



CCA Speaker Series #22

Mark Oranje

(University of Pretoria, South Africa)¹

The 1938 Johannesburg 'Town Planning Exhibition and Congress': Testament, Monument and Indictment

Thursday, 8 September, 4.30 pm

Anatomy Lecture Theatre

Centre for Curating the Archive
Level 3, Old Medical School
Hiddingh Campus
31 – 37 Orange Street
Cape Town

In 1938, a group of architecture students at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, strongly influenced by their youthful lecturer Rex Martienssen, organised the only town planning exhibition ever to be held in South Africa. Under the influence of Martienssen, himself a disciple of Le Corbusier and the teachings of CIAM, the exhibition was steeped in heroic modernist thought. The exhibition presented a series of utopian perspectives on and designs for South African cities. Despite including a number of radical suggestions for urban restructuring, the exhibition accepted the prevailing segregationist model of the time, and even endorsed it with a design for a 'Model Native Township' in apparent Corbusian style.

(...)

In this talk, the run-up, contextual setting, proceedings and products of the Town Planning exhibition of 1938 are described. The exhibition's relationship with the South African town planning profession, and its historical significance and impact, are discussed. The talk concludes with a brief engagement on the absence of major planning exhibitions since the 1938-event, despite the post-1994 'new era' of progressive planning thought and practice.

Mark Oranje is Professor and Head of the Department of Town and Regional Planning at the University of Pretoria. His key areas of research and consulting are planning policy, planning history, strategic planning, regional development and the interface between mining and settlement development. Over the last twenty-two years, Mark has authored and co-authored numerous academic papers, articles, chapters in books and technical reports and acted as a consultant to a number of national and provincial departments, municipalities, NGOs, planning commissions, science councils and private companies on a wide range of issue related to his above areas of interest.

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¹ Based on: Mabin, Alan and Oranje, Mark. (2014). The 1938 Johannesburg 'Town Planning Exhibition and Congress': Testament, Monument and Indictment, in Robert Freestone and Marco Amati (Eds.) *Planning exhibitions and the development of modern planning culture*. Ashgate: London.

