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Feed.u.cation: propagating urban spaces through an educational food facility

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Globalisation is a considerable catalyst for the state of the world today, and so it is evident through industrialisation, modernism and capitalism that the power and spatiality of food has shifted. Food has always brought people together as it is an universal language that is understood by everyone. However food no longer exists as this valued product of necessity but has now become a product of consumerism. Large corporations control our food industry which has lead to an economic food crisis where our basic needs have become too expensive. This is a consequence of increased population, demands, immoral farming methods and greed. Not only is it affecting our economies but our natural resources. Food production systems need to change along with our attitude towards the environment. In an age of technology, branding and mass production, people have become disconnected from nature, regarding the food we eat and where it comes from.

In South Africa, this has resulted in increased food insecurity, obesity, malnutrition and health risks. The necessity of honest, **healthy** and **nutritious** clean-living has been lost. So how can we overcome this pressure before we collapse as a society and as a planet? The quality of food affects our daily productivity, well-being and psyche, our primal need. How can architecture instigate a change for the free food philosophy? How can it challenge profit margins in the food system through urban contexts by re-establishing our connection with nature?

Investigating the journey through the history of farming, politics and food, I will observe the gradual change in the food industry from the farmer to corporation to consumer, exposing the cultural power plays, which can be reconsidered through architecture. This thesis proposes an holistic approach towards propagating parks and public spaces through food education in an urban context. It concentrates on re-igniting the relationship between man and nature through small-scale agriculture using small-scale architecture: '**agritechture**'. Establishing its roots in Joubert Park, Park Station Precinct, Johannesburg, the strategy unfolds **biophilia** characteristics observing the intricacy of Persian architecture and soil structures stimulated by modular systems, grid proportions and layering. The **prairie** ecosystem becomes a precedent study for **heterotopian** architecture rooting itself as homogeneity. Creating catalytic nodes of urban renewal, it unifies communities while defending its territory, similar to the original African settlement, **'the Kraal'**.

The intention is to fuse agriculture and education creating an innercity food facility. Joubert Park will become an intersecting point as a central food aid platform, with the intention to stimulate the passion for **wholesome cooking, free food** and farming in the city. Food brings people together and designates spaces accessible for the public. How can architecture change the perception of food in urban contexts? It is time for the architect to take control and mediate the balance between food, the city and the consumer (Pappas, The Context of Power, 2015).

A natural, **biophilic** attitude is taken towards educating the youth and vulnerable communities. Imagine a hybrid of exchange and collaboration between the gardener and food; the technical and social; to empower, inspire and change the path and knowledge of future generations. The 'garden' makes for a diverse space of learning and developing our senses. Through experimentation, mutual sharing, social aid and community awareness it will aim to promote a sustainable ecosystem for better food security and a healthier lifestyle.

