the park appeared to be engaged in private conversations using their cell phones. Whether it was in one's hand or ear, it was one device that more than half of the people in the park had in common. One idea that certainly would inform the Joubert Park community of the functions that will be taking place at JAG is to send them short messages (sms) to their cell phones. Murdoch suggested that getting cell phone numbers from the people of Joubert Park could be an attempt to solve that problem. By cell phone communication people would receive invitations directly into their pockets and that would make them feel special. But the problem was that the museum does not have enough employees to do the task as they need to be out of the office to collect the cell phone numbers and create a Joubert Park database. It looks like the problem is not only at JAG but also with the employer, the City of Johannesburg. JAG has had a problem with a shortage of employees ever since Murdoch arrived as Director. This is to the detriment of JAG, she says, as a number of tasks are ignored or not done to a certain world class standard and sometimes responsibilities are not finished in time because of shortage of workers. This, she continues, limits their creativity as they have to limit the number of projects per year and the concept of a project has to be within the scope of feasibility. If the city of Johannesburg fails to take care of its responsibility of hiring enough employees, imagine how complicated it would be to involve the community of Joubert Park with the institutions surrounding their area, if there were no projects or staff to manage them.

Murdoch believes that the biggest problem with visitors to JAG is caused by the shortage of marketing. She claims that a private institution, the Standard Bank Gallery, had a similar show to JAG in a short time span but had a gigantic opening and visitor figures because they had over a million rand for marketing their exhibition. JAG's opening attracted far fewer visitors. One of the biggest problems at JAG is funding. Murdoch suggested waiting for interns to be supplied by the city of Johannesburg before they are able to approach the Joubert Park people about joining them as members of their phone list. Because there are neither enough employees nor enough funding, interns will have to do the most difficult jobs like having to face people on the streets who might not be willing to give them time, and some of those people may be dangerous. But with

more funding or more employees this important database could be completed in approximately one week and would continue to grow in the following years.

Musha Neluheni, who is now Curator of Contemporary Collections, was the Education Officer at JAG at the time of this interview. This education position underpins the whole meaning of the function of a museum and purpose of this investigation. She was also not at JAG during the Joubert Park Project time but also remembers very well the 1 Mile Squared Project. This is how the interview went:

1. In 2000 the Joubert Park Project was launched to connect this community with surrounding projects and institutions. What was JAG's involvement and what were the results as far as JAG's visitors from Joubert Park are concerned?

Musha: I was not at JAG during the Joubert Park Project.

2. Have there been other recent projects dedicated to the Joubert Park community? If so, what were the results?

Musha: My first project with JAG was 1 Mile Squared which happened in 2009. The premise was that artists had to work within a 1 mile radius of the museum. JAG hosted the project and the artists created interventions in the park, Hillbrow and in the museum itself. We had a huge increase of visitors during that period. Most of them were children who lived around Joubert Park. They felt the gallery was a safe space for them and participated in the project. However, after the project ended, most of the participants never returned.

3. Do you think the Joubert Park community is fully aware of what JAG is and its function?

Musha: No, I do not. Most of the people in the community assume JAG is a police station or another such government building.

4. Do you think JAG programmes and exhibitions are of interest to the Joubert Park community?

Musha: I think they would be of interest if the community knew what JAG was and what it did. Obviously some of the exhibitions and programmes can be quite alienating, but there are a lot of exhibitions that address the social issues that the community encounters on a day to day basis.

5. Do you think JAG is doing enough that is welcoming and encouraging to the Joubert Park citizens to visit the museum on a regular basis?

Musha: No, I don't. Although JAG is open to all people and entrance is free, the building itself is very intimidating and can therefore seem unwelcoming. Efforts to hand out flyers for people to come visit haven't gone well and most people respond apprehensively. However, partnerships with other Joubert Park stakeholders like the Lapeng Child and Family Resource Centre [Refer to appendix D] have helped bridge that gap. Lapeng focuses on the entire family, not just the child and we have had a lot of sustained interaction with families whose children have attended our classes and whose parents have attended the group workshops.

6. Are there any plans by JAG to involve or attract more people from the vicinity?

Musha: There are no solid plans, but this is one of JAG's main goals. We cannot ignore or shut out our community. This has been our community since 1915. The socio-political, race, class and economic situation of the people in the community may have changed, but then JAG must change to accommodate that community. We are constantly seeking ways in which to engage the community and will continue in our efforts.

7. Exhibitions like 'Africa Remix' and 'Coming of Age: Artist Proof Studio' had big turnouts, including a lot of local residents. What do you think attracted them to these exhibitions?

Musha: I honestly think the local community saw the big crowds and realised there was a function happening. They did not necessarily come for the exhibitions themselves, but noticed the big party.

8. Has JAG had any programmes or exhibitions that involve new technologies?

Musha: Yes, JAG has had many such shows. We have had video and sound installations. There have been works that include motion capture technology. Even though we have financial and technological constraints, we will try anything as long as we can ensure the artist is happy with the finished product.

9. How do you see JAG in five years with regards to visitors from the Joubert Park community?

Musha: The city of Johannesburg has a 2040 plan which looks to reinvigorate the city and divide it into districts. For instance you have the fashion district in Braamfontein, the art district in Newtown and their next project is the cultural district which will be from Doornfontein to Joubert Park. They've already started work on the area surrounding JAG and we sincerely hope that through this process we are able to attract the local

community in the same way as the other regenerative projects have attracted their local communities.

The last interview was with Clive Kellner who was the Director of JAG from 2004 to 2008 after the Joubert Park Project was launched in 2000. Although he was not directly involved in the project he certainly played a big part working with the surrounding community as there were several initiatives he says they undertook in order to engage the local community. These include:

1. Terry Kurgan and Jo Ractliffe's *Johannesburg circa now* exhibition that involved the Joubert Park photographers (July 2004) (Kurgan and Ractliffe 2005).
2. *Kinshasa: The imaginary city* (2006).The exhibition dealt with issues of migration, xenophobia and displacement. JAG organised a Congolese Day of Celebration where they invited the Congolese community to JAG and hosted a day of music, talks and food.
3. *Urban Concerns* (2008) was a joint project with the Bildmuseet in Sweden. They partnered with the Drill Hall and Joubert Park Green House. They undertook a mapping of the various African immigrant communities in the area in collaboration with Ismail Farouk, an urban geographer. They had events at various spaces including an Ethiopian coffee shop in Joubert Park.
4. He also provided a facility for school children from the area to utilise the foyer at JAG as an art and education resource with tables and art materials for after school activities.
5. The local taxi organisation also used to have monthly meetings in JAG's auditorium.

Despite all these initiatives Kellner says he heard that the community still thought that JAG was a prison or morgue, even though he was not sure if that was true or not.

Kellner says he does not know about JAG's programmes and exhibitions now therefore he would not know if JAG is doing enough to invite/attract more people from the vicinity. During his time though, he says *Africa Remix: contemporary art of a continent* (24 June – 30 September 2007) was the biggest opening in the history of JAG and the most well attended exhibition. He mentioned that there were several factors that contributed towards this:

1. The exhibition had already been shown in Europe and was at least 'known' in the art community.

2. It included many South African artists.
3. The exhibition content, i.e. contemporary African artists, was relevant to a large diverse audience, including African immigrants, the art community, general public and schools.
4. JAG also undertook extensive consultation and networking with other organisations and communities, such as universities and schools, informing them of the exhibition in advance.
5. Kellner managed to obtain R500 000 free radio air time from 702 Talk Radio and that was of enormous benefit.
6. JAG undertook extensive PR and marketing of the event including posters on the street, adverts in the press.
7. It is important to state however that since JAG did not have a budget, Kellner had to fund-raise R5million to host the exhibition covering not only the above costs but also the shipping of artworks, insurance, 'artists' travel and accommodation, installation costs, catalogue (Njami, 2007), conference, education booklet and DVD.

It is apparent that *Africa Remix* was one of the biggest exhibitions that JAG has ever hosted, and the reasons clarified by Kellner set it apart from the other less successful exhibitions. But what did Kellner have to say about the ever growing technology, did he do any programmes or exhibitions of technological interest that would capture the attention of new audiences? Kellner replied that he has not been following much of what has been happening at JAG currently but during his time he was interested in developing a new media or digital space for showcasing contemporary art. He says that JAG did some exhibitions and purchased some works for the collection. However that was several years ago and technology at least in South Africa was in its infancy. It has been since then that the phenomena of smart phones, apps etc. have taken off. Once again he mentions that you need fairly large sums of money or sponsorship to develop technological platforms to support digital interactivity in museums, something that is missing in museums in South Africa.

One of the most interesting points that Kellner mentioned in this interview was when asked about the future of JAG with regards to visitors from the Joubert Park community. He first distanced himself by saying he cannot say as he is no longer involved, but then he continued by saying, however, an important point needs to be made about the local community in Joubert Park. Joubert Park and surrounding areas are in fact one of the densest urban areas in Johannesburg, if not South Africa. However, it is also a transit node, meaning that the majority of people living in the area

are temporary as they tend to move on, either back to their home countries, or to other suburbs in Johannesburg or elsewhere in South Africa seeking better circumstances, joining family, for jobs etc. This is a challenge for JAG. In order to develop sustainable relationship with the local community there needs to be stability. People who came to *Africa Remix* or *Kinshasa* have moved on and therefore new relationships have to be formed. This is counterproductive and is time consuming. He then concludes by saying of interest, however, may be the fact that JAG's visitor demographic completely changes over the December holiday period when JAG's traditional viewing audience of a more-privileged South African public would go on holiday. Around 24000 members of the local Joubert Park area could possibly be attracted to the gallery to have something to do during the holidays.

4. The Johannesburg Art Gallery and Joubert Park: Changing contexts

4.1 History of the Johannesburg Art Gallery

According to Carman (2006), Gutsche (1966) and Keene (2004) JAG owes its existence to the tireless effort and vision of one of early Johannesburg's most renowned socialites, Florence Phillips (1863 – 1940), wife of the mining magnate, Lionel Phillips (1855 – 1936). She decided that the City of Johannesburg should have an art museum and persuaded her husband and a number of other Rand mining magnates to donate money towards the establishment of an art collection. Her efforts resulted in enough funds to purchase JAG's first acquisitions.

Carman (1988, 2003, 2006) writes that Hugh Lane, an Anglo-Irish art dealer and art connoisseur based in London, accumulated the original collection after meeting Florence Phillips in 1909. Lane curated a collection for JAG that was considered to be of a uniquely high standard, reflecting modern artistic trends of the time in Britain and Europe

As expected, these trends presumed that modern art came from established western art centres and not from distant colonies. The foundation collection, therefore, did not have any South African paintings but only European works. JAG slowly began acquiring South African art over the next decades, but it was largely side-lined until Anton Hendriks became director from 1937 to 1964. He made some positive changes at JAG, set out in a document tabled at council in July 1946:

> A modern art gallery…… has an active function to perform as an educational institution in the life of the city. In order to convert the Johannesburg Art Gallery from a static show place to an institution which will fulfil this function as part of the city life, the existing

> collections, which are merely the foundations of the more representative collections of the future, must be built up and completed according to a general plan, and new exhibits must be shown from time to time (quoted in Carman, 2003, p.241).

