

# Chapter 6

## Concept

### **Design vision and intent:**

The project investigates how architecture, as a *second artificial landscape*, can occupy the amnesic gap inherent in the nostalgic remnant to reanimate the conditions within the cemetery and the nostalgic forest.

The conceptual design approach is informed by understanding the desire to escape as an intrinsic motif to the cemetery's creation, as well as by instigating its eventual lapse from significance. The constructed reality of the cemetery is mechanized by recognizing the potential for reanimation latent in this amnesic condition. With escape being thoroughly embedded in the materiality of the cemetery, this project's strategy for intervention aims to identify and deconstruct the amnesic conditions that hinder the dweller's ability to physically and imaginatively inhabit the cemetery. In addition to this theoretic conceptual framework, design is further generated from an understanding of the site context, site conditions, programmatic requirements (meeting SANS standards), detail development, environmental responses (meeting SANS 10400 stand and precedents pertaining to this framework). The design development aims to investigate how the manifestation of these constituent architectural elements can be developed into an architectural language which consistently harkens back to the narrative of escape. This is accomplished through an architectural insertion that appropriates the physical, nostalgic, metaphysical and mythological layers of escape which are embodied within the cemetery as the strategy for intervention through the conceptual framework of the *negative* drawn from the work of artist Christian Boltanski.

The architectural insertion as a *second artificial landscape* aims to reanimate the two conditions which caused Brixton cemetery's collapse into a nostalgic remnant: the cemetery, functioning as a sublime space (*axis mundi*) for escape through burial and memorialization, and the forest providing escape from the city. The architectural intervention responds conceptually and programmatically to these amnesic conditions

**NEGATIVES:**  
CONTROLLING FORESTATION,  
VERTICAL LANDSCAPE EXTENSION  
AXO SCALE 1:100

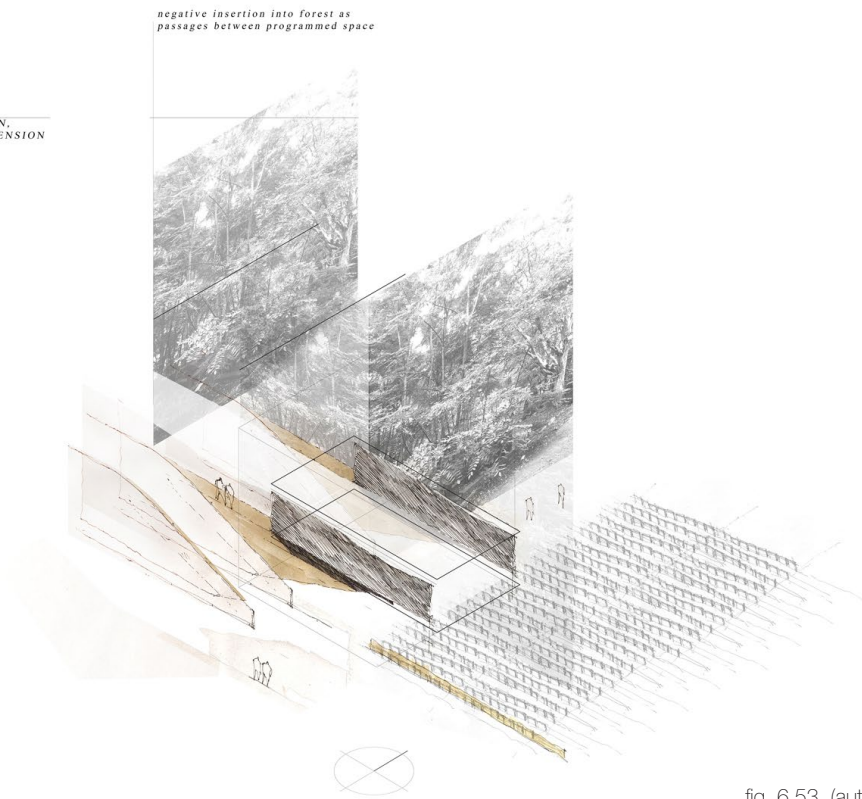


fig. 6.53. (author)  
Architectural insertion into  
the cemetery's negatives.



fig. 6.54. *The Double Negative* (1969-1970).

through the additions of a columbarium. This columbarium is introduced as a new burial typology that functions as a reanimating component of the former (developed in conjunction with the proposed expansion of the existing crematoria in the cemetery) and the *Bioluminescent Conservatory* that functions as a device for reanimating the latter through the addition of a synthetic forest. The intervention thus restores the cemetery as park, and innervates the forest with a new fantasy. The reanimation of these two components — given material dimension through the *negative* — aim to expose and mechanize the existing amnesic material as revenants and to function as devices that engages the dweller's imagination and reimagination of the cemetery, thus intimating a new, *third landscape*, through reverie as described in the theory section.

### **Initial conceptual generators:**

This section briefly describes the initial conceptual responses from which the final conceptual design approach was generated, and which informed the selection of precedents to be researched:

1. **Negative**<sup>30</sup>: The negative is considered as it allows a strategy for a sensitized intervention through extraction of the existing material. This strategy provides a means of controlling the prevalence of forestation by cutting negatives into the forest, defining and priming spaces for further architectural articulation. This bears reference to Double Negative (1969-1970), the work of artist Michael Heizer (1944-) which, constructed in the eastern edge of the Mormon Mesa ridge in the Nevada desert. This work of art consists of two excavated trenches (negative) cut into the landscape and spanning the rift between the ridges. The negative creates a tension between the artwork and the landscape in which it is situated; it also caused an inherent tension in the artwork itself — the clefts always being in suspense of not touching — through a process of extraction rather than addition (Tarasen, n.d.:1). This relevance of creating presence from absence is particularly significant in the context of the cemetery which suffers from the absence of memory, enshrined in the presence of tombs and graves. The creation of negatives

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<sup>30</sup> This is an incipient version of the *negative* described in the glossary and the final conceptual strategy. The 'negative' here merely implies creating voids through the removal of material from existing, physical conditions.

