

Our criteria have grown out of ongoing work with postgraduate students, who continue to teach us about the possibilities that emerge when we center care, context and community in landscape architecture practice.

Our selection of student projects reflects a **canon-expansive approach** that acknowledges diverse perspectives, multiple ways of knowing, and plurality. These projects make visible that which was previously ignored or marginalised, pushing landscape architecture beyond its traditional Euro-American frames through the recognition and elevation of local knowledge systems.

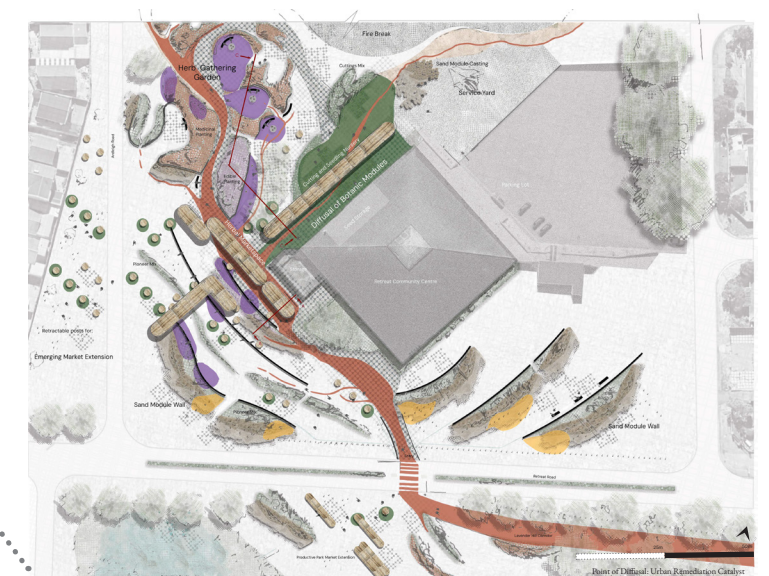
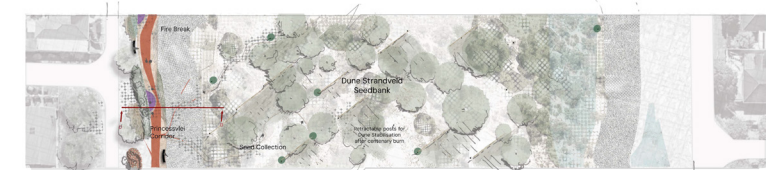
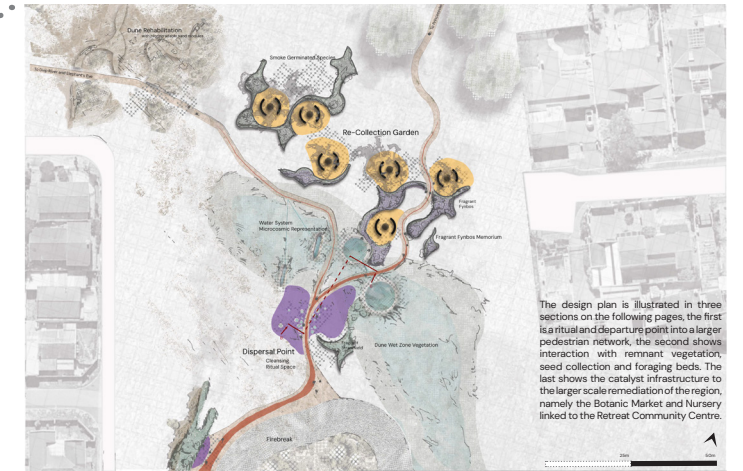
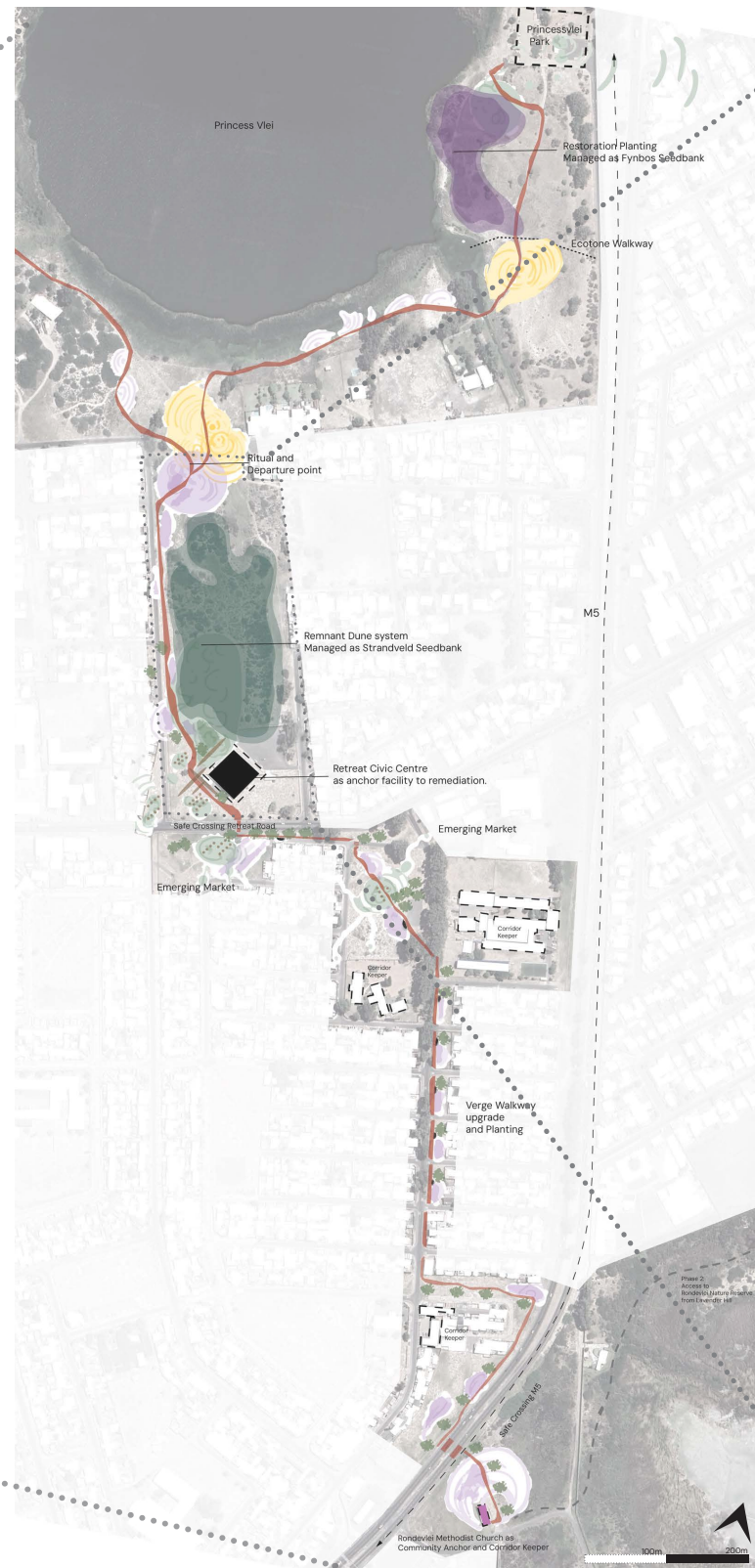
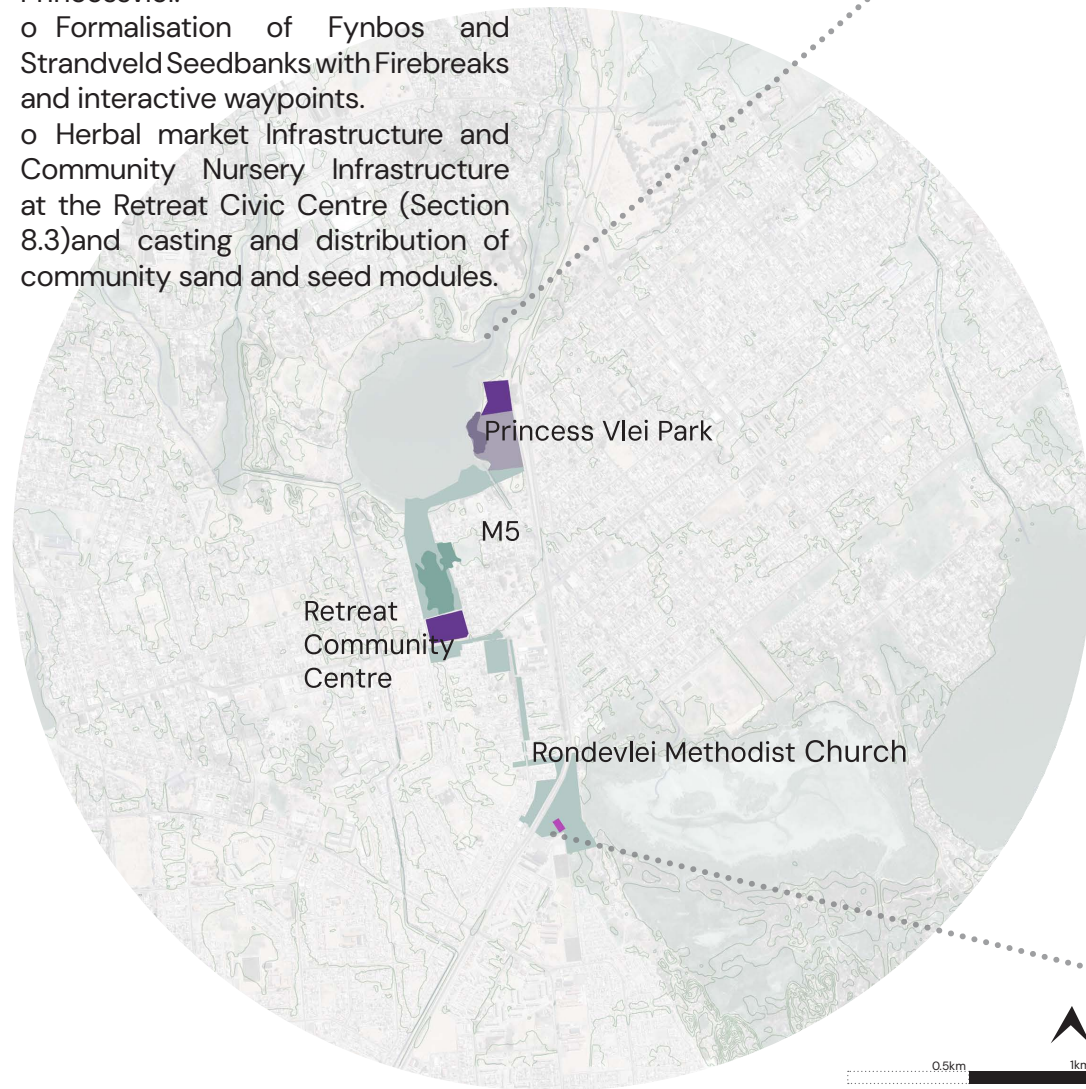
Cape Town's landscape reveals profound beauty alongside deep socio-spatial inequalities, remarkable resilience amid persistent injustice. These projects **hold space for contradictions**: they grapple with messy postcolonial and post-apartheid legacies, cultivating methods that are simultaneously rigorous and speculative. Students demonstrate the capacity to hold multiple truths simultaneously, make decisions in uncertain contexts, and acknowledge their assumptions while taking meaningful action.

Central to our selection are projects that embody **care and contextual literacy**, grounded in the African philosophy of Ubuntu and committed to social, ecological, and spatial justice. Students pursue repair, dignity, and social change through embodied experiences that prioritise who is being heard and how healing might be facilitated through thoughtful design. This represents landscape architecture as cultural practice—recognising that how people feel in spaces, whose voices are heard, and how power dynamics play out are as important as ecological or aesthetic considerations.

We believe the most transformative landscape interventions emerge when students are empowered to follow their own curiosity and intuition. These are fundamentally **student-led** projects that exist at the intersection of students' positionality as activists, designers, and researchers. Students bring insights from having lived within these systems, asserting agency in shaping design priorities that resonate with their communities.

These projects showcase how emerging practitioners don't just design spaces but advance landscape futures through thoughtful and diverse design practice.

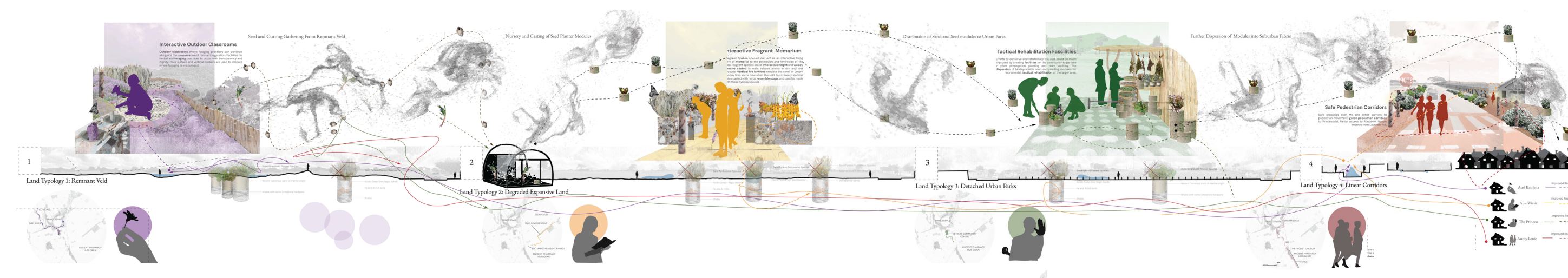
- o +-2.5km Pedestrian Walkway with supporting infrastructure at suburban scale from Rondevlei Methodist Church, Lavender Hill, Across the M5 into Retreat Civic Centre and Princessvlei.
- o Formalisation of Fynbos and Strandveld Seedbanks with Firebreaks and interactive waypoints.
- o Herbal market Infrastructure and Community Nursery Infrastructure at the Retreat Civic Centre (Section 8.3) and casting and distribution of community sand and seed modules.



City / Country
 Programme / University
 Academic year
 Title of the project
 Authors

Cape Town, South Africa
 Landscape Architecture Programme, University of Cape Town
 Master of Landscape Architecture 2024
 (Re)-Collecting Ausidi: Herstories and Herbalism from the Ancient Pharmacy
 Estelle Stander

Title of the project	(Re)-Collecting Ausidi: Herstories and Herbalism from the Ancient Pharmacy
Authors	Estelle Stander
Title of the course	MLA Design Dissertation
Academic year	Master of Landscape Architecture 2024
Teaching staff	Clinton Hindes, Christine Price, Tarna Klitzner
Programme	Landscape Architecture Programme
School / University	School of Architecture Planning & Geomatics, University of Cape Town



Inspired by June Bam’s “Ausi Told Me: Why Cape Herstories Matter,” Estelle’s project centers the Ausidi—female elders and knowledge keepers of Khoi-San descent—whose indigenous ways of being in the Western Cape landscape embody sophisticated ecological wisdom that predates and challenges conventional design frameworks.

