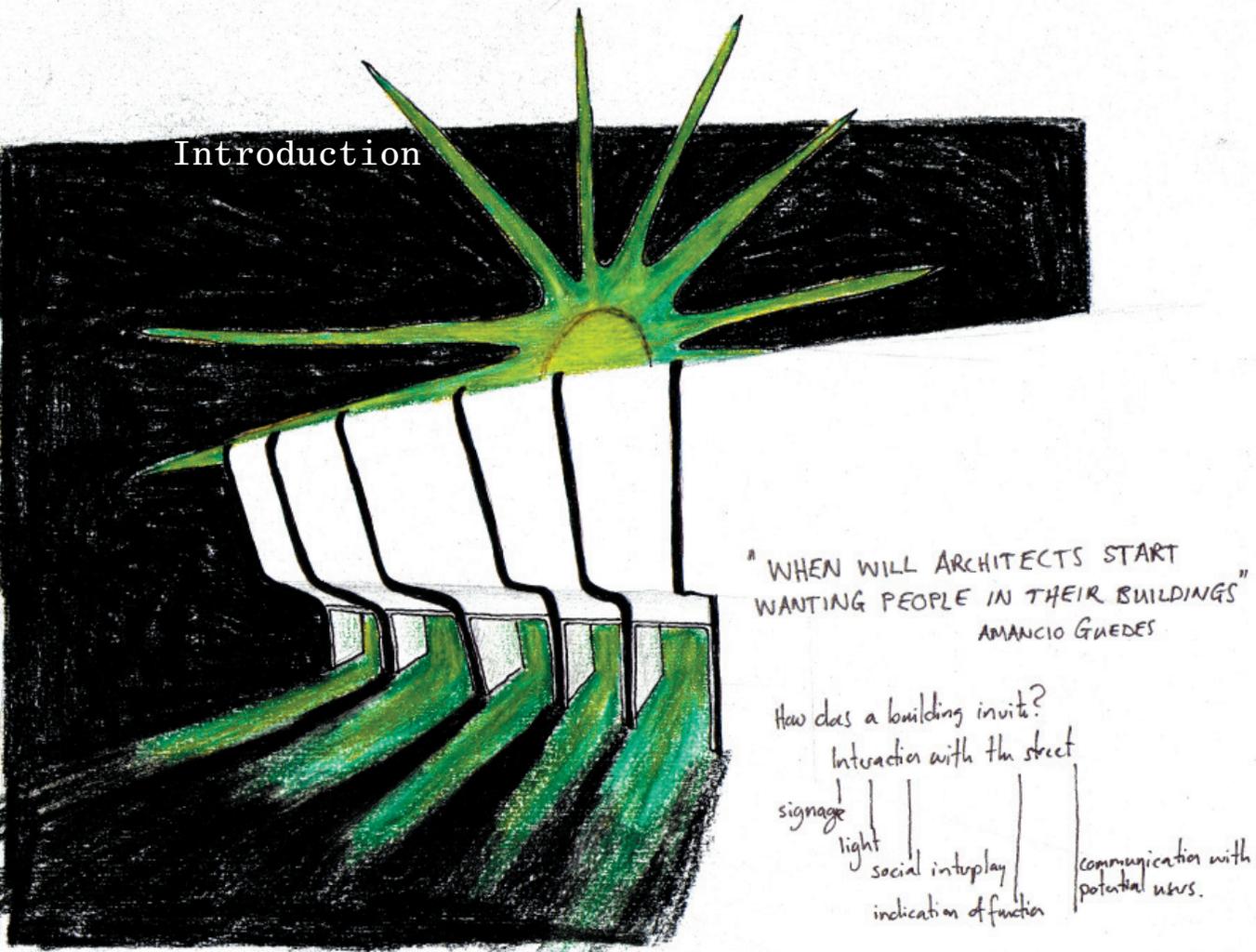


## Introduction



Pretoria is a city fragmented by fear and the lack of social cohesion between the various cultural factions that constitute its urban population. Fear of the otherness from which our parents shielded our eyes in our youth; the otherness that we half-heartedly explored in adolescence; the otherness that we exuberantly defended as young adults; and the otherness from which we, despite of it all, protect our younger siblings.

