

Wits regional Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year Award winner announced

Jason Ngibuini from the University of Witwatersrand is a regional winner in the 32nd Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year Award, taking the top prize of R10,000. Second place and a prize of R8,000 went to Benjamin Kollenberg. The winner of the third prize and R 6,000 was Suzanne Pasch, with Genna Price receiving R6,000 for the best use of clay masonry in her project.



Jason Ngibuini, regional winner in the 32nd Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year Award

Ngibuini will be one of eight young architects from major universities around the country who will compete for the 32nd Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year Award which will be announced in Johannesburg on 8 May.

Tea tasting retreat

His thesis is entitled 'Sherehe ya chai': Transmutation of Kikuyu vernacular as an immersive tea tasting retreat. He says, "In Kenya, tea plays a crucial role in country's economy, accounting for 22% of its total exports. Being the third largest producer of black tea in the world, Kenya's tea industry is struggling due to the shortfall of exports lagging high levels of production. This thesis aims to expand on Kenya's tea directorate's plans to increase local consumption from 6.6% to 15% within the next five years by proposing a tea tasting retreat in Limuru, Kenya. The tea tasting retreat would allow visitors to gain an understanding of tea cultivation, tea production, as well as the health benefits.

"This thesis has helped me rediscover my cultural roots in Kenya and expand on my mother's childhood stories around Kikuyu traditions, customs and way of life. Having been brought up in South Africa, research into Kikuyu traditional architecture was completely new. With discussions around post-colonial architecture in Kenya, a focus is put on the transmutation of Kikuyu vernacular architecture to ensure the cultural continuity of skills and expertise that are bound within traditional knowledge. The reinterpretation of these skills or expertise will enhance the visitor's experience and challenge the role of post-colonial theory in the search for Kenyan identity in contemporary architecture."

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