This dissertation exemplifies how landscape architecture can become an instrument of cultural, ecological, and ontological remediation—particularly within the contested terrains of the global south. Estelle grounds her interventions in four Ausidi ways of being in the landscape: view of the land, agency in the landscape, healing in community, and knowledge transfer. These ontological touchpoints shape realms of possible intervention, ensuring that design priorities arise from lived relationships with place rather than imposed external solutions. This approach reveals how Indigenous Knowledge Systems operated not as abstract concepts but as lived, spatial practices intimately connected to specific ecologies and seasonal cycles. Estelle’s innovative use of smoke as both metaphor and spatial logic demonstrates remarkable conceptual sophistication. Smoke connects Ausidi ceremonies and aromatherapy rituals with the fragrant plants they

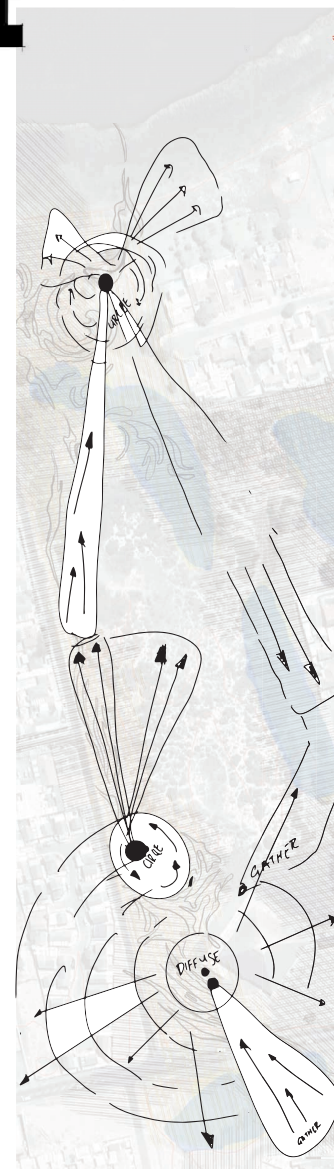
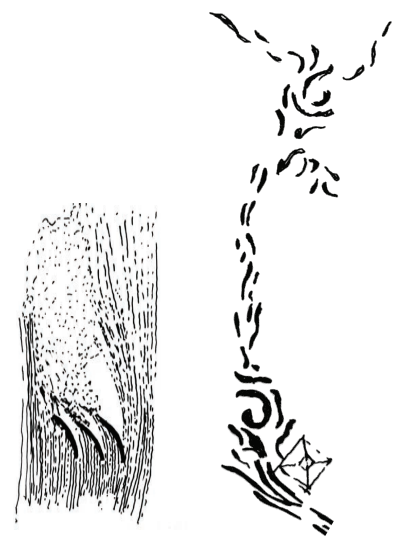
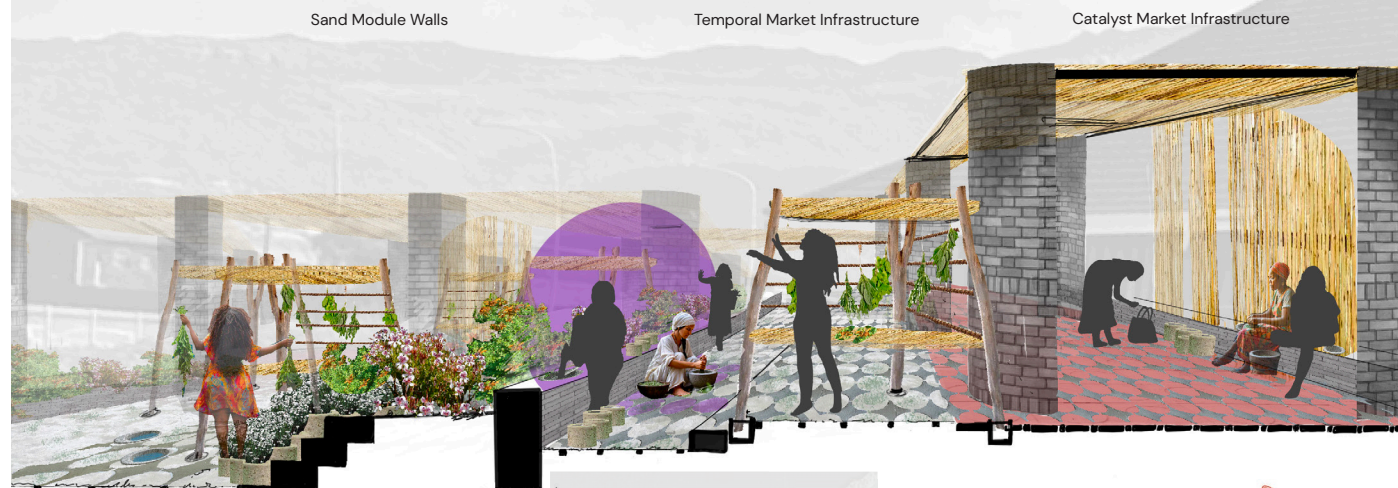
used, links sensory and memory-making practices with the smoke germination essential for local fynbos vegetation, and provides a framework for understanding how knowledge moves—drifting, gathering, and dispersing across landscapes and generations. This metaphor translates into moving modules constructed from seed, sand, and resin that function as micro-instruments of soil repair, activated through community participation.

The project envisions a contemporary framework that integrates Indigenous ritual ecologies while rehabilitating Cape Flats Dune Strandveld, an endangered vegetation type. Through this approach, the landscape becomes a participatory platform where ecological healing, memory work, and renewed kinship with land occur simultaneously. Ultimately, her thesis reimagines landscape architecture as a practice of justice, care, and plural futures—materially and culturally enacted, demonstrating how design can serve as a medium for recovering suppressed knowledge systems and healing both ecological and social wounds.

Barcelona International Landscape Biennial

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The journey begins as the sun peaks through the silhouette of the mountain and trees. We are kindly greeted by the fleeting swirl of the wind and morning singing birds.

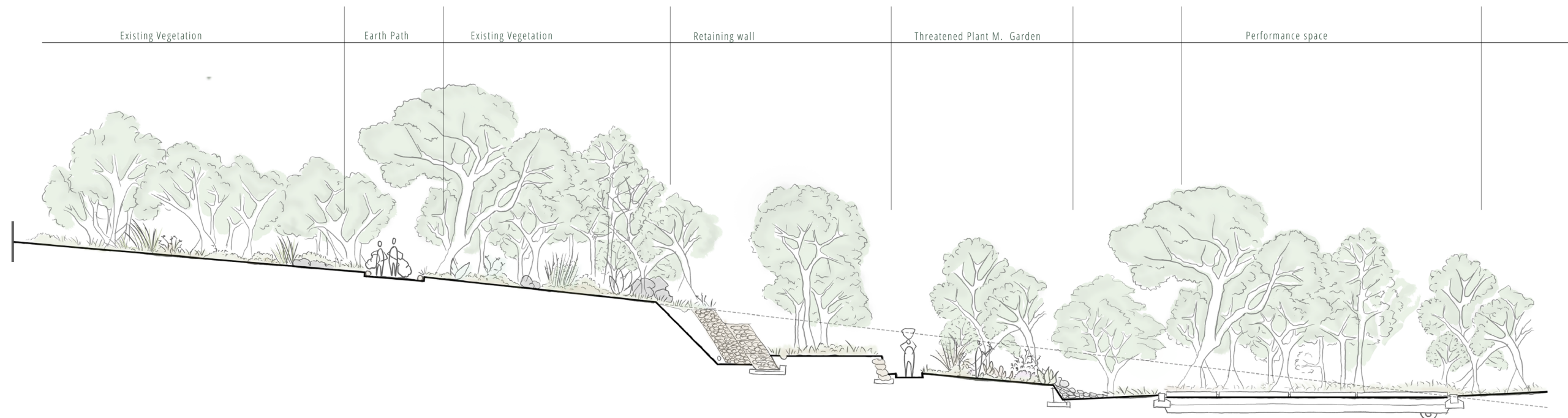
As the forest guides us deeper into its heart, a way is made for our journey to begin.

We find a space where the forest may listen and hear us as we have entered into its home. In appeasement we pray asking to receive from it healing.

From the west and east the tree has peeled, giving to us the root of its seasoned health.

With this bead we thank you for your continued giving of life and sustenance of our spirit.

