AFRISAM STUDENT AWARD FOR SUSTAINABLE DESIGN
REINVENTING DYSFUNCTIONAL URBAN SPACES

The AfriSam Student Award for Sustainable Design is calling on all enrolled architecture students to enter.

Museums and Art Museums alike are being reinvented around the world to play a more significant role in society and to be agents of change and sustainable development, while connecting with the wider civic life. Since the conception of the Centre Georges Pompidou (1977), Paris, France, the agency of the art museum as contributor to both public space and the idea of programmatic hybridity have transformed the typology significantly. In fact, during the 1980s, a vision of the museum developed as a reverse image of the city, with James Stirling’s 1984 design for the Neue Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart as one of the best examples of the principle of museum-as-urban-system. More recently, projects like the Metropol Parasol (2011), Seville, Spain set up a new relationship between the city and contemporary life, with its columns being prominent points of access to the museum.

Art Museums that were designed in the 19th or early 20th centuries that were once disconnected from their immediate urban fabric are currently being reinvented in clever ways to convert dysfunctional urban space into sustainable public spaces. Norman Foster’s recent redevelopment of the relationship between the National Gallery and Trafalgar Square, London, is a very clever example of using architecture as a backdrop for art displays in order to create a truly successful public place, a hotspot for public art events, and also for the exercising of civic rights.

In the context of such emergent spatial practices, you are expected to rescript the relationship between the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG), its immediate urban fabric and the community at large. The JAG building does not foster a relationship with its surroundings, and Joubert Park within which it is set, is fenced off from the neighbouring city. A colonial construct, it also embodies several metaphorical boundaries. Yet, it is the biggest art museum in sub-Saharan Africa, with much of the gallery space devoted to Africa’s best contemporary artists.

“Art Museums that were designed in the 19th or early 20th centuries that were once disconnected from their immediate urban fabric are currently being reinvented in clever ways to convert dysfunctional urban space into sustainable public spaces.”
IN THE RESCRIPTING OF ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CITY, CONSIDER THE ADJUDICATION CRITERIA OUTLINED ELSEWHERE AND

• Craft a symbiotic relationship between the JAG, its rich art collection and its surrounds;
• Reconsider the agency of boundaries;
• And create a new public interface.

As such, the commission is for the interrogation of what a new, sustainable threshold(s) to the JAG might be. Such threshold(s) should promote symbiosis between the JAG with its iconic art collections, the park, and the promenade that begins at Park Station. Place-making strategies towards meaningful, defensible public place should be considered, while breaking down both physical and metaphysical boundaries to create a truly civic space.

WHILE YOU MIGHT HAVE A CONCEPTUAL STRATEGY AT AN URBAN SCALE, YOU MAY FOCUS YOUR ENERGY ON A PARTICULAR AREA(S), SUCH AS:

• Along the urban threshold or promenade between Park Station, Joubert Park and the JAG, which is just a little more than a 5-minute walking distance;
• Or the problematic Meyer-Pienaar extension interface between Joubert Park and the Art Museum, considering the interior-exterior relationship.

Given the above context, you should research the JAG and Joubert Park and its immediate urban context. AfriSam will make a collection of documentation available, including the heritage audits that have been completed on Joubert Park and JAG, and an urban study that looked at the bigger Park Station transportation hub. These will form part of the research material available to students.
ADJUDICATION CRITERIA

The adjudication criteria as outlined below, is in line with the professional award. Your interpretation of the brief as outlined in the previous section, will therefore be judged according to its innovative response to the following:

1. HARMONISATION

Do the designs and related processes harmonise the use of resources with the conservation and strengthening of ecosystems (natural, social, human, financial, infrastructure)?

2. PEOPLE UPLIFTFMENT

Do the design and related processes address the dignity of people through the creation of a socio-economic environment that is inclusionary, humane, and self-sustaining?

3. EVOLUTIONARY PARADIGM

Do the design and related processes contribute towards and develop an ongoing regenerative future?

4. PLACEMAKING PERFORMANCE

Do the design and related processes enhance the architectural landscape and contextual urban environment including infusion of delight?
All architecture, landscape architecture and or interior architecture students who are registered at architectural learning sites in the Southern African Development Community are welcome to enter. You may enter as an individual or as a pair.

ONLINE ENTRY PORTAL OPENS 1 JUNE AND CLOSES ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2019.

AWARDED STUDENT PROJECTS TO BE ANNOUNCED ON THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER.