1. Sash belts & leather and mink weave
This section examines history and existing physical implementations that address aspects of the vision of the discourse.
1. History of the Breytenbach Theatre

According to the TUT official website www.tut.co.za, the history of the Breytenbach Theatre is as follows:

In 1903 the local German community erected the building. It functioned as a school and gymnasium, but after the outbreak of World War I it was confiscated and released into the hands of the Custodian of Enemy Property.

In 1918 an influenza epidemic seized the area and the building became an emergency hospital. Many deaths followed and it is claimed that a Spirit emerged that apparently still roams the theatre’s passageways.

Emily Hobhouse offered revival for war survivors when she initiated learning and application of crafts and skills. Sourced on her travels in England a number of spinning wheels were at their disposal. The Langlaagte Centre was founded where women were trained to spin and weave. General Smuts was one of the first customers to buy the local group’s woven products.

At one point the Breytenbach was changed into a sculptor’s workshop that housed the work of Gerard Moerdyk and Hennie Potgieter.

In 1955 the National Theatre Organization (NTO) was granted £6 000 with which it bought the property, naming it Harmonie Hall.

1955 to 1980 was an eventful period for the organization. It hosted its first performance in 1958, Voorlopige Vonnis by Jozef van Hoeck. Numerous productions followed and many renowned...
actors of today took their first steps on its stage. In 1959 the building developed into the new National Theatre of Pretoria, hosting a training academy for actors and technicians. This became possible through the donation of the adjacent site by Mr. Breytie Breytenbach. The Department of Education, Arts and Science supported the development of a well-resourced 300-seat theatre.

In 1980 the popularity of the theatre was lost with the completion of the State Theatre, with its extensive inclusion of new technologies and effective marketing.

In 1983, the Technikon of Pretoria became the owner of the theatre. Success was soon regained with numerous lunchtime concerts, ballet and opera recitals.

In 1993 the building of a fly-tower provided more space and stage design possibilities, enhancing the theatre’s display capacity.

In 1996 the historical but decrepit cottage adjacent to the Breytenbach Theatre was renovated and converted into a small theatre. Amongst its past functions, it was also known for many years to be a clothing manufacturing shop. Named the Moonbox, the student-fashioned interior can host 65 people. It provides the community with the option to perform inexpensively and gain popularity. It is popular among children for its holiday puppet shows.

Currently the Breytenbach Theatre (Breytie) fulfills the following two functions in collaboration with the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). It functions as a practical platform for students in the discipline of Vocal Art, Drama and Dance. Live shows provide entertainment for the public and experience for performers. The Theatre displays services students can perform as prospective employees. Props and sets are built, sound and lighting techniques are explored, and make-up and costume attempts grace the stage. The second function consist of the hiring of the theatre itself, providing maintenance income and an affordable entertainment venue for the community.

Needs of the Theatre:
Safety, more exposure, covered parking.
2. The History of Textiles

The manufacture of textiles is one of the oldest craft forms. When man initiated the domestication of animals, wool became the first form of fibre to be utilized. Linen was the first form of vegetable fibre and can be traced back to the Egyptians 3500 years BC, and to Swiss Stone Age lake dwellers. Textiles were a popular trade commodity in Biblical times; many slaves were trained in textile manufacture to fulfil demands. Men invented most of the weaving techniques and principles in the early stages of the Christian era.

1760 - 1785 James Hargeaver invented the Spinning Jenny and Sir Richard Arkwright the spinning frame.

But it was during the Industrial Revolution that textiles evolved from a form of handicraft into an industry. The invention of various forms of machines replaced weaving and spinning by hand. The speed of the weaving process was rapidly increased and quantity production became such an easy activity that even children could operate the equipment. The textile factory production system was initiated in England and became established in America.

1900 - 2005

The lack of scientific knowledge concerning fibre composition led to a hiatus in technological development. But early in the 19th century, experiments in chemistry concluded that textiles are an outcome of chemical actions during the 20th century new technological engineering concepts of textile production developed simultaneously with the evolution of computers and electronics.

This resulted in the technological progression of new forms of textiles, faster dispensation methods and an extensive diversity of new production techniques.

