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Motse wa ba dimo [ancestral home]

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ABSTRACT

The spatial history of South Africa has always favoured the white minority and as a result of this imbalance, very little spatial investigation and knowledge creation into subject matters that are primarily black exist. It is therefore the intention of this research report to expand the spatial conversation around identity, culture and tradition; particularly in relation to African spirituality. *Ingoma* can be described as the collective title attributed to the ritual, spiritual and healing fraternity of *izangoma* (traditional healers). The subject matter of the research report is the evolution of *ingoma*. The research delves into the changes that the traditional practice, particularly that which the knowledge transfer aspect known as *ukuthwasa* (initiation as a rite of passage) has undergone due to the influence of historical white rule and multi-cultural society and urbanization.

As a point of departure the report describes the capacity of the belief system to adequately define the perspective and life view encapsulated by *ingoma*. The first essay is effectively a crash course summary of the tentative categories of ancestors and healers prevalent in the practice. The purpose of this essay is to highlight the esteemed role once played by the ancestors and how *isangoma* are effectively conduits through which the ancestors communicate with their living relatives. The findings allow us to draw interesting spatial relationships between the ancestors, *isangoma* and space. The latter part of the essay familiarises the reader with the concept of *ukuthwasa.*

This study investigates how esoteric knowledge is passed on from one generation of *izangoma* to the next produces very interesting understandings of apprenticeships that are anchored both in the world of the living and the world of the ancestors. The essay in the subsequent chapter grapples with understanding the changes that shake the traditions of *ingoma* and force the culture to adapt to an environment ill-suited and inadequate for ritual ancestral praise. The essay focuses on the spatial changes that *ingoma has* undergone due to the somewhat forceful transplantation into the urban township environment and thus demonstrates that a lack of spatial agency as well as *ingoma'*s encounter with a foreign culture brings about ingenuity and desperate adaptations to the spatial needs of the practice.

The fourth chapter extends the investigation into the changes that occur due to encounters with urbanity from the specific perspective of policy, *muti* (herbal medicine) sale and professional regulation. The next section introduces the grounding of *ingoma.* This is a spatial investigation into situating the spiritual practice within an urban context and consequently, the selection of a site. This is the beginning of the spatial manifestation of the practice and culminates in a comprehensive site analysis focused on understanding and exploiting the natural attributes of the site. The final section of the report is titled Manifesting *motse*. The word *motse* [Sesotho] means settlement, which effectively describes the home as a part of the community and not as a standalone entity. This final section sees the investigation reaching its apex as we synthesize the research into a comprehensive brief and program informed directly by the case studies and interviews conducted. Encoding ritual, the unseen ancestors and materials that reflect a past remembered and a future imagined are the spatial concepts that we focus on as they reflect the paradoxical intersectionality of life – death, the esoteric and the normative.

In essence, the research report is a reflection of a young black aspiring architect in search of his spatial identity, through investigating the question – Where am I in this somewhat narrow vision of what architecture is espoused to be?