

Cate Otto

WRITER AND PHILOSOPHER



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Profile:

I am a passionate researcher, educator, and designer, and am passionate about urban spaces and the communities that live and work in them. As an employee, I am versatile, diligent, creative, and enthusiastic, and I possess a diverse body of knowledge in a variety of disciplines.

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LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/cate-otto-6a2a7a75/>

A teaching portfolio, writing portfolio, and portfolio of creative work are available on my website.

Referees:

Chad Harris (former employer at the University of Johannesburg): cmhharris@uj.ac.za
Bert Olivier (former academic supervisor at the University of the Free State): +27 84 340 9935
Lukas Fourie (former employer at Burger + Fourie architects): +27 51 436 0110
Jason Perthel (fellow thru-hiker on the Rim of Africa): +27 82 495 8459

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

Tertiary Education

2025: PhD in Philosophy at the University of Johannesburg.

- 2024:** Master of Arts with Specialisation in Philosophy (with distinction) at the University of the Free State.
- 2019:** Bachelor of Spatial Planning Honours at the University of the Free State.
- 2017:** Occasional Studies in Philosophy (1st, 2nd, and 3rd year) at the University of the Free State.
- 2015:** Bachelor of Architecture Honours at the University of the Free State.
- 2014:** Bachelor of Architecture at the University of the Free State.

Primary and Secondary Education

- 2011:** Cambridge A-Levels in Afrikaans First Language, Chemistry, Physics, Geography, and Biology at Ashton International College.
- 2010:** Cambridge AS-Levels in English First Language and Mathematics at Ashton International College.
- 2009:** Cambridge IGCSE-Levels in Business Studies at Ashton International College.

Music Examinations

- 2010:** Grade 3 Violin Examination from the University of South Africa.
- 2010:** Grade 6 Piano Examination from the University of South Africa.
- 2010:** Grade 5 Theory of Music Examination from the University of South Africa (passed with distinction).
- 2010:** Grade 6 Piano Examination from The Royal Schools of Music.
- 2010:** Grade 5 Theory of Music Examination from The Royal Schools of Music (passed with distinction).

Further Education and Training

- 2020:** Qualifi Level 5 Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language at The TEFL Academy.
- 2018:** Levels 1, 2, and 3 bar training at Worldwide Bar Academy.
- 2016:** Diplomas in Photography, Introduction to Photoshop, and The Art of Wedding Photography at Shaw Academy.
- 2013:** Emergency First Aiders Level 1 at the Institute of Emergency First Aiders.

WORK EXPERIENCE

- 2025:** Temporary lecturer of 'Business Ethics and Citizenship' at the University of Johannesburg.
- 2025:** Freelance writer and editor at Cate Otto Writes.
- 2024 to 2025:** Freelance writer at Johannesburg In Your Pocket.

- 2024:** Temporary lecturer of 'Business Ethics and Citizenship' at the University of Johannesburg.
- 2024:** Temporary lecturer of 'Aesthetics and Engineering' at the University of Johannesburg.
- 2022 to present:** Freelance ghostwriter at The Urban Writers.
- 2020 to 2023:** Freelance transcriptionist at Rev.com.
- 2017 to 2019:** Academic literacy facilitator and lecturer at the University of the Free State.
- 2017 to 2018:** Writing Centre consultant at the University of the Free State.
- 2017 to 2018:** Research assistant in the Urban and Spatial Planning Department at the University of the Free State.
- 2016 to 2017:** Candidate architectural technician at Burger + Fourie Architects.

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

Courses Presented

- 2025:** Taught a self-developed Business Ethics and Citizenship course to fourth-year Advanced Diploma in Accountancy students at the University of Johannesburg.
- 2024:** Taught a self-developed Business Ethics and Citizenship course to fourth-year Advanced Diploma in Accountancy students at the University of Johannesburg.
- 2024:** Taught a self-developed Aesthetics and Engineering course to third-year Electrical Engineering students at the University of Johannesburg.
- 2018:** Lectured and facilitated Academic Literacy in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Free State.
- 2017:** Lectured and facilitated Academic Literacy in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Free State.

