

Luzuko Funda takes top prize in 36th Corobrik Student Architecture Awards

Luzuko Funda from Nelson Mandela University was recently named the winner of the 36th Corobrik Student Architecture Awards, winning the top prize of R70,000.



Luzuko Funda, winner of the 36th Corobrik Student Architecture Awards

“I am deeply honoured by the recognition, as I am striving to make architecture accessible to all. I feel like I am already an inspiration for the next generation,” he said.

Funda’s project, *The design of buildings for the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Fort Hare in East London*, aims to revitalise the city surrounding the campus. It creates an ‘edge building’ that interacts with the public realm while lightly touching the natural landscape. It adapts the existing Old Miriam Makeba building on the site and uses modular systems to create a sustainable structure that fits the context.

Ané Meyer from the University of the Free State received a Special Commendation and a R20,000 prize.

“This year, the judges felt it was such a close competition that they wanted to commend a student who delivered outstanding work,” commented Corobrik chairman Peter du Trevou.

The finalists were selected from the eight major universities based on architectural master’s theses from the class of 2022. Each received a R10,000 prize and a chance to be in the running for the top spot. For the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic, this year’s adjudication process was held in person.

The judges were Wandile Mntambo from GASS Architecture Studios, Jodi Davids-Harber from TJA Architects, and Henry Pretorius from Typology Architects. The judges commended the eight finalists for the high quality of the work produced, which they said bodes well for the next generation of architects in South Africa.



Wandile Mntambo, Ané Meyer, Jodi Davids-Harber, Luzuko Funda, Peter du Trevou and the 36th Corobrik Student Architecture Awards finalists

Recognising excellence in architecture

Speaking at the awards ceremony, Corobrik CEO Nick Booth said: “There is no doubt that the present economic environment in South Africa has had a deleterious effect on the building industry, which has not helped investment in future generations. Funding has also become a major driver for academia. That is why we need to continue to have events like this to recognise excellence. Corobrik remains committed to the awards and to the architectural profession.”

MC Farai Mubaiwa, a strategy manager at Accenture, said the fact that 70% of Africa’s population is under 30 means the continent “finds itself at the intersection of an opportunity and a crisis. How do we transform Africa’s youth boom into an economic opportunity rather than an economic burden?” she asked.

Mubaiwa said the highest-growth sectors in Africa, from construction to energy, water and manufacturing, all linked back to architecture. “Architects play such an incredible role in how we shape an Africa that is inclusive and full of growth. Even more importantly, architects are part of the narrative of achieving this in a sustainable manner.”

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