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FROM MEMORIES TO CLOTH

[and in-between]

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The once colourful and vibrant suburb of Pageview, more fondly known to its people as Fietas, was once home to many different shades of people. The residents of Fietas fondly recall memories of a town filled with entertainment, and fashion bound together with tight-knit communities. Fietas, in its prime, was the place to be and 14th Street was beginning to make its mark on traders and buyers alike. 14th Street, was historically and spatially well-structured. Its main trade was textiles and clothing: its previous residents fondly recall the electric atmosphere with the hustle and bustle of traders, inhabitants and consumers engaging in their daily activities.

Yet today, amongst the desolate buildings and rubble, only a whisper of what Fietas once was remains. The forced removals of the people of Fietas have meant that the physical landscape of Fietas has been erased. The memories of its residents, however, have not. These memories remain prominent of the people of Fietas, encapsulated in their poetry, their stories, in the way I have witnessed how their eyes glimmer and shine as they recall idyllic days past.

Henceforth my research report is structured into four main components: memory, erasure, revival and fashion. Memory focuses on the historical fabric of Fietas, its place and its people. In particular, I evoke the memories of Fietas as a fashion hub as described by its residents. This is an important section: because fashion and clothing were so vital to Fietas, it is this aspect of the area that I wish to revive and rejuvenate in the present day.

Erasure,describes Fietas from the perspective of its previous residents who were forcefully removed from their homes, businesses and communities and, for many residents, the only lives and families they had ever known. Erasure of the environment clearly effects a city's growth, which led to Fietas being a stagnant, desolate town desperately in need of revival for the area to thrive again.

Revival on an area focuses on ideas and theories by Jeff Speck, Charles Correa and Chakrabarti's works which highlight the many techniques which can be implemented in an area within the city to promote useful revitalization and economic growth. By enhancing Fietas's density, diversity and population, the area can be given a strong opportunity to successfully economically prosper.

Fashion and upcycling in the last chapter is a new take on fashion by repurposing and renewing garments to give these pieces second lives, therefore fashion in memory and upcycling can weave into the revival of Fietas and its current state.

Therefore with the chapters of memory, erasure, revival and fashion will weave together to address the current deteriorating factors of the area such as poverty, crime and historical preservation of buildings which are in a state of neglect. My project aims to revitalise Fietas by paying homage to its fashionable historical past on 14th Street, by using the lessons of memory, erasure and revival through a multifunction and mixed used building housing a fashion school. My research therefore aims to regenerate, recreate and reconnect Fietas to its roots. I no longer want Fietas to be memorialised in a one-street museum because the memories of the place deserve much more. I hope that this multifunction function building with a fashion school will revitalise and rejuvenate the area from its urban deterioration: by learning from and applying the principals of Fietas's history in order to improve its present conditions. I aim to revive Fietas to ensure that the area can contribute economically to the larger city of Johannesburg.

