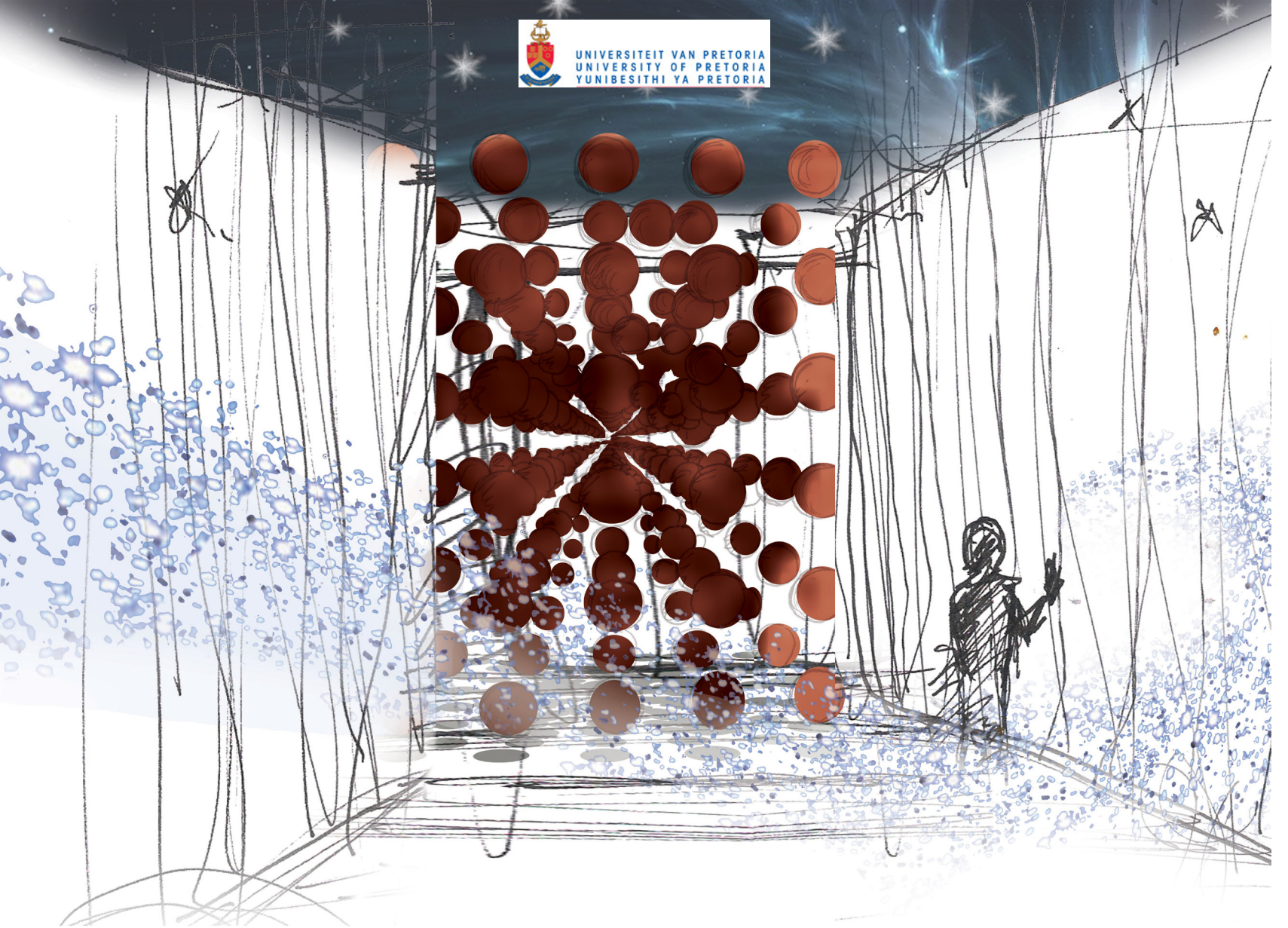




1. INTRODUCTION





1.1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

This dissertation researched filmic architecture - the field of production design - and its previously unmentioned contributions during the phases of the film production process. It is a discipline that can have an impact on screen and behind the scenes.

