

WINTER ISSUE 2008 SOUTH AFRICA

# ELLE DECORATION

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## CONTRIBUTORS

### LAUREEN ROSSOUW



Renowned stylist Lauren Rossouw contributed to and features in this issue – which is most appropriate since she is so admired for her insightful and relaxed approach to South African style. See Tablescapes on page 82 for a sneak preview of the 'South Africa House' display she created for upcoming decor show, Rooms on View. Then step into her soa cottage on page 102 and savour the southern flavour of a weekend getaway on the edge of the fairest cape of all. What does she love most about South Africa? 'The beat, the sky and street Afrikaans.'

### BRIAN MTONGANA

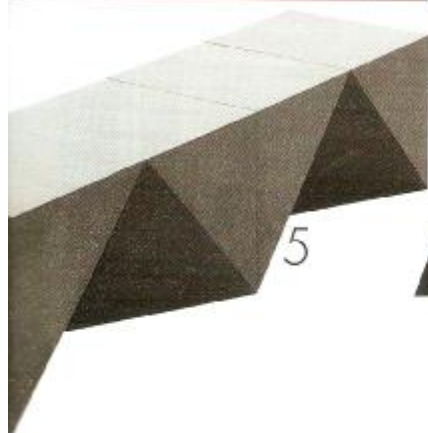
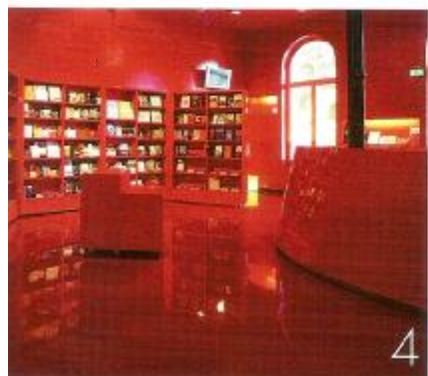
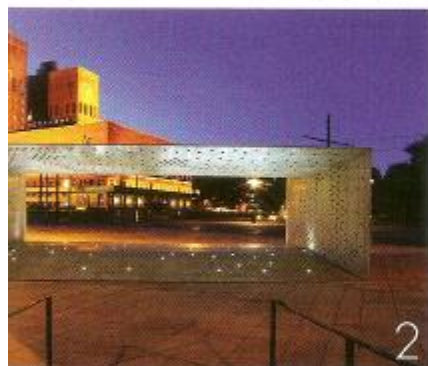


We're such fans of graphic designer Brian Mtongana's street-savvy style that we commissioned him to create a special Mzansi logo to celebrate our Magnetic South issue, because, as he so rightly says, 'gone are the days of clichéd symbols such as zebra, cheetah and leopard skins or the Ndebele and Zulu triangles in trying to make something South African.' We also couldn't resist raiding Brian's brain for Deco Style on page 51. When he isn't moonlighting for DECO, you'll find him playing in a band and working for Interactive Africa.

### ZAHIRA ASMAL



If all-personality Zahira Asmal ever challenged the term 'vivacious' to a duel, she'd emerge the smiling victor. This diversely talented dynamo left the advertising industry to become the brand manager of the Design Indaba before being whisked off to London by starchitect David Adjaye to work on his various projects around the globe, including his forthcoming book. A contributor to a number of international design magazines, Zahira gives us the inside track on David on page 65.



DECO ARCHITECT

THOROUGHLY MODERN AND UNDENIABLY AFRICAN, TANZANIAN-BORN STARCHITECT DAVID ADJAYE HAS, AT A YOUNG AGE, LEFT HIS DISTINCTIVE MARK ON GLOBAL ARCHITECTURE – AND PICKED UP AN OBE IN THE PROCESS

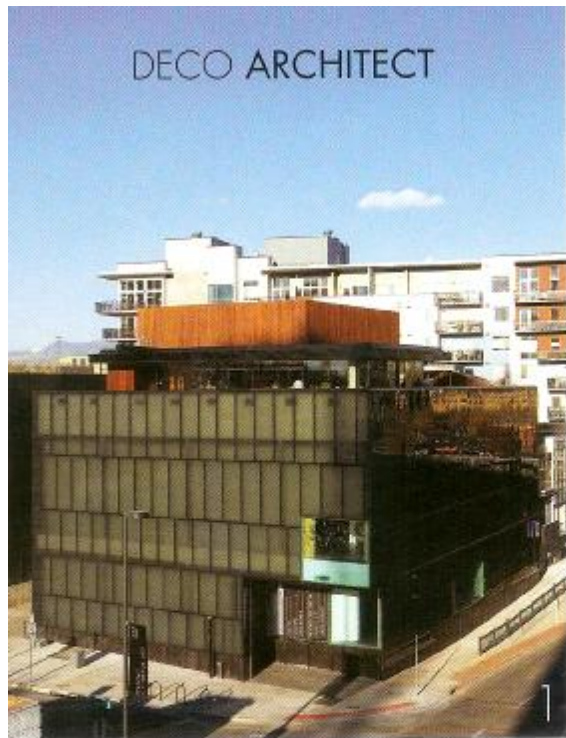
# AFRICAN ABSTRACTION

1 David Adjaye. 2 Nobel Peace Centre in Oslo, Norway. 3 Rivington Place art centre. 4 Nobel Peace Centre. 5 This granite bench is part of his 'Monoform Series' at the Albion Gallery, which represents David's sculptural furniture designs. 6 The Sunken House in Brixton, London