Teaching Outputs: Educational Publications and Products

- 2025:** Designed a course and created a study guide, PowerPoint lecture slides, course notes and summaries, assessments, and an online Moodle* page for the 'Business Ethics and Citizenship' course I presented to fourth-year accountancy students at the University of Johannesburg.
- 2024:** Designed a course and created a study guide, PowerPoint lecture slides, course notes and summaries, assessments, and an online Moodle* page for the 'Business Ethics and Citizenship' course I presented to fourth-year accountancy students at the University of Johannesburg.
- 2024:** Designed a course and created a study guide, PowerPoint lecture slides, course notes and summaries, assessments, and an online Moodle* page for the course 'Aesthetics and Engineering' that I presented to third-year engineering students at the University of Johannesburg.

*Moodle is the learning management system that is used by the University of Johannesburg.

2024: Book proposal under review: Otto, C. 2024. *Makers, thinkers, and the world that never was: Aesthetics and engineering from a global perspective.*

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES: PUBLICATIONS

Academic Papers: Accepted for Publication

Govender, N. & Otto, C. 2025. A Benjaminian analysis of the built environment: Toward a critical theory of architecture. In: *Acta Academica*.

Editorial Work: Philosophical Magazine

Co-editor of a philosophical magazine entitled *SideQuests: A Magazine of Philosophical Reflections*. To be launched in January 2026.

Non-Refereed Publications: Short Fiction

Otto, C. 2024. Green. In: *Active Muse*. Winter issue.

Otto, C. 2024. Time travel. In: *Moyé Magazine*. (Accepted for publication; to be published July 2025).

Otto, C. 2024. (Un)reality. In: *Moyé Magazine*. (Accepted for publication; to be published July 2025).

Otto, N. 2003. *Ek wonder ek wonder en ander stories*. Umsinsi Press: Durban.

Otto, N. 2003. *Ilanza en Zanika red die eende*. Umsinsi Press: Durban.

Otto, N. 2003. *Leer 'n les!* Umsinsi Press: Durban.

Under review: Otto, C. 2024. 'House of cards'. In: *AZURE*.

Under review: Otto, C. 2024. A late-night game. In: *The Molotov Cocktail*.

Non-Refereed Publications: Ghost-Written Works

I have written fourteen manuscripts ranging in length between 25 000 and 55 000 words; topics include health and fitness, psychosynthesis and psychotherapy, personal development and motivation, science fiction, folktales, esotericism, technology and engineering, and crafts and hobbies.

Non-Refereed Publications: Human Interest Stories

LinkedIn:

Otto, C. 2025. Vladimir Nabokov and metafiction: Breaking the fourth wall in *Pnin*. In: *LinkedIn*.

Available from:

<<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/vladimir-nabokov-metafiction-cate-otto-ijuof/?trackingId=rStWxCcTdA853ZwC6AQhJQ%3D%3D>> [Accessed 26 May 2025].

Elephant Journal:

- Otto, C. 2025. Time travel and the eternal return: Should we desire to change the past?. Available from: <<https://www.elephantjournal.com/2025/11/time-travel-the-eternal-return-should-we-desire-to-change-the-past-cate-otto/>> [Accessed 3 December 2025].
- Otto, C. 2025. Disappointment: Finding meaning when things go wrong. Available from: <<https://www.elephantjournal.com/2025/05/disappointment-finding-meaning-when-things-go-wrong-cate-otto/>> [Accessed 26 May 2025].
- Otto, C. 2025. The language of kindness. In: *Elephant Journal*. Available from: <<https://www.elephantjournal.com/2025/01/the-language-of-kindness-cate-otto/>> [Accessed 26 May 2025].
- Otto, C. 2024. The art of doing nothing (so we can do more). In: *Elephant Journal*. Available from: <<https://www.elephantjournal.com/2024/06/the-art-of-doing-nothing-so-we-can-do-more-cate-otto/>> [Accessed 23 August 2024].
- Otto, C. 2024. Live once, live again: On the importance of making choices. In: *Elephant Journal*. Available from: <<https://www.elephantjournal.com/2024/05/live-once-live-again-on-the-importance-of-making-choices-cate-otto/>> [Accessed 23 August 2024].
- Otto, C. 2024. On losing, loving, remembering, and moving with the current. In: *Elephant Journal*. Available from: <<https://www.elephantjournal.com/2024/04/on-losing-loving-remembering-moving-with-the-current-cate-otto/>> [Accessed 23 August 2024].
- Otto, C. 2024. Is the world dog-eat-dog, or is it a good place? In: *Elephant Journal*. Available from: <<https://www.elephantjournal.com/2024/08/is-the-world-dog-eat-dog-or-is-it-a-good-place-cate-otto/>> [Accessed 23 September 2024].

Substack:

- Otto, C. 2025. To all the humans: It's okay to be a little bit sad. In: *Substack*. Available from: <<https://substack.com/@cateotto/p-176246049>> [Accessed 3 December 2025].
- Otto, C. 2025. Tell me a story: Why fiction can be more valuable than fact. In: *Substack*. Available from: <<https://substack.com/@cateotto/p-155786311>> [Accessed 26 May 2025].
- Otto, C. 2025. People and their pets: A love letter to Sparky. In: *Substack*. Available from: <<http://substack.com/@cateotto/p-152187050>> [Accessed 26 May 2025].
- Otto, C. 2024. On living and dying. In: *Substack*. Available from: <<https://substack.com/@cateotto/p-146436801>> [Accessed 23 August 2024].
- Otto, C. 2024. Blocked. In: *Substack*. Available from: <<https://substack.com/@cateotto/p-145539431>> [Accessed 23 August 2024].

Otto, C. 2024. On dreaming and waking. In: *Substack*. Available from:

<<https://substack.com/@cateotto/p-144847774>> [Accessed 23 August 2024].

Otto, C. 2024. Beauty, meaning, and magic: Welcome to the world of a logophile. In: *Substack*. Available from: <<https://substack.com/@cateotto/p-144817403>> [Accessed 23 August 2024].

Non-Refereed Publications: Lifestyle Features

I have written reviews and features for Johannesburg In Your Pocket, including restaurant reviews, dog-friendly guides, shopping guides, exhibition guides, interviews with popular figures, event listings, and articles on the use of abandoned buildings in Johannesburg, and the role of roadside artists in the city. For more, see: <https://www.inyourpocket.com/johannesburg>.

Non-Refereed Publications: Recipes

Otto, N. 2022. Spiced pecan and carrot bread. In: *OFM Radio's Real Good Recipe Book*. pp. 36-37.

Technical Reports

Otto, N. & Otto, K. 2010. Blue Gill Eco Park: A Sustainable Community Recycling Initiative. *Interwaste*.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES: CONFERENCES

Abstracts Under Review:

2025: Annual Postgraduate Symposium at the University of the Free State in July 2026. Submitted an abstract entitled 'Infrastructural Brutalism and Rhythmanalysis in a Concrete City: Aesthetic Resistance in Johannesburg'.

2025: Philosophy and Science Fiction Conference at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in July 2026. Submitted an abstract entitled 'The Necropolitics of Philip K. Dick: Infrastructural Brutalism in the Concrete City'.

Accepted Abstracts:

2025: Philosophical Society of South Africa Annual Conference at the University of Cape Town in January 2026. Co-authored an abstract with Dr. Asheel Singh entitled 'Obtaining Life's Meaning Through Suffering: A Discussion of Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*'.

