FRAGMENTS FLOATING IN TREES
RECLAIMING THE URBAN SURFACE
In fulfilment of part of the requirement for the degree of magister in architecture (prof) in the faculty of engineering, the built environment and information technology.
University of Pretoria.

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Figure 1
Photograph of Sunnyside, Pretoria c. late 19th century.
Architecture Department
Archive: University of Pretoria, 2006
the chips are counted
Figure 3.
Photograph of Sunnyside, Pretoria from roof of ABSA Building.
Author, 2006
Bold forms rise up from the ground, scorching the earth with their shadows. The ruptured earth grows darker by the day. Hellish creatures lurk in the silence, waiting. The forms have severed their ties with their maternal earth. They have become lost in the void: fragments floating in trees.

Figure 4,
Photograph of Maroela and Tambotie flat blocks of Spruitsig Park. Sunnyside, Pretoria.
Author, 2006
This dissertation will investigate the functionalist influence on the development of Pretoria focusing specifically on the high-density residential area of Sunnyside. On an urban scale, it will examine how the combination of a topographically necessary east-west orientated road network, as well as a Functionalist building typology of north-facing flat blocks has resulted in north-south dead routes throughout the Sunnyside region.

While as a result of their orientation, these routes will always be doomed in the functional sense, they offer an opportunity to physically introduce an anti-functional theory in built form. This ‘anti-functional’, a theoretical reaction against modernist doctrine, will be implemented in these north-south routes, providing a synthesis of the existing functional and the imposed ‘anti-functional’ in Sunnyside’s grid pattern.

This synthesis can be applied within a variety of scales, from that of the urban to that of the common pedestrian. In the same way that the unused north-south streets are utilized for the purpose of the ‘anti-functional’, the lost, unused spaces between the typologically north-facing flat blocks can be used. In so doing, the wastelands at the feet of these functional buildings can become spaces which reconnect them to their urban context and the people which inhabit it.
# Table of Contents

List of Figures ............................................................................. 16
Introduction ................................................................................. 20

Theoretical Investigation ............................................................. 23
- Brutus and the Beast .............................................................. 24
- Tabula Rasa .......................................................................... 28
- Modern space, anti-space and back again ................... 30
- Détourne (the redirection of meaning) ...................... 33
  - The Situationist International .................................... 34
  - Constant’s New Babylon ............................................. 36
  - Architecture Principe: Inhabitable ......................... 38
  - Circulation .................................................................... 38
- Psychogeography Revisited ............................................. 40
  - Francis Alÿs ................................................................. 42
  - Glexis Novoa .............................................................. 44
  - Simon Evans ............................................................... 46
  - Stanley Donwood .......................................................... 47
- Conclusion ............................................................................ 48

Urban Analysis ............................................................................ 50
- Urban intervention: an anti-functional response ............ 52
- Datascape #1 .................................................................... 56
- Datascape #2 .................................................................... 60
- Datascape #3 .................................................................... 62
- Datascape #4 .................................................................... 64

Precedent Studies ........................................................................ 69
- Upgrading of the Public Spaces on Via Basso in the Gratosoglio District: Cino Zucchi ..................................................... 70
- Corviale Apartment Block: ON ........................................ 72
- Mirador Apartment Block: MVRDV .................................. 74
- BVA1: Wolfgang Tschapeller .......................................... 76

Site Analysis ................................................................................ 79
- Locality ............................................................................... 80
- Photomontage ................................................................... 87
- Pedestrian Access .............................................................. 98
- Pedestrian Interface .......................................................... 101
- Vehicular Access ............................................................... 102
- Existing Amenities .............................................................. 104

Design Development ................................................................. 111
- Fortification .......................................................................... 114
- Densification ..................................................................... 118
  - Surface Continuity ......................................................... 119
  - Un-Volumetric Architecture ....................................... 122
  - Hybridisation ................................................................. 124

Technical Investigation ............................................................... 141
- Surface .............................................................................. 142
- Elevated Locales .............................................................. 158
- Tower ............................................................................... 172

Conclusion ................................................................................ 184

References ................................................................................ 188
List of Figures

