OF JOURNEYS & MEMORY

REFLECTING ON THE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT OF TWO NEW SOUTHERN AFRICAN MUSEUMS

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We are a heritage & museum design consultancy founded on 30 years of experience in museum development & exhibition design. We specialise in turnkey heritage projects.

We are based in Cape Town but we work... ...wherever the work takes us...
TWO MUSEUMS  TWO JOURNEYS

GATEWAY JEWISH MUSEUM, LIVINGSTONE, ZAMBIA. 2013
The history, experience, contributions and achievements of the Jewish community in Zambia.

THABA-BOSIU MUSEUM AND CULTURAL PRECINCT,
THABA - BOSIU, LESOTHO. 2014
The history, the journey and the significance of Thaba-Bosiu and the life of King Moshoeshoe 1.

- Both projects were developed by dijondesign
- Both projects are in a prototyping phase
- This presentation is both a structural approach and a documentation
THE GATEWAY JEWISH MUSEUM
GATEWAY JEWISH MUSEUM

The journey from northern Europe to Southern Africa.
THE GATEWAY JEWISH MUSEUM

THE PROJECT: To develop a museum on the contribution and experiences of the Zambian Jewish community.

THE BRIEF & THE SCOPE:
• Turnkey project: Research/Concept/Content/Narrative/Design/Digitally printed panel/Digital interactive exhibits – Touch table/ Touch screen/ film work
• Social history museum - not a faith-based museum

THE SITE: Railway Museum precinct, Chishimba Falls Road, Livingstone, Zambia. Near Victoria Falls and bordering Zimbabwe

Panoramic view of inner precinct
GATEWAY JEWISH MUSEUM-REGION & THE PRECINCT

- Current economy based on tourism
- Early economy based on cattle, timber, fishing & later tourism c1920 >

Livingstone still reflects a colonial presence perpetuated by the tourism and hotel industry
THEMATIC LAYOUT AND VISITOR FLOW

- Thematic flow was linear historical
- Made a design decision to dry-wall clad the inside to facilitate the thematic printed panels
- Floor area was approx 95 sq m

**Diagram:**

- Panel 6, 7, 8 & 9: Cattle and Commerce
  - Early Jewish Settlers and the regional cattle trade
  - The Barotseland Trading Expedition

- Panel 10, 11, 12, 13 & 14: The Line of Rail
  - The Bridge Across the Falls
  - Stops along the Line

- Panel 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21: History of Jews in Eastern Europe
  - Poverty and Persecution
  - The Pale of Settlement
  - Hitler's Germany
  - The Holocaust
  - The Second World War
  - I have been a stranger in a strange land – Exodus 2:22
  - Flight and Freedom
  - The Copperbelt
  - Mining in Zambia from its earliest beginnings
  - Copper belt community

- Panel 22, 23 & 24: Political Independence
  - 1960's
  - Towards Independence
  - Political activism...and After

- Panel 25, 26, 27: Jewish Life in Livingstone
  - Jewish Life in Zambia
  - Judaism in Africa: ancient communities
  - Jews and Jewish business/Zambian Jews around the world

Area: 95 sq m
THE INSTALLATION:

- All the materials were freighted from South Africa and the internal infrastructure and cladding assembled and fabricated on site
- Display cases built by local company out of ‘Rhodesian teak’

The truck arrives...
10 days late due to delayed client TIN details

5 days to complete installation
THE INSTALLATION: views
GATEWAY JEWISH MUSEUM

Generational memory and developing the Narrative

Archival and primary research

Recall... via interviews and communication with stakeholders

Witness & testimony via live video interviews

1900

Simon & Cynthia Zukas interview
Filmmaker: Gordon Clark
GATEWAY JEWISH MUSEUM
Memory and archival research - early films

GREAT VICTORIA FALLS, ZAMBESI RIVER 1907
35 mm...445 ft

Cinematography:
LAUSTE, Emile
Charles Urban Trading Company
CHALLENGES:

