

Listening to Ancestors: Southern African Sonic and Spiritual Approaches to Relational Architecture

Mahoati Arthur Lehloenya, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

The Asian Conference on Cultural Studies 2026
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Eurocentric paradigms, worldviews, and values are dominant epistemologies that drive architectural activities, shaping the fabric of society from the perspectives of both the Global North and, more significantly, the Global South. Focusing on the Southern African context, these values seem to create mono-narratives that not only influence the legitimisation of these ontologies but also affect contemporary adaptations of life. It is recognised that in the Global South, Indigenous peoples carry narratives that enrich the distinct cultures and communities from which they originate. However, the Eurocentric values conflict with indigenous practices. At the same time, contemporary Indigenous people remain invisible in public narratives and have minimal influence on architectural discourse and debates. Incorporating marginalised identities and their material cultures into the architectural canon would benefit not only their self-determination and affirmation of their invaluable contributions but also the advancement of knowledge. Bungoma practices, a Southern African divinity healing practice rooted in spiritual, ancestral, and sensorial knowledge, offer an alternative epistemological and methodological framework. This paper proposes sensory and spiritually charged methodological strategies and tools that emerge from Bungoma's philosophical practices and ancestralities. Two contextual sites are discussed in distinct settings across the urban and rural landscapes of South Africa through a sonic reading that examines how these diverse spaces are influenced by soundscapes. The paper makes the claim that such an inquiry reveals alternative ways of practicing architecture centred on relationality, community (Ubuntu) ethics, place, and embodied practices.

Keywords: ancestral knowledge, indigenous knowledge systems, relationality, sensory methodologies, ubungoma

iafor

The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

Introduction

The arrival of modernity in Africa, and its prior historical epochs characterised as colonialism and globalisation, have eradicated, and subsequently mythologised, indigenous knowledge systems, casting them as invalid ways of knowing and being (Badugela, 2024; Mawere, 2015; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2005; Opata, 2020). This process, termed “epistemicide,” involved the systematic destruction of African epistemologies while benefiting Eurocentric knowledge systems (Abudu, 2022). In the face of modernity, these vital forms are not only subjugated but, when made visible and explored as contemporary forms, run the harmful risk of cultural appropriation (Araya, 2024; Sarah et al., 2018), romanticisation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2005), infantilisation (Schupman et al., 2022), and marginalisation (Ibagere & Anyanwu, 2024; Mawere, 2015), furthering the ongoing epistemic violence and silencing of indigenous knowledge systems. This is especially evident in African architecture, arts, humanities, and many other notable fields of study. Indigenous people today continue to practice their forms of self-expression and spiritual self-determination, albeit at the periphery of knowledge production (Ofosu-Asare, 2024). Indigenous communities and their philosophies offer a unique understanding of sensory and spiritual embodied ways of knowing that guide their practices and worldviews. Despite their peripheral status, they are valid epistemological forms unique to the local contexts in which they originate (Mistry et al., 2019; Monyela, 2023). A relook at these conditions of intangible heritage and indigenous knowledge systems is vital as a call to decolonise knowledge in design and more broadly (Bribena, 2019; Ofosu-Asare, 2024) towards epistemic justice (Makalela & Lemmenyane, 2026). Effective decolonising methodologies should address relational epistemologies (Igwe et al., 2022; Parsons & Taylor, 2022; wa Mungai, 2022), community-based practices (Igwe et al., 2022), reframed policy frameworks (Ahmed, 2024), and co-creation between researchers and participants (Held, 2019). The subject of Southern African divinity healing practice of *uBungoma* sacralises the foundations of alternative methodologies undertaken in the study and infuses the indigenous practice with sensory methodologies- particularly the sonic modalities. The contributions this study makes are to situate *uBungoma* as a legitimate sensory and spiritual episteme and, subsequently, to propose methodological strategies and tools that emerge from *uBungoma*’s practices and ancestral systems towards dominant architectural domains.