David Adjaye, Britain's only lauded black architect, has burnt a swift path to success in architectural ranks, both in that country and further afield. He has a reputation for designing urban retreats in stark contrast to their environment – his Elektra house, resembling a large light box, graced the pages of magazines worldwide – and his star-spangled clients include actor Ewan McGregor and artist Chris Ofili. But it's design for the public realm that first inspired him to become an architect and the realisation of this desire has recently led to even wider acclaim.

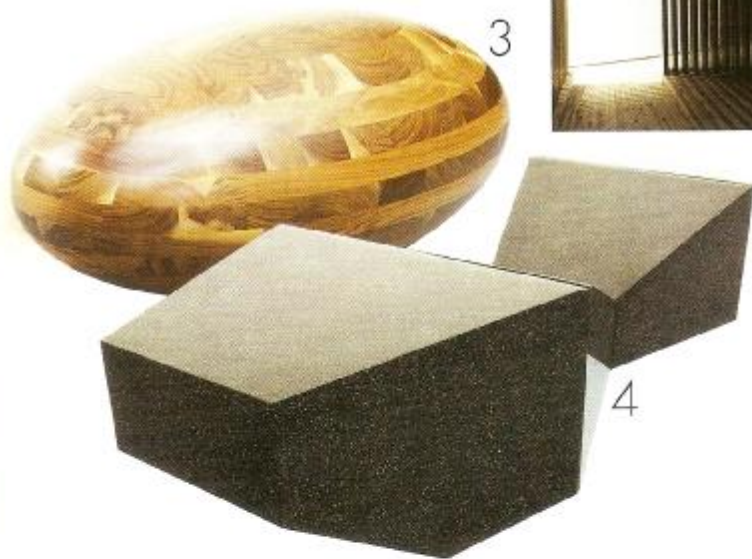
David's public buildings – such as his Nobel Peace Centre in Oslo, Norway – are recognised for their sensitivity to context, bespoke design and ingenious use of basic materials. Yet his designs are most admired for their ground-breaking expression of African culture. In the second half of 2007, three London buildings opened to the public: the Bernie Grant Arts Centre, Rivington Place and the Stephen Lawrence Centre. It's the latter that could have some influence on the future shape of architecture. Named after the black London teenager who was murdered in an allegedly racially-motivated attack in 1993, the Stephen Lawrence Centre intends to provide opportunities for underprivileged and minority-group students and to extend consciously its educational focus to architecture and design beyond the historically white-dominated focus of the field. David also enjoys lecturing to young, aspirant creatives as 'the younger generation get my work instantly. I feel like a foot soldier at the front breaking water for this gang.'

The son of a Ghanaian diplomat, David travelled extensively as a child and lived in both North Africa and the Middle East before moving to London. He acknowledges that his heritage



'I'm deeply interested in the continent of Africa, as a project that will occupy my life'

1 Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver. 2 Idea Store, Whitechapel. 3 The void 'Galilee' is made from American walnut wood. 4 Another of David's monolithic stone benches. 5 'Your Black Horizon', an installation in collaboration with artist Olafur Eliasson. 6 The Nobel Peace Centre



## Newsflash!

- David is currently working on a book that documents his travels through Africa, highlighting the differing modes of African urbanism and the way in which buildings are used in 54 capital cities on the continent
- David has also been asked to design an African-inspired rug for UK store Habitat, which will be launched in late 2008

has had a deep influence on his approach to architecture. 'I'm deeply interested in the continent of Africa, as a project that will occupy my life,' he says.

In the design of his public projects it's clear that David has drawn on a rich bank of African imagery. Gold-dust boxes from Ghana informed the shape of the Stephen Lawrence Centre. Rivington Place, a visual arts centre, bears a lattice pattern influenced by a Soweï mask from Sierra Leone. Across the ocean in Denver in the US, the design of the Museum of Contemporary Art was abstracted from the Zulu wooden neck rest found here in South Africa.

Of these influences, David explains, 'They are not inspirations in the normal sense, and it's not as though these artefacts "become" a building. I'm implicitly interested in mining them in the same way that the cubists or expressionists mined them, as a source pool for thinking freshly about complex concerns.' And so, globally, David Adjaye responds to the complexities of urban living and cultural diversity with architecture that is both thoroughly modern and undeniably African. ■

VISIT [WWW.ADJAYE.COM](http://WWW.ADJAYE.COM) OR READ DAVID ADJAYE: MAKING PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND DAVID ADJAYE: HOUSES, BOTH BY PETER ALLISON (THAMES & HUDSON)