

“The *transition* from one domain to another is a critical problem when we want to concretize a system of existential domains...We find it in nature as a straight or a pass, and on the urban level as the city gate which symbolizes the transition from nature to civilization.”

Norberg-Schultz, 1971:58

## Eutopia, Outopia + Entopia

*Topia* is Greek for place. In Greek, the word *eutopia* translates to good place and *outopia* translates to no place (Gifford, 1997: 412). The aim of design should not be to create the perfect unachievable world which *eutopia* has come to represent or be content with the lack of place and identity that *outopia* signify, but rather focus on what is real, needed and applicable. It is suggested that design rather focus on *entopia* which translates to achievable space. *Entopia* will focus on architecture of the every day, catering to real world needs of building users and addressing problems within the built environment that is unique to its place and setting.

For *entopia* to be successful it needs to be firmly grounded in creation of place, place identity and *genius loci*. The African cosmology is considered to be holistic, integrative, and anthropocentric. Humans and culture stands at the central point of African cosmology where all space is seen public except for ritualistic

and private spaces (Ntuli, 2002: 54). Within the context of Pretoria, *entopia* will therefore strongly relate to social design.

*Entopia* lies somewhere between the ideal place and the non place – *eutopia* and *outopia* and therefore translates strongly to the in-between or liminal.

Liminal is a metaphysical or subjective state of being on the threshold (Freidus & Romero-Daza, 2009: 685). Homi Bhabha, a Professor of English and American Literature and Language at Harvard University, defines liminal space as 'in-between' space. Liminal space exists between two different states, thereby attributing transcultural, trans-geographical and transitional qualities to it (Turner, [1974]).

As a prefix, 'trans' signifies over, beyond or through. Transition space could then be defined, as space which offers all of the functions needed to facilitate movement through one area into another.