In the early 1960s, the collection was scheduled to move to Parktown and the building was put up for sale, fortunately without success. JAG's position in Joubert Park was secured for posterity when the building was declared a national monument in 1993. When Nel Erasmus became director in 1966, JAG's collection policy focused on expanding international western art and was criticised for its poor representation of South African art and for ignoring the historical roots of the black majority of Johannesburg citizens (Carman, 2003). Under the following director, Pat Senior (1977-83), changes started to be introduced which engaged JAG with outside communities. The first intake of voluntary guides was trained, local artists were invited to create installations of their work on JAG premises, and funding was secured from the city council to extend JAG to the north, into the park (Carman, 2003).

Radical changes occurred under Christopher Till (director 1983-91) who changed the direction of JAG's exhibition and collection policies. He oversaw the opening of JAG's extensions in October 1986, which coincided with Johannesburg's centenary celebrations, and secured the most important donation since the inception of the gallery, the Anglo-American Johannesburg Centenary Trust of R6million (Carman, Charlton and Leibhammer, 1997). He organised a major sculpture competition to celebrate the centenary, placing two of the four winning pieces in the park and the third at JAG's West gate (Refer to appendix D). Carman (2003, p.243) writes "Through inviting participation in a competition and placing artworks in the areas outside its boundaries, the gallery was moving into the community in a new way".

Under Till JAG developed new directions in collecting, exhibiting, educational outreach and research which continue to this day. The first major exhibition under his directorship was *The Neglected Tradition: towards a new history of South African art (1930-1988)*, a watershed exhibition and accompanying publication (Sack, 1988) that challenged the 'white' history of South African art and acknowledged and supported the contribution of black artists. Under Till the historic 'traditional' southern African art collection was established and the major Brenthurst Collection was secured on long-term loan. Its exhibition and accompanying catalogue *Art and Ambiguity: perspectives on the Brenthurst Collection of Southern African art* (Johannesburg Art Gallery, 1991) "enabled the gallery to make a forceful statement about its change of direction and to show that it was located in Africa rather than the periphery of a first world empire" (Carman, 2003, p.244). Rochelle Keene, who was Till's successor, Clive Kellner and Antoinette Murdoch have all followed in the

same footsteps and the 'traditional' southern African art collection today constitutes the major part of JAG's collections.

The gallery has continued to offer guided tours and talks, and to develop its education outreach, organising exhibitions that coincide with the school curriculum, workshops and other related activities. It has also opened its library to learners, researchers and the general public.

In 2010, under the leadership of Antoinette Murdoch, JAG celebrated the centenary of the opening of the collection in 1910 (it moved to Joubert Park in 1915), commemorated in the book *One Hundred Years of Collecting: the Johannesburg Art Gallery* (Carman, 2010).

4.2 Political changes and consequences in Joubert Park

In her essay in *One Hundred Years of Collecting: the Johannesburg art gallery*, Bongi Dhlomo (Carman, 2010, p.21) records that she was the first black person who was appointed in 1992 to JAG's Art Gallery Committee (AGC). Dhlomo at first felt like she was a 'sell-out' for accepting a position on an all-white committee, but then she defines the satisfaction of being part of developments that have changed the demographics of the visitors and the democratic ownership of JAG by all Johannesburg citizens. The AGC had existed since the signing of the deed of donation of the JAG collection to Johannesburg in January 1913. It was created to monitor the Johannesburg City Council's trustee obligations, namely, to hold the collection in trust for the citizens of Johannesburg in perpetuity, to provide for the proper maintenance of the collection and its building, and to consult the AGC in all matters concerning JAG, in particular with regard to the collection and staff (Carman, 2010, p.21).

Carman continues to explain that the AGC has seven members: three political representatives (two municipal councillors – one usually the mayor – and a government appointee) and four citizens, appointed for their expertise on a long-term basis. The AGC at times in the past may have held a conservative grip on JAG's policies, for example it took 80 years for the first black member to be appointed, but it is a necessary safeguard, ensuring the proper care of JAG's collection and blocking any political interference. It would not be feasible to appoint to the AGC a Joubert Park community member, or in fact anyone without a respected position in the art world, with the purpose of agitating for change and a greater connectivity between JAG and the park. But task teams can be set up by the AGC to engage all stakeholders, to find out what the Joubert Park community wants in regards to JAG and its programmes. Such a forum would need to be inclusive and in a safe environment, with expert facilitators. If a black man can feel uneasy when trying to interview black

people in the vicinity of Joubert Park, how much more difficult would it be for a white person, particularly a female, who obviously looks different and probably does not understand or speak African languages. Apartheid divided us by force as people of different ethnic groups were not supposed to mix. This may be the reason white people moved away as more black people moved in to stay in Joubert Park and its surrounds. Now, twenty-one years into democracy, is JAG portraying what Joubert Park is all about, or even what the City of Johannesburg is about? Why is there such a divide between white and black people in the area? What contribution can the AGC and JAG make?

JAG has always been open to black people since it moved to Joubert Park in 1915 (Carman, 2003). Hendriks encouraged visitors of colour and, when asked in 1948, the year the apartheid government came to power, if Africans can visit the gallery he replied, "I am not aware of any local regulation in connection with visiting the gallery by Africans. We have quite a number of natives who are specially interested in painting who come to the gallery" (Carman, 2003, p.246). Apartheid also played a big part in stopping or delaying skills and intellectual growth of black people in South Africa. Carman (2003), quoting David Koloane, relates how Polly Street Art Centre under Cecil Skotnes in the 1950s was one of the first urban training centres for black artists, encouraging the emergence of a professional class of artists in South Africa. Skotnes recorded that JAG was always open to his students "Hendriks emphasised that he was against any form of cultural apartheid and that unaccompanied black visitors were welcome any time or day" (Carman, 2003, p.247). It is unlikely, however, that the general black public would have felt comfortable with a collection related to a British culture that excluded local black African cultures. Apartheid had an influence, no matter how subtle, on what JAG collected. JAG's first acquisition of a painting by a black artist, Gerard Sekoto, may have been made in 1940, but no further works by black artists were purchased until the early 1970s and the development and influence of modern black artists was ignored for most of the twentieth century (Carman, 2003).

Khwezi Gule (2010), former Curator of Contemporary Collections at JAG, writes about the importance of black artists such as John Mohl (1903-85) and Gerard Sekoto (1913-93) for the way they changed black South African art practice. When they moved to urban environments their art moved with them, they focused on what they saw everyday around them without any attempt to glorify it. According to Gule, such artists managed to prove that black people are not incapable of producing original art.

"Their art curtailed the perception that black artists who paint in the modern idiom are merely mimicking art by white people that they see around them" (Gule, 2010, p.122).

From the beginning it appears like JAG had its focus on the bigger picture internationally and ignored the locals, whether purposefully or not. During the times of apartheid some people enjoyed and benefited from this historic institution, including a few black people. Now that the area is mainly black, some blacks feel like they have nothing to do with the place while others are not even aware of its existence. Many believe that JAG continues to reach for the white audience that went away to supposedly greener pastures in the north of Johannesburg, and that it pays less attention to, or even ignores, the back people who live in its vicinity. Now that the access to the gallery is with no fear of any boundaries or prejudice, anyone can enter on any day any time that the gallery is opened, from white to black and Indian to Coloured, not leaving out any other race and political interests. The gallery needs much support from the people who are closest to it, the black people in the Joubert Park area.

5. Findings

5.1. Summary of interviews

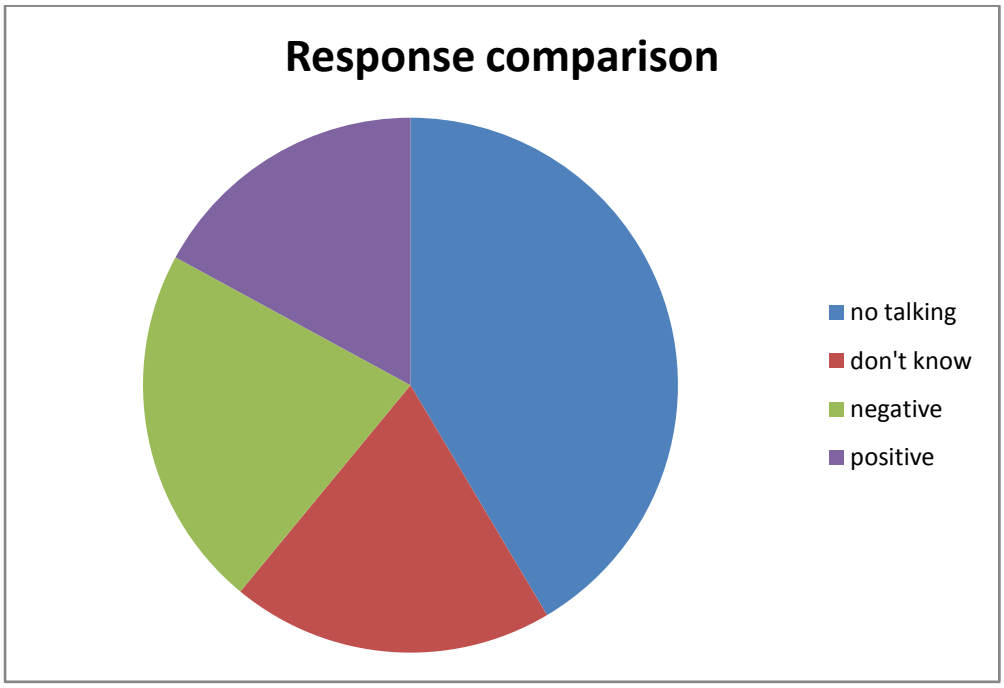
5.1.1 Joubert Park community

After 25 people were interviewed just outside JAG, these are the findings from some of the questions and people's answers. NB not all the questions are included (Refer to appendix A), and both questions and answers have been summarised and at times combined.