THE HEALERS JOURNEY THROUGH THE SACRED FOREST



City / Country

Cape Town, South Africa

Programme / University

Landscape Architecture Programme, University of Cape Town

Academic year

Master of Landscape Architecture 2022

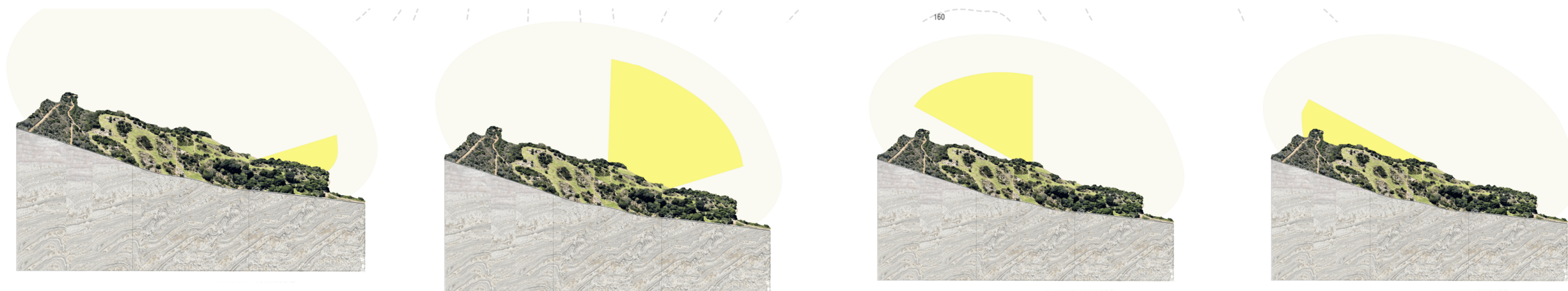
Title of the project

Isiko Lehlathi 'The Customary Rights of the Forest': Unearthing the True Nature of Botanical Gardens

Authors

Kekeletso Ramodibe

Title of the project	Isiko Lehlathi 'The Customary Rights of the Forest': Unearthing the True Nature of Botanical Gardens
Authors	Kekeletso Ramodibe
Title of the course	MLA Design Dissertation
Academic year	Master of Landscape Architecture 2022
Teaching staff	Clinton Hindes, Tarna Klitzner
Programme	Landscape Architecture Programme
School / University	School of Architecture Planning & Geomatics, University of Cape Town



Kekeletso's project emerges from profound personal rootedness in isiXhosa cultural practices and a childhood immersed in the Eastern Cape's forests, where *amasiko* (customs) shaped daily life through ceremonial gatherings, the burning of *imphepho* (sage), and the deep spiritual connection between people and *ihlathi* (forest). This lived experience drives her critical interrogation of how botanical gardens like Kirstenbosch perpetuate colonial exclusions, denying Indigenous communities access to consecrated landscapes that their ancestors occupied and where healing practices still hold cultural significance.- Her research challenges the apolitical stance of botanical institutions, revealing how Eurocentric conservation frameworks marginalize Khoi-San and AmaXhosa knowledge systems that recognize forests as living, sacred entities. Through extensive engagement with traditional healers and sangomas, Keke documents the intricate rituals of harvest—from dream-guided timing to *ukunqonqoza* (knocking) ceremonies that request permission from the forest—demonstrating sophisticated indigenous

conservation practices that predate colonial intervention.

The project's transformative potential lies in its hybrid design approach: nested precincts that accommodate both temporal ritual spaces and fixed conservation functions, creating opportunities for controlled medicinal plant cultivation and regulated local trade. Rather than displacing existing botanical functions, Keke proposes integration—spaces where traditional practitioners and conservationists can collaborate, sharing knowledge while respecting the forest's consecrated nature.

This work exemplifies student-led discovery that centers Indigenous ways of knowing, challenging landscape architecture to move beyond aesthetic and ecological considerations toward cultural healing. By reimagining botanical gardens as spaces of spiritual connection rather than colonial display, Keke advances landscape futures that honor ancestral wisdom while building resilience for both healing communities and threatened ecosystems.

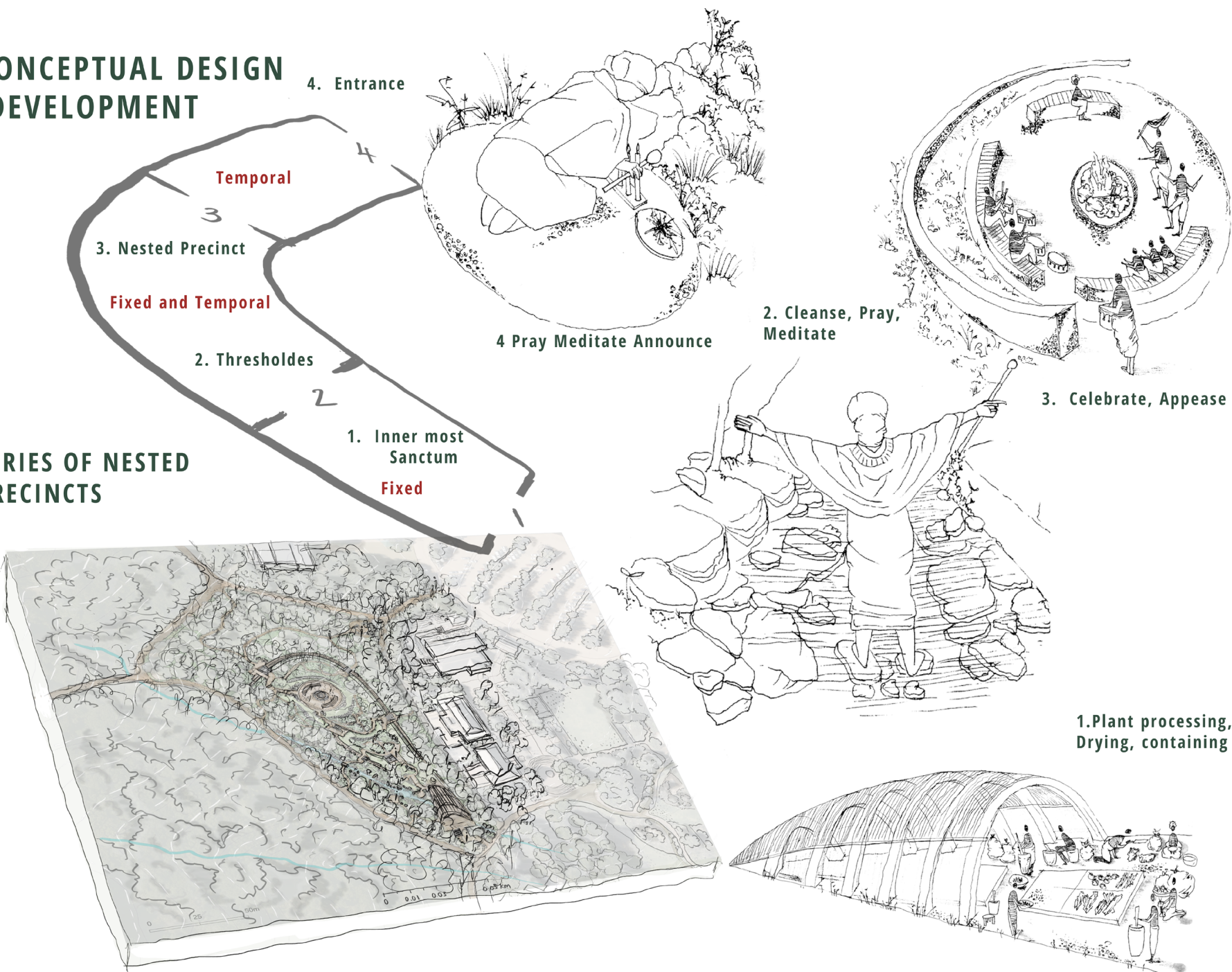
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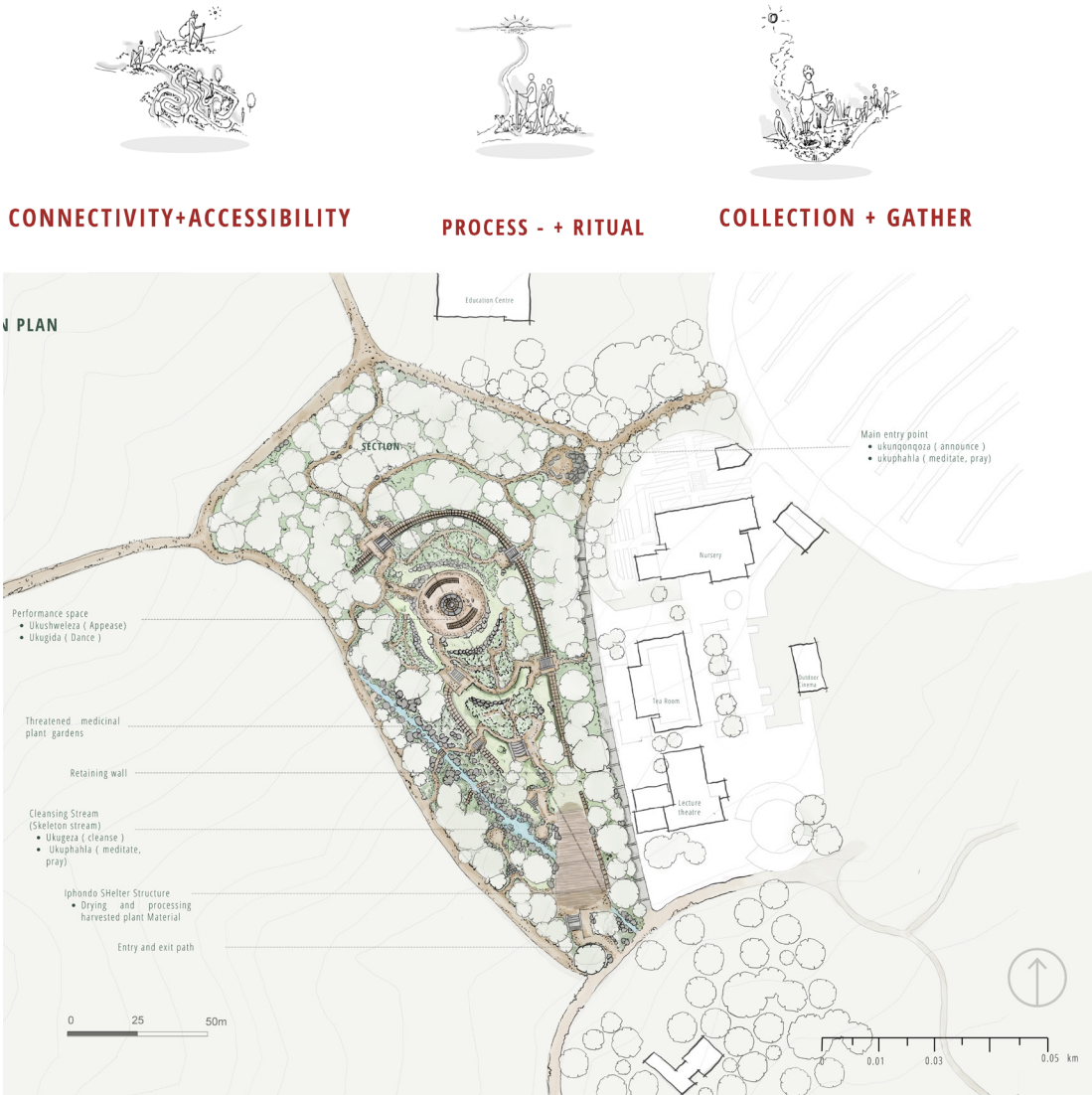
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CONCEPTUAL DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

