

apexart

2012 Franchise Proposal by
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Franchise location: Alexandra, Johannesburg, South Africa



SPAZA shops are a unique phenomenon of South Africa. SPAZAs are officially accepted as a business strategy, but yet considered to be informal. They are mostly family run shops that are part of the house, or single standing kiosks in front of the house, and are constructed out of any material available. SPAZAs began because of the sprawl of townships that made travel to formal shopping districts difficult or expensive. There are about 100 000 SPAZA shops in South Africa with a collective annual turnover of approximately US\$1 billion. Each SPAZA shop employs two- three people, who in turn support an average of four family members. The five most important products traded are soft drinks, cigarettes, paraffin/candles, maize meal and alcohol. Immigrants often run SPAZAs: Somalis, Congolese, Zimbabweans. This new competition seems to be a threat to South African SPAZA shop owners and is expressed in xenophobic attacks. Being the backbone of the informal South African economy, the SPAZA needs to be recognized as a relevant business sector for local and global market economies. The need to empower these small-scale businesses is urgent. This exhibition will creatively highlight the complexities of the small-scale business in South Africa, as well as the Art of day-to-day survival in the township. A number of real SPAZA shops will form an 'extended exhibition site' in the township of Alexandra in Johannesburg. 'Alex' is uniquely positioned because it is located opposite Sandton, the city's financial and business center. These two areas are separated by a highway and symbolize absolute extremes of the difference between rich and poor in the country. Many inhabitants of Alexandra work in Sandton as cleaning ladies or gardeners, whereas Sandtoners are known for their aversion to Alex. With this in mind, the construction of a SPAZA shop on Sandton Square is planned. This SPAZA will be the ticket booth, the resource center about local vs. global economies. A mix of ordinary SPAZA items and cultural and informational materials will be made available. Visitors will be taken on a tour from Sandton Square to Alexandra to explore real SPAZAS and learn about their owners, customers, challenges and opportunities. This will be represented by works of local artists from various disciplines, and displayed inside the SPAZAs. It is important to reflect on daily issues that shop owners have to deal with and this is the key role of the artists. Works shall range from Fine Art, Video to Performances, Site- Specific Interventions and Dance. As part of the exhibition a series of lectures concerning the issue of local vs. global economies will be organized. Wine and canapés will be served through the little SPAZA shop windows. Intended artists are amongst others: Anthea Moys, Nelisiwe Xaba, Ismail Farouk, Maja Marx, Dorothea Kreuzfeldt