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Single threads: A Cultural Knowledge and Resource Centre

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ABSTRACT

The basis of this study pivots around the notion that cultural knowledge holds a certain value and aims to demonstrate that the diversity of cultures within South Africa is the fingerprint of the nation and that this is worth storing. With each passing generation, coupled with inter-cultural relationships, the future of the single cultural practice is gradually dissolving and finding itself transforming into a hybrid culture. I have therefore engaged in a narrative around *building meets culture* and what *spacial* requirements it pertains to.

The theoretical review hosts a discussion around the surfacing of hybrid cultures in place of the existing *Pure Cultures* which hold an important intricacy and identity. An analysis of the discussion points towards the necessity of cultural preservation while simultaneously addressing the reality of a surfacing hybrid culture brought about through the post-apartheid 'born-free' generation.

In order to productively complete the research element of this dissertation, I engaged in a qualitative data collection approach which allowed for insights into problems surrounding the development of possible design ideas. A secondary data collection technique was the visual site analysis conducted by myself and stored in the form of extensive mapping exercises. The combination of these two techniques aided the design extensively allowing for a clear forward-moving design strategy.

Finally, the discussions, recommendations and deductions of this thesis point unswervingly towards the construction of a proposed Cultural Knowledge and Research Centre in the Vilakazi Precinct of Orlando West, Soweto. The design of this Center addresses the aims of the study by using the research to govern in which ways architecture can be used as a storage device for the (declining) *passing down* of cultural knowledge. The performance of this building strives to create a platform whereby the cultures within the city of Johannesburg can be successfully showcased and accessed by the public in an interactive and commemorative manner.