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MARCH | APRIL

ARCHITECTURE SA
Recently, a valued colleague gave me two books — *Finnish Buildings; Atelier Alvar Aalto, 1950–1951*¹ and *CIAM Les Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne*² — from his extensive collection. The book about Aalto bears my colleague’s name and a 30 October 1955 date, while the CIAM book has the name of Arnold Glassman with a date of 1954 as well as my colleague’s signature in the front. These are all signs of taking ownership of the two books.

Both books chronicle architecture produced during and just after WWII. The book about Aalto contains wonderful sections on his rootedness in Finnish culture and architectural traditions. The book about the CIAM, edited by Siegfried Giedion, is a careful compilation of the work presented at the CIAM Congress held at Bridgewater (UK) in 1947.

Both books also display traces of where they were acquired. The Aalto book was bought from Van Schaik Bookstore in Pretoria — the bookstore still exists, but in a different format. The book about the CIAM was bought at the now legendary Vanguard Booksellers (Pty) Ltd at 28 Joubert Street, Johannesburg.

So why note this act of generosity from a “young” 90-year-old architect of a pre-baby boom generation towards a baby boomer colleague? It really is a small personal act between two friends that most likely will have no repercussions over time.

These well-used books are, more importantly, filled with annotations and underlined passages by the hand of this architect. When acquainted with his buildings and extensive written contribution to the collective knowledge on South African architecture, it is easy to understand the huge contribution he has made. These books also bear testimony of how relatively slowly information travelled across the globe during this time. However, it also draws a portrait of somebody who did not only look at the empty images, but who wanted to deeply understand the messages and thought processes that underpinned the work discussed in these books.

The contrast to the world we live in now cannot be more pronounced — at least on the surface of things. Millennials have grown up in a world where the images and some information about the world of architecture is available almost immediately anywhere without any apparent boundaries or nuances. Influence and validity are mostly determined by a “click” or a “swipe”. It is largely images, mostly devoid of social, intellectual and a physical context, that are validated and evaluated in mere seconds, an immediacy hardly filtered by reflection and analysis. Yet global fame and, sometimes notoriety, is based largely on this means of communication. Some architects currently practise all over the world purely based on their digital footprint — this is both good and dangerous. Good in that architecture and its crucial influence on society can be communicated in this manner to the wider world, but also ominous for the way that these mostly thoughtless “sculptures” with a “wow” factor could be imposed on the unsuspecting public as the “latest and best” available.

Returning to the two books, the “freshness” and relevance of many of the buildings discussed and illustrated therein needs to be noted. They still have validity and many of them have now joined well-established places in the global history of architecture. At the same time, one needs to ask the question of how one would return, in time, to the current digital “streaming” of architecture to reconsider its relevance and place in history. Maybe then, there are still lessons to be learnt from architecture that is real and has been produced slowly and with utmost care. Architecture that is intimately part of its physical, social and cultural context without being intimidated by the so-called globally recognisable image game. Maybe, this is also the basis for a wonderful cross-interaction between the sensibilities of the baby boomers and the millennials that may open many opportunities for mutual learning.

⁴ Giedion, S. Ed. 1951. Zürich, Editions Girberger.
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Load span table
"Corr-line" recommended purin support centres are based on the following design criteria and obtained through testing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roof Slope</th>
<th>Rainfall Intensity mm/h</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 in 20 (3&quot;)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 in 24 (2&quot;)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 in 30 (2&quot;)</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 in 40 (1&quot;)</td>
<td>80</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Drainage table
Maximum roof run (in meters) for roof slopes and rainfall intensities shown. These figures are based on unrestricted, free flow water.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE SUPPORT SPACINGS (metres)</th>
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<tr>
<td>TYPE OF SPAN</td>
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<td>Roof</td>
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<td>End Span</td>
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<td>Internal Span</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cantilever (Unstiffened)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cantilever (Stiffened - max sheet length of 13m)</td>
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<td>Normal Mass - kg/m²</td>
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MATERIAL THICKNESS = TCT (Total Coating Thickness mm).
GRADE = (Yield Strength).
SAIA WELCOMES A NEW PRESIDENTIAL TEAM

By: Bryan Wallis, acting CEO SAIA

The South African Institute of Architects (SAIA) is the collective voice of our 2 200 members who are all professional architects delivering services to a wide spectrum of clients for projects in both the public and private sectors.

During the week of 3–7 December 2018, CIfA, a region of SAIA, celebrated a “Week of Architecture” during which studio visits, the CIfA AGM and the election of incoming CIfA president Henk Lourens, and a party in Hout Street were held in Cape Town. The events of that week were thoroughly enjoyed by all who participated.

The “Week of Architecture” culminated in the inauguration of SAIA’s president for 2019, Dr Luyanda Mpahlwa, in an elegant event held at the Radisson Red Hotel in the V&A Waterfront. The SAIA Annual Convention took place the following day at the same venue.

Both events were graced by the presence of the president of the Africa Union of Architects (AUA), Mr Victor Miguel, who conveyed the AUA’s congratulations to SAIA and the SAIA president on his inauguration.

The SAIA annual report for the period July 2017 to June 2018 was presented to the convention and accepted. This year the annual report has been published digitally and is posted on SAIA’s website. Members can access the report via the link on the website.

SAIA wishes to extend congratulations to Dr Mpahlwa and Mr Jan Ras, treasurer. Further congratulations and a word of welcome go to SAIA’s newly-elected vice president, Ms Kate Otten, and deputy treasurer, Ms Cecilia Janse van Rensburg. SAIA also extends its appreciation and thanks to immediate past president Ms Maryke Cronje.

SAIA looks forward to a robust and sustained recovery in the construction sector in 2019 and beyond.

CONTRIBUTORS

DR HENDRIK AURET is a senior lecturer at the University of the Free State, a registered professional architect and holds a PhD in Architecture. His first book, Christian Norberg-Shulz’s Interpretation of Heidegger’s Philosophy: Care, Place and Architecture, was published in 2018.

DR SILVIA BODEI, architect (IUAV, Venice) and doctor in Architecture (UPC, Barcelona) was post-doctoral fellow at the University of Cagliari (Italy). She is currently senior lecturer in Architecture at UKZN in Durban and has authored several research papers and publications.

BRIDGET HORNEN, is a lecturer in Architecture at UKZN and a Space Syntax practitioner. Her research focuses mainly on the exploration of learning from other disciplines to make architecture more relevant and connected. She is currently researching meaning-making in informal spaces in the Higher Education environment.

DR EDNA PERES holds a PhD in Architecture focusing on resilience theory, obtained from the University of Pretoria in 2016. She is a freelance industry writer and is currently working on “Learning from Lisbon”, which documents life in the Portuguese capital.
COUNCIL FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT: TRANSFORMATION INDABA

Report by the President of SAIA, Dr Luyanda Mpahlwa.

The Council for the Built Environment (CBE) invited the SAIA President to the CBE Transformation Indaba, held from 7 to 8 February 2019. The CBE Indaba was attended by all the SAIA regions, including the Management Committee (ManCom) and members of the Transformation Committee. It was a great opportunity for SAIA to interact with the various stakeholders in the built environment professions.

The 2019 CBE Indaba was themed "Igniting the Possibilities", with a focus on unlocking the built environment skills pipeline.

Quoting from the invitation, "the intention is for the Transformation Indaba to continue as an annual event and that it will therefore, serve as a "past, present and future" mirror to:

• gauge the status of transformation
• provide a platform for collaboration and sharing of knowledge amongst academics, the public- and private sectors
• interrogate challenges and possible recommendations/ solutions from multi-dimensional perspectives
• mobilise resources towards the BE Skills pipeline and report on how it was utilised
• track the overall progress of Transformation in the South African built environment on a yearly basis.

SAIA'S ROLE

In my capacity as SAIA President, I had the opportunity to present an assessment of the transformation agenda from my perspective. SAIA will engage with the CBE to ascertain how the multi-stakeholder platforms proposed among the built environment professions, and among the public and private sector bodies can be implemented.

The original invitation by the CBE was in my personal capacity. However, given that the indaba was about transformation, it was agreed that transformation activities of the transformation committee would be incorporated in my presentation as follows:

• Open Architecture
• Women in Architecture
• The SAIA Bursary Fund

I trust that SAIA will take on the issues which relate to the transformation of our profession to heart. We should agree on "an implementation plan of action" so that transformation can be entrenched in the work of the regions, as part of our national agenda.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A few questions for SAIA to consider when formulating a plan of action:

• How do we ensure that younger professionals are mentored and assisted as they enter the profession?
• What role do practices play in the mentoring of students doing internships?
• Some practices have bursary programmes, do these meet the transformation criteria?
• Is the Government SITA programme effective in our profession to support skills development in Architecture?
• The Thuthuka programme developed by SAICA was presented at the CBE Indaba, is this a possibility for SAIA or would this more appropriate with SACAP?

CONCLUSION

From SAIA’s perspective, the transformation of the built environment sector is a national imperative.

We believe that the transformation agenda cannot only be limited to the activity of the SAIA Transformation Committee but will need to be entrenched across all the structures of the Institute.

SAIA is honoured to have been part of the national debate on the transformation of the built environment profession, and we hope to contribute towards the skills pipeline, which will ensure that young professionals can enjoy the benefits of a transformed built environment industry. SAIA would like to be part of the multi-sectoral platform we advocate for, to address the challenges of Transformation of the built environment on a national basis.

1 This is an abridged version of the original statement.
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Frescura’s two booklets, published in 2018 under the auspices of the Phansi Art Museum in Durban, highlight his talents as an artist and an architectural historian in South Africa. Both are excellent acquisitions for collectors interested in political art, satire, visual South African political commentary and architectural history.