If a city is compared with an organism, the different cultural factions are its organs. In order for an organism to continue living, it is vital for the organs to coexist in the body and function interdependently. The organs have its own individual identity in the same way that the organism has identity, but the organ collective composes organism identity. If Pretoria were to be compared to an organism, organ entropy will surely lead to a very sick organism. A city is rumoured to be a stage for social interplay, an opportunity to learn, experience, understand and be enlightened. In the case of Pretoria, the different cultural factions live their lives with a sense of transcendental pretence towards the other (almost unwittingly, we were brought

up this way); every organ is of greater relevance compared to the other. How do we heal this condition?

Awareness: the general rule of thumb is that, in order for any unfavourable condition to be resolved, people are to be made aware of its cause. Surely the most effective means of reaching the urban population of Pretoria would be by means of visual media: television, images and art. (If a strong image were to be created as a symbol of contemporary society [in a similar way The Thinker by Rodin symbolises the Italian Renaissance] it would be an image of a man sitting in front of a television, frozen in a moment of horror and disbelief, as a contractor [invisible to the sitting man] cuts the power cable.) Another hurdle: the director or artist inevitably gives physical manifestation to individual assumptions and biases in her/his work. In order to achieve plurality, the production(s) has to be co-produced by individuals from multiple cultural factions.

The proposed development is a communication research centre. A post-graduate design school that produces concrete communication projects, merging culture and

industry. A design school where participants are actively prepared for practice. The idea is that the city of Pretoria becomes the research centre's playground, formulating an image and making people aware of the collective identity. Image is used here as the reputation or persona of the city, as defined in the Oxford dictionary (2000).

Architect, sculptor and painter, Pancho Guedes, remarked that artists limiting themselves to only one medium of expression (be it sculpture, painting, design etc.) are crippled as if by amputation. "He reduces himself to a mere part in his attempts to suppress his contradictions, his confusions, his conflicts" (Guedes 2003: 20). The communication research centre will be an attempt to reunite the different mediums of expression, a multi-disciplinary school, which promotes the cross-pollination of a wide variety of creative disciplines in the production process. The research centre will admit participants that hold a degree or diploma in fields as wide as creative writing, cinema, music, graphic/industrial design, interactive media, fine art, architecture and photography.

In order to continually produce

projects that interpret contemporary society truthfully, the communication research centre will operate in a similar way to an artist residency (The Bag Factory in Johannesburg, for example). Participants admitted will be under the age of 27 and only allowed to study at the centre for a maximum duration of one year.

The aim of the research centre is twofold. Firstly, as a cultural hub in the Pretoria CBD, transforming the inner city's image through projects as diverse as bus stop shelters to legibility and film. Pretoria will, in time, be transformed into a city with a strong identity (visually and mentally) - a true African capital city. The visual media produced by the communication research centre will attempt to dissolve the fear of the unknown: the other.

Secondly, the programme includes a public-participant interface, by means of a gallery, theatre and café, where participants can express their ideas and exhibit and/or screen their productions for the general public to view and experience. In effect a fun place to frequent in Pretoria CBD, luring the "gated communities" back into the city centre, facilitating social interplay.

South African president, Thabo Mbeki, stated, while addressing the Corporate Council Summit in 1997, "Those that have eyes to see, let them see. The African Renaissance is upon us" (Lange 1998: 10). The underlying rationale behind the proposed development is an attempt to initiate the cultural liberation of Pretoria and, being the administrative capital of South Africa, truly set the notion of an African Renaissance in motion.

Leopold S. Senghor asserted, in his essay *L'Esprit de la Civilisation ou les Lois de la Culture Négro-Africaine* (1956), that "The African Renaissance will depend largely on the work of African writers and artists, more so than on politicians. Political liberation is dependent on cultural liberation. Cultural liberation, in the spirit of ubuntu, is only possible if contemporary African writers and artists make Africa herself their school; draw sustenance from their own soil" (Senghor 1965: 71).

The physical location of such a communication research centre is of immense importance, and the success of the project's aspirations depended, to a large extent, on the site selection. The chosen site had to comply with specific

predetermined criteria, or risk the success of the project's desired impact.

