

# An Afternoon with an Artist



**I left the city of Cape Town to meet with South African artist, Tay Dall, in her home-studio located in the coastal town of Hermanus.**

Here, where Tay Dall lives and works, is where I was greeted by the passion of the artist and where I learned about her life leading up to her successful artistic career; and the motivation and inspiration behind her ever-changing style of art.

Just sitting with her for the first few moments, I could already see that her energy was boundless, and her passion overflowing – something that is evident in her striking artworks.

After studying at Michaelis School of Fine Art, Dall left her paintbrushes behind and moved to Los Angeles in the United States to work in the film industry. After seven years in the business, Dall picked up her brushes again, inspired by the disposable culture in which she was living. "I would drive around the neighbourhood to find castaway windows and doors. If you look at it, a door frame is like a canvas. So instead of going out to buy the wood and hammering it together, I would use an old door frame and stretch canvas onto it."

Dall has always been interested in unusual mediums, and they act as an inspiration for her work, "I love interesting surfaces that have their own life, their own character – this is almost like a little spark before I begin painting."

When she began painting again, her husband and business partner, Ben, was the one that acted as a buffer between her and her clients, giving her the freedom to concentrate on her art while he handled much of the business side of things. "I do not think I would have become an artist if I had not met him." While she describes herself as having "a shockingly intense imagination", she refers to Ben as the grounded one in the relationship that holds onto her ankles so that she does not get lost in the clouds.

Dall describes her earlier works as calm and more serene, while her more recent works show expression with a lot more colour. "As I change, my work changes – I don't believe in painting for an audience, so I never re-create my works. You move on, and art is really an extension of where your mind is, for me, at that given moment when I am creating it. And if it's not that, then how much of

it is actually made-up and forced? Then it becomes inhibited."

Of her artistic process, Ben explains, "Tay is very experimental with what she wants to do. She does not sit down and think 'I am going to do this now' – she is not the type of person that contrives her art."

While Dall's artworks have been in numerous galleries around the country, much of her time is spent on commissions for businesses as well as private collectors of her work. Her art has travelled all around the world to new homes, and, in South Africa, her expressive brand of abstract art has caught the attention of numerous establishments, with the Arabella Country Estate, Fancourt Hotel and Country Club Estate, as well as Groot Constantia all displaying her creations.

As I walked through her studio, it was apparent how many facets this artist has – there were canvases bright with hues of greens, blues, and purples (cells under a microscope came to my mind when I saw this). A little way on, there sat an artwork made up of different colour masks. One thing is for sure: while nothing about her art is predictable, it is always full of passion.

For more info, visit [www.taydall.com](http://www.taydall.com).