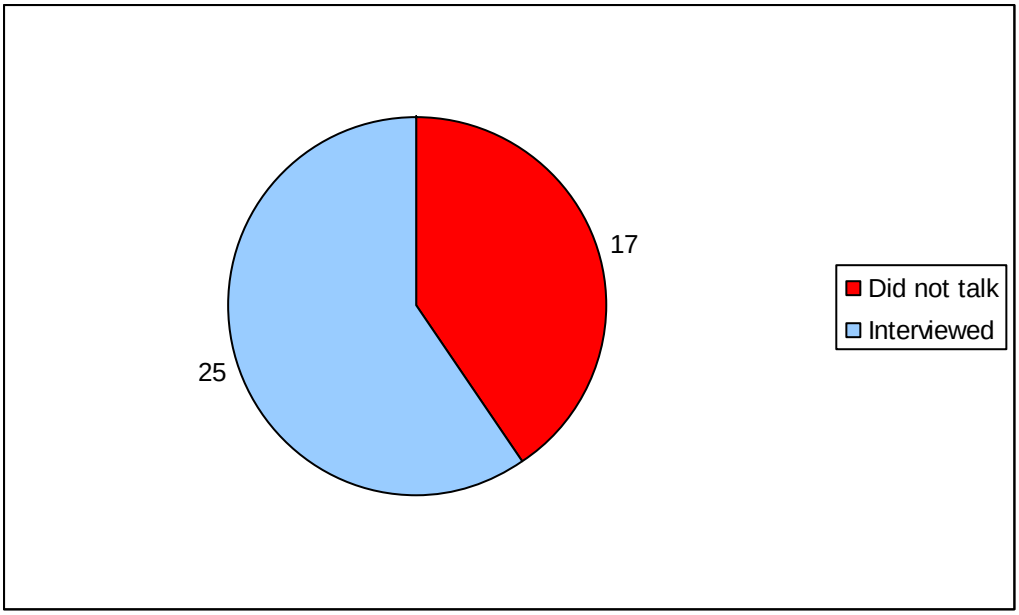
Question: What do you think this building is?	Don't know`	Incorrect answer	Correct answer
	9	9	7
Question: Have you ever been inside?		No	Yes
		16	9
Question: How come you do not know?	I don't care	Busy	It's not welcoming
	11	8	6
Question: What do you expect to see inside?	Not sure	Incorrect answer	Correct answer
	12	6	7
Question: Have you ever been invited inside?	For photos	No	Yes
	6	15	4
Question: Would you like to see the art inside?	Not sure	No	Yes
	8	4	13
Question: What would you like to see inside?	Not interested	Drawings and sculptures.	SA art and artists
	8	12	5
Question: What do you do in your spare time?	Sit in the park	Bars	Technology.
	8	6	11
Question: Would you like to use technology in the gallery?	Not sure	No	Yes
	8	7	10
Question: Do you think the gallery is doing good work for you?	Not sure	No	Yes
	9	10	6

The above table divides answers to each question into three categories, each roughly similar, with the number of people who answered in each category. The four columns (from left to right) give (1) the question and (2) to (4) the different answers with the number of respondents.

There were 25 people interviewed and the number of people above only refers to those who agreed to talk to me. People who were approached and did not want to say anything, ran away, ignored or shouted at the interviewer are not included in the above table. Altogether 42 people were approached for an interview, but 17 of them refused to be engaged. What does that imply about the people of this area?



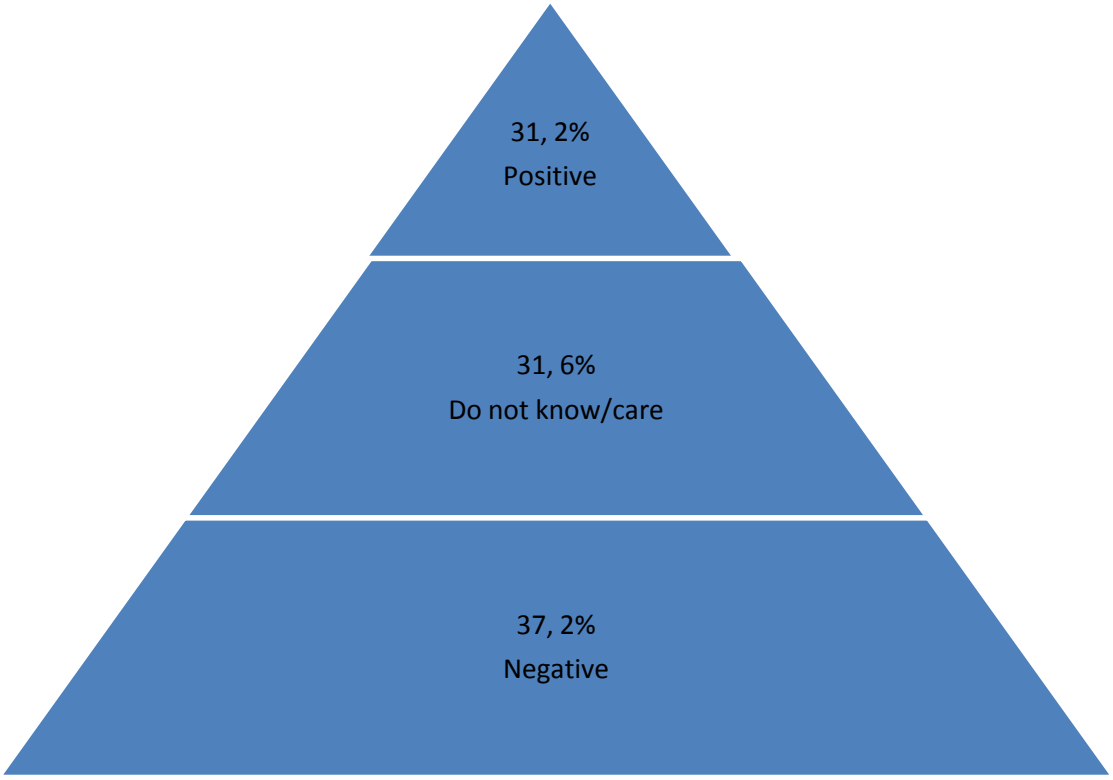
Pie chart illustrating responses to questions



Pie chart illustrating the number of people who were interviewed compared with those who refused to talk

According to observation, these may be reasons why the 17 people did not want to be interviewed:

1. They did not trust the interviewer
2. They were too busy to engage themselves
3. They assumed the interviewer was a sales person
4. They thought the interviewer was with the police
5. They might be illegal immigrants and thus they avoid confrontation
6. Language communication was difficult
7. They were not interested in whatever the interviewer wanted to say



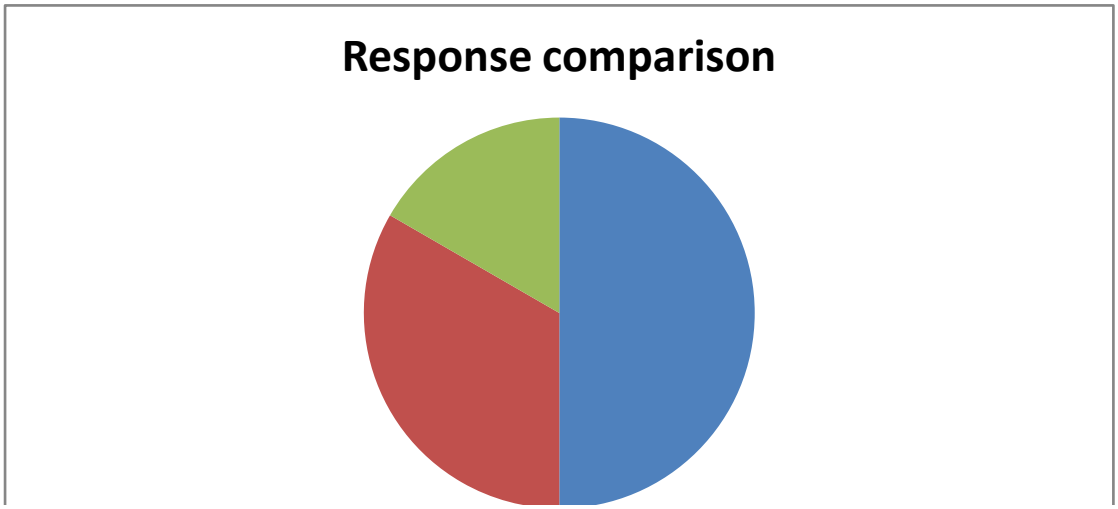
Pyramid diagram representing the biggest to the smallest percentage of groups according to their answers.

5.1.2 Joubert Park Project management

NB not all the questions are included (Refer to appendix A), some are summarised and combined, and the answers have been condensed into three basic categories.

Question	Positive/Negative/ Don't know reply
How was the response of the Joubert Park community?	Positive
Do you think the project was a success?	Negative
Do you think JAG's programmes and exhibitions relate to the Joubert Park community?	Don't know
Do you think JAG is doing enough, or anything, that is encouraging to involve the Joubert Park people?	Don't know
Do you think people want to see what they can relate with?	Positive
How do you see JAG in 5 years regarding visitors from Joubert Park?	Don't know

The table and pie chart summarise three different answers: blue for the 'Don't know' answer, red for the 'positive' response and green for the 'negative' response.



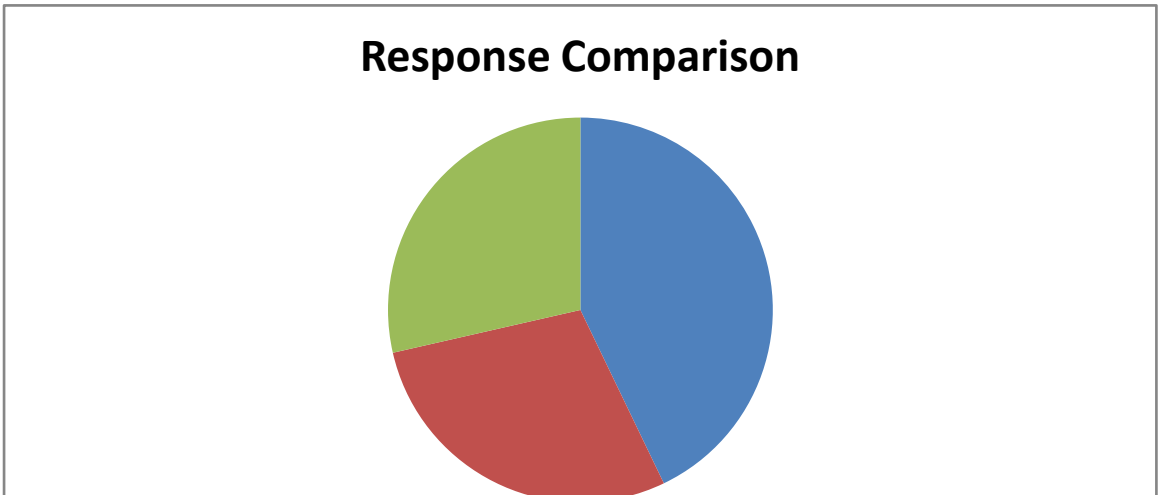
Pie chart representing responses from Joubert Park Project management

5.1.3 Johannesburg Art Gallery staff

NB not all the questions are included (Refer to appendix A), some are summarised and combined, and the answers have been condensed into three basic categories.

Question	Negative/Positive/ Not sure reply
Do you think Joubert Park is fully aware of what the building, JAG, is, and its functions?	Negative
Are you satisfied with the attendance of your immediate community (Joubert Park)?	Negative
The Joubert Park Project was launched in 2000 to connect the community with the surrounding institutions, what were JAG results?	Not sure
Are there any plans by JAG to involve or attract more people from the vicinity?	Positive
Has JAG ever had a project dedicated to the Joubert Park community? If so, what were the results?	Positive
Has JAG had any programmes or exhibitions that are technologically inclined?	Positive
How do you see JAG in five years from now in regards to the visitors from Joubert Park?	Not sure

The table and pie chart summarise three different answers: blue for the 'positive' answer, red for the 'negative' response and green for the 'not sure' response.



