



PORTRAIT OF A CITY

A Narrative of Discovery, Creation and Reflection

By Jade Langley Swanepoel

Declaration

In accordance with Regulation 4(e) of the General Regulations (G.57) for dissertations and theses, I declare that this thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree of Master of 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 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 others; the extent to which that work has been used is indicated and fully acknowledged in the text and list of references.

.....
Jade Langley Swanepoel

Those who should be mentioned

Thank-you to everyone who helped me along this challenging journey.

To Johan Swart for guiding me through the past 2 years as a teacher, listener and friend;

To my parents for all of the years of support despite the struggles and tears;

To my sister Tamryn for her willingness to learn, very quickly, how to build a model;

To my brother Daniel for the sandwiches and tea;

To Chris Hefer for being a mountain of support throughout the year;

To Suzette van der Walt for being the most incredible friend and inspiration
and to everyone in studio for making late nights and early mornings more bearable.

Thank-you.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie werkstuk is gebaseer op deurlopende gesprekke wat kritiek lewer oor die huidige stand waarin koloniale museums (na die Apartheid era) hulself bevind. Die intrinsieke waarde van hierdie museums het oor tyd verlore gegaan.

Die projek het ten doel om op hierdie verwaarlosing te fokus en terselfdertyd die publieke omgewing met betrekking tot identiteit, kuns en sosiale aktiwiteite, op te hef.

Voorstelle word gedoen om die vervalle Joubert Park in Johannesburg op te gradeer in n buurt waarop inwonders trots kan wees en sosiaal kan verkeer, terwyl die geskiedkundige verlede terselfdertyd bewaar word.

Die Johannesburg Kunsgallery is geïdentifiseer as die belangrike spilpunt vir hierdie projek. Hierdie Gallery is sentraal gelee wat dit maklik toeganklik maak vir die publiek. Die oogmerk is om n verskeidenheid kunswerke te installeer asook kamera/beeld-strukture. Hierdie kamera-beelde kan dien as n stedelike fotografiese vertoning van die stad en sy mense. Veranderinge in die stad oor n tydsvlak kan vervolgens so geargiveer word.

Die projek se eind doel is om met argitektoniese toepassings, die ou verlede, die hede, en die mense en sy sosiale omgewing, tot voordeel van almal, te integreer. Die sukses van die projek sal bepaal word deur die kollektiewe identiteit en sosiale integrasie wat bereik gaan word.



ABSTRACT

This study forms part of the discourse that critiques the current state of colonial museums in a post-colonial, post-apartheid city. The project focuses on a proposed urban vision for the precinct of Joubert Park in Johannesburg and responds to themes of memory, identity, reflection, art and public space.

In the process, strategies are investigated to enhance identity in the area using the Johannesburg Art Gallery as a starting point. The gallery is integrated into the public realm, making it more accessible and transparent to its context by introducing pavilions and art installations to the park. These pavilions perform a variety of functions with the main design taking the form of a photographic urban archive. The pavilion archives the city and the people of the park by harnessing one of the current skill sets of the park photographers who are present on site.

The project takes the form of a working camera using the principals of pinhole and wet plate photography to tangibly capture and display the happenings and changes of the site and the people who frequent it, over time. Once the pavilion has archived the desired changes in the city it will be dismantled and relocated to a new site to begin its life cycle once more. The movability of the structure acts as a critique on the static nature of buildings situated in cities that are always in flux.

By introducing an architecture that allows and facilitates public activity while using people as the subjects for the creation of art by documenting a changing city, the scheme hopes to enhance the public realm by encouraging a collective identity to form.

PORTRAIT OF A CITY

A Narrative of Discovery, Creation and Reflection

Jade Langley Swanepoel

A dissertation submitted to the University of Pretoria, Department of Architecture in fulfillment of part of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Architecture (Professional)

Johan Swart - study leader

Professor Arthur Barker - course co-ordinator

In the research field of Heritage and Cultural Landscapes

Joubert Park, Johannesburg, South Africa.

-26.194940, 28.046416

2016

Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology

Key words:

Memory; Pavilion; Photography; Art Gallery; Johannesburg; Joubert Park

Table of contents

1.	Questioning	1
1.1.	Critiquing the colonial construct	2
1.2.	The public realm	3
1.3.	The question	5
2.	Discovery	7
2.1.	Locating Site	8
2.2.	Discovery of park	11
2.3.	The photographers	19
2.4.	Site history	21
2.5.	Transformations of Joubert Park	24
3.	Discovery	27
3.1.	Introduction of a colonial construct	29
3.2.	Evolution of jag	34
3.3.	Explaining the physical extensions	36
3.4.	Photo analysis of JAG	38
3.5.	JAG Today	46
4.	Disconnections	49
4.1.	The Fence between JAG and the Park	51
4.2.	Physical barriers around the park	56
4.3.	Joubert Park today	59
4.4.	Changing identities of Johannesburg	60
4.5.	Changing identities of Joubert Park	62
4.6.	Disappearing act of a heritage park	64
4.7.	Physical barriers around the park	66
4.8.	Conceptual strategies for reclaiming space	67
5.	Potential of Site	69