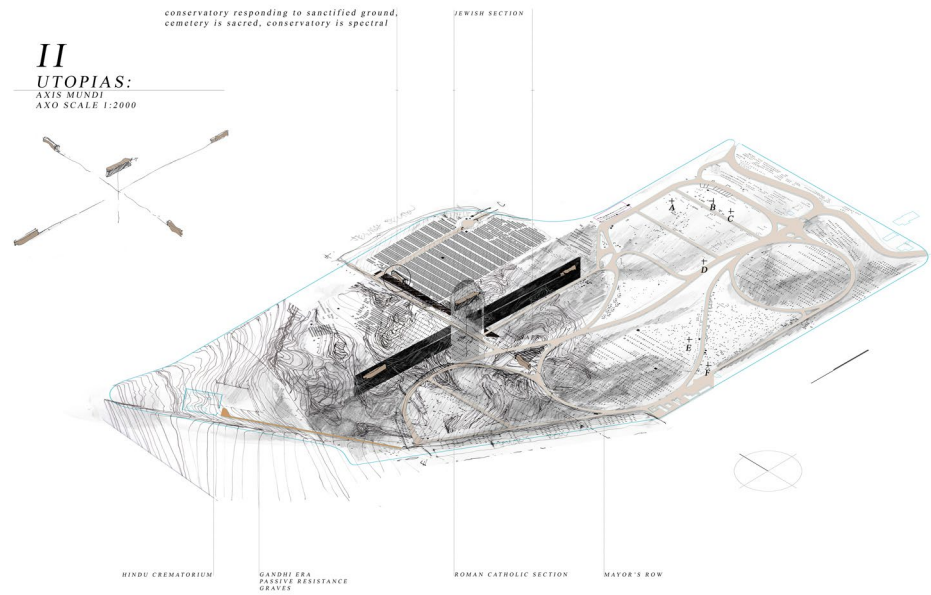


fig. 6.55. (author)  
Architecture situated  
in the cemetery's axis  
mundi.

**III**  
**UITVALGROND:**  
CAPTURING THE CITY'S EXOTIC GRIDS  
SCALE 1:100

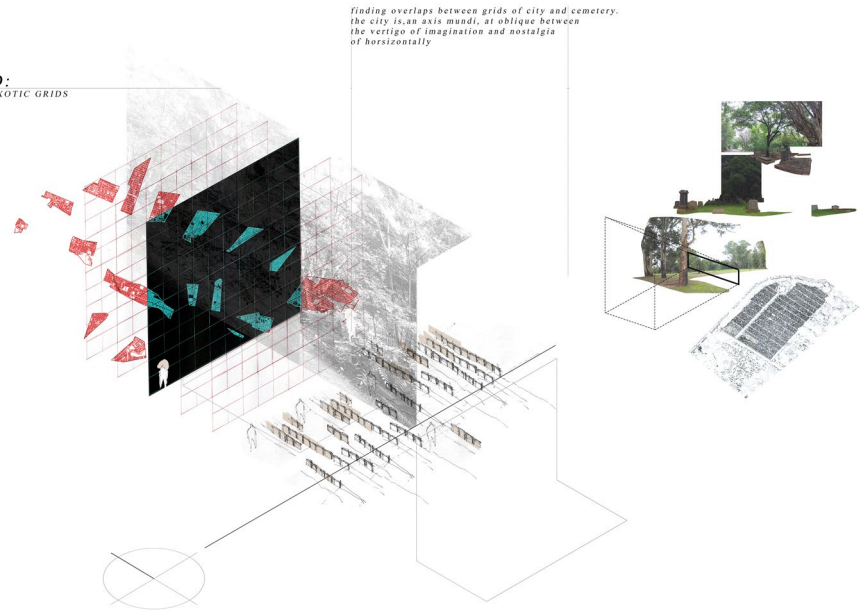


fig. 6.56. (author)  
*Uitvalgrond*. Archictural  
fragmentation mirroring  
the cemetery's disarray.

into the forest not only creates passages between new and existing programmed spaces, but further provides the possibility of creating a void within the forest and its canopy in which the architecture can situate itself as a vertical extension of the landscape.

- 2. *Axis mundi*:** considering the existence of the cemetery as an *axis mundi* intended to enable the escape from the banality and suffering of the immediate through passage into the sublime (manifested both physically and metaphysically in the various forms of *axis mundi* encountered in the cemetery), the intervention of a columbarium and conservatory can be regarded as devices that facilitate this escape from the profane through an architecture of the sacred and spectral. The intervention is situated in response to the existing sanctified ground of the cemetery, which, at some level, still acts as a portal into the sublime, described by Munro visiting Brixton cemetery:

*Stepping within the gates of a cemetery takes one into another world; it is the world of the dead but belongs to the living. Cemeteries are strange places as they are resting places for the dead, a means of disposing of a deceased body, but they are also places for the living to return to, to mourn, grieve and remember a loved one. I may not know any of the people buried there but immediately I become a vicarious mourner if only for an hour or two (Munro, 2017).*

- 3. *Uitvalgrond*:** this strategy provides a method of revealing and interpreting the aggregate of disfigured junctions between the colliding grids in the city <sup>31</sup>, the city and the cemetery, and the arbitrarily demarcated burial areas within the cemetery. The intricacy of these grids woven into each other and into the forest creates a visceral intimacy in its scale and collision as well as an 'owned' intimacy or privacy of space revealed in the segregation of the various religious denominations. *Uitvalgrond*, in this way, interacts with the idea of *axis mundi* in the dwellers' personal sanctification of space (the construction of own paradises addressed by Harries <sup>32</sup>). Using architectural

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<sup>31</sup> Refer to chapter 2: "Johannesburg as an artificial nostalgic landscape for escape: the first artificial landscape".

<sup>32</sup> Refer to chapter 3: "Escape as perpetuant for nostalgic recreation".

