

Nobethu Jolobe on architecture in strategic branding and communications

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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Strategic branding and communications agency HKLM recently appointed Nobethu Jolobe, with a background in architecture, as creative director for 3D environmental projects.



Nobethu Jolobe

Durban-born Jolobe studied a Bachelor of Architecture at the University of Cape Town and a Master of Science in Engineering at Mie University in Japan. While there, she participated in exhibitions as an expressionist artist. She resumed her career in architecture on her return to SA.

“As a world citizen with deep African roots, Nobethu is a perfect fit for the agency and will add great value to HKLM’s projects,” says HKLM director Gary Harwood.

How do you feel about your appointment?

I’m very excited about the dynamic and creative environment that I’m in right now.

■ **Tell us more about your role and specialisation in 3D environmental projects specifically.**

Creating successful, innovative and beautiful design solutions for our 3D environmental projects. I'm also here to build, inspire, mentor, coach and lead a team of designers to achieve these design solutions and their successful implementation.



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■ **And moving from a career in architecture to strategic branding and communications?**

I am a professional architect first and foremost.

“ I believe that architecture, strategic branding and communications are spheres that are very interlinked in contemporary expressions and in the 21st Century realm of artificial intelligence. ”

Corporate identity isn't something that is only experienced as a symbol placed somewhere on a building as explored historically in architects Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour's book *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972) but is becoming increasingly embedded in the architectural experience within our spatial contexts.

In a nutshell, architecture is the piece of the puzzle where I factor my work into strategic branding, communication and digital technology in creating successful design solutions.

■ **What unique skills do you bring to the field?**

Design creativity in architectural solutions, artistic expression in the three-dimensional realm, coordination of construction industry disciplines to bring a project to full fruition.

■ **What excites you most about HKLM and where it's going?**

The dynamism, being surrounded by a plethora of multifaceted creatives who are pushing, pulling and stretching in innovative ideas is great energy to be in.

■ **What did it take to get to where you are today?**

In my exposure to a comprehensive and multitude of diverse architectural and artwork projects, clients and experiences I've always searched to find opportunities to merge architecture and artistic expression, as I firmly believe that the visual and spatial experience is what holds most potential to positively impact us to improve our everyday experiences in the spaces we inhabit.

As 2019 began I knew that I wanted to be in a creative space to be able to nurture and maximise that in my career going forward and be challenged to expand on the creative realm that I've known up to now.

■ **What do you love most about your career?**

Conceptualising and producing beautiful and long-lasting practical solutions for clients; creating spaces for them to enjoy and find delight in with sensory bouquets of colour, texture and sound; for the public to participate in and delight in these spaces.

I enjoy creating good relationships with product suppliers, testing how far one can push the design envelope against engineering constraints, site constraints, economic constraints, including material constraints and then finally realise a plausible solution.

When a project is finally complete, nothing brings me more joy than to see the spaces being used and enjoyed as intended.

■ **What's at the top of your to-do list (at work)?**

Make a beautiful impact with what I create.

■ **What are you currently reading/watching/listening to for work?**

Wily's *Top 10 Marketing Trends for Engaging Consumers in the Digital Age* for some content I'm looking to infuse in the concept design for a project I'm working on. Musically Franz Liszt's *Liebestraum* for inspiration and depth and several architecture documentaries on Netflix for enjoyment.

■ **Tell us something about yourself not generally known.**

My zen spaces are working on an oil painting and meditating in a hot sauna.

■ **What is your favourite Japanese expression?**

お疲れ様です ('Otsukaresama desu'): It's a very polite way of vocalising your acknowledgement to someone for their hard work and contribution to something and it's usually said as a greeting when you're seeing them for the first time that day. We used to say it to each other within the Engineering Faculty at Mie University in-between assignments and project deadlines.

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