Frescura is an architect, a talented artist, a philatelist and an academic. He first attracted public attention with some notoriety as a student at the University of the Witwatersrand in the ’70s. His brand of humour and satire was published in the Wits student newspaper, Wits Student, in the form of a weekly satirical political cartoon page. Unafraid and with the ebullience of youth he took on the prime minister and parliament of the time and was soon arrested and charged with defamation. It was both brave and foolish as the apartheid state had a heavy-handed attitude to criticism of any sort. The outcome was statelessness and the removal of his South African citizenship. In addition, Wits University charged Frescura with bringing the institution into contempt. Today, one wonders about the mentality of both state and university to find undergraduate humour a threat. But, fortunately, we have progressed and come a long way, and Frescura is still around.

The human spirit is indomitable and Franco ultimately qualified as an architect, joined the teaching staff at Wits and moved on to complete an MArch. He began to document South African vernacular and rural architecture. Frescura earned his PhD and in 1981, Ravan Press published his now classic Rural Shelter in South Africa. Frescura’s talent for meticulous fine architectural drawings of South African building forms was revealed as he catalogued the details of rural habitations and a fast disappearing way of life.

In the ’80s Frescura spent 10 years at the University of Port Elizabeth and valuably surveyed 17 small colonial towns and villages. In 1994, he took up a position with the South African Post Office and was responsible for the design and production of South Africa’s stamps. Frescura returned to academe in 2002 when he became professor and chair of the Department of Architecture at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Franco’s Greatest Hits is a slender 64-page volume that captures a variety of Frescura’s drawings, art works, cartoons, posters and illustrations over a long career. In October 2018, the Phansi Museum organised an exhibition of his early graphics and artworks. The security police had seized many of Frescura’s early cartoons and when their archives were systematically destroyed during the transition period, it is thought that this work was lost. Franco’s Greatest Hits is important because it documents, saves and gives an historical reference point for the man, his work and a political era. It’s an architect’s representation of struggle art.

Frescura’s second book Rural Buildings of South Africa, a vanishing Tradition is dedicated to the rural builders of southern Africa. It is a celebration of the work of the unknown master craftsmen of the countryside. This study started out as supporting material for a series of lectures organised by the Phansi Museum called; ‘Our Vanishing Heritage’. This book makes a significant contribution to the study of indigenous architecture. Frescura describes the domestic structures, explores the architecture of settlement and details the southern African dwelling, the historical context for understanding the dwellings of the Khoikhoi, the Zulu, the Cape Nguni, the Swazi, the Tsonga, the South Ndebele, the Sotho, the Tswana, the Pedi and the Venda in a way that crosses the boundary between anthropologist and architect. The approach is descriptive, but the interpretation of relationships of form and function, design and decoration has not been neglected.
BEING MOVED BY ARTFUL ARCHITECTURE

The Rock Art Gallery at the Origins Centre in the University of the Witwatersrand houses the largest rock art collection in the world. It inspires deep thinking about origins, identity and shared human experiences.

By: Dr Edna Peres

1. An internal view down from the atrium toward the central staircase, which is the main circulation route through the building (McClenaghan, C. 2016).
ABSTRACT

Rock art and the new Origins Centre Rock Art Gallery at the University of the Witwatersrand share a fundamental characteristic: intention. They are examples of artefacts that record what was meaningful to their makers at the time and guided the purposeful process of making. While there is no precise record of the intention guiding the ancient rock artists, this essay reveals the intention behind the new and unique gallery that is home to the largest rock art collection in the world by exploring the hidden meaning, thinking and events that led to its creation. It traces Mashabane Rose and Associates’ design rationale within a much longer story of artistic expression and cultural documentation, thereby contextualising their new contribution to Johannesburg’s urban identity on the university’s public edge along Enoch Sontonga Avenue. This essay shows the connection between past events and ideas, and present-day responses and uses the notion of connection as a tool to describe the historical narrative and the design. An aspect of the design that the gallery space incubates so well (and which this essay endeavours to transmit) is that it invites deeper thinking and further questioning: to try to creatively engage with difficult questions about origins, identity and how we want to be in the world now, and in future.

INTRODUCTION

There are times when past and present ideologies collide, causing us to question our shared history and the nature of our future lived experience. This collision, often painful, also signifies a turning point away from old ways of seeing and thinking. The new Rock Art Gallery at the Origins Centre in the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) is an example of such a shift, symbolised by a building that tries to connect the past and present through a very purposefully designed route (Fig. 1). While moving along its experiential spaces, the imagination is triggered by artefacts of invaluable social importance so that we can ponder one of the most difficult questions underlying our shared human experience: where to from here?

WHAT ROCK ART CAN SAY ABOUT US

Ancient rock art is a global phenomenon produced by indigenous peoples living during the latter part of the Stone Age roughly 100–50 000 years ago. The art is grouped into three categories, petroglyphs (cut into the rock), pictographs (drawn onto the rock) and earth figures formed on the ground (Fleming 1995, Kleiner 2016). It derives power and appeal from an important component, the landscape. Simultaneously functioning as a device to inspire rituals and as the canvas for recording them, landscape also informs the way we experience rock art today (Fig. 2).

In rural contexts where rock art is often found, one feels a powerful connection to the cosmic continuum. Its profound significance is most often appreciated after a long hike to a cave or rocky outcrop onto which the importance of an ancient ritual is recorded.
commemorating the connection between the natural and spirit worlds of times past (The University of the Witwatersrand, 2018 a). Rock art offers an important clue into the relationship between humans and other living systems over time. Understanding this relationship not only exposes a lot about past societies, but also about present-day attitudes to "pristine" landscapes. It is little wonder that now during the Anthropocene, the relationship between humans and prehistoric sites and artefacts around the world is increasingly one of conscious destruction (Varoutsikos, 2015). This poses a question. If we must design a building to protectively house a rock art collection in South Africa at this time, what might it be and what does that reflect about us to future generations?

WHERE THE URGE TO SAFEGUARD AROSE
Perhaps it was that on a late winter’s afternoon during the mid-1960s, German-born engineer, psychologist and anthropologist Dr Paul Emil Friede (The University of the Witwatersrand, 2018 b) and his associate Revil Mason, trekked through a farm. With the sound of dried grass crunching under their feet and the last rays of sunshine warming their backs, they deliberated upon the conclusion of a long-term project which had been initiated by farmers concerned with safeguarding rock art in the area. They had spent the day overseeing the extraction of a prehistoric rock engraved with plants and animals from a koppie in the Magaliesberg. The rest of the stone artefacts collected from Klerksdorp and the Schweizer-Reinecke district were already making their way to the soon-to-be-formed Museum of South African Rock Art in Johannesburg where they would be protected, researched further and available for the public to view. As an avid rock art researcher, Friede was certain that this collection was representative of an important relationship between the artists and their context, which the artefacts were often portraying (ibid). The concern for safeguarding the artefacts from the pressure of “uncontrolled” rural development, the artwork’s flora and fauna themes, and lastly, a notion that these pieces should be enjoyed by the public within an outdoor setting like that in which they were created, prompted the decision at the time to house the museum in the Johannesburg Zoological gardens.

It took over two decades for the ideological discomfort of housing this rare collection of indigenous art within a zoological setting to reach a point where action was taken. In the early 1990s, as the country was edging toward democracy, the sociopolitical implication of keeping the museum open was compounded by concerns about the decay of the pieces from increasing air pollution and...
vandalism, a consequence of an increasingly “uncontrolled” urban setting. Smaller pieces were moved to MuseumAfrica first, while the larger pieces were later put into storage on the Wits West Campus in 2003. During this time, their full potential as a record of our collective origins as a species lay dormant, as did their potential to trigger critical thought within an engaged public.

FINDING A NEW LANDSCAPE FOR ANCIENT ARTEFACTS

After 15 years in storage, the Rock Art Collection faced the next uprooting. This time, the move was the result of an increased demand for lecturing and office space, coupled with limited storage space on campus. The idea of creating a rock art gallery arose, to move it to a meaningful position where it could be appreciated and studied with greater ease within a protective environment. The Rock Art Research Institute (RARI) wisely convinced the other entities at Wits that such a culturally significant collection, the largest of its kind in the world, belonged within the existing Origins Centre where it could connect to the exhibition narrative already there. However, there was a significant problem given that the original Origins Centre did not have the space or structural capacity to house the collection within its existing building. It would need to expand to create a new home for the rock art collection and the only available space was a small area roughly 300sqm (Fig. 3) adjacent to it on the corner of Enoch Sontonga Avenue and Yale Road.

Apart from several constraints associated with developing the site, there were also benefits, not least being the location of the site itself on a prominent public edge and access point into campus (coincidentally on the opposite corner of the Wits Art Museum along the southern edge of campus) (Fig. 4). The architectural response could therefore simultaneously answer three functions: first, the practicalities of housing the collection in a secure location, second, integrating the collection into the existing Origins Centre exhibit to potentially enhance the narrative, and third, creating a new symbolic “landscape” to house the collection that was fundamentally different from that in which

---

2 A new landscape for ancient rock art during the Anthropocene: one of the exhibition spaces in the new Origins Centre Rock Art Gallery (Goldman, B. 2017). 3 The site before the construction of the new building. 4 The new gallery marking a prominent landmark into the Wits campus (Goldman, B. 2017). 5 The route that connects three floors of the gallery to each other and to the origins centre (MRA, 2017). 6 An east-west section showing the exposed structure (MRA, 2017). 7 Uncluttered by structure, the exhibition spaces create a backdrop for the art on display (Goldman, B. 2017).
it was created. The last function is probably the most challenging aspect of all, since inherent to the collection was the relationship to the vast outdoors where it was created, but from which it was removed. The architectural response then results from a process of interpreting what an appropriate new landscape could be for this collection, that still embodies the feeling of ritual and wonder experienced in an outdoor landscape yet safeguards the artefacts from the threats of human activity by cocooning them within an indoor environment.

