

Short Bio: Martie Bitzer - November 2023

Martie Bitzer is an architect and artist who has found her niche in the architectural profession, primarily by sharing her passion for architecture with young minds. She completed her studies at the UFS in 1991 and started teaching part-time the following year. After 31 years, she still sees the future of the profession as rooted in the formative years. In 1998, she obtained a Master's degree (M Arch research) and has consistently blended her teaching roles with practical experience in architectural offices.

Currently, Martie is in the final stages of completing her PhD by Design, with a focus on "Ecdysis: Shedding Skin as Performative Agent in Negotiating New Transitions for Architecture." Her interest lies in the transient nature of contemporary building skins and their spatial understanding during the design process.

With extensive teaching experience, she has served as a lecturer at the Universities of the Free State, Pretoria, and Johannesburg. Since 2003, she has held the position of senior lecturer. After nine years in Gauteng, she returned to her alma mater in 2007 and served as the Chair of the Department of Architecture at UFS from April 2010 to April 2013.

During her time as the Head of Department (HOD), Martie chaired the UFS Sustainable Committee, coordinating sustainability initiatives on campus. She believes that the architectural profession plays a leading role in creating a sustainable future. Additionally, Martie has served on six other committees, contributing to the spatial organization of the campus and various architectural projects.

Over the past 31 years, Martie has acted as a juror in student competitions, an external examiner, and a coordinator for undergraduate and post-graduate student selection. She emphasizes the importance of an integrated curriculum in helping students develop a comprehensive understanding of architecture.

For the last decade, Martie has been teaching all years of study except the second year. Since 2021, she has been running the Third-year design studio, where students demonstrate their abilities after three years of study, showcasing a strong foundation and a specific vision and mission in theoretical approaches.

Since 1992, Martie has sporadically taught presentation techniques to first-year architecture students, advocating for a hybrid approach that combines analog and digital skills in visual communication at all stages of the design process.

In her free time, Martie is an accomplished artist skilled in various media, including pewter, metal etching, oil, watercolor, and digital drawing. In 2016, she completed a drawing course

with Diane Victor and has successfully exhibited her work at several galleries in South Africa over the years.