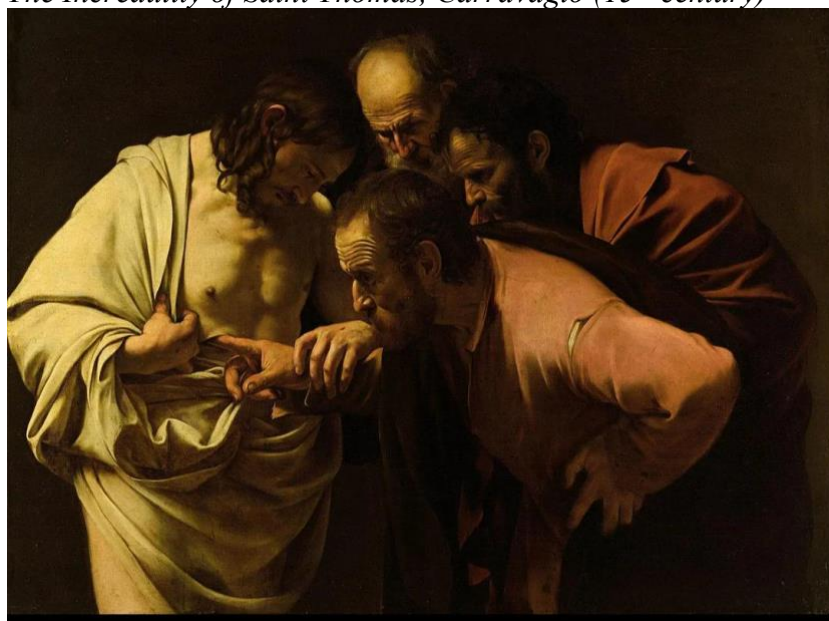
Through a brief discussion of two distinct contextual sites in urban and rural localities of South Africa, the Kwa Mai Mai Traditional Market and the Mautse Sacred Caves, respectively, are the principal sites where daily healing practices, ancestral teachings, and sonic rituals occur. Whilst seemingly distinct in their natural and urban morphologies, the sites are key to spiritual pilgrimage and generate their own meanings within the surrounding landscapes. The sites offer distinct resonances that have the potential to shape how architecture performs and to reveal alternative architectural practices grounded in relationality, community ethics, and placemaking.

My decision to situate these sites in conversation is not only rooted in their methodological potentials, but also in a personal and spiritual imperative, as a researcher with a specific indigeneity that straddles these sites where I professionally practice and where my ancestral lineages and roots lie. The question that animates the research, central to the researcher’s doctoral thesis: *how can uBungoma’s sensory and spiritually grounded methodologies, particularly surfaced through sonic modalities, reframe the practice of architecture in Southern African contexts, beyond Eurocentric paradigms?* Firstly, I discuss the mono-narratives produced from the epistemic dominance of Eurocentric paradigms. Secondly, I situate *uBungoma* practice as an epistemology by defining what *uBungoma* offers and

demystifying it. Thirdly, to explore sonic methodologies, specifically sound as a spatial tool, listening as a method and sensory engagement beyond vision. In this section, I link *uBungoma* to the methodologies explored and ultimately relate its relevance to architecture. In the last section, I describe the spatial conditions and provide a sonic reading, along with the relationships that emerge through listening, as informed by *uBungoma* principles. Together, these illuminate *uBungoma* practice as a means of knowing, the importance of spirituality and a reading of architecture approached through sonic registers. This paper is exploratory (and speculative) in nature, and the methodologies proposed are central to and ongoing in the researcher's PhD studies in the School of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, with the topic titled "*Eyes of the Spirit: Situating uBungoma practices in an Architectural Praxis.*"

Eurocentrism, Architecture, and Epistemic Violence

The title of the doctoral studies, from which this paper derives its concepts, "*Eyes of the Spirit*," aims to trace an indigenous theory of sensing, querying what it means to disrupt the constructed dualisms of subject and object, mind and body, material and immaterial, as premised by Kidd (2021, p. 2). One end of the prism indicates the prominence of visual art disciplines and their plight — *Eyes* as the central sensory modality. To elaborate on the above, the Age of Enlightenment was a critical period in intellectual, cultural, and artistic movements, emphasising reason, scientific advances, and rationalism (McGrath & Martin, 2017). Observational drawings of the Renaissance period underpinned Western scientific traditions, in which the ocular laid the foundation for quantifying objective truth. Architectural approaches to the ocular, including the modernist movement and cultural paradigms that introduced the disciplines and terms "aesthetic," "patina," and "picturesque" (Jokilehto, 2017), marked an essential interest in pornographic imagery in architecture today. On the other hand — *Spirit* describes the sensory experience and subjective truth that recognises the sixth sense as vitalities that sustain indigenous intelligence (Howes, 2011). As a reference to the painting by Caravaggio (1571–1610) titled *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas* (Figure 1), we are reminded of the tactile senses that shape our experience and understanding of the world, and, secondly, that the skin functions as our first medium of communication. To marry the above with Kidd's (2021, p.2) understanding, "our bodies, and our environment [are] neither contained nor stable, but always affecting and being affected by the other, generating new forms of material and embodied experiences." *Eyes of the Spirit* is an attempt at epistemic disruption, placing reverence for indigenous ways of knowing and thereby attuning us to the environment through our perceptual fields.

