

Conversations on Architecture in Cape Town

The annual half-day conference, Conversations on Architecture (COA), sponsored by Caesarstone, will be held at the CTICC on 26 April 2012. Themed 'Architectural expression in the 4G Phase: Exuberant. Experimental. Explicit', the conference looks at contemporary issues facing the global and local built environment.

Tailor-made for architects and anyone working in the building and related design industries, the conference features speakers from Saraben-Studio, one of the UK's most promising young architectural and design firms, alongside local design mavens Porky Hefer and Haldane Martin; architect-filmmaker Robert Silke and film buff Alexandra Parker. Architecture students will also share their fresh insights on the huge opportunities ahead.

COA Host, Hugh Fraser says, "Using the work of Saraben-Studio as a departure point, the conference explores what is possible, now that we understand digital rendering, modelling and fabrication better. The boundaries between the design fields have also blurred allowing architecture, interior and furniture design to blend with product and graphic design more seamlessly."

International perspective

Sara Shafiei and Ben Cowd of the Saraben-Studio in Leicester built their reputation on producing highly crafted, ornate and layered drawings and models that have led to major exhibitions in London, Madrid, China and the Museum of Art and Design, New York. What they love most of their work is the act of invention and creation. "Whether it's buildings, models or drawings, it's the making of something beautiful, funny, practical or sublime that excites us." They will explore the theme of 'Craft and Exuberance', highlighting key work emerging from a young generation of digital enabled designers and researchers.

Local insight

Hefer, production designer of Porky Hefer Design, one of the country's most awarded creative people, designs concepts rather than products. Hefer designs a room concept at the Plascon Colour Forecast 2012 stand at Decorex Cape Town, depicting a bedroom as a 'nest', inspired by a bird's first memory. His talk is about living not working. "I'll be touching on how I left advertising to do what I loved; speak about my light designs and weavers nest tree houses and the links between bio mimicry and vernacular architecture and crossing disciplines to achieve things."

Martin, contemporary furniture and interior designer, will illustrate the use of digital design and manufacturing, combined with handwork to echo the beautiful, complex, organic forms found in nature. Martin, who qualified as an Industrial Designer in 1992, won numerous awards, the most recent being the Elle Decor, Designer Of The Year 2010, will illustrate the use of digital design and manufacturing, combined with handwork to echo the beautiful, complex, organic forms found

in nature.

With his growing reputation as one of South Africa's most promising young architects, Silke, design director at Louis Karol, has seen his work awarded and his design commentary published in blue chip design journals. His cult mockumentary, 'The Satyr of Springbok Heights' (2009) probed his preoccupation with architecture, urbanism and its profoundly underestimated effect on the lives of ordinary people. He will be presenting the question 'Do architects dream of electric buildings?' and addressing 'Hopes and fears for the application of virtual architecture in a post-industrial Africa.'

Parker, of the Architect Africa Film Festival, researches the role of film and television in shaping urban representation. She serves on the board for the Architects' Collective organizing, among other events, the Architect Africa Film Festival. Can architects learn from the art of filmmaking, if anything? Can we incorporate the language of film into our presentations to clients or into our own visualizations of buildings? Parker will also screen student films from the Moving Space competition.

CPD credit

The in-depth, visual presentations are followed by panel discussions and the programme closes with a valuable networking opportunity over a lunchtime cocktail, hosted by Caesarstone.

The conference is aimed at architects and interior design professionals, property developers, interior architects, builders, design and decor journalists and students in the field of design and architecture. The cost is R741 including Vat, refreshments and entrance to Decorex exhibition. The South African Institute of Architects has assessed and validated this as a Category One CPD Activity, carrying a 0.5 CPD credit.

To book, go to www.decorx.co.za/includes/siteimages/fileuploads/COACape2012NormalBookingForm.pdf.

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