

Sally Arnold – artist in search of unusual exhibition space

At first glance, a design store may not seem to be the ideal exhibition space for an artist to display a retrospective, but Sally Arnold is not a typical artist. The pretty South African tells Duncan Roberts about her new show and talks about her work and life as an artist in Luxembourg.

Sally Arnold is not at all keen on the conventional gallery scene and her latest venture, at the Interieur Bauwens-Boffi Studio in Strassen promises to provide visitors with an unconventional experience. Perhaps not as unusual as her catwalk show – titled Points of Light and featuring DJ Miss Pitch – at the Schleifmillen studios where she has her own atelier, but certainly a step away from hanging paintings against the white walls of an empty gallery space.

Sally plans to transform the shop for the exhibition, this Thursday. “I am not going to move any of the items, I am going to use the bathtubs and basins to mix installation work with the hanging of paintings.” Sally met store owner Frank Bauwens when she was looking for a particular style of tap for a small house she had recently acquired in the town of Prince Albert. Named the Skuinshuis - Crooked House, due to its crooked, sun-oriented position – the house stands in what was, up until the 1950’s, a residential area for what Sally calls “brown-skinned farm workers”. Under a regulation valid until 31 December 1999, the property was not reclaimed by the descendants of former residents, so Sally acquired the property. “When I told him I was taking the taps – it was a whole suitcase full – to South Africa, I think he thought I was mad,” she says. But the encounter was the start of an acquaintance, based on an appreciation of design, which has culminated in the new show.

“It’s my first show in Luxembourg for two years. I did a big show in Venice in 2002 [L’Imaginaire Féminin in the Lido] and felt I needed a bit of a rest after that,” Sally explains. Venice holds a special significance for Sally – it was there, in 1993, that she got what is probably her big break when she became involved in the Biennial – the first time South African



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In the studio - Sally Arnold with some of her works

artists were really welcomed back into the international community. “Artists like Kendal Geers and William Kentridge real-

ly made a big splash and everyone was talking about that show,” she says, not without a certain amount of pride. But in