

02 theoretical premise



The realm of theoretical discourse is a foundation for the perspectives that guide the choice of organising design principles and design constraints. Rowe (1987:115) elaborates that theory is assumed to be about general principles with applicability beyond specific cases, and, whether it comes by way of systematic speculation and codification or by way of more indirect experience, to be well substantiated.

What follows is the derivation of a normative position presenting the location and identification of an issue under contention, an assessment of prevailing practise and a counterproposal with its rationale.

The normative position, 'designing from the inside out', establishes the premise for the design approach. Co-dependent design, or symbiosis, is investigated to describe the relationship between the installation and host. This temporary relationship and the migrating nature of the exhibition provide the backdrop for the 'imprint' as well as 'movement and nomadism' theories.

2.1 INSIDE-OUT

Johnson (1987:30) states that the inside refers to a location that is physically or symbolically separated from another location that is exterior to it. The locations of inside and outside generate different spatial experiences and, by association, suggest different perspectives of the world. We use the spatial and experiential distinction between inside and out to help structure our understanding of the world.

What perspective is to be adopted toward the architectural enclosure?

Franck and Lepori (2007:19) ask, if an enclosure has a roof and walls, "do we imagine being inside the *space*, or do we imagine being on the exterior, contemplating the *form* the shelter makes?"

When describing a residence with the word 'house', it evokes an image of the exterior. If, however, one accepts the word 'home', a series of sentimental and sensorial moments come to mind, a sense of place (Spankie 2007:243). Inside, we are surrounded; we occupy the spatial depth and shadows, engaging all the senses. Outside, we are confronted by surface; we can see the exterior shell and perhaps see into the structure, but not experience it.

"Outside we are spectators; inside we are occupants."

(Franck & Lepori 2007:19)

Therefore, when accepting that the interior is “a contextualized backdrop for all human engagement” (Caan 2007:52) and further describing the human as the occupant, it stands to reason that interior design should be approached from an occupant’s perspective – from the inside.

Saarinen (1956) notes that “one should always design a thing by considering it in its next larger context – a chair in a room, a room in a house, a house in an environment, an environment in a city plan.” When considering Saarinen’s approach and accepting that any movement from the inside out depends on a previous intake from the outside, one could argue that when designing for the human occupant,

the approach should be to design from the inside out. According to Lepori (2007:5), design from the inside out challenges the status quo approach. She states that the traditional design approach, based on market values, abstract personal aesthetic criteria, technical standards and mechanical reproduction is not invalid but rather incomplete. This conventional approach lacks concern for human, physical and emotional values.

Design from the inside out could be facilitated by two templates. One involves the language of shapes and materials and is concerned with a reevaluation of the senses as a means of relating to the world.

The other is related to an idea of design as opportunity for socio-cultural as well as personal transformation.

Caan (2007:52) defines the interior as a contextualised backdrop for all human engagement as being more than the sum of its parts. According to Lao Tse (Kakuzo 1998), “the reality of the building does not consist in roof and walls but in the space within to be lived in.” Interiors have at their core people and space.