Figure 1*The Incredulity of Saint Thomas, Carravaggio (15th century)*Source: <https://www.caravaggio.org/the-incredulity-of-saint-thomas.jsp>

It is vital that we examine the epistemic dominance that has instead prevailed, which has lent itself to mononarratives (coloniality of knowledge) and universalism. Eurocentric paradigms have dominated and continue to shape architectural projects in Southern Africa and the Global South. Architectural trends focus on global identity and the appeal of modern architectural looks, which are alluring and seductive, featuring reflective glass facades and high-end technology. The “pornographic” imagery alienates all our vital senses that are functional to how we use our sensory perceptions, neglecting and hierarchising the senses, with the visual as the most credible. The dominance of visual archetypes positions the architectural endeavour as possessing brilliant architectural features, placing indigenous worldviews as inferior. Not only do they make invisible intangible architectural forms, but they also produce singular narratives that perpetuate Eurocentric ideals and technological advancements. They validate and legitimise their forms, rendering the unseen unquantifiable and unintelligible. Surveillance and eyewitness testimony are lauded examples of forensic evidence that we can consider in how truth is factualised (Porter & Kennedy, 2012). Yet, as Ariella Azoulay articulates on her concept of the *imperial shutter*, technologies of vision, such as the shutter (a technical component of the camera), play a constitutive role in imperialism, which has had the potential to suppress, forget, ignore, as well as for the photograph taken, for its meaning to be accepted (Azoulay, 2019). She articulates that “the shutter is a synecdoche for the operation of the imperial enterprise altogether, on which the invention of the photograph, as well as other technological media, was modelled” (Azoulay, 2019, p.16). The shutter, it would seem, fixes moments and photographic events as objective frames that are mobilised by dominant powers. This resonates with the privileged ocular dimensions over other modes of knowing, such as the *unseen*, which are often relegated to the margins as subjective and inferior.

The tradition of a dominant epistemic framework has manifested in spatial practices that ignore local specificity, ecological and social contexts in favour of Eurocentric norms (Bennett, 2025; Ponciano, 2025). The insufficient nature of this framework is evident in the inability to honour more culturally rooted epistemologies, leading to a devaluation of indigenous knowledge systems and the injustice thereof. Gayatri Spivak speak fluently of this idea in her essay, “*Can*

the Subaltern Speak?” highlighting the concerns of the power structures that make it difficult for the subaltern community to express their own experiences. Historically, they have been spoken *for* rather than listened *to*. The question to ponder on, while not addressed extensively in this edition, is how such a novel study attends to the risk and harm that could be sensationalised with sacred knowledges? If this research aims to make visible what has been invisible, what then becomes of this “new” geography articulated? What this study seeks to do instead is to navigate the methodological tools that address the central claim articulated in the introductory outline.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems and *uBungoma* as Epistemology

The practice I shed light on in this study requires an ethics of care and accountability, which are essential to studies in indigenous postcolonial paradigms, African-based relational practices, and community representation. These notions are expressed by many prominent African scholars (Chilisa, 2019; Chilisa et al., 2017; Reo, 2019; Snow et al., 2016) to describe culturally resonant research that links individuals to communities in an ongoing relationship that implicates them. Thus, in my long pursuit of this research, there is a need to be accountable to the community, to adopt a bottom-up approach, and to de-emphasise the violent harms of colonisation (Defries, 2014). The work of Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018, p. 4), a decolonial scholar from South Africa, calls for the deprovincialisation of Africa, describing it as “an intellectual and academic process of centring Africa as a legitimate historical unit of analysis and epistemic site from which to interpret the world.” It demands a restructuring of epistemological foundations and production. It requires the reclamation of indigenous perspectives through what Walter Mignolo terms “epistemic disobedience” – a conscious delinking from modernity’s hierarchies and entanglements of power (Mignolo, 2009). Ndlovu-Gatsheni, along with Walter Mignolo, Sylvia Wynter, and other decolonisation scholars, urge us to reposition knowledge within “ex-colonised epistemic sites” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

The study undertakes the strong directive to take epistemic disobedience seriously and to think rebelliously about “deprovincializing” historically dominant sites of knowledge, by adopting indigenous-led research epistemologies framed through *uBungoma* practices. An indigenous articulation (in place of a worldview) privileges Indigenous concerns, practices, and participation as both researchers and the researched. Wilson (2020, p. 54) articulated this concern, noting that “indigenous people are at a stage where they want research and research design to contribute to their self-determination and liberation struggles, as it is defined and controlled by their communities.” Addressing this problem requires a methodological shift grounded in relational ethics, particularly considering the exploitative history of research conducted on Indigenous communities (Smith, 2021).

