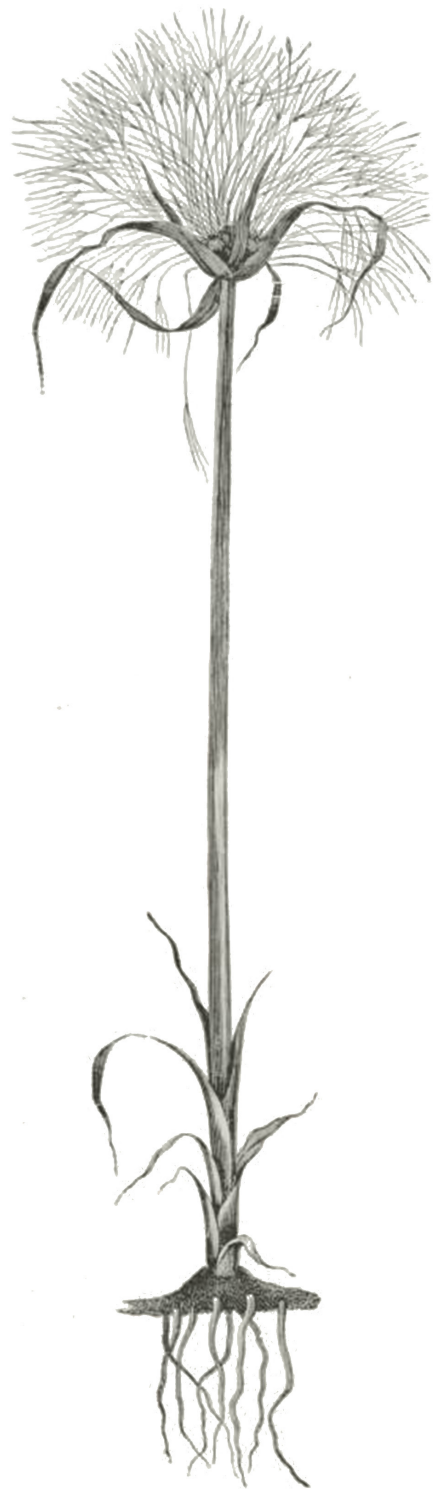




## Chapter 6

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Manifesto.



PAPYRUS PLANT.

Fig 6.1: Papyrus Grass; botanical art (Ebers 1878)

## 6.1 Manifesto.

The term “manifesto” is derived from the Latin word manifestum, meaning clear or conspicuous (Turner 2014). After the theoretical discourse several conclusions were reached. These conclusions all hint towards what the design intent of this thesis is, but a lack of clarity still lingers. The practice of issuing art and design manifestos became widespread in the 20th century (Turner 2014), which the author feels is a helpful tool to clearly state what the design decisions will be based on, and which summarizes the most important elements of the research that need to be kept in mind when looking at the design. Herewith the author’s Landscape Architecture Manifesto:

- 1 Our understanding of nature should be made visible through ecological design. Ecological processes need to be visible in order for them to be expressive.
- 2 Refuse to create boundaries that confine nature and define movement. We should allow edges to transgress, merely guide energies, and design with change as medium.
- 3 Set a stage for the performance of nature through the creation of environmental conditions for plant habitats, but allow nature to grow and evolve intuitively and improvise and transcend through its inherent potential to embrace change.
- 4 The view of plants as groups of interrelated species modifying and interacting with each other, rather than as separate and fixed, demonstrates flexibility — a main motif of landscape form.
- 5 Plants should be the main focus and attraction in botanical gardens and not merely what we pass by in order to get to a destination.
- 6 Allow landscape to be unpredictable. Maintenance does not determine whether the garden is aesthetically pleasing.
- 7 Do more than represent nature; allow nature to represent itself. Redefine the role of the landscape architect and the way that landscapes are represented.
- 8 The sequential spatial experience of the landscape should immerse the audience in nature and confront, excite and captivate the visitor. This can be done by using repetition/ pattern to compose and order the landscape.
- 9 Refuse to create a pre-conceived plan, narrative or set way of movement.
- 10 ‘Region’ is a unifying theme or identity to which local inhabitants relate.

