

BRIEF

INTERNATIONAL ART

A spotlight on South Africa's daring design

For more than a decade, the Southern Guild gallery in Cape Town has championed South African design. Now this month, Southern Guild will show in the UK for the first time, with an exhibition at the PAD London fair.

As well as representing the country's most established artists and makers, Southern Guild is also a home for rising stars, from multidisciplinary artist Atang Tshikare, who specialises in sculptural furniture, to fashion designer Rich Mnisi, whose first collection of minimalist leather seating was inspired by his late great-grandmother.

"The idea of collectible design is relatively new, it's only since the international design fairs took off that it has become more mainstream," says South African Trevyn McGowan, who set up the gallery with her British husband Julian. "In 2011 we were the first African gallery to present work at Design Miami and I realised that we were part of this movement."

The couple decided to launch the gallery after Trevyn's experiences at her interior design and architectural practice in London, sourcing South African furnishings and home accessories for stores such as Liberty and Heal's (Julian worked as a set designer back then). "There were artists whose larger-scale pieces made from more expensive materials didn't fit into that exporting model," she recalls.

Since then, the pair has made a name for the gallery and its artists on a global scale. "We're not just representing artists," says Trevyn, "what we've done over the years is propel the industry forward by providing a platform for creative collaborations, mentorship, museum shows and international exchanges."

The couple are also inspired by a desire to explore South African issues, be it politics, history or tribal heritage. "All our makers have their own narrative," she says. "So they produce incredibly personal pieces that could only be made by them." *EL*

➔ **Andile Dyalvane, ceramicist**

Renowned Cape Town-based ceramicist Andile Dyalvane explores his Xhosa heritage. His hand-built terracotta and stoneware pieces are often named after farming machinery or crops, whether it's an interpretation of a traditional African milk pail or a bowl formed from layers of clay that represent textures caused by soil erosion.



➔ **Porky Hefer, designer**

From lifesize nests woven with Kooboo cane to his new leather seating pod made especially for PAD London, Porky Hefer's playful pieces use age-old techniques. In 2016, he represented South Africa at the inaugural London Design Biennale; last year he was commissioned by art consultants for the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation.



**Rich Mnisi,
furniture**

Johannesburg-born designer Rich Mnisi has made a name for himself in fashion with his award-winning line which has been worn by Beyoncé and Naomi Campbell. The Nwa-Mulamula sofa, named after his great-grandmother, is his first foray into furniture.



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**Justine Mahoney,
sculptor**

Justine Mahoney's work looks at childhood, dreams and the loss of innocence. Her youth as a privileged white girl in 70s Johannesburg is the main inspiration for her kitsch bronze sculptures based on cut-and-paste collages of pop culture. Her first show looked at childhood while the second focussed on teenagers, including an emotionally conflicted "Sleeping Samurai" female warrior, outwardly strong yet still wearing school shoes.



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Dokter and Misses, product design

Industrial designer Adriaan Hugo and graphic designer Katy Taplin are the husband-and-wife team behind this Johannesburg-based design company that produces bold, modernist furniture and lighting. Reworkings of traditional African patterns are a key feature, as seen on pieces such as the hand-painted beech Kassena Isibheqe Server cabinet, which references the adobe structures of the Kassena people of Burkina Faso.