

## Ninja Turtle Madness (October 2020)

It sounds like a trivial pursuit question. What do buildings in Sandton and the ninja turtles have in common? I'm sure I'm not the first person to notice this, but why do penthouse suites, office towers or shopping and leisure complexes share names with three of the ninja turtles? Okay, you right. The buildings are actually named after renaissance geniuses. But it may well have been the turtles, such is the disconnect with South Africa. You have to wonder who decided upon the naming. What was the thought process?



"I know", piped up one of the little men around the glossy table. "It's, like, a really one-of-a-kind building. Nothing like this has ever been developed before in South Africa. And as for the rest of Africa, forget it china. This is completely unique. This will attract the most exclusive people in the country, Europe and America, and we need names that will sell that."

"He's right you know," nodded the lady with the cherry red lips. "They've gotta be classic. Timeless." She squealed with delight at the possibilities. It was settled. And after one of the turtle's names was used, there was no stopping.

Now, I am not in any way opposed to the supremely gifted artists and polymaths whose names have been appropriated for the three structures in question. But this was a missed opportunity.

What in Heaven's name do the three great artists have in common with downtown Sandton? I can't think of a single thing. Their tastes were quite the opposite to these grotesque cathedrals to consumerism. They would probably have loathed the place. Or am I missing something? What is their connection to a business district in Africa? Or must the naming be drawn from the classics to give a veneer of acceptability for the target clientèle? Why not a name like the Steve Biko building? Or the Ubuntu tower? That has an appealing ring to it and taps into the country's remarkable history. Even better, choose an easily recognisable African (Xhosa, Pedi, Zulu, Nguni, any of the indigenous languages) woman's name as a tribute to the anonymous township Gogo who sacrificed so much. Who remained dignified against the odds? She is worthy of celebration. I doubt that Leonardo, Raphael or Michelangelo would have objected. Neither the artists nor the turtles. Then again, associating the monstrosity that is Sandton City with the altruists who saved the country would be insulting. They have nothing in common. So maybe that isn't a good idea either. To borrow a word from President Trump's lexicon, Sandton City is a sh!th&le.

Here's another trivial pursuit question. What do Sandton developers and carrots have in common? They share a similar creative potential. OMG, we can't wait for the Donatello building. It's going to be, like, amazing.