

# Guild international design fair to boost design exports in Africa, South Africa

A leading supporter of design-driven economic growth, Southern Guild is putting the spotlight on the continent with Guild, Africa's only international design fair, in Cape Town from 25 February to 1 March at the Lookout, V&A Waterfront, sponsored by Absa Private Banking.

Already, African and international designers are collaborating and producing work on the continent using local talent and products. That work will show exclusively at Guild.

## Noteworthy collaborations include:

- LA-based The Haas Brothers and South Africa's Monkeybiz beading company
- Amsterdam-based designer Frederik Molenschot and Gone Rural Swaziland
- Peter Mabeo from Botswana and South African conceptual designer Porky Hefer
- Beirut's the Massoud siblings with Cape Town-based ceramicist Andile Dyalvane and Bronze Age Foundry

That the ranges from these collaborations are being produced on the continent is a strong economic boost. Work on The Haas Brothers collection, for example, has generated permanent employment for craftswomen who would typically produce ad hoc pieces at irregular intervals. The project has given them a sense of position, pride in their skill and prompted them to nickname themselves the Haas Sistas. Demand for Gone Rural's weaving expertise means that rural women are able to provide financially for their families. Gone Rural works with over 750 Swaziland-based artisans.

"The revenue stream for South African design exports has been growing year on year. At a time of recession, when other categories may be in decline, this is a remarkable movement and one we want to propel," says Trevyn McGowan, who co-founded Southern Guild with her husband Julian.

## International exhibitors



With Guild, the gallery brings home some of the most interesting and important international galleries, designers and curators. Following last year's inaugural edition, which represented 17 countries and was attended by more than 8,500 visitors, Guild 2015 is putting the focus on global design collaboration and the rich opportunities that exist for working with African studios.

Producing bespoke, limited edition design that will premiere at Guild, African and international design heavyweights have linked up exclusively for the fair.

Guild is hosting some of the most recognised names in the world. The prestigious Carpenters Workshop Gallery, from Paris and London, is showcasing design pieces by Kendell Geers, the South African fine artist living in Belgium, for the first time on home ground. Esteemed UK-based journalist Helen Chislett launches her gallery London Connoisseur, presenting work from Thomas Heatherwick, Studio Swine and David Adjaye. South Africa's Conrad Botes will have a solo show of large-scale sculptural works.

"Design is a crucial tool for innovation, economic growth and competitiveness in the global market," continues McGowan, who in March will be exhibiting African designs at New York's top design gallery, R & Company. The invitation comes after gallerists Zesty Meyers and Evan Snyderman were awed by the African designers when they participated in Guild last year.

"Guild has opened the flood gates for South African and African designers to work alongside the best in the world. Seeing



the work presented side by side highlights just how far we have come," she concludes.

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