CONSIDERING, INTERPRETING AND MAKING, THE ARCHITECTURAL RESPONSE

After carefully considering the significance of the collection, interpreting its value in past and present history, a new building-cum-landscape or better, place, for the collection began. Yet, while ambitiously trying to create a new protective place to defend a rare and valuable collection, much like a safe house, the architects were also cautiously trying to connect its precious artefacts with the now — the visitor, the rest of the Origins Centre and academic campus, and the city beyond. The desire to connect therefore drove the design process, and the concept for this building focuses on a route that forms a loop, connecting three floors of the gallery to each other and to the three stories of the origins centre, along which the visitor circulates as seen in Fig. 5.

The form and volume of the building is carved around this route. Phill Mashabane (2018) founding director of Mashabane Rose & Associates (MRA) describes it as being a complex form, but with reason. And to give it reason, the design follows four clear rules described by Craig McClenaghan (2018) as being:
1. Only concrete
2. Fold the surface
3. Carve the volume
4. Express the structure

The art of expressing the structure is evident by the way in which all the structural engineering is exposed to enhance the atmospheric qualities of the cavernous interior (Fig. 6). The structural engineer, Peter Fellows (2018) explains that although the site is small, it lies on the watershed and a geological fault, so that half of the structure is on piles while the rest is on quartzite rock. Even in the process of creating architecture, landscape influenced the form and expression of the architectural artefact, much like it influenced the rock art it contains. Exposed off-shutter concrete walls mimicking the surface of a rock rise up slenderly as floor slabs appear to erode leaving behind only the supporting beams. These crossbeams carry the weight of the structure thereby freeing the exhibition floor space from the need for more columns in an already small floor plan (Fig. 7). This uncluttered volume also means that it can easily be used as event or learning spaces thereby increasing the usefulness of the building.

A staircase marks the main route through the gallery, almost as though one might be navigating through a landscape. The material palette evokes the feeling that the building has been worn away by the elements with the timber formwork and aggregates used in the reinforced concrete providing the correct “rock-like” colour and texture for the walls. This is highlighted by

8 The western “rock-like” façade of the gallery, as it connects to the existing Origins Centre (Goldman, B. 2017). 9 The new gallery, an artefact for being in Johannesburg, circa 2017 (McClenaghan, 2016).
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the controlled entry of natural light into the building from windows placed strategically at the start and finish of the stairs, which add to the cave-like atmosphere inside. While the rest of the space is low-lit, the exhibits on display are lit obliquely with artificial lighting to enhance the engravings. Looking up the staircase atrium, the pinched perspective enhances the verticality of the building and the feeling that as with the rock art, so too was this building made with intention. This significance attributed to the new gallery makes it partly a backdrop to the art on display, and partly a portal that triggers visitors to connect to deeper thoughts regarding being human and being alive, both then and now.

The outside experience is quite different, and the connection is less tangible. The windows are flush to the surface outside to emphasise the solidity of the form, reflecting the surrounding urban context from afar and allowing a few glimpses into the gallery from close by on ground level. The exterior envelope reveals little about the interior programme while making a strong statement about permanence on the urban edge of campus. There are no fences around the building(I) and the new public space created along the facade feels more civic than most of the campus boundary (Fig. 8). Presently, this street edge offers no public entrance, but the design provides for the possibility that such service door may be an entry point — a good example of flexibility and future proofing. The design distinguishes the connection to the existing Origins Centre by stepping down in height, while directly linking the old and new areas with the service yard.

It is not hard to imagine that one might drive by and be intrigued by the evasiveness of this unusual building just as easily as one might walk past and not even notice it (just as easily as one may have walked past rock art in a landscape without noticing it). We begin to see when we begin to look. And as we look we begin to see that this architectural contribution manages to say so much about where we stand as a disconnected society currently. It triggers questions about identity, accessibility, and the human and the feeling that as with the rock art, so too was this building made with intention. This significance attributed to the new gallery makes it partly a backdrop to the art on display, and partly a portal that triggers visitors to connect to deeper thoughts regarding being human and being alive, both then and now.

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**CONCLUSION**

While writing about this building, the idea of connection emerged not only in the design rationale, but also in the overall historical narrative that led to the creation of this building. More specifically, to the connection between people on the team, time and place, as well as art and architecture. In both the rock art and the new gallery, intention is fundamental. They are artefacts that consciously record what was meaningful to their makers. The intention of this essay, much like the gallery, was therefore to illuminate the hidden, to try to make sense of the now.

A year after completion, the gallery forms a new chapter in the human narrative that began thousands of millennia ago on the surface of the rocks that it was envisioned and created to house. Part of its charm is that it stirs up nostalgia for an ancient past, an ancient community and landscape that is so different from ours now, to which we are all connected. One might imagine that its exhibitions space allow us to explore our individual identity within a longer narrative of shared humanity. Similarly, this gallery connects to a much longer architectural narrative in South Africa. The fact that the gallery’s architects describe it as a safe house, as well as an interpretive landscape, says a lot about how public buildings are designed in Johannesburg today: trying to connect while trying to protect. Certainly, the gallery succeeds at being both simultaneously, but it does so much more: it demonstrates that a contemporary building in South Africa can also move us, deeply, and isn’t this the broader purpose of art and perhaps even architecture?

*Thanks to Phill Mashabane and his team at MRA for supplying an excellent resource pack.*

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1. *The collection was removed from 16 sites that are now found mostly in the Northern Province. There were numerous smaller pieces as well as 36 large dolerite or blue wonderstone rocks (The University of the Witwatersrand, 2018). While the details regarding the collection and characters in this section were found in the references, the description of the excavation follows fictional narrative.*

2. *The museum was officially opened on 5 September 1970. Dr Friede was its curator until his death (ibid). The pieces were cleaned of the lichen and moss, which had damaged them significantly, and became part of the Rembrandt collection (ibid).*

3. *All the building’s services including security surveillance cameras are discretely positioned to blend into the design.*

**REFERENCES**


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Mashabane, P. 2018. Skype interview with the author, 30 June. (Notes in the possession of the author).

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Forms and ideas are not created suddenly, but are formed over time, and a design project should be, if realised with awareness, a “mosaic of references” and possible new solutions arising from the place, practical needs and spirit of the time. The Hans Hallen, Collective Architecture in Durban exhibition, which was open to the public from 16 November to 14 December 2018 at the KwaZulu-Natal Institute for Architecture in Durban, was realised with these assumptions, and as the conclusion of a collective study carried out with University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) students doing the Architecture History course of South Africa in 2018 (third-year, Architectural Discipline, School of Built Environment and Development Studies). The materials and setting up were exhibited with the main intent of illustrating the results of the research and to make known to the public the places and architecture of the city.

THE WORK PATH TO THE EXHIBITION

THE CHOSEN THEMES

During the second semester of 2018, parallel to the theoretical lessons of the course, the students (divided into groups of six or more) analysed on site and studied some modern buildings in Durban designed by architect Hans Hallen (Durban, 1930).
Hans Hallen
Collective Architecture in Durban

Hans Hallen, Collective Architecture in Durban presents a critical analysis of a selection of six buildings designed by the South African architect Hans Hallen (Durban, 1930) through models, pictures, videos and original drawings. The work focuses on collective buildings located in Durban which are related to the idea of living in a community and sharing spaces. The selection includes Hulett’s Head Office (1975) in Umhlanga, Saint Olave Norwegian Lutheran Church (1957) and the housing building Bellevue (1965) in Musgrave, Mabel Palmer Residence (1966), Scully Dining Hall (1965) and John Bens Residence (1964) at the Howard College, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

The exhibition is laid out in two different sections. The first space is dedicated to a selection of original drawings from the Hans Hallen Drawing Collection and Archive (UKZN Technical Reference Library) and the second space displays the work developed by the students for the module of History of South African Architecture (UKZN, School of Built Environment and Development Studies, Architecture Discipline, 3rd year, 2nd semester 2018).

BIOGRAPHY

Hans Heyerdahl Hallen is a South African architect, teacher, writer and urban planner. He studied Architecture at the University of Natal in Durban (1949–1953), under Barrie Blemmann, Ronald Lewcock and Leslie Croft. He entered into private practice in 1959 and during his life he worked alongside different architects. His most important partnerships were with J. Diamond (1959-1962), M. Dibb (1963-1969) and J. D. Theron (1969-1970). Other partnerships include M.J. Speed (from 1955), P.H.A. Custares, T.C. Emmett and P. J. H. Smith (from 1968). He also taught design and lectured at the University of Natal School of Architecture from 1960 until 1978. In 1978 he moved to Sidney and continued practising until 2000. He still lives in Australia.

The majority of Hans Hallen’s buildings are located in the region of KwaZulu-Natal and in the area of the city of Durban. His work includes a variety of building typologies from public to private functions.

Hans Hallen Drawing Collection and Archive. Technical Reference Library
School of Built Environment and Development Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal
With the 3rd year students of the Architecture Discipline, UKZN

Curators: Dr Silvia Boley, with Rosanne Moodley and Michele Jacobs

Acknowledgments:
Prof. Ernest Hlahla, Dean and Head of School of Built Environment and Development Studies
Lawrence Ogilvie,
Academic Leader of Department of Architecture
Cord Brown, Rodney Rathee, Bheki Shilole, Prof Oliver Msagala, Bridget Horn
Lecturers and administrative staff of the School of Built Environment and Development Studies
Achimota Drika, Helen Fletcher
Staff of the KwaZulu-Natal Institute for Architecture

In partnership with the KwaZulu-Natal Institute for Architecture

This exhibition is dedicated to the late architect Rodney Choromanski and his great passion and vision for the city of Durban.

