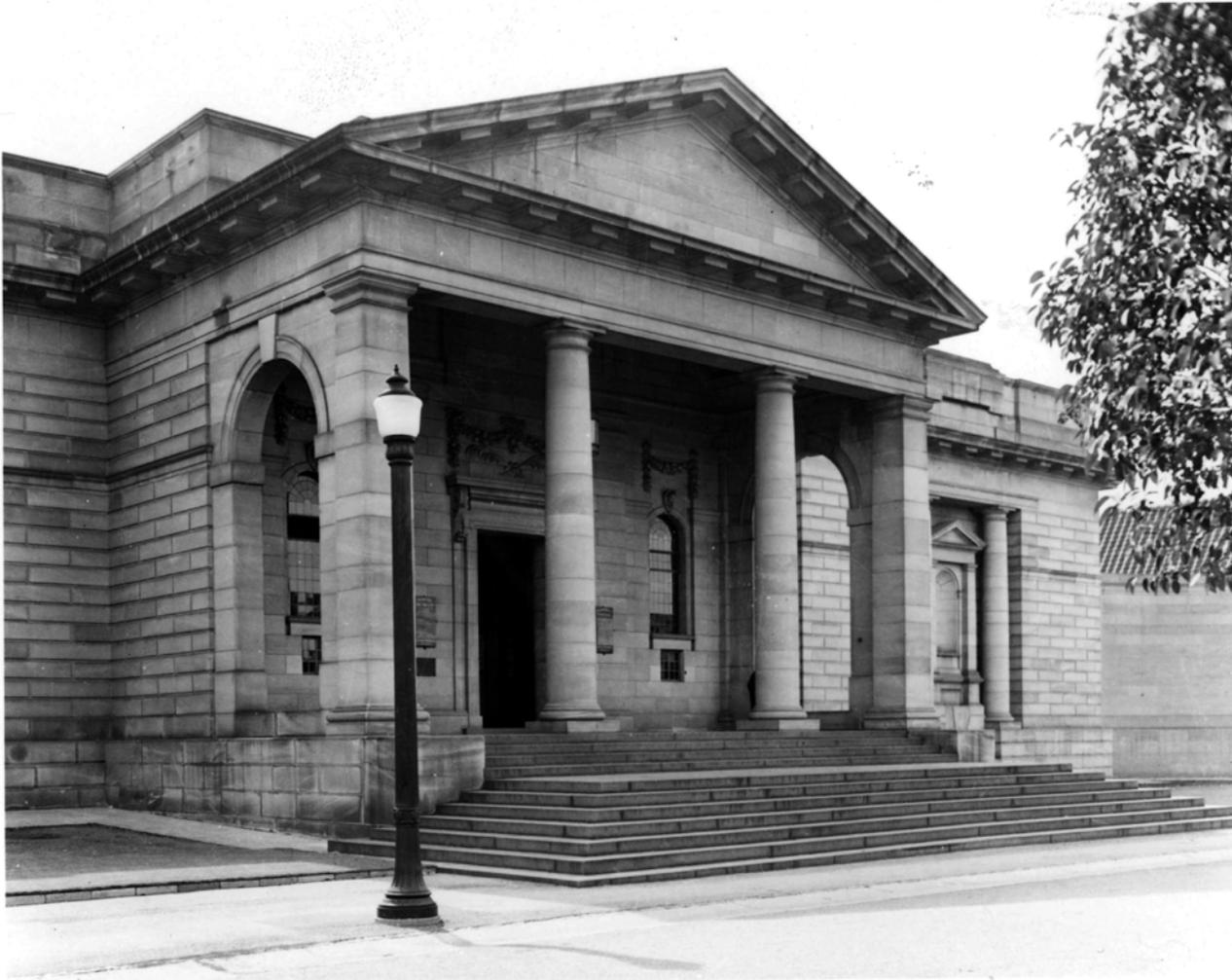


Figure 3: Photograph of the southern (and original) entrance of the gallery - taken between 1930-1950 (JAGA, N.d.)

3

DISCOVERY

Chapter 3 introduces JAG as a part of the site discovery and analysis.



Current page:

Figure 3.1: Photo of the southern entrance of the gallery - taken approximately between 1918 - 1930 (JAG Archive N.d.)

Opposite page:

Figure 3.2: Entrance doors into the first gallery space - original Lutyens entrance that is still used today

3.1. INTRODUCTION OF A COLONIAL CONSTRUCT

Discovery of the Johannesburg Art Gallery

DISCOVERING JAG



As a child, I recall visiting various galleries and museums, speedily walking (lest my mother reprimand me for running) past images and sculptures that failed to capture my attention, pausing only to stare in awe at those I considered fascinating or beautiful. I vaguely hear the soft echoing of slow footsteps in the gallery halls with the occasional whisper or giggle followed by a long and over-amplified hiss of “sbbbbb”.