IV  
SECOND SURFACE:  
PHYTOTRON  
AXO SCALE 1:100

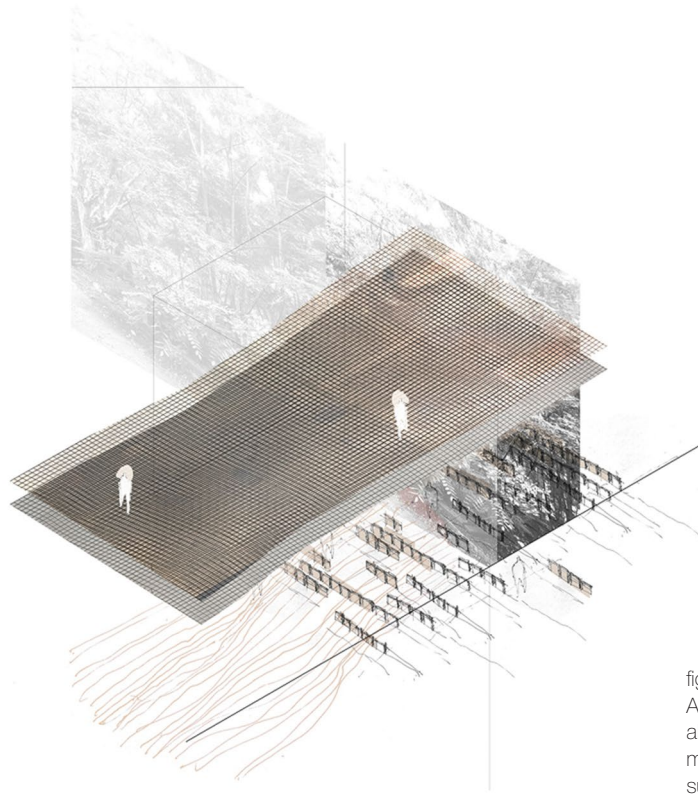


fig. 6.57. (author)  
Architecture suspended  
above the cemetery's  
material as a second  
surface.

intervention to capture the relations and tensions present within the intricacy of these grids, which allow the abstraction of the sacred from the profane, provides a potential space in which architecture can act as an oblique between the vertigo of imagination (*axis mundi*) and the nostalgic memory inherent in the horizontal surface.

4. **Second surface:** recognizing both the city and cemetery as artificial morphologies (Bremner, 2014) produced from the desire to escape provides a conceptual framework for architectural intervention. The intervention situates itself in the cemetery as a mimicry of this *second landscape*, still embedded within the city's creation myth<sup>33</sup> — a superimposition over the desacralized surface and the abandoned material of the cemetery. The artificiality of this

<sup>33</sup> Refer to chapter 2: "Johannesburg's artificial nostalgic remnants / *Uitvalgrond*".

landscape is further manifested through its acting as a *phytotron*<sup>34</sup> to control and accelerate growth of the nostalgic forest and ruined surface below. Escape is both materialized and revealed through the architecture intended to reanimate the cemetery, and create a new sublime surface amongst the sacred realm of the deceased.

- 5. Artifice:** a new proposed conservatory cultivating bioluminescent botany (an exotic import without consequence) that mimics the artificiality of the forest as a realm for escape, in which the dweller is enthralled by fleeting, spectral wonder, charges the architecture through an understanding of the remnant alluding to Pallasmaa's notion of the *Poetic Image*<sup>35</sup> to provoke intimation through engaging the dweller's imagination with fantasy and unfamiliarity. The conservatory is a reverie, materially manifested as a collection of synthetically created, exhibited and archived bioluminescent botanical species drawn from imagination but scientifically produced through synthetic biology. The conservatory is analogous to the deepening of nature through imagination, demonstrated through its mimicry of the forest and the artificiality of its contents. This strategy further allows the incorporation of the previously mentioned conceptual generators.

A final intervention strategy was extracted from these initial responses, conceptualized and articulated into the *negative*, providing the design framework from which to produce the *second artificial landscape*.

## Project intentions

Conceptually, the projects investigate the relationship between the narrative of escape, its production of artificiality, and how this narrative may be absorbed into an architectural language which informs design decisions: formgiving, program, materiality, technification, construction and maintenance. This is accomplished through creating architectural *negatives* of the artificiality evident in the cemetery's

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<sup>34</sup> This makes reference to the conceptual project A flower factory for the caves beneath Naples by Italian architect Marco Zanuso (1916-2001), in which a new, mechanically automated, botanical intervention is used to rehabilitate the network of natural tunnels below the city of Naples through the cultivation of prize flowers beneath a surrogate sun (Manaugh, 2010).

<sup>35</sup> Refer to chapter 4: "The *second artificial landscape*: artificiality as escape".