1. Introductory exhibition panel: Hans Hallen’s biography.
FORMS AND IDEAS ARE NOT CREATED SUDDENLY, BUT ARE FORMED OVER TIME, AND A DESIGN PROJECT SHOULD BE, IF REALISED WITH AWARENESS, A “MOSAIC OF REFERENCES” AND POSSIBLE NEW SOLUTIONS ARISING FROM THE PLACE, PRACTICAL NEEDS AND SPIRIT OF THE TIME.

COVERS OF THE EXHIBITION BOOKLET:
2 The Huletts Head Office in Umhlanga (1978).
3 Saint Olav Church (1967) in Musgrave.
4 Mabel Palmer Residence (1966) on the Howard College Campus at UKZN.
6 Bellevue apartment block (1965) in Musgrave.
7 Scully Dining Hall (1965).
Modern Architecture in South Africa is part of a consolidated landscape, both in the urban city centres and in residential areas. Modern traits are recognisable and often coexist with Victorian-style houses, Dutch style, and with more recent types of architectures. This heritage is often not considered to be possible research because it is linked to the difficult political and historical context of apartheid. However, the history teaches us that architecture has its own value that goes beyond the temporal context in which buildings are built, and buildings and parts of cities survive over the time of various political and social vicissitudes and become part of the urban landscape. This consideration is particularly true for South Africa, which had strong urban expansion between the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. Cities like Johannesburg and Durban have skyscrapers, single-family houses and residential and public buildings that are influenced by the late modern, transforming and adapting to the different context and have contributed to creating strong pieces of the city recognisable in their characteristics.

The choice of working on a selection of Hallen’s buildings was due to the role this architect played in the city of Durban. Hallen, who has been living in Sydney, Australia since 1987, studied architecture at the University of Natal in Durban (1949–1953). He studied with professors, who in those years marked the school, such as Barrie Biermann, Ronald Lewcock and Leslie Croft. Hallen also taught at the University of Natal (1966–1978). He is a multifaceted personality, as well as an architect, teacher and writer, has worked with various artists, and is himself an excellent drawer. The drawings presented in the exhibition highlight his habit of working with sketches and collages to represent projects and how painting, visual representation and art, in general, are important in his buildings. He designed and built in KwaZulu-Natal and the city area of Durban, alone or with other architects — among whom it is important to remember J Diamond (1959–1962); M Dibb (1963–1969); J D Theron (1969–1970); M J Speed (since 1970); P H A Custers; F G C Emmett; and J L H Smith (since 1980). His architecture is of the most varied types, both public and private, and many buildings date back to the ‘60s and the ‘80s.

Hallen interpreted the language of modern architecture in an original way and he adapted and moulded it to the climatic and topographical conditions of the place in a very characteristic way. His architectural solutions led him first to follow characteristics of modern architecture; he then somehow moved toward an architecture attentive to movements and the “spirit of the place” with a language that can be assimilated to some traits of the postmodern, somehow making him an eclectic architect if we consider the totality of his work. Hallen likes to emphasise that “landform, landscape and buildings stay in our memories and with our experience of place and of time, they enter our cultural life through the effect on personal identity, cultural identification and of social values. From these are made the symbols of an age, a period or a group. Thoughts such as these have interested me from my early days in architecture.”

The work with the students focused on shared architecture, that is, places and forms of living where the community inhabits, works and shares the spaces. They selected from the work of the South African architect the following: Huletts Head Office (1978) in Umhlanga, Saint Olav Norwegian Lutheran Church (1967), Bellevue apartment block (1965) in the suburb of Musgrave, John Bews Residence (1964), Scully Dining Hall (1965) and the Mabel Palmer Residence (1966) on the Howard College campus of UKZN.

Several site inspections to verify in the field the forms, architectural characteristics and conditions of the buildings were carried out at the same time as a careful revision of the bibliography on the subject, which consisted of a few existing published articles about the architect’s work. An important phase of the research concerned, in particular, the study of the original documents at the Hans Hallen Drawings Collection and Archive (Technical Reference Library, UKZN). The Archive holds many documents by Hallen and other architects, and the project for the exhibition was an important occasion for exploring this rich material, discovering its contents in detail, and revealing a part of it to the public.

Having the original drawings of Hallen’s projects and buildings at hand was important for us. Indeed, among the works under study, we selected three buildings at Howard College, the campus where our architecture school is also located. Therefore, these buildings, in addition to being accessible, are part of the environment and daily life of the students.

The complex, designed by the architect in different phases, but conceived as a single whole, is formed by the two student residences, John Bews and Mabel Palmer, and Scully Hall, which was located between the two buildings and was originally intended for recreational activities and as a dining hall. The uniformity and continuity of the three projects, represented by Hallen in a perspective...
drawing displayed at the exhibition, is recognisable by the identical facades, punctuated by the alternation of prefabricated concrete modules and elongated windows, and by the compositional choice to insert the three volumes in a complex topography, with the accesses placed at the same level and along a common path.

In the residential suburb of Musgrave is the important Church of St Olav, the first modern church with a central plan in the city, and the only building among the six selected built mainly with bricks. It has an octagonal volume, flanked by the bell tower, and is punctuated by thin fixed windows elongated as full-length slits, with coloured glass mosaics made with the dalle de verre technique. This was a very innovative plan for the time in Durban.

Also in Musgrave is the Bellevue residential building, consisting of 28 apartments and divided into nine floors in four different heights to follow the slope of the land and stand out from the lower surrounding buildings. The particular volume of the complex is then characterised by a facade punctuated by windows and balconies with rational and square characters and marked by the two cylindrical volumes of the stairs.

The five examples of the architecture described above are all from the ’60s and were designed and built during the period in which Hallen worked in collaboration with Dibb, and he mainly used materials such as concrete and spatial and formal solutions close to the themes of modern architecture.

The sixth building chosen for the study, the Huletts Head Office in Umhlanga, unlike the others selected, was designed with Theron and inaugurated in 1978, and its materials and influences are different. It is built of metal and glass and has a strong compositional clarity on the outside, based on a tripartite division of the volume (base, central body and roof), which recalls the structure of a Greek temple, while the inside, in its original version, is conceived as a large “box” with spaces for workers in continuity with each other.

The position of the building in the territory, originally completely free from construction around it, as Hallen also explains, had been studied in such a way that “the slow curving road and the formal geometry of Hulett’s were to be used in the making of a temple-like form standing free in the settings of the cane fields. […] There is a distant view and the sense of moving about the building and then the formal entrance platform […] inviting contemplation and then entry”.

The large quantity of existing original documents, with numerous unpublished documents preserved in the archive, together with the direct testimony of the actual building, allowed the careful reconstruction of the projects. The possibility of creating videos directly in situ, axonometric drawings and building models, accompanied by annotations and writings, were then a crucial exercise in developing awareness of the composition and articulation of the forms and ideas of the building.

The students were asked to redesign the projects as an important exercise to recognise the main elements of each piece of architecture. The representation chosen was the axonometric monometric view of the complete or exploded building because it is very useful for representing the project in three dimensions without altering the measurements, proportions and angles, and is also effective and clear for communicating to a wider public. The redesign was integrated with the realisation of vertical models in white cardboard, placed on two white bases of 50 x 50 cm dimensions for each project, which represented only parts of the buildings in section and plan at different scales. The projects were.

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8 Seminars developed with the students at the School of Architecture, UKZN.
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therefore, divided into parts to better understand the constructive and spatial solutions, from the details of the roof and skylights to the organisation of spaces in the plan. During the survey, it was advised that the different aspects of the project be analysed, such as the site and context, type, entrances and routes, functions (public, semi-public, private and service spaces), relations between external and internal, architectural form (including facades, skylights, roof solutions), structure, and also the interior spaces. An important result of this work was to discover the close link between architecture and the site in terms of climate, materials and landscape. The shape and the section of the roof, its integration with the drainage pipelines designed as real architectural elements, the skylights and windows, the areas destined for movement and circulation, and also the use of cement and bricks, have been some of the constant themes in Hallen’s work that create an interesting link with the site. These features have been particularly emphasised in the collective spaces of the buildings, including the design of large common areas with special solutions for light and space. Among these it is interesting to remember, for example, the double-volume space dominated by a skylight in Scully Hall, the central pivot of the building; the circulation areas of the student residences at UKZN, realised as large and open spaces illuminated from above by spectacular skylights — as is the case of the two truncated cone roofs in the Mabel Palmer building, which are intended for stairs and circulation, but are also designed as collective spaces and a communication between student rooms; and the central space, always lit from above, of the church of St Olav.

The research by the students then revealed the references incorporated in some of the buildings, as well as a series of parallelisms with the projects of important architects of the Modern Movement. This work was facilitated by first-semester student research dedicated to the architecture and architects of modernism, in particular, Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe. 

The comparison showed the similarities, but also the dissonances and specificities, of the architecture we were studying. For example, the projects for student residences designed by Louis Kahn, the use of reinforced concrete and plan libre in the projects of Le Corbusier, or the solution of “clear span buildings” in Mies van der Rohe’s projects. These different aspects have been studied, and then presented orally in two seminars and transcribed in a booklet, on display at the exhibition. The two seminars were a moment of comparison and deepening, thanks to the participation of Sibusiso Sithole, lecturer in our school of architecture, Michele Jacobs, archivist of the Hans Hallen Drawings Collection and Archive, and also architect Rodney Harber, who was a collaborator with Hallen (1964–1971) and worked in realising the Scully Hall project. These meetings provided valuable information not only on the use of original documents, but also on Hallen’s way of working, his design and construction choices and on the organisation of the studio.

THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDYING THE HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE IN A PRACTICAL AND CONCRETE WAY WAS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE STUDENTS

The experience of studying the history of architecture in a practical and concrete way was very important for the students. Furthermore, having to show the material produced in an exhibition as a conclusive phase of the research, pushed them to think and scrupulously look for a certain uniformity in representation and rigour in the presentation of documents, materials and in the setting up of the exhibition.
preparation of the exhibition to make it comprehensible to all and to create a communicative and welcoming space.

The KwaZulu-Natal Institute for Architecture in Durban, chosen as the venue for the exhibition, is located in a Victorian-style, single-family house in the suburb of Glenwood. The interior rooms still have part of the original distribution and are currently used for various administrative activities; they are not specifically designed for setting up an exhibition space. Making an exhibition inside a place that is still partly “domestic” was not a small challenge. We, therefore, chose to use two of the main spaces of the building, which communicated with each other, so creating a single continuous space of about 55m² with an L-shaped plan starting from a side entrance of the building and concluding with a bow-window. We worked with the six groups of students, corresponding to the six buildings studied, and divided the work into different tasks: from upgrading and improving the documents, models and drawings to setting up the space and materials resulting from the research.

To create homogeneity and clarity in the setting up, we opted for wall cladding in black foam board modules, so that they would work as a support as well as a background and backdrop. It was decided to create two separate sections displaying the material. In the first section, there was an introductory panel with the architect’s biography and 10 original drawings, lent by the collection, which were then placed horizontally on easels and vertically on the walls. Four were handmade drawings of threedimensional perspectives and project views and the others comprised a panel of sections and construction details for each project. The second section was dedicated to student work. Each group displayed a two-minute video and, vertically on the walls, models and the notebook, which included a critical text, original drawings, photographs, the redesign of the project, and the bibliography of the building studied. Then we selected three original panels for each project that were reprinted and hung vertically from the ceiling in front of the models. An intermediate space between the first and the second sections was used for the projection of the videos and to pin up a panel with the photographs taken during the seminars.

The exhibition’s opening day, on 16 November 2018, was a final moment of confrontation and learning. Andre Dauvenaute, a collaborator with Hallen (1974–1986) who also worked on the Hulett’s Head Office, made a speech about Hallen’s way of working and his experience in the office. Hallen himself, with whom we were in contact, sent a short video complimenting the students on the work and explaining his relationship with the city of Durban and his habit of making drawings and paintings of the city, the landscape and the harbour, because “architecture with art is a wonderful combination”. He concluded by saying that “with art you can enjoy your life”. ■

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A REVIEW OF HANS HALLEN’S COLLECTIVE ARCHITECTURE IN DURBAN

A review of the exhibition held at the KwaZulu-Natal Institute for Architecture in Durban from 16 November to 14 December 2018

By Bridget Horner (in dialogue with Dr Silvia Bodei)
Bridget Horner is a full-time lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and enjoys collaborating across disciplinary boundaries, specifically within performance and visual arts. Dr Silvia Bodei, a recently appointed senior lecturer at UKZN hailing from Italy, has a wealth of knowledge about modern architecture in Europe. She, together with her History of Architecture 3 students, curated and prepared the Hans Hallen Collective Architecture in Durban exhibition. Horner attended the opening night of the exhibition and was involved in some of the presentation sessions at UKZN before the final event.

**Horner:** The venue for the exhibition was the KwaZulu-Natal Institute for Architecture in Durban, an alternative venue to the intended space of Scully Hall, a dining hall on the UKZN campus designed by Hans Hallen in the 1960s, that is patiently awaiting new life as a gym. An exhibition of an architect in a building he designed within the thematic of “collective architecture” would have been a fitting tribute. Unfortunately, it was not meant to be. This did not, however, detract from the incredible exhibition held within the small boardroom and anteroom of the KwaZulu-Natal Institute for Architecture. The exhibition made use of all available surfaces with the students creating even more space by hanging drawings from purpose-built brackets strung from the ceiling. In sharply contrasting tones of black and white with a red accent, this exhibition really packed a punch. On the walls, students explored six public buildings of Hallen’s, through drawings, sectional models, a booklet and videos. These buildings were the Hulett’s Head Office (1978) in Umhlanga, Saint Olaf Norwegian Lutheran Church (1967), Bellevue apartment block (1965) in Musgrave, the Mabel Palmer Residence (1966), the Scully Dining Hall (1965), and John Bews Residence (1964) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The students’ work complemented and contrasted the original drawings laid out on tables for all to see. Dusted off and spruced up, these archival records meant to be. This did not, however, detract from the incredible exhibition held within the small boardroom and anteroom of the KwaZulu-Natal Institute for Architecture. The exhibition made use of all available surfaces with the students creating even more space by hanging drawings from purpose-built brackets strung from the ceiling. In sharply contrasting tones of black and white with a red accent, this exhibition really packed a punch. On the walls, students explored six public buildings of Hallen’s, through drawings, sectional models, a booklet and videos. These buildings were the Hulett’s Head Office (1978) in Umhlanga, Saint Olaf Norwegian Lutheran Church (1967), Bellevue apartment block (1965) in Musgrave, the Mabel Palmer Residence (1966), the Scully Dining Hall (1965), and John Bews Residence (1964) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The students’ work complemented and contrasted the original drawings laid out on tables for all to see. Dusted off and spruced up, these archival records were the catalyst for this study.

Hallen’s career as an architect in South Africa spans 1959–1987, during which time he partnered with Maurice Dibb as Hallen and Dibb, and some years later in the ’70s with Danie Theron as Hallen, Theron and Partners. Within three decades, he explored many stylistic movements. Beginning with the white cube-like geometrical explorations in his early houses inspired by the Cape style to the more formal geometric shapes around a plan form of his churches to the larger scale buildings that explored ideas around community through the organisation of pedestrian movement and social spaces within the buildings1. Hallen’s architecture was very much defined by the building and the landscape, the formal aspects of approach and the idea of capturing the potential of movement within a building, and not so much in the formalistic sense of a building as an object, but rather the buildings appropriateness to its site and location. In the KZ-NIA Journal, Hallen wrote “it has seemed important to me that buildings and landscapes should be conceived in a manner that touches upon cultural memories that are rooted in time and the circumstances of building and the spirit of the site. I cannot say that this is what I achieved but it is surely what architects should seek.”

The opening was very well attended by the architectural community, especially those who had interactions with Hallen over his many years in practice in South Africa. What key things were you trying to explore through the exhibition, those things that you hoped the “audience” would understand and take away with them?

**Bodei:** If I understand you correctly, this is essentially a question of dissemination. If so, there were several different aspects of the exhibition that were important to communicate. The first purpose of the exhibition was to showcase the work of the students and the work we do within the university. The second was to highlight important architectural examples, designed by the talented Hallen, within the city of Durban. And, the third intention was to explore this body of work through the lens of the architecture itself. This is not to negate the social and political aspects and contexts of the architecture, but to focus on forms, elements and solutions so as to try to understand the process of design. The last important aspect of the exhibition was showcasing the original drawings from the archive at UKZN, as they were the catalyst for this study.

“IT HAS SEEMED IMPORTANT TO ME THAT BUILDINGS AND LANDSCAPES SHOULD BE CONCEIVED IN A MANNER THAT TOUCHES UPON CULTURAL MEMORIES THAT ARE ROOTED IN TIME AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF BUILDING AND THE SPIRIT OF THE SITE. I CANNOT SAY THAT THIS IS WHAT I ACHIEVED BUT IT IS SURELY WHAT ARCHITECTS SHOULD SEEK.” — HANS HALLEN

**Horner:** Hallen was very prolific in the work he did in the 30 years prior to him leaving South Africa for Sydney. His work included apartment blocks and large institutional projects such as university residences, hospitals and libraries. Could you give us some idea of how you made Hallen’s work relevant and meaningful to today’s student?

**Bodei:** The project focused on heritage buildings, so what was interesting is that students worked with the original drawings and then they visited the buildings to see the
physical architecture as existing. They then went back to the drawings to see what Hallen’s original design intention was.

There were three different parts to this project: one was the conception, which is different from the realisation of the building in its physical manifestation at the time, which, in turn, is different to what may occur with the building over time. So, for example, the students discovered that the skylight of Scully Hall differed to that on the drawings and this skylight was later enclosed. In most instances, the changes that may have occurred within the buildings have been in response to re-use in general, while the functions have predominately stayed the same. The students tried to rediscover the original design intention among all the changes that had taken place. So, students were envisioning what to extract or to add in order to see the original design intent. Students needed to understand the differences through time and then attempt to re-imagine the building in its original context. Huletts is an example of remarkable change both within the interior and the landscape as it was once an object in a landscape of sugar cane; this landscape, however, no longer exists. The other aspect is the interiors of Huletts, which have completely changed, but not necessarily for the better.

It was important for the students to learn from the past and to generate a vocabulary of architecture, especially architecture from South Africa and particularly from Durban. Hallen’s architecture is prolific and is an integral part of the city’s landscape, therefore, it has an important presence in the historical layering of the city of Durban.

**HORNER:** The theme for the exhibition was the “collective” architecture. What was the reason for this choice of public buildings and social spaces? What is of interest in the journey to the exhibition is the selection of the six buildings themselves, could you elaborate on the factors that contributed to the selection of these buildings in particular?