1: Weaving loom
Modern-day industry

Due to the broad range of uses for textiles, a high degree of specialization is required. The production of fabrics for industrial use is becoming increasingly essential. This results in technicians, engineers, and artists having to perform a high degree of advanced processes. The design of textiles is mainly associated with clothing and furnishings, which form a large portion of the industry.

Textile construction

**Yarn textiles:** Man-made and natural fibres are spun into yarns and are used for weaving, lace-making, knitting and braiding.

**Non-woven textiles:** Fibres are not spun into yarns but through the application of heat, moisture and pressure non-woven textiles are formed. Felt is the oldest form of textile produced by this technique. The use of chemicals and adhesives can also produce bonding of various layers of textiles.

Textile processing:

Textiles coming off the loom are known as grey goods due to their grey colour and coarse irregular appearance, which can be changed by the following procedures to smooth and alter the finish:

**Bleaching:** Whitening goods by means of sunlight or bleaching chemicals.

**Printing:** After removal of grey, colour can be added by means of block printing. Engraved rollers stamp designs onto fabrics or different-sized linocut blocks can be used for hand printing.

**Resist dyeing / screen-printing:** is a process where screens are covered with wax paint, except on areas that carry a design. The screen is placed over a cloth which receives the designed portion when colour is applied. This is a very economical process; it also requires only semi-skilled labour and requires little effort to instigate. Natural light and a wet room is essential for the process.

**Dyeing:** The whole fabric is immersed in a dye bath, but due to the composition of different fibres this may lead to an uneven finish. Solution dyeing is a method...
3. Art Fabric

Recalling our inventive inspiring potential through play.

“Thread is the source of all textile material. In the form of twine, yarn, line, string, cord rope and cable has ways to stir man’s creative urge. Spinning, weaving, knitting and knotting are age old crafts. That is why today, the making of something out of thread can be a most valuable addition to our education - an education which tends in this technological age to place excessive value on intellect and technical ability.” (HARTUNG 1969:3)

The textile and fabric world is so inherently part of our daily lives that we tend to take it for granted. We fashion our daily environment with its variety of forms. It provides protection, allows us to express our individual character and reflects our status. The Art Fabric represents a crucial art form of this epoch. It is a construction, independently fashioned by its artist. It can be woven, knotted, knitted, crochet or manufactured by other techniques.

1: Playing with string

2: Face

3: Papua print
The evolution of the Art Fabric corresponds with that of the visual arts, for they both belong to the world of experimentation, technological invention and material manipulation that inspires new concepts. There is no longer a definite distinction between fine and decorative arts. Painting is not restricted to wood and canvas, or sculpture to stone, wood, casting and modelling.

"Such distinctions separating the 'minor' arts of photography, film, graphics and the various crafts from the 'major' arts of architecture, paintings and sculpture are status distinctions imposed at the end of the Middle Ages when the guilds disappeared to be replaced by the Renaissance academies...the prejudicial distinctions continued until the present day. If we dispense with the distinction between the major and minor arts, and think of quality alone, we see that the quality of American photography, film, graphics, crafts is at least as good as American paintings today and certainly better and more innovative than the collapsing sculptural tradition.... But the minor arts are in an upsurge, as we discover the importance of craft, the human body, and the natural and man-made world around us." (CONSTANTINE, M & LARSON, J. 1973:10)

Artists today find liberty in the fibre medium - a metamorphosis of expression, and the option to favour an aesthetic over a utilitarian need. Skill, physical effort and discipline, and the operation of creative and aesthetic factors become the power by which all is considered. The Art Fabric exists in a fluctuating situation; it has no distinct description but assimilates itself with the affluent and multifarious trend of art that goes further than craft.

**The endurance of Craft through the ages:**

We find ourselves in a world of consumerism. The signifier is preferred over the transcendental signified. Meaning is discarded and we are left with an industrialized mechanistic society. Product is the absolute. How do we as designers redefine the meaning of phenomena into our own living environments? How can we counteract nihilism?

