



FACES OF THE FUTURE

STUDENT COMPETITION

20
23

Reimagine Robben Island

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A Scape and Geberit Collaboration

REGISTRATIONS
CLOSE
16 June 2023

SUBMISSIONS
CLOSE
31 July 2023

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**GRAND PRIZE
R20 000**

Eligibility

Entrants must be enrolled at a recognised South African tertiary institute (undergraduate or postgraduate), studying towards a qualification in architecture, interior design, landscape architecture or design, or urban planning.

Free registration. Collabs welcome.

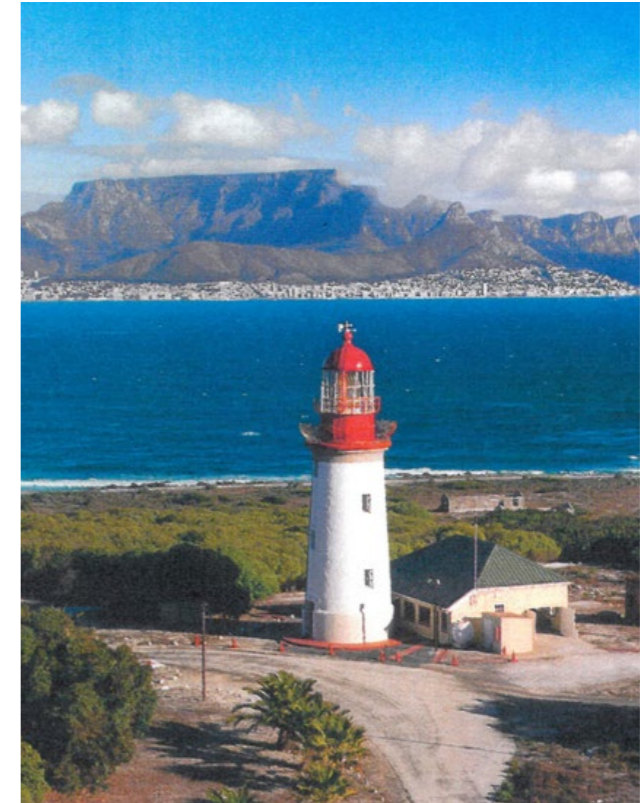
Shortlisted proposals will be showcased at SCAPE Trade Show on 7 September 2023. Grand Prize winner will be announced on the day.

scape X GEBERIT

Reimagine Robben Island

Robben Island, located 9.6 kilometres north of Table Bay Harbour, is one of the most famous places in the world and serves as a powerful symbol of the triumph of the human spirit over adversity. Covering an area of 518 hectares, it measures 3.57 kilometres north to south and 2.06 kilometres east to west. Included in this component of the site is the maritime landscape — the one-nautical-mile zone surrounding Robben Island providing an important buffer zone.

Despite its size, this small island, with its rugged coastline and harsh landscapes, has a complex history that spans centuries. Robben Island is best known for its Maximum Security Prison, which operated as a place of isolation and confinement for political prisoners during the apartheid era. Nelson Mandela spent 18 of his 27 years of imprisonment on the island, and the museum remains a testament to the resilience and unwavering determination of those who fought against Apartheid and sought to bring about a more just and equal South Africa.



The island has a Mediterranean climate, but is exposed to violent winter gales and tides that make its northern and western sides virtually uninhabitable. There is, not surprisingly, a number of historic shipwrecks along this inhospitable coast.

Beyond its role as a prison, Robben Island was used as a place of banishment, where lepers, political dissidents, and various other marginalised groups were sent to be kept out of sight and isolated from society. The island also served as a military outpost and a training ground during various periods in South African history.



Today, Robben Island has been transformed into a living museum and UNESCO World Heritage Site, offering tourists and locals a unique opportunity to explore its somber past and gain a deeper understanding of the struggles and sacrifices endured by those who fought for freedom and justice.

What if we can repurpose this unique and historically significant site by unlocking its untapped potential?

We are challenging South Africa's future thought leaders to submit their proposal for what this iconic island can become.

Will you be a part of the revival?

