

Design Foundation Awards honours top achievers

The sixth annual Design Foundation Awards was held on Saturday, 9 March in Cape Town honouring leaders of South African design.



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The awards recognised the industry’s top achievers in design, manufacture, commercial success and innovation, each category sponsored by a supporter of local talent. The seven winners each took home a limited-edition bronze trophy depicting a gorilla and made by sculptor Otto du Plessis.

“Recognising achievers in this industry not only places a spotlight on what design businesses are capable of, but allows those outside the industry to start placing more value on the commercial viability, social impact and strategic importance that design can have on economic success and global identity,” said Trevyn McGowan, co-founder of the Design Foundation and CEO of The Guild Group.

Porky Hefer was named this year’s Icon – his second time receiving the title, which acknowledges outstanding achievement by a highly regarded designer, based on work produced over the past 12 months. His Endangered collection of soft sculptural seats was exhibited at Design Miami/Basel last June, where it was virtually sold out, raising more than \$200,000 to benefit the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation’s wildlife conservation programmes.

The Design With Purpose Award was won by Our Workshop, an open-access workshop set up by designer Heath Nash at

Guga Sthebe Arts & Culture Centre in Langa. A community resource that empowers locals with the skills and tools to make and repair things, Our Workshop encourages a 'fix it' culture by finding new uses for 'waste' products. The award is sponsored by the V&A Waterfront, which will commission Nash and his team of artisans to create a dynamic installation for the precinct made from recycled materials.

The Imbizo stool by ceramicist Chuma Maweni won the Object That Moves Award, which celebrates an advanced and original product that has enjoyed significant commercial success. From his studio in Woodstock, Cape Town, Chuma has taken his ceramic practice to the next level, developing a range of sought-after stools, each one with its own precise silhouette and unique patterning. A master of his craft, his whose work bears testimony to the commercial viability of handmade design.

Durban-based furniture and interior design graduate Lwazi Mshibe won the Apprentice Award, which places an outstanding graduate in a 6- to 12-month apprenticeship with one of the top design companies in the country. Lwazi graduated with a B-Tech in Interior Design from Durban University of Technology last year. Mr Price Home, sponsor of this award, has offered him a three-month internship followed by a place in MRP Foundation's nine-month Jump Start Retail programme.

Lulasclan, Bonolo Chepape's vibrant textile design brand, won the Future Found award which recognises a young designer who has already achieved a degree of excellence with limited resources. inspired by her Pedi cultural roots. Bonolo left the security of ad agency life with only R2500 in her pocket to start her own studio and has since released her own fabric and wallpaper collections and collaborated with Smeg, Nando's and Mr Price Home. The award was sponsored by Krone and carries with it tailored support and guidance from the Design Foundation board to help Bonolo build her brand.

Sealand Gear won the Maker to Market Award, given to a design company that understands the value of brand-building and identity, marketing and consumer interaction. Founded by Cape Town surfers and ocean warriors Jasper Eales and Mike Schleich, Sealand manufactures bags out of old yacht sails, billboards and other waste materials.

Every detail in the business journey of this innovative lifestyle brand has been considered, from its minimal packaging and lifetime product warrantee, to its approach to digital storytelling. It is now an internationally recognised brand that can be found at Selfridges, Mr. Porter and Liberty London.

Hot Wired Design was honoured with the Manufacture Award for their technical proficiency and willingness to help many local artists and designers give three-dimensional form to their imaginative ideas. From their premises in Woodstock, they regularly take time out from manufacturing props, signage and architectural elements to share their expertise with artists.

A new development this year was the opening up of award submissions directly to the design industry and public. The open call resulted in a large number of submissions and broadened the reach of these annual accolades in the local design industry. Public nominations were pooled with those from past winners and an external jury of industry insiders that included Tracy Lynch (curator and interior designer), as well as tertiary education leaders who recommend their leading graduates for the Apprentice Award.

Judging was done by the 13 members of the Design Foundation board who include professional leaders such as Dion Chang, founder of Flux Trends; Ashraf Majiet, head of design at M&C Saatchi Abel; Amanda Dilima, retail manager of the V&A Waterfront; and Temi Ofong.

The award ceremony was attended by 400 top industry insiders, designers, local media and VIP guests, with MCC from Krone, gin and tonic by Hope on Hopkins and Fitch & Leedes, and red wine from Spier.

Design Foundation Award 2018 winners

Icon Award

Winner: Porky Hefer

Sponsor: BMW

Awarded in recognition of work produced in the last 12 months, acknowledging outstanding achievement, innovation and career advancement.

Object That Moves Award

Winner: Imbizo stool by Chuma Maweni

Sponsored: 100% Design South Africa

Celebrates the designer of an original product that has experienced great commercial success – aspirational and top-end, yet commercially viable to sell in multiples.

Maker to Market Award

Winner: Sealand Gear

Sponsor: M&C Saatchi Abel

Awarding a design company that understands the value of marketing, consumer interaction, packaging and delivery.

Manufacture Award

Winner: Hot Wired Design

Sponsor: *Visi*

Recognising a manufacturer who has gone beyond expectation to aid designers in realising their products.

Future Found Award

Winner: Lulasclan

Sponsor: Krone

Celebrating a young designer who has already achieved excellence with limited resources.

Apprentice Award

Winner: Lwazi Mshibe (Durban University of Technology)

Sponsor: Mr Price Home

Places an outstanding graduate showing maturity, originality and true potential, in a 6- to 12-month apprenticeship.

Design With Purpose Award

Winner: Our Workshop

Sponsor: V&A Waterfront

Recognising socially responsible work done by a company, within the South African landscape, with a focus on design aspects, that makes a difference in the lives of communities.