

Abstract

This paper investigates contemporary world city discourse, specifically in regards to the role of arts and culture, and with a focus on the implications of this discourse and policy in the urban African context. The historical legacies of colonial policies and thinking are explored in order to understand the current status of African cities within the world system. These dominant narratives are critiqued and some alternative modes of understanding Africa within the global context are explored. These various discourses are used to investigate the implications in a specific context - that of the current urban regeneration project taking place in Newtown, Johannesburg.

This paper will contextualise the language and policy relating to arts and culture from a national government to a city level, in order to unpack some the assumptions that underpin these policies and the impacts that this language and policy have on the arts within a uniquely African urban context.

Keywords: Johannesburg, arts, culture, world city, urban regeneration, Africa