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**Title**

EXCREMENTA I: Welcome to Excrementa

**Permalink**

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**Journal**

limn, 1(9)

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**Publication Date**

2018-01-03

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EXCREMENTA I:

# welcome to *excrementa*

Brenda Chalfin and Xhulio Binjaku imagine designs for the future with Dwelling-Based Public Toilets in urban Ghana.



## THE INTRODUCTION

Combining architectural models and drawings, graphic texts, and photographs, the following section is an exercise in critical design anthropology, serving a dual purpose of documentation and provocation. Building on African solutions to African problems—namely the shortage of urban sanitary facilities—Excrementa Estates promotes innovative multi-use dwelling design. Four design models are featured: *Stomach Has No Holiday*, *Adepa*, *Lady Di*, and *Doctor*. Each combines private residential space with toilets and baths available to the wider public on a fee-for-service basis. In development parlance, these can be glossed as dwelling-based public toilets (DBPTs).

All of the designs draw from Ghana's edge-city of Ashaiman. Located near Ghana's port of Tema and national capital, Accra, Ashaiman is a fast-growing urban settlement largely occupied by working-class migrants and transients with access to no or low-quality dwellings. The city has no central sewage system and limited municipal facilities. Nevertheless, due to the low price of land and proximity to Ghana's commercial core, Ashaiman is also home to an upwardly mobile social stratum. With space, capital, and status to spare, many well-off households invest in excrement-based enterprise, tapping the bodily needs and pocketbooks of less prosperous neighbors. Variations on a theme, the four models highlighted here afford different opportunities for privacy, propriety, and enterprise development

and offer a range of for-profit sanitary solutions, from flush and squat toilets and showers and baths to tap, tank, and purified water; water closet; septic tank; and pit latrine. Each one is already in use in the city. All of the DBPTs showcased offer a distinctive synthesis of domestic space, public access, sanitary infrastructure, and commercial imperatives in a context of minimal state provisioning.


These popularly derived solutions to pressing urban and human needs are presented via customized real estate brochures, a promotional and informational modality common across the African continent. The brochures are juxtaposed with architectural drawings and three-dimensional models derived from the structures built and used by Ashaiman residents. This format provides a way to ponder the viability of corporatized mass production of vernacular problem solving. Mixing low and high, public service and for-profit urban sanitation solutions, and aestheticized abstraction and on-the-ground realities, Excrementa Estates uses the conditions of the present to imagine designs for the future in Africa's fast-growing cities. Abstracted and miniaturized, these designs for living and the pan-human need for bodily care and evacuation raise questions about the source, scale, and replicability of "development devices." Although the sanitary solutions found in Ashaiman can be packaged and promoted, their capacity for circulation and adaptation is open to debate.



## THE MODELS

**STOMACH HAS NO HOLIDAY** is situated amid the shanties of Ashaiman's working poor. With 16 toilets and 8 shower stalls, it is near but detached from the owner-operator's family home among a cluster of other family-based enterprises. A source of retirement income and status recognition for the proprietor, Stomach represents a beacon of prosperity and service provision in an otherwise impoverished locale. Bucking the municipality's efforts to control its operation or design, the low-tech, low-cost, yet well-maintained pit latrine offers affordability for the local populace and promises profits and permanence in a largely transient space.





**Make the most of your retirement**

Care about property values? Use your retirement to build your assets and economic footprint.


A perfect investment opportunity for pensioners.

With Stomach, options for retirement have never been better.

Stomach offers a mixed-use property plan.

Stomach combines residential living with enterprise-based property development.

Stomach allows you to work from home and build your property values, nest-egg and peace of mind for the next generation.