"Craft has always been a supremely messy word. For centuries it was normally used in contexts that had nothing to do with creative artistic practice of any kind, but when it is used in the context of art, its multifarious nomenclatic heritage has rendered it so ambivalent that many who are associated with it consider it a drawback. Those of us who have spent time in the field are at a stage, I am sure, at which earnest definitions and descriptions of craft as something which is (or is not) art, is (or is not) design, as techno phobia, as an anthropological signifier, as a protector of some traditions, as old (or new) age lifestyle, as patriarchy, as airport trinket, as ethnic iconography, as communist Utopia, as eco-protest, as redundant technology, as aromatherapy, and most emphatically as victim of an unloving world, have ground us all down." (GREENHALGH 2002:1)

The concept of Art Fabric originated in the 1870’s with William Morris. Morris initiated the movement by the re-introduction of handicraft as a commendable form of art. Industrialization pioneered machine art in the 1900’s. Walter Gropius brought synthesis to the latter by initiating the Weimar Art School, Staatliches Bauhaus in 1914. The school combined an academy of art with a school of arts and crafts. It also contained a laboratory for handicraft and standardization. A union of school and workshop was born. This initiation paved the road for the growth of Art Fabric. During the last three decades Paul Greenhalgh (GREENHALGH 2002:4-16) identified a set of topics in the art world that will affect its inclination:
Classification is the categorizing of dissimilar kinds of practices within the realm of visual art, determined by: craft, art, and design for the economy, institutional and political influence for the profit of the market place, galleries, and government. The craft economy is in an arduous situation; the object must be economically viable. The profit made by selling craft is governed by the exclusiveness of the project or the quantity.

“Straddled between an art and a design economy, craft often gets the worst of both worlds. It occupies an economic space where objects, though individually handmade, sell at mass-production prices. Lacking the prestige of high art or the reproductability of product design - both characteristics economically viable - the crafts person frequently is obliged to sell unique work at mass process.” (GREENHALGH 2002:6)

Amateurism is the production of crafts as a part-time, after-hour hobby. John Ruskin (1819-1900) once stated that any person in a community could achieve identity through the medium of craft. Many people in the industrialised world are on a quest to find the “self” through DIY workshops and TV programs, evening classes of creating decoupage, pottery, paper and embroidery. Poetry is one of the means of expression and is often more written than read; at an amateur endeavour craft institutes this. An essential facet of modern craft is the pronouncement of the process over product. The hands-on engagement with an assortment of media is of crucial significance in a healthy society. It becomes the objectification of individual need.

Technology has been a catalyst for the unravelling of visual culture since the Renaissance. It has been present at all stages of artistic invention; it served as a facilitator in the manner of construction of different phenomena and is responsible for the progress of exclusively innovative practices. Social Luddism was a strong reaction to the development of technology; it presented sightless opposition to the mechanical, electronic and mass production initiative. This anti-technology movement was the promoter of original man made objects and as a consequence, the anti-urban. The etymology of craft relates it to power; to be in control of one’s own time, desires and model of life.

Morality of art suggests that it entails not only a balance of aesthetics and technics, but that the craftsperson, designer or artist engages in a moral dimension prevalent in the modern era. John Ruskin made art a moral reflection of the culture that fashioned it. Purism, De Stijil, Art Nouveau, Constructivism and the Bauhaus and Studio Craft Movement were all changed by the inherent yearning to explore the moral interface. Art can serve as a medium for change. Andy Warholl (1928-1987) addressed the consumerist society by creating awareness of a world drunk with signifiers. The repetition of mundane objects such as dollar bills and soup cans in his prints, absolutises the signifiers as signs. The sign is always the sign of a sign.

Place. Humans have an inherent need to create places or sites that have credence and symbolic significance. Non-places are identified as pass-through spaces of non-psychosomatic affection, such as transport terminals and pit stops. Crafts initialise the concept of portable places that radiate a sense of history, permanence, and symbolism. A space occupied by these concepts has the prospect of becoming a place. Creating permanence is an essential aspect of the formulation of a communal cultural reminiscence.

