

NMU's Gideon Greyvenstein wins Corobrik Regional Architecture Award

Gideon Greyvenstein from Nelson Mandela University was recently announced the Eastern Cape regional winner of the Corobrik Regional Architecture Award.



Nelson Mandela University's Gideon Greyvenstein, Eastern Cape regional winner of the Corobrik Regional Architecture Award

Greyvenstein received R10,000, with Mohammad Yusuf Gopee taking home the second prize of R8,000, and Zani Alberts receiving R6,000 for third place. A further R6,000 was awarded to Robert Duvenhage for his innovative use of clay masonry in the building design.

"As an organisation, we believe that 'better starts here', and this is particularly true for this award. These up-and-coming young architects are already designing iconic structures that would imprint their legacy on the country's built environment. It is truly an honour to witness history being made," said Musa Shangase, commercial director of Corobrik.

Greyvenstein is one of eight young architects from top South African universities receiving a Corobrik Regional Architecture Award in recognition of their design talent and innovation throughout 2019. In addition to the cash prize, the regional competition winners are through to the finals of the National Architectural Student of the year Award – set to be announced in Johannesburg in May 2020 – which comes with R70,000 in prize money.

Rural regeneration

Greyvenstein's dissertation, entitled "The design of a merino wool processing facility in Barkly east, Eastern Cape", focuses on a sustainable factory as a rural regenerative system.

The subject of this treatise is sparked by the concerning state of rural Eastern Cape agrarian towns and the lack of facilities. Some high impact programmes are needed to boost agrarian reform in an attempt to revive dying small towns.

The project aims to use a factory to restore forgotten wastelands, traditionally used as buffer zones in township communities, in the distant hinterland. This unique opportunity can reverse urbanisation, restore socio-economic conditions and allow a rural population to thrive in uncongested healthy environments.



Gideon Greyvenstein pictured with (left) Lourine Smith, secretary of the NMU Department of Architecture and (right) Adri Oliphant, centre manager, Corobrik PE

Creating an inclusive space

The project revisits the typical exclusive factory type to create an inclusive space where the community is involved and celebrated. The quote: “The architecture of place should be more important than the architecture of time,” from architect Gunnar Asplund, became the sole base of the architectural expression. The building is constructed using materials of the region, local clay bricks and lanolin treated timber structure, methods that are familiar to local craftsman and builders.

The building takes inspiration from the cultural, immediate township scale, and mountainous context to generate a unique architecture responding to the harsh climate of the highlands of South Africa.

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