



Attention: Shirley le Guern
Corobrik

By email

18 January 2020

Dear Shirley

2019 University of Pretoria regional Corobrik winner: Annemie Vermeulen

Please find comments related to your questions below:

1. Please share with us some important outcomes from this dissertation that you feel will impact on architectural discourse into the future?

Our cities are densifying at a tremendous rate with a concomitant lack of adequate services and places that provide relief for the average citizen. Similarly, the negative consequences of our impact on the planet need to be reduced by, for example, recycling existing fabric and limiting new build. Spaces and places in our cities are laden with memory, both tangible and intangible, and through a considered response new derivations can be forged from the old, to create a strong palimpsest of socio-cultural meaning.

2. What, in your opinion, is the highlight of this dissertation / project?

Vermeulen's dissertation focusses on the reconfiguration and development of latent spaces in our dense urban fabric. Through a considered analysis of urban development, and its consequences, and a deep understanding of memory as well as the economic needs of a contemporary society, the student has forged an innovative and unique response to regenerative architectural thinking. The architectural solution provides infill that is functionally flexible over time, while the new programs that are introduced provide, not only spaces of relief in the bustling city, but facilitate a closed loop economic system to benefit extant, new and future inhabitants.

3. Given the challenges in our economy and in the built environment, in particular, how would you like to see your students work and future dissertations such as this impact on South Africa in the future?

It is my belief that architecture in South Africa should be driven by four key aspects namely legacy, identity, memory and ethics. Each situation will determine a necessary hierarchy of response, but all aspects should be considered. Our inherited apartheid spatial legacy separates communities both physically and economically. Architectural identity is key to making considered responses to all places and spaces and associated

communities in South Africa while memory refers to our past and how it should be reflected on and for whom? Ethics is not only how architects should operate professionally but also how we act in terms of respecting and looking after our environment.

4. With the backing of Corobrik, this competition has continued for a number of years – how, in your opinion, will it impact on students currently studying architecture and (3a) how will it impact on Vermeulen’s future career going forward?

The ongoing support of Corobrik, provides a prestigious reward for Masters in Architecture students at all eligible universities in South Africa. After the many years that the competition has run, the projects rewarded by Corobrik are still revered by current students, setting benchmarks to live up to. The judging criteria and status of the judges furthers enhances the prestige and pushes students to consistently improve their design processes, intellectual rigour and presentation. The thematic foci that Corobrik have created are extremely 2019 important in guiding (and assessing) the relevance of architectural practice in South Africa.

Vermeulen is focussed, driven and passionate about our historic architectural legacy. She will make significant contributions to architectural design approaches through her ability to sensitively interpret and then respond in a critical manner to cultural and historic architectural heritage. Her well-honed analytical skills will foster new approaches to the making of our built environment by building on important preceding knowledge and critically extending those approaches to existing environments that are under threat. But more importantly, her haptic understanding of architecture will provide places and spaces of great enjoyment while her appreciation of current economic circumstances will provide architecture that will improve the livelihoods of local inhabitants.

5. Why do you feel that competitions such as this are important?

They proved a platform for showcasing the best work at the highest professional qualification level which allows not only the participating students but all others that closely follow the build-up and outcomes to benchmark their projects and design abilities. They are also very important platforms for exhibiting, and recording, the intellectual capacity and legacy of architectural academies over time.

Yours sincerely



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Lefapha la Boetšenere, Tikologo ya Kago le Theknolotši ya Tshedimošo

Kgoro ya Thutaboagi