SERIES OF NESTED PRECINCTS



CONCEPTUAL DESIGN PLAN



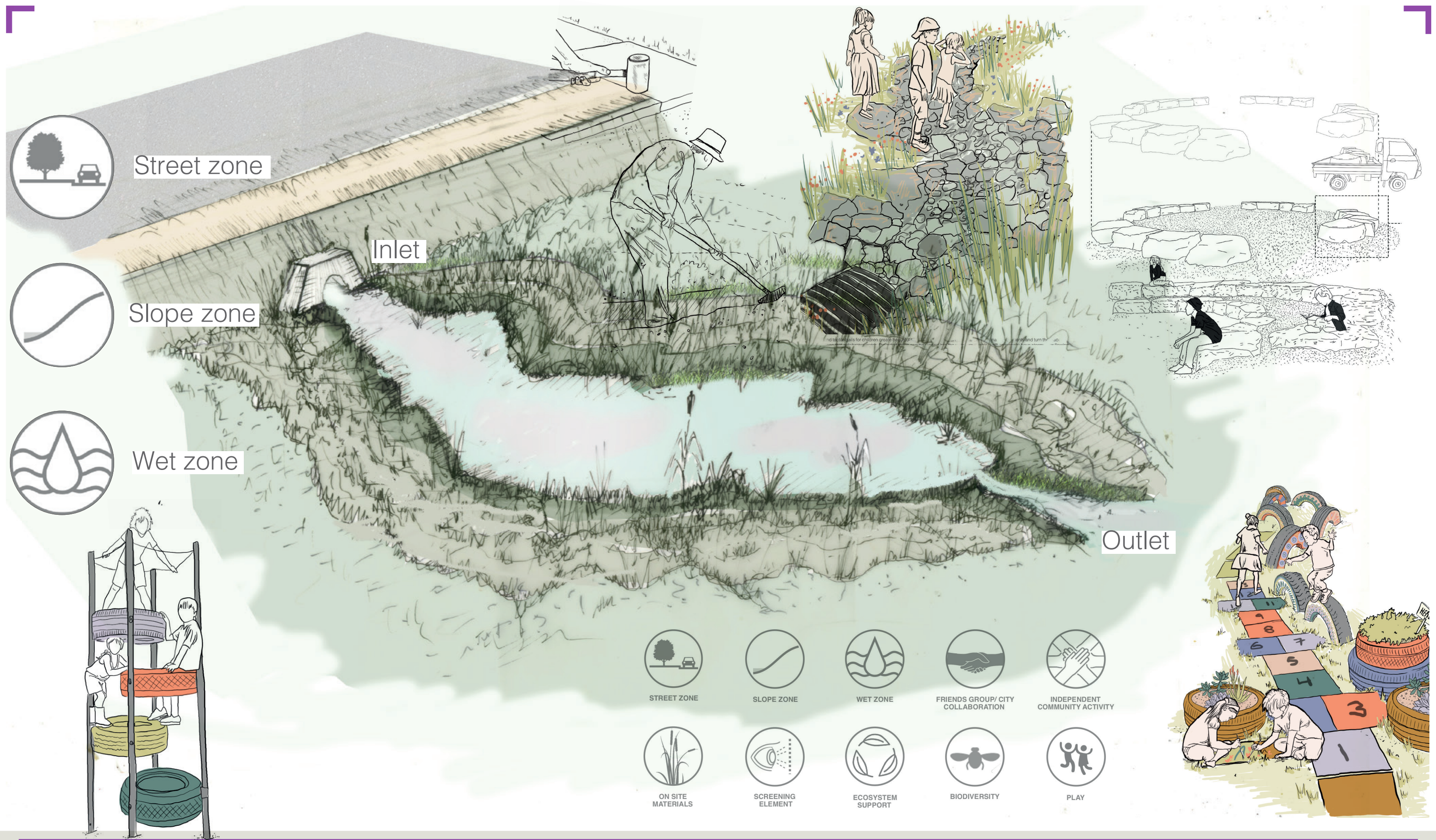
GENERAL SURROUNDING

PUBLIC ROUTES + ACCESS POINTS

INTERNAL PATHS+ RITUAL SITES

INTERNAL PATHS+ RITUAL SITES





City / Country

Cape Town, South Africa

Programme / University

Landscape Architecture Programme, University of Cape Town

Academic year

Master of Landscape Architecture 2024

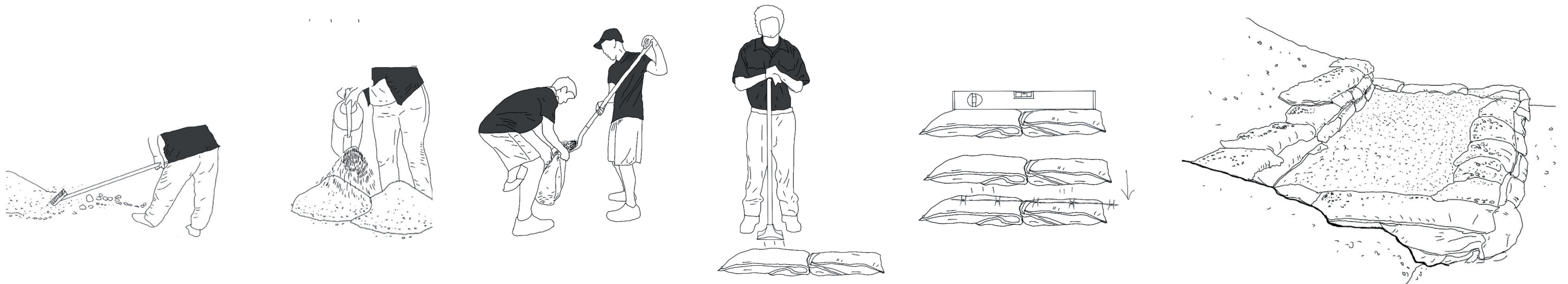
Title of the project

Citizen Placemaking Toolkit

Authors

Inayah Essack, Eden Cloete, Colin Lombard, Estelle Stander, Salma Elamin, Paula Frank and Kekeletso Ramodibe

Title of the project	Citizen Placemaking Toolkit
Authors	Inayah Essack, Eden Cloete, Colin Lombard, Estelle Stander, Salma Elamin, Paula Frank and Kekeletso Ramodibe
Title of the course	Landscape Innovation Seminar
Academic year	Master of Landscape Architecture 2024
Teaching staff	Julia McLachlan, Christine Price and Kekeletso Ramodibe (with guest input from Zeenat Arieff and Craig Tanyanyiwa)
Programme	Landscape Architecture Programme
School / University	School of Architecture Planning & Geomatics, University of Cape Town



This open-source publication, produced for the Future Water Institute research unit, represents a careful approach to community-driven landscape transformation of neglected stormwater ponds into vibrant, multi-functional community spaces that positively contribute to local livelihoods.

Cape Town's 800+ stormwater ponds, particularly the 300 located in the Cape Flats, function solely as engineered flood management systems. Despite being zoned for public open space and environmental conservation, their value is hampered by safety concerns, vandalism, dumping and debris accumulation. Located in under-served neighbourhoods affected by socio-spatial inequalities, these sites represent untapped potential for community empowerment and environmental restoration.

The project's significance lies in the nuances embedded within seemingly simple interventions, born from students following their individual curiosity about pond ecology, community use and maintenance realities. Each design element responds to multiple contextual needs simultaneously. Edible and medicinal sandbag planters double as seating for social gathering while providing fragrant sensory landscapes,

stabilising slopes and increasing biodiversity. They promote food security, and maintain cultural knowledge systems around traditional healing practices through on-site, non-polluting materials and accessible construction methods. Reeded litter traps collectively restore indigenous vegetation, create habitat, filter stormwater, host educational play, offer materials for traditional thatching and basket weaving and generate economic opportunities through harvesting cycles.

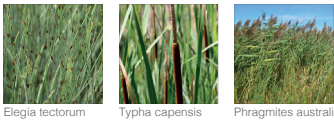
The toolkit embraces the messy complexities of these spaces: recognising knowledge of residents, working with seasonal flooding patterns, material availability and maintenance capacities. Through clear, hand-drawn illustrations that function like recipes, it provides essential guidance while remaining adaptable to local conditions. These interventions demonstrate landscape architecture's expanded role into facilitative practice. Through deceptively modest gestures, they address urban challenges by recognising residents as agents and experts in their own environments, creating sustainable transformation through community-led, highly localised solutions.