2025: For the Love of Art Conference at the University of Johannesburg in January 2026. Submitted an abstract entitled 'Tell me a story: Why fiction can be more valuable than fact'.

Papers Presented

- 2025:** South African Society for Critical Theory Annual Conference at Nelson Mandela University in November 2025. Presented a paper with Nathisvaran Govender entitled ‘Walter Benjamin and Those Kitsch Casinos: Toward a Critical Theory of Architecture’.
- 2025:** Annual Postgraduate Symposium at the University of North West. Presented a paper entitled ‘Chromophobia, Colour, and Smoothing the Striated: Aesthetic Resistance in Johannesburg’.
- 2025:** Philosophical Society of South Africa Annual Conference at the Vredefort Dome. Co-presented a paper with Dr. Asheel Singh entitled ‘Exploring life’s meaning through literature: The tragic flight from purpose in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Beautiful and Damned*.’
- 2024:** South African Society for Critical Theory Annual Conference at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Co-presented an abstract with Nathisvaran Govender entitled ‘Erich Fromm and spontaneity within the South African built environment: Toward a critical theory of architecture.’
- 2024:** Annual Postgraduate Symposium at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Presented a paper entitled ‘Aesthetic resistance: Frommian spontaneity in the South African city.’
- 2023:** South African Society for Critical Theory Annual Conference at the University of the Free State. Co-presented a paper with Nathisvaran Govender entitled ‘A Benjaminian analysis of the built environment: Toward a critical theory of architecture.’
- 2023:** Annual Postgraduate Symposium at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Presented a paper entitled ‘Ideology, discourse, and power in the South African built environment: A multimodal critical discourse analysis of the Mangaung Intermodal Transport Facility.’
- 2019:** Postgraduate Philosophy Association Annual Conference at the University of Johannesburg. Presented a paper entitled ‘Decolonising knowledge: Rethinking the South African built environment.’
- 2010:** WasteCon International Conference at Emperor’s Palace. Co-presented a paper with Kobus Otto entitled ‘Blue Gill Eco Park: A Sustainable Community Recycling Initiative.’

RESEARCH OUTPUTS

Obtaining Research Funds

- 2025:** Applied for a scholarship with the Canon Collins Network.
- 2025:** Obtained a Supervisor-Linked Bursary from the University of Johannesburg.
- 2025:** Obtained a Merit Bursary from the University of Johannesburg.
- 2017:** Arranged funds from the National Research Foundation (NRF) as part of the Thuthuka Scholarship.

MEMBERSHIPS

Membership of National and International Bodies

- 2025 to present:** Member of the troika of the South African Postgraduate Philosophy Society (SAPPS).
- 2024 to present:** Member of the Philosophical Society of Southern Africa (PSSA).
- 2023 to present:** Member of the South African Society of Critical Theory (SASCT).
- 2016 to present:** Registered candidate architectural technician with the South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP).

ARTISTIC OUTPUTS

Published Artworks

- Otto, C. 2024. Auntie V. [portrait in pastel] In: *Moyé Magazine*.
- Otto, C. 2024. Pappa P. [portrait in pastel] In: *Moyé Magazine*.

Art Workshops

- 2025:** I presented a series of creative workshops entitled *Mapping Memories* on October 11 and 12 at the annual Design Week South Africa in Johannesburg in October 2025.
- 2025:** I presented a series of bookfolding workshops entitled 'Bookies and Stuff' in November and December 2025.

Art Exhibitions

- 2025:** *Mapping Memories*, an interactive exhibition and series of creative workshops co-hosted and curated by me and Rozina Vavetsi at AA Gallerie, Melville, as part of Design Week South Africa.
- 2026:** Portrait series, *Good morning, sunshine!*, to be featured in an upcoming exhibition (March 2026) at Norscot Manor, Fourways.

Art Competitions

- 2025:** Made it into the top 100 of 200 entrants of the bi-annual Rust-en-Vrede portrait competition.
- 2023:** Made it into the top 100 of 200 entrants of the bi-annual Rust-en-Vrede portrait competition.

