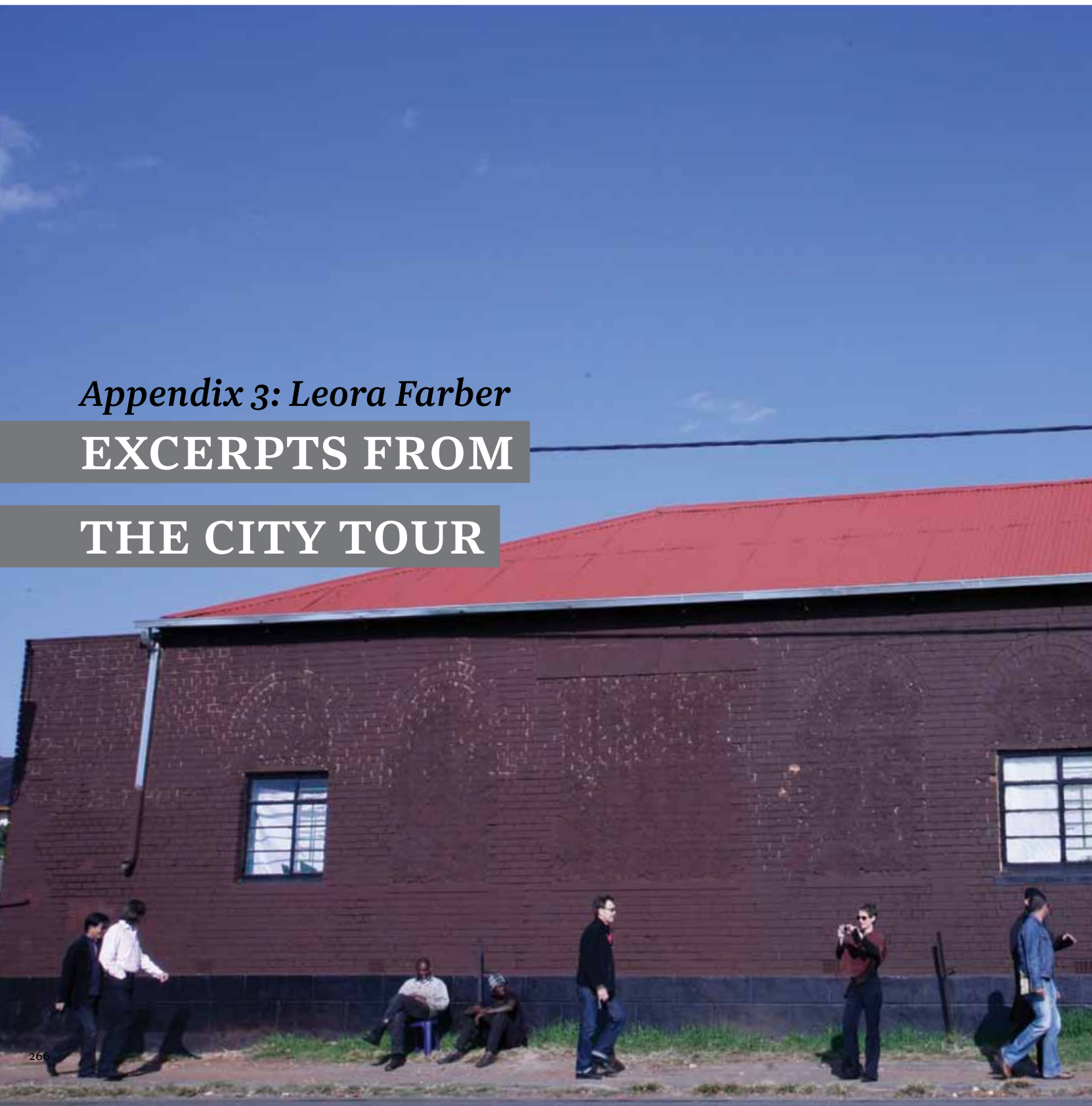

Appendix 3: Leora Farber
EXCERPTS FROM
THE CITY TOUR





The Johannesburg and Megacity Phenomena colloquium city tour offered a more interactive, first-hand experience of greater Johannesburg than the common tourist drive-by, as it provided opportunities for those who have worked on specific sites to give site-specific presentations. The morning began with an emotionally affective presentation by ex-residents of Fietas¹, at the 26'10 South offices in Fietas. Facilitated by Thorsten Deckler (Principal Architect, 26'10 South Architects) and ex-Fietas resident, Feizel Mamdoo, a group of ex-residents passionately narrated their recollections of living in the area, before the apartheid-sanctioned forced removals in the 1950s and 1960s. Each recalled the urban vibrancy and vitality of the area, and in particular, its emphasis on shared communal life, played out through the co-existence of residents with diverse religious and cultural beliefs. Small plots and tight street frontages, with living quarters above the shops below, encouraged use of the street as public space. These close living conditions encouraged empathy and tolerance. Questions raised in the discussions which followed the presentations examined

- What made Fietas the dynamic, vibrant place it was?
- Did the spatial / built fabric of the environment influence peoples' lives / interactions; their dealings with each other and their senses of identity?
- How can the history of area be incorporated / inform development?
- What can planners, architects and city managers learn from this history?

Fietas is characterised by its strong community identity. These narratives presented a unique opportunity for micro-focus into an aspect of Johannesburg's history, whilst also raising current challenges. For Deckler and his partner architect, Anne Graupner, this communal architectural model proposes an historical precedent from which to reconstruct a democratic city. As they (Deckler 2008) note, "public space – offering a sense of civility, being part of a common civic community – is a rare commodity in South Africa, especially Johannesburg". As architects, they look to this form of popular urbanism, to inform their practice. (Deckler 2008)