On my first visit to the Johannesburg Art Gallery I was confused and disappointed when driving through the “entrance” from the street, only to see a parking lot filled with scraps of wood, looking onto what seemed to be the back-of-house of the gallery itself. If it weren’t for the signs in bright pink directing us to the main entrance we would not have known where to go. It was only inside the gallery that I felt an especially heightened sense of awe in comparison to the uncelebrated entry route.

The entrance to the gallery site is to the West, leading directly off King George Street. The series of images have been arranged to give the reader a step-by-step understanding of the entry sequence one would experience when visiting the gallery. From these images it is clear that the point of entry is in no way celebrated or shared with the public realm, but is rather hidden behind a row of palm trees, electrical cables, fences and parking lots.

The main entrance into the building, once past the security desks, is a vast, symmetrical space with high vaulted ceilings and impressive windows and shutters. At first you are encouraged to express appreciation for the building itself, as there is no art on the first main wall you encounter upon entry. It is only on the route through the building that one forgets about the structure housing the blank walls and concentrates on the amazing pieces of art found within.

I must admit that I was unaware of the value of the collection contained within JAG until seeing them myself and chatting to the librarian, Jo Burger, about the gallery building; its history; the temporary exhibitions and permanent collection housed there. The extent of the collection and the variety of local and international works (including Dali’s Lobster Phone, works by Picasso, William Kentridge and Chuck Close to name a few) was very impressive.

Snippets from JAG's collection



Figure 3.3: Gerard Sekoto's *Yellow Houses, A street in Sophiatown* (1940).



Figure 3.4: Penny Siopis' oil painting named *Melancholia* (1986).



Figure 3.5: Exhibition of JAG's Foundation collection, curated by Hugh Lane (the first curator of JAG). (Ceruti 2014)



Figure 3.6: *Aphrodisiac Telephone* by Salvador Dalí (1936).



Figure 3.7: Francisco Goya and Diane Victor prints from the JAG collection (Friends of JAG 2016).



Figure 3.8: *Due Ballerine* by Edgar Degas (1889).

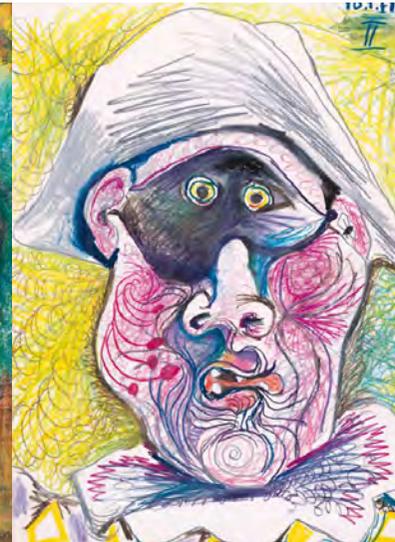
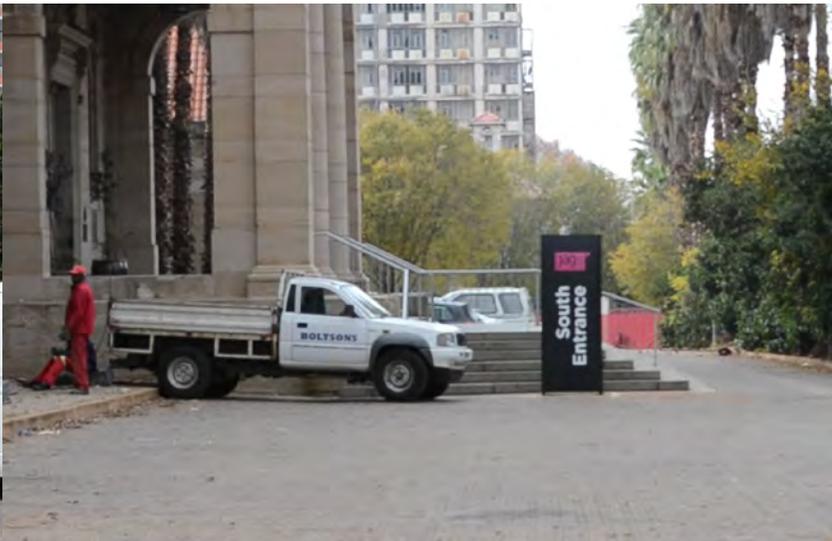


Figure 3.9: Drawing of *Tete d'arelequin* by Pablo Picasso (1970).

The uncelebrated entrance to JAG



Figure 3.10: Series of images depicting the entry in JAG from the street.



3.2. EVOLUTION OF JAG

Design and Structural Development of the Johannesburg Art Gallery

The Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG) was introduced to the south of Joubert Park as a dominant colonial construct, which would enhance the identity and role of the park in the city. Institutions such as these within Johannesburg were denied government grants and for this reason the construction of JAG could be considered an act of defiance by the inhabitants of Johannesburg with the project being privately funded by the Randlords (Carman 2015: 17). It can also be considered as a symbol of permanence, giving the message that “Johannesburg and its inhabitants were here to stay” (Carman 2015: 17).