Music Qualifications

- 2010:** Completed the Grade 6 Piano examination at the University of South Africa.
- 2010:** Completed the Grade 5 Theory of Music examination at the University of South Africa.
- 2010:** Completed the Grade 6 Piano examination at the Royal Schools of Music.
- 2010:** Completed the Grade 5 Theory of Music examination at the Royal Schools of Music.

2008: Completed the Grade 3 Violin examination at the University of South Africa.

Cultural Activities

2025: Completed the 947 Ride Joburg cycling race.

2022: Completed the 947 Ride Joburg cycling race.

2019: Completed the 650km Rim of Africa thru-hike from Clanwilliam to George. For more, see:

Rim of Africa Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EExIvME4RZE&t=2s>

Rim of Africa Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLCOXjaoLhU&t=2s>

2009 to 2011: First chair of the second violins in the East Rand Youth Orchestra.

2006 to 2011: Member of the East Rand Youth Orchestra; partook in two international choir competitions.

2002 to 2006: Member of the Cantare Children's Choir; partook in two international Choir Olympics.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES

Departmental Involvement

2025: I initiated a series of informal postgraduate events in the Philosophy Department of the University of Johannesburg for the purposes of encouraging philosophical debate amongst postgraduate students in a non-academic setting.

2025: I was part of the University of Johannesburg's Department of Philosophy, where I performed several administrative functions as a temporary lecturer.

2024: I was part of the University of Johannesburg's Department of Philosophy, where I performed several administrative functions as a temporary lecturer.

2017 to 2018: I was part of the University of the Free State's Centre for Teaching and Learning, where I performed several administrative functions as an academic facilitator.

2017: I was part of the University of the Free State's Centre for Teaching and Learning's Write Site, where I performed several administrative functions as a writing consultant at the university's writing centre.

2017: I was part of the University of the Free State Department of Urban and Spatial Planning, where I performed several administrative functions as a research assistant.

COMMUNITY SERVICE OF PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Outreach Projects

- 2025:** Hosted an interactive exhibition and series of creative workshops entitled *Mapping Memories* as part of Design Week South Africa.
- 2024:** Volunteered with JoziMyJozi, which is a civilian governance organisation that aims to undertake community infrastructure projects in various parts of Johannesburg.
- 2021:** I was part of the Mother Soup Project, which was a food scheme aimed at providing communities with nutritious meals following the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Cape Town.
- 2017:** I did outreach work with the Towers of Hope programme, which was an inner-city outreach project in Bloemfontein, Free State.
- 2016:** I took part in the African City Initiative, which was an urban project focused on installing artistic and architectural interventions in Bloemfontein, Free State.
- 2016:** I took part in It's My City, which was an art installation project aimed at providing a public platform for the work of local urban artists.
- 2012:** I started the House Kestell Residence Recycling Project, which was a recycling project on the campus of the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein.
- 2009:** I started the Blue Gill Ecopark and E-Waste Facility, which is an ongoing recycling project in Kempton Park, Gauteng.

Professional Service Performed

- 2003:** I was interviewed by the SABC as part of a televised educational campaign.

REVIEW AND REFLECTION

Critical Assessment of Teaching

My teaching journey began in 2018, when I was approached by the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the University of the Free State to become part of the Faculty of Humanities' literacy programme. My duties in this capacity included teaching academic literacy to students for two hours a week, and facilitating and overseeing academic writing workshops for two hours a week. During this time, I was also approached by the university's writing centre, where I had to work with students on a one-to-one basis to assist them with their academic essays and assignments. Teaching in this role taught me how to make abstract concepts – such as grammar – both interesting and relatable to the students' academic work in other modules. It also made me aware of the intersections that exist between various disciplines, and how these intersections can – and should – be used to help students better understand their own academic research within the context of the larger world.

