

TITLE

**What modes of Design Research are transformative and venturous?**

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ABSTRACT

Design although it generates a building is also a search for meaning, for a change in values and perceptions and even a change in power and politics, although in some instances it is a search to legitimise existing power dynamics and entrench them. Design is so much more than just the generative act. (Sullivan, 2010)

In the South African context where our built environment and cities are struggling more than twenty years into democracy to subvert their Apartheid segregationist beginnings, design research has the capacity to understand the historical connections between design, power and politics, and purposefully subvert them and even venture new modes of practice.

Where the transformation of academia and practice of architecture is imperative, the design research question is not so much the generic one asked by Fraser,

“What are the most effective modes or routes through which architectural design research can be pursued? “ (Fraser, 2013)

but rather,

What are the most effective modes or routes through which architectural design research can be pursued **which support and forward the transformation imperative of both academia and practice? Can the intellectual space and conditions be created that support a strong critical culture of architectural design research, with its’ hopefully resultant transformation of our built environment?**

Through analysing various international Design Research modes and their applicability to the South African context, an understanding will be gained of how Design Research can be transformative and venturous both within practice and academia, but also within the larger socio-political context. As Teddy Cruz so aptly put it “new experimental practices of research and intervention will emerge from zones of conflict” (Cruz, 2013)