Despite much protest from the South African design community towards hiring a non-South African citizen to design the gallery, the architect appointed for the project was England-based Edwin Lutyens, whose name was already being whispered in South Africa because of his professional friendship with Sir Herbert Baker (Carman 2015: 16). It was discovered that Sir Herbert Baker used Lutyens’ advice and design suggestions (found in sketches sent between the two men) in the making of the Union Buildings (Christenson 1996). It is likely that, for this reason, Sir Herbert Baker was appointed as a consultant on the design of the gallery, along with South African architect RR who managed the site works during Lutyens’ absence in Europe (Carman 2015: 20).

The site that was selected was situated along the railway, which was an integral part of Johannesburg’s existence and functioning. This scheme was originally part of a larger framework, incorporating the Union Grounds Park to the south of the railway into the greater park (Figure xx). The intention was to bridge over the railway line to provide direct access to the entrance of the gallery between the

two sides of the park on either side of the railway line, making JAG the heart of this extended green lung of the city (see figure 2.33). Lutyens’ master plan was however, never realised – the Southern half of the park was never connected and thus diminished over time. As a result, the original gallery entrance faces directly onto the fence of the railway, a space devoid of people and activity.

The original gallery building was not completed in its entirety, but remained as an open core of the original design. It was in this incomplete state that the official gallery opening was held, despite much protest from Lady Phillips herself.

In 1940, Lutyens designed an extension to the gallery (Aphane Wiew Architects and Urban Designers 2013). This design differed structurally from the original design as he introduced more contemporary ideas and nuances. Part of this extension housed the theatre room in the basement under the eastern wing.

The second major extension was completed as part of Johannesburg’s centenary celebrations in 1987. The postmodern extension by Meyer Pienaar Architects juxtaposes the Lutyens structure while still complementing its design features and ordering system. The main objective of the project was to make the gallery more accessible to its surroundings, introducing an entrance that faces the park in order to correct the shortcomings of the existing building. Other additional functions were to create new display areas, house workshop spaces and a restaurant. The project was completed and was well received on opening night when the building was illuminated and every section of the new gallery space housed an array of artworks. On this occasion it was unimaginable that this space, within

the next twenty years, would become derelict and almost entirely closed off to the public.

The Meyer Pienaar addition in 1986 relates well to the original design, especially when looking at the Post-Modern elements mimicking the existing language of the original building (Carman 2015: 23). The addition was to be the junction between the old architecture and the changing city while respectfully attaching to JAG. The addition was designed to complete the footprint as originally drawn by Lutyens, filling in the portions that were never built (Carman 2015: 16).

The addition however does not appear to be a welcoming entrance facing the park, but rather appears to be the back of the gallery, wrongfully facing what should be its main interface.

Opposite page:

Figure 3.11: First exhibition hall designed by Edward Lutyens.



In 2015, marking the building's centenary year, financing was once again granted by The City of Johannesburg to manage upgrades to the building. The Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) appointed heritage consultants and contractors to address the roof and air-conditioning in the building, paying specific attention to the Lutyens' portion of the gallery (Burger 2015). This section of the building has always remained in a relatively good condition, especially when compared to its contemporary counterpart, the Meyer Pienaar extension. As building work for the upgrades commenced, roof tiles were imported from Europe as a testament to the great care given to the selection of materials and their use on JAG, which was declared a national monument in 1993 (Carman 2015:31). It once again seemed as if the relevance and importance of this institution within the history of Johannesburg and South Africa was being recognised, which was a positive indication for future intentions.

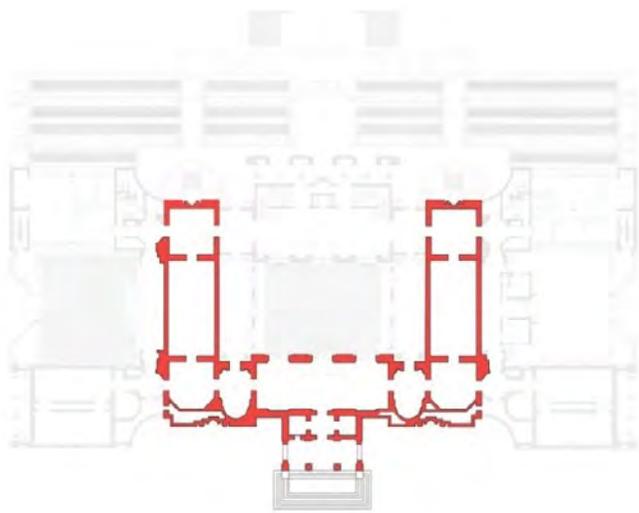
This feeling of elation however was destroyed when the first rains of 2016 came down and the problems in the renovations became apparent. The amount of water damage that occurred within Lutyens' section of JAG was enough to upset anyone with a mild interest in the gallery. Luckily, as heard in an interview with Jo Burger (2016), JAG's librarian, the staff acted quickly enough to salvage the artworks that hung in these rooms with only some requiring reframing. The western wing of the gallery is currently entirely closed off to the public due to the lifting parquet floors and the water damage on the walls being a hazard for any artwork kept there. This is evident when viewing the images taken of the building (see figure ...).

