

UP's Renée Minnaar wins a spot in Corobrik architectural awards

The 31st Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year Awards is an annual competition that recognises the country's best architectural students from eight major universities. Students are identified based on their final theses and presented with awards at regional events.



UP's regional winner Renée Minnaar

At the University of Pretoria (UP), Renée Minnaar was named the regional winner of R8,500, Jan Diederleff van Aswegen won the second prize of R6,500, while Chrisna Viljoen received the third prize of R4,500. A R4,500 prize for the best use of clay masonry was also presented to Nick Randall.

Minnaar's thesis is entitled, *Remediator - Restoring the dichotomous relationship between industry and nature through an urban eco-textile mill and dye house.*

Inspiring a new archetype for industrial architecture

She says, "Industrialisation brought about dramatic changes in many major cities around the world, including Johannesburg. However, rapid technological advancements have resulted in the abandonment of many industrial sites often within the confines of expanding cities, as is the case with the old Johannesburg Gasworks.

The repercussions of the hazardous industrial processes of the past are still present on the site in the form of pollution. This, together with South Africa's lack of protection of our industrial heritage, has awoken the fear that these post-industrial artefacts might be in danger of becoming extinct if their value is not recognised.

This dissertation aims to investigate the potential of redundant industrial sites like the old Johannesburg Gasworks to mitigate the environmental and social issues resulting from the past in an attempt to reintegrate the site back into the surrounding urban fabric. Through the understanding and application of environmental and heritage theories, this dissertation hopes to find a means of using architecture as a tool to mediate the dichotomous relationship between industry and nature resulting from an exploitative world view, and inspire a new archetype for industrial architecture, that is able to inspire mutually beneficial relationships between industry and nature, whilst creating a didactic and dialectical relationship between the existing industrial heritage of the past and the envisioned contemporary architecture of the future."

Minnaar will go on to compete for the national title and a prize of R50,000 at the Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year Awards which this year will be held in Johannesburg in April 2018.

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