Fig. 1 Photograph of Sunnyside, Pretoria c. late 19th century. (Architecture Department Archive: University of Pretoria, 2006) 4,5
Fig. 2 Photograph of Sunnyside, Pretoria c. 1938. (Architecture Department Archive: University of Pretoria, 2006) 6,7
Fig. 3 Photograph of Sunnyside, Pretoria from roof of ABSA Building. (Author, 2006) 8,9
Fig. 4 Photograph of Maroela and Tambotie flat blocks of Spruitjes Park. (Author, 2006) 10
Fig. 5 Future City by an anonymous inner-city 5th grade student (Sutton 1997:243) 21
Fig. 6 The flow of energy in space is an architecture of change: one thing affects another in ways that cannot be exactly predicted by Leibniz (Woods 1992:28) 21
Fig. 7 Photograph of Panorama of Pretoria by Titus Moteayne in the National History Museum, Pretoria (Author, 2006) 24
Fig. 8 Fragments for an urban primer: A catalogue of hurrah words. in CREDO No. 13, October 1968 26
Fig. 9 Original CREDO Manifesto signed by its various contributors in CREDO No. 1, October 1966 27
Fig. 10 Diagram Equating Le Corbusier’s proposed Plan Voisin for Paris with the Sunnyside of today. Clockwise from top-left: Early 20th century Paris, Aerial Photograph, 1933, The Radiant City; Le Corbusier’s Plan Voisin for Paris, 1919, The Radiant City; Aerial photograph of Sunnyside Precinct, 2006; Aerial photograph of Sunnyside Precinct showing historic corrugated houses. c.1934 (Architecture Department Archive: University of Pretoria, 2006) 28
Fig. 11 Photograph of Old Vic. (Durrell, E. 2006) 29
Fig. 12 Continuation of Fragments for an urban primer: A catalogue of hurrah words. in CREDO No. 13, October 1968 30
Fig. 13 Kriseis in Pretoriana (Crisis in Pretoria), Heading of an article discussing the advent of functionalism on Pretoria’s historical heritage in CREDO No. 7, October 1967 31
Fig. 14 Guide psychogéographique de Paris. Discours sur les passions de l’amour: Petits psychogéographiques de la dérive et localisation d’unitées d’ambiance by G. Debord 1957 (Bayer, Migayrou & Nanjo 2005: 22-23) 34
Fig. 15 Beauty is in the street c. May 1968 (Ford 2005:121) 35
Fig. 16 Mémoires by A. Jorn and G. Debord c. 1957 (Ford 2005:65) 35
Fig. 17 New Babylon/Den Haag (The Hague) by C. Niewenhuis (Wigley 1998:155) 36
Fig. 18 Early version of Fragment van een sector (Fragment of a Sector) by C. Niewenhuis (Wigley 1998:173) 37
Fig. 19 Sector constructiv (Sector Construction) by C. Niewenhuis (Wigley 1998:109) 37
Fig. 20 Human Impulse by Architecture Principe c. 1966 (Bayer, Migayrou & Nanjo 2005:108) 38
Fig. 22 Man Walking to the Sky in front of the Fridericianum during documenta 9 by J. Borofsky c.1992 (Böhme 400:2002) 40
Fig. 23 Instructions for A. B. and C; C for Tuning, A for Humming, B for Whistling by F. Aly’s c. 2001 (Matsui 2005:116) 42
Fig. 24 Video still from Ziscalo by F. Aly’s c. 1999 43
Fig. 25 From Murano Grande by G. Novoa c. 2002 (Gallo 2005:230-231) 44,45
Fig. 26 The World by S. Evans c. 2003 (Molon 2005:100-101) 46
Fig. 27 Poster in Radiophobe: Hail to the Thief - Special Edition by S. Donswood (EMI Records LTD, 2003) 47
Fig. 28 Photograph of the appropriation of an unused lot into a make-shift night club, Havana, Cuba (Author 2006) 50,51
Fig. 29 Location of Sunnyside precinct within Pretoria’s inner city. (Author 2006) 53
Fig. 30 Location of east-west arterials within Sunnyside precinct. (Author 2006) 54
Fig. 31 Location of north-south linking streets within Sunnyside precinct. (Author 2006) 54
Fig. 32 Location of unused semi-private spaces adjacent to north-south streets within Sunnyside precinct. (Author 2006) 54