5.1.	Precinct Vision	71
5.2.	Potential	73
5.3.	Strategies for Joubert Park	77
6.	Identity and memory	81
6.1.	Statement of significance	82
6.2.	Art as part of collective identity	84
6.3.	JAGas an archive of art & identity	86
6.4.	JAG as a repository for identity	88
6.5.	Museums today	89
7.	Remembering and Forgetting	91
7.1.	Thematic proposal	93
7.2.	Memory in the everyday	94
7.3.	Existing memory nodes in Joubert Park	99
8.	Symbiosis - Park and Gallery	101
8.1.	Site vision - achieving symbiosis	102
8.2.	Written park proposal	104
8.3.	Site analysis & proposal of place	110
8.4.	Route of park proposal	112
8.5.	Conceptual and spatial exploration of park proposal	114
9.	Programmatic Proposal	123
9.1.	Programmatic intent	124
9.2.	Photographic case studies	130
10.	Design Proposal	135
10.1.	Design intent	136
10.2.	Design approach - Respecting the park-scape	136
10.3.	Conceptual Approach	137

11.	Design Development	141
11.1.	Formal strategies	143
12.	Exploring Techné	177
12.1.	Tectonic concept	179
12.2.	Permanence and temporality	180
12.3.	Construction exploration - iteration 1	182
12.4.	Structural concept	184
12.5.	Implementing Concept	188
12.6.	Building systems	190
12.7.	1-20 section iterations	194
12.8.	Column Detail	199
12.9.	Material palette Concept	204
12.10.	Permanent palette	206
12.11.	Temporary palette	208
12.12.	Panel fixing iterations	214
12.14.	Panel iterations	218
12.15.	Tectonic model	220
13.	Reflection	249
13.1.	Final Narrative	254
13.2.	Personal reflection	256
14.	List of Figures and references	261

It should be noted that in this document there are two text styles representing different forms of writing to make the reading of the document a little simpler.

The narrative

&

The body text

&

Theory

The narrative sections in this document have been “written” by three different characters. The first narrative, in *Discovery*, is written as my own personal reflection. The *Narrative of experience along the route of the proposed park* is written through the lens of a Friends of JAG member (Gluhbegovic, R.) and the *Narrative of reflection* is written by a young woman (JoziGirl97) who used to live around Joubert Park..

