INNER CITY MOVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Reading and Re-writing, Johannesburg Inner City, 2011

Funders: The Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA), The Johannesburg Road Agency (JRA) and The City of Johannesburg Department of Transport, Planning & Urban Management

The city is an amalgamation of complex layers of people, trade, movement, ever changing requirements and functions, the formal and the informal. All these layers are overlapped and entangled, making them, at times, indistinguishable from one another.

At the core of the city are its networks. These complex connections are played out on the canvas of the modernist city grid, structuring sets of relations, defining the activities and interactions between the formal and informal and shaping the "ordinary", everyday
contested spaces.

The inner city is a place of convergence; where the city finds its voice through the people who engage and dwell in it. It is estimated that 1.5 million people arrive everyday at Park Station and associated taxi facilities, from far away destinations, coming to the area for work, shopping, or leisure. This congested and multi-layered part of the city is also home to about 400,000 residents.

The study conducted as part of the research and analysis phase of the "Johannesburg Inner-city Traffic and Transportation Study", commissioned by the City of Johannesburg, and coordinated by the JDA, engages with the "pulse of the city" at its most revealing point-its heart. It traces the main activities located around transport facilities whilst recording pedestrian movement patterns, places of friction, conflict and coexistence between the formal and the informal. The study looks at the voids- the streets and spaces between buildings which constitute for more than 20% of the urban fabric.

These "shared spaces" are the resource that supports the local trading patterns and allows for a fluid exchange of goods, information, transactions and social interactions, creating multiple opportunities for the new comers and the already entrenched networks.

This study presented the opportunity to observe the city with multiple eyes: Recording + mapping + counting + tracing + mixing + engaging + enquiring + spontaneous place making + simulating + planning...
By using different techniques assisted by film makers, such as the video recording of critical spaces over 12hr slots, the accurate mapping of movement patterns and spaces of
conflict and extensive photographic records of various conditions, unfolded the narrative of the everyday and became readable to the untrained eye of the observer.

The ever evolving purpose and life of a city was one of the key design informants in this research. The development of a framework that is to be successful, must allow for the inevitable interruptions of spaces by its users, and the subsequent growth of the city, whilst still providing a flexible enough base/framework to allow for future requirements.

Continued on Panel 2.

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