

SCENES OF LAMENTATION

A scenographic approach to landscape narratives

By Sabello Malcom Sibanda



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Course coordinator: Dr Arthur Barker



Declaration

In accordance with Regulation 4(e) of the General Regulations (G.57) for dissertations and thesis, I declare that the thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree Master of Landscape Architecture (Professional) at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

I further state that no part of my thesis has already, or is currently being submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification.

I further declare that the thesis is substantially my own work. Where reference is made to the works of other, the extent to which that work has been used is indicated and fully acknowledged in the text and list of references.

Sabello Malcom Sibanda



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Abstract

Protests, often violent have become a major talking point in South African politics.

This dissertation focuses on three matters: decolonisation of public spaces in South Africa, the notion of landscape narratives in re-interpreting landscapes of contestation and using a scenographic approach in communicating landscape narratives.

Decolonisation of public spaces

The problem that this dissertation aims to address is how public spaces in South Africa can be re-imagined so that they represent all inhabitants of the city they (public spaces) occupy.

The landscape narrative

The protests concerning the decolonising of public spaces in South Africa is an issue of narratives.

The protests are not a reaction to the actual design of the spaces, but they are a reaction to the narrative that these spaces represent. The main issue regarding narratives in landscapes is whose story gets communicated and whose story is left out. For that reason, the notion of landscape narratives is investigated.

Scenography as an approach to landscape narratives

This dissertation focuses on the application of scenographic principles in representing and communicating narratives in public spaces. Scenography is researched as an alternative approach to dealing with landscape narratives because scenography emphasises on the design of performance spaces where the narrative is performed, rather than the design of elements that represent the narrative. This approach is important because the aim of the investigation is to move away from the use of symbols and signs in communicating narratives in public spaces. The vandalism of statues in South African public spaces is a testimony of why symbolism might not be the best narrative approach.



What a time to be alive!

PROLOGUE

Prologue

Figure 1: Protests against the appointment of Thoko Didiza as an ANC Tshwane mayoral candidate in the 2016 South Africa local government elections (Enca 2016)



“Highways blocked, motorists stoned, shops looted, the city centre evacuated and the police missing in action. This was the scene in South Africa’s capital on Tuesday” (Hosken 2016).

What a time to be alive!



Figure 2. Fees must fall protests (Hidalgo 2015)

“Thousands of students demanding lower university fees gathered on Friday for a march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria... This after protests - some of them violent - broke out at universities across the country, taking the African National Congress (ANC) by surprise” (BusinessDay 2015).

Prologue

Figure 3. **Xenophobic attacks in South Africa**
(Robinson 2015)



“Mozambican Emmanuel Sithole was walking down a street when four South Africans surrounded him. Sithole pleaded for mercy, but it was already too late. The attackers bludgeoned him with a wrench, stabbed him with knives, all in broad daylight” (Swails 2015).

What a time to be alive!

Prologue explanation

Oh, what a time to be alive!

The author finds himself situated in a society that is conflicted with political, social and economic issues.

It is the year 2016 in the city of Pretoria; the capital of South Africa which is considered to be the heart of South African politics. People are protesting about a variety of issues such as the affordability of tertiary education and basic service delivery. The protests are occurring both on social media and on the streets. The violent events have exposed a general dissatisfaction of life within our society.

