

FADA Hosts Successful IID Student Design Conversations

On 23 May 2025, the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture (FADA) at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) proudly hosted the IID Student Design Conversations in the FADA Auditorium. The event was a collaborative effort between the African Institute of the Interior Design Professions (IID) and UJ's Department of Interior Design, aimed at inspiring and mentoring future professionals in the South African design industry.

Curated by Trevor Sibanda, assistant lecturer in the Department of Interior Design, the one-day event brought together interior design students from various public and private institutions, including Tshwane University of Technology, Potchefstroom Academy, Greenside Design College, Vega School, and Inscape Pretoria.

Connecting Students with the Design Industry

The primary objective of the Student Design Conversations was to expose students to the dynamic world of interior design careers, with a strong emphasis on mentorship, innovation, and career development. Through a series of guest talks, panel discussions, and interactive exhibitions, students gained valuable insights into current industry trends, challenges, and opportunities.

Keynote speakers included:

Tamara Grooteman; Jaco Kruger (Nero); Felicity Molokome; Mbali Mbense; Maresa Martens; Jodi Day Boikanyo Makafola; Mawande Mdluli

Their talks explored diverse themes such as corporate and hospitality design innovations, advancements in residential interiors, and the value of student design competitions like Caesarstone in shaping young talent.

Industry Exhibitions and Networking Opportunities

Students also engaged with pop-up exhibitions hosted by leading design suppliers, including Sonae Arauco, Steibel Eltron, Trellidor, NMC, and Smartstone. These exhibits gave students hands-on exposure to cutting-edge products and technologies currently shaping the interior design profession.



Our Future. Reimagined.

Student Reflections

Attendees expressed enthusiasm for the insights gained during the event. Some of the feedback shared includes: “The event really guided me on advances in the interior design industry. I particularly found the topic on the importance of student competitions interesting. As a hopeful entrant and potential winner of the Caesarstone competition, I appreciated the insights into how past winners have benefited in their design careers.” — Palesa Phake, 3rd-year student at Tshwane University of Technology

“The talks on the design journeys of Felicity and Mbali were truly inspiring. As an aspiring interior designer, I felt encouraged by the professional advice shared by established interior designers, especially about navigating a career as a young Black woman.” — Awande Xulu, 3rd-year student at the University of Johannesburg

“Engaging with the exhibitions by design suppliers was the highlight of my day. Seeing the latest products available for interior designers was fascinating, and I especially enjoyed the talks on corporate and hospitality design.” — Ashley Lentz, 1st-year student at the University of Johannesburg

Encouraging the Next Generation of Interior Designers

The IID Student Design Conversations reaffirmed the importance of collaboration between academic institutions and the design industry in building a stronger, more inclusive professional landscape. FADA and IID remain committed to providing platforms that empower students through exposure, mentorship, and career readiness.

For more events and updates, visit:

African Institute of Interior Design Professional (IID) – Instagram Handle: @iid_professions
(https://www.instagram.com/iid_professions/)

UJ Interior Design – Instagram handle: @interiordesign_uj.fada
(https://www.instagram.com/interiordesign_uj.fada/)

