

## Recovering the gathering table, bringing cosmopolitics into conversation with architecture

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In this work we use the metaphor of conversation around a table to reinvent the relationships between architecture and the beings with whom our practice engages. A conversation that expands social justice to cosmos justice. Critical to this exploration is the understanding of cosmos drawn from Stenger's (2010) notion of cosmopolitics, that all things - human and nonhuman - are beings with whom we share our perceptions of life experience. We see the relationality of these beings becoming a practice, or dance, aligned with what Robbert and Mickey (2013: 1) describe as 'Cosmos becomes attached to politics by means of the many associations continually forged and broken between humans and nonhumans'. At our table, rocks and minerals, fish and animals, grains and trees are not the pie to be divided in a drive for capital gain. Instead, they are the guests, we are the guests. Uppermost is the topic of relations, how do our ecologies of being value each other and how does or could this play out in the world we share? As we look around the world today, our human ecologies continue to be defined by narratives which historically framed, and now prop up, the social scaffolds of white (male) supremacy, "capitalist sorcery" and dominance. For some the repetitive familiarity of the logics of those scaffolds carry with them the habits of security, for others precarity and violence, and for still others only the imaginings of well-being. For Deleuze and Guattari (1987) this practice of repetition becomes the *milieu* or what defines our human experience of place. But what about the diverse understandings of place across unique human and non-human cultures of existence? This study is rooted in a skatepark project along the Klipspruit River in Kliptown, Soweto and its entwined ecologies of ghetto and polluted river. Can the beings of these two work together to restore each other? We build on the practice of land acknowledgments (Robinson et al, 2019), using critical methodologies of drawing, truth telling and shifting narratives to embody altered understandings of self and of relations to the cosmos that reinvent our sense of place and practice in the built environment.

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