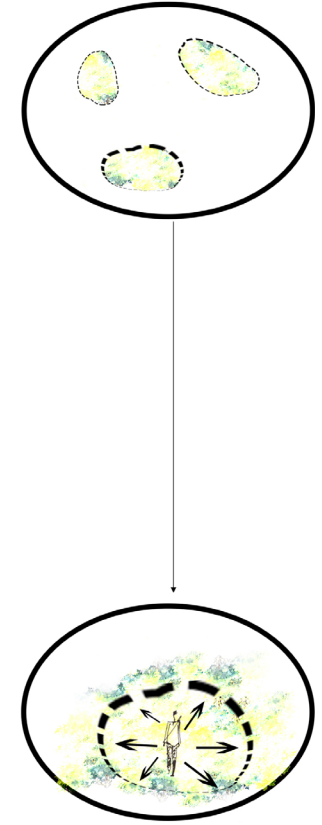
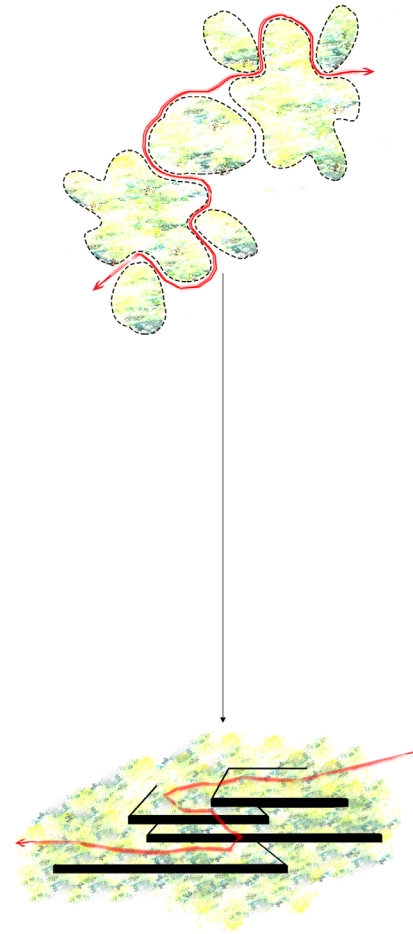
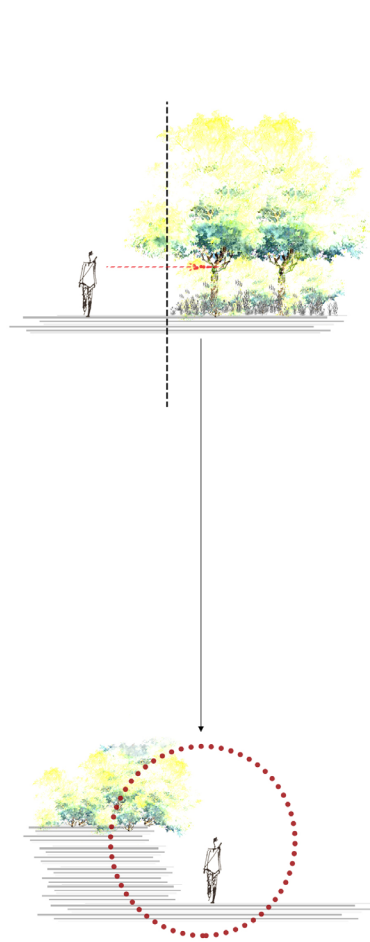
### MAN-LANDSCAPE RELATIONSHIP