With each partitioned drywall and each timber sliding door

closed, the building and its artworks become more and more secret, with a vast amount of artworks being stored in all corners of the building, on floors and bars in the closed and dusty restaurant spaces and anywhere else with room to spare. Each unused surface has become part of the gallery's archive. This form of storage is not conducive to the proper care and preservation required for cultural artefacts and is causing relationships with international galleries to dwindle (Murdoch 2016).

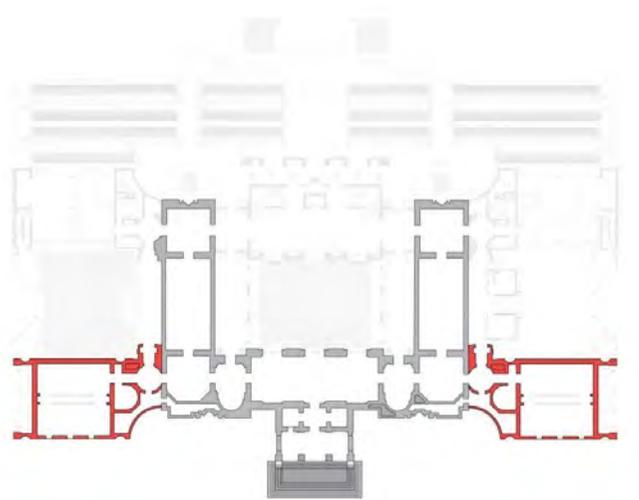
3.3. EXPLAINING THE PHYSICAL EXTENSIONS

Diagrams of the physical adaptations made to JAG



1915 - THE ORIGINAL BUILT FORM

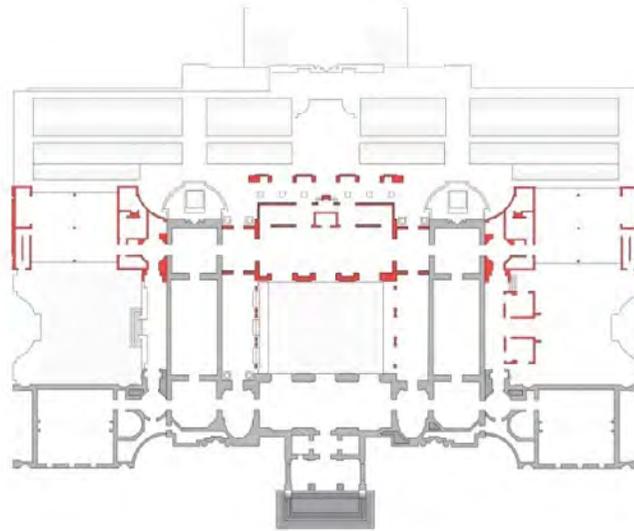
A section of the design by Edward Lutyens was built as the finances for the project ran low when stone was used as the main building material despite the architects recommendation to use brick and mortar to save on costs. The building was part of a larger master plan in which the gallery would have formed the center piece of a large public park. Due to a lack of funds and common interest, the master plan was never realized. The incomplete version resulted in a building that faces the wrong way. The entrance of the gallery faces directly onto submerged railway tracks forming a great part of the issue of accessibility to the gallery.



1940 - ATTENTION ON JAG ONCE MORE

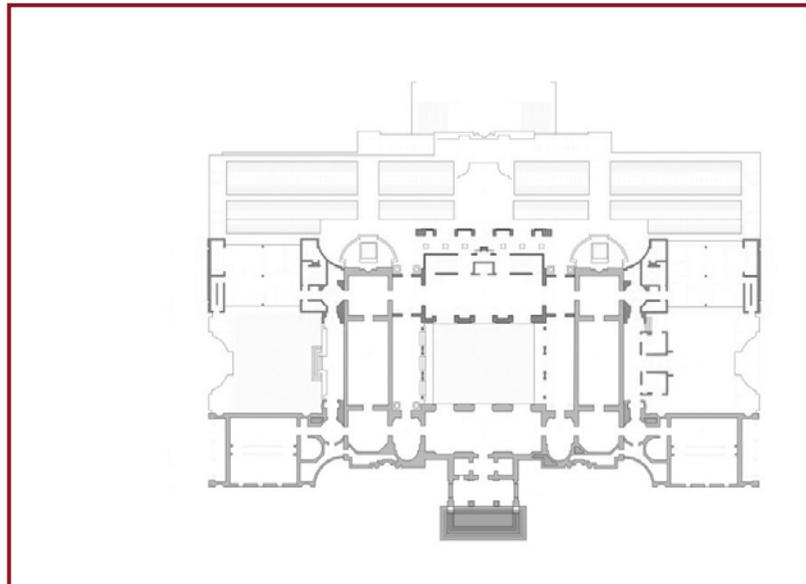
The two southern wings of Lutyens' original design were added in 1940 when the interest in the gallery flared in Johannesburg once more. It was now the local council who funded the project. This could be indicative of ZAR's acknowledgment of Johannesburg as a permanent city.