V  
**ARTIFICE:**  
CONSERVATORY OF  
EXOTIC SPECIES FROM  
IMAGINED WORLDS

AXO SCALE 1:100

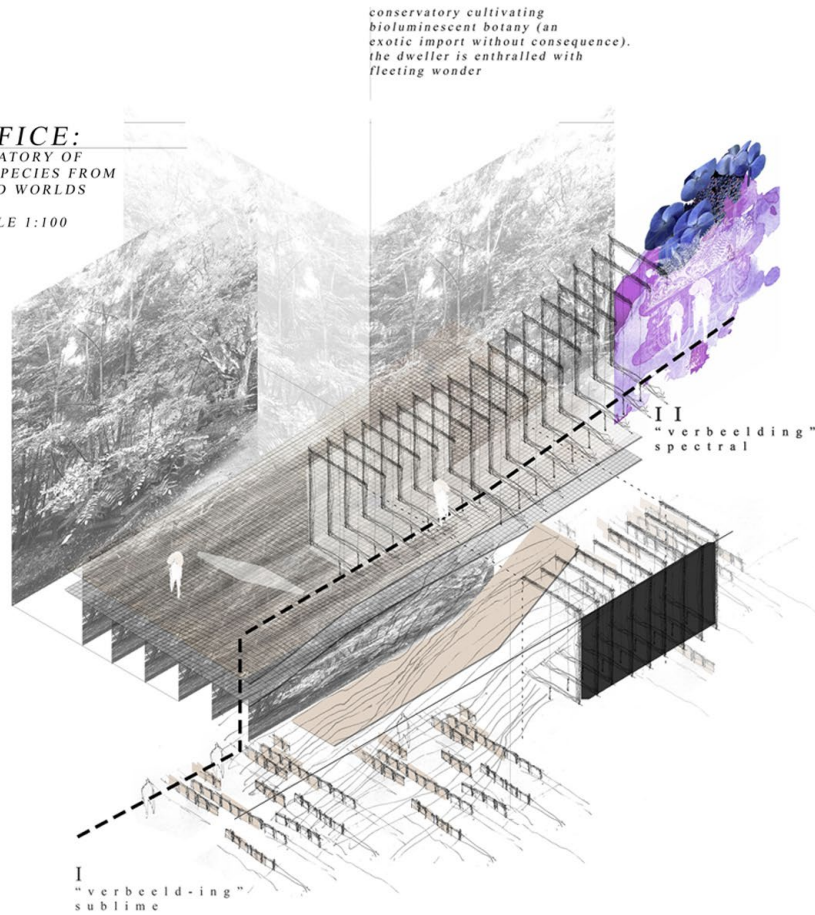


fig. 6.58. (author)  
Architecture mirroring the  
cemetery's artificiality.

material. The idea of the *negative* as an artificial reproduction is adopted as a conceptual strategy for intervention and articulation of the architecture. The *negative* as conceptual framework is explored through the artistic work of Christian Boltanski, whose work painfully reveals the treachery of memory and memorialization, but which also finally signifies the potentiality inherent in this amnesic inevitability, to reoccupy and recreate from this gap. The cemetery and forest are reanimated by the architecture's *redeeming* of the mechanism of escape which caused the cemetery's devolvement into an amnesic state.

The *negative* aims to reveal how artifice, in the form of architecture, is the mechanism that initiates the transformation from amnesia to imagination/reverie, and facilitate *La Petite Mort*. That is to say, artifice provides a framework in which the dweller is encouraged to reanimate remnants by actively engaging in the process of re-imagination. This functions on an intimate scale for the dweller. The *negative* reveals the remnant's potential for reverie. However, this also impels the dweller to realise how this mechanism



functions, therefore making it imitable (opening up a sublime framework) even when removed from the realm of the cemetery. This intimate experience of reimagination/revery is sublimated into the dweller's ontological framework, thus existing past its engagement with the cemetery. In this way, the *negative* not only functions as a system which allows intimacy between the architectural intervention and the dweller, but more significantly, function as a tool allowing *the artificial* to be reinstilled with significance.

The *negative* purposefully reimagines the potential of artificiality. In this way the *narrative of escape* is internally reconfigured for the dweller —it not only becomes a voluntary confrontation with the unknowns pervading the cemetery, but, more so, an encounter with *the vestiges of the real*:

*The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory — precession of simulacra — that engenders the territory, and if one must return to the fable, today it is the territory whose shreds slowly rot across the extent of the map. It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges persist here and there in the deserts that are no longer those of the Empire, but ours (Baudrillard and Glaser, 2014:1).*

It is at this point where Kafka's fable of the burrow meets Baudrillard's acceptance of the artificial that is incessantly produced from nostalgia, as a manifestation of *escape*. There is a delirium in the realisation that artifice shrouds the real, however, it is also in the discovery of the potential to create and reimagine from this mechanism, which makes the experience with architecture intimate. In this way, the significance of both of the *second artificial landscape* and the cemetery is not only restored, but sustained through the dweller's voluntary confrontation with the unknown encountered in the artificial (the simulacral). The discovery of this mechanism, through the *second artificial landscape*, constitutes the realm through which the significance of architecture is reimagined to function as a device for intimation — the tool which eluded Kafka's burrowing creating — with which the *vestiges of the real* can be sublimated into a *third intimate landscape*.

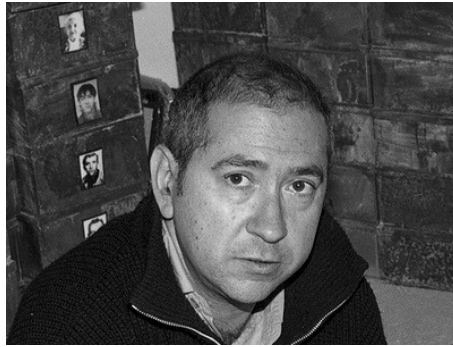


fig. 6.59. Christian Boltanski (1944-).



fig. 6.60. *Autel de Lycée Chases*, 1986–87.

# The Negative

## Conceptual precedents

### **Developing the *negative* as conceptual strategy for the *second artificial landscape*:**

#### **1\_ The *negative* as performance of memory:**

##### **Christian Boltanski:**

##### **Keywords:**

Heritage, memorialization, memory, amnesia, imagination, performative

The work of French artist, Christian Boltanski (1944-), reflects on the millennial critical and artistic obsession with memory born(e) from a culture terminally ill with amnesia (ibid., 2004: 4). His work is an interrogation of this condition and the role which memory plays accomplished through representation of remnants of the Holocaust including human remains, lost property and catalogued belongings of the dead. Predominantly focused on the problematics of memory, memorialization and the inevitability of amnesia, his work offers ways to map the performativity of memory through the theatricality of his installations, providing optimism in the crisis inherent in memory.

##### **Defamiliarization capacity of the *negative*:**

Revealing the inconsistency of memory through photography and installation, Boltanski's work embodies the theatricality of memory in both medium and content. The performative representations of memory of Boltanski's work resides in this fissure between past and present memory — the interplay between remnant, revenant and reverie:



fig. 6.61. *Réserve* -  
*Hamburger Strasse*,  
1995.