fig 1 Group walking through
Fietas, 10 April 2008
Photograph by Clive Hassall

Passing by the Women's Gaol and the Fort; Constitutional Court; the Eland statue; Nelson Mandela Bridge; Brickfields; the original Park Station; Museum Africa and Mary Fitzgerald Square, the second site presentation was by Ludwig Hansen (Principal Architect, Urban Solutions) at the Metro Mall Taxi Rank, corner of Bree Street and Nelson Mandela Bridge. Hansen focused on ways in which the architecture of the taxi rank is designed to meet certain challenges facing the informal sector. These challenges included the needs of informal traders and taxi operators, as well as the functioning of the facility. The Metro Mall development links informal traders and transport operators, integrating them into one facility. It is one of many such facilities, of which Faraday, Metro Mall and Baragwanath Transport Interchange are the most significant. The site visit provided the opportunity to view the workings of the largest of these new transport interchanges.

During the tour, Hansen explained that the Metro Mall Taxi Rank was, in part, designed to develop informal trading in Johannesburg. Due to their informal beginnings and operations and functioning independent of a government framework, street traders were long regarded as illegal citizens of the city, exposed to abuse, extortion and forced removals. Whilst not provided with any status within the city, they occupied whatever space was available, including under-utilised land and city pavements. During the early 1990's this changed, as this period saw an unprecedented, rapid, but unplanned growth of the sector. Through realisation that street traders could not sustain themselves independently from other city functions and activities, projects which followed a more integrative approach, such as the Metro Mall were initiated. The combination of informal trading and public transport, particularly the taxi industry, became a logical form of integration.