uBungoma encompasses the philosophy, spirituality, and practice associated with traditional healers across Southern and Central Africa (Janzen, 1992), known locally as sangomas, izangoma (isiZulu), igqirha (isiXhosa) or lethuela (Sesotho). These practices are transmitted orally and embodied through ritual, emphasising relationality over textual archive. While *uBungoma* has deep rural roots and a peripheral identity, it is becoming increasingly visible in urban contexts, reflecting the need to situate the practice (and, by that, make it relevant and ethically practised) for a modernised world and to usher it into contemporary society. In this context, the *uBungoma* practice—a Southern African divinity healing practice grounded in spiritual, ancestral, and sensorial knowledge—offers an alternative epistemological framework. Rooted in oral traditions, rituals, and human archival knowledge, *uBungoma* exemplifies a sensorialist logic that fundamentally departs from Cartesian rationalism. Despite

ongoing scholarship on IKS (Chilisa, 2019; Ramabu, 2026; Wilson, 2020), *uBungoma* remains excluded from contemporary architectural thinking and practice. Compounding this is the long-standing victimisation of Indigenous systems by colonial mythologies, Western stereotyping, and romanticisation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2005). *uBungoma*'s refusal to be fully known, codified, or revealed is a methodological stance, not a limitation. The practice enjoys, to recall Edouard Glissant's concept, the *right to opacity*, as illustrated in his book *Poetics of Relation* (1990/1997). In it, he warns us about the rights of individuals to remain incomprehensible to a Western audience, to demand opacity, especially to the curious researcher, whose colonial impulse and yearning for knowledge seek mastery and expertise, thereby making transparent the very same knowledge prone to dilution, simplification, and instrumentalisation. While the academy often demands clarity, objectivity, and proof, *uBungoma* operates in the "fugitive" – the sensory and the spiritual, visible but not immediately apparent to the naked eye. As a researcher, being embedded and resisting the academy is a double conundrum, and one must navigate the tensions between academic rigour and Indigenous relationality. The research problem is both epistemological and institutional; what does writing and designing from within this opacity and transparency mean?

uBungoma's sensorial, ancestral and extrasensory rationalities are pivotal to reassessing architectural discourse. In the context of modernism, current *uBungoma* practices remain untranslatable into the language of architecture, rendering them "unintelligible" in academic spaces. This framing invites architectural research and practice that is not solely about spatial design, but rather about a creative, complex methodological process, ethical positioning, and epistemic resistance.

Sonic & Sensory Readings of Space

Sensory heritage studies and sensory perception examine the material manifestations of the visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile fields within societies, drawing on interdisciplinary strands, including the anthropology of the senses. These studies recognise that sensory perception is culturally contingent, with each community interpreting and responding to the world in distinct ways. The task at hand is not one of adding sensory context through which we can understand the past, but what and how we hear shapes subjectivity in important ways, as argued by Mansell (2020). The role of the historians, as he argues, is to *hear with* rather than *listen to* the past. It is useful in decolonial studies to make this distinction. Listening denotes the historian as privileging a particular audition, seeking knowledge, and making what they have listened to part of the historical record. These audible forms are the reason for cultures of class and gender. Listening is contingent on the listener. Hearing with, instead, is only what the historian hears. Mansell (2020, p. 100) calls this the "historicity of truths as they have taken sonic form." It is also vital in decolonial studies to think through listening as an ethical act of responsibility, accountability, and politics of care and relationality. By tuning in to the sonic and hearing with, we also invite hearing between frames of noise and silence, not necessarily as divergent listening ranges but as offerings of vibrances and resonances of being in spaces, in the quest for spatial knowledge. Furthermore, as deviating from extractive measures of listening to or observing. Later, I discuss the two contextual sites parallel to the sonic ranges of noise and silence. By deploying the *sangomas* (*uBungoma* practitioners) as epistemological agents attuned to sonic-spatial awareness, I can view sensing as a bodily function that gathers information about their environment. *uBungoma*, as an episteme of indigenous intelligence, is laden with sensorial modalities that encode ancestral knowledge and ways of being. The sangoma's body is not only a communicative vessel but also a living, sensorial, archival body that transmits heritage signals across cosmologies, time, and space.

