

I'm infected: Infecting the City is contagious

 By [Michael Britton](#)

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On a windy and chilly late spring evening, I stepped into another world. And was immediately infected. First, with doubt and unease, later with wide-eyed admiration and awe and, finally, by humour...

Infecting the City is in full swing in Cape Town city's open spaces and frequently used pedestrian routes. On Tuesday, outside Iziko South African Museum, two events were unfolding simultaneously.



Infecting the City makes a return in November

16 Sep 2019



Doubt and unease

One, *Interthread*, seemed to be tied up in coloured cables, and I couldn't be sure if they were still setting up or if the performance had begun. This was my doubt.

The other performance, *The Dish*, by Oupa Sibeko and Thulani Chauke, consisted of the performers wearing discarded satellite dishes around their necks and tossing raw eggs around. Most of them went into one or another satellite dish. All of them were broken.



Oupa Sibeko and Thulani Chauke - Dish: Image sourced from www.news.uct.ac.za

The performers then scooped up handfuls of egg and smeared each other. And this was the cause of my unease. I'm confronted by poverty and hunger on the streets of the city every time I leave the comfort of my home. Given this, I found *The Dish* distasteful.

It brought a quote to mind: “Art for art’s sake is an empty phrase. Art for the sake of truth, art for the sake of the good and the beautiful, that is the faith I am searching for.” (For readers interested in exploring both sides of this debate, [The Cradle Will Rock](#) is a good starting point.)

Sublime

Moving out of the wind and into the warmth of the Whale Well in the museum was stepping into a world where I wanted to linger. Kitty Phetla, 2019 Standard Bank Young Artist for Dance and senior soloist and choreographer at Joburg Ballet, and composer and pianist Nduduzo Makhatini (2015 Standard Bank Young Artist for Jazz) performed *Going Back to the Truth of Space*.



Kitty Phetla and Nduduzo Makhatini - *Going Back to the Truth of Space*

Space has continuous conversations with those who pass through it. That same space has memory and carries our heritage.

Together, through hauntingly beautiful music and extraordinary dance, Phetla and Makhatini explored the spirituality of ritual and the bleak inner spaces of loss and pain. This was more than finding and establishing connections with the ancestral past and offering music and dance as healing mediums.

It was sublime in the hope and inspiration it left in me. The prolonged applause and standing ovation made it clear that the

audience was reluctant to leave.



Kitty Phetla and Nduduzo Makhathini - Going Back to the Truth of Space

Hats off

Back into the wind outside, the chill was soon forgotten in the exhilaration of Stravinsky's *The Firebird*. Directed by Janni Younge, I was lucky to see the full production in 2016 before it left for an international tour.

This extract was performed by Jackie Manyapelo and Shaun Oelf, with capable support from the dancers of the Indoni Dance & Leadership Academy. A strongly emotional show, with a moving performance by Jackie Manyapelo, this was dance and music rousing enough to warm more than just my heart.



Although the puppeteers had their hands full manipulating the puppets in the strong wind, they succeeded admirably. Hats off to the dancers (my hat was blown off to the Atlantic before I could doff it).

Bravo

Back indoors at the Hiddingh Campus, *All Eyes On* wrapped up what was already a night of sensory feasting. Teresa Vittucci, in a brave and zany show, made sure we were fully titillated.

She played with perceptions, stereotypes and whatever sense of decorum the audience might have had. Playing to a packed house (with the last people in finding space on the stairs and the floor) she shared the intimate moments of a young woman home alone, with technology for company.



Teresa Vittucci - All Eyes On

Through clever use of webcams, multiple screens and an in-the-flesh comedienne, the house giggled and guffawed to her tune. "I love technology," she said, and certainly knew how to push the buttons – and the boundaries. Good one, Teresa. Bravo!

Without the hard work of the festival curator, Jay Pather, and the dedicated team of people backing him up, *Infecting the City* would be a vague disturbance on a city street.

Instead, it's infecting citizens and visitors alike, both those who are unaware that what they're seeing was meticulously planned, and those who came seeking stimulation, inspiration and entertainment.

It's special, and it's yours for the price of the time and effort you give to it. Embrace the infection. It'll change your mood (and maybe your life).

Infecting the City runs daily until Sunday, 24 November 2019. Times and venues vary, depending on which day it is, so check the programme [here](#).

ABOUT MICHAEL BRITTON

Comfortably curious writer and editor and project manager. Constantly creative thought processes and habitually questioning attitudes are my guide.

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