

Former Miss SA opens new gallery space in Cape Town

 By [Ruth Cooper](#)

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Sandy de Bruin, former owner of Country Living SA and winner of Miss South Africa in 1980, has recently turned her attention to the opening of [No. 5 On Hudson](#), a new art gallery in Cape Town. Drawing on themes such as 'women and art', the carefully curated space aims to focus on the empowerment and upliftment of female artists in South Africa.



We got in touch with Sandy to chat career highlights, women in the arts, and beauty pageants.

How did the opening of No. 5 On Hudson come about?

The opening of No. 5 on Hudson Art Galley came about while I was living in London and I developed an interest in the local and European art scene. Also having the time to start painting myself and attending art lessons stimulated my creative side, and then back in South Africa, enjoying the local representation of our artist community.

What have been some of your career highlights?

My career highlights have been the winning of the Miss South Africa Crown in 1980, which led me on to model internationally, and to work in the world of fashion, events, and marketing. I became a fashion promotor for Truworths for three years, putting together and taking fashion shows around the country.

I then had an event and image company called Image Incorporated that assisted women in business to market and upgrade their images. I started a decorating business called Lemon Tree Cottage in the Keith Kirsten Nurseries, specialising in high-end home accessories.

I established Country Living South Africa, which grew into a well-known recognised brand, importing furniture and home accessories and franchising the stores. I also started Country Living Café, which was a successful stylish coffee shop concept as an addition to Country Living. Country Living received extensive media coverage and graced many décor magazine covers.

I left SA to live in London and live partially in Cape Town now and have since opened No. 5 On Hudson.



■ ***How has winning Miss South Africa influenced your life's direction?***

Winning the Miss South Africa title gave me an enormous amount of life exposure and opportunities that I otherwise would never have had. I learned public speaking, confidence, and general knowledge, it opened so many doors, so many opportunities and networks, and gave me a platform to promote my endeavours and I met a huge amount of incredible people through my journey. My experiences taught me valuable life lessons and I'm grateful for the opportunities that I've had as a result.

■ ***What are your thoughts on these sort of beauty pageants and competitions? In an age where we are trying to celebrate women from all walks of life, backgrounds, age, etc. is the beauty pageant concept still not too narrow in its scope on who can enter and how it's judged?***

The pageant, while still focused on the surface idea of beauty, does serve a purpose to draw attention to issues such as education and charities. It also sets a benchmark which may be unattainable to many young women, but Miss SA can be a role model to girls leading them in areas by example. So, a lot of responsibility lies with the winner to make sure her message is one of upliftment. It is judged not only on looks, but also intelligence, personality, and ability to carry the crown in a way as described above.

■ ***What women artists are you most excited about currently?***

There are too many amazing female artists to single out one. To be a successful artist, one must be incredibly disciplined, hardworking, and self-motivated.



▀ ***What does Women's Month mean to you?***

Women's Month is an opportunity to celebrate women across all divides and the amazing contribution they make to society. It is also an opportunity to draw attention to the plight of underprivileged, impoverished, and abused women and the discrimination of women in society.

▀ ***How would you like to see the support of women in the arts progress?***

Women in the arts need to have the same recognition as their male counterparts and receive the same financial remuneration and have their contribution to the arts recognised.

No. 5 on Hudson is located on 5 Hudson Street, De Waterkant in Cape Town. The gallery is open from 9am-5pm Mondays to Fridays and 9am-1pm on Saturdays.

ABOUT RUTH COOPER

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