The site has to be located near an entrance node into the Pretoria CBD, in order for the research centre to communicate the desired image of a culturally perceptive city. Furthermore it is important for Pretoria to convey this image to visitors and its urban population alike.

Another important consideration is that the site has to be located in an area in need of urban regeneration, which is not threatening to the wealthier communities of Pretoria east. Preferably a site that do/did facilitate social interaction to which the communication research centre can add and strengthen.

Proximity to a large public transport node is crucial to facilitate the connectivity of the researchers to the city and simultaneously the general public to the research centre.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

The city of Tshwane, the former capital and current administrative capital of South Africa has been, and still is, experiencing processes of change since the country's first democratic election in 1994. Tshwane has the potential of becoming the seed of African enlightenment and in effect the thrown for the African renaissance.

Unfortunately, the fall of apartheid led to a fragmentation of Tshwane's multifarious population, which resulted in island communities that dissociate themselves from each other. The city of Tshwane requires a unifying and articulate sense of identity, before it can become a African capital city of international measure.

Contemporary culture can be characterised as a visual culture and art, as a means of providing social commentary, becomes an important vehicle for social change. In order for art to reach urban dwellers and impart a strong, thought altering message, the different creative disciplines cannot function independently. A city-scale campaign demands a unification of creative disciplines in order to achieve a far-reaching effect.

These are the concerns which delimit this dissertation.

FIG. 1.1 Poster for teatri 90. 1999. Omar Vulpinari for Fabrica



#### PRECEDENT STUDY: FABRICA

Benetton Art School, Villorba, Treviso, Italy 1992- 1994 designed by Tadao Ando.

#### CORPORATION IN THE CLASSROOM

Fabrica is an applied creativity laboratory that follows in the tradition of the early 20th century European schools, including Hochschule fur Gestaltung and the Bauhaus, which were preoccupied with design solutions for the industrial society of the future. It is a multicultural, innovative and international entity that unites culture and industry. New forms of expression are researched that communicate "industrial culture" through means of design, music, cinema, photography and publishing, among others.

It is applied in the sense that students participate in the realisation of actual projects under the guidance of distinguished professionals – hands-on approach to training. Fabrica is all about cross-fertilisation and interactivity of disciplines and cultural identities in the "production" process. Fabrica is home to 30 participants from across the world that shapes the model for design schools of the future. (Triggs 2001: 151)

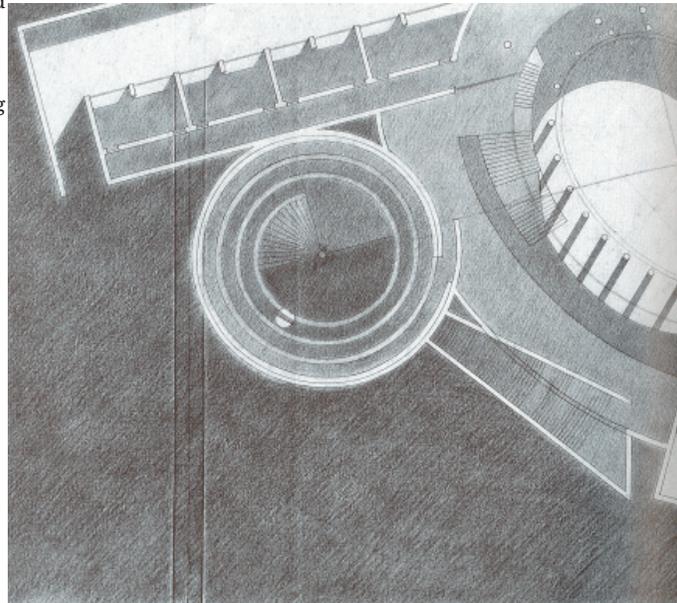
#### BUILDING

Fabrica is located 30 km from Venice and shares the site with a 17th century Palladian Villa. The old Villa was retained, with much of the design based on maintaining and revitalising it, and the greater part of the new structure was placed underground, opening into a sequence of sunken courts or plazas. The infusion and harmony of cultures anticipate dynamic interaction among the young people who study there, where the plazas become stages of varied interchange.