*In constantly questioning memory, we then hover in the in between, neither the true and exact presentation of a past event, nor an entirely contemporary reinvention [...] Associating with other materials and texts, once engaged in the theatricalized space of a sculptural construction and activated by the viewer's memory, a commonplace snapshot that might be previously overlooked as pedestrian becomes highly charged (ibid., 2004:4).*

As the familiar is defamiliarized and the unknown engaged (through the *negative*), that which is already known is made compelling again. A second sight is provoked through this engagement which allows the existing to be made into a new poetic construct (ibid., 2004: 5) (interpreted as the *third artificial landscape*). Gaines further argues that Boltanski's works often situate memories as continuously recreated events, which, although based on the past, are always interpreted through the present, which, instead of invoking lamentation or ignorance, may offer cause for celebration:

*It is possible to see that memories are potential, simultaneously irretrievable, instable, fluid, transient, poignant, melancholic and goldenly nostalgic. The mapping of memory offers history a chance to reinvent itself [...] Memory is a source of power, a storehouse of cultural treasures and a source of grief and obituary (ibid., 2004: 4).*

Boltanski's installations mechanizes memory and amnesia as the means through which reworkings, engagements and physical confrontations with the past can take place and thus engage imagination. The work provides an optimism in the crisis of the inescapable sense of loss associated with memory by exposing the gap which

(amnesic) memory creates, by delicately tying together representations of death inherent in his photographic memorialization with the amnesic and reimaginative 'death' of his medium. Although this process then implicitly requires sacrificing the known through reimagination <sup>36</sup>, it is this mechanism which the *negative* offers *La Petite Mort* to be manifested materially through the performative reproduction of the cemetery's amnesic material <sup>37</sup>.

*"It is not possible to get back to what was". Performance, based as it is on bodies, space and presence, does not necessarily mourn this unrepeatable past but actually relies on the generation of the re-presented moment, the both completely original and simultaneously patently fake, and it is out of this juxtaposition that performance takes its very form [...] it is possible to understand memory as transient performance, and endlessly reiterable recreation of the past (ibid., 2004:5).*

The *negative* as artificial reproduction is thus adopted as a conceptual architectural language which addresses the processes of memory, memorialization, documentation and amnesia encountered in the cemetery. The transience of *negatives* (produced from the amnesic originals) further acts to bind the intervention to death, elaborated on in the following sections.

*Boltanski's work point to memories as continuously recreated events, based on the past, but understood through the present [...] Revisiting Boltanski it is thus possible to map memory not just as a host of floating signifiers nested in fragile physiologies, but a performative form, a set of concurrences which hover between the original and copy, a theatrical source of creativity (Caines, 2004:4).*

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<sup>36</sup> Refer to chapter xxxxxxx: "The architectural insertion: mechanising amnesia".

<sup>37</sup> When Boltanski declined a commission for creating a Holocaust monument for an American museum in 1994, he made a suggestion as to how such monument could be made. He advised that the monument should be made fragile and transient, subject to the marring of time, a monument which in order to last had to be "constantly tended, looked after and rebuilt [...] as perhaps in the frequent physical watching over and rebuilding of the monument instead of building a monument in bronze that we could leave behind and forget [...] we would have to physically act to remember and keep remembering" (ibid., 2004:4).



fig. 6.62. Internal perspective of the ark at the *Jewish Kindermuseum*.

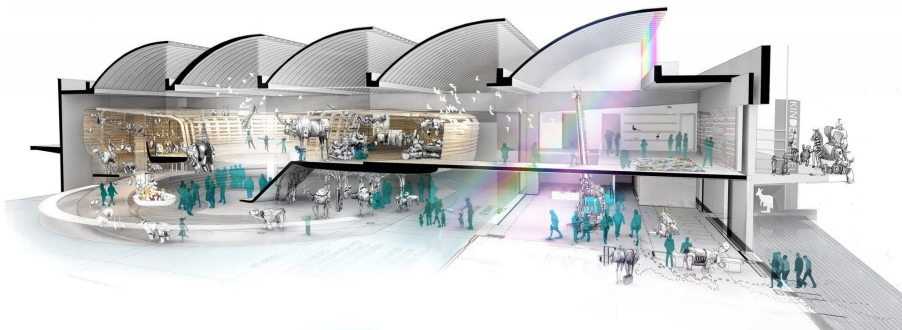


fig. 6.63. Procession into the ark. Physical and virtual escape in the *Jewish Kindermuseum*.

## 2\_ Conceptual, programmatic:

### JEWISH KINDERMUSEUM

**Location:** Berlin, Germany

**Date:** 2016 (unbuilt)

**Architect:** Olson Kundig

**Keywords:**

Heritage intervention, archiving, interactive, role-play, mythology, imagination

The Jewish Kindermuseum in Berlin is a project by architect Alan Maskin from the firm Olson Kundig which investigates how museums can regain significance in a culture enslaved by the need to (predominantly digitally) record, archive, exhibit, and share memory. The French philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault (1926-1984) regarded the museum or “the place of all times” as a paradigmatic expression of the modern obsession with memory, stating that:

*The idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive [...], the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity (Foucault and Miskowiec, 1986: 26).*

The museum’s potential for evoking imagination through collection and archiving is explored through appropriating the ‘narrative’ of Noah’s Ark, reinventing the typology of a museum to respond to the fluidity of cultural conditions.

The story of Noah’s Ark is a biblical tale which is deeply rooted in Abrahamic cultures (but echoed in various other cultural mythologies which precede the Old Testament) which describes Noah’s divinely appointed task to construct a vessel which would hold one of each sex of each species inhabiting the world before it would be purged from sin by the deluge. The tale’s significance in relation to the museum is firstly located in the ark, which functions as a device for collection and conservation - properties inherent to the Museum which are challenged by a culture obsessed with documentation, digital archiving, and with infinite access to information. Secondly, the project acknowledges and unpacks the potential for engaging imagination through myth (described, here, in the theory section), thereby addressing the Museum’s declining relevance in contemporary culture.