Domesticity. Technological advancement subverts the external workplace as a requirement; the ratio of population that will not need to leave their home except for social activities will gradually rise. This corollary will redefine the function of the public space.
**Museology.** One can never underestimate the importance of the environmental context to the public display. Artworks establish a relationship between people and objects. If there is no predestined relationship, art will have no significance in that specific community. Crafts need to have a distinct and exclusive presence within its context, for the optimum operation of exhibitions.

**Gender.** Craft is furthermore a tool to explore the gender realm. Artists in the past and presently are using it to address women’s issues. Many craft practices are completely dominated by women all over the globe.

**Quality.** The Enlightenment searched for the absolute truth and value by which all phenomena could be measured to determine aesthetic truth. An assured amount of skill is required to generate quality. Benchmarks and standards are set to promote quality.

When considering the previous aspects affecting the development of craft, one is faced with the reality of possible economic failure. Designing a whole building can be useless if the requirements of context-generated crafts are not addressed. The building will purely exist through the participation of the public.

1: Prado print

2: Felt
4. Case Studies

4.1 Arkas Textiles C.C.

A textile-printing factory situated at the Mission End Trading Post in the Hazyview Mountains. Employing many rural inhabitants, it produces silkscreen prints for various products. Company logos and emblems are designed and printed according to specifications. Game lodges and hotels are provided with curtains, bed linen, kitchen and table linen, and furniture covers.

Arthur, the owner of the facility, stated that the development of the factory and its clientele took a period of 15 years. When designing for the community, success and profit is guaranteed by addressing the needs of the area. Silkscreen printing is a safe and easy skill to train people in and the output outweighs the input, making it a feasible income generator.

Knowledge gained:

The building and production system must be designed in different phases to enable expansion in cycles of 5 years according to profit made. The functions of the phases will be determined by community needs and the existing frameworks present on site.

The current market close to the site:

A large active African community in Oeverzicht village and Esselen Street, provides opportunities to express its identity through the production of individualized textiles for restaurants, entertainment venues and clothing.
The Bus Factory:
National Craft and Design Centre
Johannesburg, Gauteng

The Bus Factory was originally built in the 1930's. It mainly functioned as a bus depot and mechanical repair workstation until the early 1990's. From April 2001 until November 2002, Blue IQ and the Gauteng Department of Sports Recreation, Arts and Culture (SRAC) refurbished the Bus Factory for approximately R9.5 million. The Bus factory has emerged...
as a vibrant centre of artistic and cultural activity.

It accommodates the following:
The Craft Council S.A Office, the Visual Arts and Crafts Academy (VACA), an Artist’s proof studio, the Drum café, The Bus Stop café, studios, the Beautiful Things permanent and temporary exhibitions and the Beautiful Things shop.

**Beautiful Things** is an exhibition of crafts from all over South Africa, ranging from usable products to display art. Made by locals using contemporary materials, the range of the products adapts to the local and international markets. Large, flat squares on the ground filled with natural materials such as sand, woodchips, stones and coal become the platforms for the craft installations. These become a metaphor of the dynamic landscapes and peoples of our country.

**Knowledge gained:**

Plentiful of natural light provides good working conditions and lower electricity bills. A flexible, adaptable exhibition space is provided yet, a lack of defined space can be overwhelming and misleading. An existing structure and its elements is re-used. The noise-generating workshops are placed in the basement. Other commercial ventures like restaurant, cafes and a drum club ensure the continued existence of the exhibition and workshops.
Daliwe
Hand-crafted blinds and crafts
White River, Mpumalanga

The name Daliwe is Xhosa for ‘nature’, and this is a true reflection of what these woven grass designs echo when applied to blinds, ceilings, furniture and architectural finishes. These constructions integrate African impressions with modern design. Situated in the Whiteriver district, the workshop was established in 1997 by the Hubert and Zylstra families. Daliwe is a source of pride for the local people, who use the application of their traditional skills to compete in a modern market and to generate job opportunities and sufficient income. Fifty people are permanently employed and two hundred and fifty people are material gatherers on an informal basis.

The waste and noise generating workspaces are outdoors under gum-pole lapas, which are mainly areas for woodwork and the stripping, dyeing and weaving of reeds. In the interior workshop the weaving of the products takes place. The flute reeds used are obtained from the clogged waterways in the area and the wattle from bush-clearing programmes.