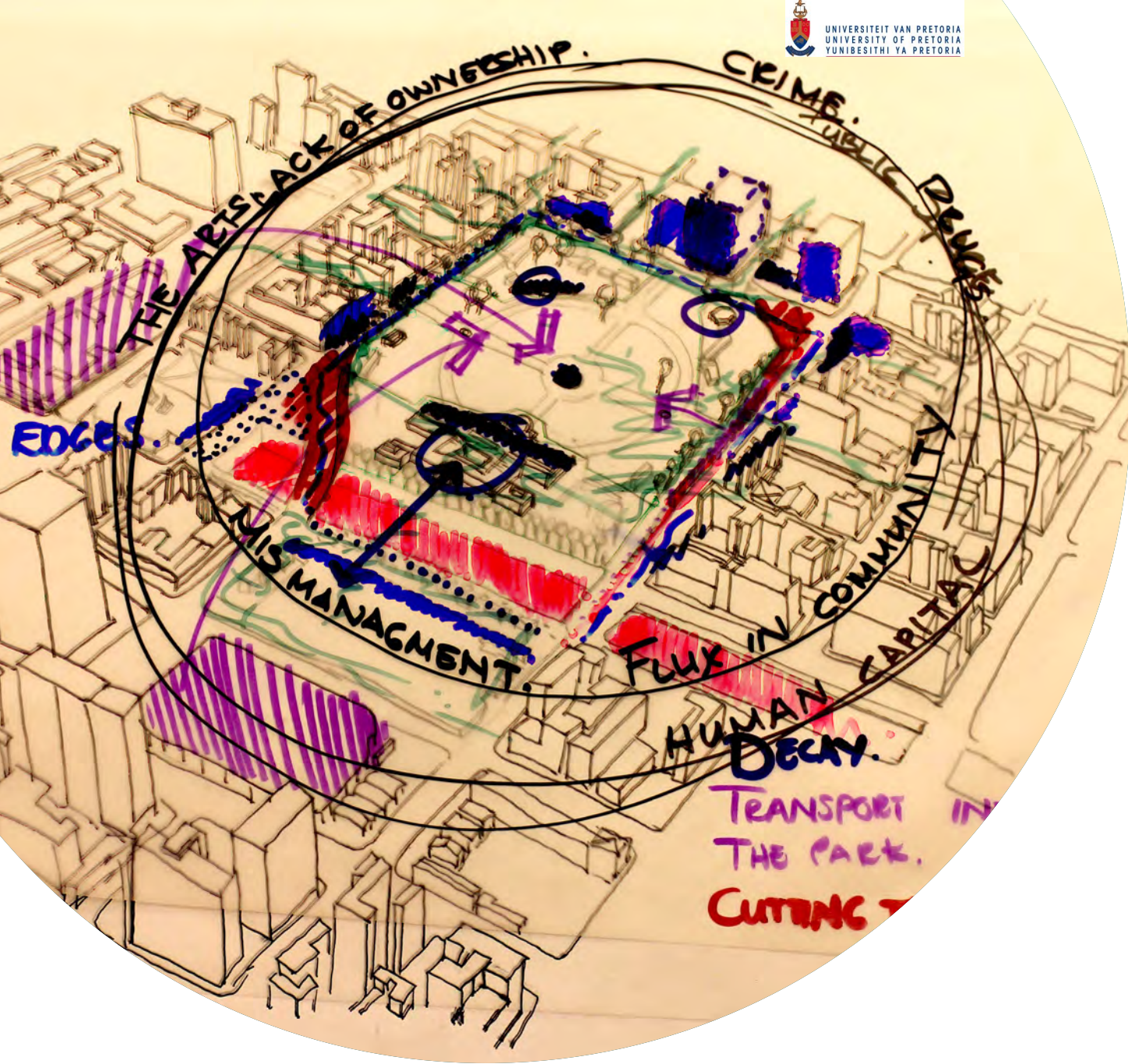


Figure 1: Discovering the site.

1

QUESTIONING

This chapter gives an indication of the location of the project as well as provides the entry point into an existing discussion.

1.1. CRITIQUING THE COLONIAL CONSTRUCT

The original intention of this dissertation was to critique the static conditions of colonial institutions that have maintained an air of elitism and segregation, despite some of them undergoing programmatic and/or physical adaptations to make spaces more democratic.

The particular site in question is the Johannesburg Art Gallery (hereafter JAG). The approach to the scheme is largely based on personal interest, therefore involving personal reflection, exploration and discovery during the analysis of the building and the documentation process. In its current state the building can be described as an “art mausoleum” attesting to its state of degrading relevance.

The word museum usually sparks images of a stand-alone, usually historic, building, lacking the hub-bub that usually draws people to public spaces. Why? It houses items that are old or of value, or because it is the way it has always been? Our acceptance of the static and enclosed image of a museum has allowed places like the Johannesburg Art Gallery in Joubert Park and Museum Africa in Newtown to fall into redundancy (Koen 2016).

JAG does not foster a relationship with its surroundings and has been closed itself from its environment. It has also been fenced off, a state that represents both the metaphorical and physical segregation of the institution from the energy of its public surroundings. The result is a gallery that is underappreciated, under-valued and mainly left devoid of activity. Furthermore, neither the institution nor the space forms part of the daily rituals of the city.

Spaces of remembrance should be draw-cards for visitors, encouraging exploration and excitement, and in doing so gain relevance in today's social climate. If they are considered public facilities then they ought to adhere to the ideals of good public space. To do so they need to encourage public interaction, provide opportunity for gathering and active involvement in the functioning of the institution (Project for Public Spaces N.d.).

Museums around the globe are being reinvented to create more dynamic and interactive places. Especially in developing countries, it is important that institutions like galleries and museums support the community (Arnize 1999). This contradicts most South African museums which were introduced via colonial ideas of exclusion and elitism. Some of these spaces have still not managed to escape the stigma associated with them.

1.2. THE PUBLIC REALM

The second, although not secondary, point of investigation in the study was Joubert Park. A portion of the park is site to JAG building although its value lies in its use as a public space within the city of Johannesburg. Public spaces offer a range of social and economic benefits to cities while building community and creating local identity (Rutherford 2014). The issues that arose from investigations into the park can be encompassed by an existing threat – the possible demise of the public space in its totality.

The site requires an established and beneficial identity in Johannesburg in order to protect it from being absorbed into the city's plans for transportation advancements. The theme, as proposed in the urban vision for the site, is around establishing place by establishing identity. By creating a positive and strong identity the site will be able to establish itself against the encroaching city, thereby protecting the heritage and current value it offers to the area.

“Places that serve everyone in the community—parks, libraries, public buildings, markets, plazas, playgrounds, sidewalks and other hang outs—are more important than ever” (Raphael 2009)

“So I would call for an architecture that does not delineate public and private space, does not articulate the common, and does not connect us in a prescribed manner. I would argue for a leaky, confusing, difficult to understand and perhaps even to use architecture that, somehow, somewhere and maybe even sometimes, creates the sense that we are only truly alive when we are part of a social construct in which we can act out the roles we believe or are proper to us.” – Betsky, 2015

1.3. THE QUESTION

The question lies in how we create an interaction between the public space of historical value, the artistic exhibition space and archiving in a way that would enhance them all. According to Van Rensburg and Da Costa (2008), it is the activity of people that makes buildings what they are. Similarly, public institutions require the presence and participation of people to remain relevant. People, on the other hand, require the establishment of a collective memory that influences their togetherness or collective identity in order to ensure strength within communities or nations (Pallasmaa 2009:26).

This dissertation will investigate strategies of how a colonial construct can be reintroduced to the public realm were investigated. One such strategy that encompasses and conceptualises themes of memory, was investigated both spatially, formally and tectonically as a commentary on the static nature of South African museums while establishing identity to ensure the protection of place.