Agora

Transition through information to memory
AGORA

Transition through information to memory.

Submitted in fulfillment of part of the requirements for the Degree of Magister in Interior Architecture (Professional) in the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology

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This project would have been impossible without my base of support. Firstly all honour and glory to my Creator, Saviour and Lord and thank you to my family, and friends for understanding, helping and supporting me through this learning process. Catherine, thank you for your patience, guidance and dedication.
This project investigates Interior Architecture as the design of space within established physical parameters. The concept of an Agora as a public meeting space generating memory forms the design platform from which the investigation happens. After 100 years, the University of Pretoria is still relatively young compared to other similar institutions worldwide, and the current diversity of users further add to the loss of corporate identity that is shared between these users. The Agora creates a generator of information by hosting interaction between previously separated groups, exposing information to a majority of users on the Campus.
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The Concise Oxford Thesaurus defines a touchstone as a criterion, a model or a point of reference. Commencing this dissertation by means of a touchstone is ideal to translate abstract concepts such as information, knowledge and memory into a physical project.

The starting point of the following investigation is the University of Pretoria and its main objective namely information. Forming the basis of information, are letters, forming words, sentences and ultimately languages. These include spoken languages, written languages (historical languages) and even computer (binary) languages. Sentences at the base of the touchstone all refer to the universe. Mind-boggling and intriguing to most, unknown and daunting to others the universe remains one of the things in our frame of reference that still has some undiscovered secrets. It reminds one strongly of information - also vast and sometimes intimidating, yet it holds several "secrets" that still need to be discovered. People have captured information in various ways, but capturing anything implies tying it down – taming it in a sense so that it can be accessed later on.

When this information is acquired by a human being, it becomes knowledge. Like pillars within the vast landscape of information, the human becomes a carrier of that knowledge. After this acquisition, the knowledge needs to be recalled and then applied. In its most basic form, recollection is summarized by the concept of memory. Memory is defined on various levels, as mentioned the first refers to recalling, then sharing that knowledge, and then creating additional layers of
memory. Like strings connecting the pins of knowledge, memory forms a network of relationships, both direct and indirect.

Distinguished in red, the new information commences from pins of existing knowledge and the interaction between the fields of knowledge supports this new information. Although it cannot be separated from existing fields of knowledge, it exists on another level (containing influences from current social trends and other needs that will be captured and stored).

The red string on the model points to future memory that is created through existing knowledge and new information. Perspex tubes, independent from the grid of structured information-knowledge relationships, spans the levels created by the previous memory (green and blue string) and knowledge to carry the future memory (red string) to elevated meaning. The Perspex tubes, transparent and not clearly distinguishable, refer to the metaphysical (human experiences like conversation) that in turn facilitates and generates the future memory (red string).