Pie chart representing responses from Johannesburg Art Gallery staff

5.2 Observations about current visitors to the Johannesburg Art Gallery

During the past 30 years or so, it must be emphasised that JAG has always had individuals and groups that have supported it even if the figures may have dropped. A growing number of different groups, plus an increasing focus on the Joubert Park community and including the already existing structural support system, could result in a promising future for JAG attendance.

5.2.1 The Friends of the Johannesburg Art Gallery

Today support for the arts has tended to be negative, reflected in the often poorly attended functions, and in meetings convened to discuss current issues, where talk usually turns to the language of no funding, no support and lack of resources. This negativity has misdirected the focus of the arts industry and made positive objectives more difficult to pursue. The anticipation of the country is to improve our economy through the arts by competing internationally with the new, latest, clearer, faster creations. Even if creativity cannot be suppressed, resources can limit the final product of a wonderful idea. Every good idea needs support, it may be financial or in kind or both like a group of people that contractually support JAG.

Such a group is The Friends of the Johannesburg Art Gallery, an NGO established in 1976. It is made up of ordinary individuals and families that have a desire to support JAG financially or otherwise for the love of art and mostly of this institution. The mission of the Friends is to support and

enhance the activities of JAG. Their predominant function includes educational activities as well as fundraising for JAG.

Friends are fee-paying members, an average amount of R120 per annum with deductions for students, who demonstrate their contribution in supporting the gallery. With different incentives which could be expected to attract more members, the number of Friends appears to be increasing very slowly. In 2009 the number was 490 members, in 2015 there are 690 members, of whom less than 10% are from central Johannesburg (according to the Friends database/records), with far fewer – if any – members from Joubert Park. That on its own provokes questions of the relationship between the park and the gallery.

The Friends organisation has been communicating with its members by means of mail, telephone, emails and face-to-face encounters when members come to JAG. Even though Facebook and twitter have started to be used, there are still very few people who are aware of these services and of JAG's activities which would explain the need for more and intense advertising, and Joubert Park should be the first target area to advertise to as JAG is within the park.

During observations and interviews in the park it was evident that Joubert Park has a vast number of visitors per day. JAG could use at least half of those visitors, perhaps some would like to become Friends, and that would be enough visitorship without even having outsiders.

5.2.2 Other groups that visit the Johannesburg Art Gallery

i. Photographers

Joubert Park is a very relaxed park where there are activities that groups of people engage with on a daily basis. Having observed the activities at JAG for the past six years, I have noticed that photographers have been the ones introducing new faces, their clients, into the museum, but nothing formal. They usually bring them inside the museum to take pictures in the courtyard with sculptures. That should be a big marketing opportunity as many of their clients walk into the museum for the very first time, which you can tell from the way they react when they see the sculptures. The excitement is short-lived as they choose a spot, usually suggested by the photographer, have a picture taken, and then leave in just less than five minutes. As they smile at the camera, enjoying the experience and avoiding eye contact with anyone else, they may take a glance at whatever that their eyes can catch in those few minutes as they enter and exit the museum. Wouldn't that be a great opportunity to take advantage of marketing the museum to new visitors? The first-time experience is the one that can make or break the whole success of a project and its future. Visitors feel their experience as special if they are warmly welcomed or taken care of and that improves the chances of them

returning and perhaps bringing others, with the hope of the same experience as well. The question will then be, are these people from Joubert Park considered unimportant by the museum, a disturbance that cannot be chased away as the museum is for the whole public? The chief Curator Antoinette Murdoch was very clear when interviewed that the museum is open to everyone, it's for the public she said, black, white, young and old. Doesn't that make it difficult to dismiss or ignore anyone that you feel does not belong to your target group? Everyone, even vagrants from the park, should be welcomed.

ii. Clinic

The clinic is another source of potential visitors. It has people queuing from about 7:00, some passing through the museum yard from JAG's West gate, and other entrances too (Refer to appendix D). Most patients do not integrate with JAG activities for obvious reasons: they are ill or in need of care. These people bring a bit of sadness into the park, making one face the reality of the situation in South Africa. Pregnant women and girls from the age of about 15 are waiting in the long queues at the clinic, patients with TB and sexually transmitted diseases are falling asleep on benches, both outside and inside the clinic, and some might not even get a chance to be treated since the nurses can stop at any time they feel like, by cutting the line or going home. The reality is that patients have more serious things to worry about in life than visiting the museum. This museum culture is for people who are relaxing, enjoying and learning during the process. For other people, who have many serious and even life threatening problems, visiting a gallery will be the last thing on their minds, perhaps time wasting instead of scouting for a better life or even the next meal. It is a sad reality of life in South Africa and in the Joubert Park community.

iii. Homeless/vagrants

But these clinic people are not as visible as another group that does not interact with JAG: there are homeless people that look like they are into drugs and no one seems to bother with them. They make Joubert Park a place to avoid. During the interviews inside the park I avoided talking to them but I tried to find out as much as I could about them. Even if you wanted to improve the involvement of the Joubert Park family with their museum, this is a group that you do not want to engage yourself with at any level except by cleansing them, both outside and inside. The average JAG visitor, when walking from a taxi rank to and from JAG, finds this the most daunting group of people you can meet, yes their visibility stretches in and around Joubert Park. I have personally seen them robbing people, I have also heard from people that have been robbed and I have escaped their attempts a few times. They may not be the only illicit crowd which is intimidating, others are camouflaged within the hectic life of the neighbourhood therefore it would help everyone to become vigilant at all

times. Coming to JAG on foot, by taxi or even with your private car, may not be safe at all and that is what Murdoch worries about and looks forward to the walkway, promised to be built by the City of Johannesburg that will connect Park Station and the Gautrain to JAG. As much as some people are worried about the possibility of robbery on that proposed walkway, as apparently used to happen on the Mandela Bridge, most people are optimistic about the idea and hope it will create more job opportunities.

iv. Social users

In the meantime JAG is connected as far as Soweto since the Rea Vaya bus station is adjacent to both the East gate and North gate entering Joubert Park (Refer to appendix D). Other kinds of transportation also reach Joubert Park and JAG but people always complain about traffic as it is close to the biggest taxi rank in Johannesburg (Refer to appendix C).

Joubert Park does not only have photographers and their clients, patients to the clinic and homeless people, it also has people who come to the park to relax. Despite the fact that I felt like an intruder when I was trying to interview lovers in the park as it looked like I was taking away their special time, they are a perfect target market to visit the museum at any time. Other than conversing they might appreciate a special activity like taking a stroll among art pieces inside JAG, whispering sweet nothings to one another, wondering what the artwork is all about and laughing at each other's stupid misunderstandings and interpretations of the work while learning a new experience. The feeling of being special when told by your previous lover, or your current one, that you are someone special, you took them to new places and taught them what others never did, those should be memorable moments in one's life. These are the perfect targets to introduce as new audience to JAG, they have availed themselves, they are in an affectionate state already, all they need is some little push in the right direction and hopefully their following stage would be addiction. This is the majority of the groups that I attempted to interview, simply because they seemed more relaxed than the others. Most of them declared that they had never been invited, they do not know what is inside but they would love to see. Yes it may sound contradictory, but the questions were arranged in a way that the interviewer finds out first if they know anything, to what they think and finally after getting some information, if they would like to learn more. For me this is proof that people stick to what they know and avoid what they do not know – unless an effort is made to make them aware.

As much as others can feel repelled by the park because of the area it is in, some park users are merely there to relax, like the lovers described above, and a group playing a game of chess, seemingly civil and friendly to one another as well as to passers-by. It became evident, however, that they do not care much about other activities beyond their circle. When I

approached them they appeared suspicious of this stranger and a few of the young men gathered there started dispersing slowly. I immediately thought that was a sign of fear, they might have been thinking that I was a police officer, perhaps they are foreigners who are illegal in the country or maybe they were involved in a criminal act. But soon after the conversation began to flow they came back. Again I find myself with questions that need a bit more research to get to why are they here almost daily but know so little about the museum in front of/behind them. It is quite evident that very few of them are interested in visiting JAG. Is it the conflict of cultures? The way we were brought up differently? The different schools we went to? Is it lack of knowledge? Or is it just a choice of one's interest?

From the words of Murdoch, she says they do not have any programmes that connect JAG directly to the Joubert Park community but there are future plans to extend exhibition invitations to cell phone users. Currently, most of JAG's exhibition invitations are sent through emails, while hard copies are usually sent to other museums, galleries and art institutions, and are available on JAG's premises. That looks like the continuation of the art community keeping it within themselves, they send invitations to one another and avoid outsiders, like those in the park, whom the establishment art community generally considers to be 'misfits' or 'low class'. It makes me wonder, do they actually want these people to attend JAG's functions? Is it better the way it is?

V. Clubs/groups

You may assume that being inside the buildings of JAG can make someone interested in the arts; do not be mistaken. There is a church group that uses JAG's auditorium every Sunday for their Sunday service. They have utilised the auditorium space for about two years but what they do is wait for each other outside JAG, they walk into JAG as a group, they proceed straight to their destination crossing five different exhibition spaces, and when they leave they do the same without interacting with the art inside. Were they taught, perhaps as a church regulation, to respect the museum and not to engage in whatever is happening?

Big groups of Zulu dancers had a competition, also using the auditorium, which must have been the most disordered evening that I have ever witnessed at JAG. Groups were practising their songs and dance moves in the exhibition spaces, literally running and screaming at each other with excitement, as their function was going very well. They looked like they were possessed by supernatural spirits, they were very much into the feeling of the song and dance that they did not want anyone to disturb them. It took about an hour to calm them down and make them understand that they were not allowed to run inside the museum because they might knock down some of the artworks. That behaviour and ignorance from the Zulu dancers was a huge eye opener for me as that

explicitly uncovered the reality that other people have no idea what a gallery/museum is, how to behave, and they just don't care because they have no schooling about it. There was another group of guests that evening, familiar with museums, who had booked a guided tour followed by crackers, cheese, snacks and wine. They were completely stunned by the Zulu dancers' behaviour.

vi. Pre-booked tours

Special pre-arranged tours can be a source of income. An example of a commercial fund-raising collaboration is that between JAG and the Groupon tour group. Groupon uses an internet strategy for marketing its business and functions to people who wish to find out what is happening locally and around the world. Members use their credit cards to book for a chosen function, confirm with, for example, JAG, and avail themselves on the day where everything that is agreed upon awaits them. It seems like a good contemporary way to market the museum. The outcomes of the Groupon project were very optimistic because over 80% of the visitors had never seen or visited JAG before, and the admiration they expressed for JAG and its exhibitions was astonishing. It was obvious that JAG should do more of these and other marketing campaigns – but there are costs involved, in the provision of security and catering, and the proceeds had to be shared between the Friends and Groupon.