These modalities include codes, philosophies, rituals, and technologies that express a “language of the spirit” (Wreford, 2008). Preliminary observations suggest that these practices involve communication with ancestral spirits through kinaesthetic movement, trance states, and sonic enactments—especially the drum *ngoma*, from which the term *uBungoma* derives its name. Along with song and dance, the drum initiates ritual states and facilitates ancestral communion between the sangoma, the ancestor and the patient. Entering a trance, facilitated by sound, scent, and movement (as an individual and collective participation), becomes a form of ancestral resonance. Additional sonic artefacts, such as the whistle, used to summon ancestors, resonate across African spiritual practices. These communicative devices not only summon but also structure the spiritual presence in space. In some traditions, children are discouraged from whistling at night because it is believed to summon snakes, which are symbols of spirit guides in many sangoma cosmologies. Further sonic gestures include foot stomping, vocal burping (signifying ancestral presence), and rhythmic clapping accompanied by the call “*thokoza*,” all of which invoke, acknowledge, and honour ancestral presence. The idea of the multisensory is especially important, as sonic gestures are modes of spatial invitation (and cues) that interface with spatial knowledge. Therefore, the sonic becomes an access point, or a means of granting spiritual permissions, and assists in establishing aspects of space-making.

Could we extend this thinking to the architectural discipline and consider learning from and with sangomas about the creation of space and its functionality, not only to heal people and their relationships, but also to enable architecture to learn from and with sangomas in the making of space? Understanding the spiritual fabric of the city as a living, responsive entity reframes architecture not as an inert structure but as a sensorial, relational and ethical act. A decolonial lens is essential for accommodating the forms of extrasensory perception (Geurts, 2003) within architectural discourse, especially in ways that resist dominant ocular-centric narratives. The simplistic taxonomy of the classic five senses is enlivened by a nuanced reading of the *uBungoma* practice. Conventional academic approaches, such as participant observation, while valuable and necessary, are ocularcentric and might prove insufficient for the nature of this study. The research involves immersive, respectful engagement with *uBungoma* rituals and practitioners, where knowledge is shared through reciprocity, humility, and co-presence (Smith, 2021). As custodians of this knowledge, sangomas must be acknowledged as co-researchers whose practices shape the process and outcomes. By minimising research practices centred on visual observations, a sonic and sensory ethnographic practice is situated to refuse the colonial gaze as evidence of how we come to know. The thinking above gives rise to decolonial methodologies proposed towards developing spatial tools. These encompass a range of research methods aligned to the conceptual frame of sensory readings of space. To enlist these are:

1. Site immersion, guided by Thornton’s conception of the *Exposed Being* fully implicated in the study (Thornton, 2017).
2. Listening as a Method through soundwalks. This entails walking with and allowing universes to unfold through conversation and prompts. The walking conversations allow sangomas’ narratives to be understood through movement and body language.
3. Sound journaling. This is the practice of recording thoughts, feelings and experiences, including documenting sounds of the environment.
4. Autoethnography. Reflexive writing, which attends to the researcher as implicated in the study, is reflected through journal entries.
5. Refusal/ Letting go/ Abandoning (Smith, 2021, pp. 191–192). This surfaces a decolonial ethics of practice, which demands that some knowledges are sacred and

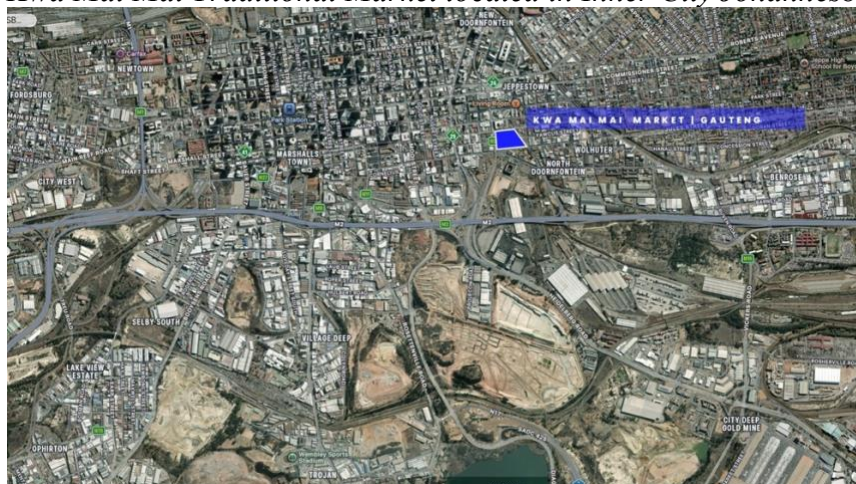
cannot be known, and that the researcher is content to abandon some parts of knowledge production.