The following are current projects: Kruger-Mpumalanga Airport, Hans Merensky Golf Club and various luxury lodges.

Knowledge gained:

Environmentally conscious solutions are established through production.
A pyramid system; exists where each employed individual supports 10 others.
Traditional skills can be modified for contemporary relevance.
The use of existing traditional skills in the area, encourages community involvement and participation.

4: Display panel
5: Samples
6: Weaving shades
Mpumalanga Provincial Government Complex
Nelspruit, Mpumalanga.
Architects: Meyer Pienaar Tayob Schnepel Architects

“The project challenged all those involved, to explore new approaches to architecture, both in process and product, and give appropriate expression to the aspirations of a rapidly transforming society.” (MPTS 2001:19)

Tracing through the past and present, the designers changed their frames of reference. They wanted to compose a true African building, conveying the nature of a free democratic system. The architecture emerged as a response to examples such as the Union Buildings, the great Zimbabwe ruins and decoration in African vernacular architecture and the local vernacular. The climatic conditions of the region, available materials, and dome structure analysis was translated into modern applications. Using local artistic skills, an identity was woven into the building that will inherently serve the community.

“Louis Kahn’s tenet ‘let the building be what it wants to be’ was perhaps the foremost solution to the building form, with the clues taken from the surrounding environment and the design brief, and developed in an ongoing search for cultural expression.” (MPTS 2001:21)

A site visit allowed the design team to observe and explore every rock, tree and stream. A design concept emerged from the footprint of the site itself. Pavilion-like offices are placed along the natural curve of the land, mimicking existing trees. The dome of the Legislature is a mirror image conceived by inverting the river profile that runs through the site. The layout of the complex as a whole is very flexible and publicly orientated.
Knowledge gained:

On site the author was in awe of the scale of these buildings effortlessly fitting together, allowing a swarm of people to infiltrate them with ease. Walking on the grounds the attempt to commit an illegal activity by taking photos was almost impossible due to the buildings enabling observation of all spaces. This was resolved by drawing the walkways (fig 1) and passive design principles (fig 4), and conclusions on how site and context generated the form. The walkways are not merely movement routes but are designed to offer opportunities to stop, chat, observe or stroll, thus accommodating different movement speeds. This principle allows different experiences to take place.

Passive climate control creates an interesting and varied building façade. Air-conditioning in buildings of such scale is inevitable, yet the emission towers (fig 8 and fig 9) become artistic elements and completely hide the fact that they exist. Throughout the entire building complex, community art is constantly integrated into the built form. Tapestries, paintings and sculptures are placed in spaces designed for the user to observe and enjoy them. Local skills are incorporated into wall finishes projecting an array of textures and colours that express the surrounding environment. The dome mimics the composition of a woven basket, innately becoming art. The endemic trees placed in the landscape are representative of this unique region. A huge grasshopper with luminous wings swiftly reminded of her appointment with Mr Zolile Ngono, Chief of Public Works, who accompanied her into the private sectors of the Legislative building.
5. Paperback Study

Rorke's Drift
ELC Centre
KwaZulu-Natal

The Evangelical Lutheran Church Art and Craft Centre (ELC) at Rorke's Drift participated in the training of black artists and the development of South African art in the Apartheid era. Printmaking was their most prominent undertaking due to its economic possibilities, but it was also a means of conveying socio-political messages. Printmaking was a form of empowering expression for its students and the South African art scene.

In 1960, Sweden became aware of South Africa’s racism via the internationally broadcast Sharpeville incident. Post-war reconstruction in Sweden not only allowed redevelopment of the nation itself, but and external international consciousness was promoted concerning underdeveloped countries. Industrial South Africa didn’t qualify as underdeveloped and any development project had to be a private philanthropic undertaking.

