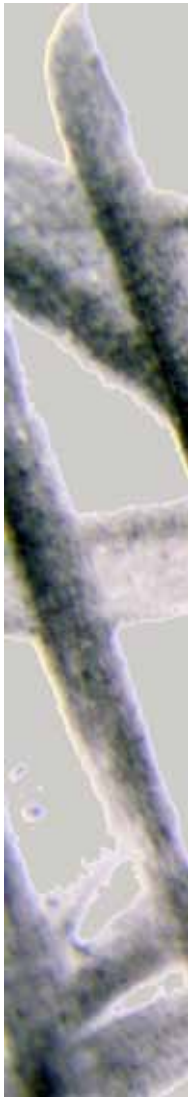
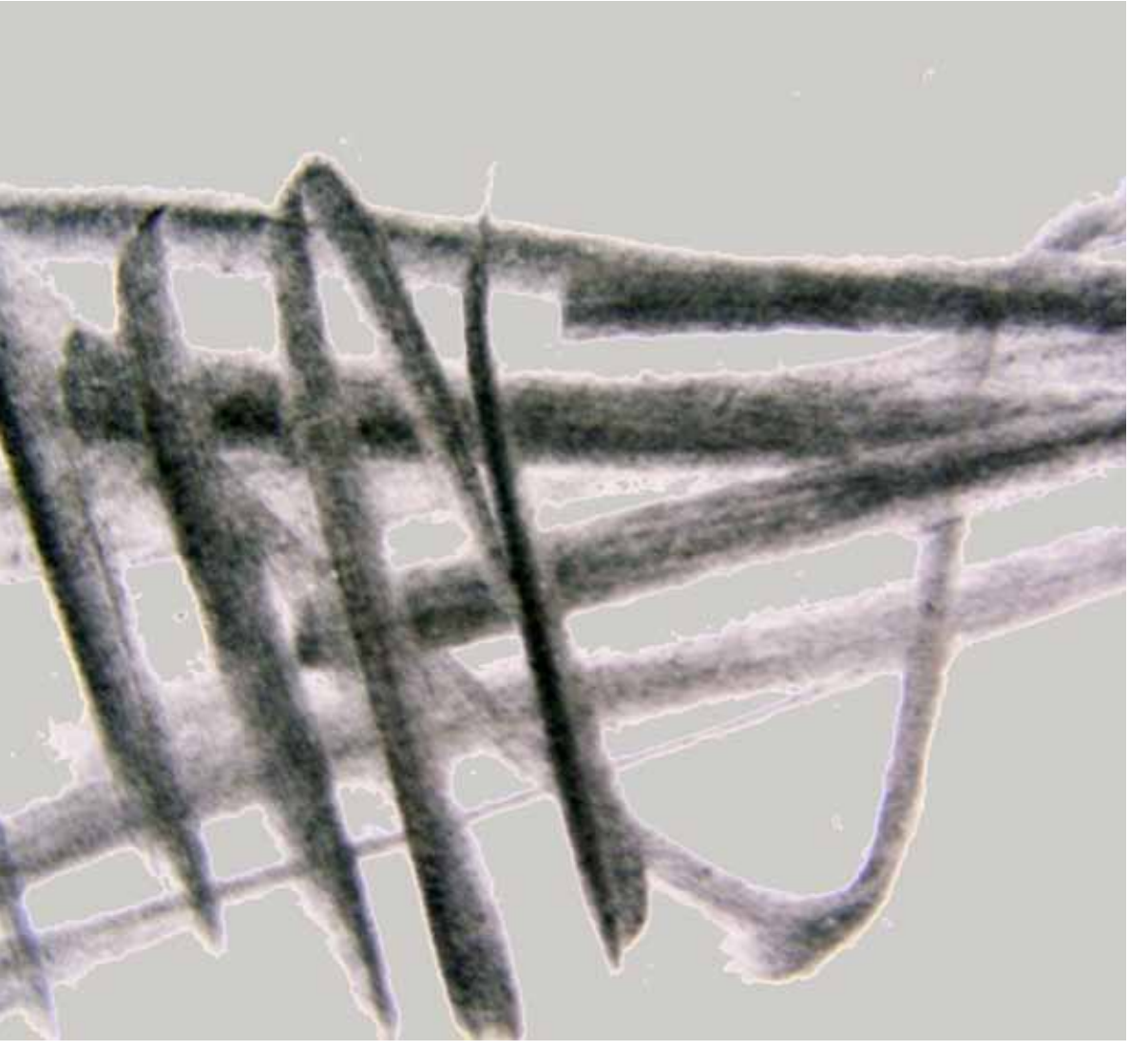


chapter 02 argument



The argument investigates the architectural design process. The process of program versus form, and possibility versus reality. The history of contemporary dance is briefly reviewed followed by an examination of how these two professions can influence each other.

another way of producing architecture

Current architectural design lacks the application of 'fantasy' in the process and ultimately in the final product. When architects produce, via a process, a reasonable product, they (ab)use this established process to deliver different results. When repeatedly using this set formula we must not be surprised if the results are quickly categorized into a 'style'.

