



## Interview with Lisa Todd Designs

**Designer and artist, Lisa Todd, has been garnering attention with her unique homeware designs taking inspiration from processes and techniques used in her native South Africa. From her 'Ubuntu' collection to working alongside female African artisans, we learn more of her story - and how she will be showcasing at Peter Jones, Chelsea on Nov 1st.**

**You have a unique and distinct aesthetic combining colour, pattern and painting - what first drew you to design and how did your particular aesthetic come about?**

As a little girl I drew houses and patterns on everything including the onion skin pages of the telephone directories. After a long stay in hospital age 11, staring at pea green walls I became determined to use my passion for colour to make the world a better place! I studied art at Hornsey College of Art and completed my degree in Interior Design at Middlesex University.

Each design begins life as an original painting. This is then reinterpreted as a digital print and reproduced on products from cushions to tableware.

**Can you explain your 'paint from hand, print from technology' process? What are the advantages to this production process?**

My paintings inform the collection and then each product is developed individually, whether that involves beading by hand on to enamel mugs in Durban or printing on British velvet at Glasgow School of Arts award-winning print facility.

**You grew up in South Africa - what part of their culture/tradition have particularly informed you over the years?**

Growing up in South Africa provided the perfect tropical canvas to develop a vibrant decorative style. Both the country and of course the people and their traditional crafts have always provided a great source of inspiration for my work. My first collection was inspired by iconic African artist Esther Mahlangu and the patterns of the Ndebele people.

**You have recently created the 'Ubuntu collection' - based on the African mantra 'I am because you are' - how did you want to best express this collective thought process through your homeware?**

My award winning Ubuntu Collection was created during lockdown when we were shielding with our personal health conditions on both sides of the globe. A wonderful friend and Xhosa bead artist was unable to work so she recreated one of paintings at home in beadwork and the project began. The project has grown to include a variety of talented women bead and wire artists all over Kwazulu Natal, many of whom work with the African Art Centre, a Not for Profit organisation who teach traditional skills and economic empowerment.

**How did you play with new abstract patterns and how did the process differ from the other collections?**

The patterns were developed from a series of tropical landscape inspired paintings.

**What are the design pieces/designers that have particularly caught your eye recently?**

I am a great fan of British colourist and designer Yinka Ilori and the Portuguese artist Joann Vasconcelos with her brilliant Gateway swimming pool at Jupiter Artland in Scotland.

**You did a pop up recently at Peter Jones - what do you enjoy about the Kings Road/Chelsea area? The aesthetic and the community?**

I have long been an ardent fan of the Kings Rd. As an interior design student I remember my first interview for a Saturday job with the legendary British designer, Nina Campbell, in her beautiful flat opposite the cinema thinking what a cool place to live!

Whilst it's been a dream to be exhibiting at Peter Jones department store: it exudes style, charm and my favourite original mosaic artwork is at the Cadogan Street entrance - we will be popping up again there on 1st November with a special Christmas display.

Also another highlight was exhibiting my beaded zebra rocking horse at the fabulous Chelsea Flower Show in collaboration with Stevenson Bros.

**What would you say is the Lisa Todd 'bestseller' - what future projects can we look forward to?**

The current bestseller are my award winning organic British melamine plates followed closely by the hand beaded mugs.

Aside from the Peter Jones pop up we have many exciting things happening, including being stocked in the brilliant 'Museum of the Home', a feature in October's FT Spend It Design issue, and a growing number of international stockists.

[www.lisatodd designs.com](http://www.lisatodd designs.com)