If one looks at JAG today in the 21st century, the Groupon example is an easy and fruitful way to market, communicate and raise money, that cannot be disputed. Even Lady Phillips would be smiling wherever she is. But she would be horrified by the 'lower-class' locals within Johannesburg who do not understand the behaviour that is required in a museum, like the participants in the Zulu dance competition. Maybe JAG was truly not meant for them, unless they change to being a museum-visiting 'type'. One of the missions of JAG is to educate the public; would be focusing on appropriate behaviour result in a downfall or rise of JAG? Or maybe we should ask ourselves, who is 'the public' that JAG is educating, should it be people that are already known as art lovers or those who are ignorant about the subject of the arts? Between the two, which one would be a more powerful accomplishment? Where is the focus?

5.2.3 School groups and young adults

Most school groups attend pre-arranged free tours, given by JAG voluntary guides, which relate to their school syllabus. There are, however, a number of children and young adults who do not study art and whose interests should also be addressed.

JAG hosts about five different exhibitions in one year. Because of poor funding, it often uses artworks from its existing collection, many from its storerooms, curated in differing contexts. This is a decent way of

educating the public and saving funds, utilising what the museum already has, and with no expenditure on transport and loans. But regardless of expense, it is important not to compromise the diversity of creativity, which can often be achieved only through loan exhibitions. If contemporary art and new media are not promoted because of financial difficulties, that would lead to the promising group of school children being restricted in creativity. Considering that this group of the new democratic South Africa is technologically inclined in the world that promotes new creations, museums should endorse the presence of children and allow them to feel at home in a cyber space.

The large number of school children that visit the museum are considered to be the future of our country, yet their culture of new technology is at odds with static museum displays and texts. Techno-savvy children – and adults – have their own language of communication: words are shortened and spelled differently from the originals. Despite the concerns of language-purists, one must accept that this is how people chat to each other in cyber space, even within the Joubert Park community. Here is an example, a virtual conversation between two friends after not talking to or seeing each other over the weekend. The question was:

> *How are you, how was your weekend? I miss you.*

And the answer was:

> *Hi fre mss u 2. I got yo sms bt dd nt hv airtm. Wknd was gr8 went 2 club Buzzz VIP style saw Mike ….OMG!!!!!! Not again plz, I left asap, can u blv it he was dancing!!!! LOL. K, c u later, luv ya, tnx bye*

This translates as:

> *Hallo friend, I miss you too. I got your sms but I did not have airtime. The weekend was great. I went to Club Buzzz and we were in a 'Very Important Person' area. I saw Mike, 'Oh My Goodness!!!' I did not expect to see him again therefore I left as soon as possible. Can you believe it, he was dancing!!!! Laugh Out Loud. Okay I will see you later. I love you. Thank you, bye-bye.*

Providing an environment which is in line with this cyber technology is a challenge. Possibly the future could be better if JAG can focus on and expand the two important projects it already has, *Looking as Learning* and the Gerard Sekoto Day. *Looking as Learning* is an exhibition that coincides with the school syllabus and extends to a booklet that the users can answer questions from. Tours of this exhibition, offered by the voluntary guides and museum staff, are ongoing. The Gerard Sekoto Day, which was started with a donation from the famous South African artist Gerard Sekoto (1913-93), occurs once a year on16 December, the Day of

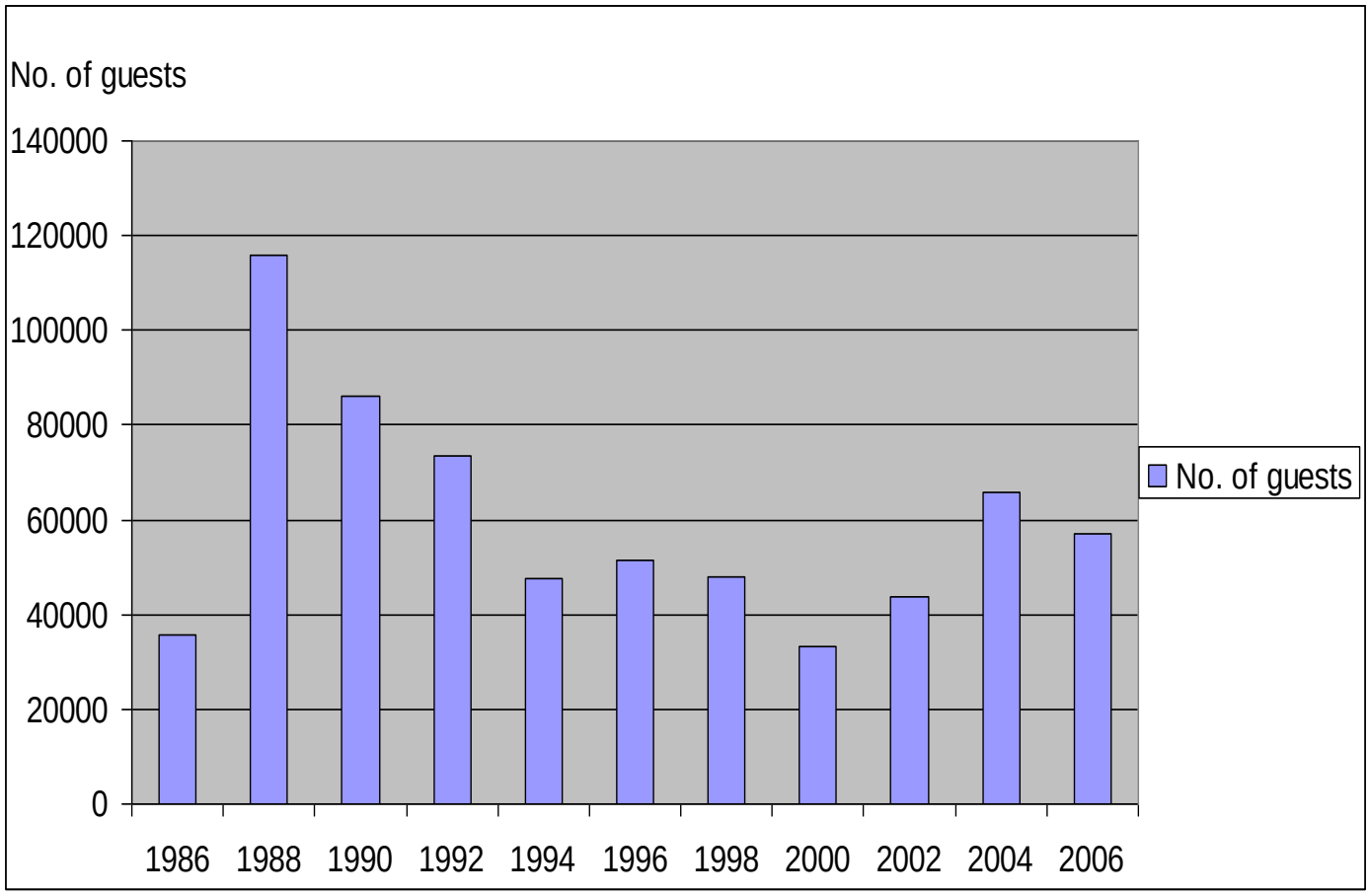
Reconciliation. Young children (4 to 16 years) come to JAG to celebrate the day by creating art-works and performances, with refreshments supplied. One good thing about these two projects is that they both focus on children, they aim to teach children about art while they are still young. The difference between the two groups is that for *Looking as Learning* the target group is teenagers that have already selected art as a subject at their schools. The exhibition is also open to everyone to view. The Sekoto day is mainly for younger children, most of whom do not study art, or have not even started school. As planned by JAG, the majority are orphans and they are introduced to the art world on that day.

Visitor attendance at JAG in general is boosted by the large number of school groups. Even though most of them are just on a school outing and know little about art, these school trips introduce children to the arts industry at an early age and enable them to choose art in future as one of the school subjects or as something to do as entertainment/hobbies during their leisure time or even to nurture it to convert into careers. Plentiful additional projects can still be conceptualised to attract and keep the children coming, but confidently one can articulate that the future is promising.

A further regular group of visitors is children from the Lapeng Child and Family Resource Centre, a day care centre for children under the age of six (Refer to appendix D). These children visit JAG once a month to participate in children's arts which may be face painting, image colouring, paper cutting and pasting, and they also do singing and dancing. Children's play is universal and it is widely believed that play is vital in the development of a child, promoting social and physical skills, and nurturing intellectual well-being. As the Lapeng children grow up and start school they sometimes visit with their schools and it gives great pleasure to see them greet JAG staff with excitement as they have worked/played with them before. This on its own creates a positive culture of visiting museums. With children being exposed to JAG and feeling free on the premises the future is promising and these children may be the future Directors, artists and some of them may become Friends of the Johannesburg Art Gallery. When and why do we then stop the culture of creativity within a life of a child? Why do schools have to stop teaching and encouraging artistic creations during Higher Primary school, and why is it left to the schools to decide if it is necessary or not for the children to continue being creative?

