



DOMED VIEW: Ndabo Langa's Ushaka Marine World in Durban



SHAPING LIVES: Heather Dodd's Brickfields social housing design in Gauteng

# Buildings that thrill senses

The Daimler Chrysler SA Architecture Award Exhibition showcases the work of talented young local architects

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tgw saturday

The Iziko SA National Gallery is offering more than usual in its current display of eight South African architects' designs, styles and philosophical perspectives until March 30.

From sketchbook to architectural models, visitors are introduced to individual architects and their work by viewing video footage and reading display boards that accompany their architectural models of scaled-down versions of their designs for public and private buildings.

The architects are the winner and nominees in the 2007 Daimler Chrysler award for SA Architecture, the seventh in the annual South African cultural awards which have spanned diverse disciplines since their inception.

This exhibition is the last of the Daimler Chrysler SA Architecture Award Exhibitions. It opened in Berlin, then moved to Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, and will travel back to Bayreuth. A copy of the exhibition was also shown at the São Paulo Architecture Biennale in Brazil.

It has provided an opportunity to showcase local talent internationally to encourage and raise awareness of a sensitive discipline that has shaped our sense of civilised structure.

Without a sense of history we are in no position to make enlightened choices so it is reassuring to recognise some of the historical influences that reveal themselves in the designs on display



NATURE'S WAY: Andrew Horn's Nieuwoudtville caravan park site

The winner of the Daimler Chrysler Award for SA Architecture 2007, Heinrich Wolff, is passionate and articulate about the need to integrate sustainable "user-friendly" public and private buildings into communities. A practising architect, lecturer at the University of Cape Town's architecture department and painter, this energetic young man possesses a rare social conscience.

In the comprehensive catalogue accompanying the exhibition he states: "If the eight nominees for the Daimler-Chrysler Award with only one female and one black representative are an accurate reflection of the state of the profession, then we all have a lot of work to do to transform the profession and to give young people access to educational opportunities."

An interesting core sustainability focus emerges in his work, which incorporates water tanks for

storing natural rainwater. Surface textures and facades often echo the effects of the relevant surrounding "urban pile" context.

The one black architect, Ndabo Langa from Durban, claims to have "drawn more domes than anyone in

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the world" and is also environmentally sensitive, but points out that having grown up in impoverished circumstances, corrugated iron does not feature in his design vocabulary. Langa's projects to date include the uShaka Marine World in Durban and the ongoing



ECO-DESIGN: Heinrich Wolff's Inkwenkwezi Secondary School in Du Noon

Nomalanga Estate in Greytown, KwaZulu-Natal, where the inspiration for the estate and tourist huts originates from traditional Zulu village and huts. He feels that architecture should restore dignity and pride and that his designs should affect all five senses.

An admirable humanitarian approach is exemplified by Zimbabwe-born and Johannesburg-based Heather Dodd, who pinpoints the urgency facing the South African government to embrace the fact that forming communities depends on housing. The negative impact of a lack of sensitive forethought keeps a legacy of neglect and cruelty alive on our doorsteps in the Cape Flats and horrifically engineered sub-economic housing remains the breeding ground of gangsterism and depravity.

Pointing out that she is "trying to make neighbourhoods", Dodd mentions a "spatial fabric" and

social structure that is influenced by and indeed shapes the experience of the individuals who live in the structures she designs.

Displaying unique flair, Andrew Horn is re-introducing communities to the time-honoured skills of thatching and acquainting us with self-sufficient water supply systems of settler communities like the Moravian community in Mamre, currently a project in collaboration with the City of Cape Town.

Horn relies on the laws of physics, natural cooling and heating which, when combined with efficiency, produce their own renewable energy as a resource in a post-oil economy.

This exhibition as an example of South Africa's current crop of under-40s movers and shakers in the architectural realm is a sneak peek into tomorrow. Viewing hours are from Tuesday to Sunday from 10am to 5pm; phone 021 467 4660.