

## **ARCHITECTS OF THE FUTURE COMBINE SUSTAINABILITY WITH DESIGN AT 26TH COROBRIK ARCHITECTURAL STUDENT OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

Today's fine architects are required to combine design talent with engineering ability, social awareness and an aptitude for business. In recent years this skills set has, of necessity, expanded to include understanding of the impact of different technologies on the environment with a particular focus on bio-diversity conservation, wise water consumption and low energy usage. Students of architecture who successfully incorporate technologies able to lower environmental impacts with their artistic and design talents, are those set to make a valuable contribution to the built environment of the future.

It is students demonstrating holistic competence who will be acknowledged and rewarded in the 26th Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year Awards, currently in the regional phase at eight universities across the country in the run-up to the national finals in Johannesburg in April next year.

Allin Dangers, Corobrik Director of Sales, Inland region presented prizes to architectural students of Tshwane University of Technology. The regional winner of R7000 was Danél Mentz for his thesis entitled The design of an Open Information and Educational Resource Center in central Pretoria. In second place is Danie Steenkamp taking the R5000 second prize and Navarre Ebersohn taking home the third prize of R3000. The winner of the R3000 prize for best use of clay masonry was Frandah Look.

The overall winner from among the institutional finalists will be announced and presented with a cheque for R50 000 at the 26th National Student Architect awards function at Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg on 18 April 2013.

"We are well into our third decade of sponsoring these awards," said Dangers. "Our intention has always been that this programme should inspire design excellence but the complexities of the global environment today demand a far broader vision from our students. We are looking for a deepened sensitivity towards all three pillars of sustainable development – the environment, the economy and our social fabric. This has to be seamlessly combined with practical solutions to a particular architectural challenge all done with artistic flair."

"The students who have received awards today have demonstrated a remarkable maturity in their work and a welcome acceptance of the multifaceted approach which bodes well for the future of the profession and the sustainability of our planet."

Danél Mentz' design is an open information and educational resource centre situated in central Pretoria. In his dissertation he proposes a new digital information building type in South Africa within which local educational facilities would be accommodated and would serve as a community hub. Located on the south eastern periphery of Pretoria's Central Districts, surrounded by the inner city residential areas, the facility does not replace the existing city libraries but supplements them by addressing current technological needs. The facility aims to create a hypothetical architectural model which can address built environment issues regarding information literacy.

Mentz says, "Part of the investigation includes the development of a central community related educational hub. This architectural investigation seeks the opportunities that could arise from information literacy which again influences academic performance and community development. In the proposed building, the

designer attempts to rehabilitate a public nodal area while incorporating research with regard to sustainable architecture.”

Danie Steenkamp's entry is for New Police Headquarters for Pretoria West Steenkamp says, “The proposed design responds to the identified current need for new police headquarters for the Pretoria West precinct. The building must accommodate all departments in one, properly functioning facility, which conforms to the needs of a police station to have controlled and private areas. The building aims to reflect a new approach to policing by creating a community orientated facility.”

In third place Navarre Ebersohn The Design of a Synaesthesia Research and Sensory Substitution Facility in Pretoria. This thesis presents the proposal of a Synaesthesia Research and Sensory Substitution facility in Prince's Park Pretoria.

He stated that to be able to perceive our world and the built environment we have to rely on our senses. However, the senses have been separated distinctly because of today's technological culture and modernist ideas, allowing the human body to be a mere observer of built objects.

It explores the human being's perception of the built environment and how we experience the language of materials to create a rich sensual journey. The architectural response relates to the sensorial exploration of space through a sequence of buildings linked by experimentive walkways. This initiates a sensual journey with nodes of episodic moments that will address the agenda, in this thesis, of enhancing architectural experiences.

In his design of a National Food Technology and Research Centre, Frandah Look proposed the establishment of a centre which deals in innovative and sustainable food technology and development. It will be built on a dilapidated site. Look has incorporated Corobrik's Firelight satin and Corobrik Onyx satin face brick to celebrate the heritage of the remaining buildings within Marabastad as well as the inherent durability and low maintenance of the material. The Burgundy piazza paver was used for the courtyards and the Tuscan blend paver used for the pedestrian sidewalk

Dirk Meyer, managing director of Corobrik, said the company had long put sustainability' at the centre of everything it did, and as with architects, Corobrik was pursuing and making use of systems and more environment-friendly technologies to add value to the recognized sustainability attributes of its products.

“We aim to give architects bricks with the requisite attributes to reinforce this ethos in their designs,” he said. “Clay bricks happen to have an environmental integrity that is holistic in its offering and with far reaching positive consequences. Durability, longevity, inertness, mineral properties that meet all necessary requirements for healthy living, incombustibility, natural sound insulation qualities, maintenance-free qualities as a face brick that mitigate future carbon debt, reusability and recyclability are some of the more prominent factors that contribute to clay bricks environmental status.”

From an environmental management perspective Corobrik now has six factories with ISO 14001 Environmental Management System Certification, and is well into its programme to further reduce its carbon footprint through the conversion of its facilities from coal-fired to natural gas-fired operations.

“An embodiment our commitment to the sustainability imperative is our achievement in becoming the first company in South Africa to be awarded Carbon Emission

Reductions CER's (carbon credits) from the United National Clean Development Mechanism for our successes in reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, this commencing at our Lawley Factory. While progress is being made we are ever mindful that more needs to be done", added Meyer.

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