Contextual Case Discussion

The study is situated across two sites in urban and rural South Africa. These are grounded to ascertain how decolonial architecture can learn from *uBungoma's* practices, rituals, and ancestral knowledges. Kwa Mai Mai Traditional Market is situated in a thriving urban precinct where traditional healers reside, and cultural entrepreneurs liven the atmosphere through their own economic and cultural self-determination (Figures 2 and 3). Kwa Mai Mai also demonstrates the resilience and adaptability of the *uBungoma* practise in an urban precinct. It is a dynamic site where migrant communities actively sustain and transform their cultural practices. In this sense, the market exemplifies a form of autonomy that resonates with Marx's conception of "man as producer." Yet, unlike Marx's materialist emphasis, this production is not purely economic but also spiritual and epistemic.

Figure 2

Kwa Mai Mai Traditional Market located in Inner City Johannesburg



Source: Google Maps

Figure 3

Kwa Mai Mai Precinct Site Image

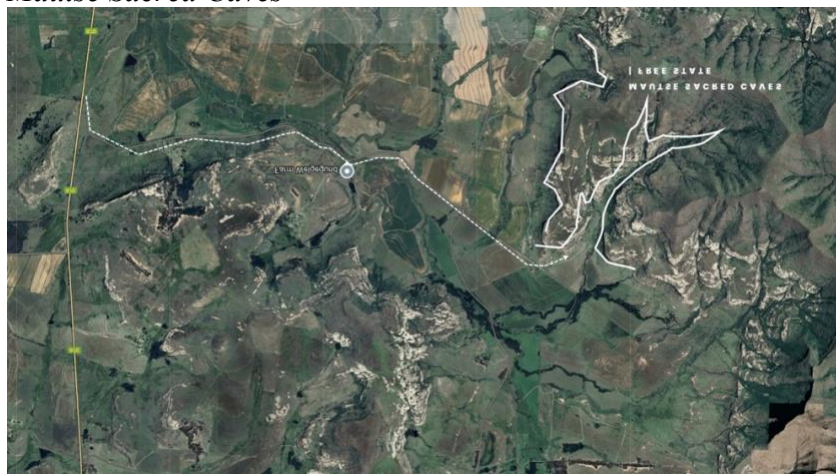


Source: Author

Conversely, Mautse Sacred Caves is situated in a rural area of the Eastern Free State Province in South Africa, along the Caledon River Valley, on private farmland (Figure 4).

Figure 4

Mautse Sacred Caves



Source: Google Maps

The sites act as affirmations of the existence of worlds within dominant worlds, self-determining towards indigenouness (freedom) and indigeneity. Simpson (2017) advances decolonial scholarship by emphasising the importance of land as the anchor of decolonial practice, recognising that land dispossession, surveillance, and violence have been enactments of colonial impositions and disruptions. These sites have thus lain outside the domain of Eurocentric heritage frameworks and their potential to inform a decolonial and spiritual approach that listens, senses, and relates rather than sees, measures, and fixes.

The site's offerings can be conceptually read within the conceptual framework of *Noise and Silence*. The approach involves attentiveness to sounds and their resonant implications in research contexts, aiming to stimulate alternative ways of engaging with these contexts, given the traditional practices of architecture that seek to know through the visual field. It stimulates new ways of dealing with places, people and objects. This approach allows us to recall not only spiritual practices but also African folktales and their resounding mythologies. Listening in this sense, according to Voegelin (2010, p. 13), one I contend with, is “an aesthetical activity that challenges the philosophical tradition of the West...sound is left to describe and enhance but never to do and become.” Investigating sound is an interdisciplinary endeavour that involves attentive listening to the everyday, offering a cultural and historical contextualisation of auditory perception and considering the context in which listening practices take place (Bull & Cobussen, 2020).

Conclusion

A focus on decolonial scholarship and aligning to the demands of a sacred practice are not without pertinent questions; What does it mean for a sacred practice to be situated within dominant canons of knowledge? How does such a novel study attend to the looming risks and harm that could be sensationalised with sacred knowledges? A relational spatial practice, as I have demonstrated, founded on decolonial and indigenous-led research methodologies, is key to understanding these dynamics and epistemic considerations.

I unpacked what Azoulay terms the imperial shutter, as moments within historical narratives that favour objective “frames” captured by dominant powers. This study epistemically develops a decolonised shutter, so to speak, or epistemic site, through which indigenous knowledges (and technologies) can find grounding. A new epistemic site is also about attending to the question concerning land, as a decolonial practice amplified through listening as a mode of knowing and, ultimately, as a form of *healing* (of contexts, histories, people, and architectures). The methodologies presented have been driven by an ethical, theoretical, and epistemological framework, not only to honour the practice of *uBungoma* but also as acts of refusal and rights to opacity that such a practice demands in the advancement of knowledge.