### BOUNDARY VS. MOVEMENT

### THEME GARDEN EXPERIENCE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROPOSED CONDITIONS



**PURIST / MAINTENANCE**

**MAN-PLANT INTERACTION**

**SEQUENCE OF EXPERIENCE / PATTERNS**

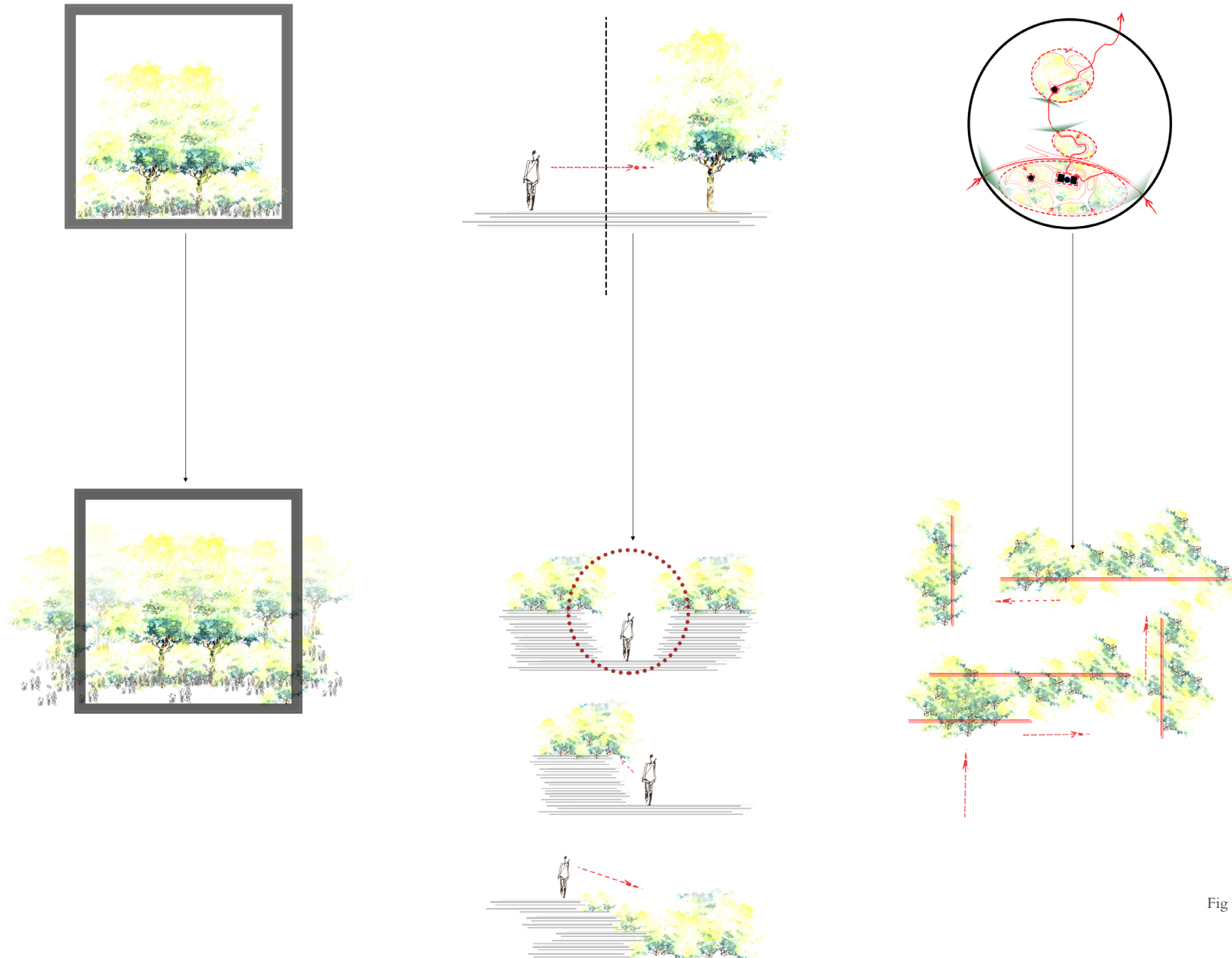


Fig 6.2: Design principles (Author 2015)

## 6.2 Design principles

Stemming from the manifesto, there are certain design principles that developed from it that will be carried out and pulled through the entirety of this design dissertation. These principles include:

### 6.2.1 Man-landscape relationship



Fig 6.3: Man-landscape relationship (Author 2015)

This entails embracing our ability and knowledge to “command ecologically”, as Ian McHarg (1995) stated, setting the stage for nature to perform and to transcend the everyday. In the landscape architectural profession this would mean to work with topography as design medium to create varied microclimates that help to form habitats that support plant growth and ecological processes. It also speaks about man’s relationship with the larger landscape. It is currently a common theme in landscape architecture, as mentioned in Chapter 4, to refer to the regional landscape as a unifying theme that people can identify and relate with. This type of design emphasizes the area’s unique, natural features, and the importance of being responsive to the region.

