

The Tumbleweed Lady

I worked for the first lady of design and decor in South Africa for 15 years at her flagship store in Hyde Park shopping centre. No design school or university course could have taught me more.

Helen introduced the duvet, the futon, the Flokati rug and of course the Marimekko fabric range to South Africa. The works of several successful artists were displayed and sold through Helen's shops. Carol Boyes and Barbara Jackson were just two such artists who caught her eye.

As an English lecturer at WITS, but an astute potter in her own right, she started by selling her wares outside Greatermans. She attracted so many customers that Greatermans offered her space within the shop. Hence the inception of the Helen de Leeuw brand to this country.

Her trademark design, the tumbleweed, appeared on her brown wrapping paper, her paper bags and of course on her own fabrics.

Dear Helen, heart of gold and a mother to so many aspiring artists and decorators, thank you for all that you have taught me and South Africa. May you rest in peace. God bless.

Miki Spangenberg