

Cape Town shows off for WDC2014 convocation ceremony

 By Leigh Andrews

20 Oct 2014

Cape Town's reign as the official World Design Capital city of 2014 has come to an end. Here's what you can expect as Taipei takes on the creativity chalice as WDC2016...

Is there anything more beautiful than Cape Town at dusk? I think not. That's why dusk was the perfect time of day to celebrate all that Cape Town's accomplished as WDC 2014 and mark the official handover of the designation to the city of Taipei as WDC 2016.

Proceedings started with welcome drinks and a cocktail dinner where guests wore cocktail wear with a touch of yellow on the 8th floor of the new FNB Portside building, with live music and beautiful views of the city.

“ Breathtaking view and sounds coming from the [@wdc2014](#) convocation ceremony at new FNB building [pic.twitter.com/sSonBoq8wQ](#)- Rambling Litchi (@Leigh_Andrews) [October 18, 2014](#) ”

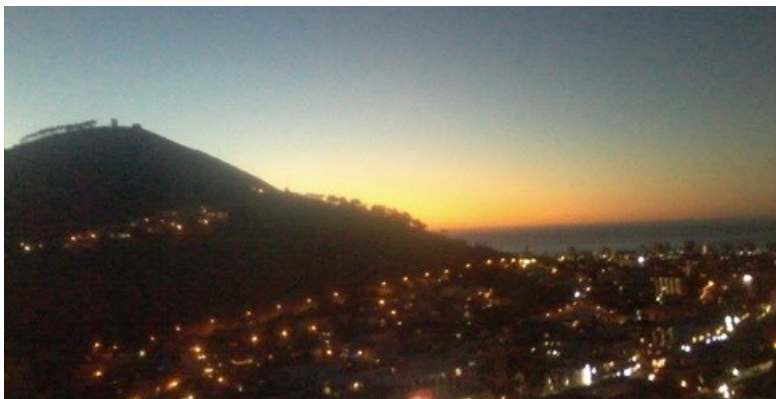
We then moved up to the 28th floor at sunset, where Cape Town showed off with a spectacular sunset that we could view from 270 degrees with the Athlone School for the Blind playing soothing marimba beats in the background.

Here's why the colour of creativity is turning purple



Once seated, Alayne Reesberg, Chief Executive Officer of Cape Town Design NPC welcomed all attendees, stating that from that moment on there would be "more purple in the world than yellow", with Taipei officially handed the baton as the WDC 2016. Fittingly, the lighting behind Reesberg dimmed from the yellow we've come to associate with Cape Town as WDC2014 to the purple we'll see more of as Taipei's official colour of creativity.

Reesberg thanked the city of Cape Town for providing the operational security needed and getting fully involved, from global sponsors to local, including the Graham Beck sparkling wine guests sipped on, which Reesberg pointed out was a favourite of Madiba and Obama alike. She said that Cape Town as WDC 2014 had knit together a narrative that made sense of what could have been a woolly concept at the WDC policy conference, and announced that roughly 6000 visitors had attended the [WDC2014 Design House Exhibition](#) at the Cape Town Stadium since its opening on Wednesday. Reesberg then introduced Prof Francis Petersen, the new chairman of Cape Town WDC, in double celebration on his 50th birthday.



Sunset over Signal Hill, as seen from the 28th floor of the FNB Portside building

Petersen noted that Alderman Patricia de Lille, as City of Cape Town's Executive Mayor, had truly embraced the notion of Cape Town as World Design Capital 2014 and encouraged co-creation so everyone was part of both the process and the

final product. This was important as Cape Town's title as WDC actually extended beyond the city to the whole country, if not the continent. Also, strategies implemented in 2014 of "yellow gees" will continue onwards, so it isn't simply a year-long event but rather a catalyst to recreate the city and position Cape Town for a sustainable future. We need to focus on social transformation to heal the divides of apartheid and enhance citizen-led initiatives through the 460+ WDC products curated and six signature events through the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID), like [the Make it New design exhibition](#). And while thousands did attend, Petersen feels the exhibition needs to still be displayed elsewhere as it comprises a strong learning component, to mobilise and create conversations on how design can enhance lives. Especially as it's gaining global prominence, with [Bizcommunity reporting](#) that World Design Capital 2014 was recently featured on CNN's 'Marketplace Africa' show.