fig 1



fig 2

fig 1 The Nelson
Mandela Bridge
Braamfontein
Photograph by Clive
Hassall

fig 2 Inside the Metro
Mall Taxi Rank
Photographs by Clive
Hassall



Passing by the Turbine Hall (Anglo Gold Ashanti); Main Street; Ghandi Square; through the new upmarket residential area and the Rand Club; past the Kopanong Government Precinct and the Legislature; through the Legal Precinct; the Fashion District; Faraday Taxi Rank and Muti Market; Baragwanath Taxi Rank; the proposed Baragwanath Retail, Orlando Ekhyaya and the Maponya Mall, the next site visited was Kliptown Freedom Square. In a site presentation by Daniel van der Merwe (then Senior Lecturer in Architecture, UJ) and Precious Makwe (StudioMAS Architects), it became apparent that in as much as the Metro Mall accommodated and has been claimed by its users and traders, so Freedom Square remains alien to its community. Ironically, intended as an architectural intervention which would act as a catalyst for large scale urban renewal and initiate formalised civic space in the heart of Soweto, and which, as an architectural narrative, would embody the ideals and principles expressed in the Freedom Charter, the Square remains desolate in comparison to the vibrancy of the Metro Mall. Traders attempt to sell clothing, spreading their goods on the ground, but little has been provided by way of coverage or facilities for trade.

fig 3 At Kliptown
Freedom Square
Photographs by Clive
Hassall





fig 4 Lunch at Wandies Place, Soweto
Photographs by Clive Hassall



fig 5 Scenes taken from the rooftop of the Drill Hall
Photographs by Clive Hassall



fig 6 At the Johannesburg Art Gallery, Joubert Park
top: Clive Kellner; Director
Photographs by Clive Hassall

After lunch at the famous tourist restaurant, 'Wandie's Place' in Soweto, the group travelled back to the inner-city, passing Greater Ellis Park 2010 and Ponte, to arrive at the Joubert Park Collective Projects based at the Drill Hall. Projects director, Dorothee Kreutzveld introduced the space and surrounds, outlining the challenges and opportunities the Drill Hall offers as a multi-use heritage site and platform for cultural exchanges within a rapidly transforming urban environment. She also outlined some of the projects that the Joubert Park Project Collective has facilitated, pointing to the Keleketla! youth library on site, which is facilitated by writer Bettina Malcomess and current UJ Fine Art Master's student, Christian Ngoato, as an example.

The Joubert Park Projects Collective has been running public art interventions at the Drill Hall since 2000. Its location in the heart of the inner-city provides an impetus for developing a multi-tiered programme aimed at activating the Drill Hall. This programme is intended to inspire different ways of thinking about relationships between artistic production, urban space and inner-city communities.

Kreutzveld (2008) explains that whilst the Drill Hall offers a platform for interaction and reflection on and within the city, she and her team are exploring four metaphors for how the urban context might be envisioned, namely

urban space as a playing field, a marketplace, a battleground and a stage. The idea is to propose these metaphors as reference points ... for projects that would, for example, engage economists, artists, long-distance swimmers, educators, anthropologists and choreographers to research and generate collaborative actions in urban space.

Kreutzveld (2008) continues that these intentions are based on the perception that there is a close relationship, between the methods and procedures of games, sports, markets, warfare and theatre, and the manner in which space and power in the inner-city are presently being contested. This complex match is often presented in public discussion and the media as being a contest between the forces of 'law and order' on the one side and rampant 'criminality and violence' on the other. For her, the above-mentioned metaphors serve as a touchstone through which different kinds of disruptions of public space can be initiated.

From the Drill Hall, participants walked through the Noord Street Taxi Rank, to the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG), where they joined Clive Kellner (Director: JAG) for a tour of the gallery. Kellner provided information on the history of the establishment of this institution and granted participants access to certain non-public areas such as the conservation studio and the store rooms which house the collections.

Endnotes

1. Fietas refers to the two Johannesburg suburbs currently known as Pageview and Vrededorp

References

- DECKLER, T & GRAUPNER, A. 2008. Site Presentation Outline. [O]. Available: <http://www.uj.ac.za/JohannesburgandMegacityPhenomena/SitePresentations> ACCESSED ON 26 MAY 2008.
- KREUTZVELD, D. 2008. The Joubert Park Collective Projects based at the Drill Hall. [O]. Available: <http://www.uj.ac.za/JohannesburgandMegacityPhenomena/SitePresentations> ACCESSED ON 26 MAY 2008.
- KREUTZVELD, D. 2008. The Joubert Park Collective Projects based at the Drill Hall. [O]. Available: <http://www.uj.ac.za/JohannesburgandMegacityPhenomena/SitePresentations> Accessed on 26 May 2008.