In 2020, I completed a Qualifi Level 5 Teaching English in a Foreign Language (TEFL) course. From this, I learned the value of different kinds of class interactions, both when teaching in-person and online.

Personally, I believe teaching is about more than merely imparting knowledge to students: it is an interactive process during which students are given the opportunity to both formulate their own opinions, as well as share their thinking in a safe and accepting environment. This requires teachers to cultivate their students' abilities to think critically about all matters, whether social, professional, historical, economic, or personal.

Early in 2024, I was appointed as a temporary lecturer at the University of Johannesburg for the module 'Aesthetic and Engineering'. This role required me to design a module, as well as to create study materials for the students. Some of these include PowerPoint presentation slides, lecture notes and summaries, and an online Moodle* page for the course. Additionally, I also had to teach the course, create and mark assessments, and manage a team of tutors. This experience taught me to think laterally, especially insofar as making an abstract topic such as aesthetics relevant to the field of engineering. Moreover, it made me realise the importance of teaching for a specific context: while it is important to include Western theories and ideas, the propensity for universities to base courses purely on Western theory is outdated and inappropriate for the South African context. Thus, in my module, I included aesthetic perspectives from the East, India, and Africa in my module. This allowed for a more balanced course that was simultaneously relatable to a larger portion of the audience. The research conducted for this module also inspired a book proposal, which is discussed below.

In my capacity as temporary lecturer of the module 'Business Ethics and Citizenship' (which I presented in July/August of 2024 and 2025), my approach was the same as mentioned above, and I created a course that gave an overview of ethics not just from the West (as is commonly done), but also from other parts of the world (specifically India, the East, and Africa). As the lecturer of the course, it was once again my responsibility to design the module, create study materials – such as PowerPoint slides, lecture summaries and notes, and an online Moodle page – design and mark assessments, and manage a team of tutors.

*Moodle is the learning management system used by the University of Johannesburg.

Critical Assessment of Research Outputs

My academic research first began in 2012, when I started studying architecture at the University of the Free State. Although predominantly a practical course, I always had an unusual interest in theoretical modules, such as the philosophy of architecture and the history of architecture. As an undergraduate, my research was limited to these modules, and there was very little opportunity for taking initiative. However, in my Honours year, we were given more freedom in this regard. For my final design project, I conducted extensive research into the functioning of the South African city, and I believe this is what sparked my passion for urban spaces and the South African city. I found that what is important is that architecture is relevant to its context, and my work during this year gave me the opportunity to conduct extensive investigations into the South African context. It also taught me the dangers of contextually

irrelevant architectural interventions, and this is something that has continued to inspire my academic work.

In 2017, I completed an Honours degree in urban and spatial planning at the University of the Free State. The research I did for this course further solidified my interest in urban spaces. During this time, I was also awarded the Thuthuka Scholarship, which required additional research in my capacity as research assistant for Dr. Stuart Denoon-Stevens. In 2025, I completed a Master's degree with specialisation in philosophy (which I passed with distinction). The topic for this dissertation is 'Ideology, Discourse, and Power in the South African Built Environment: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of the Mangaung Intermodal Transport Facility'. The objective of this research was to come to a greater understanding of the ideological forces that determine how architecture – as discourse – is created, and how these forces are translated into power dynamics in the built environment. Specifically, the objective of the study is to investigate public architecture in the South African context as the driving force of socio-cultural, economic, and political activities in urban spaces. It also aims to understand the role of indigenous knowledge in both the built environment and policy processes related to the built environment, and how such knowledge can be used to ensure the success of public architecture. This research can be considered transdisciplinary, as it puts in conversation the fields of philosophy, urban planning, and architecture in such a way that collaboration between these fields becomes possible. Variations of this research were presented at the 2019 Postgraduate Philosophy Association conference, the 2023 and 2024 Postgraduate Philosophy Symposia, and the 2023 and 2024 South African Society of Critical Theory conferences. I also presented research on other – yet related – topics at the 2025 Philosophical Society of Southern Africa conference, the 2025 Postgraduate Philosophy Conference, and the South African Society of Critical Theory Conference.