**BODEI:** Firstly, it was about selecting buildings that would be relevant to the complexity required of a third-year student. Secondly, it was about buildings that were accessible. I gave the students a choice of 10 buildings from which they selected the final six. I also tried to include buildings of different functions — student residences, a dining room, a housing building, religious buildings and the office building — to explore how the functions related to the design resolution. The students realised that a building’s design solution does not depend on the function, so repetition of solution is not related to the function. It was not the intention to directly explore this relationship, but this is what emerged naturally from exploring the buildings. Hallen did propose different solutions, but there is a repetition of certain elements that are consistently repeated in order to explore and refine elements such as skylights, facade details and stairs as communal spaces. So, what I think is that this idea of the “collective” does not negate the aspect of the Modern Movement — it was a specific choice.

**HORNER:** The students were a critical component to the success of this exhibition. What learning do you think occurred for the students from this process of seeing the documented archival drawings to experiencing first-hand the contemporary lived experience of the buildings? What was your view of the students’ ability to critically engage with both the work of Hallen and the Modern Movement?

**BODEI:** The result was excellent. Their engagement exceeded my expectations. This process offered an interesting methodology of studying history through a pragmatic process of exploring models, redrawing, and creating videos of each building’s present state. The process was quite long because, in reality, it was only a one-semester project derived from some explorations in the first semester module. Also, of importance was the organisation of the seminars, with one building per group, this process allowed each group to see the development of their fellow students’ work.

**HORNER:** Barrie Biermann writing in *Contemporary Architects*, refers to Hallen as “creating designs that reflected increasingly the style of our age, each new project not only engendering its appropriate formal language (form follows function), but also determining the use of specific materials handled in a particular way (technological eclecticism)”.

**BODEI:** We have to understand the Modern Movement in the context in which it originated, also what architects of this period did was a revolution in the aesthetic categories that they used and the kind of solutions they proposed. I am of the opinion that if we don’t know the Modern Movement, then we don’t know one of the most important parts of the history of architecture because most of these ideas are now repeated in contemporary architecture.

Hallen’s design solutions are quite specific: in the ‘60s, for example, he was exploring the ideas around circulation in the form of ramps and stairs, which can be seen in the UKZN residences of Mabel Palmer and John Bews. In the ‘70s, in the conceptualisation of the Huletts Head Office, in collaboration with Theron, his architectural language was changing.

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CONNECTING EXPERTISE - BUILDING SOLUTIONS
WHAT WAS INTERESTING FOR THIS PROJECT WAS HALLEN’S CAPACITY TO USE ASPECTS OF THE MODERN MOVEMENT AND THEN CONTEXTUALISE IT BY PROVIDING A SPECIFIC SOLUTION FOR DURBAN. HALLEN’S SOLUTIONS RESPONDED TO THE SUBTROPICAL CLIMATE, THE SUN, THE VEGETATION AND ASPECTS OF VENTILATION.

HORNER: With reference to Hallen as adopting a “style of our age”, I am interested in understanding what is meant by “what did Hallen appropriate from the Modern Movement and the likes of Le Corbusier and Louis Khan?”

BODEI: Let’s talk about this as a period of time instead of a style, which has strict rules and classification. Through his studies and career, Hallen was influenced by the Modern Movement in a number of ways: he travelled and worked in London County Council in 1956 where he would have been exposed to modern architecture. He was also a student at the then University of Natal, which was influenced by the Modern Movement and the European vision. The journals of the time also spoke of the modern architecture, so his environment, in a sense, influenced him.

What is also quite interesting is his use of materials. He used concrete or reinforced concrete or both in the buildings that we analysed. Walter Peters mentions in a KZN Journal article about it being difficult to find a suitable brick for the John Bews Residence, resulting in Hallen having to explore and use more concrete — concrete being an important material of experimentation in Europe and the USA in the ’20s and ’30s.

What is interesting in relation to Louis Khan is Erdmann Hall in Philadelphia dated 1965, and the residences of John Bews and Mabel Palmer and Scully Dining Hall at UKZN’s Howard College, which were more or less from the same time period. If we observe materials, the configuration of plan and facade, Louis Khan experimented with using rhomboidal plan forms and changing the typology of residences to resemble cells of a monastery. We can see similarities in Hallen’s rhythm of facade of rectangular windows set within rhythms of concrete panels and the idea of top-lit atrium space. Other architects who influenced Hallen’s work were Paul Rudolf and Alvar Aalto.

Also, of interest is the classical reference Hallen makes to the temple in the Huletts Head Office. The elements of the classical architecture can also be seen, for example, in the National Gallery in Berlin designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, which opened in 1968. In this example, I asked students to try and see the different elements that are used in the abstraction of the temple — the base, the central part and the top, and its relationship with the city of Berlin — to see what the similarities were with Hallen’s Huletts office building in Durban.

HORNER: Hallen then explored these ideas from the Modern Movement, but his work also made a contribution in terms of its contextual responsiveness. Could you elaborate on Hallen’s contribution to the Modern Movement in Durban?

BODEI: Hallen was a talented architect in Durban during the ’60s and ’70s and the intention of this project was to explore the architecture of the time period as built, and as it is now. What was interesting for this project was Hallen’s capacity to use aspects of the Modern Movement and then contextualise it by providing a specific solution for Durban. Hallen’s solutions responded to the subtropical climate, the sun, the vegetation and aspects of ventilation.

Over and above the influence of the modern architecture and climate, Hallen also provided specific solutions that were related to some key philosophical ideas he had about architecture that he wanted to explore. For example, there is an article in an old KZN Journal where Hallen writes about aspects of landform and landscape and solutions of routes, stairs, ramps and paths. He also writes of an interest in Greek architecture. These ideas informed his architecture and exploration therein.

HORNER: With your outsider’s insight, could you give us a view on how you have come to understand the interpretation of the Modern Movement in Durban specifically through the work of Hallen?

BODEI: The built object survives longer than the political era into which it was born — as it ages, it then becomes part of the social, political and physical landscape of the city from which it cannot be easily unbundled.

Architecture’s relationship with the political time of its making does not have the same longevity as the enduring aspect of good architecture.

REFERENCES

5 See note 2.
In 2018, the Sophia Gray Memorial Lecture and Exhibition celebrated its 30th year and is a highlight on the country’s architectural professionals’ calendar. This is part one of a three-part essay covering the work of the laureates.

By: Dr Hendrik Auret, Department of Architecture, University of the Free State
This essay is the first in a three-part critical curation of the work of the Sophia Gray laureates. The first essay will clarify the methodological approach and philosophical background against which human life may be appreciated in terms of Martin Heidegger’s concept of care and be safeguarded in architecture practised as an “art of care”. The second essay will aim to notice the diverse ways in which architecture practised as an art of care, in the hands of the Sophia Gray laureates, opens new ways to approach architecture as an “art of life”. The third essay will further develop this line of inquiry by using the art of life to re-envision the nature of masterful architecture as a “focal practice”.

Why do people feel the need to commemorate the work of certain individuals? According to the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), the essential motivational force behind all human endeavour is the care, or sorge, saturating mortal existence. Before venturing into the work of the laureates, the following theoretical introduction will aim to contextualise and clarify the nature of Heidegger’s ontological concept of care and discuss some of the most important themes connected to it.

**THE NOTION OF CARE**

During a lecture course presented in 1925, Heidegger mentioned that he first encountered the notion of care “seven years ago” (1925:302), that is, during or just after World War I. In this time of crisis, he came across the ancient *Cura* (Care) fable of Hyginus in which people are described as beings of care. More than subjects who are “able to care”, the fable proposes that human beings “belong” to care. In 1919, Heidegger was appointed as research assistant to the founder of the phenomenological movement, the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859–1938). One of the key concepts of Husserlian phenomenology was “intentionality”, but seeing people as beings of care opened an alternative way to describe how humans interact with their surroundings. Heidegger contended that the way phenomenology approached intentionality (at the time) made mankind into “an eternal out-towards” (1925:130) — always understood in terms of something else, in other words, “a phenomenon regarded merely from the outside” (1925:303). In contrast, his conception of care revealed people as beings who always already live as “concerned being-in-the-world” (1925:159). According to the American philosopher and noted Heidegger scholar Hubert Dreyfus (1929–2017) the main difference between Husserlian intentionality and Heidegger’s “more primordial intentionality” is that in Husserl’s case “mental content is directed toward an object under an aspect”, while Heidegger’s formulation focused on “the embodied person going about his or her business” (Dreyfus, 1993:32–33). Instead of questioning the concept of intentionality, Heidegger was interested in the more fundamental “question of the being of the intentional” (1925:129).

In *Being and Time* (1927) — a book widely recognised as one of the most influential works of philosophy of the 20th century — Heidegger laid out his conception of mortal care based on the “fact that in its being this being is concerned about its very being” (1927:12). When Dreyfus later asked Heidegger what he meant by “care”, the philosopher replied that he wanted a term that could gather all the ways in which *Sein geht mich an* (Heidegger cited in Dreyfus, 1991:239). In the broadest sense, care is that which renders human existence gripping, moving and meaningful. It is therefore important to distinguish between the way people usually understand care as a “special possibility” (which one may choose to follow) and Heidegger’s much more encompassing ontological appreciation of mortal concern. Rather than promoting any “special attitude” (Heidegger, 1927:193–194), or any “ethics” prescribing what humans ought to do, care designates the way mortals, in other words, human beings who are concerned about their temporal finitude, always already exist in the world. Moreover, care is the fundamental capacity that opens people to endeavours like history, contemplation, making and designing, and in such a way that these practices “matter” to us.

One of the pivotal aspects of *Being and Time* was that Heidegger used the idea of care to reconsider human temporality; the way people live in time as mortals. Instead of living “chronologically” and progressing steadily from past to future in a “pure succession of nows” (1927:329), mortals live time “ecstatically”; always already casting current understandings into the future, attuned by past concerns and the way we have been “thrown” into the world and inevitably absorbed amid present cares. In effect, Heidegger was trying to venture beyond “history” to gain access to the fundamental way humans live in time as a form of “historicity” (1927:375); a concept denoting a shift in focus towards a more involved and participatory engagement with everyday life. The implication being that mortal historicity — the “fact” of our concerned everyday existence — “opens” people to the study of something like historical facts, lets the implications of history matter to us, and (true to the unresolved tautologies of the hermeneutic circle) once more opens people to the recording of something like history. At the risk of over-simplifying the matter, Heidegger augmented the recording and study of history by appreciating the foundational “historicity” inspiring the recording and study of history.