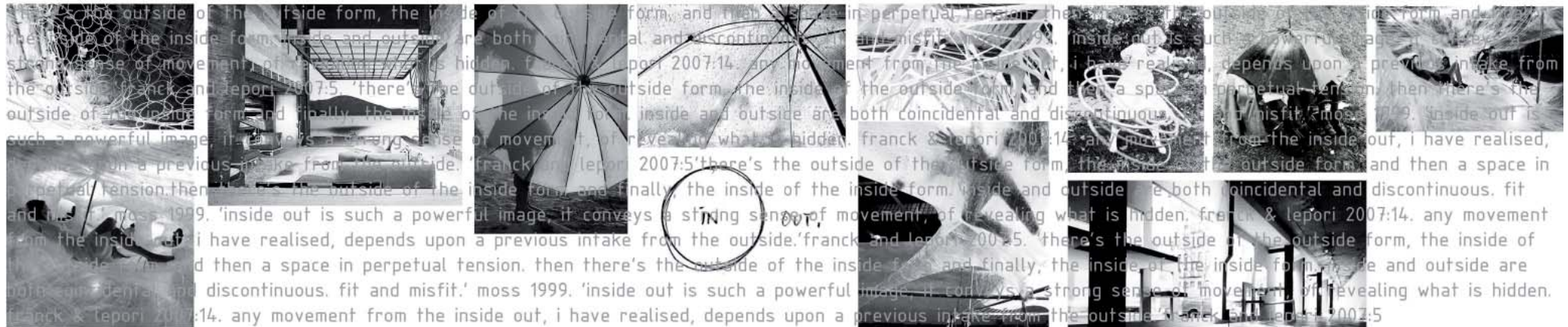


FIGURE 2.1 Collage depicting inside-out approach

2.2 CO-DEPENDENT DESIGN

Co-dependence, also known as symbiosis, describes a mutually beneficial relationship between different people or groups (OUPSA & DUSAE 2010). When the concept is applied to the built environment, it could suggest inter-reliant architectural systems.

At the Edinburgh College of Art, it is taught that all interior design sites and conditions are architectural (Milton 2007:7). Thus, there exists a physical dependency of interior design on the architectural site.

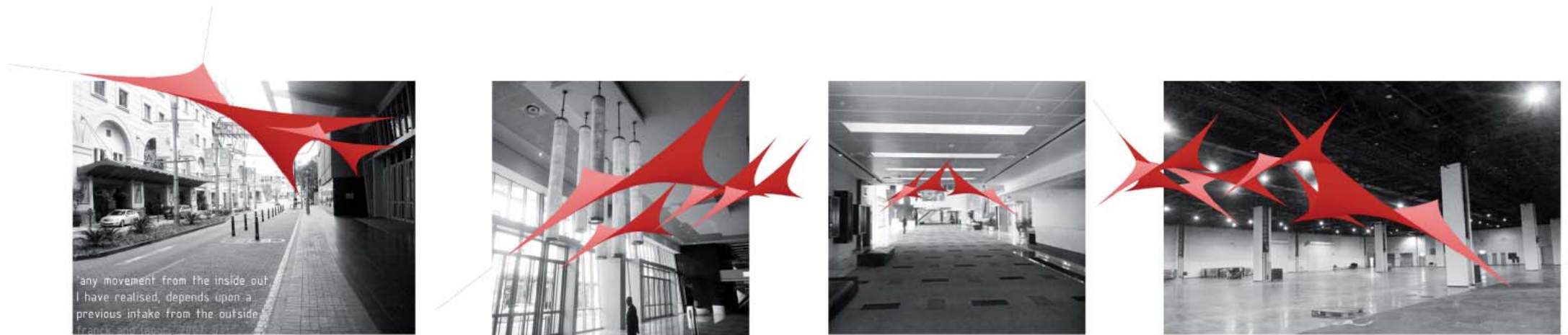
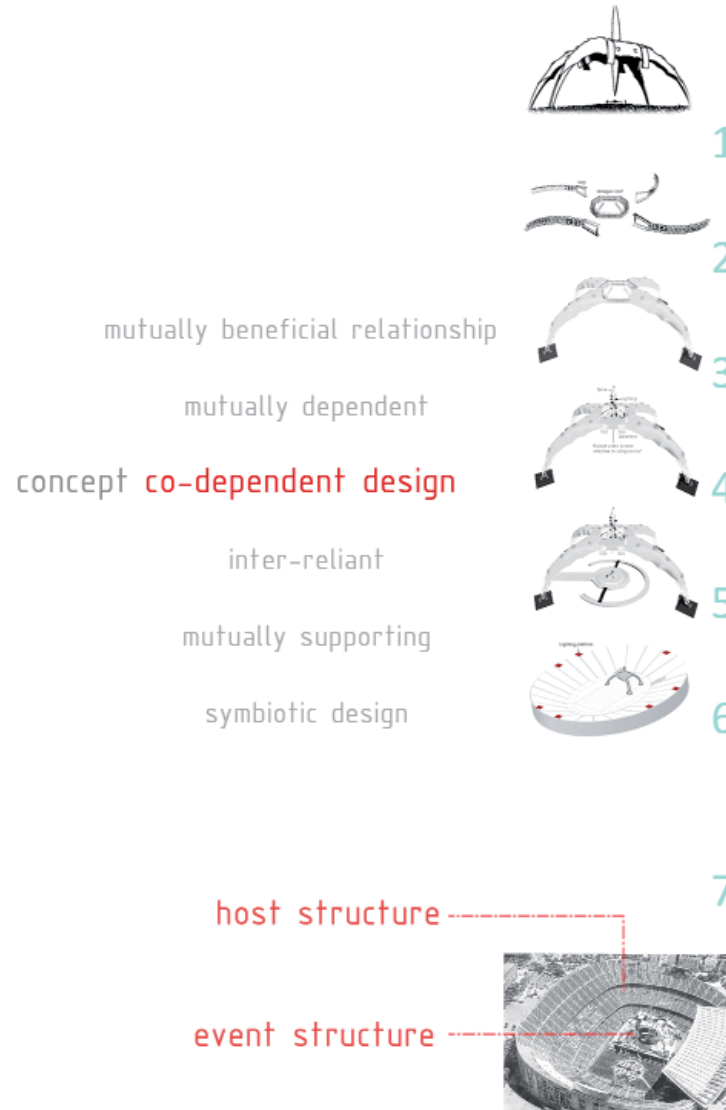