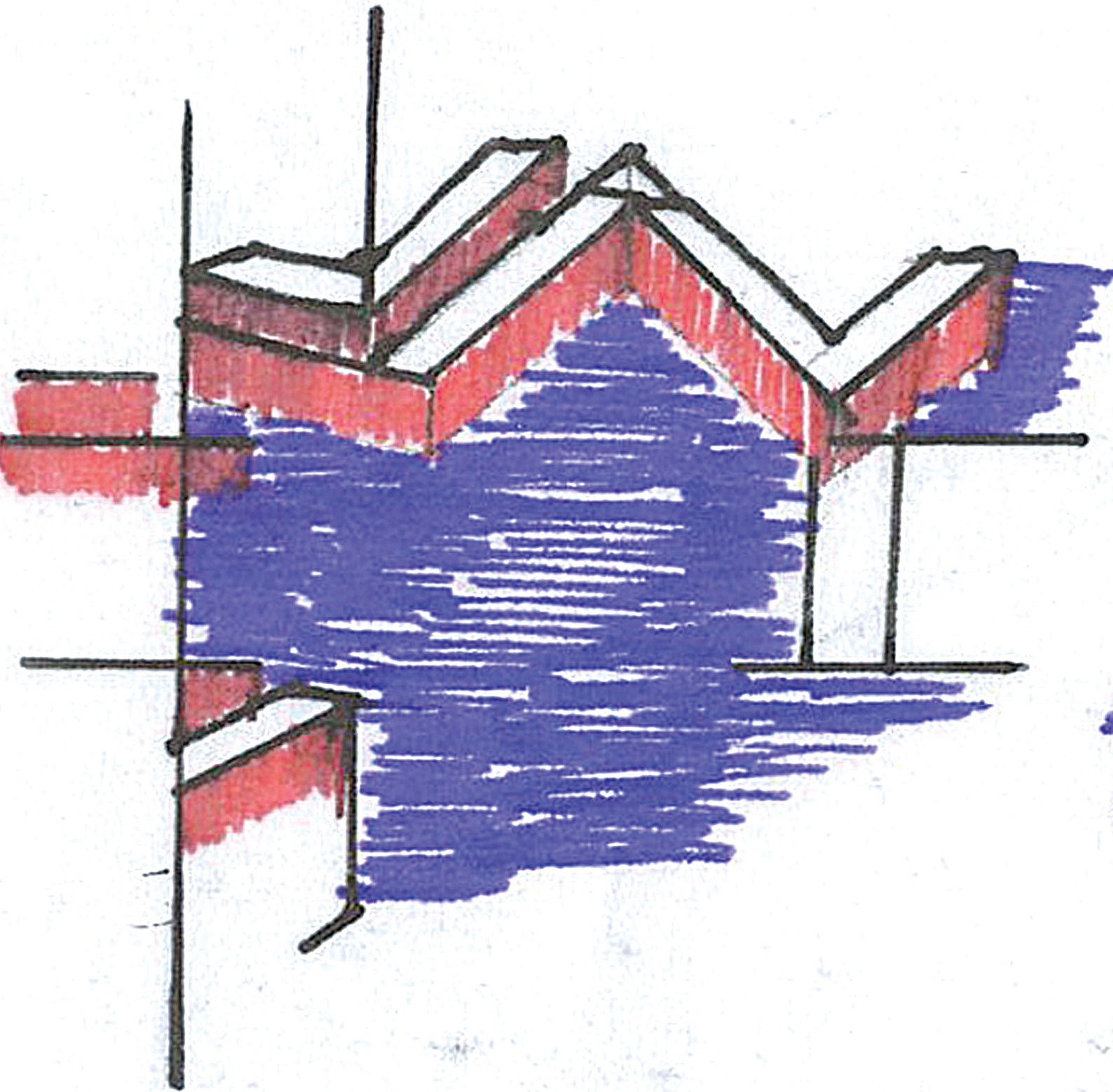


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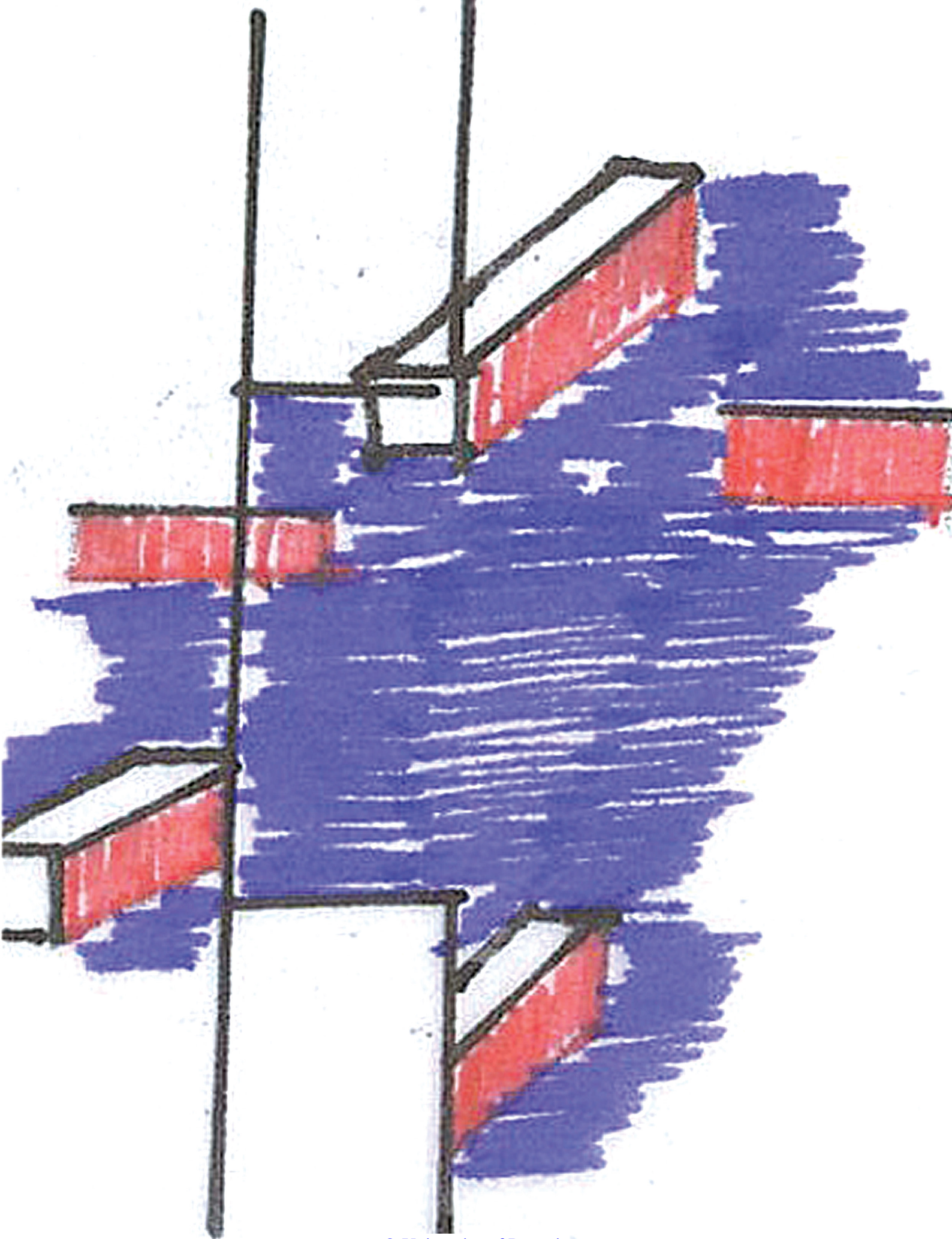
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