

The grand finale

 By [Terry Levin](#)

6 Mar 2017

A full house last session saw Craig Edward Dykers founding partner of Norwegian architecture and landscape design firm [Snøhetta](#) share some of their projects, including the reconstruction of The Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt, the Times Square reconstruction and the expansion of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Talking over a large black and white image of Archbishop Desmond Tutu with the title, 'the arch', Dykers explained the significance of the arch in architecture, the key feature without which the structure would not stand being the keystone.



[Snøhetta.com](#)

Dykers went on to share that a letter that had been received from the executive director of the Nobel Peace Center located in Oslo, Norway, of which His Grace Archbishop Desmond Tutu had been a recipient in 1984. The letter, a tribute to the Laureate, congratulated him for “Inspiring peace, through stories... which have left an imprint in history and for showing true leadership...” Dykers likened Tutu to a keystone.

It was then revealed that after a special commission had transpired during a visit by Design Indaba MD and founder Ravi Naidoo to Norway with additional collaboration, including Johannesburg-based architect Thomas Chapman, founder of Local Studio, to bring the dream as #archforthearch to reality.

The executive mayor of Cape Town Alderman Patricia de Lille was warmly welcomed on stage to general cheers revealing that as Tutu had been a recipient of The Freedom of the City in 1998, it would be an honour to accommodate the arch structure in Cape Town as a tribute to the man known as the 'Grandfather of the people'.

The backdrop image of the Arch retracted to reveal the surprise not only a mock up of the 14 arced arch, but also the appearance on stage of the man himself, accompanied at his own request by former Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane and current Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, prompting a prolonged standing ovation from delighted Indaba audience and moving address in which the man affectionately known as Khulu, assured us that Mandela was looking down at us with pride at what we had achieved.

Assembled under the arch The Cape Town Philharmonic Choir under the baton of Levi Alexander, performed a hymn and Handel's Hallelujah Chorus.

At a press briefing Alderman de Lille promised that the city would see the wheels in motion to ensure the approval of the land use at the entrance to the Company Gardens for the Arch, as part of a general cathedral and plaza upgrade scheduled to be ready for its official opening on Tutu's 86th birthday on 7 October 2017. This will also coincide with the 21st anniversary of the adoption of the constitution.

The symbolism of the 14 arcs of wood is inspired by the 14 lines and 14 chapters of our constitution, that begins "We the people".

ABOUT TERRY LEVIN

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