

STEPPING INTO CREATIVITY

Ardmore's Artistic Voyage

With each step forward, I drew deeper into Ardmore's enchanting world, an experience reminiscent of Alice falling into the rabbit hole and arriving in Wonderland.. It wasn't just an ordinary encounter; it was as if a magical realm was unfurling right before my eyes. I was immersed in a fantastical landscape of intricate narratives and hidden details within the artistry. Before me stood a magnificent piece – a hippopotamus adorned with a ceramic bowl, accompanied by monkeys playing on his back, and as I inched closer, eager to unravel the delicate artistry of the piece, I fell headlong into its story.



The hippopotamus was a sight to behold; his bottom half gleaming in pristine white while his top section was adorned with a scalloped black blanket embellished with vibrant green geometric flowers. Nestled amidst the foliage were emerald leaves, their red veins adding a touch of realism to the piece. Perched upon the hippo's back sat the ceramic bowl, intricately crafted with flowers and fruits – a testament to the artisan's skill and dedication. Surrounding the scene, mischievous monkeys frolicked with boundless energy, adding to the palpable excitement of the moment. The day of the jungle's grand parade was an annual spectacle where the animals showcased their artistic prowess. The hippo, filled with pride and anticipation, couldn't wait to unveil his masterpiece – a ceramic bowl inspired by his mentor, Bonnie. With the help of his trusty companions, the mischievous monkeys, he had poured months of effort into its creation, hoping to claim the coveted prize.

Stepping back, I couldn't help but marvel at Ardmore's prowess in the realm





of luxury African art. Their unwavering commitment to craftsmanship, creativity, and pride permeated every aspect of their work, setting them apart as a global leader in the industry.

HISTORY OF CREATIVITY

Ardmore Ceramics traces its roots back to 1985 when Fée Halsted, driven by a desire to empower others, founded the company on her farm in KwaZulu Natal. Facing adversity as a woman in the art world, she sought to create opportunities for rural communities by teaching the art of ceramics. Guided by the principle of Ubuntu – the interconnectedness of humanity – she embarked on a journey to make a meaningful contribution to society.

Under Fée's tutelage, a talented group of individuals, including Bonakele (Bonnie) Ntshalintshali, honed their craft, earning recognition and acclaim locally and internationally. Ardmore's distinctive blend of traditional African motifs with contemporary influences captivated audiences worldwide, earning them a reputation for whimsical and intricate designs inspired by African wildlife and folklore.

In 2010, Fée's children Jonathan, Catherine and Megan expanded Ardmore's horizons by venturing into the realm of fabric design, giving rise to Ardmore Home, and ultimately Ardmore Fashion several years later. By translating their iconic ceramic designs onto silk, linen and cotton, the brand found new avenues for creative expression, garnering attention from renowned designers and artists. This expansion further solidified the brand's presence in the luxury market, heralding collaborations with prestigious names like Hermès.





With a team of over 70 artists, Ardmore remains committed to economic empowerment and the preservation of African artistic traditions. Their products, characterised by vibrant colours, intricate patterns, and rich storytelling, serve as a bridge between cultures, inviting dialogue and appreciation for African heritage.

Ardmore's social impact extends beyond its products, reflecting a commitment to ethical and socially responsible practices. Each piece not only tells a story but also contributes to the livelihoods of local communities, resonating with consumers who value authenticity and sustainability.

By offering a glimpse into African culture and craftsmanship, Ardmore's creations transcend mere decor, becoming cherished symbols of cultural appreciation and conversation starters in homes and workplaces alike. With each piece being handmade and inherently exclusive, Ardmore's products appeal to collectors and design enthusiasts

seeking unique and rare treasures to adorn their spaces.

To experience Ardmore's rich legacy firsthand, visit their website at www.ardmore-design.com or hear an insightful conversation with Fée in this [video](#). For an immersive shopping experience, visit one of Ardmore's boutique stores in Cape Town, Johannesburg, or O.R. Tambo International Airport. I enjoyed touring the Cape Town store with Phillipa Strydom, the owner, who offered a glimpse into Ardmore's world of creativity and inspiration.

For a deeper understanding of their craftsmanship, visit the Ardmore Ceramic Gallery on Caversham Road, KwaZulu-Natal, where you can witness the intricate processes involved in creating each masterpiece. Guided by Fée's vision, Ardmore continues to push the boundaries of artistic expression, inviting audiences to take one step closer to their vibrant world of stories and colour. 🌍