5.3 Analysis of visitor numbers

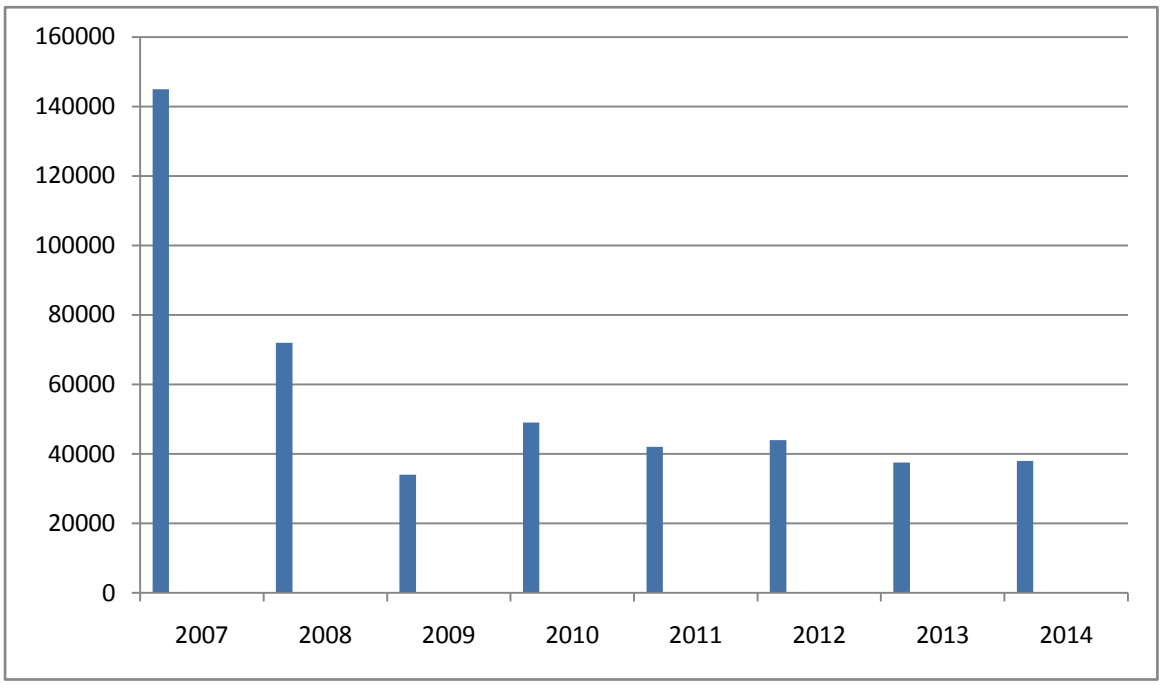
5.3.1 Visitors from 1986 to 2006



Graph indicating the number of visitors per year from 1986 to 2006

Source: Johannesburg Art Gallery

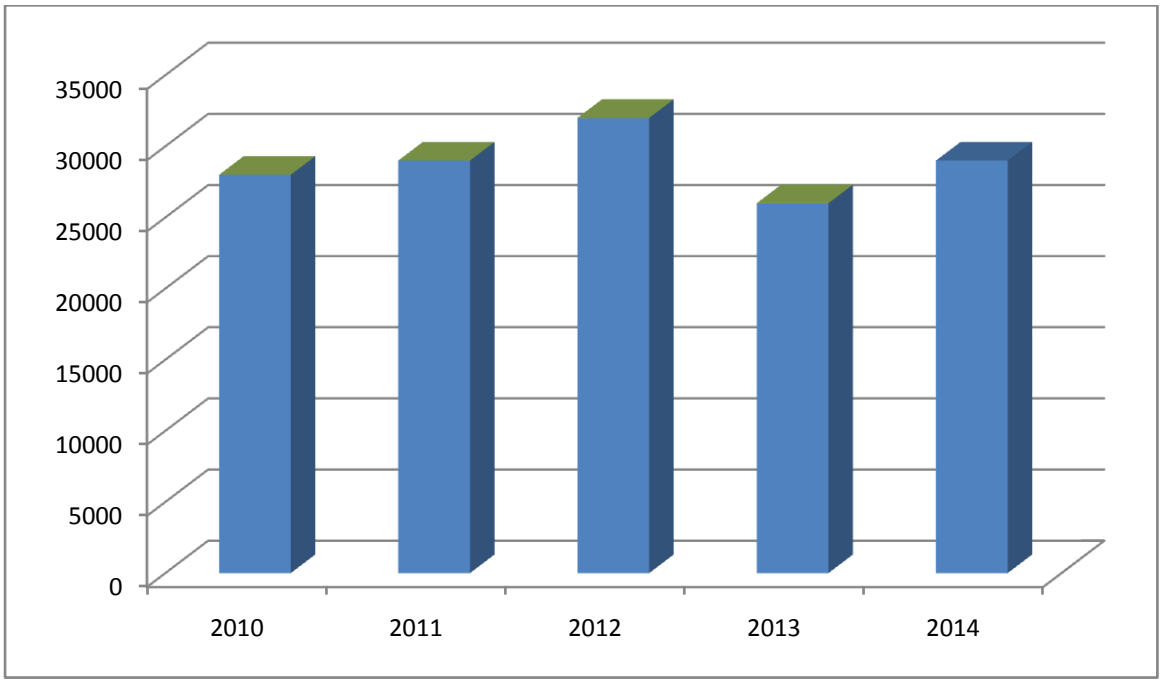
5.3.2 Visitors from 2007 to 2014



Graph indicating the number of visitors per year from 2007 to 2014

Source: Johannesburg Art Gallery

5.3.3 Children visiting in school groups from 2010 to 2013



Graph indicating number of school children who visited in school groups from 2010 to 2014

Source: Johannesburg Art Gallery

5.4 Recent successful exhibitions.

Successful exhibitions have a positive effect on visitor numbers. A recent successful exhibition at JAG that Murdoch mentioned was *Coming of Age:21 years of Artist Proof Studio* (6 May – 6 July 2012). She suggested that one of the reasons for its success was that the opening speaker was the world-renowned artist, William Kentridge, who has had a long association with Artist Proof Studio. Numerous students of Artist Proof Studio, past and present, visited JAG during the exhibition, as well as members of the public and learners who observed artists making prints and participated in workshops. Prior to the exhibition, renowned artists such as Norman Catherine, Walter Oltmann and William Kentridge, who had participated with Artist Proof Studio in previous projects, were invited to collaborate with the studio's master printers to make new large-scale works. The exciting results, which included linocuts, relief prints and etchings, were displayed at JAG (Allara and Berman, 2012).

But the most important exhibition in recent times was *Africa Remix: Contemporary Art of a Continent* (24 June – 30 September 2007), the reason why JAG had twice the number of visitors in 2007, compared to 2006 and 2008. Kellner raised R5million to bring the exhibition to Johannesburg, the only venue on the African continent where it was shown. The exhibition had been showcased at major venues in Düsseldorf, London, Paris, Tokyo and Stockholm, and attracted significant international media attention. There were over 80 artists in the exhibition, and it was one of the biggest shows in Johannesburg. It drew an astonishing number of visitors not only at the opening but also during the entire run. The exhibition was accompanied by a 260-page catalogue (Njami, 2007), adapted for South Africa from the international catalogue, as well as an education guide and a DVD.

Many factors make an exhibition popular - some of those could be marketing, art-works of great interest, works by famous artist/s, the creativity of the installation. How do people relate to an exhibition, what concepts provoke interest in people? *Africa Remix* in 2007, seven years after the Joubert Park Project was introduced, attracted thousands of people to witness a world famous exhibition with well-known artists displaying what seemingly people wanted to see. It makes one inquisitive if designing a project for ordinary people, the Joubert Park community in particular, is it something to be completed in the boardroom or should one research first what they are interested in? What kinds of exhibitions have had good support at JAG in the past few years? Since the start of the Joubert Park Project, exhibitions like *Johannesburg Circa Now* in 2004, *Dumile Feni* in 2005, *Africa Remix* in 2007, *Thami Mnyele and Medu* in 2008 and *Artist Proof Studio* in 2012 all had magnificent visitor figures regardless of the fact that the number of visitors are dropping almost

every year. What is it that these exhibitions had, that other exhibitions do not have? From the explanations that were mentioned above, was it

1. Money for extensive marketing?
2. The exhibiting artist/s?
3. The subject of the exhibition and the artefacts?

The graph above in 5.3.2 shows the declining attendance figures from 2007 to 2014. There was a slight peak in 2010, coinciding with the soccer world cup in South Africa, and another in 2012, because of the enormous success of the exhibition *Coming of age*:*21 years of Artist Proof Studio*. But it is clear that the visitor numbers are continuing to drop. How can more visitors be attracted to JAG?

6. Conclusion

The observations of daily behaviour of Joubert Park people, their reactions towards the questions that they were asked and their expectations of what JAG should be resembling, seem in conflict with what Lady Phillips envisioned: a peaceful building full of beautiful European art-works that could serve as educational models for aspiring artists, and give pleasure to the well-behaved, well-dressed visitors who frequented the once elegant Joubert Park. Despite JAG's mission to contribute meaningfully to the appreciation of visual culture in a multicultural society, and efforts to attract a wider and more diverse audience, one thing is constant: the number of visitors keeps on decreasing almost every year. Even though Murdoch says the target market is everyone, there is no sustained action taken or plan at hand to market the museum to a new audience. A good thing is that a promising amount of school groups visit the museum almost every week day. But with no preparation plan to keep the children interested and wanting to come back, they might also fade away and disappear to their new and improved technological activities.

JAG could be marketed as a haven of tranquillity amongst the noise and turmoil outside. Johannesburg hosts a unique and vibrant culture of different kinds of music. Walking in the swarming streets, that have become undersized because of a large number of people from Park Station to JAG (Refer to appendix C), one is assailed by the sounds of different music overlapping with each other, and also with the sounds of traders calling on anyone that can buy their merchandise, especially since they grab your hand or your bag just to quickly tell you the price and promptly marketing their product. Others ask you where you are going and try to direct you to the right taxi while holding your arm, without you even asking for their help, making one feel confused and unsafe. The music plays different songs in high volumes right across each other, you constrict yourself in-between oncoming pedestrians while trying not to

step on the commodities that are being sold, and in a few minutes you are in front of the West gate (Refer to appendix D) of the museum where cars and large numbers of taxis block each other, hooting appears to be the sound of communication but most drivers have learnt to ignore each other. In the midst of that confusion, you enter inside the museum and the atmosphere changes to silent and peaceful.

One of my neighbours who is also a friend was curious about the investigation of this nature and asked to accompany me so he can see what type of building it is that I was talking about. When he arrived at JAG, to his surprise, he knew the building and I was not surprised to hear him say that he thought of the building as a police office. While inside, he illustrated the unanticipated and he mentioned that he would have never thought what was happening inside. When it was time for both of us to leave, 45 minutes after, he expressed some disappointment as he had not completed his tour and looking at the exhibitions but promised to return when he had enough time. He loved it. He was the first person that provided optimism and necessity for this investigation.

The Joubert Park community may not know much about JAG because no one is interested in telling them about it. All that the museum seems to be interested in is the protection of their visitors from the people of the surrounding area. Inviting and waiting for the visitors from outside Joubert Park appear to be the priority while the residents are side-lined as they do not fit the profile. Perhaps that might be the reason the residents feel secondary and feel the need to steal from the superior. What would make them desire to visit? The boom gates at the entrance, the unwelcoming heritage building that is often mistaken by the citizens for a police station, the unwelcoming security that mistreat some individuals, art that does not speak your language, you cannot relate to most things inside, why even bother if you can stay on Facebook or WhatsApp outside? If you do not notice my presence I could not be bothered by who you are, unless you want my attention. Anyone could feel special if you treat them with interest.

A gallery or museum could be a peaceful place where even the underprivileged can relax and create an imaginary world, escaping from reality, and be inspired by the creativity of fellow human beings. This in turn can release positivity that they can also do better, thinking of their loved ones back at home and hoping for a better tomorrow. Art should be therapeutic in mind, body and soul for all people, and should not evoke the iniquity that some are superior and others are worthless.

6.1 What are people's expectations?

People come to visit galleries and museums for different reasons, they may be invited by a certain art institution, invited by a friend or colleague, from browsing the internet, walking or driving past or curiosity.

But, a person returns voluntarily to visit a museum or gallery out of interest. People can only surmise what to expect when they visit for the first time, but when they visit the second time they think they know what to expect even though they can still be surprised, which is good, interest has been born and can be developed even further. The majority of people that were interviewed in Joubert Park had this common thing at the end of the interview: they were optimistic about JAG and art. The questions were arranged from what they know to being told what exactly the building is for and to what they expect to see inside. Most agreed on visiting JAG sometime soon, the reason I believe is that no one has ever showed interest in them about the building. For some of the people you need to provoke them to be able to even realise you exist. This research may demonstrate that you can develop concern from people who were not attentive, but then again, how do you keep them interested?