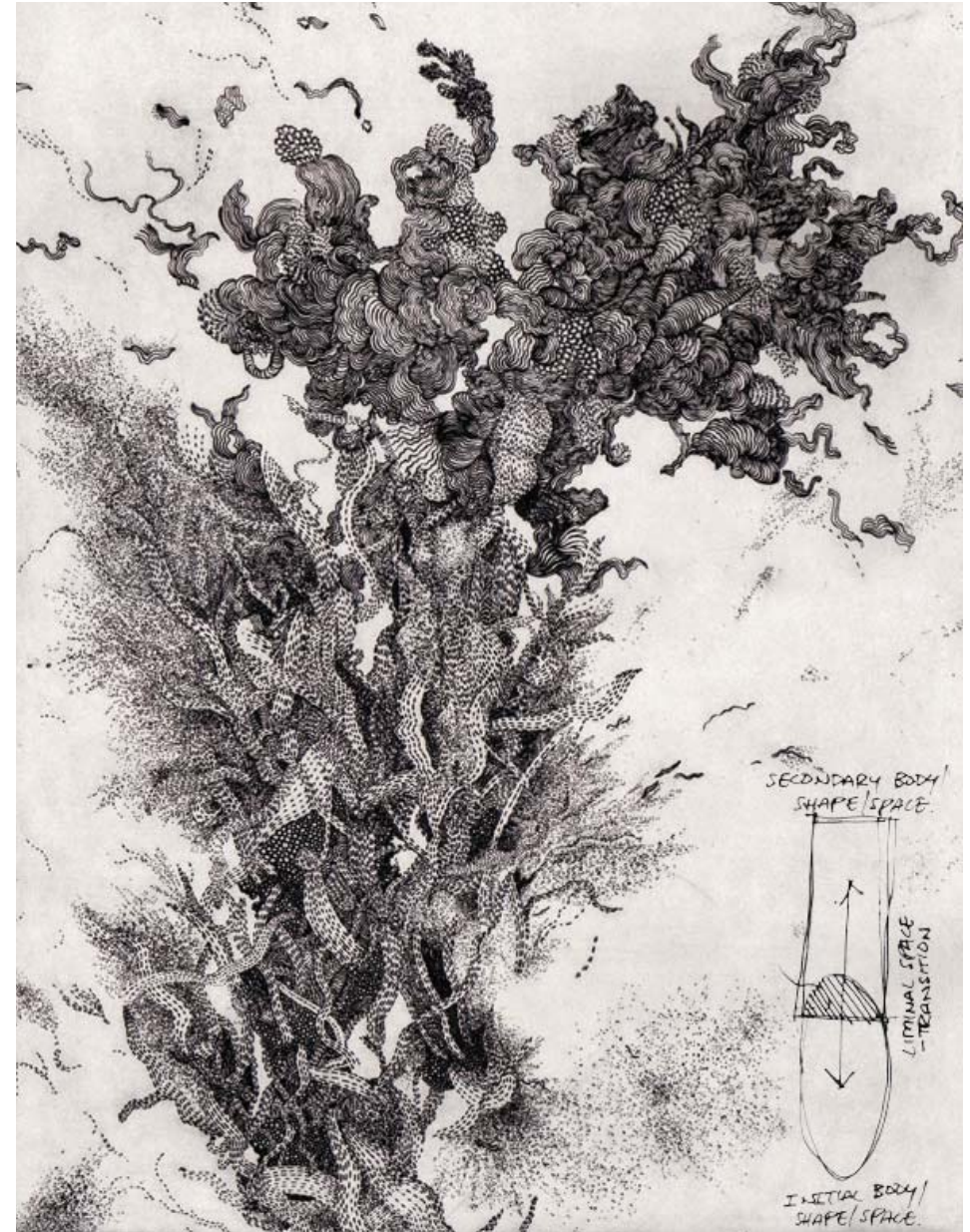


Fig. 2.1: Liminal Deploy by Karla Hackenmiller

Fig. 2.2: Liminal Deploy analysis

## Choice of Program

Within the liminal space enclosed by the city boundary and inner city, including the buildings which house the different public transportation systems on the southern side of Scheiding Street, little to no auxiliary public programs are located.

At present, Pretoria Station merely houses the platforms, ticket office and restrooms serving metro rail with little consideration given to resting space, waiting rooms and secondary programs. The same is true for the new Gautrain Station, with only provision made for the actual transportation system and service spaces needed to operate it.

Other transportation services forming part of the traffic node similarly only offer the bare essential programs needed

for the system to be functional, thereby forcing pedestrians within the area to re-appropriate Station Square into an urban waiting room which is unsheltered and still does not offer needed programs within the area.

The new design aims to generate a defined gateway to the city by creating a transition space with a distinct public nature which does not enclose or segregate public space from potential users. The building will therefore focus on providing everyday programs which has been neglected within the area but are needed at a threshold into and out of the city.

These programs will include: waiting rooms, tourist information, restaurants,

a bar, communication facilities, a job centre, office space, adult education facilities, a reading room and overnight housing facilities focused on short term city visitors. Interaction between different programs will ensure activity levels throughout the day and well into the night.

Tourist information is needed for way finding and optimal use of the precinct with restaurants and the bar functioning as meeting space that service and activate the waiting rooms.

Educational facilities provided offer short term programs suitable for commuters or people in transition and offers a chance at improving knowledge, skills and work opportunities.

Educational programs are serviced by the office space, reading room and communication facilities where research or work can be done while waiting for transport into or out of the city and will in turn activate the job centre.

Overnight facilities are aimed at short term, low cost stay thereby complimenting the Victoria Hotel which provides expensive rooms for longer periods of visit.

Placement of the different programs will be influenced by the hierarchy of public to the progressively private nature of the programs as well as levels of contact between different users and the building resulting from different levels of transition and its associated programmatic needs.



Fig. 2.3: Existing Skyline with little attention given to gateway



Fig. 2.4: Creating a gateway

## Client

The project will have both institutional and private commercial clients leading to a public/ private partnership to fund the development.

The site forms part of the Pretoria City Improvement District (CID) with the City of Tshwane as client for various key projects.

ABET and SETA are non profit, government sponsored entities catering for basic adult education and skills training. Training programs available focus on providing basic skills needed for social, economic and political participation (ABET, 2010).

Educational aspects of the building as well as non profit programs such as tourist information will be funded by the City of Tshwane and commercial spaces privately rented. Dining spaces will be rented by established restaurant chains with the Protea Group serving as main client for overnight facilities.

## Problem Statement

South African society boasts an extraordinary diversity of cultures and races which after the transition to democracy in 1994 were believed to start the process of desegregation. The goal of racial harmony however remains elusive ([Bean], [2010]).

Within South African cities such as Pretoria, the slow pace of desegregation is evident, as years after apartheid, the city remains segregated amongst racial lines (Morris, 1998: 763). South Africa continues to battle racism, with some even believing that the social condition within South African cities has worsened in comparison to the situation before the 1994 elections (Hunter-Gault, 2011).

According to Marx any medium can be used to manipulate the community to believe in a false consciousness and participate in their own oppression (White, 1987: 137). Since the false

consciousness has been constructed, the reverse statement is true as well.

The built environment has a central role in the production of social life (Mueller-Friedman, 2007: 37) and can therefore form an integral part in the success of community formation and desegregation.

This document aims to investigate how architecture can facilitate and encourage social cohesion, interaction and desegregation between different people and cultures within a post apartheid environment.

## Research Questions

- Can architecture facilitate social cohesion?
- What role does architecture play in community formation?
- How can architecture encourage desegregation?
- What influences the perception and experience of space?

## Hypothesis

Public spaces are believed to enhance and encourage social interaction as well as strengthen social bonds while facilitating social cohesion.

It is hypothesised that by incorporating social design principles in the design process socially responsive architecture can be created that facilitates social cohesion and community formation thereby reducing cultural segregation within the city of Pretoria.