

UCT's Mpho Sephelane takes regional top spot in 2022 Corobrik Student Architecture Awards

The University of Cape Town's Mpho Sephelane has been named a regional winner in the 2022 Corobrik Student Architecture Awards. Her winning thesis, 'Re[covering] place: African ways of seeing, thinking and making as a call to rethink and remake places in cities', translates associations of the traditional Basotho blanket (kobo) into "an architecture that engenders a revival of traditional practices through tectonic agency, relatedness to context and creation of communal linkages" in Maseru, Lesotho.



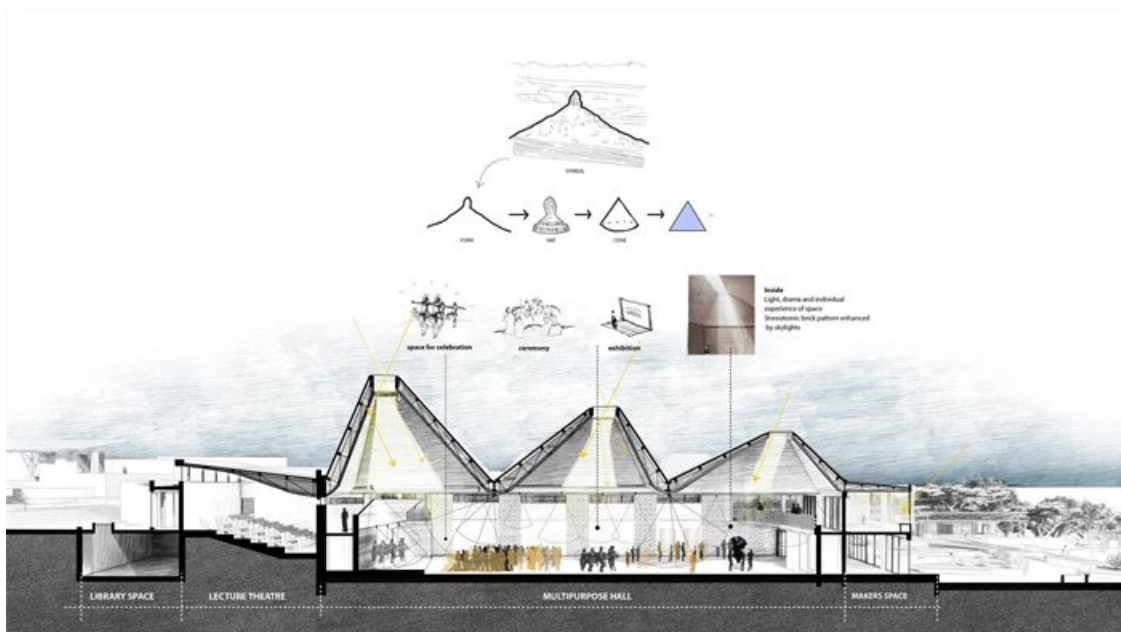
UCT's Mpho Sephelane, a regional winner in the 2022 Corobrik Student Architecture Awards

Sephelane receives a R10,000 prize and the opportunity to compete in the national awards where the top title is awarded, plus a R70,000 grand prize.

Preserving traditional African knowledge systems

Sephelane's thesis investigates issues of recovery and preservation of traditional African knowledge systems, and how these can be translated into making contemporary spaces. "The blanket revealed an interesting cross-pollination of cultures and an ability to embody the tangible and intangible infrastructures that shape the identity of the Basotho people," explains Sephelane.

The project proposes the use of the Basotho blanket as a symbolic artefact of cultural preservation and continuum through architecture. This is explored through its connections to traditional practices such as litema mural practice, communal relatedness, and connection to nature in the creation of symbolic form and space.



"I believe deeper investigations of vernacular architecture and traditional building technologies can reveal numerous sources of conceptual solutions through which sustainable systems can be rediscovered and translated in our urban environments. These can offer new ways to empower users at all levels and foster sustainable networks of production in communities in ways that are culturally and contextually specific," highlights Sephelane.



NMU's Daniel Fouché named regional winner in 2022 Corobrik Student Architecture Awards

5 Apr 2022



35th Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year Awards - University of Cape Town:

- Winner: Mpho Sephelane, R10,000
- First Runner-up: Hannah Mullins, R8,000
- Second Runner-up: Travors van Breda, R6,000
- Best Use of Clay Masonry: Treasa McMillan, R6,000

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