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LITTER TRAPS AND CHECK DAMS
REED IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT



ELEGIA TECTORUM

Cape thatching reed, Deckreed
(Eng.)
Dakriet, Dekriet (Afr.)

TYPHA CAPENSIS

Bulrush (Eng.)
Papkuil, Matjiesriet (Afr.)
Ibhuma (Zulu, Swazi)
Ingcongolo (Xhosa)
Motsitla (Sesotho)

PHRAGMITES AUTRALIS

Hanta(m) (Khoi)
Fluitjiesriet/Vaderlandsriet (Afr.)
Lehlaaka (SeSotho.)
mHlanga(isiZulu.)
Lutanga (Tshivenda.)

Eleigia Tectorum is a medium-sized restio. It can grow up to 1.5m high and spread up to 2-3m wide. Eleigia has thin dark green stems (culms) with brown flowers in Autumn (March-May).

Eleigia is best grown from seed which needs to be handled quite carefully. Seeds can be harvested about 9 weeks after brown seed flowers appear in Autumn.

Eleigia requires full sun and well-drained soil (sandy soil). It is best planted above flood lines and not in soil exposed to constant water. It is best planted at the start of rainy season (May).

Eleigia can be used as a thatching reed, but the timing of harvest is important! Only harvest when new culms come out in the centre of the plant. Cut old culms from the side of the plant for use. Stem harvest can only happen after 1 year of planting seed. (SANBI, 2016)

Typha capensis is a common and robust perennial wetland herb. It grows up to about 2.5m in height. It is fast spreading and can take over wetland habitats if not controlled. Typha needs slowflowing or still water to thrive.

Typha is easy to grow by digging out roots and dividing into clumps.

NB: to control, cut back from the rhizomes during dry season. It can be planted in plastic containers and submerged to help maintenance of cutting back. The roots and rhizomes can be dried for medicinal purposes.

The flowers spikes are dense and cylindrical. The pollen powder of these spikes can be harvested as an alternative to flour for baking. Typha capensis is in flower from December to January.

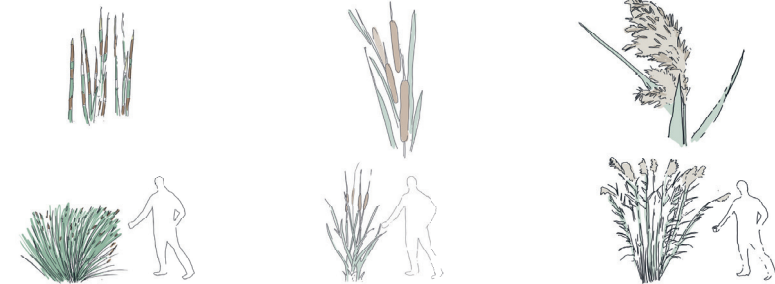
The big leaf blades can be harvested during the beginning of dry season (around October) and used to make mats and brooms or used for thatching and weaving. (SANBI, 2007)

Phragmites Australis is a tough perennial reed that grows up to 4m high. The flowers (12-40cm) are compact with long silky hairs. Flowering season is from December to June.

Phragmites Australis can spread to stands as big as 1 square km in favourable conditions. The reed spreads at an approximate rate of 5 square meter per year. It can grow in water up to 1 meter deep and needs wet soil to grow.

The reed is also tolerant of brackish water and can grow in water systems closer to the sea.

The hollow upright stalks can be harvested during the beginning of dry season (around October). The stalks are better for building material or check-dam infill, but can also be split and woven. (SANBI, 2015)



LITTER TRAPS AND CHECK DAMS
REED BED LITTER TRAP



SAFETY MEASURES

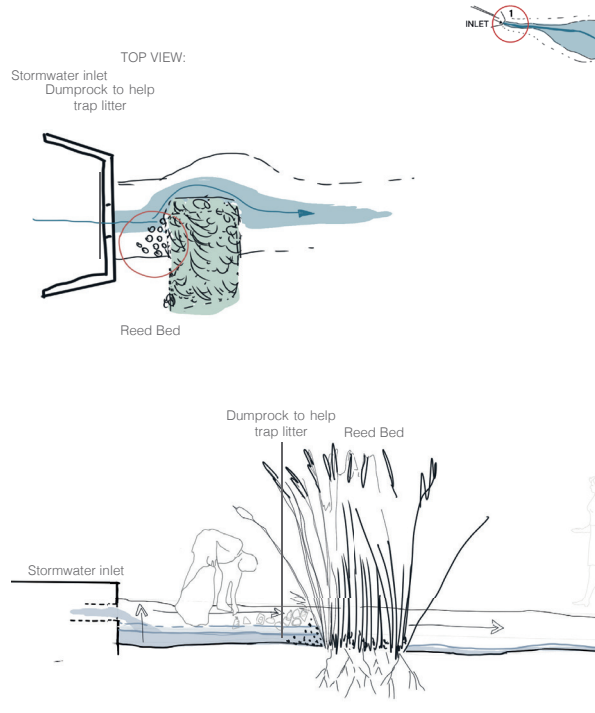
- When using a shovel wear closed shoes or safety boots.
- Wear gloves or use a litter picker stick when picking up litter.
- Wash hands after contact with Cape Flats stormwater, this water is mostly contaminated.

