

NMMU SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP 2016



Nelson Mandela
Metropolitan
University
for tomorrow

2005-2015

Nelson Mandela Bay: Making a Place

Building the Future with Vision 2020

Zainab Ladak



On Friday, 05 February Director in the executive Mayor's office, Roelf Basson, spoke about Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality's Vision 2020 at the Architecture building in South campus.

"Vision 2020 is an initiative of National Government as a turn-around strategy attempting to address economic growth and investments" he said, which is intended to create jobs and alleviate poverty. It is a plan formed by the government in order to provide a better life for everyone. The objective for this proposal is to encourage economic growth,

poverty alleviation and employment opportunities for the disadvantaged. Mr. Basson explained that Vision 2020 is a fifteen year plan with a listing of priority projects such as building an International Convention Centre, harbour re-development, youth development, the building of a Techno Park and much more. For instance, there is a demand for an ICC in Port Elizabeth as the international conference industry has seen significant growth here.

Port Elizabeth harbour re-development is one of the projects currently focused on for Vision 2020, as the present harbour is too small for larger vessels and needs

to be enlarged. One of the projects completed is the Techno Park in Uitenhage, which has a science and technology centre.

However, Mr. Basson commented that there are environmental and de-centralization challenges that need to be addressed in order to develop the ideas of Vision 2020. Another aim of Vision 2020 is to take facilities to the people living in townships, as not everyone has the means to come into the city for facilities. The key issue is to eliminate poverty by creating opportunities for the poor and financing infrastructure for trade purposes. ■



"The city of Port Elizabeth in fact owes its location to the Baakens River due to the availability of freshwater for Dutch sailors in the late 18th century."

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Q & A

Mieke Kotze

Interview with Carin Smuts

Which global challenges do you feel need to be urgently addressed by architects?

"Reality."

What do you find unique and inspiring about South Africa and its architecture?

"Vernacular architecture has an important role. It reflects our history, culture, time and place."

Which of your own projects have you found to be the most rewarding, and why?

"Guga S'thebe Arts and Culture Village, as it was designed and built by the people of Langa. Thousands of people enjoy the building because it was designed in a participatory way."

What strategies would you suggest for aspiring architects to better meet these challenges?

"Stop producing paper and cardboard solutions and get involved hands on and build something."

What do you see the role of the architect becoming/ changing in the future?

"It will only be a few who challenge convention and stand up, like Samuel Mockbee for the Architecture of the Neighbour."

Featured architect: Carin Smuts

Mieke Kotze

Locally and internationally acclaimed architect Carin Smuts represents South Africa in the stellar line-up of international guests at the NMMU School of Architecture's International Workshop this February.

Since attaining her qualification from the University of Cape Town's School of Architecture in the 1980s, Smuts has worked on numerous projects both locally and abroad. Currently based in Cape Town, Smuts practices from CS Studio Architects, established in 1989. Inspired by human energy, Smuts

and her team have been involved in a wide variety of projects, from local community development initiatives, such as Guga S'thebe and multi-purpose community centres across the country, to high-tech marine architecture as well as an array of international projects spanning the globe from Namibia to Finland.

Smuts has won acclaim for many of her projects, including the Global Award for Sustainable Architecture in 2008 and the Design and Health International Academy Award for her work on the Guga S'thebe

Cultural Village in 2010.

Alongside her work as a practicing architect, Smuts runs workshops at numerous institutions geared toward challenging conventional architectural teaching and exploring alternative models.

This February, NMMU is just the latest in a long line of institutions to benefit from the knowledge and experience of Carin Smuts. Smuts will be facilitating a workshop for NMMU architecture students which explores possibilities of inner city housing developments in the Baakens River Valley. ■



Arch. Carin Smuts, CS Studio Architects, Cape Town, South Africa





Architecture: A social justice tool

Azola Dayile

On the afternoon of Wednesday 10th February 2016, the second floor of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's Architecture Building was host to a lecture by Prof Julian Cooke as part of this year's NMMU School of Architecture International Workshops.

Prof Cooke, who hails from the University of Cape Town's School of Architecture, prepared a talk titled Lessons from a Hostel Upgrade Project: Participation, Piecemeal, The power of Small Things of which focuses on the hostel housing projects in the Western Cape during the Apartheid regime into the current democratic dispensation. Speaking to a room full of enthused students and staff members, Prof Cooke began his talk by giving a word of warning, saying he usually

bursts into tears whenever he has to deliver the talk because the people he worked with were attacked and killed:

"I worked with a group of people and they were viciously attacked and some of them murdered. I think I suffer from post-traumatic stress but when I talk about it I can't help these feelings rearing up in me," Cooke said.

The talk, which centres on the work done by Prof Cooke together with an organised team of four black

men who resided in the hostels, brought forth critical insight on how spatial planning and architecture were together used as a tool by the Nationalist government to further oppress black people during the Apartheid era.

"I worked with a group of people and they were viciously attacked"

According to Prof Cooke, the hostels were solely for migrant labour for surrounding mines and their task was to upgrade the hostels in order for them to become fit for family habitation.

Prof Cooke, who is the 2015 recipient of the Golden Medal of

Distinction from the South African Institute of Architects, went on to further lament about the current state of public housing in South Africa after more than 20 years of democratic rule, sighting that the fault lines are up top where representatives are chosen for the people instead of it being the other way around.