The ecological stage will focus on the abstraction of the essence of the Pretoria

### FIVE ESSENCES OF THE PRETORIA LANDSCAPE

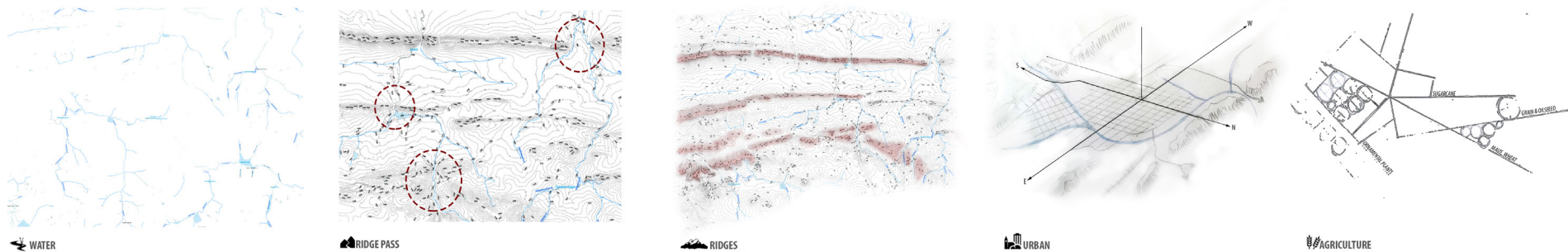


Fig 6.5: Essence of the Pretoria region (Author 2015)

landscape, and thus the exploitation and representation of the geology and vegetation

occurring in the region. Also, it would allow people to relate to the larger landscape and experience it more intensely and immediately than would usually be the case.

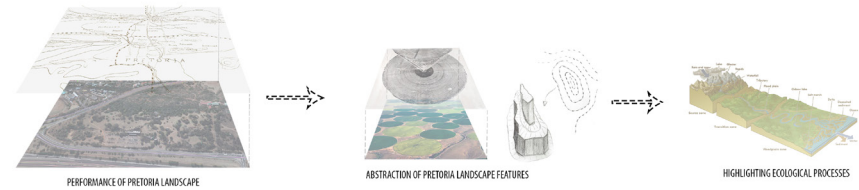


Fig 6.4: Regional design approach (Author 2015)

After an analysis of the regional landscape, five essences were identified which capture the essence of the Pretoria landscape and define the features that make Pretoria the beautiful city that it is today. These essences are water, ridges, ridge pass/poort, urban and agricultural landscapes, which can be seen in figure 6.4 below. The design will incorporate the natural landscape including the ridges, water and ridge pass, rather than the man-made landscape as the botanical garden is situated in an urban environment. Agriculture is not included in the design as there is already agricultural research grounds right across the street from the botanical gardens on the University of Pretoria’s experimental farm (proef-plaas). As mentioned in chapter 5 the botanical garden grounds were under ownership of the University, but they sold the land due to toxic soils making it impossible to farm naturally on that specific piece of land.

6.2.2 **Boundary vs. movement**

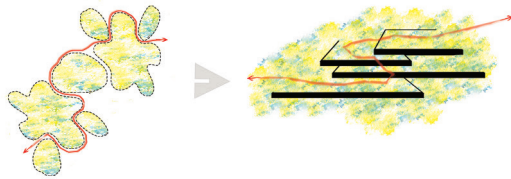


Fig 6.6: Boundary vs. movement diagram (Author 2015)

This refers to the refusal to create boundaries that confine nature and define movement. Edges should be allowed to transgress limits; one should merely guide energies and design with change as medium. Plants should remain the main focus of a botanical garden; thus the design should excite visitors so that they move spontaneously towards nature and not pass it by as a side matter. The ecological stage will become the structure that guides the energies of movement of people through the site as well as the energies of plants. This structure will not confine either of these energies but rather celebrate them, so that nature and the experience thereof can be transcendent.

