

Talk is chic

Décor and design gurus have combined forces for the launch of Talk Show, Decorex Johannesburg's exciting new interactive conference programme. Conceived by décor and media consultant Lianne Burton, Talk Show will offer Décor Masterclasses, Design Forums, Virtual Décor Tours and Workshops - all free to Decorex visitors.

"With Talk Show, Decorex Jhb is literally putting its money where its mouth is," says Burton. "Cape Town has the Design Indaba and we think it's time Jo'burg hosts a 'décor indaba'. Talk Show will be flying in top people from around the country for a week of discussions, debates and visual presentations on décor, design and architecture. The aim is to provide a vibrant forum for the industry and to attract lively audiences that will benefit and contribute."

Over the past 10 years, Decorex Jhb has established itself as South Africa's pre-eminent décor and design exhibition, attracting some 55 000 visitors over five days. With a truly broad exhibitor profile that showcases the best of décor, design, architecture and the widest range of related products, Decorex Jhb is uniquely positioned in its market. Far from resting on past successes, however, recently appointed Decorex SA director Melanie Froneman has taken Decorex SA through a dynamic process of renewal and relevance, with a fresh new look and feel for the shows and a firm focus on the future.

"We're bridging the divide between pure design - or product-focused stands - and the creation of environments that combine these elements, namely interior design, architecture and, importantly, the décor magazines," explains Froneman.

"At the moment, the South African décor market is undergoing a renovation frenzy, and this has resulted in the growing appeal of product-specific showrooms. In the past, Decorex SA has reflected that shift. But, at the end of the day, Decorex SA as a brand aims to inspire and educate people on how to pull these products together to create the environment they aspire to. For this reason, I believe that the products should always be seen within a wider context of décor, interior design and architecture."

The Talk Show Masterclass series includes a not-to-be-missed masterclass on Contemporary African Style, hosted by décor fundi Cathy O'Clery, together with panelists Greg Dry of Egg Designs in Durban, Philippe van der Merwe of Tonic in Jo'burg and textile artist Jenny Gifford. Other Masterclasses cover Global Style, facilitated by architect and travel photographer Hu Fraser; New Colonial Style; Soft Contemporary Style and Modern Style.

Talk Show Forums will include a Trend Debate that questions the very idea of trends, hosted by Elle Decoration editor Ker Du Preez, and a Design Debate, titled: "Designing The Future - Senses, Spirit and Sustainability", hosted by Design Centre director Des Laubscher and featuring leading Australian interior designer Kim Thornton-Smith, among others.

The highlight of the Talk Show Virtual Tour programme is a presentation titled "Inner City Revival", featuring virtual tours of Constitution Hill, with commentary by architect Andrew Makin; 44 Stanley, with commentary by developer Brian Green; sneak previews of current Jo'burg inner city developments by Urban Ocean's Alfonso Botha and a personal tour through Tonic designer Greg Gamble's own loft at The Refinery.

"The industry response to Talk Show has been overwhelming," says Burton. "There's a sense that this is just what's needed to create excitement, ignite passions and spark dialogue across the conventional boundaries of design, décor and architecture. After all, those boundaries become meaningless when one considers the real world - the spaces we live, shop, work and move in. In reality all disciplines need to come together to create something harmonious. That's where Talk Show can make a significant contribution."

Decorex Jhb and Talk Show runs from 5 - 9 August at Gallagher Estate in Midrand. Visit www.decorx.co.za.

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