A colonnaded gallery penetrates the existing villa and extends over a pond before it. The introduction of the new architecture revitalises the villa and accentuates its charm. The building concept was to "accentuate the spirit of the new, producing creative energy from dialogue with the past and to realise the concept through an essentially practical programme", as stated by Tadao Ando. (Futagawa 1993: 218).

#### FACILITIES

Study rooms, studios, workshops, an art gallery, a lecture hall, a cafeteria, a restaurant, a library and an archive.



#### REACTION

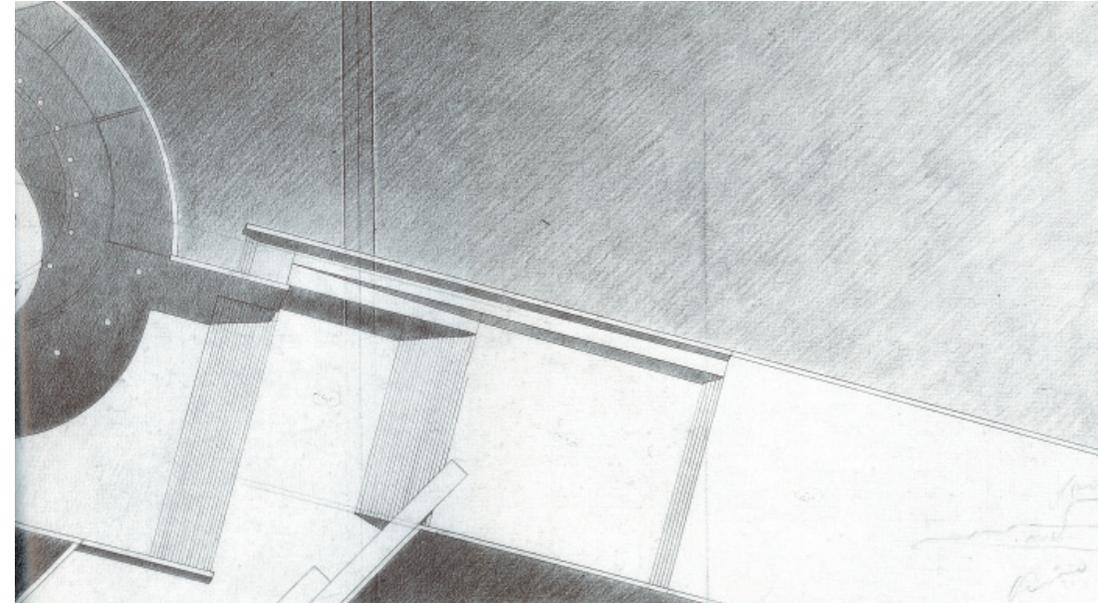
The design is very legible, with public, semi-public and semi-private space well articulated. Wide walkways and junctions are spaces designed to facilitate meetings between participants and public. As the visitor progresses from the entrance along a wide colonnaded walkway towards the gallery, he/she is educated in the inner workings of this culture-producing machine. He/she experiences where the old

(Palladian villa) and the new meet, passes a studio and bears witness to the design process, as well as experiences the product as he/she enters the gallery. The gallery opens up into the central colonnaded plaza, around which all the activity generators are located - a space designed for interaction.

The central plaza gives a strong sense of enclosure and, through the reiteration of ionic columns, makes reference to the historical

significance of the site, a reminder of Roman classical architecture. A sequence of open courts encourages meetings between cultures and disciplines.

Given that the greater part of the building is underground, the building proves sensitive towards the rural scenery of the region, as well as the Palladian villa. The old villa has also been restored to accommodate additional studio space.



The liberal, counter-culture character of Fabrica is somewhat subdued by the formal, blank architecture of the building. The building does not reflect the community that inhabits it - Fabrica is loud, colourful and in-your-face.

FIG. 1.2 FABRICA (Benetton Art School) plan

## CLIENT PROFILE

### DESIGN SOUTH AFRICA

Design South Africa is the recognised association representing a voice for professional designers in South Africa.