FIGURE 2.2 Collage translating inside-out's dependence on a previous intake from the outside-in, photos taken at SCC

Caan (2007:54) makes the analogy that the interiors discipline is to the built environment what psychology is to the world of science. She describes the parallel between architecture and interior design, not by means of physics or structure, but psychology and the behavioural sciences.

The beginning of the 20th century featured an understanding of human health, that was dominated by a biomedical perspective, and characterised by a point of view in which "health was defined as the absence of illness" (Uskul & Sherman 2009). This view has been replaced by a bio-psychosocial model that emphasises the role played by socio-cultural forces in the shaping of health and related psychological experiences (Engel 1977). In 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) defined health 'as a complete state of physical, mental and social well-being.

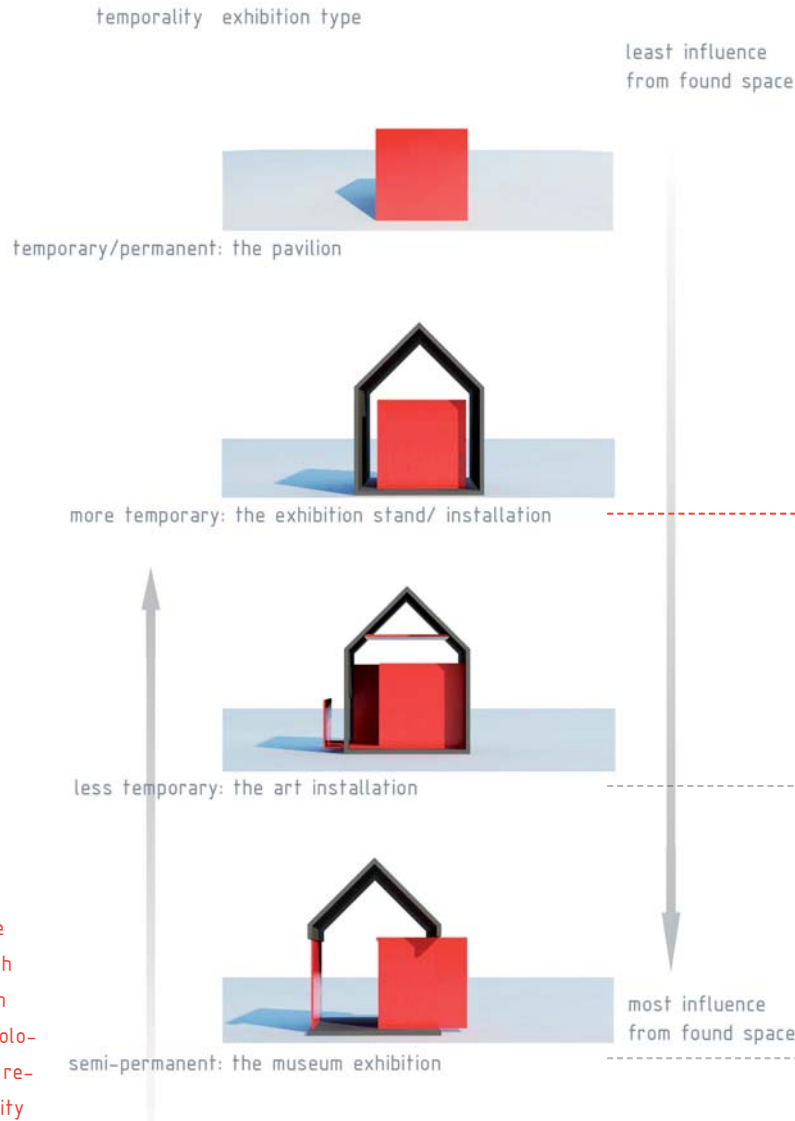
When agreeing with Lepori (2007:5) that "the built environment influences people both physically and emotionally", it is reasoned that by designing the built environment, we produce values in relation to the occupant and his 'health'.