"…it seems to us that only those who continually practice an experimental approach - concentrating all our efforts in a completely unknown outcome - are the ones who can truly be said to idealist of this world" (Bos & Berkel, 2006: 11).

Therefore the suggestion is made that the outcome must not be apparent as part of the process and could even be what Frederick Kiesler wanted of his Endless House:

"Kiesler knew perfectly that the Endless House would never be built. Towards the end of his life he touched on this question in many of his letters and theoretical writings, in which he speaks of the project as an idea, a work-in-progress destined to pass from hand to hand while changing form" (Sonzogni, 2003: 55)

The architectural firm UNStudios uses another approach to solve design problems. They define it as "architecture as an art of combinational, acknowledging that we will never, unlike the risk-free architect, enjoy the feeling of being absolutely in the right, nor accomplish as much as the successful pragmatist" (Bos & Berkel, 2006: 11).

This different way of doing things is not an attempt to be original just for the sake of being original, it serves a specific purpose. According to UNStudio's the current processes are not delivering a sufficient amount of solutions for the demands and problems of contemporary society.

In this ‘original’ process UNStudio’s makes use of ‘Design Models’. This for them are:

> “…packages of organizational or compositional principles, supplemented by constructional parameters. The design model does not include site-specific information; it exists at a more abstract level and may be implemented in various situations and projects. It is formulated in such a way that it becomes an internal point of reference that can be used for the duration of the process to help check if the design is progressing according to your principles and purposes” (Bos & Berkel, 2006: 19).

With their design models UN Studio tries to get around prejudiced arguments by developing never seen before concepts which have not been influenced and changed by society. Examples are Inclusive Principle, Mathematical Model, Blob-to-Box Mother Model and V Model.

Figure 4 - UN Studio design model: inclusive principle.

Figure 5 - UN Studio design model: mathematical model.

Figure 6 - UN Studio design model: blob-to-box mother model.

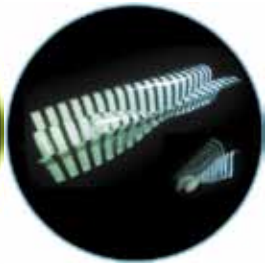


Figure 7 - UN Studio design model: v model.

Inclusive principle

description

NMR Laboratory, Utrecht, Nederland.
2001.

For this project the design model was inspired by the specific research technique Neutron Magnetic Resonance (NMR). NMR analyses molecular structures and the behaviour of proteins with the aid of high-frequency magnetic pulses. (Bos & Berkel, 2006: 46).

process

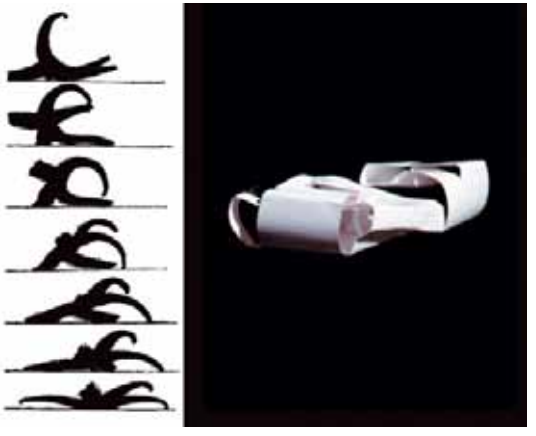


Figure 9 - conceptual diagrams showing the concrete folding.

product

Figure 8 - ramp to first floor, NMR Laboratory, Utrecht.

Mathematical model

description

Möbius House, Het Gooi, Nederland.
1998.

The Möbius strip was interpreted and transformed to a diagram leading to the Möbius House. Architectural elements (space, time, light and materials) were used to structure the interpreted diagram (Bos & Berkel, 2006: 150).

process

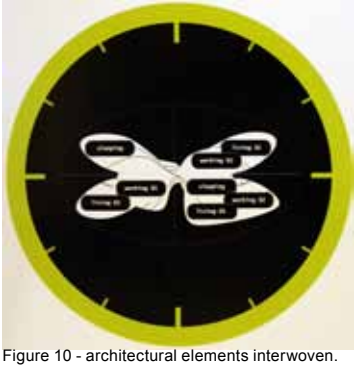


Figure 10 - architectural elements interwoven.