Since 1985, Prof Cooke and his team have upgraded many hostels in and around Cape Town, more especially in the areas around Nyanga East and Langa.

He hopes the current crop of architecture students can base their practice not only in commercial projects, but to also look to communities to boost socio-economic welfare of the poor and marginalised. ■

Prof Stephen Read

Azola Dayile



▲ Professor Read (back row, middle) alongside architecture academics

The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's Department of Architecture is proud to host Professor Stephen Read, who alongside three other renowned architecture academics, will provide insight to students at the 2016 NMMU School of Architecture International Workshops.

Prof Read, who is an associate professor in the chair of Spatial Planning and Strategy in the Faculty of Architecture, TU Delft, began his training at the University of Cape Town before moving on to TU Delft upon where he completed

his PhD in Urban Modelling. On completion, Prof Read then went on to pursue a post-doc fellowship at University College London.

Prof Stephen Read is well decorated, having run teaching studios in Delft as well as specialising in urban theory of various sorts. He has also supervised numerous MSc graduates, a number of PhDs and worked on a number of research projects. His main line of research now looks at urban development in challenging situations, with an emphasis on finding strategies to support communities and everyday 'informal' livelihoods. ■

Armando Dal Fabbro: Venice. The Shape of the City

Mieke Kotze

On Wednesday evening Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University students and members of the general public gathered at City Hall for the penultimate public lecture, being held in conjunction with NMMU's International Architecture Workshop.

The lecture, entitled "Venice. The Shape of the City" was delivered by esteemed Italian architect and educator Professor Armando Dal Fabbro. As the lecture began the audience was transported to the idyllic aquatic metropole of Venice, through Dal Fabbro's carefully selected artworks, literary extracts and beautiful antique maps, which highlighted the city's rich cultural heritage.

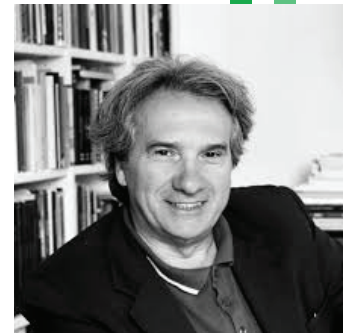
A city unlike any other, Venice, Dal Fabbro claims is shaped by the water which surrounds it and is marked by

a series of stark contrasts. Water and land, mainland and island, the beautiful and the utilitarian. Perhaps most glaring, however is the contrast between the vibrant, modern Venice of the 21st century, and the unspoiled architectural glories of the ancient Venice.

Marked by an unrivaled array of historical cathedrals, piazzas and bridges, the city, Dal Fabbro points out developed organically, with little formal planning, developing in tandem with the public's needs as they arose over the centuries. Venice, in its current state is a testament to a happy coalescence of the new and old. Responsive to the calls of both innovation and preservation, the city boasts thriving industrial developments, as well as a historical heart which draws millions of tourists annually.

This lecture was particularly relevant and informative in light of the proposed development of the Baakens River Valley, as it addressed many questions which face local architects and developers. The Baakens River Valley, by Dal Fabbro's admission, is "a complex area" which poses many challenges, physically and economically, as well as philosophically.

With the area constituted of a similar blend of historic and industrial buildings to modern day Venice, questions of the interplay of old and new and the importance of heritage, are raised. As well as questions pertaining to the balancing of necessary industrial and commercial growth with the desire to retain elements of beauty and historical significance which draw tourists to the area. Finally,



Arch. Armando Dal Fabbro, Italy

like Venice, the Baakens River Valley faces numerous environmental challenges, such as flooding, as well as the retention and creation of green spaces in densely populated urban areas.

Aspiring architects can undoubtedly benefit from extensive Dal Fabbro's knowledge and experience in creating functional and beautiful spaces in diverse and environmentally challenging locations. ■

The Trail to the History of South End

Zainab Ladak

Day three of the architecture school talk series opened with Mr. Yusuf Agherdien's talk entitled "The Footprints of South End" at the NMMU Architecture building. Mr. Agherdien was born in South End and while he is a plumber by trade, he has been involved in extensive research on the history his birthplace for thirty years. He is also an author of three books regarding South End's history.

The talk centred around the history of South End, which used to be the central point in Port Elizabeth as well as the most cosmopolitan area before it was destroyed by the apartheid regime.

Mr. Agherdien described the influence of the Malay community on the establishment of Port Elizabeth and how its impact has been neglected in the retelling of the history of the city. He himself

used to be a member of the Malay Muslim community that resided in South End in the early years when Port Elizabeth was still being established, and has fond memories of living there before the apartheid government demolished the area.

The old South End was, according to Agherdien, "living proof that multiracialism could flourish" in South Africa and that all races and religious groups lived together in harmony with one another. However, South End's harmony ended in 1965 after it was declared a "white only" zone by the apartheid regime and the residents of that area were evicted and their houses demolished. That year was the "saddest year in the history of South End", according to Mr. Agherdien. After the fall of apartheid, South End was completely re-developed and can never physically return to its original state that brings back fond

memories for people such as Mr. Agherdien.

"The story of South End needs to be told so those of us that do not know may get a vision of what it was like", he concluded. The talk ended with questions from the students regarding what happened after South End got destroyed as well as suggestions of what could be built there now. ■

// Living proof that multiracialism could flourish //

