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Intro ction

*All the world is a stage;
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts;*
-Shakespeare, As you like it: 2/7 c.1650.

Introduction

The city consists of a series of parts, ranging from buildings to monuments, services and infrastructure (fig. 1.1). However, these parts are not the only components that make up the city (Krier, 1980: 40). In fact, the urban environment is far more complex, comprising of a series of scales and layers shuffling between cultural, social and economic strata (Dewar & Uytendogaardt, 1991: 12). Public space is the city's main connective tissue, consolidating these various urban components within a single space (fig. 1.1).

As an urban component, public space is the interface by which the city is made legible to its inhabitants (Krier, 1980: 43). It is at this interface (threshold between city and public space) that architecture has the critical potential in celebrating and enhancing the urban environment. However, with more incoherent town planning, public space has lost its true value within South African cities (Jordaan, 1989: 26-29). Currently Pretoria is in limbo between an occidental post-colonial city and an African city. The emphasis of the public has shifted to the street interface (to illustrate this point a series of mapping and case studies is used to examine everyday public life). This is confirmed by the research of Koolhaas (2005, 625) on mutated African cities. The dissertation attempts to explore these new forms of mutated public space manifesting within the city, through defining a typology of liminal public space.

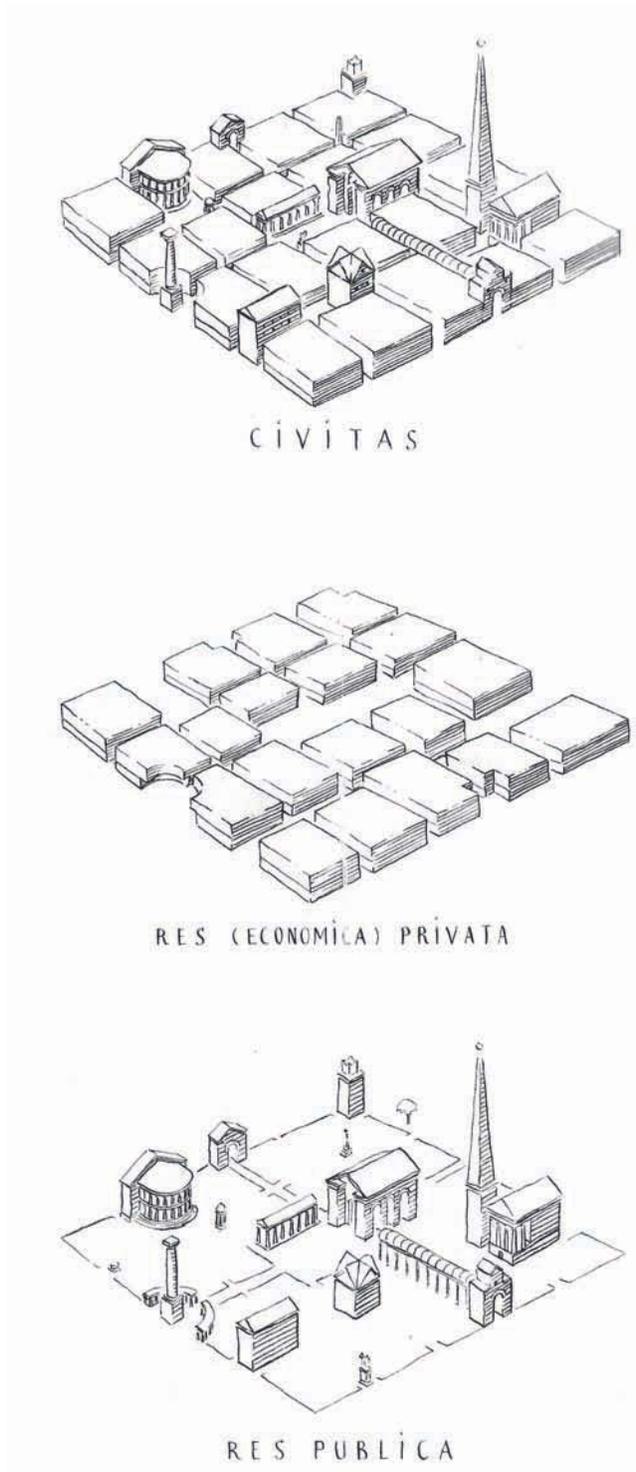


fig. 1.1 Urban Spatial hierarchy [public space]

The dissertation promotes the understanding of everyday activities as parts of the urban environment; not in opposition it.

The discourse will investigate the public realm within the urban environment, by way of an understanding of the quotidian context. Through researching how the city is used and appropriated for its everyday activities, a suitable architectural typology can be developed (liminal public infrastructure). Where the project challenges how architecture can celebrate these everyday performances within the city, as well as enhancing the user's perception and experience therein.

The project thus aims to both celebrate and enhance the quotidian context of the city, through the development of a responsive spatial typology and exploring the concept of liminal public infrastructure. The dissertation promotes the understanding of everyday activities as part of the urban environment; not in opposition to it. This encompasses the spatial identity of the city, where the design aims to uplift the urban context by providing a stage for these everyday spectacles (fig. 1.2).



fig. 1.2 Praxis of quotidian context [public space]

The dissertation is a manifestation of the research and theoretical stand point. The focus is thus placed on two inter-related topics, **public space** and **the everyday**; a quantitative mapping of the public urban realm is accomplished, while a qualitative understanding of the everyday context is documented. The project sets out to celebrate the spectacle of the everyday within the public realm (fig. 1.3). This is further studied through mixed media such as film, photography and drawing. The project proposes a programmable urban surface and a 'surveillance space' for the city. The following chapters will discuss the theoretical premise, followed by an explanation of the context as an architectural manifestation thereof.

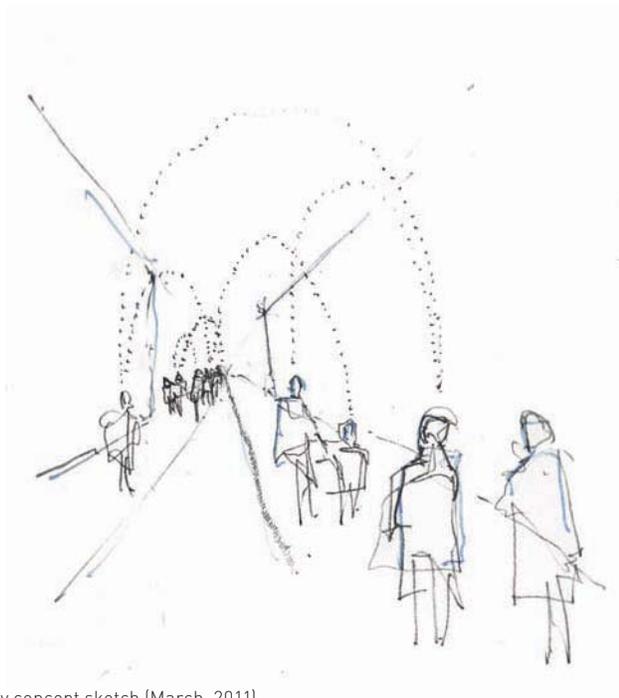


fig. 1.3 Early concept sketch (March, 2011)