- Site was within another museum precinct, the Railway Museum & therefore **major interventions were outside of our control**
- **Building in poor state of repair**
- **No running water** during installation and first few months of operation
- **Poor electrical and telephonic infrastructure.** No line or internet. Blackouts for 6 hour periods.
- **Challenges with freighting/customs and delivery:** trucks took 10 days to arrive
- **Little expertise and technical support**
- **Regular communication with client was difficult.**
- **Client and Stakeholders in Lusaka and in the diaspora / Heritage and Conservation Committee in Livingstone but small office.**
POSITIVE OUTCOMES:

- Established relationships with stakeholders. This included local museums, cabinetmakers, artists, archives and communities.

- Learnt how freighting, customs and tax operates in Zambia. This may have benefits for future work in southern Africa.

- Re-assessed use of digital interactive exhibits in certain environments.

- Contributed to the body of knowledge relating to early history in Zambia and southern and central Africa.

- Contributed to the body of knowledge in museological sector in Zambia.
THABA-BOSIU MUSEUM & CULTURAL PRECINCT
Thaba-Bosiu Museum & Cultural Precinct

The Long Walk to Thaba-Bosiu

In his search for a safe home for his people, Moshoeshoe heard about an area in the south that had not been so badly affected by conflict as Butha-Buthe, and where there was a large, difficult-to-access karstified mountain, at that time called Ghananes. Realizing that he could not leave his people, Moshoeshoe sent half-brother Moleki and Montsho to inspect the site. On their return they reported that it was an ideal place for a village, a natural fortress rising in the heart of an immense valley. It is also thought that Moshoeshoe chose the site because he already had good relations with, or family connections to, several groups in the region.

Moshoeshoe and his people set off in June or July 1844, with their livestock and all their worldly goods. It was a long and arduous journey. The group was beset with illness, suffering from dysentery after the stage of Butha-Buthe. They covered about 150km to reach their destination.

The Long Walk to Thaba-Bosiu

Traveling close to the forest to avoid the Balobha, their route took them through the valley of Mabu and Mzimane, crossing into Mafune, eventually reaching the Nqapele area of the Nqapa river. From there, the group climbed the Lepheane Pass and pressed on, spending the night in an area that was later known as Spingisane, the Place of the Cameron. By this point the group was spread out, with some TREKING inland, and thus a few hill-tribes in embattled, including Moshoeshoe's grandfather Phuthi.

The following day they continued the journey, reaching Hhambane, overlooking the valley of the Puthelhla river. Descending onto the plain, they crossed the river, passing a number of areas later occupied by the Balobha people, who had settled near the river. When they reached the northern part of the valley, the group was again beset with illness, suffering from dysentery after the stage of Butha-Buthe. They then made their way into the Nqapa river valley, reaching the Nqapele area of the Nqapa river. From there, the group climbed the Lepheane Pass and pressed on, spending the night in an area that was later known as Spingisane, the Place of the Cameron. By this point the group was spread out, with some TREKING inland, and thus a few hill-tribes in embattled, including Moshoeshoe's grandfather Phuthi.

Thaba-Bosiu (The mountain at night)

Sacred mountain. Place where King Moshoeshoe lived and formed the Basotho nation
THABA-BOSIU MUSEUM & CULTURAL PRECINCT

Thaba-Bosiu: The journey by Moshoeshoe from Butha-Buthe to Thaba-Bosiu.

