

Pretoria school wins design competition

The 2010 Making the Difference Through Design competition, sponsored jointly by Sappi and Woolworths, was won by a group of Grade 11 and 12 design learners from Zwartkop High School in Centurion, who have been named the Gauteng and overall national winners.



(L - R): National winners of the Making the Difference Through Design 2010 'Battle of the Schools' design competition are Zwartkop High School learners Bianca Boshoff, Lanthe Louw, Bianca de Beer and Mareli Jooste.

Four hundred schools throughout Gauteng, the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal participated in the design education programme that, for the first time, was open to group entries only. Also for the first time this year, the winning school receives a specially designed trophy created by South African designer Strijdom van der Merwe. The idea behind the competition is to help learners understand the vital role design plays in everyday life.

"Design not only develops new products that make our lives easier or provide us with entertainment; it can also create awareness of important social issues, help structure our lives and improve our quality of life. In fact, design is a powerful tool that can be

harnessed to meet social needs and bring about change," explains Penny Luthi, who runs the programme for Woolworths.

"By asking them to work in groups this year, we also helped the learners understand the importance of teamwork, which is an important lesson to learn - not just for school or for work, but for every aspect of their lives." Learners were also encouraged to make use of the Making the Difference website for information and inspiration.

Design process

For the first part of the competition, teams had to devise a name, logo and strap line for their team. The winning team from Zwartkop High School, Bianca de Beer, Lanthe Louw, Mareli Jooste and Bianca Boschoff called themselves 'The Freedom Fighters.'

Having chosen fashion design as their category, they then had to brainstorm and design a multi-faceted campaign for the launch of a new product or event (either real or imaginary), or to raise awareness of a social or environmental issue.

The campaign had to include designs for five of the following eight categories, the first of which is compulsory for all entries: a logo and strap line; a mascot; merchandise; a TV ad campaign; a print ad campaign; a radio ad campaign; a surface that could be used as part of the campaign; and an exhibition space.

As always, the competition called for creativity, imagination, originality, innovation, energy, dedication and passion as well as resourcefulness. Throughout the process, their teacher, Bernita Griesel, guided the winning learners.

Luthi adds, "The judges were very impressed at the standard of this year's entries. From an education point of view, there is no doubt that challenges such as these enrich the learning experience. In fact, I would urge schools that are not yet part of the design programme to seriously consider joining us."

Kathy Ormerod, business development manager at Sappi Paper and Fine Paper, says, "The annual design competition is now firmly entrenched in the high school design community and it is gratifying to see learners strive to attain the highest accolades."

Trophy

Strijdom Van der Merwe was delighted to be asked to help inspire South Africa's budding designers by designing the



(L - R): National winners from Swartkop High School - Lanthe Louw, Mareli Jooste, Bianca de Beer and Bianca Boshoff - pictured here with Strijdom van der Merwe and the trophy he designed for the competition.

trophy. "I think the whole programme is an absolutely wonderful idea and I salute the sponsors.

It's the younger generation that will lead the way tomorrow, and it is essential to expose them to the thinking process behind good design and message and social responsibility that go hand in hand with every design and product."

The focus point of the trophy design is the stone, which dates back to the middle stone age, which was a period of African prehistory that began around 300,000 years ago and ended around 50,000 years ago. This particular stone comes from the Kimberly area.

During this period these stones were widely used for tool making. This component of the design refers to the symbolic manufacturing processes of 'something' and it tells us that ever since the beginning of humankind did we design and produce.

The many silver 'splinter' lines that surrounds the stone is a graphical interpretation of the many nanowire lines, which are invisible to the human eye but are responsible for all our energy levels. This 'cloud' of energy that surrounds the 'stone' is a tool of creating, designing, manufacturing.

The products produced might not always be luxury items but design is also used to produce tools of necessity for survival. It is emphasising the fact that design does benefit society when producing functional items.

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