The Lorax (Seuss 1971), a fable about the dangers of avarice, was chosen as a practical example for its continuing relevance in the world today. The universal message of the narrative was adapted to the local context of Pretoria in order to create a production design with *zeitgeist*. The real and imaginary worlds and the blurring of the boundaries between the two, were investigated, in what was called a heterotopic image; 'heterotopia' being a place which is at the same time both real and imaginary (Foucault 1967).

Literacy on the discipline of production design is limited and inadequate, as the importance of production design in film was only recognized in 1939 (Barnwall 2004:13), the discipline has a limited number of practitioners and tertiary courses on the subject is in its infancy. The discipline is also part of the secretive preproduction film phase, which possibly contributes to lack of information (Weavind 2009).

Therefore this study aims to give a brief summary of the field of production design and the film industry conventions necessary to complete a production design. The precedent studies analyse the 'unmentioned' behind the scenes aspects of the discipline, as well as how technological advances, such as the Steadicam, can influence the design of sets.

This research is then employed in designing a production design for *The Lorax*, on the location of Lillian Ngoyi Square (previously Strijdom

Square).

1.1.2 THE CLIENT

The end result of this dissertation, excluding the summary on production design and film industry standards, can be handed over to a production company to develop further into a full fledged production resulting in either a feature or short film.

1.1.3 AIMS AND GOALS

The aim is to produce a production design that

- > has a universal message, applicable to current society, in a local context, in order to produce a design with *zeitgeist*;
- > is designed to be built in actuality, as opposed to virtually in CGI, as far as possible;
- > where possible maximises the input of the production designer during each phase of the film production process;
- > is true to the original message of the narrative;
- > is responsible - socially and environmentally;
- > adheres to film industry standard where possible.

Furthermore a brief summary of the discipline of production design and its relation to the film industry and its conventions are necessary, as sources studied only provided selective information necessary.

1.1.4 DELIMITATIONS

Feature films are created by large teams of specialists during a time period that varies from three to five years (Louw 2009). Production designers have various departments and resources at their disposal during the production design process, which can last anything between a few months to a several years.

Therefore the following delimitations has been set, as this dissertation is the attempt of an individual in the time period of ten months.

- > The study implements the function of a production designer and not the rest of the film production team;
- > due to the fact that this study is done under the discipline of interior architecture, lighting design was included. This is contrary to standard film industry conventions where this is a function of the director of photography;
- > in the chapter on design methodology the design process is explained. Only sections of the different levels of production design was completed, with each level increasing in detail.

1.1.5 DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

The document starts with the theoretical premise and its influence on the dissertation topic and design development.

A brief summary of production design and the current conventions of the discipline, is then given in the chapter on production design. The next chapter demonstrates how production design conventions and film structure is implemented to form a design strategy.