The Brief



Designers are invited by SCAPE x Geberit to create a **conceptual and functional design** that holistically reimagines Robben Island and two of its key sites. Your proposal must consider the **purpose of the island** for locals and visitors alike, and give a **detailed exploration** of the **access points, transportation, navigation, infrastructure, and the logistics around the island and your chosen landmarks.**

The island is home to numerous existing structures that are important elements to consider in the redesign process and cultural landscape of Robben Island. Integrating, altering, repurposing, or enhancing these structures, landscapes, and interiors (or even adding new features) will breathe new life into the appeal of the island while maintaining its historical significance and creating a memorable visitor experience.

Option 01

Together with transportation, reimagine **2** of these **3 sites**

- SITE 01 - Maximum Security Prison
- SITE 02 - Robben Island Lighthouse
- SITE 03 - Leper Cemetery

OR

Option 02

Together with transportation, reimagine **1** of these **3 sites** **plus 1 other key site** on the island of your choice

- SITE 01 - Maximum Security Prison
- SITE 02 - Robben Island Lighthouse
- SITE 03 - Leper Cemetery



Transport

There is a single ring road that encircles Robben Island, approximately 22 kilometres in length. This main road serves as the primary transportation route for guided tours, allowing visitors access to various sites, while smaller paths lead to specific landmarks within the island's interior. These paths often require permission or guidance from authorised personnel due to their sensitive nature or ecological importance. While the ring road provides access to most key points of interest, certain sections may have restricted or prohibited access due to ongoing conservation efforts and research.

In a heightened focus on the island's deteriorating infrastructure, Sports, Arts and Culture Minister Zizi Kodwa revealed more funds will be directed towards Robben Island to revitalise the world heritage site. In the previous fiscal year, R111 million was budgeted for infrastructure maintenance, but that has now been increased to R152 million. But perhaps there is yet more to be done to ensure the legacy of one of the most important site in South Africa?

Maximum Security Prison

SITE 01

The prison complex is the most prominent structure on the island and was built by prisoners in the early 1960s, with stone and stone aggregate from two of the island's quarries. The Maximum Security Prison comprises various cell blocks, guard towers, administrative buildings, a hospital, workshop, and communal areas.

The famous Section B of the prison housed political prisoners, most notably President Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, while common law prisoners were held in Section A. 'The Yard' was a small outdoor space within the prison complex for recreational time, which served as a place for secret discussions, intellectual exchanges, and organising resistance. Today, the complex serves as the Robert Island Museum, allowing visitors to gain insight into the conditions endured by those imprisoned on the island and the struggle against Apartheid.

→ TAKE A VIRTUAL TOUR BY CLICKING [HERE](#)

Robben Island Lighthouse

SITE 02



Due to the island's strategic location at the entrance of Table Bay, the need arose for navigational aid into the main harbour. In the past, huge fires were lit on Fire Hill (now Minto's Hill) at night to warn ships of the treacherous rocks and unpredictable weather conditions. A lighthouse was built by Joseph Flack in 1864, after the wreck of the Forfarshire vessel. At 24 metres above sea level, Minto's Hill is the highest point on the island, and became a suitable location for the 18-metres-high lighthouse, which was converted from oil lamps to electricity in 1938, and eventually becoming fully automated in 1991.

Designed in the distinctive Victorian Gothic style of the time, the 159-year-old structure is the only South African lighthouse to utilise a flashing light instead of a revolving light, and its beam can be seen as far as 24 nautical miles. Boasting unparalleled views of Table Mountain and Cape Town in the distance, the lighthouse is interestingly the only area on the island that is not an official heritage site.

Leper Cemetery

SITE 03



In an effort to contain the spread of leprosy, the South African government established a leper colony on Robben Island in 1846. This cemetery became the final resting place for thousands of infirmed individuals who lived and died on the island.

The cemetery's location was chosen with purpose. Situated away from the main settlement and surrounded by rocky outcrops, it served as a poignant symbol of separation and exclusion from society. The graves were simple, marked by modest headstones, reflecting the hardships and marginalisation experienced by the leprosy sufferers.