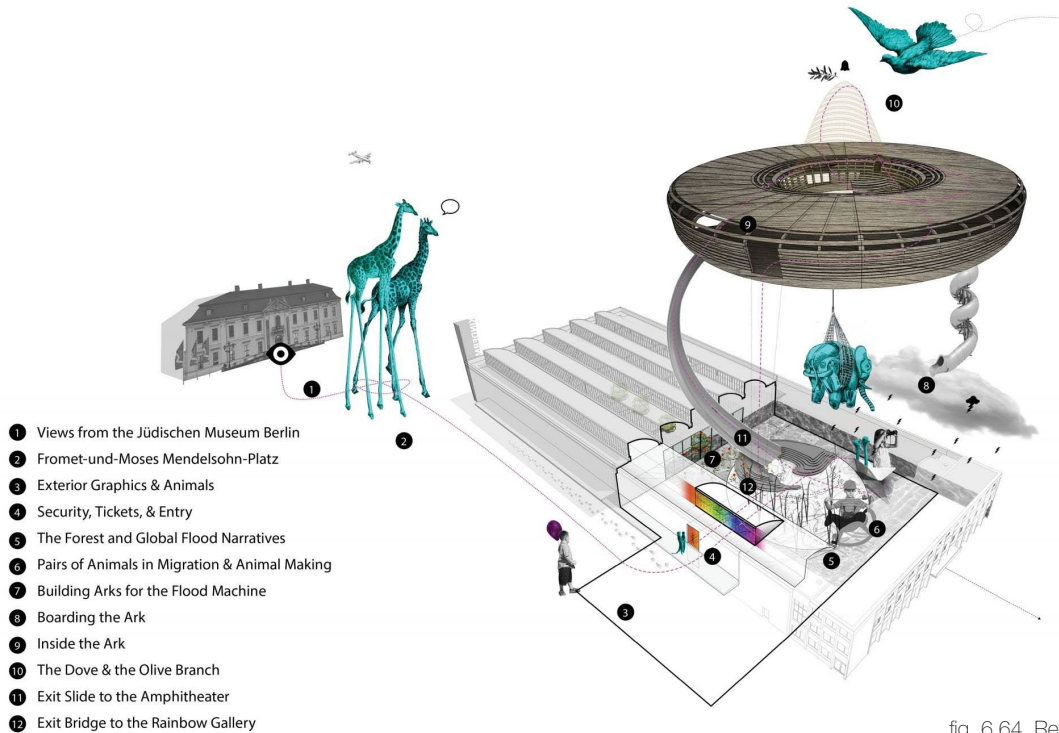


fig. 6.64. Recreating the ark at the *Jewish Kindermuseum*.

The program, which, situated within an old wholesale botanical market, is a spatial retelling of the Noah's ark narrative, unravelled in a sequence of layers which present the dweller with new informative experiences and interactive interfaces as he/she drifts deeper into the museum, until the final arrival at a physical emulation of the ark, containing an inventory of wondrous objects. Typologically reminiscent of the Wunderkammer or "cabinet of curiosities" which originated during the Renaissance as a pedagogical typology allowing the public increased accessibility to otherwise abstract information through physical representation of objects in encyclopedic collections. These collections were regarded as memory theatres that reached their prominence before scientific advances, such as the invention of photography and the mass production of cheap paper, which allowed for an even more accessible distribution and commodification of memory (Giudici, 2017: 91). While the Museum



functions through synecdoche, whereby objects are curated to represent a larger, absent whole, and thereby mostly relieves itself from ambiguity, the *Wunderkammer*, in contrast, loosens this representational structure through analogy. Curiosities contained in the *Wunderkammer* are arranged in disarray, recreating the chaos of the cosmos and “spatializes the narrative of human life as a path from darkness to light, from death to rebirth” (ibid. 2017: 97) as the objects are imaginatively reanimated through analogy.

*The idea of cataloguing the whole of reality in a room requires an implicit narrative, though not necessarily a historical one. While the museum links memory to the temporal structure of history, the Wunderkammer ties the idea of remembering to an ability to mentally reconstruct the totality of things in their spatial order [...] Wunderkammern are microcosms, and the objects they contain are memorabilia - extraordinary pieces to be remembered as exquisite or bizarre anomalies that offer a complete image of the universe recapitulated inside a room (Giudici, 2017: 94).*

The ark is a further poignant metaphor of the consequence of preservation<sup>38</sup> as an insulating Modern condition — that which is too exotic succumbs in the deluge — when stories become demythologized and lose significance of their ontological potential. The reinvention of the ark thus not only situates the myth in relation to contemporary themes of diversity, migration, creation and new beginnings, but also redeems the original myth (Olson Kundig, 2017).

Furthermore, the museum typology is challenged and reimagined as a tool/portal to the imagination that facilitates and inspires the dialectical reimagination of the museum's inventory, as well as the mythological narrative of the ark on an architectural level, reinvigorating its fantasy by appealing to the visitor's imagination through individual interaction and role-play. By dissolving the perceived boundaries between architecture and mythology through participation and performance, fantasy enables the engagement of imagination. Artificiality of memorialization in this way acts as the method to engage the viewer's imagination through the programmatic physical and virtual layering of fantasy hosted in the ark, providing narrative immersion within the ark nested in the building.

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<sup>38</sup> The ark can be likened to the conservatory, which functions as a similar archiving and indexing device, elaborated on in the discussion of Antediluvian Park of 1854 at the Crystal Palace in chapter 4: “Brief mythological and historical analysis of conservatories”.

This leads to a further consideration of how performance is not only absorbed into the architectural language through its conceptualisation of materiality, detailing, construction and maintenance, but also how the skin articulates itself as a *negative*, to become *autonomous* in its artificiality.

Similar to the ark, the project generates a conceptual language with which to reimagine and reanimate the cemetery and the forest:

### **Interpretation of precedents as second artificial landscape:**

#### **Significance and potential of the *negative* as architectural strategy to reimagine cemetery and forest.**

*Negatives* are manifested in the forest firstly through memorialization (representations of the deceased) and secondly as a series of voids nested within the forest, both as consequence of the pursuit of escape. The experience of these absences present material in which the architecture can situate itself and which, being void of significance, prevents intrusiveness and further damage and desecration of the nostalgic layering of the cemetery, while adding new layers of significance.

