

# FEAT OF CLAY

*Jan Ernst Exhibits in Paris and New York*

South African ceramic designer Jan Ernst is a multidisciplinary creative specialising in functional art and spatial design using clay as his primary medium. The work is driven by his fascination with natural structures such as corals, fungi, and rock formations. His organic designs stem from his abstract understanding of form and space influenced by his background in architecture, his connection with the natural world, and his South African heritage.



Jan Ernst recently exhibited his collectable design pieces through the New York branch of international contemporary sculptural design and art gallery, Galerie Philia. After the first leg of the exhibition, entitled “Into the Wild”, select pieces moved on to Galerie Philia in Paris.

“Into the Wild” is an original concept organized by Galerie Philia that showcases hand-sculpted art design pieces in natural landscapes. According to the gallery, “this physical translation enables the public to admire the design artworks in a novel way by creating a fruitful discrepancy. The eyes look and apprehend the works creatively in this particular context. Silent resonances hatch and multiply between the artworks and the surrounding nature. The idea is to convey a distinct sight of what sculptural design work is...”

For “Into the Wild”, Ernst’s poetic clay works are pictured against the spectacular setting of the Cederberg region in South Africa. Driven by his fascination with natural structures, Ernst presents his sculptural artworks in an enigmatic natural environment where







marks of ancient human presence can be felt.

"It is incredible to be taking a bit of South Africa to the show, as my work is inspired by the natural landscapes that we have here," he says. "Most of the designers on the show come from Europe and the US, so it is refreshing to see designs from other parts of the world that attract interest. And it is fantastic to exhibit in New York and Paris, where the elite of the design world hangs out!" he adds.

There are roughly ten pieces on the show, and Ernst describes them as a "very eclectic collection". His candelabra, seed pod vessels, table lamps, eye lamp, worm lamp, and squiggle side table have been included.

"It is, of course, an incredible honour to be exhibiting with other emerging and established artists from around the world - there are some very big names on the show, such as Rick Owens, who is a well-known fashion designer. I am thrilled to be on an international platform with designers of that calibre."

#### **LOCAL CONNECTION**

In addition to showcasing internationally, Ernst recently exhibited his work in South Africa as part of the





landmark group show “Right Here, Right Now!” at Union House in Cape Town. This substantial exhibition of contemporary local design and art debuted new pieces by a range of designers and finalists of the Nando’s Hot Young Designer Talent Search (HYD). “Right Here, Right Now!” was curated by Creative Director Tracy Lynch of Clout/SA and marked the public launch of Clout/SA.

Clout/SA is a purpose-first enterprise, creative agency, and business-to-business (B2B) market-maker for South African design. The aim is to promote South Africa’s

creativity, craftsmanship and heritage. Additionally, creating opportunities for collaboration between corporates and designers is a primary driver.

Ernst was included in “Right Here, Right Now!” to highlight the Clout/SA’s capacity to support the placement of limited edition pieces alongside designs that can be reproduced in multiple units. Ernst’s relationship with Clout/SA originated through HYD; he was a Top 10 finalist in the competition’s previous round.

Ernst credits HYD and Clout/SA as motivating factors for launching his stand-alone brand Jan Ernst. He started his collectable design brand after

participating in the HYD competition.

“I took part in HYD through my architectural studio, which I run with my business partner, and only subsequently started my own separate brand of collectable design focusing on ceramics. Being exposed to that way of critical thinking about furniture and design was a contributing factor in establishing my own brand. With the architectural studio, we were dipping into interior design but not necessarily product design, so the HYD was a pivotal point.”

After this prompt, Ernst started “playing with clay”, an exploration that evolved into his organic-inspired limited edition pieces that are all entirely hand-built, strikingly singular, and beginning to take the international design world by storm.

*For more information on Jan Ernst, visit [www.jan-ernst.com](http://www.jan-ernst.com), or go to [www.galerie-phia.com/jan-ernst](http://www.galerie-phia.com/jan-ernst) for more information on Galerie Philia. For info on Clout/SA visit [www.clout-sadesign.co.za](http://www.clout-sadesign.co.za). The exhibition will be in Paris until 29 April 2022, by appointment only - [info@galerie-phia.com](mailto:info@galerie-phia.com). *

---

*by **jaylene williams**  
photography by **jan ernst***



# FRANSCHHOEK

COUNTRY HOUSE & VILLAS



Positioned in the most romantic valley on earth, Franschhoek Country House & Villas is an exclusive boutique hotel reminiscent of a village in Provence yet with an elegant Cape sensibility. Set in gardens of lemon trees, lavender and vines – with fynbos draping the nearby mountains – the original, charming country maison includes 14 standard and luxury rooms as well as the award-winning Monneaux Restaurant while the 12 Villa suites are havens of privacy & understated opulence. Swimming pools, a candle-lit cellar, a treatment room and sun-down verandas are all a traveller needs as you live la vie extraordinaire.



MONNEAUX  
RESTAURANT

For current special offers and packages visit  
[www.fch.co.za](http://www.fch.co.za)

tel: +27 (0)21 876 3386 | email: [info@fch.co.za](mailto:info@fch.co.za)