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## UCT hosts workshops to explore better ways for poor to live in Cape Town

**Density Syndicate, focusing on Athlone, Khayelitsha and Maitland, to kick off with first of three studios on 12-16 May 2014 at the Guga S'Thebe Arts and Culture Centre in Langa**

Twenty years into democracy, South African cities remain stubbornly divided, fragmented, inconvenient for the poor, and uninspiring: urban patchworks of disconnected business districts, wealthy neighbourhoods, gated communities and poor townships. In Cape Town, for example, the affluent City Bowl and southern and northern suburbs stand in contrast to townships and informal areas that remain profoundly mono-functional, racially homogenous and most vulnerable to a multiplicity of risks.

In response to these challenges, the African Centre for Cities at the University of Cape Town (ACC) is collaborating with the International New Town Institute (INTI), the City of Cape Town and Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU) have formed the Density Syndicate to explore innovative, alternative strategies for the future of Cape Town. The Density Syndicate officially kicks off with its first studio, beginning on **Monday, 12 May 2014, and continuing through Friday 16 May at the Guga S'Thebe Arts and Culture Centre on the corner of Washington & Church in Langa**. Multi-disciplinary teams, consisting of Dutch and South African urbanists, researchers, and activists will collaborate to develop speculative designs that will improve density and accommodate social mix in a sustainable way.

This will be followed by another week-long workshop and mid-review of the design work in Cape Town in July 2014. The final results will be presented at a public exhibition in Cape Town in October 2014.

### **Two Rivers Urban Park, Khayelitsha and Voortrekker Road Corridor under spotlight**

INTI and the ACC have chosen three locations that represent Cape Town's diverse urban forms. **Site One is the** Two Rivers Urban Park, at the confluence of the Liesbeek and Black Rivers, encompassing an area that includes the South African Astronomical Observatory, the

Maitland Garden Village, the Mowbray Golf Course; Valkenberg East and the Oude Molen Village. It has been earmarked by the City of Cape Town as an important social, historical, environmental and economic site, yet it is highly contested by the residents. This site includes the decommissioned Athlone Power Station site, located between three very different suburbs: Pinelands, a predominantly middle class "white" suburb; Athlone, a predominantly "coloured" neighbourhood; and Langa, a largely poor "black" area.

**Site Two is** TR Section: in Khayelitsha, one of the most rapidly growing suburbs in South Africa and home to more than 400,000 people, predominantly Xhosa speakers. Khayelitsha, the second-largest township in South Africa, after Soweto is a product of forced removals during apartheid. It is made up of 22 sections between Table Bay and False Bay on the Cape Flats, prone to flooding in winter and fires in summer. The unemployment rate is around 50% in comparison to the national average of 29.9%. TR Section is one of the informal areas within Khayelitsha and has been involved in high-profile skirmishes over service delivery issues. The ACC has been conducting research in the area and can draw on a wealth of resources that can be tapped into for a project such as this.

**Site Three is the** Voortrekker Road Corridor, stretching 15km from Woodstock through Maitland, Goodwood, and Parow to Belville. It is a busy transport corridor, lined with small businesses and light industry. There is mixed-use development potential, and artists fleeing gentrifying areas such as Woodstock have started creating new cultural pockets in the area. Additionally there is a large officially unrecognised African immigrant population living and running small businesses in the area. It therefore offers another kind of opportunity for exploring density and diversity in Cape Town.

Participants in the Density Syndicate include South African groups such as ACC, Arup, Cape Town Partnership, City of Cape Town Spatial Planning & Urban Design, Community Organisation Resource Centre, dhk urban, Provincial Department of Human Settlements, Sustainability Institute, Urban Water Management Research Unit, Jakupa and VPUU; Dutch groups such as Doepel Strijkers, H+N+S Landscape Architects, INTI, Land+Civisation Compositions, Witteveen+Bos and the Dutch Consulate in South Africa.

The Density Syndicate is made possible by the City of Cape Town, the Dutch Creative Industries Fund, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and the Netherlands Consulate General, Cape Town. It is also a programmatic component for NL@WDC2014, an initiative of the Netherlands Consulate-General in Cape Town. Follow us on <http://www.africancentreforcities.net> , Facebook and Twitter @ through #DensitySyndicate or #WDC234.

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***Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department***

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