



IMAGE: HAYDEN PHIPPS

Julian and Trevyn McGowan

TREVYN MCGOWAN

The Guild Group's founder and CEO gives us some insight into what makes her tick

INTERVIEW: MILA CREWE-BROWN

Before Trevyn McGowan, there was no single vehicle putting South African design under the international spotlight. As the guiding light of The Guild Group, whose stables encompass Southern Guild, Source and Odeon, Trevyn's dedication to design from the African continent has left an indelible mark on the industry. We chatted to her about the artists and objects she loves.

Southern Guild stands for excellence, challenging boundaries and African originality.

Simon Andrews informed my opinion of African design when, as Christies London international specialist on design, he remarked that we were making history and our work belonged in museums.

Authentic design means design that is deeply rooted in the creator's personal narrative, process and practice; a work that couldn't have come from any other studio.

This brand began over a decade ago, when we realised that South African designers had a unique viewpoint and process and needed a platform to help shape, propel and promote their trajectory.

I'd describe my personal style as diverse and narrative driven — everything we own has a very long back story.

I'm reading Alice Rawsthorn's *Design as an Attitude*, Tara Westover's *Educated* and Elvis Costello's *Unfaithful Music & Disappearing Ink*. I tend to read multiple books at a time.

My current fave book is *On Beauty* by Zadie Smith.

My go-to scent is Maison Francis Kurkdjian OUD.

The first thing I do when I get home after work is mess with the kids and the dogs.

My best hotels are Benesse House in Japan and Babylonstoren in SA.



Pulling Threads Exhibition



Volt dining chair by OKHA

IMAGE: NIEL VOSLOO



Alice Rawsthorn
Design as an Attitude



Haas Brothers

IMAGE: JOE KRAMM

I collect the Southern Guild pieces that, after working with them day in and out, I can't bear to be without. Also art works that Julian and I both feel strongly about. But truly, there isn't any more room and we need to be more disciplined.

When travelling, I'd never do without my family. I love the crazy of us all together.

My current Southern Guild crush is Stanislaw Trzebinski. His solo show *In the Absence of Light* is on at the Southern Guild gallery in Cape Town until mid-October, presenting a stirring collection of bronze pieces inspired by the coral reefs off the Kenyan coast.

My all-time favourite design studio is the LA-based Haas Brothers, because they show that it's possible to be brilliant, wild and rule-breaking, kind and considerate all at the same time.

Things that make my home special are the many fireplaces (burning alien invader timbers) that heat the house and encourage reading, general lounging and talking, and wine drinking — all my best pastimes.

When looking for great local homeware, I head to Robert Sherwood, Okha, Tonic, Dokter and Misses, Africa Nova and Lim — all incredible established brands doing amazing work.

The one designer I'd love to grab a coffee with is Patricia Urquiola, because she makes genius look effortless — and she was very gracious when I once accosted her.

The last memorable exhibition I attended was *Pulling Threads* at the Norval Foundation, a sensitive and globally relevant curation by Owen Martin.

One designer everyone should watch is Zizipho Poswa. Her work has just been acquired by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and is growing in leaps and bounds.

It's a true privilege being intimately connected to the day-to-day creativity and processes of the artists I admire most.