*The objectives of Design South Africa are to:*

- Enhance the awareness, understanding and appreciation of professional designers within the business community, government and the general public*
- Encourage and assist new designers, students and professional designers in the development of their design quality and professional practice*
- Assist buyers and users of design in identifying professional levels of design quality and professional practice and in working with professional designers*
- Improve the working relationships between practicing designers and suppliers to the design process*
- Provide educators with feedback on industry expectations of graduates, the impact of current curriculum's and changes to industry requirements*
- Promote social responsible design projects and programmes*
- Rigorously pursue and promote equity policies and principles within the industry*

### FUTURE PROSPECTS

*Whilst exploring our uniqueness, it is important to synergise leading edge technology and functional qualities, in keeping with the modern and progressing nature of indigenous design. Africa has a long and proud history of ingenious design. For centuries its people have intrigued humanity with creations that range from the great Egyptian pyramids, intricately designed textiles and jewellery up to the South African designed automatic pool cleaner and first wind up radio. However, Africa as a developing continent is still in the phase of transformation from being the source of inspiration, towards becoming a leading force in the design and production world. The impact of design of design is immense. Design influences every aspect of our daily lives and the responsibilities facing designers increases daily.*

*Challenges facing South Africa's designers in the future include developing a meaningful understanding and interpretation of all environments and cultures, mastering technological advances and an aggressive contribution to the national economy and job creation. (www.dsa.org.za)*

## FUNDING AGENCY

### JOHNNIC COMMUNICATIONS

Johnnic Communications is South Africa's leading media and entertainment agency, which reflects and celebrates the diversity of South African culture.

Johnnic Communications publishes newspapers (including: *The Sunday Times*, *Sowetan*, *Sunday World*, *Daily Dispatch*, *The Herald* and *Weekend Post*), magazines (including: *Elle*, *Longevity* and *SA Homeowner*), shareholder of music label *Gallo Music* and distributes movies and exhibits through Nu Metro.

### VISION

*To be an integrated entertainment and media group that is globally competitive and dominant in the African continent. (www.johncom.co.za)*

## ACCOMMODATION SCHEDULE

### COMMUNICATION RESEARCH CENTRE

Description: Administration

Function: Administering the Communication Research Centre

Room	Size	Standard
Reception & administration	46m <sup>2</sup>	
Offices (x2)	40m <sup>2</sup>	200 lux
Personel lounge	24m <sup>2</sup>	
School director's office & reception	60m <sup>2</sup>	200 lux
Conference Room (x2)	25m <sup>2</sup> each	10 persons each. With audio visual equipment.

Description: Studios

Function: The production of commissioned projects

Room	Size	Standard
Studios	680m <sup>2</sup> 24 partisipants, 28m <sup>2</sup> pp	Natural lighting is preferable Artificial lighting: 500-1000 lux Large windows: 1/3 - 1/4 of floor space
Plotter room	34m <sup>2</sup>	
Kitchen space for studios	70m <sup>2</sup> 24 patisipants & staff	
Storage	50m <sup>2</sup>	

Description: Workshop

Function: The production of commissioned projects

Room	Size	Standard
Workshop	150m <sup>2</sup>	Concrete or wood-block on concrete floor Good natural ventilation
Storage	70m <sup>2</sup>	
Locker room/sanitary	22m <sup>2</sup> staff and participants	
Loading/unloading	20m <sup>2</sup>	
Foundry yard	185m <sup>2</sup>	

Description: Music and recording studio

Function: The production of music as an expression of identity

Room	Size	Standard
Control room	40m <sup>2</sup>	All digital recording - 2x computer workstations + mixer (1 x 2m) 2 x sound engineers + client seating
Live room	68m <sup>2</sup>	Irregular shape, preferably no parallel walls Floating wooden floor, isolated from concrete flr. with rubber joint to prevent structural noise Reverberation time: R60 ( 1.2 seconds ) Midrange absorber acoustic tiles All glazed openings should be double glazing
Piano room	11m <sup>2</sup> (5 x 2.2m)	
Sampling studio	35m <sup>2</sup>	
Equipment storage	18m <sup>2</sup>	

Description: Archive

Function: The storage of previously completed projects & for research purposes

Room	Size	Standard
Help desk & computer lab	40m <sup>2</sup>	9 computer stations
Archive	305m <sup>2</sup>	Open access book shelving Individual workstations Project storage: filing equipment

