

Objects With Narratives

SOUTH AFRICA EXHIBITION





Dates:

8 January 2025- 8 March 2026

Location:

Place Du Grand Sablon 40, 1000 Brussels

South African Exhibition

Digging Traces

Over the last years, we discovered that there are only a handful of places in the world where traditional and contemporary craftsmanship meet through extraordinary artisans, resulting in some of the most wonderful objects one can find today. For example, on the European continent we see this happening in Belgium, in Asia these treasures can be usually found in South-Korea and for the African continent there is one country currently leading by example: South-Africa.

Over the last years it has been the gateway for African artist to break through on the international scene. It's location, availability to resources and rich culture created a melting pot for art, design and craft where artists can fully express themselves.

Digging Traces represents our personal journey and encounter through this vibrant country and especially learning from their magnificent master-artisans. While meeting these diverse makers, we realized there is an overarching theme. It is neither the culture, nor the history that brings them together but the territory - and literal ground- that they share between each other. Artists use their unique bond and co-existence with nature as a true driving force in their designs, something unfamiliar for most other cultures.

As an ode, our goal is to bring our experience to the other side of the world with our largest dedicated exhibition up to date in the gallery. It fuels our ongoing goal to cultivate deeper connections between countries known for their craft. Through this cross-country dialogue, we hope to inspire the fusion of ideas, techniques, and cultural influences that continue to shape the future of art and design.

"Visiting South Africa has been an eye-opening experience. Learning from the history, culture and especially the land, has taught me a lot even in a very brief moment of time." Robbe Vandewyngaerde



Solo Show

Conrad Hicks

Group Show

Andile Dyâlvane
Atang Tshikare
Christine Jacobs

Dylan Lewis
Jan Ernst

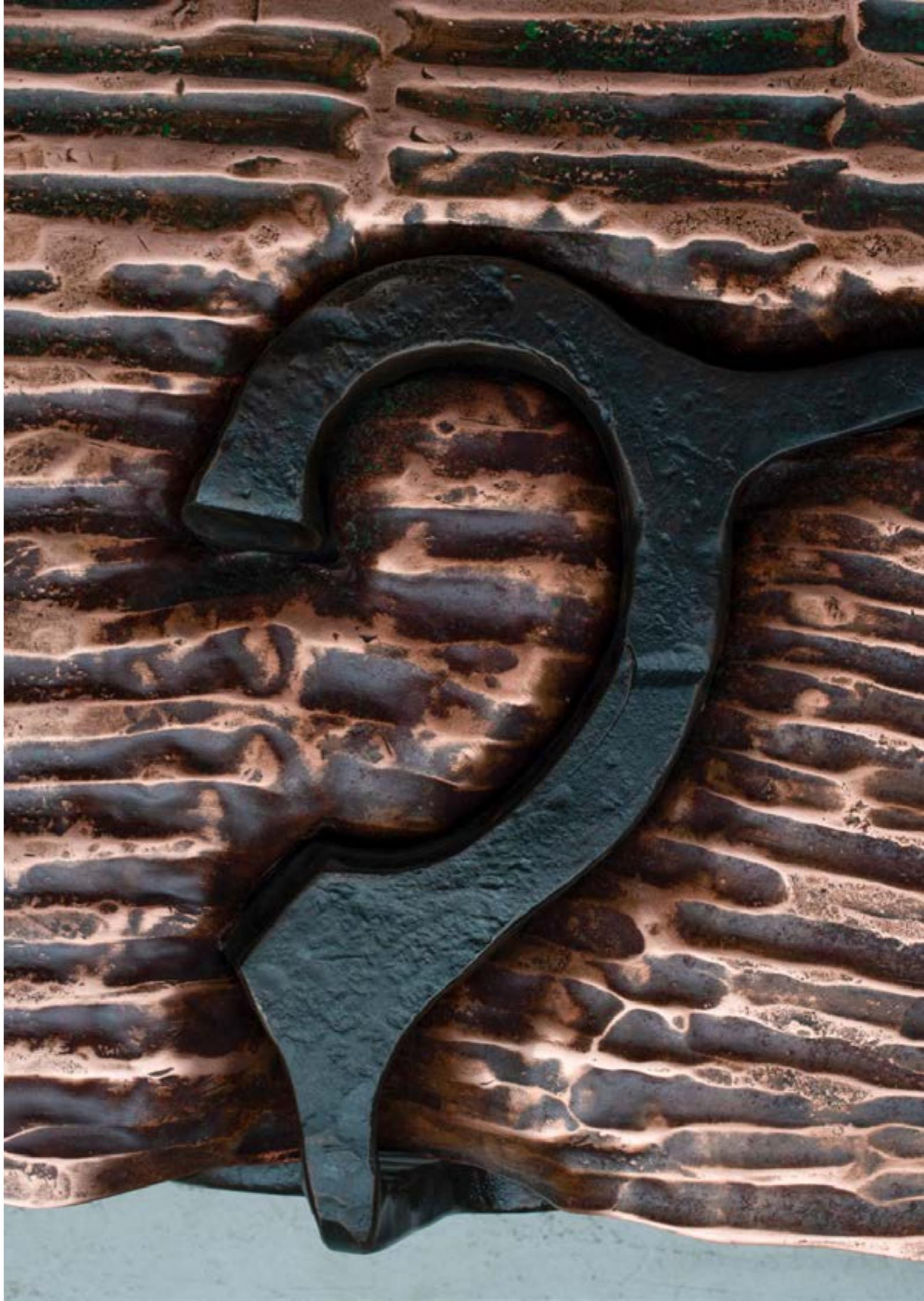
Stanisław Trzebinski

Conrad Hicks

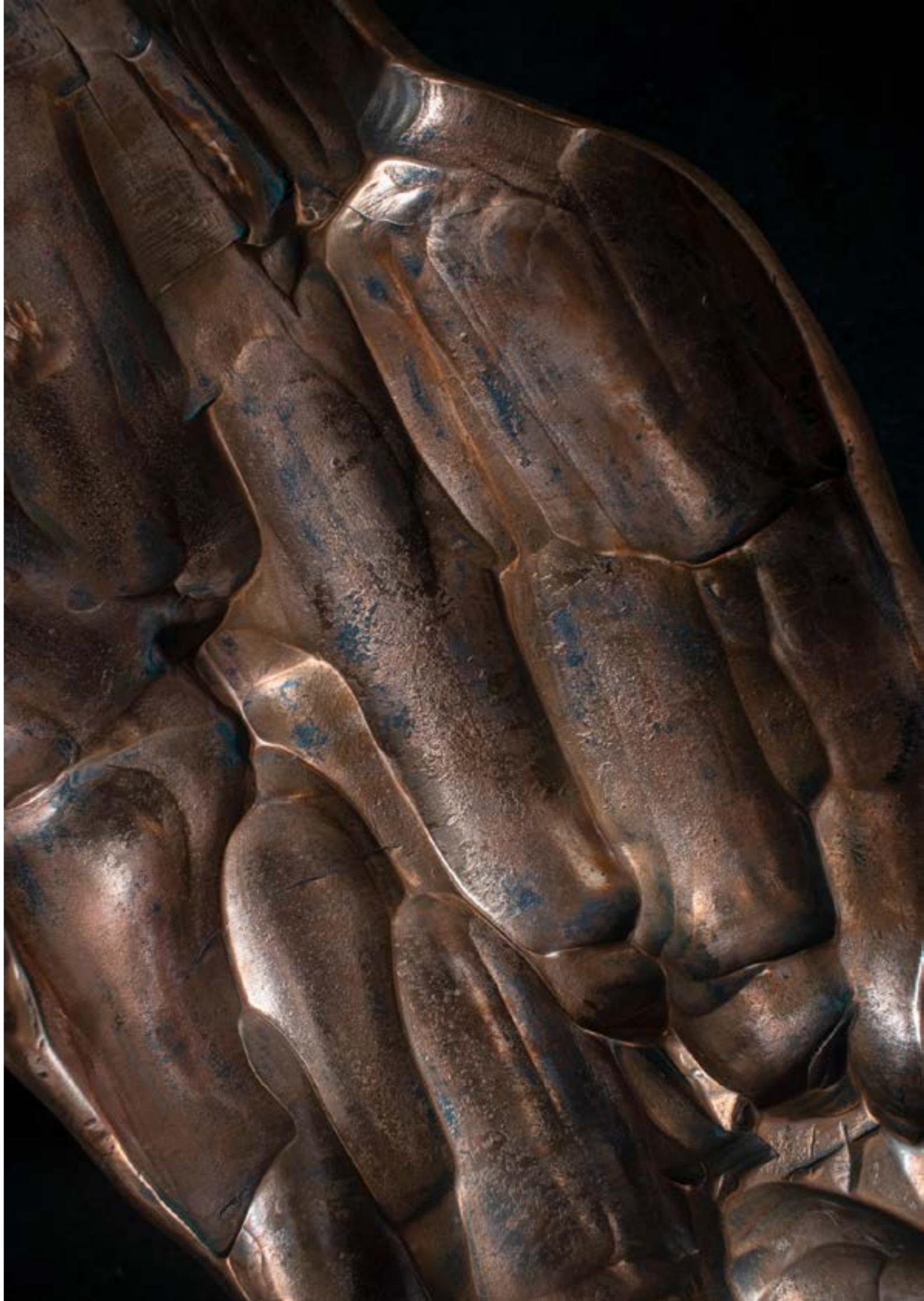
Conrad Hicks is a Cape Town-based artist, blacksmith, and tool-maker renowned for his expressive hand-forged metalwork and commitment to traditional blacksmithing techniques. Rooted in craftsmanship and guided by intuition, his practice is both deeply physical and profoundly philosophical—an instinctive search for beauty shaped by fire, force, and form. Conrad works exclusively with traditional jointing methods, believing that these ancient techniques are integral to the symbolic and structural integrity of each piece. Through a process of cutting, heating, hammering, pressing, and stretching metal, he uncovers a primal, archetypal language—one that echoes ancient art forms while speaking to contemporary aesthetics.

All of Conrad's creations, whether sculptural or functional, are conceived as tools—extensions of the human hand and spirit. His work is distinguished by its raw texture, organic abstraction, and a tactile relationship with nature. Sculptural pieces like *Wife?* Bench and *No. 2 From Maquette Series* pulse with animalistic energy, while ethereal works such as *Chaise Muse* and *Copper Chaise* showcase delicate, almost weightless forms, with beaten copper so thin it seems to float. Blurring the lines between art, craft, and design, Conrad Hicks invites viewers to engage not only with material beauty, but with the deeper narrative embedded in the making—where tool, object, and art converge in elemental harmony.











Andile Dyalvane

Andile Dyalvane is one of Africa's leading ceramic artists, whose sculptural practice is deeply rooted in ancestral spirituality, cultural memory, and the transformative power of clay. Guided by an unwavering connection to his Xhosa heritage, Dyalvane's monumental ceramic works serve as vessels—not only of form, but of healing, storytelling, and gratitude. Born in 1978 in the rural village of Ngobozana near Qobo-Qobo in South Africa's Eastern Cape, Dyalvane's early life was shaped by the land—farming and tending to cattle—experiences that cultivated a profound sense of place and identity. His chosen medium, clay, or umhlaba (mother earth), is a sacred material to him: a direct link to the soil, to memory, and to the spiritual world. In his hands, it becomes both language and lineage.

Dyalvane studied Art and Design at Sivuyile Technical College in Cape Town and earned a National Diploma in Ceramic Design from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in 2003. In 2005, he co-founded Imiso Ceramics with fellow ceramicist Zizipho Poswa. The studio has gained international acclaim for its hand-crafted tableware and vessels, where Dyalvane developed his signature technique of incised surface markings—a motif inspired by traditional African scarification and continued across his sculptural practice.

Through his intricate carvings, grounded forms, and sacred symbolism, Andile Dyalvane creates art that speaks across generations, honouring indigenous knowledge systems while navigating the complex terrain of identity, belonging, and transformation.



Atang Tshikare

Atang Tshikare is a Cape Town-based multidisciplinary artist whose practice blends sculpture, design, and storytelling into a bold and visionary expression of contemporary African identity. Entirely self-taught, Tshikare has forged a singular creative path that defies categorisation—drawing from heritage, mythology, and futurism to build a unique visual language that is both deeply personal and universally resonant.

Born in Bloemfontein in 1980, Tshikare grew up immersed in imagery and narrative, shaped by the graphic work of his father—an anti-Apartheid illustrator for pan-African publications. This early exposure to visual storytelling laid the groundwork for his own expansive practice, which celebrates and reimagines Southern African culture through a lens of Afrofuturism and biomorphic abstraction. Working across bronze, ceramics, glass, stone, and wood, Tshikare's process is highly experimental, yet grounded in tradition. His sculptural forms are often inspired by zoomorphic and biomorphic motifs, vernacular architecture, and the shifting landscapes of his homeland. Each piece initiates a dialogue between the natural and the engineered—melding organic textures with minimalist sensibilities, and inviting a tactile encounter with material and meaning.

Tshikare's work is characterised by its transformative energy: objects become talismans, creatures, or structures that speak of time, ancestry, and possibility. Whether monumental or intimate in scale, his sculptures are portals—offering glimpses into imagined worlds shaped by memory, spirit, and speculative futures.







Christine Jacobs

Christine Jacobs is a South African functional artist whose multidisciplinary practice spans furniture design, sculpture, fine art, and photography, unified by a deeply personal and poetic relationship with the land. Rooted in her upbringing on a six-generation Merino wool farm in the Free State, Jacobs's work draws from the textures, rhythms, and emotional topography of the landscape she calls home.

Describing her style as "nostalgically minimal", Jacobs distills references from Scandinavian, Art Deco, and Japanese design into quiet, contemplative forms. Her pieces balance the organic and the constructed, the intuitive and the deliberate—where a sculptural curve or steel edge can echo the memory of a field, a fence line, or a breath of wind across the veld. Her aesthetic is refined but grounded, imbued with a tactile honesty that honours both material and memory. Working across mediums, Jacobs treats each discipline as a way to map and memorialise the traces we leave on the landscape—and the traces it leaves on us. Her large-scale felt sculptures and gestural charcoal drawings, for instance, explore the interplay between human presence and natural form, referencing everything from vegetation to topographic contours, often with a dreamlike abstraction.

These works act as meditations on heritage, time, and transformation, capturing the quiet tensions and harmonies of rural life. Jacobs rejects the notion of strict categorisation. Instead, she embraces a fluid identity as a maker, drawing inspiration from both the visible and invisible marks of her environment. Her practice is less about objects and more about relationships—between people and place, material and meaning, history and imagination.



Dylan Lewis

Dylan Lewis is widely regarded as Africa's most internationally acclaimed living figurative sculptor, known for his evocative bronze works that explore the primal relationship between humans, animals, and wilderness. His practice, developed over more than three decades, is deeply rooted in the raw, untamed beauty of the natural world—an environment that continues to shape both the form and philosophy of his work.

Renowned initially for his powerful portrayals of big cats, Lewis's sculptures transcend traditional wildlife representation. His felines—poised, muscular, and electric with tension—embody the essence of apex predators as evolved expressions of their environment. These are not simply animals rendered in bronze; they are profound meditations on ancestry, survival, and adaptation. Each form pulses with a dense, contained energy, as if caught in a moment between movement and stillness, instinct and intelligence.

Over time, Lewis's focus has shifted inward, from animal to human form. What began as subtle references to the body in early works has since evolved into a significant body of deeply emotional and psychological figurative sculpture. These human forms—often fragmented, sensual, and introspective—interrogate the boundaries between our wild, instinctual nature and the constructed self. His recent works navigate themes of identity, transformation, and the shadow self, forging a new mythos that connects personal narrative with universal archetype.









Jan Ernst

Jan Ernst is a South African multidisciplinary artist and designer best known for his organic, sculptural ceramics that blur the boundaries between functional art and spatial design. With a foundation in architecture, Jan's work is deeply rooted in his abstract understanding of form, space, and texture, which he channels through clay—his signature medium.

His artistic journey began with a fascination for the South African landscape, shaped by a childhood spent moving across the country. These early experiences cultivated a strong connection to nature, which remains a central theme in his work. Initially drawn to creating textural pieces inspired by natural forms, Jan's creative narrative has since evolved to explore the interrelationship between human beings and the natural world. Collections such as "Time Lapse" delve into philosophical concepts like the perception of time, while works like "Convergence" examine the energetic intersections of natural and human forces. Jan's process is intuitive and non-linear, often involving a mix of model-making, sketching, and experimentation with diverse materials—ranging from clay and plaster to found objects and textiles. Though ceramics remain his primary medium, each project dictates its own material language, allowing him to push the boundaries of traditional craftsmanship.

Through his pieces, Jan Ernst invites viewers to reconnect with nature and discover the shared rhythms between organic forms and human experience, crafting a visual language that is both deeply personal and universally resonant.







Stanisław Trzebinski

Stanisław Trzebinski is a multidisciplinary sculptor whose work navigates the fault lines between ecology, mythology, and speculative futures. Born in 1992 in Mombasa, Kenya, and now based in Cape Town, Trzebinski is recognised for his genre-defying practice that blends ancient craft with futuristic vision—crafting sculptural worlds that are as much about memory and loss as they are about rebirth and transformation.

Emerging from a background in figurative bronze sculpture, Trzebinski first gained attention for his anatomically precise yet poetic depictions of the human form, often enmeshed with marine life and natural systems. These early works explored the body as an extension of the Earth—vulnerable, adaptive, and spiritually entangled with its environment. However, his more recent practice marks a dramatic shift: the figure dissolves, giving way to alien organisms, algorithmic patterning, and otherworldly life forms that inhabit spaces suspended between science fiction and ecological reality. Drawing deeply from his upbringing on Kenya's coastline—among tidal pools, coral reefs, and volcanic plains—Trzebinski creates sculptural ecosystems shaped by the emotional and environmental anxieties of our time.

Trzebinski's process fuses traditional techniques such as lost-wax casting with contemporary digital fabrication and experimental patination. His materials—etched copper, bronze tendrils, hand-blown glass—evoke both the fossilised and the futuristic, conjuring environments that pulse with organic intelligence. These are not merely objects, but living mythologies—speculative relics that question where nature ends and artifice begins, and what new forms life might take in the wake of transformation.