Figure 11 - a virtual cross dividing house.

product

Figure 13 - exterior of Mobius House, Het Gooi.

Figure 12 - interior of Mobius House, Het Gooi.

Blob-to-Box Mother Model

description

Musical Theatre, Graz, Austria. 2008.

This design model uses the combination of two contrasting typologies, the blob and the box. The model consists of a spiral directed horisontally, of which the ends are entwined with its middle part to generate the internal organization. In an endless composition the spiral transforms itself from blob to box, and vice versa. (Bos & Berkel, 2006: 254).

process

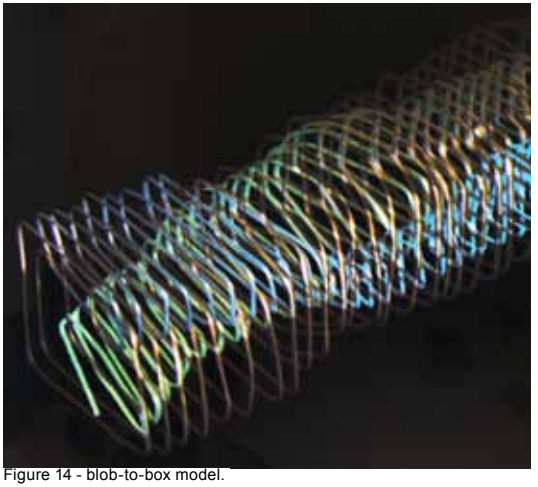


Figure 14 - blob-to-box model.

product

Figure 15 - Music Theatre, Graz, Austria.

Figure 16 - interior staircase of Music Theatre.

Figure 17 - interior staircase of Music Theatre.

V Model

description

Wien Mitte Competition, Vienna. 2004.

In this proposal a crossing-point model is used to develop a system that supports the arrangement of certain elements (Bos & Berkel, 2006: 300).

Figure 19 - conceptual model of Wien Mitte.

process

Figure 18 - application of V Model to process.

product

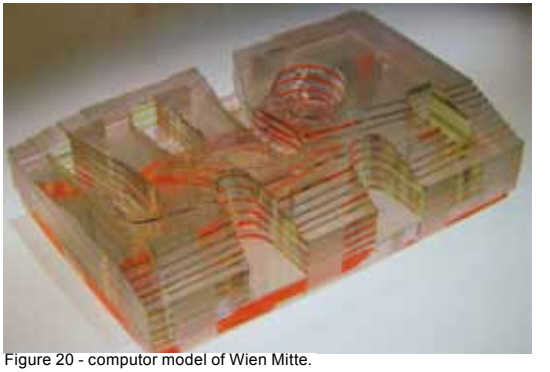


Figure 20 - computor model of Wien Mitte.

Figure 21 - rendering of Wien Mitte Urban proposal.

This thesis uses a similar approach and creates its own ‘design model’. Simultaneously the design model is informed by the program and the context. It uses contemporary choreography as generator of space, form and urban movement. It aims to achieve a balance to be found between the ‘fantasy’ of the model and the ‘reality’ of constraints. Ultimately the design is a result of interactive parallel processes.

Günter Feuerstein argues that the embracing of functionalised architecture results in a certain level of comfort, “the death of fantasy, imagination, vision and intuition” (Kraus, 2003: 62).

Figure 22 - Frederick Kiesler with model of Endless House, 1959.

Figure 23 - image of Frederick Kiesler’s Endless House.

In order to enhance the final product the design process should vary. A continuous change of design generators adds collectively to produce an ‘unknown outcome’. The intuitive nature of this process necessitates an spontaneous relationship between designer and product.

“It is our emotions and the expression of them that make us artists” (Giedion, 1967: 430-432).

canvas versus image

The canvas represents a neutral plane as a backdrop for activity. The canvas can evolve as required, from blank to rendered supporting the image or activity. When viewed from the opposite side the canvas becomes animated. In this dissertation both of these conditions have value. However the animated image generates more interest through the occupation of space through movement. The reflected view could result in the user taking notice and lingering in anticipation.

“For if, as we believe, the role of architecture is to make us see ourselves and the world around us in a new way. It… aims of intensifying the gaze, inspiring thoughts and images, and making it attractive for people to linger and return to the places we make for them” (Bos & Berkel, 2006: 371-372).

These ideals encourage the discovery of buildings and the spaces they frame. These views should be choreographed to appear incrementally within cities and landscapes. Enhanced spatial experiences should offer the dweller an unique event that remains in the memory long after the user has left the environment.