This way of thinking about time also challenged the Cartesian understanding of spatial existence. Instead of perceiving space as an entity that extends along x, y and z-axes, mortals always already project their
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own understanding of how space may be lived, are tuned into the voice of their surroundings, and are absorbed into the places they already find themselves in. To summarise, Heidegger proposed two fundamental shifts in thinking: from space understood in terms of measurable spatial parameters to the munificence of place; and from history unfolding as a timeline to the ecstatic simultaneity of past, present and future conspiring to shape people’s concerned historicity. In short, mortals existing between earth and sky, birth and death, live space as place and time as care.

The extent and nature of this “turn” are still disputed among philosophers, but in terms of the notion of care, I propose that Heidegger’s later writings actually reveal and expand the true scope of what it means for mortals to exist. Heidegger’s later writings actually reveal and expand the true scope of what it means for mortals to exist — and dwellers are gripped by the continuity and change conspiring to shape people’s concerned historicity. The goal is not to portray care as being more “primal” than place. The perspective of human mortality, they are entwined. Yet each offers a valuable new perspective on the other.

The Norwegian architect and theorist Christian Norberg-Schulz (1926–2000), arguably provided the most insightful architectural interpretation of how architects may turn their gaze from abstract space to concrete place. He called this approach the “art of place” (2000:11). Therefore, it is so surprising that when it came to time, he overlooked Heidegger’s understanding of lived temporality in favour of the view held by his erstwhile mentor, the Swiss historian and architecture critic Sigfried Giedion (1888–1968). Giedion understood time as “continuity and change” (1941:859). Continuity and change is useful as a way to categorise inter-epoachal progress (for example, from Renaissance to Mannerism) and was key to Norberg-Schulz’s description of how the “spirit of place” endures despite incremental change. Yet it offers an anemic picture of the concerned intra-epochal historicity of mortal life since it does not grant access to what Heidegger called the “site of the moment” (1938:255); a concept referring to the lived situation of emplaced concern in which, for instance, architects practise architecture. If the goal is architecture inspired by mortal life — if architects want a richer picture of the “being of the intentional” practising amid the “site of the moment” — then we not only need to understand space as place, but also time as care. The goal is not to portray care as being more “primal” than place. From the perspective of human mortality, they are entwined. Yet each offers a valuable new perspective on the other. Care reveals the deeper significance of place as a “region of concern”, and dwellers are gripped by the continuity and change of their places as beings of care. In addition to Norberg-Schulz’s “art of place”, it would then be essential also to consider architecture as an “art of care”.

THE GOAL IS NOT TO PORTRAY CARE AS BEING MORE “PRIMAL” THAN PLACE. FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HUMAN MORTALITY, THEY ARE ENTWINED. YET EACH OFFERS A VALUABLE NEW PERSPECTIVE ON THE OTHER

CARE, CRITICAL CURATION AND THE LAUREATES

The philosophical insights discussed above formed the basis for identifying broad themes guiding the “critical curation” (Fraser & Jim, 2018) of the contribution made by the Sophia Gray laureates. The traditional notion of curation, derived from the Latin Cura, is closely related to care, but it is also indicative of the methodology followed. As a work of critical curation, the three essays draw on a comprehensive literature review of the laureate’s Sophia Gray memorial lectures and other connected writings, the experience of some of their lectures and exhibitions by the author and visits to particular works. In the current format, it would be impossible to convey the full nuance and richness saturating the colossal contribution of the laureates. However, instead of listing all their achievements, the curatorial approach followed will aim at “grouping” and “exhibiting” similar tendencies under broad themes related to the art of care. The process is rendered “critical” by the deliberate attempt to underplay “prevailing position” usually associated with works in favour of what is typically considered to be “marginal concerns”. Ultimately, the lens of care refocuses the curatorial approach in order to venture beyond the “curator-as-auteur” or the “curator-as-artiste” towards participating as an “exhibition-maker” (Fraser & Jim, 2018:5–6). The goal being to notice the ways in which the laureates are already practising architecture as an art of care. In turn, noticing these aspects of care will be used (in the second essay) to point towards a broader appreciation of architecture as an “art of life” and a “local practice” (discussed in the third essay).

Some argue that attempts to use Heidegger’s writings for architectural practice are misguided. For instance, the Italian philosopher Massimo Cacciari (b. 1944) argued that such efforts should be condemned as a “vulgar, idiotically rationalistic way of reading [Heidegger’s work]” (1980:395). In terms of care, this position would make it almost impossible to “show” any aspect of care in architecture and avoid accusations of “diluting” the integrity of Heidegger’s ontological notion of care. However, while a certain measure of hesitance is fitting when it comes to making claims...
about “care” in architectural practice, Heidegger himself pointed out that the way care draws near human life “is nothing which hovers over entangled everydayness” (Heidegger, 1927:179). A far greater danger resides in the possibility of transforming care into some kind of disengaged, unattainable “ideal”. For example, Cacciari tried to prove the folly of those who apply Heidegger’s thinking to architecture by proposing that the problem of dwelling is not primarily concerned with “the form of building”, but “lies in the fact that [the human] spirit may no longer dwell” due to a broader sense of metropolitan estrangement (Cacciari, 1980:395). It is at this crucial junction where the notion of care once again becomes essential, because Heidegger ended his famous essay “Building Dwelling Thinking” (1951) with a much more optimistic proposition: “The real dwelling plight lies in this, that mortals ever search anew for the nature of dwelling, that they must ever learn to dwell” (1951:159).

In a tumultuous time of transition, Heidegger saw care as the appropriate foundation for proposing any new notion of dwelling. With this, I am not trying to draw any direct parallels between the interwar years in Germany and post-apartheid South Africa. Heidegger’s point is more essential. With the notion of care he was questioning the roots of why things matter to beings like us. However, while reflecting on the contribution made by the laureates, one cannot help noticing that the last 30 years have posed many hard questions related to the way people dwell in South Africa. Moreover, the resolute nature of care implies that any existing art of care always already challenges the next generation of architects to formulate new propositions for dwelling amid existing legacies.

Incidentally, it was one of the laureates who inspired this line of questioning. Some years ago I asked Bannie Britz what he thought architecture was all about. Later that day, he answered: “Architecture must dignify the human condition”. His words have inspired me to consider the nature of this “condition”, and the degree to which works of architecture are able to dignify it. Care is crucial to such questioning since it does not try to prescribe how people ought to be, but merely (and momentously) sustains that sense of awareness that may help architects notice, appreciate and safeguard, by means of architecture, the way mortals always already are.

CULTIVATING SPATIAL EMPATHY

Let us start, as one does in this context, with Mira Fassler Kamstra. Her work testifies to a deeply empathetic appreciation of space. As Marguerite Pienaar reported: “… [Mira Fassler Kamstra] maintains that during her design process she imagines herself inside a space first, in other words, she ‘inhabits’ the space in relation to windows, light, furniture and spatial flow” (2016:50).

What is it to have empathy with space being designed? This question goes to the heart of what architecture is. Most famously, Le Corbusier asserted that a building becomes architecture when it manages to “touch [the dweller’s] heart”. Less well known, is that he believed this capacity depended on people’s ability to “perceive [the architect’s] intentions” (1923:141). As discussed earlier, the concept of care allowed Heidegger to progress beyond the more detached nature of Husserlian intentionality and focus on “the being of the intentional” (1925:178–180/129). From this perspective, one could argue that if the human capacity to spatially and temporally “draw near” design possibilities springs from the concerned “being of the intentional” then, beyond focusing on the designed attributes of any particular space, spatial empathy calls us to notice the relationships between places and ways of life as an ongoing spatiotemporal “regioning”. Heidegger used the notion of regioning to consider the reciprocal “enchantment” (Heidegger, 1945:73) emerging between places and beings of care played out as a lived hermeneutic process of appropriation and ecstatic interpretation.

Noticing the processes of regioning sustained in meaningful places asks for a certain humble reverence, the restraint needed to keep at bay the impulse to impose ideas, thereby letting the place show itself. The “silence” following restraint can often seem deafening. Instead of signifying apathy, Heideggarian restraint is marked by the precision and “rigorousness” of the poet that ventures beyond “correctness” (1938:52), since she holds open the possibility for listening and questioning as a “bearing of silence” (1938:62–64). The laureates offer many examples of this kind of humility: Stan Field “camping” on the site of the Miller House before designing an “elaborate model [of the koppie on which the house was to be built] in which each rock was beautifully carved out of imbuia and given a name” (Louw, 2012:11), thereby serving as a precursor to later seeing “the landform as a determinant in establishing an architectural dialogue” (Louw, 2012:16); the total place relationship displayed in the rugged sophistication of Jaco Wasserfall’s work echoing...
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the “stoic tenor” (Wasserfall, 2010:29) of Namibia; the intricate exuberance exhibited by Kate Otten in Gabriel’s Garden (2013:21-22); the respect for topography evident in Freedom Park, hinting at new forms of commemoration that eschew dominance in favour of re-imagining design as a way to “carve” the landscape rather than imposing an external form upon it (Mashabane & Rose, 2014:20). Alternatively, consider the penetrating awareness present in the way Paul Mikula referred to the “wildness” of his design for House Mikula as “a tropical thing” (Mikula cited in Sanders, 2003:7). In short, cultivating spatial empathy depends on humbly noticing and resolutely being open to the regioning of emplaced care.