THE JOURNEY:

- Moshoeshoe departs Botha-Bothe on his epic journey to Thaba-Bosiu in 1824
- Travelled 120 kms and after many days of travel arrived at Qiloane later to be known as Thaba-Bosiu (The Mountain at night).
- Moshoeshoe and over 25 000 of his followers lived on the mountain until 1870’s
THABA-BOSIU MUSEUM & CULTURAL PRECINCT

1. **THE CLIENT:** The Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture. Government of Lesotho
2. **THE BRIEF:** To develop the precinct including the interpretive centre, the cultural precinct and mountain trail
3. **SCOPE:** Turnkey: Research/Concept/Content/Design/Production/Installation. Theme layout – *Thematic mosaic*
4. **TARGET AUDIENCE:** Youth/schools/families/researchers/local tourists/international tourists
5. **COLLECTION:** The site is significant & mountain & ruins form main part of collection. Content in the museum was based on documentation, photographs (collections in British Museum etc.), objects-similar material culture to content
6. **THE SITE:** Thaba-Bosiu sacred mountain, the museum and the precinct
7. **DURATION OF PROJECT TO INSTALLATION:** Approximately 18 months
8. **STATUS:** In a protoyping phase and client appointing management team

**THE BACKGROUND:**
Thaba-Bosiu is located near Roma in the Maseru district. It is a mountain which has sacred status and was where King Moshoshoe formed the Basotho nation.
THABA-BOSIU CULTURAL PRECINCT: View from the Rofutho Pass on the mountain
THABA-BOSIU - THE MUSEUM NARRATIVE and interpretive interventions

1. The Journey
2. The Mountain
3. Cultural objects from the time of Moshoeshoe
4. A Timeline of Lesotho History
5. The Clans
6. The Temporary exhibition space

Thematic layout Visitor flow
OFFLOADING AT MOCHOCHONONO (THE COMET) after two-day delay

Loading in Cape Town

Off - Loading at Thaba-Bosiu
DESIGN & INSTALLATION

3D Design and actual views of the 6 themes

The Journey

The Mountain

Cultural objects from the time of Moshoeshoe

IN INSTALLATION
INSTALLATION: Views of the six themes installed

The Timeline with Interactive touch table

The Clans

Temporary exhibition space
INSTALLATION: INTERACTIVE DIGITAL EXHIBITS

Historical Timeline

The Mountain
INSTALLING THE CLAN TOTEM SIGNAGE IN THE CULTURAL PRECINCT

THABA-BOSIU
Welcome to the Thaba-Bosiu Cultural Village! This village is divided into three zones, see map.
INSTALLING THE SIGNAGE FOR THE CLAN TOTEMS AND THE MOUNTAIN TRAIL

THE ROYAL VILLAGE
The Royal Village was home to Moshesh, his wives, other family members and important people. It includes a number of homestead clusters, public spaces where the king conducted business and enclosures for cattle.
THE MOUNTAIN TRAIL - THE BROCHURE
TRAIL GUIDE AND TO BE USED FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES
SOME CHALLENGES:

- Working out of one’s comfort zone

- Conditions were harsh & the weather was severe. Warmed to -1C during the day

- Usual resources were scarce

- Building was designed and built without consulting museologists or designers – unsuitable

- Thatched roof and concrete slab floor - difficult for climate control

- Access to materials and expertise was limited

- Security problems: Electronic components were stolen shortly after completion
**POSITIVE OUTCOMES:**

- **Established relationships with stakeholders.** This included local museums, archives and communities.
- **Found innovative ways of solving problems**
- **Learnt how freighting, customs and tax operates in Lesotho.** This may have benefits for future work in SADC states.
- **Learnt how best to communicate with clients from a distance...** WhatsApp!
- **Re-assess use of digital interactive exhibits**
- **Contribute to the body of knowledge** relating to early history in Lesotho and southern and Africa
- **Contribute to the body of knowledge in museological sector** in Lesotho
CONCLUSION & SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

- In both projects, the challenges were similar.
- In Lesotho, there were several primary stakeholders – local communities, mission heritage centres.
- In Zambia many of the potential stakeholders & contributors were aged and spread across the diaspora.
- Complications around infrastructure, expertise, freighting and customs requirements were similar.
- In both cases we worked with local researchers and technicians which facilitated a transference of skills.
- Both projects opened up debates around repatriation.
- Both projects opened up channels for further collaboration.
- The projects highlighted the diversity of different heritage contexts in Southern Africa.