**PRESS RELEASE**

Winner of 35th Corobrik Student Architecture Awards announced

**9 June 2****022:** The winner of the 2021 Corobrik Student Architecture Awards was announced on Wednesday 8 June at a special event at the Radisson RED in Rosebank, Johannesburg. The 35th national awards ceremony was unique in that all seven regional winners and the heads of school from their respective universities, together with leaders from the architectural fraternity, were in attendance in person for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic.

The event was livestreamed on Corobrik’s Facebook page and YouTube channel, with Corobrik CEO **Nick Booth** welcoming all and highlighting that the leading clay brick and paving manufacturer “has been investing in the architects of the future for the last 35 years and will continue to do so.” Corobrik Chairman **Peter du Trevou** added that the awards were a personal highlight for him to attend and congratulate the finalists and hand out the grand prize to the worthy recipient.

Master of Ceremonies **Elana Afrika-Bredenkamp** opened proceedings by stating it was an honour to be part of “one of the biggest architectural awards programmes in the country let alone the world, with our universities representing South Africa on an international stage.”

The 2021 national winner, announced live, was **Mpho Sephelane** from the School of Architecture at the University of Cape Town, who received a R70 000 cash prize. A special prize for the best use of clay face brick in a project was awarded to **Wian Jordaan** from the Department of Architecture at the University of Pretoria. An overwhelming four of the seven regional winners used face brick in their projects, including Mpho. However, this is not a criterion to clinch the overall prize.

The thesis by Mpho was entitled ‘Re[covering] Place: African ways of seeing, thinking and making as a call to rethink and remake places in cities’. The judges’ citation stated that Mpho “shifted our mindsets to trust our heritage to guide us and to be truly authentic. She narrated the use of the Basotho blanket as a transformative and imaginative symbol of identity and relevance.”

“The opportunity afforded to me has validated a lot of what my fellow students, especially people who connect with their culture, have been struggling with, and that is the issue of translating who they are and what their culture entails and the values they bring to their everyday lives and professions,” said Mpho. “The journey is really a beginning for me as I am excited to continue to collaborate and learn from other cultures about such ideas of translation and preservation.”

The seven regional winners presented their theses to an esteemed panel of judges in a Johannesburg studio during May, from where the final winner was selected. The judges were **Ludwig Hansen** from Ludwig Hansen Architects + Urban Designers, **Rahdia Parker** from Archi Cape Town, and **Adwoa Agyei**, Director: Physical Development Services at the City of Tshwane.

“I can only agree with the sentiment that we as judges were impressed by the quality of the submissions. There are actually seven winners here. It has been an honour from our side to be part of the awards,” said Ludwig.

Adwoa concurred and said the process for the judges had proven “challenging, real, and relevant and it was exciting to see your potential as architects. The work was incredible, beautiful, and communicated really well what you were each trying to get across.”

Rahdia added that the presentations “created interesting conversations. It is something immensely profound to have come through six years of study and now we are selecting seven of the top performing students from institutions all over South Africa and bringing that together for all to share and to contribute to the collective learning of the profession.”

Guest speaker **Cliff Gouws**, a senior architect and urban designer at Boogertman + Partners, was national winner in 2011 and told guests and finalists there was a definite improvement in the quality of the work being presented every year. “This is because the students have better access to information and guidance, so the universities can be very proud as to what all of these finalists present in terms of good architecture.”

Cliff added a note of thanks to Corobrik for hosting such a prestigious event that upheld a high standard that everyone in the industry could look up to. “What Corobrik is doing for the architectural fraternity is fantastic. The quality of South African architecture is better than what we realise. We have phenomenal architectural practices that do phenomenal work. Our student work competes at an international level.”

Nick paid tribute to the hard work of the judges and pointed out that Corobrik has no input into the judging process or how the final winner is determined. “Our three esteemed judges have applied their minds at a level of detail that was truly exceptional. It is this consideration that has made these awards so successful over the years. It is largely due to the fact that it is not company driven but is driven by the architectural fraternity itself. These awards are important to the architectural profession, the building industry, and the participating universities as they encourage creativity and innovative approaches to architecture.

“They bring a sustainability to the profession because what we are doing is ensuring that the future of the built environment is in good ethical hands. That is an outstanding vision for your profession. We are immensely proud of the ongoing success of our past finalists and winners. They are scattered across the globe, are all working in major firms, and have been highly successful in their careers,” said Nick.

“We are proud of our overall contribution to the architectural profession,” concluded Nick. Apart from the Corobrik Student Architecture Awards, the company is involved with a number of regional architectural associations through the South African Institute of Architects, of which it has been a patron for the past 40 years.

To view the winning projects, visit: [www.studentawards.corobrik.co.za](http://www.studentawards.corobrik.co.za).

**Pull quote**

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The winner of the 35th #Corobrik Student Architecture Awards is Mpho Sephelane (UCT), who received a R70 000 cash prize. Wian Jordaan (UP) was awarded a special prize for best use of clay face brick in a project.

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**Notes to the editor**

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**About Corobrik**From small beginnings in 1902, Corobrik has evolved into South Africa’s leading clay brick and paving manufacturer. Corobrik’s product quality and performance attributes remain key to the company’s success.

**Corobrik Contact**

Nadine Prinsloo

Digital Marketing Manager & PA

Phone: (011) 871 8722

Email: Nadine.prinsloo@corobrik.co.za

Web: [www.corobrik.co.za](http://www.corobrik.co.za)

**Media Contact**Thobile Ndlovu

NGAGE Public Relations

Public Relations Admin Manager

Telephone: 011 867 7763

Cell: 073 574 2931

E-mail: thobile@ngage.co.za

Website: [www.ngage.co.za](http://www.ngage.co.za)

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