Within a media driven society the image has lost its potency. The image has to return to the criteria of timelessness; it has to have that nameless beauty. This is equally relevant for representing more than an elaborate envelope where the space does not occupy all its potential.

The generation, the process, of the image becomes significant. The image is loaded with controversy and represents a never ending thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis.

Order does come out of the process, but composing itself is not a process of talking things and putting them in order, as one would arrange objects in a room" (Beiswanger, 2009: 17).

UN Studio works extensively with the 'after image'. This is defined as:

"We question if and how we can replace the manipulative, one-dimensional image with something far more advanced and tangible: the 'after image', the one you take home with you, an inexhaustible, ever-renewing composite of perceptions, memories and thoughts" (Bos & Berkel, 2006: 370).

Through exposing the symbiotic relationship between canvas and image this thesis aims to create a memorable experience. The resulting product contributes visually and spatially, adding an intimate layer within the urban environment. These glimpses into the proposed program will remain with the urban dweller, thereby enhancing the individual experience of the city.

contemporary dance

Classical dance was established in the French courts of Louis XIV (the Sun King) in the 1660s and developed into ballet. Ballet is defined as a form of classical dance that demands highly developed techniques, precision and grace executed according to specific gestures and flowing patterns that dominated Western Society until the end of the 1900s (Internet: Artsalive. 2009). At the turn of the century a paradigm shift in artistic performances was brought on mainly by the writings of Darwin and Freud (Brockett: 2009: 177). Even though this shift happened more or less simultaneously in the visual arts and architecture, it was not as prominent and well documented as the Modern Movement of the arts, but is today recognised as Contemporary Dance.

Contemporary dance evolved as a reaction against classical dance. Classical dance, or commonly known as ballet, has strict rules and convention, sometimes described as a set formula. Contemporary dance on the other hand, is an open ended discovery

of human movement (Futter: Interview, 2009). Contemporary dance uses classical ballet as basis allowing the choreographer to explore beyond the classical formulas (Le Roux: Interview, 2009). Similar to the Expressionist painters and sculptors, contemporary choreographers have been inspired to combine different ethnic styles of dance in an attempt to add a creative layer onto the existing classical. The purpose of performance in Western culture has always been to entertain, but with the commencement of the Contemporary Dance Movement performance took on another role: the opinionated role (Internet: Brockett, 2009:185-188).

Figure 24 - images of classical dancers versus contemporary dancers.

Contemporary South African dance productions (work done by Mzansi productions and Dance Umbrella) compared with contemporary European and USA dance productions (Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre and the Netherlands Dance Theatre) is not up to standard. This is due to a host of factors, amongst others, lack of discipline, funding, technical expertise, lack of a comprehensive approach and documentation of creative expressions. Timothy Le Roux (Interview, 2009) argues that current South African contemporary dance has become a self-indulgent, dull and superficial stage.

dance choreography versus architecture design

Dance has to be choreographed; in a similar way architecture has to be designed. Thus the choreographer, as the designer, sculpts the end product according to their vision. Defining the act of choreography can be as intricate of a task as defining the act of architectural design. According to Beiswanger "…to choreograph a dance is to design it in the process of making it, for we can hardly conceive of an art-making process which is not a designing activity as well. Thus designed, when the dance is presented in finished performance its order, its quality of design, makes itself manifest as the very clarity with which the dance's shape takes its presence before us" (Beiswanger, 2009: 13).

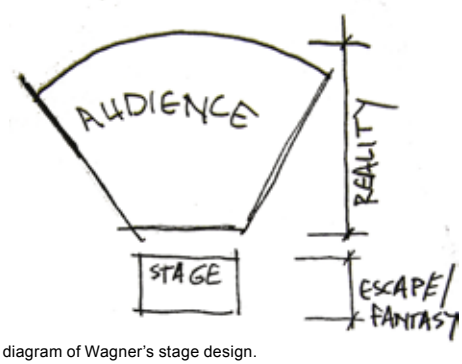
Similarities exist between the process of choreography and architectural design. Choreographers do not have the same restrictions as architects, such as clients and building regulations, and are allowed to be free and creative as actual artists. It is the opinion of the author that the discipline of dance provides the choreographer with a host of opportunities to express their 'fantasies' and converting them into reality.

A choreographer works with chance and discovery during the process to generate a product and relies heavily on intuition (Beiswanger, 2009: 13). High quality choreography always comes from the heart and therefore a passion for the process should exists that the product will communicate (Van der Nest: Interview, 2009). Architectural design should exhibit similar qualities to break away from the current monotonous state of the majority of South African Architecture.

Figure 26 - stage model for opera 'Tristan and Isolde' by Richard Wagner.

Figure 27 - stage model for opera 'Der Meistersinger von Nurnburg' by Richard Wagner.

Choreography has two main tasks: one that gives opinion on societal matters; and another that creates mystery, taking the audience away from reality whilst entertaining. Tshwane theatres already presents only the latter and is typically based on Richard Wagner's fan-seating known as a classical theatre (see figure 25).



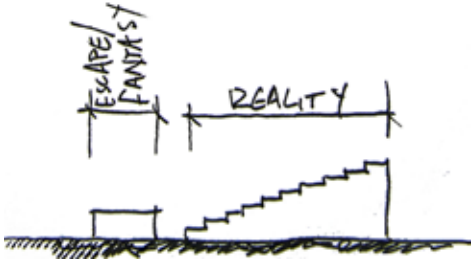


Figure 25 - diagram of Wagner's stage design.

Figure 28 - seating arrangement of Breytenbach Theatre.

Figure 29 - seating arrangement of Unisa Little Theatre.

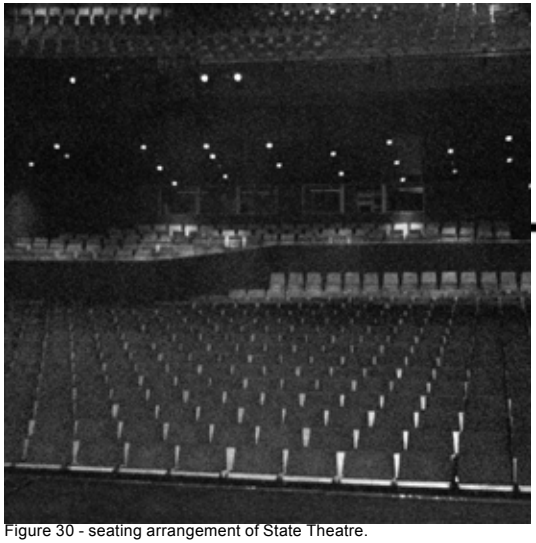
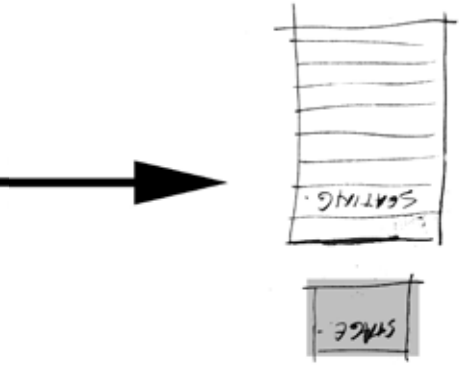
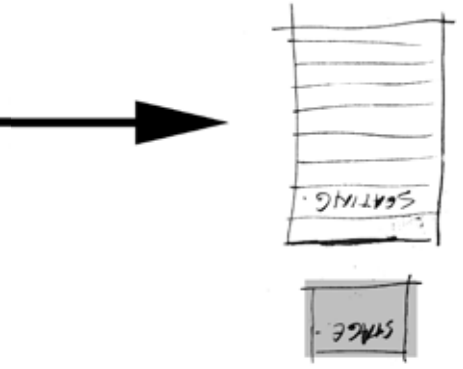


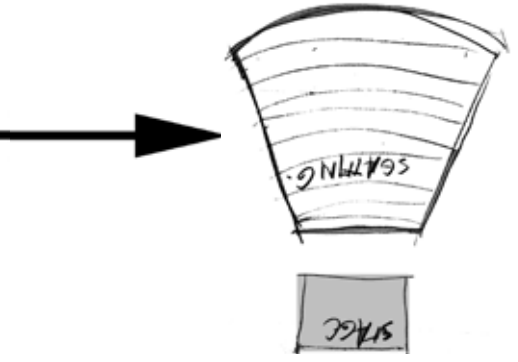
Figure 30 - seating arrangement of State Theatre.

Main examples of classical theatre's in Tshwane are the State Theatre, the Breytenbach Theatre, Capital Theatre and the UNISA Little Theatre. This style of seating was designed by Wagner to be more democratic and to distinguish between the every day and the 'fantasy' (Brockett, 2009:188).





In Pretoria a formal stage for the opinionated and ever changing function of contemporary dance does not exist. As part of the requirements for this dissertation the author proposes a contemporary layer, in the form of architecture, being placed onto the existing classical layer (later referred to in chapter five). It presents a performance area for the ever changing opinion and a stage that should be able to change and adapt as the times and the views change.



"Theory comes before insight" (Erik Holm)