The impact of WDC 2014 is by no means over...

In closing, Petersen said that WDC 2014 was by no means a silver bullet to provide all the solutions and fix everything, as its success will only be seen in many years' time through the planning already implemented and in the work of the legacy sub-committee. This will ensure that projects built on a basis of sustainability, design thinking and co-creation are nurtured and integrated into existing, well governed and enabled structures, wherever that may be, to take it forward. The notion of WDC should be seen as a diving board; an opportunity to use to its fullest in reshaping the future through a culture of innovation and design.

Next up was Dr Brandon Gien, President of ICSID. Gien said he'd recently told his wife based in Australia over a telephone call that he was falling in love. His outburst was met with shocked silence until he explained that he meant he was falling in love with Cape Town, which he described as a city that seduces him every time he visits.

Gien explained that [ICSID](#) is formed by 43 countries that work together as a global design network to design a better world through the creation of better systems, experiences, policy, environment and society for all. He acknowledged that this is a very ambitious statement but said that through the flagship WDC event, it actually comes to life. Obviously each country activates being WDC in a unique way, and Cape Town injected her own personality through the slogan "Live design, transform life". As the first WDC in Africa, Gien said the city had showcased how design can take some of the world's biggest problems and turn into opportunities, and emphasised Petersen's earlier point that WDC shouldn't be seen as a final destination but rather as a starting point to jump off from. The City of Taipei will join the existing design network with the theme of "adaptive city, design in motion". Gien feels this will be an entirely new design experience linked to humanity and sustainability, and said that while Taipei has big shoes to fill, it has already presented an ambitious set of objectives including 16 core projects as a vibrant year-long programme in 2016, Gien asked Taipei to "Make me fall in love with your city as well."

“ It's official! WDC plaque handed over to Taipei City Commissioner Liou Wei-Gong by CT Mayor De Lille, ICSID pres
Gien pic.twitter.com/IYMVrEEg5Q - Rambling Litchi (@Leigh_Andrews) [October 18, 2014](#) ”

Taipei's design promise as WDC 2016

The WDC plaque was then officially presented to Taipei's City Commissioner Liou Wei-Gong with Taipei's mayor speaking in a video call. He emphasised the importance of carrying forward cultural design to become an inspiration in the Chinese speaking world.

Wei-Gong added that this was a proud moment he'd been looking forward to since joining the Taipei WDC team in 2012. He'll be working with designers to bring innovation to all planning, and while he admits it's not an easy job, he enjoys it as each day he meets people who give the city greater imagination and enhance its quality of life. He said the plaque is so heavy it symbolises the start of the journey, and promised Taipei would show the world a remarkable story of adaptive design in 2016.

In closing, Reesberg introduced "the mayor who needs no introduction". De Lille began by stating that Arts and Culture Minister Nathi Mthethwa sent his apologies for not attending. She described 2014 as quite a year for the city of Cape Town,

saying "I can't believe it went by so quickly." She spoke of the benefit for our city of design this year, saying that after 20 years democracy, it's now time to move into a different phase of development, one where we share the future. To do so, we need to understand what design means and use it to transform life.

De Lille feels that creatives and those who work in product development already appreciate this, but says design is an essential component in how we work, live and play. We need to use structured creativity to enhance citizens' experience and appreciate as the greatest legacy of the year, and spread it through various sectors of society. Cape Town's WDC bid book inspired pride from the start and will become 'everyday work' and be felt over time in the lives of everyone who interacts with these sectors.

WDC will leave an intangible legacy best felt in the future. De Lille wished Taipei everything of the best, and predicts we will see the rewards and benefits we seek returned tenfold. As WDC, Cape Town certainly learned a lot and is not going to look back.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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