

# UP student wins Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year Award

Heidi van Eeden, a student at the University of Pretoria, has won Corobrik's Architectural Student of the Year Award with her thesis *Machinarium: Architecture as a living machine, a 21st century textile mill*.



At the prestigious annual event which was held in Sandton, Johannesburg, Van Eeden took home a prize of R50,000. This is in addition to the R8,000 prize that she earned on winning the regional final in September last year.

Edna Perez, who supervised Van Eeden's thesis, said that the awards were important as they motivated students to think about their roles as architects in a fast-changing world by rewarding them to become the best designers they could be.

## Beneficial to career

"I believe winning an award like this is beneficial to the recipient's career in that it demonstrates a level of competency, ingenuity and also communication that is necessary in practice. In addition, I think these awards are also important for the profession as they offer an opportunity for reflection and forward thinking," she said.

Van Eeden's project is an investigation of the potential of industry as urban catalyst - a mechanism with which to regenerate urban environments and re-integrate fragmented socio-ecological systems. In an attempt to redefine modern concepts of waste and mitigate the flood of pollution emanating from 20th century industrialisation, the investigation is focused on the re-structuring of the textile industry and is contextually based in an 'urban wasteland' - the Daspoort Wastewater and Sewage Treatment Works.

Perez pointed out that, in a world where architecture's ability to navigate an uncertain future was increasingly being

questioned, Van Eeden explored one of the biggest challenges of our time - how to transform wasted sites, wasted structures and wasted land into sites that can regenerate conditions within which life can flourish and evolve.

## **Evolution in architecture**

Corobrik managing director, Dirk Meyer, said that in recent years, there had been an exciting evolution in the architectural debate surrounding issues related to sustainability which was clearly manifesting in the work and thinking of the architects of tomorrow.

"We are truly proud that our brand and the products that we produce can play a meaningful role in this. It is significant that a thesis such as this manifests a design ethic that strives to deliver a richer environment that caters for future generations at a significant time in our country's history - the celebration of 20 years of democracy," he said.

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