Figure 3.12: Diagrams indicating progression of the JAG building. All figures are adapted from Aphane Wiew Architects and Designers' *Conservation Management Plan for Johannesburg Art Gallery, City of Joburg* (2013)



1987 - ATTEMPTED INCLUSION

On Johannesburg's centenary in 1987, money was granted to improve the gallery by means of an extension to the north of the existing building. The extension aimed to create more usable gallery and introduce workshop spaces and, most importantly, to improve accessibility by adding an entrance that faced directly onto Joubert Park. In terms of a welcoming change, the extension is considered by many to fall short of the brief.



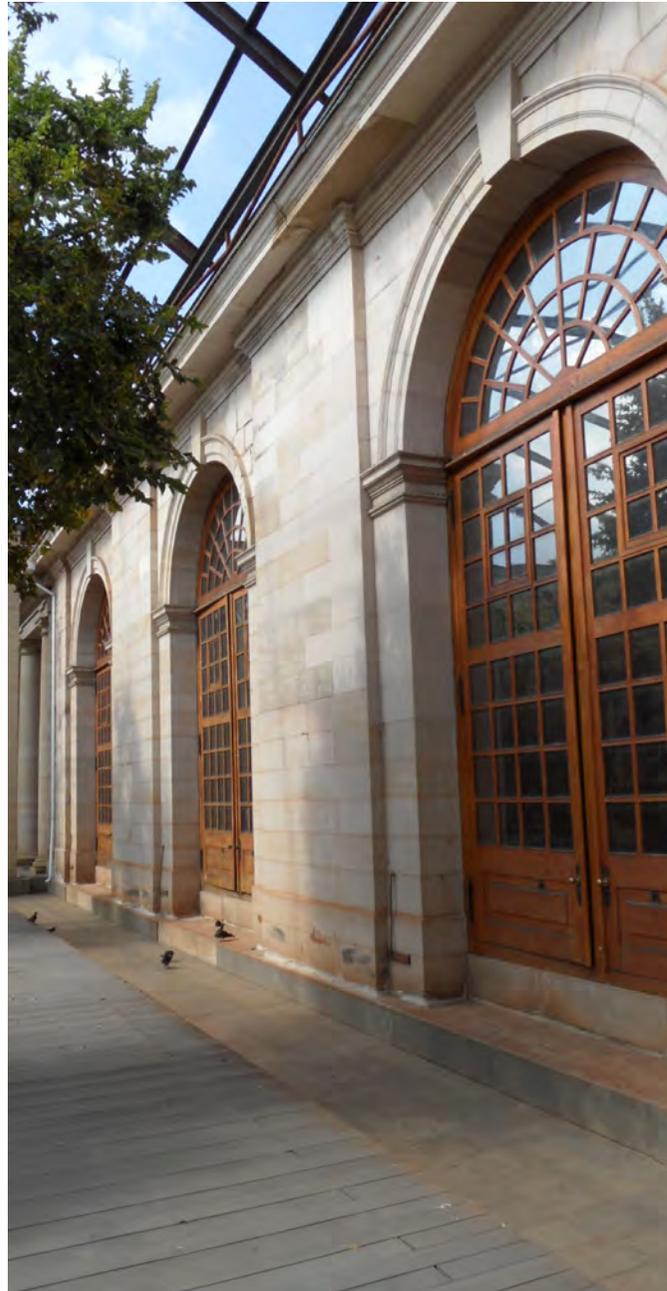
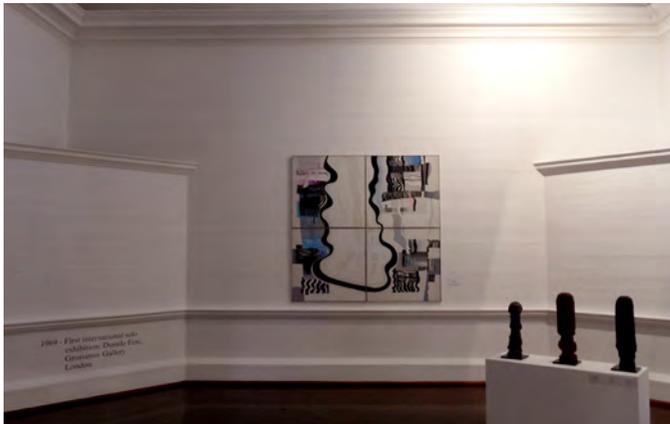
1994- DISCLOATION

Shortly after the northern extension, a palisade fence was erected around the gallery, cutting JAG off from its surroundings. This fence has since been at the center of various discussion within the discourse regarding the relevance of galleries in today's urban climate.

Many initiatives have been investigated to bridge the physical disconnect between the park and the gallery. The JDA's development document for an improved Johannesburg includes concept renders of potential interventions that could replace the fence with a more interactive installation. None of these interventions attempt to deal with the deeper issue around this fence and are, in essence, more elaborate fences that separate the gallery from the public space.