If interior design is dependent on the architectural shell as site, and architecture relies on the interior qualities for the occupant's trinity of 'well-being' and behavioural sciences, one could describe the relationship between interior design and architecture as co-dependent.

This project applies the theory to the relationship between the IFI exhibition (event structure) and the exhibition host. The U2 360° stage (2008) by Mark Fisher is used as precedent for this type of relationship. The 360° stage is seen as the event structure. The tiered football stadiums (which are the preferred venues) are seen as the host structures. The event structure is dependent on the existing services offered by the host structure. In return, the 360° stage design can increase the capacities of the venues by about 15–20%, which benefits both the host and event (Waddell 2009). The stage also evokes a temporary sense of place. A U2 fan describes the stage with the words, "there is no destination, only a feeling" (Blogger 2009).

FIGURE 2.3 U2 360° stage co-dependent relationship with football stadium



2.2.1 THE DESIGN APPROACH

Hay (2007:35) describes interior design as ‘the spatial manipulation of an existing building whilst engaging its structural DNA, history, context, orientation and proposed programme.’ He classifies three architectural approaches to facilitate these structural and spatial changes:

Installation

“The new elements are placed within the boundaries of the building. The design or grouping of these elements may be influenced by the existing, but the fit is not exact and should the elements be removed then the building would revert to its original state.” Hay (2007:35)

Insertion

“If a new autonomous element, the dimensions of which are completely dictated by those of the existing, that is, it is build to fit, is placed within the confines of the existing.” Hay (2007:35)

Intervention

“If the existing building is so transformed that it can no longer viably exist independently and the nature of the remodelling is such that the existing and new are completely intertwined.” Hay (2007:35)

Hay’s architectural approaches could also be translated through the relationship between an exhibition and its host. Locker (2011:07) describes exhibition design as being symbiotic and experimental in nature. She states that the discipline overlaps a wide range of design subjects in order to communicate clearly, but in terms of spatial intervention, interior design is its closest relative.

The the IFI Interiors Biennale 2013 would approach and react to the various exhibition sites as an ‘installation’.

FIGURE 2.4 The design approach correlated with exhibition typologies and their related temporality

dictionary definition (oupsa & dusae 2010): to make an impression on, to fix an idea firmly in some one's mind, a mark or outline made by pressing something on to a softer substance, a lasting effect. the project specific definition: the slight, temporary adaptation of the event structure (IFI Installation) to the host structure (exhibition venue) for the duration of the event, lasting effect the event has on the design community and discipline, effect transferred to client. dictionary definition (oupsa & dusae 2010): to make an impression on, to fix an idea firmly in some one's mind, a mark or outline made by pressing something on to a softer substance, a lasting effect. the project specific definition: the slight, temporary adaptation of the event structure (IFI Installation) to the host structure (exhibition venue) for the duration of the event, lasting effect the event has on the design community and discipline, effect transferred to client. dictionary definition (oupsa & dusae 2010): to make an impression on, to fix an idea firmly in some one's mind, a mark or



2.3 IMPRINT

An imprint is to make an impression or mark on, to fix (an idea) firmly in someone's mind (OUPSA & DUSAE 2010). It also describes a mark or outline made by pressing something onto a softer substance; it could also be a lasting effect.