Recognizing both cemetery and forest as material manifestations of nostalgic escape<sup>39</sup> along with layers of escape further present in the form of various discordant axes of memorials and pedestrian corridors, provides further substance for intervention. The reproduction of these elements in the form of *negatives* is a theatrical acknowledgement, embracement and extension of this layering. Conceptually this strategy is further developed through a language of layering: *negatives* articulating the architecture as *thresholds of escape*, emphasized through the architecture's construction (created through burrowing), materiality and detailing, developed in the following sections.

#### **Potential of programmatic intervention:**

*Negative* manifested as second artificial landscape.

The *negative* reproduction of memory and amnesic traces encountered in the dilapidated surface and substance of the cemetery is a material performance of the consequence of escape. It is a celebration, rather than lamentation, of the treachery of memory and a mechanization of this propensity through which the significance of both cemetery and forest can be restored and sustained. Escape forms the

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<sup>39</sup> Discussed in Chapter 2: "Amnesia in Brixton cemetery as nostalgic remnant of the *first artificial landscape*".

tool by which the architecture is artificially, yet intricately woven into the tapestry of the forest to expose and engage this potential. The *negative*, as reproductions of the existing material, enables escape through a *second artificial landscape*, luring the dweller deeper into its confrontation of unknowns. This artificiality is expressed performatively in the architectural program, materiality, construction and maintenance, as well as throughout the architectural design and design process. As such, the documentation, methodology and language produced by this process is regarded as crucial extensions of the architecture. A language is produced by the architecture with which it can (artificially) infuse itself, demonstrating the limitless creative potential inherent in the artificial, and the method by which (the terror of) unknowns (knowledge existing beyond what is known) can be confronted and made known.

### **Required programmatic intervention:**

The urgent need for alternative burial solutions in Johannesburg and specifically Brixton cemetery forms the first base for programmatic intervention. A columbarium is proposed in relation to the conservatory, a further representation of artificiality and reimagination of the *first artificial landscape*, and the crossprogramming of these two typologies is investigated. Bearing in mind the proposed developmental framework of Brixton in the near future, it is necessary to intervene in the cemetery and facilitate its metamorphosis into a recreational public forest. This is accomplished by responding to the proposed *Knowledge Precinct*, which will define the northern periphery of the cemetery and which creates a network between the existing educational institutions in close proximity to the site, by further accommodating a synthetic biological and botanical research. This will include a botanical laboratory which will research and propagate the bioluminescent inventory, guest laboratories facilitating and promoting the emergence of DIY biology, exhibition spaces and archiving facilities to expose the public to and document current and past research.

### **Relevance of conservatory as typology: reanimation and reimagination of the cemetery through (the confrontation of) escape.**

The artificiality produced by escape latent in both cemetery and forest, and the amnesic gap it created can be appropriated to engage with, rather than escape from, the unfamiliar, thereby reanimating the nostalgic remnant as a *third intimate landscape*. Imagination is intimated through the artificiality of the bioluminescent conservatory through mechanizing escape, thereby deconstructing the amnesic material encountered both in the forest and the cemetery. The *Bioluminescent Conservatory* as *second artificial landscape*, thus not only functions as a new botanical intervention which makes the forest permeable and habitable, offering fleeting wonder, but also acts as the mechanism which allows the imaginative potentiality of the cemetery to be

CLIENTS AND FUNDING



**1**  
**COLUMBARIUM**

These institutions are approached as clients, having expressed their interests in the maintenance of and intervention into existing parks and cemeteries, which are regarded both as public amenities and national heritage resources. These institutions have also raised concerns about the dire need for reconsideration of new burial typologies relevant to the ever densifying metropolis.

**1**  
**Johannesburg City Parks**

- Development, intervention and maintenance of parks and cemeteries as public amenities.
- Rehabilitate cemeteries existing as urban blight to address the abject conditions they create for surrounding contexts.
- Urgent need to reconsider burial typologies.

**2**  
**National Heritage Foundation**

- Preservation of cemeteries as holding heritage significance.
- Relevant documentation and archiving of cemeteries, burials, buildings and deceased as national heritage resources.

**3**  
**The Johannesburg Development Agency**

- Urban development of Brixton, the surrounding neighbourhoods and the proposed Knowledge Precinct as part of the Corridors of Freedom urban design proposal.
- The rehabilitation of existing yet neglected fabric of the city.

**2**  
**BIOLUMINESCENT CONSERVATORY**

The institutions harbour a vested interest in environmental research and sustainability. These institutions further promote and support research through funding, human resource development and the provision of research facilities, accommodating knowledge creation, innovation and development in scientific disciplines.

The bioluminescent conservatory offers a platform for research in synthetic biology as a rapidly emerging field (on both an institutional and amateur level), as well as recording, exhibition and sharing of knowledge and advancements.

**4**  
**Department of Science and Technology**

- Facilitates the research, innovation, development and sharing of knowledge in scientific and biological disciplines.
- Promotes environmental sustainability and research in this field.

**5**  
**National Research Foundation**

- Facilitates the research, innovation, development and sharing of knowledge in scientific and biological disciplines.
- Promotes environmental sustainability and research in this field.

**6**  
**South African Agency for Science and Technological Advancement**

- Promotes scientific literacy to the public and youth
- Creates awareness in youth to careers in science.
- Facilitates interaction with public in relation to science, engineering and technology.
- Share advancements made in scientific fields.