3.4. PHOTO ANALYSIS OF JAG

The Lutyens portion of the gallery



Current page:

Figure 3.13: First main exhibition space with arched doors and shutters and vaulted ceiling.

Figure 3.14: Walk-through exhibition space.

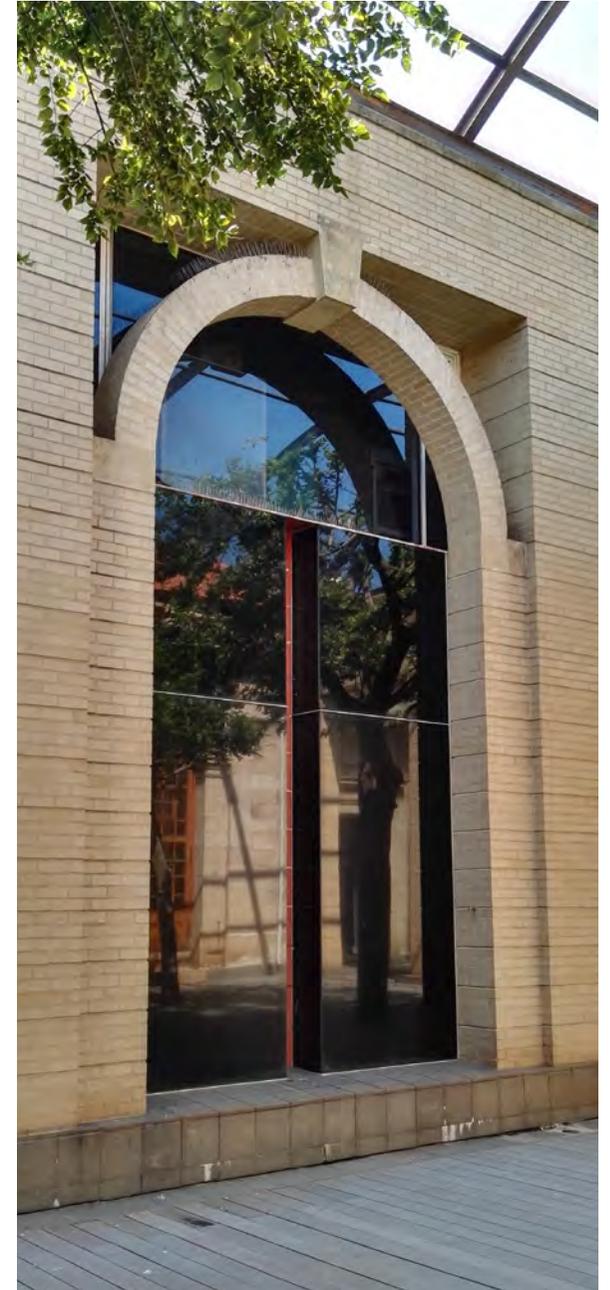
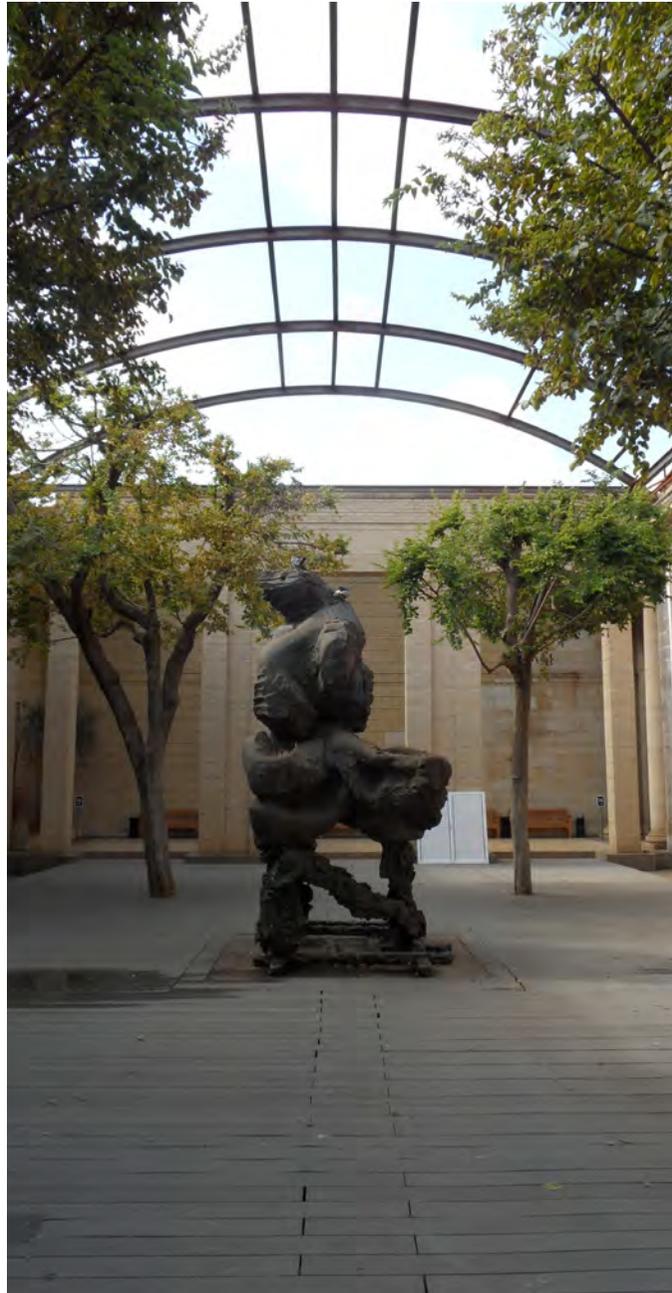
Figure 3.15: Wall in courtyard represents the joining of the old and the new Meyer Pienaar addition