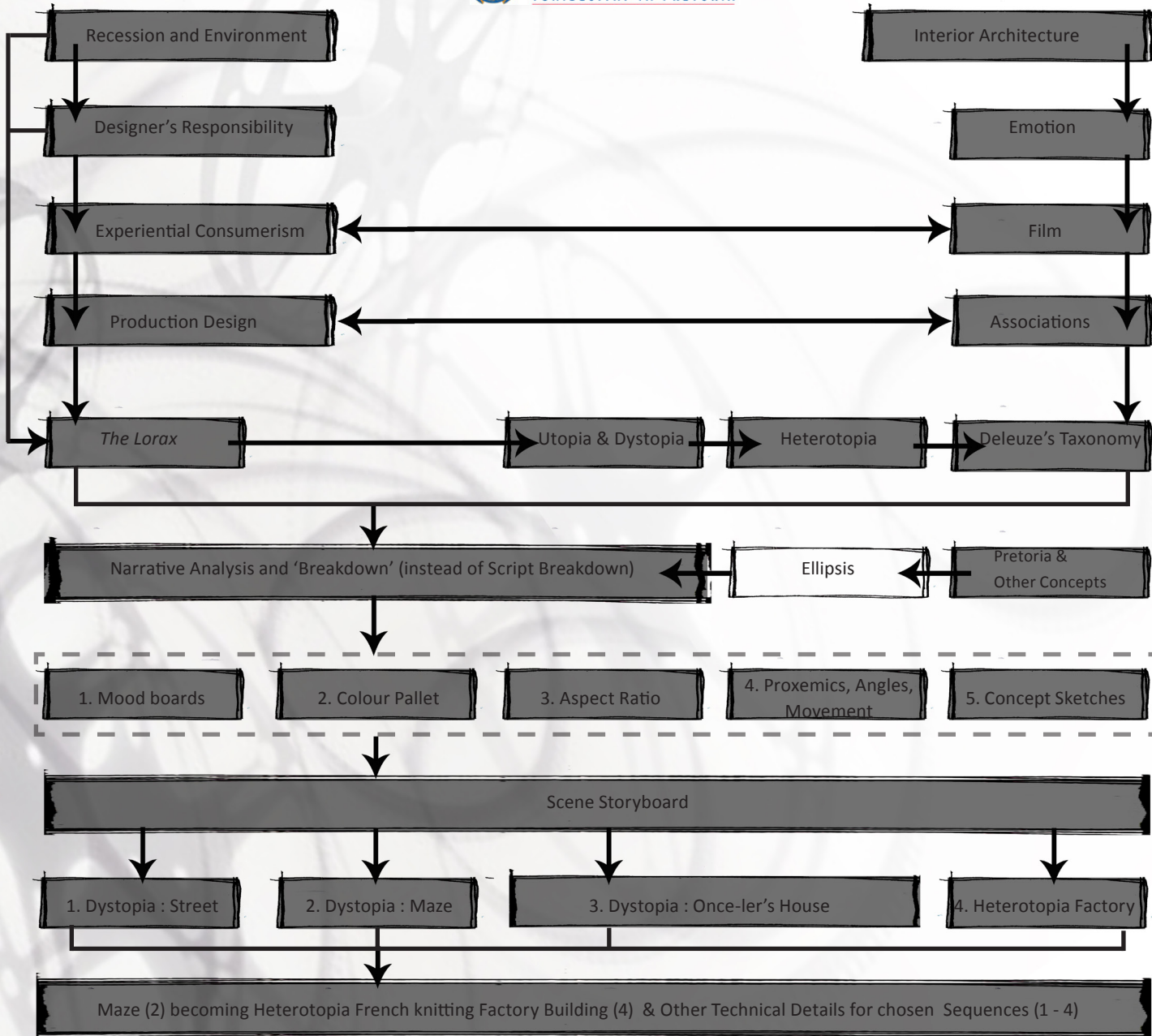


Figure 1.1 Connections between parts of the dissertation

The three chapters following ‘design methodology’ deals with the context. First the narrative context of *The Lorax*, then the context of film in South Africa, followed by the location context of Lilian Ngoyi Square. After the section on the context the precedent studies follow.

Subsequent chapters deal with design development - first production design development and then lighting design development. It is important to note that before any design development could take place, it was essential to understand the technical aspects of the film industry. The technical chapters follow design development, but the two are in fact inseparable. Please refer to the technical chapter if any convention in design development is unclear.

The conclusion is the final chapter, with an extensive glossary following in the appendix.

Please refer to the figure to the left for a general idea of how the various parts of the dissertation link together.

1.1.6 ABBREVIATIONS

PD	Production Designer
DP	Director of Photography
AD	Art Director
IMDb	Internet Movie Database
OED	The Compact Oxford English Dictionary for Students 2006

1.1.7 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIELD OF INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE

The associations and emotion needed in production design (see the chapter on the theoretical premise) can assist interior architects in

developing meaningful and metaphoric designs. Production design can be seen as a ‘sister’ discipline which can provide interior architecture with a fresh approach to looking at the world. Interior architecture and architecture on the other hand, can provide production design with a more holistic lens for viewing its role in society.

1.1.8 CONCLUSION

The discipline of production design is a fascinating one with limitless possibilities that, with a bit of extra effort, can change the real world through the fictional world created.