By the mid-20th century, advancements in treatment allowed patients to reintegrate into society, and the leper colony on Robben Island was eventually closed. Many were buried in the Leprosarium graveyard, a mesh-enclosed area part of the larger cemetery that was established 45 years ago. The graveyard is north of the Church of Good Shepard and extends to the grounds of the Maximum Security Prison. Today, the site stands as a place of remembrance and reflection, preserving the memory of those who were excluded from society due to the disease.

Robben Island is home to several existing sites of historical and cultural significance, including:

If you pick option 2, consider one of these sites as your second site.

- Robert Sobukwe House
- Limestone Quarry
- Murray's Bay Harbour
- Alpha 1
- John Craig Hall
- Pre-primary School
- Parsonage
- Guest House
- Faure Jetty
- Garrison Church
- Church of the Good Shepherd
- Moturu Kramat



CLICK [HERE](#) TO EXPLORE THE DIFFERENT SITES

scape



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Objectives and Considerations

Faces of the Future

2023 Student Competition

- To envision a sustainable and inclusive design concept for Robben Island that respects its historical significance while boosting the local economy.
- To enhance visitor experience while preserving the island's natural, cultural, and political heritage.
- To create innovative architectural, interior design, and landscape solutions that promote attention, accessibility, environmental stewardship, and education.
- To foster an environmentally responsible approach to design, including renewable energy solutions, water conservation, and waste management.
- To respect the island's natural environment and biodiversity through careful site analysis and preservation efforts.
- To improve educational opportunities by incorporating informative and interactive elements throughout the design.
- To develop effective routes and/or transport options for visitor experiences that will connect the various political landscapes.

Objectives and Considerations

1. Site Analysis

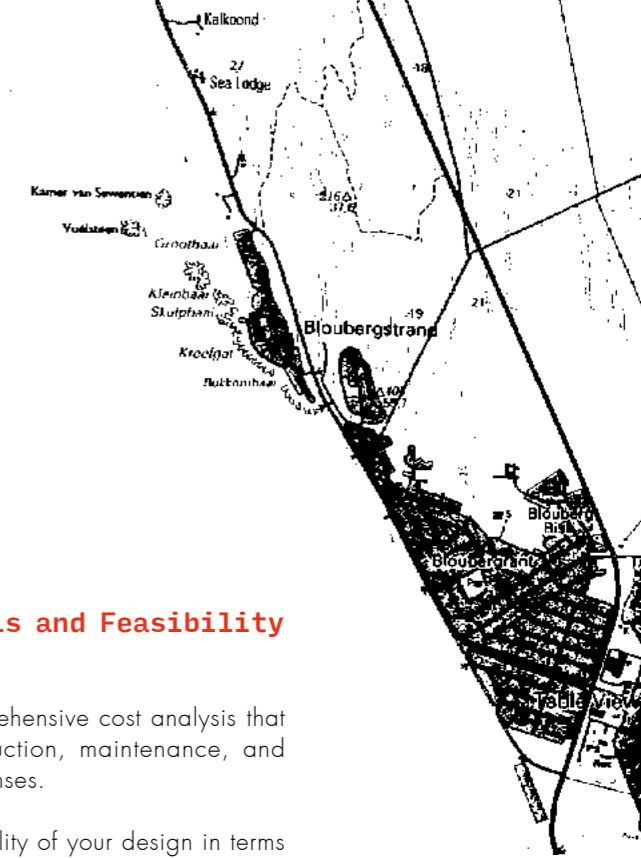
- Conduct a thorough analysis of Robben Island's natural features, and cultural landscape.
- Expand on your chosen key historical landmarks and areas of significance you'd like to focus on.
- Assess the island's infrastructure, including transportation, utilities, and accessibility.
- Evaluate the ecological and environmental aspects of the site, including flora, fauna, and natural resources.
- Understand the climate and weather patterns of the island to inform design decisions.