Finally, the article presented a reading of the sites, conceptually *seen* through noise and silence. Not just in their sonic status as urban and rural ambiances, but as a modality for engaging with contexts and describing places. It asks, what can we hear when we momentarily close our eyes, and then ultimately what are some of the teachings that can emanate from such a study to inform a decolonial architectural practice- one that does not alienate, as the modernity project has done, but affords the spaces designed by architects an imbued significance in *healing* and *making* being. Therefore, the visual gap is replaced by a sensory and “sonic” offering that is not conclusive but addresses a sensibility that mediates the philosophical, methodological, and ethical dimensions.

Acknowledgement

I want to acknowledge the University of Johannesburg for enabling my travel to the conference that was held in Tokyo, Japan. I honour the practice of *uBungoma* (and sangomas alike) and strive to represent it ethically in ways that tell their story sensibly and attempt to advance their ways of knowing through my own spatial intelligence and understanding.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The author declares that Grammarly, an AI-assisted writing tool, was used to proofread and refine the manuscript's language. The usage was limited to correcting grammatical and spelling errors and rephrasing statements for accuracy and clarity. The author further declares that, apart from Grammarly, no other AI or AI-assisted technologies have been used to generate content in writing the manuscript. The ideas, design, procedures, analyses, and discussion are original and derived from the appropriate and systematic conduct of the research.

References

- Abudu, K. U. (2022). Colonial Legacy and Knowledge Production in Africa: Re-echoing the Need for Epistemic Decolonisation. *Knowledge Production and the Search for Epistemic Liberation in Africa*, 49–67. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-07965-8_5
- Ahmed, B. (2024). Decolonizing Policy Research as Restorative Research Justice: Applying an Indigenous Policy Research Framework (IPRF). *Critical Policy Studies*, 18(2), 271–298. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2022.2158481>
- Araya, S. G., & Beyene, B. B. (2024). Effect of cultural appropriation on the cultural garment weaving industry: the case of weavers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1), 2351679. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2024.2351679>
- Azoulay, A. A. (2019). *Potential history: Unlearning imperialism*. Verso Books.
- Badugela, T. M. (2024). Revisiting the Effects of Colonialism on Africa's Indigenous Knowledge. *Advances in Knowledge Acquisition, Transfer, and Management*, 103–124. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-7851-6.ch004>
- Bennett, J. (2025). Architectures beyond an architect: A perspective on uncommon practices from the global majority in post-apartheid South Africa. *(un) Common Precedents in Architectural Design*, 103–115.
- Bribena, K. (2019). Globalization and Knowledge Production in the World: A Critical Analysis of the Place of Africa. *Journal of Reviews on Global Economics*, 8, 12–20. <https://doi.org/10.6000/1929-7092.2019.08.02>
- Bull, M., & Cobussen, M. (Eds.). (2020). *The Bloomsbury handbook of sonic methodologies*. Bloomsbury.
- Chilisa, B. (2019). *Indigenous research methodologies*. Sage publications.
- Chilisa, B., Major, T. E., & Khudu-Petersen, K. (2017). Community engagement with a postcolonial, African-based relational paradigm. *Qualitative Research*, 17(3), 326–339. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794117696176>
- Defries, C. (2012). Indigenous research methodologies. *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, 29(1), 138–140.
- Geurts, K. (2003). *Culture and the senses: Bodily ways of knowing in an African community*. University of California Press.
- Held, M. B. E. (2019). Decolonizing Research Paradigms in the Context of Settler Colonialism: An Unsettling, Mutual, and Collaborative Effort. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918821574>
- Howes, D. (2011). The senses: Polysensoriality. *A Companion to the Anthropology of the Body and Embodiment*, 435–450.

