

# Wits' Ian McBride wins regional Corobrik Architecture Award

Ian McBride from the University of the Witwatersrand has been named a regional winner of the 33rd annual Corobrik Regional Architecture Awards.



Ian McBride pictured with a model of his proposed thesis.

McBride received R10,000 in prize-money, with Nonhlanhla Mashego and Philippe de Laroche being awarded runners up, receiving R7,000 each. A further R6,000 was awarded to Nicole Ramos for the innovative use of clay masonry in the building design.

McBride 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 on 6 May 2020 – which comes with R70,000 in prize-money.

## Site of civic engagement

McBride's dissertation is entitled, 'The Queer Commons: Interweaving queer space into Hillbrow as an urban resource for Johannesburg's LGBTIQ

community.'

'The Queer Commons' is a speculative architectural intervention which proposes a site of civic engagement to offer assistance to the growing social and psychological needs of Johannesburg's LGBTIQ community. The building programme is configured to reconcile the fact that there is little infrastructure to compensate for the vastly different lived experience of people who are discriminated against and live in social isolation. Lack of state endorsement has inhibited the ability to create a meaningful public interface for the queer community in Johannesburg; therefore this speculative development is conceived as an opportunity to engage with the city's impetus to define a new site of civic engagement.



Ian McBride at the award ceremony with (left) Prof. Ariane Jansen van Rensburg, architectural programme director Wits, and

(right) Shauneez Naidoo, national business development, Corobrik.

The proposed structure is placed in the multicultural inner city suburb of Hillbrow part of the Windybrow Centre. Transformation of the inner city over the decades has had a profound effect on the social context of its queer community which has in turn also exposed its internal divisions. This proposal interweaves existing aspirations for the activation of the Windybrow site in Hillbrow with a new 'Queer Commons' which negotiates between much needed structures of civic engagement in the area as well as an urban resource for Johannesburg's LGBTIQ community.

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