

# THE ACT OF REFUGE

Showcasing excellence, University of Pretoria final-year architecture student Wian Jordaan has been declared a regional winner in the 2022 Corobrik Student Architecture Awards, in addition to winning the Best Use of Clay Masonry category.



Wian Jordaan, final-year architecture student, University of Pretoria

**E**ntitled 'The Act of Refuge: Facilitating Spatial Practices of Mobile Urban Dwellers in the Inner City of Pretoria', Jordaan's thesis looks at how daily commuters are confined to the sidewalk – "a space of transition that promotes anonymity, indifference and transience." New approaches to space-making were developed to explore how architecture can influence the behaviour of users and their everyday spatial practices by manipulating their perceptions of space to mediate between its lived and conceived dimensions.

Jordaan highlights that architecture is a unique discipline that not only provides the opportunity to solve real-world problems, but also allows for personal artistic expression in the conceptualisation, execution and representation of space. He adds that the contribution that architecture can make to the improvement and welfare of communities is often underappreciated.

"Healthy urban environments allow people's everyday lives, identities and rituals to be played out in public spaces. People's relationship to the built environment and public spaces in the Pretoria inner city are fractured and require alternative solutions," Jordaan explains.

The project design used Montana Travertine face brick and Nutmeg Piazza pavers from Corobrik for internal arcades and courtyards to be perceived as external and public spaces.

"The perception of a space as 'public' aids in the facilitation of temporary acts of refuge

and appropriation. The use of bricks also played a significant role in how a building responds to the existing urban context of Pretoria," Jordaan continues.

"Bricks can be an expression of time, place and the process of making, which are aspects often neglected in contemporary architecture," he adds.

### 35th Annual Competition

Celebrating talent, creativity, innovation and inspiration, the Corobrik Student Architecture Awards is all about jump-starting careers, building the industry and designing tomorrow. Regional winners are selected from eight major universities, based on the students' final theses. These regional winners then go through to the national round, where the top title is awarded, plus a R70 000 grand prize. This year, the national awards will again be a hybrid event held in May, following a similar format to 2021.

"We are very excited to celebrate the 35th edition of the awards. It has been an incredibly exciting and richly fulfilling journey," says Thilo Sidambaram, marketing support manager, Corobrik, who herself has been involved with the awards for two decades.

Adds Nick Booth, CEO, Corobrik: "Our relationship with the awards goes back some 35 years, and it's one that has proved very enlightening for Corobrik. It has added a lot of depth and enriched the architectural profession by allowing young, up-and-coming architects to express themselves and show the kinds of directions they believe architecture should be going in." **35**

