

Abandoned pages_Unsettled space: An urban dialogue created through literary practice in contemporary Doornfontein

"The Doorn Paperback Project"

Abstract

Architecture is the appreciation for story-telling; fiction and literature, history, culture and conversation. It entails the unfolding of a plot, unfamiliar places and eccentric characters. These do not merely exist on dusty old pages in books but are an integral part of our imagination - our subconscious design. This report explores the role of the architect as the reader; and so, this thesis forms what I have 'read' this year.

This thesis aims to interpret literature as a design methodology in order to understand site and develop a suitable architectural language. The process of oral traditions, written text and digitalised technology are used to deconstruct systems and principles that document change in architecture and the city.

This project, ***The Doorn Paperback Project*** is located in a contested area set within the in-between yard spaces of New Doornfontein. The unsightly nature of the site gives rise to ephemeral slumming. The cracks that exist within the formal urban fabric are atypically inhabited by the marginalised. These hidden narratives of the people living on the site create new meaning to these abandoned and derelict spaces. The way in which people 'hack' the site and use it in ways opposed to what was originally intended forms the reality for which the architecture exists. The architecture needs to 'tear down' and 'dismantle' formal conditions on the site in order to mediate a space in which 'life' can be reinvigorated into the space. Thus the introduction of a literary program responds well to the educational and industrial conditions on the site.

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