2. Historic Points to Note

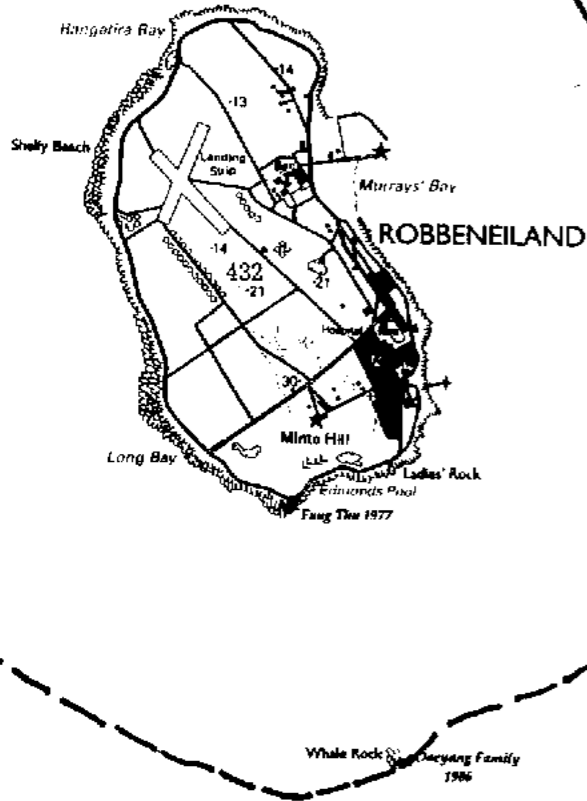
- Consider the emotional and cultural significance of the island for visitors and local communities.
- Respect and integrate the existing buildings and structures with the new design proposals.
- Consider the potential for interpretive and educational elements to highlight the island's history.

3. Cost Analysis and Feasibility

- Develop a comprehensive cost analysis that considers construction, maintenance, and operational expenses.
- Assess the feasibility of your design in terms of budget, materials, construction techniques, and project timeline.
- Balance the ambition of your proposal with practicality and sustainability.



CLICK [HERE](#) FOR EXTRA SOURCE MATERIAL TO AID YOUR RESEARCH!



Submission Guidelines

Eligibility.

Entrants must be enrolled at a recognised South African tertiary institute (undergraduate or postgraduate), studying towards a qualification in architecture, interior design, landscape architecture or design, or urban planning.

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01

Proposal document (pdf)

A written proposal outlining your site analysis, design concept and approach, anticipated challenges and solutions, and cost and feasibility analysis, including an estimated budget for construction, maintenance, and operation.

Maximum 3000 words

02

Detailed drawings, sketches, plans, sections, and/or elevations

for each of your 2 chosen sites and the island as a whole.

03

Original high-quality renders, visualisations, or digital art

of your design to communicate your vision effectively.

04

Personal information

Name, surname, email address, contact number, year of study, name of institution, and department and course name.

05

Professional bio (pdf)

Introduce yourself in 200 words.

06

Head and shoulders image

Email your submission to hello@paperplanepublications.co.za using a Google Drive, Dropbox, or WeTransfer link. Use the subject line: **Reimagine Robben Island Student Competition 2023.**

Important Dates

Shortlisted proposals will be showcased at **SCAPE Trade Show on Friday, 7 September 2023**, at The Lookout, V&A Waterfront. The Grand Prize winner will be announced on the day.

EXCITED TO GET STARTED? WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOUR IDEAS! CONFIRM YOUR INTEREST BY REGISTERING [HERE](#)

REGISTRATIONS CLOSE
16 June 2023

SUBMISSIONS CLOSE
31 July 2023



Proposals will be reviewed by a panel of trade professionals who will pay attention to the creativity and originality of entrants' design concept. We are looking for new, exciting, and imaginative ideas for the island's future in South Africa.

Pay careful attention to:

- Sensitivity and respect towards the island's historical significance and how to further accentuate its legacy of remembrance.
- Sustainable and environmentally responsible design principles.
- Feasibility and practicality of the proposal within operational and financial constraints.
- Clarity and coherence of the written proposal and visual representations.

We hope this will be a moving and transformative experience for all entrants, offering a window into South Africa's complex past and the triumph of the human spirit. May we remember, revive, and reimagine our dream of a democracy — never giving up on our pursuit for justice, equity, and opportunities.

We're calling on YOU to reconcile the past with the future. Will you take up the challenge?

Evaluation Criteria

**GRAND
PRIZE
R20 000**



WILL YOU BE CROWNED THE 2023 WINNER?



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For more information:

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