### RESEARCH CENTRE / PUBLIC INTERFACE

Description: Exhibition space

Function: Exhibition of projects done by the research centre's; Exhibition space for Design South Africa

Room	size	Standard
Lobby	64m <sup>2</sup>	
Information desk	10m <sup>2</sup>	
Exhibition space	760m <sup>2</sup>	
Audio visual exhibition space	40m <sup>2</sup>	
Loading / unloading	36m <sup>2</sup>	
Storage	68m <sup>2</sup>	

Description: Auditorium / small theatre

Function: Music performances; film screenings; lectures & discussions

Room	size	Standard
Auditorium	295m <sup>2</sup>	Mechanically ventilated Disabled access Type II vinyl wall coverings for 1/3 of the front of the sidewalls; Fabric covered acoustical panels for 2/3 of back sidewalls and rear walls. Raised floor-HVAC ducted supply through floor vents Ducted ceiling return air vents
	Stage 64m <sup>2</sup> Seating 180m <sup>2</sup>	142 seats at 1.1m <sup>2</sup> p/seat (1.22 x 0.9m)
Rear projection room	14m <sup>2</sup>	Manual & programmable lighting controls
Storage	30m <sup>2</sup>	
Cloakroom	6.6m <sup>2</sup>	

Description: Library

Function: Subject specific library for students and visitors

Room	size	Standard
Assistance desk/security check	22m <sup>2</sup> (2 x 11m <sup>2</sup> )	
Published space	320m <sup>2</sup>	Open stack system can accommodate between 17 030 - 26 780 books Internal climate: 18-22 degrees celcius
Reading space	58m <sup>2</sup>	1.5m <sup>2</sup> per visitor - 40 readers. 200 lux
Individual workstations	20 workstations at 2.2m <sup>2</sup> each	200 lux
Storage	10m <sup>2</sup>	

Description: Cafe that serves light lunches and meals

Function: Open to general public, partisipants and office workers - place for social interchange

Serves as spill-out area for the auditorium / theatre

Room	size	Standard
Seating - inside	30m <sup>2</sup>	45 patrons (1.3m <sup>2</sup> p/p)
Seating - outside	30m <sup>2</sup> - easily expandable	
loading/unloading	Cold storage - 6m <sup>2</sup> Dry storage - 36m <sup>2</sup>	
kitchen	90m <sup>2</sup>	100 lux. 45 patrons (2.0m <sup>2</sup> p/p)
Storage	35m <sup>2</sup>	
Bar	16.5m <sup>2</sup>	

CORPORATE COMPONENT

Description: Office space

Function: To attract companies involved in creatice disciplines.

Bringing the corporation and the classroom closer together

Room	size	Standard
Reception	6m <sup>2</sup>	
Corporate lounge/waiting area	20m <sup>2</sup>	
Rentable/adjustable office space	740m <sup>2</sup>	200 lux
Fixed office space	270m <sup>2</sup>	200 lux
Conference rooms	4 x 25m <sup>2</sup> each	200 lux
Fixed storage	50m <sup>2</sup> (2 x 25m <sup>2</sup> )	
kitchen space	60m <sup>2</sup> [2 x (12m <sup>2</sup> + 18m <sup>2</sup> )]	

Description: Basement

Function: Basement parking for corporate component and HVAC plant room

Room	size	Standard
Parking	700m <sup>2</sup>	29 parking bays + 1 disabled parking bay
Loading bay	170m <sup>2</sup>	Can accommodate medium wheel base delivery trucks
Plant room	80m <sup>2</sup> (68m <sup>2</sup> + 12m <sup>2</sup> )	

Description: Open parking

Function: Parking for visitors and partisipants

Room	size	Standard
Partisipant / visitor parking	640m <sup>2</sup>	25 parking bays including 2x disabled parking bays
Research centre admin parking	50m <sup>2</sup>	4 parking bays
Workshop loading zone	220m <sup>2</sup>	Can accommodate medium wheel base delivery trucks

Description: Circulation

Function: movement of people and goods

Room	size	Standard
Corridors	1.6m min. width	
Stairs	170mm risers 250mm, min. tread width	
Ramps	All ramps: min. gradient of 1:12	