The U2 360° stage (2008) by Mark Fisher remains mostly identical in design and construction between host venues. There exists, however, a slight variation. The site preparation and base constructed prior to the stage construction is suited to the specific host and also managed and constructed by the host agent (Waddell 2009). The event lighting platforms utilise the host lighting pylons to latch on to. This variation and adaptation to the host structure, existing in the joint between the host and otherwise standard event structure, will be known as the imprint.

The project specific definition of imprinting could be relayed as the slight, temporary adaptation of the event structure to the host structure for the duration of the event. It could also describe the lasting effect the event has on the design community and discipline, which could also be transferred from the designer to the client. The imprint theory also depicts the impression the exhibition leaves on the host community.

FIGURE 2.5 Growth imprint on aloe leaf relating imprint theory

2.4 MOVEMENT AND NOMADISM

The first dimension in pictorial form is created when a “point sets itself in motion...The point moves...and the line comes into being. If the line shifts to form a plane, we obtain a two-dimensional element. In the movement from plane to spaces, the clash of planes gives rise to body (three dimensional)” (Klee 1961).

The African nomadic structure serves as home, meeting place, religious and political institutional symbol. According to Prussin (1995:2) it recognises changes in the nature of the environment, occupancy and mobility, and accommodates variations in lifestyle and social structure by shifts between sedentary and nomadic existence.

The IFI Interiors Biennale 2013 travelling exhibition consists of planar surfaces that shift to create a three-dimensional installation. During transport the planes explore the available space inside the intermodal container within a two-dimensional capacity. For the duration of the Biennale, the planes investigate and populate the host, shaping a three-dimensional space. The fourth dimension, time, is added when the user is introduced to the exhibition volume. Holl (1996:11) describes a movement through space with “a twist and turn of the head, mysteries gradually unfolding, fields of overlapping perspectives charged with a range of light. A range of smell, sound, and material”.

Prussin (1995:xi) discusses the importance of the built environment, material culture, and collective creativity within the African nomadic culture. She encourages the relinquishing of the familiar preoccupation with permanent, monumental architectural structures and the appreciation for the ingenuity and complexity of nomadic structures. It is described as an environment of transformation, motion, and continuity. Mobility can be described as the underlying purpose of a nomadic structure, but a movable structure is not necessarily temporary. The inherent structural and communicative knowledge instilled by the configuration could be seen as permanent.

Instill: gradually but firmly establish an idea or attitude in a person’s mind (OUPSA and DUSAE 2010).

When the technical organisation or the rational order of a thing overwhelms our attention, it is an object of use. In dictionary terms (OUPSA and DUSAE 2010), art refers to the conscious arrangement of colours, forms or other elements in a manner that affects the sense of beauty. It is sensual, not practical. Technique is often demeaned in favour of concept or personal expression. Prussin (1995:xx) argues that nomadic architecture’s beauty emanates from an ethos unique to its technique and context.

Established exhibition designer Reinhard (1998:203) does not describe his work as trade fair stands, but rather systems, tailored to the client’s product and company language. These systems, rather than once off exhibits, are designed for reuse and ease of transformation.

The IFI exhibition’s success depends upon the ability to communicate. As an ambassador for the interiors profession, it should not only create the sensual experience that is synonymous with the discipline, but also subtly communicate the aesthetic of the technical configuration derived from the context.

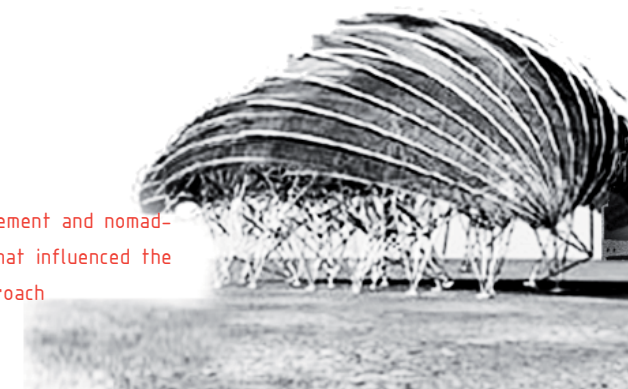


FIGURE 2.6 Movement and nomadism in design that influenced the theoretical approach

