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PAULO JORGE GUERREIRO ESTEVES (1974–2013)

We note with sadness the untimely passing of Paulo Jorge Guerreiro Esteves, an architect who was equally gifted as a musician as he was designing buildings.

BY **NICK DE KLERK, ASSISTED BY NABEEL ESSA, HANNAH LE ROUX, LUIGI SALEMI, RYAN COX AND ANA MARIA ESTEVES**

PAULO ESTEVES, who died unexpectedly of an asthma-related condition at the age of 39 at his home in July, was an architect who maintained a deep intellectual engagement with his practice. Prolific, he produced a vast number of residential projects and nature reserve lodges across South Africa in the brief 15 years that he was active. He studied at the University of Witwatersrand, graduating in 1999. Following graduation, he worked at Mashabane Rose Associates on the Apartheid Museum and at Paragon Architects, before setting up his own practice, Parallax Design Laboratory, in 2002. Throughout this period he was also a gifted pianist and baritone, which proved influential in his career as an architect.

His BArch thesis, entitled *Urban Pathways: Thresholds of the Contemporary City*, took the highway (in this case the M1 in Johannesburg) as a lens through which to examine and understand the city in which he lived and studied. Drawing on polyphonic modes in early Renaissance music, the thesis posited that the multiple, competing and collaborative systems that took the form of the highway are visible as a texture of structured subservient or dominant voices and narratives. This polyphonic structure would, at intervals, break down or cohere into consolidated forms or statements. These intervals, given that the underlying structures are inherently unstable and unpredictable, become visible in repeated, iterative viewing. This was also, critically, a way of negotiating Johannesburg's politically scarred landscape – then, as now, in a simultaneous state of flux.

In practice this took the form of a highly developed appreciation of the spatial potential of the syncopation of solid forms and voids within his buildings. This was something that he would continue to develop throughout the course of his career. It is visible in the early projects pursued while still at university, and in his last, a private residential project in Rynfield in Benoni (not far from where he was raised and went to school). His first client, while in second year at Wits, commissioned a residential alteration in Paulshof. This client was also one of his last, for what would ultimately be one of three large houses in the Pezula Estate in Knysna. This demonstrates how much his clients valued him, and the emphasis he placed on developing and maintaining professional relationships in his career.