Figure 3.16: Arched doorways in courtyard as part of Lutyens design.

Opposite page:

Figure 3.17: Central courtyard space, framed by the Lutyens building on the south and the Meyer Pienaar extension on the north.

Figure 3.18: Meyer Pienaar's reinvention of the arch, forming the northern wall of the courtyard.



Meyer Pienaar basement addition



Current page:

Figure 3.19: Main walkway in basement with lights made to look like light shafts.

Figure 3.20: Outdoor "fountain" space- currently unused and inaccessible to public.

Figure 3.21: Outdoor "fountain" space, now left derelict. Forms a barrier with the park.

Opposite page:

Figure 3.22: Main exhibition space in the basement.



The copper barrel vaulted roofs form the northern entrance facade toward the park

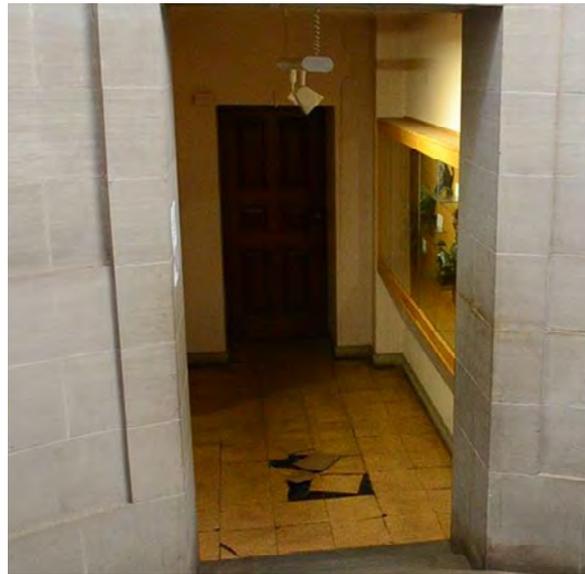


Figure 3.23: Ramps leading onto entrance platform alongside relentless and dead roofs and retaining wall.

Figure 3.24: View of roofs from upper floor of JAG.



Destruction of the Lutyens portion of JAG



DESTRUCTION OF HERITAGE

Destruction and decay of the Meyer Pienaar extension



Opposite page: Images from the Lutyens portion of JAG

Figure 3.25: Exhibition wing from the Lutyens' 1940 extension now closed off to the public and used as storage.

