



Flower power

It wouldn't surprise many if the winner of the **Most Beautiful Object in South Africa** (Mboisa) came from a fine arts background. But this year's winner is a scientist who holds a PhD in electrical engineering.

Dr Michaella Janse van Vuuren used cutting-edge technology to create the dual-use centrepiece that caught the eye of visitors to Design Indaba – SA's holy grail of design, who voted for the Mboisa.

Michaella does have somewhat of an arty background – she matriculated from (performance- and art-oriented) Pro Arte High School before

going on to study electrical engineering and computer science.

Her love for mathematically founded patterns in nature combined with her interest in three-dimensional manufacturing methods resulted in the Chrysanthemum Centrepiece (retailing at R12 000) – an intricately textured and beautiful object which would've been impossible to sculpt by hand.

The design can function as either a bowl or a candle holder by simply flipping it over. It was carved out of Polyamide PA2200 (a form of

Nylon) by selective laser sintering (SLS) – the object is “printed” layer by layer, building up to the 3D form by fusing layers of Nylon. The result is an eye-catching piece with an uncanny likeness to the perennial chrysanthemum flower – a stock item at flower stalls.

“I was very surprised to win,” says Michaella. “People loved the designs and after the great reception, winning was an unexpected bonus.”

Michaella also designs jewellery and lighting solutions, and has exhibited across SA. Visit www.nomili.co.za to check out her wares.

CLAY FOR AWAY

Louise Gelderblom grew up making mud pies in her mom's garden. But she's traded mud for ceramics and won the Craft Designer of the Year award at the Elle Décor International Design Awards

How do you feel about your award?

It's nice to win awards when you don't have to enter the competition yourself. The greatest honour is that this category was created especially to honour SA's rich heritage of craft design, and I was the first recipient!

Which of your artworks excite you?

I'm always quite interested in seeing how large (and thin) I can go with clay. The judges were impressed with my larger format works, some of which stand at about 2.5m. As far as inspiration goes, it's like being in a continuous drawing class where you make one drawing after the other and they follow on from one another. There are very few intentional “being – new idea!” moments.

Have you ever made something you've hated?

I usually realise pretty early on that something looks hideous, and from there it doesn't stand much chance. The most satisfying part about working with clay is that you can bundle it all back into a ball and make it into something beautiful.

How does art spread to other areas of your life?

I'm a great cook and a good stylist, too. I always take great care to place things in my environment in an emotionally pleasing way. Areas where my art does not spread are clothes and cars. My clothes are purely functional, and my car is the cheapest vehicle my ego can afford!

HER FAVOURITES

- Painters** Walter Meyer, Henri Matisse, Irma Stern
- Ceramicists** Pablo Picasso, Hylton Nel
- Photographers** David Goldblatt, Annie Leibovitz
- Musicians** Ry Cooder, Ali Farka Touré
- Typographer** Neville Brody
- Filmmaker** Pedro Almodóvar

To see Louise's art, visit the Montebello Design Centre (31 Newlands Ave, Cape Town). Call her studio on 082 658 3568.



10 to 12 July: it's time for the first **Photo & Film Expo** (Coca-Cola Dome, Northumberland Rd, North Riding, 011 781 5351) in Jo'burg. Highlighting still- and film-photography excellence in South Africa, the event will showcase the latest hardware and software, techniques, facilities and courses available in these fields. Tickets at the door: R40 (children and pensioners) and R80 (adults).