

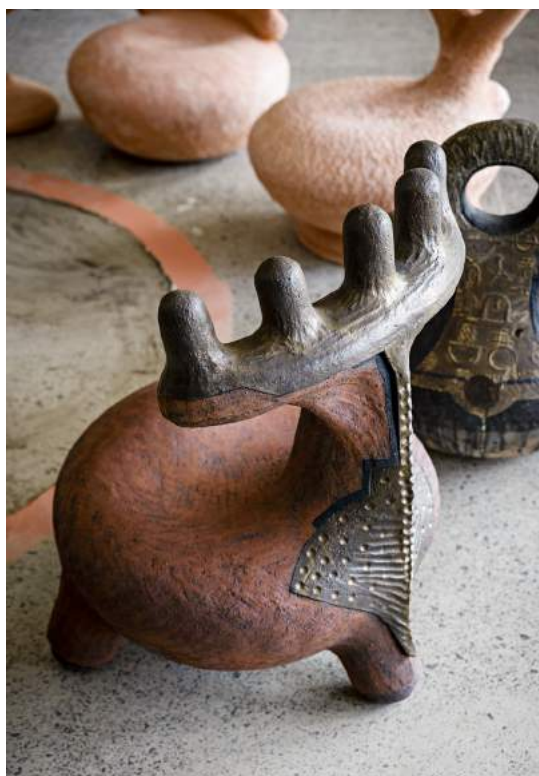


The Shape of Things

In the sculptures of South African artist Andile Dyalvane, his ancestors are always present.

by Rima Suqi

Photographs by Adriaan Louw



Clockwise from top left: Artist Andile Dyalvane in his studio; the *Umtshayelo* ("Broom") chair in terra-cotta; a stamp Dyalvane created to use on his works. The circular symbol represents the "ancestral dreamscape" where he communicates with his ancestors.



SOUTH AFRICAN ceramist Andile Dyalvane is a widely celebrated artist across the continent, but he still finds his creative inspiration from his ancestral home about 500 miles east of his studio in Cape Town.

The 42-year-old artist creates complex, dramatic stoneware pieces—vases, bowls, chairs, and sculptural objects—many with

abstract designs and tribal markings influenced by his native Xhosa culture. For "Ithongo" (Ancestral Dreamscape), his next show at Cape Town's Southern Guild gallery in December (which will then travel to New York's Friedman Benda gallery next year), he created 20 chairs with different symbols representing concepts like farmer, shaman, or the moon. The emblems came to him in "very vivid visions," Dyalvane says, and represent that which he believes his community is losing due to the influence of Western culture and migration to South Africa's urban areas. "These are messages from my ancestors," he says. "They are helping us to remember. I am using this language, these symbols to communicate in shorthand."

The first presentation of "Ithongo" will take place in Ngobozana, the Eastern

Cape village where Dyalvane was born and raised. To honor those who have inspired him, he will also leave a few of his pieces among the ruins of the nearby village from which his ancestors were forcibly removed during the apartheid era. "It's the first showing of this kind in Africa," says Trevyn McGowan, cofounder of Southern Guild. "Andile has a calling to who he is, where he comes from, and honoring his ancestors. It instills his work with incredible vibration and magnetism."

For the artist, it's about giving back. "I'm not only a child to my parents, but to the whole community," Dyalvane says. "I have to do this for my people and hope that it is going to help them remember, heal, and reinstall their dignity." *southern guild.co.za*