At present, I am completing a Doctorate in Philosophy at the University of Johannesburg. My research is concerned primarily with 'aesthetic resistance' in Johannesburg, South Africa, which is an unconscious and unintended form of resistance produced by urban informality against existing political and spatial planning institutions. Simultaneously a sensory experience, a means whereby existing paradigms are questioned and shifted, and an instance of creative expression, such aesthetic resistance 'deterritorialises' urban space in Johannesburg for the purposes of allowing the creation of a 'chaosmopolitan' – a place where new ideas and ways of being in the world can emerge. Using the work of theorists such as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Jacques Rancière, Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, Michael Truscello, Henri Lefebvre, and Erich Fromm, I use this concept to explore the ways in which philosophy can contribute to the paradigm shift that is necessary – by its inhabitants, politicians, and urban planners – in the city if its socio-economic qualities are to be addressed. Variations of this research have been presented at the 2025 Postgraduate Philosophy Symposium and the South African Society of Critical Theory conference.

The research conducted for my Master's and Doctorate exemplifies two of my core beliefs with regard to academic research: the first is that all disciplines have something to offer others, and that transdisciplinary – and not solely inter- or multidisciplinary – work is necessary in order to bridge the

gaps that currently exists between different disciplines in the academic environment; and secondly, that research should be contextually relevant, and should be conducted such that it can bring to bear real-world changes for the people who live in that context. It is my intention to publish several articles on the topic investigated in my Master's and PhD in journals from various disciplines in order to bring more awareness to the potential consequences that public architecture can have on urban spaces, as well as how these consequences ought to be considered by practitioners both in and outside of the built environment.

The research done during my Master's – specifically the role of context in the built environment – has also inspired a number of other projects. Currently under review by *Acta Academica* is an article (co-authored with Nathisvaran Govender) that considers public architecture in South Africa from the perspective of the work of philosopher Walter Benjamin. Again, the critique that comes to the fore is that architecture should be contextually relevant, and that indigenous knowledge should play a role in how that architecture is created. This research was originally presented at the 2023 and 2024 South African Society of Critical Theory conferences. At present, this study is being extended to create not only a critique of South African public architecture, but also to consider how such projects can be approached more successfully.

In addition to the above-mentioned, I recently submitted a book proposal to Springer on the topic of aesthetics and engineering. This research is based on a course I presented at the University of Johannesburg in 2024, and the aim of this book is threefold. Firstly, it hopes to offer perspectives of aesthetics from various parts of the world, including the West, the East, India, and Africa; secondly, the objective is to use these perspectives to develop frameworks that can be applied directly in the field of engineering; and finally, the aim is to critique different aspects of the engineering discipline from each of these perspectives. Although my background is predominantly in the built environment, it is my hope that this work can be extended to include all branches of engineering.

With regard to more informal research, I have taken my passion for both the city and local knowledge to the field of journalism, and I freelanced for *Johannesburg In Your Pocket*. I also regularly contribute to a *Substack* page entitled 'The Logophile', as well as *Elephant Journal*; in both these cases, it is my aim to make philosophy more palatable and understandable for a mainstream audience. I have also gained extensive experience as a researcher while working as a ghostwriter for The Urban Writers, and I have completed 14 manuscripts on a wide range of topics (including health and fitness, technology and engineering, personal development, science fiction, folktales, and esotericism) during my time with them.

I believe it is the job of a researcher to bridge the gap between different disciplines, between theory and practice, and between academia and mainstream audiences. Additionally, South African researchers have to take it upon themselves to gain a better understanding of local knowledge and practices, and to use this understanding to improve real-world conditions for South Africans. Practice can ground theory, and theory can function as the conscience of practice; and it is up to academic researchers to bring the world's attention to the potential that exists when such overlaps occur.