TOOLS LIST

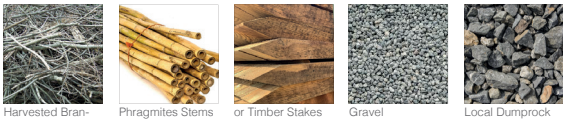
- Shovel.
- Rake to scrape trash.
- Litter picker stick or gloves (to pick up trash).

FURTHER NOTES

- Reedbeds are a natural way to trap litter and sediment in slower water gul-leys.
- Most reeds tend to become invasive. Please consult friends' groups to assist in control and maintenance.
- See below for some tips on manage-ment of reed beds:



LITTER TRAPS AND CHECK DAMS
BRUSH CHECK DAM



SAFETY MEASURES

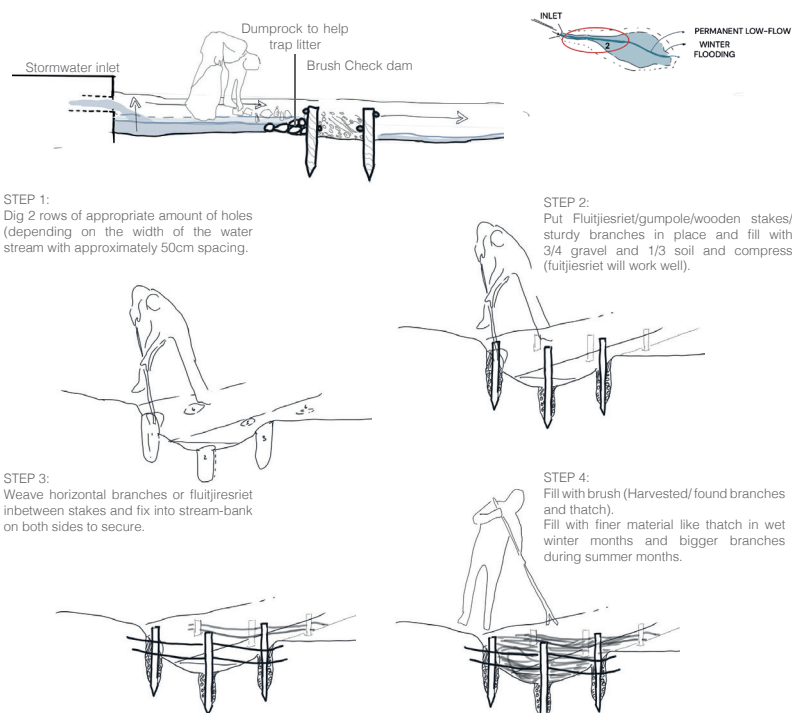
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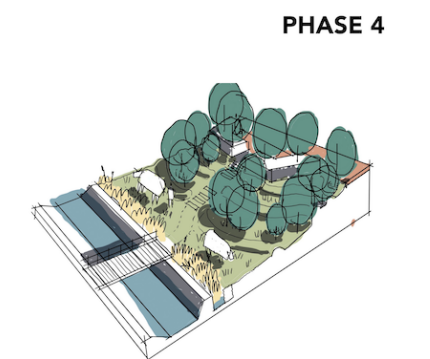
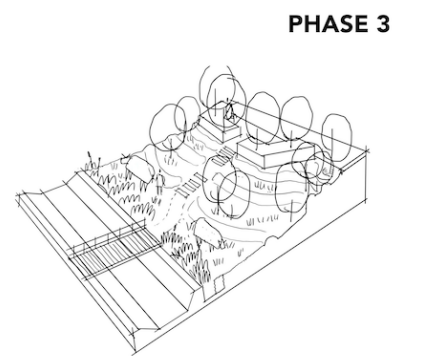
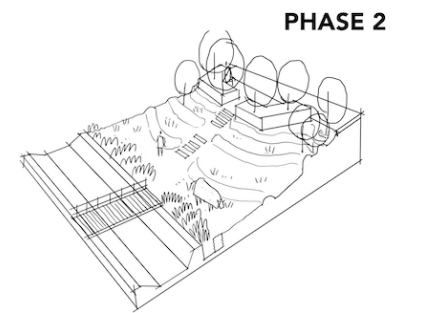
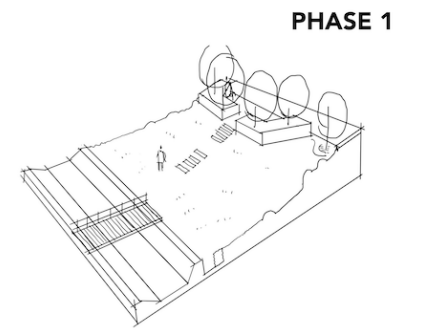
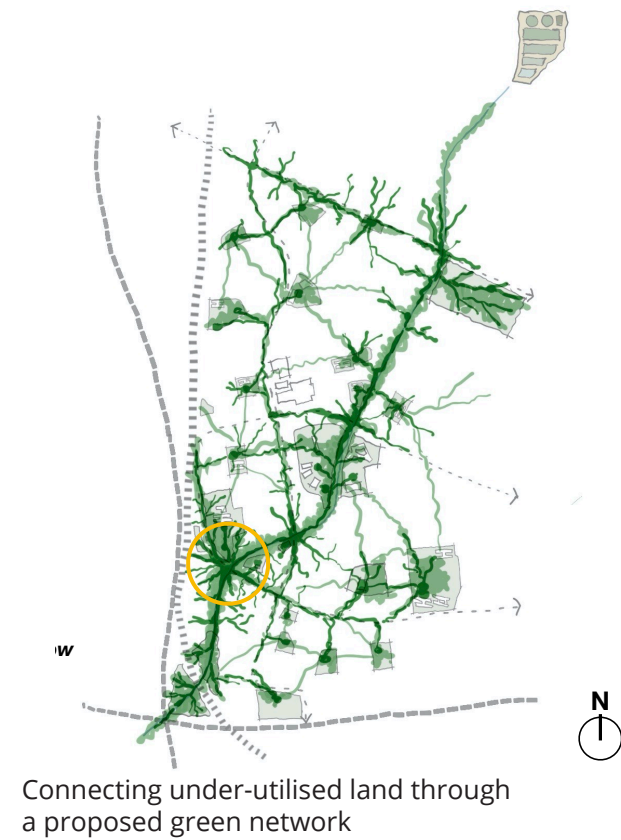
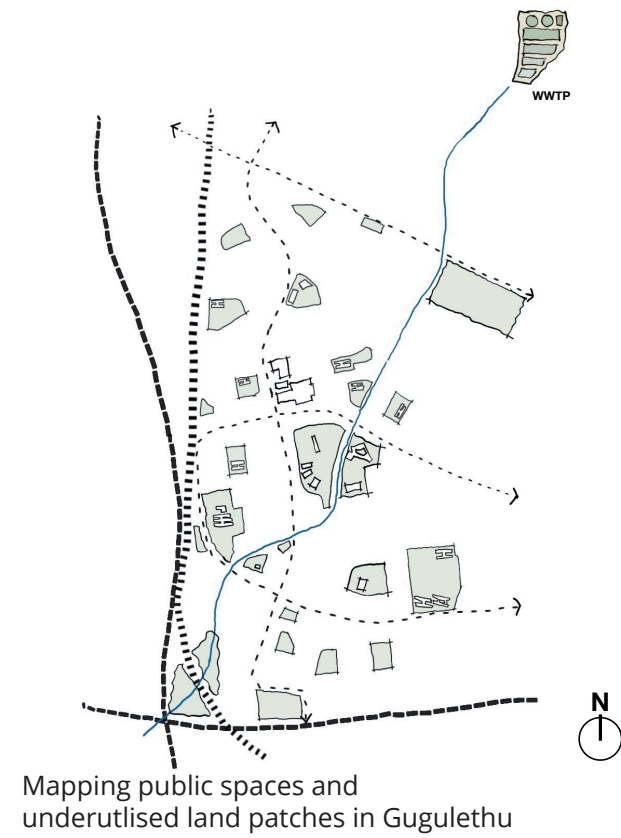
TOOLS LIST

- Shovel.
- Rake.
- Litter picker stick or gloves (to pick up trash).