Figure 3.26: Due to on-going water problems the wings are left unused

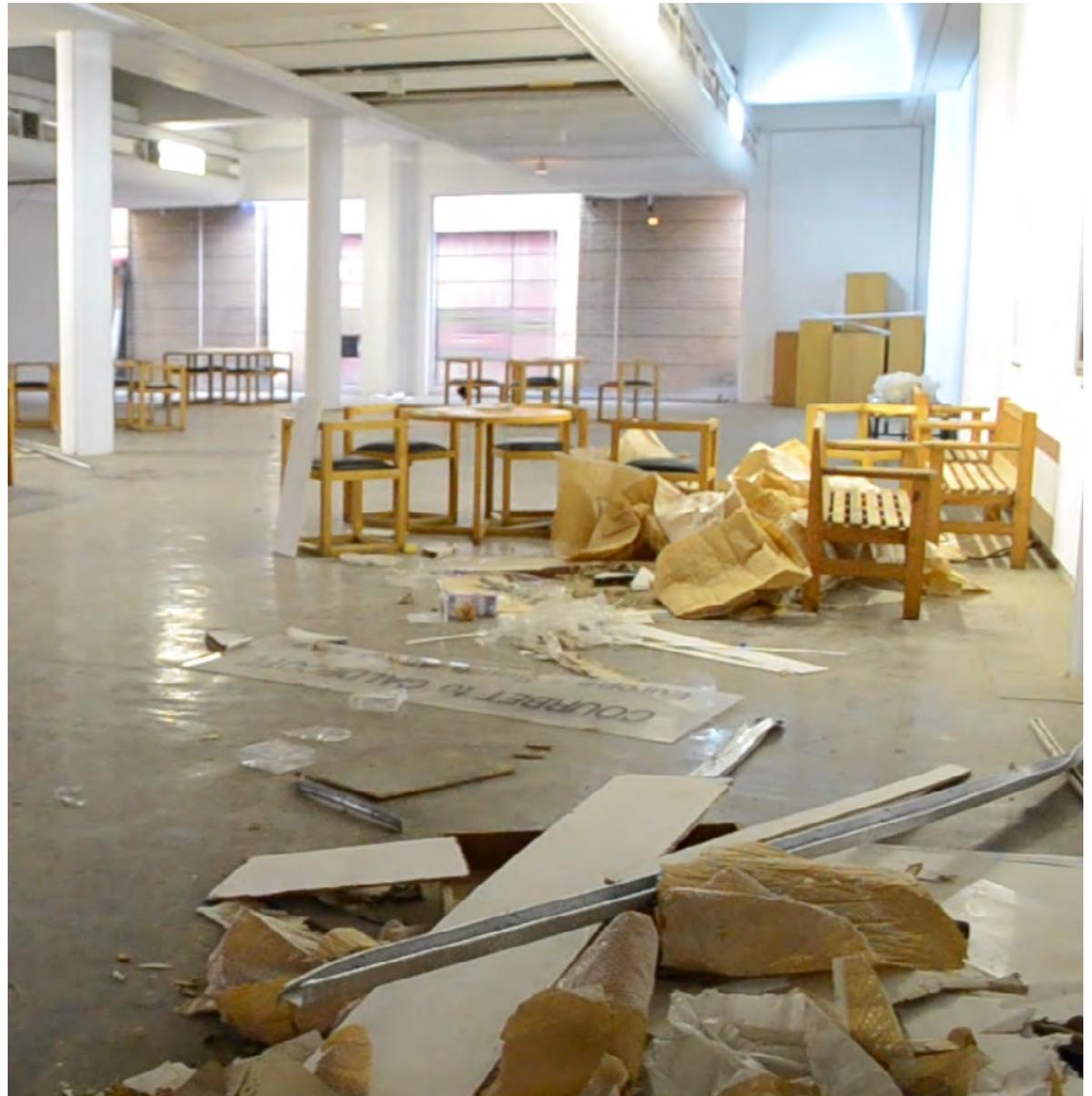
Figure 3.27: Destroyed wall panneling.

Figure 3.28: Floor in exhibition space has lifted.

Current page : photographs of the Meyer Pienaar extension in its current state.

Figure 3.29: The southern entrance door is closed to the park.

Figure 3.30: Majority of the basement extension is used as storage space.



3.5. JAG TODAY



VS.



Figure 3.31: Image showing the *quietness* of JAG's spaces.

Figure 3.32: Photo depicting the vibrancy of the park..



“At this point JAG is barely functioning as a public institution: it is insufficiently funded and under-staffed; sections are in disrepair; the doors are closed for long periods. In contrast, the park is used intensely as one of the few public green spaces in the inner city, despite the lack of maintenance or care by the municipality” (Kreutzfeldt & Ratcliffe 2015: 148).

Similar to the way Kreutzfeldt and Ratcliffe (2015) described their experiences while working on the Joubert Project in 2001, the park and the gallery can still be described today. The stillness and almost mausoleum-like feeling that one experiences when moving through the impressive spaces housed in the gallery is due to a lack of visitors who wander through the spaces. As mentioned in the first chapter, if the gallery is indeed a public space, then the feeling while actually being there does not emphasise this fact.

In stark contrast to the quietness inside the gallery, there is not a lack of people in the park. With thousands of users moving through the green space each day, the gallery should be busier, it should have more visitors, but this is not the case.

The gallery is still used as an educational resource and plays host to various school tours for primary and high schools alike. The newly appointed education officer, Colin Groenewald, has started new workshops for high school learners and encourages the public to become involved too (Friends of JAG, 2016). This initiative will hopefully enhance the use of JAG as an educational tool and teaching space through the use of the workshop areas.

JAG has turned to the public for aid and an organisation, aptly named Friends of JAG, aims to help raise funds for the gallery through public investment and participation. The organisation even arranges safe passage for visitors from outside of Hillbrow by partnering with Uber and reducing fares when traveling to the gallery for specific events (Friends of JAG, 2015). This initiative could become a positive interface between the public and the happenings of the gallery as articles and events are communicated continuously via their online webpage, www.friendsofjag.org.

JAG’s Mission Statement

The Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG) is committed to preserving and providing access to our South African art heritage and to giving due recognition to our neglected artists through exhibitions, publications and education programmes. The Gallery collects works of art historical importance and conserves these pieces for future generations. In addition to an extensive collection of historical European and South African paintings, drawings, prints and sculptures, JAG is home to several works at the cutting edge of South African contemporary art. The museum also actively aims to redress omissions and oversights in collecting practice during South Africa’s colonial and apartheid eras by regularly acquiring works by, and hosting projects that create awareness about, artists who have previously been marginalised in the construction of South African art history (Murdoch 2015: 178).