- Ibagere, E., & Anyanwu, C. (2024). Developing indigenous knowledge systems in Nigeria through the mass media: current realities, challenges, and the way forward. *African Identities*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2024.2442638>
- Igwe, P. A., Madichie, N. O., & Rugara, D. G. (2022). Decolonising research approaches towards non-extractive research. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 25(4), 453–468. <https://doi.org/10.1108/qmr-11-2021-0135>
- Janzen, J. M. (1992). *Ngoma: Discourses of healing in Central and Southern Africa*. University of California Press.
- Jokilehto, J. (2017). A History of Architectural Conservation. In *A history of architectural conservation*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315636931>
- Kidd, A. N. (2021). *Affect, architecture, and practice: Toward a disruptive temporality of practice*. Routledge.
- Makalela, L., & Lemmenyane, G. D. (2026). Illuminating African epistemologies: Reclaiming literacy through indigenous knowledge systems in higher education. *Countering Colonialism in Language Education*, 81–95.
- Mansell, J. G. (2020). Hearing with: Researching the histories of sonic encounter. *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Sonic Methodologies*, 93–114.
- Mawere, M. (2015). Indigenous Knowledge and Public Education in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Africa Spectrum*, 50(2), 57–71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000203971505000203>
- McGrath, J., & Martin, K. C. (2017). The Modernization of the Western World. In *The modernization of the Western world: A society transformed*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315157795>
- Mignolo, W. D. (2009). Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and Decolonial Freedom. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 26(7–8), 159–181. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409349275>
- Mistry, J., Jafferally, D., Ingwall-King, L., & Mendonca, S. (2019). Indigenous knowledge. *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, 211–215. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-102295-5.10830-3>
- Monyela, M. (2023). African indigenous knowledge on the cloud: The role of libraries, archives, and museums. *Digital Preservation and Documentation of Global Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, 219–235. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-7024-4.ch012>
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. (2005). Quarrying African indigenous political thought on governance: A case study of the Ndebele state in the 19th Century. *Indilinga: African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, 4(2), 449–470. <https://doi.org/10.4314/indilinga.v4i2.46965>

- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. (2013). *Why decoloniality in the 21st Century?*
<https://ujcontent.uj.ac.za/esploro/outputs/journalArticle/Why-decoloniality-in-the-21stCentury/9910848907691>
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2015). *Decoloniality as the future of Africa*. 13, 485–496.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. (2018). *Epistemic freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and decolonization*. Routledge.
- Ofosu-Asare, Y. (2024). *Decolonising design in Africa: Towards new theories, methods, and practices*. Routledge.
- Opata, C. C. (2020). African Education and Cultural Belief Systems: Extrapolations from Igboland, Nigeria. *The Palgrave Handbook of African Education and Indigenous Knowledge*, 233–244. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-38277-3_11
- Parsons, M., & Taylor, L. (2022). Indigenous geographies: Researching and de-colonising environmental narratives. *The Routledge Handbook of Methodologies in Human Geography*, 144–160.
- Ponciano Núñez, P. D. (2025). Community football pedagogies in Colombia: exploring situated learning and epistemic justice. *Sport, Education and Society*, 1–14.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2025.2547872>
- Porter, G., & Kennedy, M. (2012). Photographic truth and evidence. *Australian Journal of Forensic Sciences*, 44(2), 183–192. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00450618.2011.634835>
- Ramabu, N. M. (2026). Exploring Botho Philosophy as a Foundation for a Culturally Relevant and Ethical Participative Research Process: Considerations and Reflections from a Mixed Method Project in Botswana. In *Decolonising Research* (pp. 60–82). Routledge.
- Reo, N. J. (2019). Inawendiwin and Relational Accountability in Anishnaabeg Studies: The Crux of the Biscuit. *Journal of Ethnobiology*, 39(1), 65–75.
<https://doi.org/10.2993/0278-0771-39.1.65>
- Sarah, W., Suchet-Pearson, S., Lloyd, K., & Graham, M. (2018). Everything is love: Mobilising knowledges, identities, and places as Bawaka. *Indigenous Places and Colonial Spaces*, 51–71.
- Schupman, E. J., Cassady, J. C., Shear, S. B., Martin, L. E., & Rincon, K. R. (2022). Overcoming Invisibility: The Systemic Need to Recognize Indigenous People in Educational Spaces. *The Palgrave Handbook of Educational Leadership and Management Discourse*, 1491–1509. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-99097-8_101
- Simpson, L. B. (2017). *As we have always done: Indigenous freedom through radical resistance*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Smith, L. T. (2021). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

- Snow, K. C., Hays, D. G., Caliwagan, G., Ford, D. J., Mariotti, D., Mwendwa, J. M., & Scott, W. E. (2016). Guiding principles for indigenous research practices. *Action Research*, 14(4), 357–375. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476750315622542>
- Thornton, R. (2017). *Healing the exposed being: The Ngoma healing tradition in South Africa*. NYU Press.
- Voegelin, S. (2010). *Listening to Noise and Silence*. Bloomsbury Academic. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781501382901>
- Wa Mungai, N. (2022). Indigenous and decolonizing research methodology. *Principles of Social Research Methodology*, 337–346.
- Wilson, S. (2020). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Fernwood Publishing.
- Wreford, J. T., & Wreford, J. (2008). *Working with spirit: Experiencing izangoma healing in contemporary South Africa*. Berghahn Books.

Contact email: mahoatilehloenya@gmail.com