



# art and soul

*A Cape Town film production company uses art and design to create an enviable work-life balance*

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Most of us – art and design aficionados included – spend a huge chunk of our lives working in an uninspiring office setting. Not, however, if you are lucky enough to be part of the small team that make up Cape Town's Monkey Films.

'Film is a visual medium,' says owner Clare van Zyl of her production company, which creates commercials, music promos, documentaries, and film and video-art installations. 'An environment filled with beautiful, affecting things to look at helps the people who work here appreciate what they are trying to make.' And to Clare these beautiful, affecting things are part of her own extensive collection of contemporary artworks. Here a Claudette Schreuders print shares company with lights and a sculpture by Brett Murray, while a Lisa Brice or a Joachim Schönfeldt piece may be the first thing you see when you look up from your computer.



# NEW WORK

The office wasn't always like this. Five years ago it was the 'brutally compartmentalised' credit-card division of a local bank, with vinyl-tiled floors and poor lighting. But Clare saw the potential of the 1951 former factory, and was persuaded to buy it when she opened the original steel windows and none of them rattled in Cape Town's notorious southeaster! Together with architects Mark Thomas and Jane Visser, she set about opening it up to the expansive views of Table Mountain and creating a 'friendly' environment for her small staff.

'I wanted to copy the 1950s detailing of the Mid-Century Modern furniture I love,' says Clare, who commissioned expert cabinetmaker Paul Chames to handcraft the classic-lined wooden tables with tapered legs that now serve as desks. In communal areas low-slung sofas with scatter cushions in striking Zambian fabrics invite less formal, spur-of-the-moment discussions. The kitchen area is dominated by a large wooden dining table surrounded by Jasper Morrison's brightly coloured Air Chairs. 'We always sit around the table and have lunch together,' adds Clare. Just like you would at home. ☺

**Monkey Films, [monkeyfilms.co.za](http://monkeyfilms.co.za)**

**THIS PAGE** Monkey Films' staffers get to work surrounded by artworks like Ed Young's 'I love New Work', part of a series he made for Art Basel Miami Beach. **OPPOSITE** Work by top South African contemporary artists such as Lisa Brice, Brett Murray, Joachim Schönfeldt and Sue Williamson sit alongside those by international artists such as Rankin, Chris Ofili and Grayson Perry.