Fig. 33 3D Rendering of unused semi-private spaces adjacent to north-south streets within Sunnyside precinct. (Author 2006) 55
Fig. 34 3D Rendering of possible links between unused semi-private spaces within Sunnyside precinct. (Author 2006) 55
Fig. 35 3D Rendering of possible links superimposed onto unused semi-private spaces within Sunnyside precinct. (Author 2006) 55
Fig. 36 Analysis of semi-private spaces within Sunnyside precinct (Author 2006) 56,57
Fig. 37 Analysis of semi-private spaces within Sunnyside precinct (Author 2006) 58,59
Fig. 38 Psychogeographic study investigating Esselen street’s potential influence on urban intervention (Author 2006) 60,61
Fig. 39 Datascape investigating potential public activities within Sunnyside precinct (Author, 2006) 62,63
Fig. 40 Final abstraction of the analysis of the urban solution (Author, 2006) 64,65,66,67
Fig. 41 Aerial view of intervention showing the farmhouse, market and railway as well as the post-war functionalist flat blocks in the background. (Aymonino & Mosco 2006:133) 70
Fig. 42 Progression of views upon site entry: Advancing towards the site from a distance (Aymonino & Mosco 2006:134) 71
Fig. 43 Progression of views upon site entry: Entrance threshold with blow-up graphics. (Aymonino & Mosco 2006:133) 71
Fig. 44 Progression of views upon site entry: Central enclosure with lighting and street furniture. (Aymonino & Mosco 2006:135) 71
Fig. 45 Pavement plan (Aymonino & Mosco 2006:132) 71
Fig. 46 Three dimensional element plan (Aymonino & Mosco 2006:132) 71
Fig. 47 Site plan showing existing functionalist buildings to the north (Facing south-northern hemisphere) (Aymonino & Mosco 2006:135) 71
Fig. 48 Photograph showing Corviale’s southern elevation. (Molinar 2005:76) 72
Fig. 49 Digital Collage showing recreational and agricultural spaces incorporated on the southern side (northern hemisphere) of the apartment block. (Molinar 2005:78) 72
Fig. 50 Photographs of entrance lobby and the view from the external circulation passages. (Molinar 2005:82) 73
Fig. 51 Mirador apartment block (Flores, Z. 2005) 74
Fig. 52 Progression of user experience through building: Flores, Z. 2005 & Betsky, A. 2005 (Author 2005) 74
Fig. 53 Model of urban rooms and public circulation. Wolfgang Tschappeller BVAI. c.1998 (Forster 2005:378) 76
Fig. 54 Model of urban rooms, public circulation and glass curtain facade. Wolfgang Tschappeller BVAI. c. 1998 76 (Forster 2005:378) 76
Fig. 55 Model digitally superimposed into existing context. Wolfgang Tschappeller BVAI. c.1998 (Forster, K. 2004) 77
Fig. 56 Digital Collage representing site generation. (Author, 2006) 79
Fig. 57 Digital Collage with locality plan. Photographs and aerial photographs. (Author, 2006) 80,81
Fig. 58 Photograph of site. (Author, 2006) 82
Fig. 59 Photograph of site. (Author, 2006) 82
Fig. 60 Photograph of site. (Author, 2006) 83
Fig. 61 Photograph of site. (Author, 2006) 83
Fig. 62 Flat block name key: Karee, Tambotie, Maroela, Soetdoring & Kiepersol. (Author, 2006) 84
Fig. 63 Photograph of site. (Author, 2006) 85
Fig. 64 Photograph of site with key. (Author, 2006) 86
Fig. 65 Photograph of site with key. (Author, 2006) 88,89
Fig. 66 Photograph of site taken from the Pretoria Art Gallery. (Author, 2006) 90
Fig. 67 Photograph of site taken from Wessels street. (Author, 2006) 90
Fig. 68 Photograph of site with key. (Author, 2006) 91
Fig. 69 Photograph of site with key. (Author, 2006) 92
Fig. 70 Photograph of site with key. (Author, 2006) 94
Fig. 71 Photograph of movement through site. (Author, 2006) 95
Fig. 72 Photograph of movement through site. (Author, 2006) 95