

Erky Wood to deliver third Roelof S. Uytenbogaardt UDISA Memorial Lecture

Director of GAPP Architects and Urban Designers Erky Wood has been nominated to deliver the third [Roelof S. Uytenbogaardt UDISA Memorial Lecture](#). The lecture will take place in Johannesburg at the Wits Planetarium on 12 September at 5pm.



“I wasn’t always in love with cities,” admits Wood. “In my mother-earth days, which are still at the core of my value system, I thought of cities as a global cancer that would grow exponentially and strangle the world. I then, on enquiry, found that they’re probably humanity’s greatest cause for optimism. I thought I’d simply started romancing the city, but had unwittingly become involved in a full-blown life-time affair, with she - the City - the dominatrix.”

Khalied Jacobs, chairman of the Urban Design Institute of South Africa (UDISA), says Wood has been presented this honour as recognition for his contribution, principally, to the practice of urban design. “With his early background in lecturing and thesis supervision, Wood went on to design, implement and administer the levels of urban design involvement that are seldom achievable in contemporary city management, adding immense value, whether socially, culturally, spiritually and economically,” says Jacobs.

Sharing urban design, processes knowledge

Wood, who has been a director of GAPP since 1983, has dedicated his time to not only urban development projects but to the sharing of knowledge around urban design and processes. He achieved his BSc TRP at Wits University’s Faculty of Architecture and went on to do his Master’s in Environmental Planning: Urban Design. In his earlier years, and while learning the ropes of city administration and management with the Johannesburg City Council, he was a lecturer in urban processes at Wits and for many more years was a master’s thesis supervisor in urban design. His involvement in student crits and juries, competition adjudications, countless conferences and a special presidential commission has kept him relevant in all aspects of urbanism beyond the work he carries out in his practice.

Over the years at GAPP, Wood was a member of the original urban design team for Sandton Square (now Mandela Square) and the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront project in Cape Town. He was also the team leader of urban design for the FNB BankCity headquarters in Johannesburg and, in 1992, was responsible for documenting the Johannesburg Metropolitan Interim Strategic Framework for a post-apartheid urban future. For 18 years he was involved with AECL’s 4,200ha Modderfontein landholding in Johannesburg, taking land that had become surplus to requirements for the

chemicals and explosives industry and weaving it into an unfolding urban area. He was the urban designer in charge of Tongaat Hulett Developments' La Lucia Ridge Office Estate, including its architectural design controls, which has been described as South Africa's premier office park, and the Umhlanga Ridge New Town Centre, north of Durban. These are but a few of the high profile projects in which he has been involved.

Uytenbogaardt's approach to urban design

"I certainly feel privileged to be presenting the Roelof S. Uytenbogaardt UDISA Memorial Lecture to commemorate a truly inspiring and influential architect and urbanist," says Wood. Uytenbogaardt established UCT's first postgraduate programme in urban design and often acted in the public interest in support of the poor and marginalised. He was known for setting the highest standards of excellence in his many urban design projects. These projects often challenged archaic design and planning thought and set the approach for restructuring the South African city in the post-apartheid era. "As an urban designer, I believe it's important to learn from and honour the pioneering way in which Uytenbogaardt approached urban design."

Speaking about his topic for the lecture, Urban Praxis: Making sense of nonsense for the post-apartheid city, Wood says despite being over 20 years on into democracy, the spatial legacy of apartheid and the exclusion of many from the urban system is still with us and the urgency to muster the political will to transform remains profound.

"I will cover many of the issues Uytenbogaardt raised in taking on the inequities of apartheid city-building, assessing why change has been so limited and, largely from an urban practitioner's perspective, reflecting on and pointing to the prospects for urban success," he says.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>