**You earned it.**

Take a holiday with Stomach:

- Amortized
- 8 Make@ Remote Toilet stalls
- Separate entry ways
- Robust toilet seats
- Ventilated Pit Latrine
- Customer-rated Staff
- 8 Fully Enclosed Showers
- Decorative Tile Throughout
- Daily Cleaning Service
- Handy Staff
- Easy to Maintain Septic Tank
- Low Water Usage

**Features:**

- Hub and Spoke Design
- Clear Floor
- Office On-Site
- Shaded Lot
- Room for Water Tanks
- Companion Enterprises
- Near town center



**ADEPA** (a Twi term meaning “It’s nice”) is a compact enclosure containing eight top-of-the-line flush water closet (WC) toilets and porcelain hand sinks. Situated at the rear of the domicile, its separate entrance sets it apart from residential space, which is close enough for convenient monitoring and servicing yet affords privacy. Located in a long-settled neighborhood of large compound-style homes, Adepa is an attractive alternative to the overburdened and sensorially offensive municipal toilet. Despite the steep price of entry, Adepa is well patronized due to the high quality of service and good reputation of its proprietors. Toilet-related services and socializing extend into the public space and thoroughfares surrounding Adepa, all the while maintaining respect and discretion for customers.

 <p><b>Susuka Keep It Quiet!</b></p>	<p><b>Leisure and Lifestyle</b> Adepa is the Choice for Urban Living In-town housing among family and friends. <b>A Natural Business Opportunity</b></p> <p>Adepa is the Choice. Live, work and relax among family and friends. Grow your business and your reputation.</p> <p>Adepa is the choice for in-town housing and business opportunity among friends and family. Affording the leisure and therapy of urban living, Adepa lets you live at home and still be at the center of things as you grow your business.</p> <p>Adepa continues to expand family home with in-kind expansion services directly located off the rear of the house, close to neighborhood walk ways and meeting places.</p> <p>Adepa's top-quality facilities, easy accessibility and serene location make it the environment of choice for customers who value service and privacy. Generating additional revenue for the home-based owner-operator. Best for service and all the same high value-added services.</p> <p>Adepa's sanitary amenities come in small with the family home. It is simple to build, maintain and monitor. Adepa's entry level facilities allow business and family members to come and go as they please. The proximity allows for easy communication when it's needed.</p> <p>Adepa: Best Deal for you can walk off home and growing your family's cash and good reputation!</p>	<p><b>ADEPA ADVANTAGES</b></p> <p><b>For Customer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adepa is the place to go whether you are preparing for your next day heading for school, or returning from school with your children.</li> <li>Adepa's clean, well-maintained facilities, offering the highest quality service, makes it an option for part of the daily routine.</li> <li>Adepa is close to practice good habits and meet others who value respectability and quality of life.</li> </ul> <p><b>For Owner-Operator</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adepa is perfect for a sole proprietor or family business. Work from home while enjoying the best of urban living.</li> <li>Adepa is easy to build from a local family home and can be customized to meet domestic needs, business interests, and decorative preferences.</li> <li>Adepa represents the best of all: home and workplace, respectability and possibility, private life and public accessibility.</li> </ul> <p><b>Adepa cares for you as you care for yourself!</b></p>
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	<p><b>Turn an Ordinary Home into a Gold Mine.</b> There are no limits with Lady Di. Water, Sanitation, Your Pot of Gold.</p>		
<p><b>Dream Big with Lady Di.</b> Are you an urban or suburban property owner in search of a promising investment opportunity? Lady Di offers the ultimate in business and property development. Build a full-service water and sanitation enterprise on your property. Make the most of a spacious plot or by adding high demand income generating urban amenities without compromising the comforts and privacy of a self-contained home. Lady Di allows you to turn an ordinary home into a gold mine. All it takes is a modicum of investment and an aggressive business sense. Stay at home. Build a business. Create a lasting legacy.</p>	<p><b>Lady Di</b> lets you have it all.</p>		<p><b>Lady Di is the ultimate urban oasis.</b> Water Purification, Flush Toilets, Spacious Showers, Private Bore Hole. <b>All in your own backyard.</b> Do you like boosting your wealth in your own home? Do you live in an area of low quality public services and high public demand? Are you ready to fill the gap? Get ready to realize your dreams. Convert your backyard into a full-service water and public sanitation enterprise. You won't look back. All that's required is a spacious lot, start-up capital, an aggressive business sense, and a touch of class!</p>

**THE LADY DI DBPT** is altogether different in design. Contiguous with the family living area, this 20-toilet and 12-bath complex is equivalent in size to the already spacious home to which it is connected. Combining the toilet and bath enterprise with a lucrative water business consisting of an on-site borehole, multiple storage tanks, and a dedicated filtration system, there is no clear boundary between dwelling space and commercial operations. As such, toilet customers and toilet cleaners are incorporated into household life. In turn, the businesswoman and her female offspring who run, own, and live within the facility gain wealth, regard, and a broad network of dependents by keeping waste-work at home.





<p><b>MODERN TOILET &amp; SHOWER</b></p>	<p><b>Thinking of Building?</b>          Make the most of an investment property. Convert an unused homestead into an up-scale sanitary enterprise.</p>		<p><b>Not sure what to do with an unused urban property? Undecided about building plans?</b></p>	<p><b>The Doctor is the answer.</b></p>
<p><b>Build and Improve</b></p>	<p><b>High end services. Prime location. High aspirations.</b></p>	<p><b>Sanitary conversion pays off.</b></p>	<p><b>Upgrade an unused property into an urban showcase.</b></p>	<p><b>The Doctor's impacts are far ranging.</b></p>
<p><b>Be a leader.</b></p>	<p><b>Quality investment. Quality of Life.</b></p>	<p><b>Sanitary conversion pays off.</b></p>	<p><b>Be a pioneer. Be a visionary.</b></p>	<p><b>Let the Doctor lead the way.</b></p>
<p><b>Turn an unused property into an up-scale sanitary enterprise.</b></p>	<p><b>With the Doctor, quality living and quality earnings go hand in hand.</b></p>	<p><b>A full-size plot can support separate male and female toilet facilities, toilets, showers, substantial water storage, and customized septic tanks.</b></p>	<p><b>Be a pioneer. Be a visionary.</b></p>	<p><b>Spread the word and spread your influence.</b></p>
<p><b>Spread the benefit of improved health and hygiene.</b></p>	<p><b>The Doctor is a sure way to raise living standards, lift property values, and augment your income stream.</b></p>	<p><b>Be a pioneer. Be a visionary.</b></p>	<p><b>Be a pioneer. Be a visionary.</b></p>	<p><b>Let the Doctor lead the way.</b></p>
<p><b>Spread your reputation.</b></p>	<p><b>With steady access to urban land, good things are easy to accomplish.</b></p>	<p><b>Improved Sanitation is a gift that keeps on giving.</b></p>	<p><b>Be a pioneer. Be a visionary.</b></p>	<p><b>Let the Doctor lead the way.</b></p>
<p><b>Contribute to the community and generate income all at once.</b></p>	<p><b>Healthy investments help everyone live better!</b></p>	<p><b>Be a pioneer. Be a visionary.</b></p>	<p><b>Be a pioneer. Be a visionary.</b></p>	<p><b>Let the Doctor lead the way.</b></p>

**THE DOCTOR** depicts a DBPT owned and operated by a prominent physician. Located on an expansive lot in an up-and-coming neighborhood well beyond Ashaiman's congested commercial core, the toilet occupies the entirety of a structure originally built to serve as a residence. Now converted to a toilet facility, with 14 men's rooms on one side and 14 ladies' rooms on the other, the only dwelling space that remains is the office area reserved for the attendants; the doctor-owner lives elsewhere. The attractive fence, decorated gate, airy veranda, and large lot provide cover for a multi-corridor shower area. Blending in with neighboring domestic structures, this large-scale facility is well prepared to handle urban infill.



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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Brenda Chalfin, concept, text, brochures; Xhulio Binjaku, models, drawings; Brenda Chalfin and Eva Egensteiner, photographs. Prepared with the support of Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study and the Mellon Foundation.