Peder and Ulla Gownenius, a married Swedish couple - both educated in textile art, weaving, sculpture and printmaking - were offered a one-year contract by the Swedish Committee under the wing of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Their aim was to research the material culture of the Rorke’s Drift’s region for the establishment of marketing opportunities of arts and crafts, in order to assist black people. In 1961 they based themselves at the Ceza Mission Hospital, for the access it provided to many different black communities. To counteract depression in patients suffering from tuberculosis and other diseases, a proactive approach was instigated by the couple. They introduced handicrafts to the patients and taught them various skills such as sewing, strip weaving and spinning. They invented ‘occupational therapy’, of which economic upliftment and therapeutic rehabilitation was the outcome.
Their interpreter Allina Ndebele, a trainee-nurse, took time off her studies to assist the Goweniuses to train the patients in craft techniques. She inspired 15 more volunteers and established a vision of a formalised programme.

In 1962 the Umpumulo Art School was opened through the support of the mission and subscribes to the following principles: help the church, hospital and patients by teaching them skills they can continue to use at home; provide young women with independence and increase the understanding of weaving, spinning and craft making and the preservation of old traditions and materials. Many students joined the centre and the success of the workshops and training programmes was established. Allina Ndebele’s weaving workshop became the primary income-generating project. The tapestries attracted attention from all over the country, due to their unique nature and quality. Interest and demand grew along with the demands for printing as a faster from of artistic production.

Peder Gowenius saw the cutting tool as a point of commonality for its ability to translate pre-existing carving skills into a new form of art. Men were offered the opportunity to participate in the linocut workshop. They were encouraged to express their own lives, and the recording of history and present evolved.
In a 1999 interview Gowenius encapsulated the dilemmas that had emerged about his teaching in question. Should you teach the basics or should you leave them - until their confidence and identity develop? He opted for a strategy to build up confidence by giving positive reinforcement for the design aspects that he thought worked well... they tried to be as non-interventionists as possible and have seen themselves more as facilitators than teachers...” (HOBBS 2003:41)

The increase in participants demanded more space for production and accommodation. The school therefore relocated to Rorke's Drift in 1967. The name of the school was changed to The Evangelical Lutheran Church Art and Craft Centre (ELC). New aims and objectives were to extend the knowledge of different arts and crafts in the region, train occupational therapists, and train church members in self-sustaining prospects.

The workshops formed the main focus at the centre, generating employment, education and funding. In 1963 an exhibition in Konstfacksckolan in Sweden generated a profit of R6000. Following the news of this success in 1967, the Royal Society of England ordered a tapestry for the Council Chamber in Carlton House, London. The tapestry called “Creation” was and still is a renowned artistic accomplishment. This placed the ELC on the international map.

After the succession of these events Peder Gowenius confirmed the importance of a fine arts school that will provide both men and women with economic independence and add to the value of the centre as a whole. It attracts a wider spectrum of students from all over the country and thus promotes new ideas in art creation. The first certificates of fine art were issued in 1969 and this continued until 1982. The centre was closed down due to a lack of finances and proper marketing.

A collaborative partnership between the communities, the Msinga Local Municipality, the Department of Arts and Culture and the Department of Labour National Skills Fund ensures the continued existence of The Rorke's Drift workshops today. Training in product development, production, marketing and enterprise development allows sustainable social and economic opportunities for workers. Their exhibition at The Bus Factory reflected the high quality of their products and their unique innovative tapestries.
Knowledge gained

By the provision of employment and occupational therapy, the programme evolved into a successful endeavor promoting community participation. Once a system is proven and successful in the economic realm, people are willing to assist with financial aid.

Growth and reduction in spatial requirements occur according to economic status; built space must be rented out for functions in times of lower economic achievement.

Setting standards for achievement in the form of an educational system provides a continuous input of new ideas and perceptions; this adaptability is essential to art.

The uniqueness of an expressed identity is interesting and intriguing for buyers.

Recall:

- The Breytenbach Theatre needs a safer environment and more exposure for its productions.
- Textiles are an inherent part of our lives; the production of textiles will provide a viable economic opportunity.
- The response is not merely architectural but also a functional production system.
- An existing social need - dependent on public participation must be addressed.

- The expansion and reduction of the facility must be allowed for.
- The design of an exquisite space that is rare in the area will promote social interaction.

3: Students and teachers