After extensive marketing to try and get the first timers inside the building that they have spent years thinking was something else, it is always good to think ahead on how to sustain their interest, what it is that they like. From the interviews, what was questioned and their answers, the information could be used to make them come back for more without compromising the standard and regulations of the museum. Visitors come back for different reasons and types of visitors differ, there are spiritual, emotional, intellectual and social visitors. These are all classified by their expectations caused by their previous experience. The spiritual visitor is motivated by looking at creativity and contemplation. The emotional visitor receives pleasure from experiencing the past, aesthetic reminiscence, for example, something that may take them back to their childhood. The intellectual visitor has an academic interest, someone that may want to expand their knowledge from a professional concern. Then a social visitor may come back for entertainment, they had food and wine the first time and they were motivated to come back, for social interaction. These reasons are what the Joubert park community may react to in order to keep them visiting JAG.

For people who are not yet interested in the arts, did not study art or who did not grow up familiar with museums and galleries, a social visit is what mostly attracts them to the arts scene. A reasonable number of individuals that I am familiar with have visited JAG and were very impressed with the social interaction, free food, free drinks, meeting new people, entertainment and being treated like VIPs is such an honour for them that they request to be invited again if there are other functions. The willingness to come back confirms that a social visit can be a good motivation to create and develop attendance. JAG had giant puppets at one exhibition opening and the puppets paraded around JAG and Joubert Park. They attracted so much attention that lots of passing individuals decided to stand and watch while asking each other questions and a quantity of the uninvited viewers entered the premises and engaged

themselves with the activities that were taking place inside JAG. This is one of the marketing methods that made the oblivious involved in the JAG that day and hopefully still involved today.

6.1.1 Changes in the arts and technology

Technology has improved significantly from the time of the 1980's to today. A cell phone is a must-have for almost everyone, a computer, television, DVD, I-pad etc. are accessible for most of the people that reside in the cities. Technology is a form of art, the change in technology describes a more advanced creativity. It is a form of art that changes almost every day as new creations fill our marketing tools like your TV and radios. Access to technology has become so apparent; your cell phone rings to wake you up while your TV has recorded a programmed episode while you were asleep. Today we are living in a technologically advanced society and Joubert Park is no exception. Technology is so visible that standing on the first floor of JAG you can watch a big screen TV playing inside Joubert Park on special occasions like the 2010 world cup. Yes, homeless people, lovers, workers on lunch, patients at the clinic, photographers, chess players, passers-by, everyone who has an angle can just sit or stand there to watch TV inside the park. Regularly school children walk inside the museum carrying their cell phones, they take pictures of the artworks and of themselves, they record what they see so that they would be able to watch it later in the privacy of their own homes. These days it is customary to come across a group of people communicating with other people, who are not in their presence, on their phones, completely ignoring the individuals who are present. They use the short language that is used to communicate as fast as you can when talking to each other.

Facebook is one of the most popular social networks. It is used all over the world reducing the distance between people as one can invite a friend and if they accept your friendship you can then chat to them and other friends around the world and they can respond immediately. This method of communication improved the computer communication as the device that is used can be smaller, a cell phone that can be carried in your pocket anywhere you go, which makes a response to be faster. Other sites were developed and started to compete with Facebook like Mxit, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Twitter, We Chat and all other different ones that differ according to their target market which may range across age groups and social classes. All these sites are the new technologies that have taken the world by storm, and people socialising on their electronic devices, even on public transport, is now a daily trend. Joubert Park is also the place where individuals can sit and mind their own business on their own cell phones. The improvement of technology and the way communities are attached to it could lead to a right direction for museums if the two could be fused together.

6.2 The Johannesburg City Council's views

In his foreword to the catalogue, *One Hundred Years of Collecting*, Amos Masondo, the Executive Mayor of the city of Johannesburg writes about "the relationship between three major phases in the life of the JAG collection, namely, its early history, its negotiation of South Africa's apartheid era, and the creative milieu of post-apartheid, contemporary South Africa" (Masondo, 2010, p.14). After being ignored, the southern African traditional collection was later included in the late 1980's, "The so-called traditional works continue in the present day to provoke heated debate about the scholarly treatment of this genre of art-making and its relationship to mainstream art discourse" (Masondo, 2010, p.14). Masondo goes on to say that the JAG centenary catalogue should be treasured like the JAG collection itself, they both belong to the City of Johannesburg and hopefully will enrich the ways in which art lovers, scholars and visitors to the city experience our fine cultural heritage.

According to Murdoch, Ali Hlongwane, Director of Museums and Galleries, is optimistic about the manner in which JAG is performing and says that the visitor figures at JAG are still amongst the best in Africa with regards to art museums, and are better than the Iziko South African National Gallery in Cape Town. He agrees with Murdoch when she says that they strive to have more visitors and they have introduced social media like Twitter and Facebook, so far very productively. Also, they have started to print pamphlets, cheaper than, say, card invitations, to be distributed widely to anyone and therefore reach more people, especially those in the direct community.

Council funding, however, is limited. Sponsorship is a problem as funding in the arts industry is usually not sustained by organisations. Public institutions need to find ways to become financially more resourceful and more able to develop and maintain their own funding base.

6.3 Suggestions.

There are English sayings that say, "you can take the horse to the river but you cannot force the horse to drink", and, "the leopard does not change its spots". Possibly the Joubert Park community does not want anything to do with the museum. Some people like milk while for others it makes them sick. But we cannot run away from the fact also, that some people do not like the taste of cereal while others have never tasted it, as it is something they do not even have in their shops because there is no customer demand for it. People grow up from the day they were born and start by being exposed to life by their family, and that develops a way of life, culture, typical of that family and of that community. I believe the community of Joubert Park has their routine, culture, of doing things on daily bases and because they are not familiar with the activities of the museum, which may be caused by apartheid, assumptions, education or

whatever the case may be, JAG has not done enough to invite or engage the people of its vicinity. From the interviews held with the community it is evident that the majority of the community is not concerned about what is happening at JAG while others have no clue. Yes other people may not relate to or like the culture of the arts but education and exposure would give those that might be interested an opportunity to choose, learn and possibly create a future in the arts industry. If they are not introduced to this culture, they will never know about it and South Africa might never know their 'best artist of the next century'.

My personal experience attests to this. When I first went inside a museum I was an adult. I never had an opportunity to study art at an early age because there was no art subject at school and I was never even exposed to it, and to consider it as a career was even far-fetched. It was just entertainment and what some individuals did to decorate their homes. Arts and crafts items were made merely for daily usage because people needed them, it was utility art. Now at JAG wooden spoons, spears, shields, head rests etc. are used for display in exhibitions, which is a good thing since the Joubert Park community does not use these house equipments anymore, therefore coming to a museum to look at them as an exhibition would be educational. One of the important suggestions from the people who were interviewed was to see art from South Africans. Since JAG is situated in the heart of different African cultures, different exhibitions from different African countries may develop interest in the people of this community. The first thing to undertake to reach the stage of the community being interested is marketing. Marketing is the analysis, planning, implementation and control of programmes designed to increase visitor awareness and use of collections, facilities, and services in a way that will mutually benefit both the organisation and the visitor.

Like *Coming of Age: 21 Years of Artist Proof Studio*, marketing to the people who are in the arts industry made a huge difference because of the presence of William Kentridge. It might not mean anything to the people of Joubert Park especially if they are not aware who this person is or whom the people are talking about. But the attendance of Kentridge that brings thousands of people will trigger a spark in their minds and make them curious and wanting to join in. The more people there are at a JAG opening the more Joubert Park individuals come in because they can blend with the crowds without anyone questioning them about anything, they can hide from authorities and at the same time learn as much as they can while inside the premises, well, and even eat and drink as much as they can. The Education Officer at JAG, Musha Nehuleni, said in her interview that the Joubert Park community sometimes join in because they see a big party, which should be enough reason to conclude this is a good marketing strategy. She also mentioned that the City of Johannesburg's plan is to convert the whole area to be a cultural district, which they hope will develop support like it has at the other already

converted districts in the centre of Johannesburg. Therefore people might as well start now to familiarise themselves with arts and culture.

Also we must not forget the popular marketing strategy of inviting a celebrity, it could be a musician or an actor or anyone that is famous and not only in the field of visual arts, anyone that people are fond of. They will come to the event just to see that celebrity in person rather than seeing them on TV. At another exhibition in 2013 *Off the Beaten Path,* which was dedicated to violence against women, the celebrity guest was Yvonne Chakachaka who is well known for her music and Good Samaritan behaviour in Africa and all over the world. Visitors were continuously pressing their cell phones taking pictures of the superstar and sending the photos to those that were not at the function as a proof of them rubbing shoulders with the celebrity. Some people came to the exhibition after they had been phoned by someone who was already at the function reporting to them if it was worth coming or not. Chakachaka was a late invitation decision by JAG so people did not know beforehand, but as soon as she was there the locals started coming in. Murdoch assures that these little marketing strategies are the core of getting as much needed popularity as long as you have the funding to do so.

Funding is a serious issue in the arts industry. There is not enough money to support the arts and most artists are not skilled enough to do their own administration to get the funding that they require. Funding bodies should be arranged to assist more artists. Different funding bodies should be advertised and made available to those in Joubert Park, and assistance should be offered to help the applicant develop a proposal and fill in an application form. The intention should be sponsoring the good and promising idea rather than the technicality of filling in the form. Let there be different qualification methods in order for the number of applications to be managed. A specific funding body should be projected for certain groups, like those in Joubert Park, with different criteria. It could introduce a new strategy of employing people that will scout for existing and new talent and encourage them to showcase themselves to this funding body for a contract. Their funding contract could strictly be performing, for example, in Joubert Park for a certain period of time, not only for dignitaries in conferences but also for the ordinary people that need to be taught a particular lesson, and also to introduce and attract them to the art industry. People need to be exposed to the arts to appreciate and start to have interest in it.

The government could as well do more on introducing and encouraging arts and culture as a subject at schools from an early age. Most schools do not have art as a subject and that positions pupils in a disadvantaged situation in a world where creativity is the vanguard of improvement - new creations, fast cars, fast internet, fast food, new phones, new TVs, new ideas - and an immense drive of a country’s economy. When these

children grow and try to find their place in the world they discover a new world that is not familiar to them. Soweto has recently had a theatre built, it has art centres and the internationally renowned Hector Pieterson Museum. How many townships have this kind of cultural environment? Government should introduce art to all schools and that will encourage people to have facilities in their neighbourhoods, and hopefully, with dedicated management, to create programmes that will engage their communities.

As Shalini Venturelli says:

> A nation without a vibrant creative labour force of artists, writers, designers, scriptwriters, playwrights, painters, musicians, film producers, directors, actors, dancers, choreographers, not to mention engineers, scientists, researchers and intellectuals does not possess the knowledge base to succeed in the Information Economy, and must depend on ideas produced elsewhere (Venturelli, 2009).