6.2.3 **Theme garden experience**

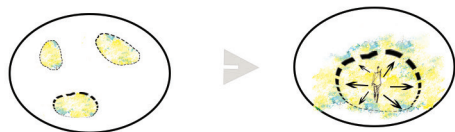


Fig 6.7: Theme garden diagram (Author 2015)

Theme gardens in botanical gardens is a very valid way of showing the unique qualities of nature to the audience. Botanic gardens are regarded as ideal places to encourage exploration of the relationship of nature to culture: by their physical framing of the plant collections, botanic gardens can act as a metaphor for the complex relationships that humanity has with the environment (Sanders 2007:1213). The informal atmosphere of many botanic gardens and their relaxing, aesthetic environments are also seen by Ballantyne, Packer and Hughes (2007) as effective contexts in which to present to visitors the interrelationships among plants, animals and humans and to explain how the different components are inextricably linked and interdependent. Although, currently, theme displays in botanical gardens focus more on having a diverse collection of plants rather than allowing the landscape and the plants to be experienced by man in such a way as to rekindle their interest and respect towards the awe that is nature. Theme gardens should focus on the

experience thereof and what the visitors can learn out of it rather than merely displaying plants in manicured plant beds.

6.2.4 **Picturesque / Maintenance**



Fig 6.8: Picturesque/maintenance diagram (Author 2015)

Landscape architecture can support the principle that maintenance does not determine whether the garden is aesthetically pleasing. This does not mean that we need to completely remove ourselves from interfering with nature and return to the concept of wild nature. It merely means that we need to highlight beauty in a temporal landscape that changes with the changing of seasons. This would also refer to the fact that we cannot confine nature to preconceived ideas on a plan, trimming it to define perfectly groomed edges. We need to return to the humble approach of gardeners, who have an observe and react relationship with nature and respond to what nature tells them it wants to be. The gardener does not, as in the picturesque paradigm, focus on creating a romanticized image of landscape that is captured as a perfectly composed viewpoint; he is rather interested in what happens outside the frame of this picture: what influences nature, forms it and interacts with it and how nature reacts in return.

6.2.5 **Man - plant interaction**



Fig 6.9: Man - plant interaction diagram (Author 2015)

This principle is closely related to the man – landscape relationship principle; however, there is a scale difference. Thus, through building onto the first principle as well as through doing research for this thesis, the realization dawned that the ecological stage needs to be designed in such a way that the main focus falls on



nature in all its glory, in other words, drawing people's attention to parts of a plant or the landscape that might go unnoticed in a natural environment. We need not remove design from landscape in order for it to perform ecologically. We can utilise design to make an ecological feature an experience in its own right. Also, in most landscapes the conditions are such that interaction is largely frowned upon. We need to design landscapes so that interaction is welcomed, whether by plants, humans or any other living being.

### 6.2.6 Sequence of experience / pattern

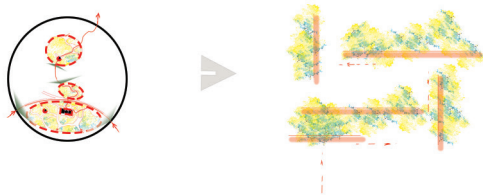


Fig 6.10: Theme garden diagram (Author 2015)

Meyer (2008) instructs the designer to replicate the natural process rather than the natural form. This principle can be applied through a pattern language as a way to make ecological processes visible and guide change in a landscape, with dance performance as a precedent of this idea. This pattern can order the landscape and attempt to create organised chaos within nature, thus still allowing unpredictability. The forms of the patterns needs provide a sequence of spatial experiences within the garden, even if this landscape approach is not a narrative. The form of the pattern should be based on what implications it will have on the ecological stage and how this influences the conditions withing which landscape performs.

### Conclusion

These design principles will be applied to the design of the Pretoria National Botanical Gardens and be discussed in more detail in the chapters that follow.