Research Institutions:

CSIR  
NEON  
DST  
SAEON  
NRF  
SAASTA

Educational Institutions:

WITS  
UJ  
Schools and Collages  
Educational Programmes:  
- The Heritage Portal  
- Johannesburg Heritage Foundation

Professional Institutions:

SAIA  
GIFA  
UDISA  
ILASA

Government:

The City of Johannesburg  
The Johannesburg  
Development Agency  
Johannesburg Heritage Foundation  
The Provincial Heritage  
Resources Authority Gauteng  
National Heritage Council

penetrated (by engaging the unknown), through artificiality. Although the cemetery's desacralization and forestation led to its severing with death (and with its unknowns), the reanimation of the cemetery in the dweller's imagination as third intimate landscape tethers the conservatory back to death, through *reimaginative death* — *La Petite Mort*, revealed in Boltanski's work. The conservatory further engages death by creating habitable gardens (also bound to seasonality, decay, transience) cultivated on the architectural skin interspersed with the columbarium.

### **Programmatic development:**

A reimagination of the constituent programs is required in order to reinterpret their significance not only to the cemetery but also to their performative function, rebinding them to physical-, amnesic- and reimaginative death rooted in the cemetery and its forest:

## **A - Cemetery**

### **1 Columbarium**

**Significance:** burial expanding and reanimating the cemetery  
Public, interacting with 3 & 6

- 1\_ Burial of ashed remains from Brixton and Braamfontein crematoria.
- 2\_ Performance of memory through public engagement with burial and the columbarium's interaction with the *Spectral Garden*.
- 3\_ Performance of the transience of memory as graves become clustered, removed, overgrown.

Includes African, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Roman Catholic and non denominational sections with provision for family graves, shrines, mausolea and a section for the 'mayor's row' and other persons of significance.

fig. 6.65. (author) Clients and funding.

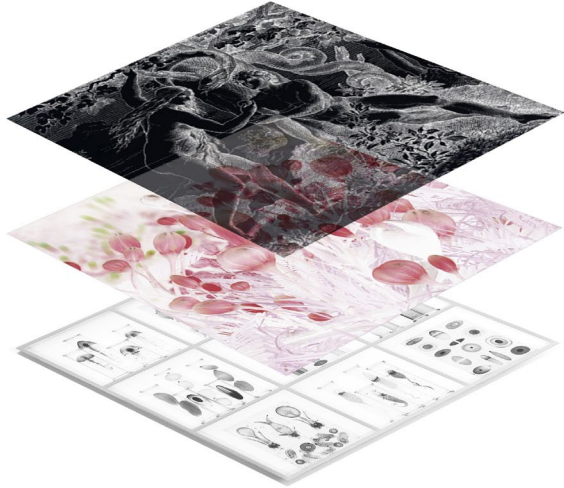


fig. 6.66. (author)  
The *Bioluminescent Conservatory*.

## B - Forest

### 2 The *Bioluminescent Conservatory* (botanical laboratory)

**Significance:** research and propagation of bioluminescent botanical species as well as further synthetic biological experimentation.

Private, interacting with 1 - 6

- 1\_ Botanical research, experimentation and documentation of current work.
- 2\_ Germination and propagation of bioluminescent botany.
- 3\_ Expanding knowledge through synthetic biological experimentation, performed through an enlarging, yet seasonally bound inventory of plants.

Includes a propagation laboratory, research laboratory, cold storage (seed and sample vault) and equipment storage.

### 3 **Spectral Garden** (*maturation loculi*<sup>40</sup>)

**Significance:** Maturation and collection of synthesized bioluminescent species

Semi public, private, interacting with 1, 2, 6

1\_ Expanding the (material) fantasy of the forest as *first artificial landscape* for escape.

2\_ Collection, maturation and exhibition of bioluminescent species bio-engineered in the *Bioluminescent Conservatory*.

3\_ Forest is made less hostile with the expanse of the bioluminescent collection programmed in relation to the columbarium.

4\_ Performed through the expanse, death and exoticism of newly imagined and engineered species.

Includes the maturation loculi and gardens for the imagined, synthetic bioluminescent botany with a controlled climatic buffer, provision for equipment storage as well as public ablutions.

### 4 **Cabinet of Obscurities** (guest laboratory)

**Significance:** Research and experimentation, gathering of obscure knowledge (known unknowns)

Private, interacting with 2, 5, 6

1\_ Contextual significance in relation to *Knowledge Precinct*.

2\_ Research, experimentation and documentation of current work done by research professionals, students and diy biologists.

3\_ Performance of imaginary death through confronting unknowns and sacrificing knowns.

Including two guest laboratories with working desks, a shared equipment laboratory with the *Bioluminescent Conservatory*, cold storage, equipment

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<sup>40</sup> Derived from *Loculus* meaning: 'each of a number of small separate cavities' (Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.). It refers to an architectural compartment or niche that houses a body, especially found in catacombs. The reinvention of this name becomes a performative reanimation of the cemetery's function through creating loculi in which bioluminescent botany is grown.



fig. 6.67. (author) *The Cabinet of Obscurities.*



## ARCHIVE

trace - memory - index

fig. 6.68. (author) *The Inventory of Effigies.*



storage and staff facilities.

5 ***Inventory of Effigies*** (public exhibition)

**Significance:** Tracing, mapping, archiving and exhibition of gained knowledge.

Public / private, interacting with 2, 4, 6

1\_ Exhibition of current work.

2\_ Curation and archiving of contributions, discoveries and advancements of previous research.

3\_ Responsible for the exhibition and performance of gained knowledge through permanent and fleeting exhibitions. The exhibition maps out memory traces and effigies as knowledge is gained and sacrificed.

Including: Temporary and permanent research exhibition galleries, archiving facilities, entrance lobby and foyer and public ablutions.

6 ***Imaginarium*** (administration)

**Significance:** administration, archiving and research facilities.

Semi public / private, interacting with 1 - 6

1\_ Administration of research facilities, cemetery and forest.

2\_ Archiving death records as immediate engagement of the public with death.

3\_ Archiving expanse of knowledge from current and previous research and work in the Imaginarium as public engagement of *reimaginative death*.

Including: administration offices, *Imaginarium* (archiving and public research facilities pertaining to both cemetery, *Bioluminescent Conservatory* and *Cabinet of Obscurities*), staff lounge, kitchenette and ablutions.

The program accommodates imagination and reimagination through performance and participation of the archived and newly imagined objects.