A continuation of this research, an exploration of what may interest the Joubert Park community in JAG, is having the community itself being part of this museum. The South African government makes it clear that what they want to do for the people is to create job opportunities, and that is what everyone wants, even the Joubert Park community. The city of Johannesburg and the Friends of the Johannesburg Art Gallery could help in opening job opportunities for the surrounding people, as assistants in the JAG shop, cleaners, security guards and any other positions that a general public can be interested in or qualify for, including professional vacancies. In this way they get to be involved in the daily operations of the gallery, and their loved ones, family and friends will visit and slowly be introduced to the gallery and life of the arts. Most importantly they will feel attached to the institution and start to love JAG as it provides them with the dignity of employment. Sooner or later they will be inviting the wider public to join them in exhibitions and educational tours, they could be trained as guides and teach their own public about JAG and its programmes, and visits to artists could encourage some to become artists themselves or to study art.

An art competition for Joubert Park and surrounding residents could be arranged. There could even be a fun run to raise funds for the arts, just to get the public's awareness. To do that without having to walk around, we can use the TV screen that is inside Joubert Park as the advertising space to capture the attention of this community that sees this TV screen daily. We can also use it to get their information into JAG's database by allowing them to sms or send a please-call-me to a certain number, then we can save their details. We can use the TV to market exhibitions and other functions that JAG hosts, like art classes, community meetings and art competitions. The winners of art competitions could be exhibited in

one of the spaces at JAG. This initiative would instil optimism that one day they could be world famous artists. Educational activities in JAG could be organised around a year's project, motivating the participants with an incentive, like a R5,000 bursary to further their art studies at the end of the project.

As JAG's visitor numbers keep decreasing, it might require relooking at and reshaping its focus. This research has unpacked two important areas that might indicate the possible direction to take:

- to focus on school children and attract more of the younger visitors by using a marketing strategy and technology that suits them, and secondly,
- to have an operational plan to engage the community of Joubert Park like the Joubert Park Project but this time perhaps call it, for example, 'The Beyoncé Art Project' (the two girls interviewed in the park would be the first ones to join) or, more pertinently, 'The Yvonne Chakachaka Art Project' and have Chakachaka opening and closing the project.

But a more simple beginning could be the researcher inviting a group of Joubert Park community members, starting with the ones that have already been interviewed, to a walk-about at JAG to find out their reactions, especially if they are given special attention. They would be given a tour, then snacks and drinks, and after that they could discuss their experiences, particularly for the first timers, and the researcher could ask them if they would encourage other people to visit JAG, even if there are no snacks? The aim of this action would be to continue investigating the Joubert Park community's participation but focusing on their first time reaction and keeping track of their following visits, how many did they bring along, communicating with them, creating and growing a relationship with the Joubert Park group that engages with JAG, similar to The Friends of the Johannesburg Art Gallery.

Carman (1988) writes that at a Southern African Museums Association conference in 1987 the question of the survival of museums in a post-independence South Africa was discussed. Delegates were warned by one of the invited speakers during a panel discussion that, if they wished to ensure their survival and continuing relevance, museums had to give new perspectives to their policies with regard to acquisition, display and education. The same warning holds today, over 25 years later.

With the hope, as mentioned by Neluheni, of the 2040 project developing the whole area surrounding Joubert Park into a cultural precinct, both parties in this research – Joubert Park and JAG – will learn to be familiar with each other. And in the midst of the cultural precinct JAG can formulate programmes that are culturally friendly to the community that

it is in, and the community will improve its involvement with their heritage building, JAG.

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These include records of exhibitions, visitor numbers, schools and special groups' visits, education programmes and material, newsletters, exhibition hand-outs, visitors' books and newspaper clippings.

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8. Appendices

Appendix A: Interview questions

Questions are divided into three groups:

<u>Joubert Park community</u>

1. How often do you pass or come to this area?
2. Do you know what that building is?

Assuming the answer is **yes**;

3. How many times have you gone inside, if you have?
4. How was your experience, would you do it again?
5. Do you feel welcome, at home, relaxed, do you think you belong in a place like this?
6. Would you encourage or invite your friends and family to visit the museum?
7. Do you like the artworks that are displayed inside and outside?
8. Do you understand the artworks and their meanings?
9. In recent years there have been exhibitions like *Africa Remix*, *Dumile Feni, Thami Mnyele* and *Coming of Age* by Artist Proof Studio, did you ever visit to see these shows?

10. What do you prefer, to stay at home and watch TV, play music, play games, browse the internet, chat on your phone or come to the museum for an hour?

11. What else would you rather see or do when you are in the museum?

Assuming the answer is **no**;

3. How come you never went inside?
4. Do you think they would welcome you to go inside?
5. Has anyone ever invited you inside?
6. What do you think is inside?
7. Would you like to know what is inside?
8. What do you know about art?
9. How much do you think it is to go inside?

10. How do you think you should look like if you want to go inside?

11. Since now that you know that it is a museum, what type of art would you like to see if you go inside?

12.Would you go in if you could see some of your cultural norms inside a place like this?

13.Do you have a TV, radio, ear phones, cell phone, computer, iPod etc.?

14.Would you go in to use these (mentioned above gadgets) inside inside the museum?

Joubert Park Project management

1. What made you start this project?
2. What type/group of people were you aiming to work with?
3. What were your programmes that connected JAG?
4. How was the response of the Joubert Park community?
5. Do you think the project was a success?
6. If not, what went wrong and what would you have done better?
7. Do you think JAG's programmes and exhibitions relate to the Joubert Park community?
8. What do you think they would like to see if they go inside the museum?

JAG's staff members

1. What do you think about the attendance figures at JAG?
2. Do you think it could be better, or could be worse?
3. People that visit JAG, are they from around or from other cities?
4. Do you think Joubert Park is fully aware of what the building, JAG, is, and its functions?
5. Are you satisfied with the attendance of your immediate community (Joubert Park)?
6. Would you like to see more people from Joubert Park involved in the activities of the museum?
7. In the year 2000 the Joubert Park Project was launched to connect this community with the surrounding projects and institutions. What was JAG's involvement and what were the results as far as JAG's visitors from Joubert Park are concerned?
8. Are there any plans by JAG to involve or attract more people from the vicinity?
9. Do you think JAG programmes and exhibitions are of interest to the people in question (Joubert Park community)?

10.Exhibitions like *Africa Remix* and *Coming of Age* by Artist Proof Studio, had a big turnout, including a lot of the residents, what do you think attracted them to these exhibitions?

11.Has JAG ever, in your presence, had a project dedicated to the Joubert Park community? If so, how were the results?

12.Do you think JAG is doing enough, or just anything, that is welcoming and encouraging to the Joubert Park citizens to visit the museum on regular bases?

13.With the new culture of keeping up with the ever improving technology, has JAG had any programmes or exhibitions that are technologically inclined?

14.How do you see JAG in five years from now with regards with the visitors from the Joubert Park?

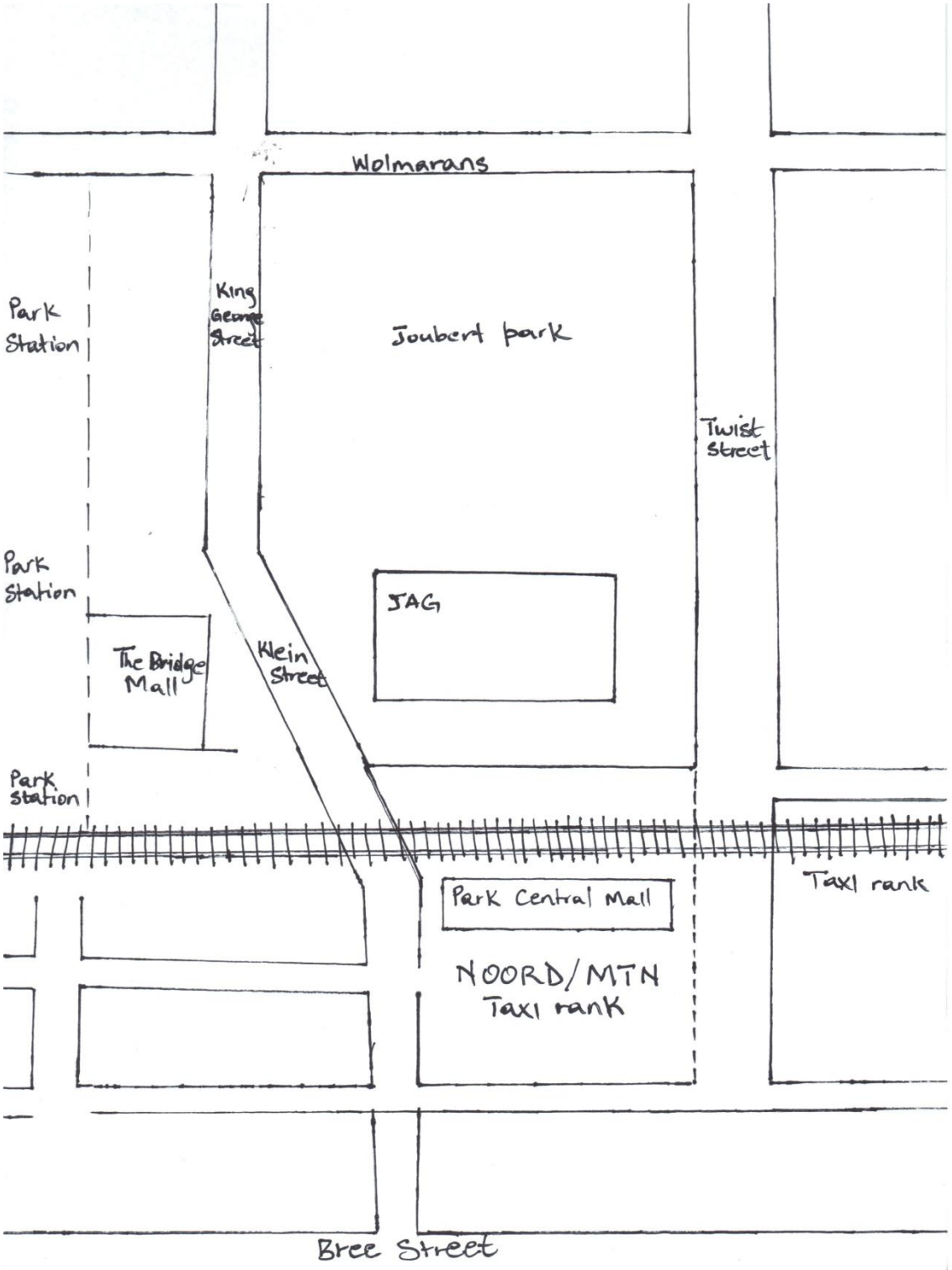
Appendix B: Johannesburg CBD including Joubert Park



Figure 4: Location of Joubert Park in relation to its surroundings in Hillbrow (Google Earth 2010; edited by author)

(Ndaba, 2010)

Appendix C: Joubert Park, Railway Line and Noord/MTN Taxi Rank



Appendix D: Drawing of JAG and Joubert Park