FURTHER NOTES

- Brush check dams allow for changes in aperture to control the ammount of water that passes through. It is also an easy way to trap litter and sediment.
- It can also help to slow down water in higher flooding situations. Be sure to adjust height of brush wall for higher flood situations.





City / Country

Cape Town, South Africa

Programme / University

Landscape Architecture Programme, University of Cape Town

Academic year

Master of Landscape Architecture 2022

Title of the project

Productive Green Networks: Using Productive Landscape Processes and Green Infrastructure in Gugulethu, Cape Town

Authors

Yann Friederich

Title of the project	Productive Green Networks: Using Productive Landscape Processes and Green Infrastructure in Gugulethu, Cape Town
Authors	Yann Friederich
Title of the course	Landscape Architecture Studio V
Academic year	Master of Landscape Architecture 2022
Teaching staff	Kathryn Ewing, Hedwig Crooijmans-Lemmer, Alma Ruiz and Clinton Hindes
Programme	Landscape Architecture Programme
School / University	School of Architecture Planning & Geomatics, University of Cape Town



STRUCTURING ELEMENTS



The project proposes a dynamic productive landscape system that connects underutilised parcels of land across Gugulethu through a new green network. In doing so, it simultaneously tackles the persistent problem of illegal dumping and responds to the acute need for vibrant, accessible green public spaces within this township context.

At its core, the intervention is rooted in a site-specific, South-led approach, deeply informed by local hybrid land-use practices that originate from the interaction between traditional grazing practices and contemporary city living. Rather than imposing external solutions, the design works with existing informal cattle grazing, integrating these practices into a controlled system that incrementally regenerates degraded soils. This soil restoration creates the foundation for rehabilitating a neglected canal running through the heart of Gugulethu, which becomes the backbone of a primary green infrastructure system

composed of terraces and managed grazing zones.

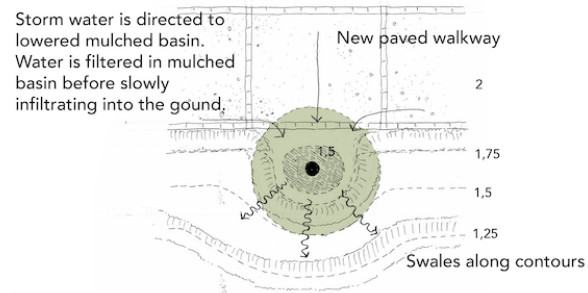
From this ecological framework emerges a layered social system. Movement routes interface with the green infrastructure, generating new public spaces that accommodate informal economies and foster everyday community life. The project begins at an emerging community node, designed to catalyse local participation and stewardship, and incrementally extends along the growing network.

By hybridising nature-based solutions, such as soil regeneration through managed grazing, with community-led activation of public land, the project exemplifies an innovative and transformative landscape approach. The methodology challenges conventional Eurocentric models of park-making by embracing local practices and economies as the drivers of urban green infrastructure. Through this, it envisions a resilient, culturally resonant landscape future for Gugulethu.

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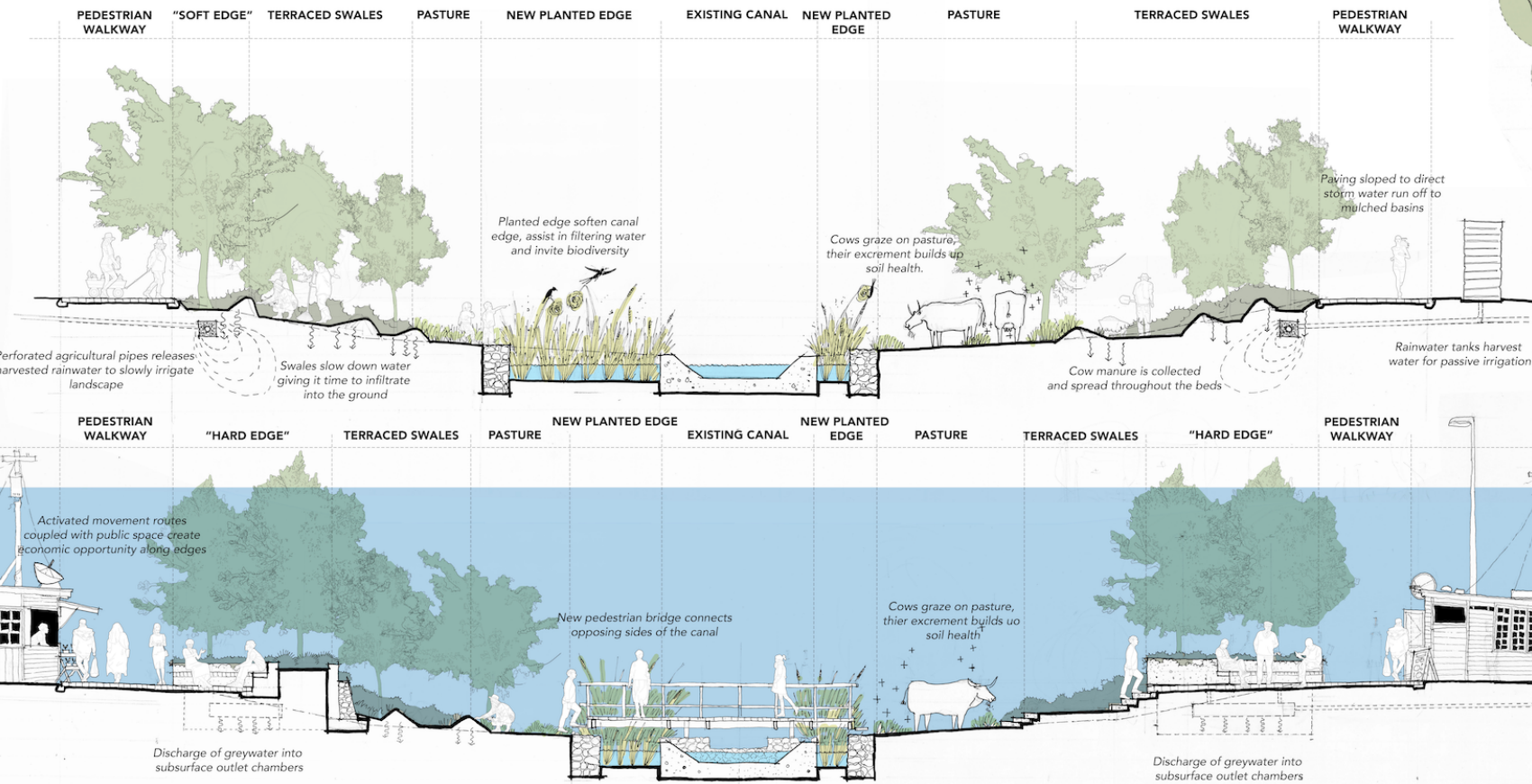
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SOFT EDGE DETAIL 1:50

SECTION B-B 1:50



SECTION A-A 1:50

HARD EDGE DETAIL 1:50