**DESIGN, IDENTITY, THE SHARED AND THE UNIQUE**

Care draws life and place into the nearness of regioning: a life-care-place totality. Heidegger proposed that the simultaneous correspondence and difference implied by such relationships of contiguity should be approached as a question of identity. In essence, he argued that mortal identity is endured amid the “strange ownership” extended by being and the “strange appropriation” by the being of care (1957:36). In an architectural sense, one could imagine an individual arriving at a place, being overcome by its genius loci and then building a house that safeguards (as an act of appropriation) certain aspects of the voice of place. The house accommodates certain needs, but also exerts a strange ownership over the mortal by shaping the rituals, physical comfort and capabilities associated with her way of life. The interesting point Heidegger was trying to make is that this reciprocal interaction between “appropriation” and “ownership” happens “uniquely” (1957:36). Beyond personal idiosyncrasies, the original German word he used, seltsam, alludes to the strangeness and rarity of this “event of appropriation” (1957:39).

The rarity of the laureates, their unique regionings of concern, is displayed by the divergent instances of their architectural appropriations: Kate Otten’s whimsical Pineapple Republic aiming at “keeping cost to a minimum and invention at a maximum” (2013:13) and the joyful Lulu Kati Kati, harbouring moments described as a “pink ‘wing-wongy’ bay window” (2013:24); the emotive narratives choreographed by Mashabane & Rose in response to the “unique history” of sites of oppression in which, amongst others, the balustrades at the Hector Pieterson Museum are “cobra-waxed to a dull finish” thereby recalling police weapons, the concrete at the Apartheid Museum is “bruised” and the bricked-up windows at the Liliesleaf Liberation Centre are meant to “silence” the whole (Mashabane & Rose, 2014:14–17). Alternatively, consider the approach followed by Mikula and the Building Design Group in which idealism and belief in architecture culminating in an “action-oriented practice” (Raman, 2005:17), or the row of innovations at Al Stratford’s Sophia Gray exhibition, which Kobus du Preez memorably described as “the inventor-architect with auction-tables full of ideas” (2016:14).

These examples show moments of design in which the laureates extended their “strange appropriation” over their regions of concern. However, beyond expressing the uniqueness of appropriation, Heideggerian identity is always already subjected to a certain sense of being “owned” by existing totalities of relevance. The skill of the great architect is to find ways, through built or written work, to draw others into these rare seltsame moments of care, thereby again envisioning “the unique” as something that may also make sense to others as a moment of shared captivation.

**ARCHITECTURE AS AN ART OF CARE**

In general, the Sophia Gray laureates are already practising architecture as an art of care in that they...
The Sophia Gray laureates are already practising architecture as an art of care in that they have found ways to notice, appreciate and build their emplaced care. The lecture series is there to celebrate their rare dedication to drawing near a particular region of concern while inviting and enabling other beings of care to do the same.

Each in their own way the laureates have become, as Bannie Britz put it, “life-long student[s] in the mysteries of life” (Britz, 2009:14); a view that echoes Mira Fassler Kamstra’s assertion that “architecture is a way of life” (1990:40) and lends further credence to Michael Benedikt’s remark inspired by Saitowitz’s Brebno House: “Engagement is the point” (1995:11). Mastering architecture as a way of life has its price and exerts its claim, but it is pivotal to cultivating the capacity to give form and duration to the emplaced concerns of dwellers. In this kind of life, it is not only possible, but also necessary, to climb onto the roofs of buildings we find captivating (Fig. 2) and revel in the wonder of architecture giving a voice to our emplaced care.

1 I have discussed the interaction between care, place and architecture in greater depth in Christian Norberg-Schulz’s Interpretation of Heidegger’s Philosophy: Care, Place and Architecture (Routledge, 2019).

2 The term “regioning” is a neologism used by Bret Davis to translate the dynamcis nature Heidegger implied with the German term das Gegen (Heidegger, 1945:73).

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For the new Origins Centre: Rock Art Gallery at WITS, the intention of the architects was to make the building seem as if it was hewn out of a piece of rock like the display pieces that it houses. It presents itself externally as a cluster of rocklike fragments with a horizontally stratified concrete finish that evokes the marks left on a surface after cutting, carving or grinding. Flush-glazed windows whose reflective surfaces conceal the building’s interior from view reinforce its monolithic appearance.

However, similar to a natural geode, the tough exterior of the building’s imposing concrete shell encloses a large internal volume that is lined with an almost crystalline structure of angled beams and slabs with a smooth off-shutter concrete finish. The atmospheric interior volume is reminiscent of a cave, made possible by the structural system that seems deceptively simple: the building lies on a geological fault and a watershed and is supported partly on quartzite rock and partly on pile foundations. Downstand beams, columns and reinforced concrete walls allowed for the creation of large uninterrupted floor planes and interconnected volumes, but these elements also become an important part of a visitor’s experience of the building.

The combination of a limited material palette that acts as a neutral canvas for the precious display pieces and a structural system that forms an integral part of the building’s architectural expression, results in a building that blurs the boundaries between engineering and architecture.

1 Internal view of exposed structure. 2 External view of window openings.
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SERENDIPITY NEAR THE SEA RANCH, CALIFORNIA

By: Etienne Louw, BBuild (PE), BArch (CT) ASSOC. AIA, RIBA, LEED.

This journey starts in Port Elizabeth and ends in Bodega Bay, 50km south of The Sea Ranch.

In 1972, as a second-year architecture student at UPE, our studio master was Nic Maritz. In 1970, Nic attended the seminal lectures by Robert Venturi and Denise Scott-Brown at Wits. He joined the staff at UPE in 1971 as a convert to the notion of a contemporary architecture that was eclectic in references and unshackled from what Nic called “ortodokse moderne argitektuur”.

Coupled with Venturi, the work of Charles Moore was studied. While Venturi was “Learning from Las Vegas”, Moore was learning from whatever context he found himself in. Moore was a professor at the University of California Berkeley and was commissioned to do master planning and initial architectural work at The Sea Ranch, about 150km north of San Francisco. Moore joined forces with Donlyn Lyndon, William Turnbull and Richard Whittaker (MLTW) and set about establishing the vocabulary for what was to become a development that profoundly influenced architects worldwide.

Moore was influenced by nearby dairy farm timber sheds and the Orthodox Church, constructed in 1812 by Russian settlers, at nearby Fort Ross (Fig. 1). Moore MLTW’s Condominium No 1, completed in 1965, quickly became a guidepost for understanding the vernacular and materiality of a region and marrying it with a series of contemporary responses. Moore talks extensively about this in his book The Place of Houses published in 1974 (Fig. 2 and 3).

Fifty years later in 2016, I bought a 140m² vacation house on the Northern California coast, about 50km south of The Sea Ranch. The house was designed in 1967 and the architect had clearly been influenced by what Moore had done nearby. Happily, the house had not been altered in 50 years. The site was 15 x 30 metres and the original plan shows a rigorous structure with 1.5-metre side spaces and a house comprising eight structural timber bays at 1.5 metres with clerestory lighting (Fig. 4).

The adjacent 15 x 30-metre site had been added subsequently, and the site now measured 30 x 30 metres. The challenge was to add a 35m² art studio to the existing house. After making interior interventions to the original house (Fig. 5 and 6), the major hurdle to manage was the California Coastal Commission. Ironically, the commission was founded in the mid-70s as a result of The Sea Ranch.

development and it effectively placed a moratorium on all coastal development in California. To obtain California Coastal Commission approval, various limitations were imposed. Navigating and, in fact, embracing these provided a template that was used in the presentation to the commission.

**APPROACH**

1. As the San Andreas Fault that devastated San Francisco in 1906 lies 1km offshore, the geotechnical survey required a substantial foundation design. The response was to place the structure on piles and raise it off the ground to float above the natural landscape. The landscape consists of ice plant (“vygies”), which are very effective in binding the site and the bluff at the edge of the site, 26 metres above the beach below.

2. The anthropological survey didn’t find Native American (Miwok Tribe) artefacts so allowing the natural vegetation to continue under the structure was considered appropriate and respectful.

3. The flora and fauna survey required the structure to be set back from a bird-nesting habitat on the bluff to the west.

4. Space also needed to be set aside to provide for a future “french drain” should the current 50-year-old septic tank system fail.

5. View corridors from the adjacent Pacific Coast Highway to the east and the beach from the west needed to be retained.

6. A height restriction of 5.8 metres was to be observed.

7. Existing neighbouring property views were not to be compromised.

8. And finally, the commission was expecting a structure that would respect the original design approach in materiality, colour and scale (Fig. 7).

**RESPONSE**

The various restrictions placed by the California Coastal Commission allowed for a relatively small footprint. The existing house to the south, the bluff to the west and the future “French drain” space to the north together with the height limitation, established a relatively simple envelope.

Given the existing rigorous structural rhythm, a decision was made to continue that rhythm and separate the art studio from the house with a 1.5-metre interstitial space. The art studio was placed to reinforce the existing edges of the house and to create an interior wind-free courtyard and preserve views from the house up the coast (Fig. 8).

The interior structural rhythm is similar to the house, yet the north wall is angled to imply an opening to the view to the west. The rectangle is completed by a corrugated metal box that houses the fireplace, a sink, TV, cupboards and a corner window, which captures the view to the northeast (Fig. 9).

The roof slopes to the west and an angled gutter preserves the view from the kitchen and discharges rainwater into a corrugated metal rainwater-harvesting tank (Fig. 10).

This small studio’s response is muted and attempts to quietly extend the rigorous discipline, preserve the view corridors from the street and beach, and place the work in the context of today (Fig. 11 and 12).
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