

What's in the box Lauren Beukes?

By  Ruth Cooper

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How does one define a designer these days? Designers are so much more than building constructors, typography poets and chair and vase crafters. Designers are creators, activists, humanitarians, revolutionaries, risk takers, visionaries. One might be confused as to why an author might be on the line-up for a design conference, but with the previous statement in mind it makes perfect sense.

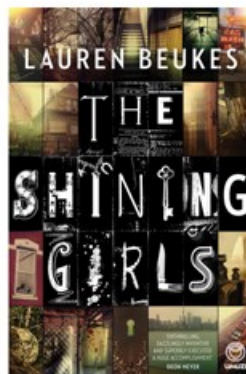
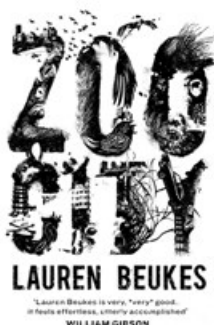
Award-winning author Lauren Beukes was the last speaker in a very behind-schedule day two of Design Indaba, but was well worth the wait. Appearing on stage with a white box amidst dramatic lighting, smoke and eerie music, courtesy of music maverick Markus Wormstorm, she proceeded to tell us a story.



Photograph by Jonx Fillemer - sourced from www.designindaba.com

A story of unimaginable horrors and of heart-warming hope, centred on three of her published novels and the mysterious box that she had brought on stage with her. What's in the box? Well it could be a ticking time bomb, a human brain, a bleeding heart.

Her novels: Moxyland, Zoo City and The Shining Girls were used as touch points throughout the talk. Beukes explaining how these three books were inspired and how they have become a way to deal with an often horrifying world. The first novel, Moxyland, inspired by our increasing dependence on technology and particularly our phones. Zoo City a story inspired by the harrowing conditions of illegal immigrants in downtown Jozi; and recent novel, The Shining Girls was triggered by an appalling incident of domestic violence inflicted on a woman who she knew personally.



Writing is a way for her to work through her anger and self-admitted forgiveness issues, Beukes explained, giving voice

and raising awareness and funds for much-needed issues experienced by our country. For example, the launch of The Shining Girls had Beukes teaming up with a host of local artists to create works to raise money for Rape Crisis in South Africa. The artworks selling out in a matter of minutes.

In a dramatic conclusion Beukes (sorta) revealed what was in the box. Like [Pandora](#) we're all just too curious to leave a mystery untouched, even if doing so would be greatly detrimental. The box was opened and, with that, a plague of horrors and heartache was released upon the world. But what forms did these horrors take? It's our own face staring back at us with all the potential in the world for both atrocity and supreme goodness. And right at the bottom of the box, is a small seed of hope, our hope, which every human possesses and can be nurtured for greatness.

Be inspired, be creative, be great! The End.

laurenbeukes.com

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