
A woman with short brown hair, wearing a white button-down shirt and a red skirt, stands in a room filled with taxidermy. She is smiling and leaning on a white shelf. The shelves are filled with various rabbits of different colors and sizes, including white, brown, and grey. Some are sitting, some are standing. The background shows more shelves with more rabbits.

'Seeing the enjoyment people get from my hares is the best bonus ever'

CAROL SLABOLEPSZY, 56

A woman with dark curly hair and glasses, wearing a white short-sleeved blouse with a large bow at the waist, stands in a cluttered vintage jewelry store. She is smiling slightly. The store is filled with various pieces of jewelry, including necklaces, earrings, and bracelets, displayed on shelves and in glass cases. The lighting is warm and focused on the jewelry.

'When you're surrounded by beautiful vintage items every day, it's a temptation not to buy them all yourself'

TERRY MULLINS, 31



My passion for sculpture has turned into a business

CAROL SLABOLEPSZY, 56, makes and sells life-size sculptures of hares through her company, My Hares and Graces. She's married to Paul and lives in Linden. They have three grown-up children.

THE IDEA I discovered my love for sculpting while I was studying B.Tech (Fine Arts) at Wits Technikon. I honed my skills at art school, but instead of pursuing sculpture as a career, I began working in marketing. About a year ago, I started sculpting again and one of my first projects was a life-sized hare made from clay – there's something so enchanting, almost mythological, about the creatures. I was so happy with the final product that I took a few hares to a shop in Melville and, with the owner's permission, positioned them near the door. I spent the next few hours watching passers-by to gauge their reaction to the display. So many people commented on how lovely the hares were, or bent down to pick them up, that I knew there'd be a market for me to sell them.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT I spent several months learning how to make the silicone moulds, which have a fibreglass resin casing, and produced more hares. I then approached Rhoda and Sascha, who own Garden Bleu in Greenside, and they fell in love with the hares and agreed to buy a few to sell in their shop. Once those sold, I chatted to other shop owners and secured sales at Country Company in the Midlands and Collaro Designs in Pretoria.

WHERE I AM NOW I create my hares from my home studio and I've employed someone to help me. It takes me about a week to make each hare as they're hand-cast and then meticulously finished by hand – pigments and metal powders

give them a distinctive appearance. They all have their own unique characters and I love creating fabulously quirky names for them, like 'The Whistleblow-Hare', which is covered in *Mail & Guardian* newspaper clippings. The hares are entirely weatherproof and are the perfect addition to any garden. I'm thrilled that they're now selling further afield, in Somerset West and Cape St. Francis, and I encourage the hare owners to take photos of them in their new environment and then e-mail the photo to me, together with their location, so I can upload it to my Facebook page. At the moment, I'm putting most of the money I make from sales back into buying materials, marketing and improving on my website, but every time I sell a hare, a donation is made to the Endangered Wildlife Trust for the conservation of the Riverine Rabbit.

GLITCHES Moulding and sculpting is a very time-consuming process, so I can't make as many hares as I'd like to.

MY TIP I won't sell my products on consignment. I believe retailers will invest in a good product if they can see it will bring good returns for them.

BUSINESS IN FIGURES

LAUNCHED 2012
START-UP COSTS R20 000 for moulds and equipment
TURNOVER Breaking even
TRAINING R6 000
WEBSITE R5 000
KITTING OUT MY STUDIO R9 000
myharesandgraces.co.za

I tapped into the growing demand for vintage items

TERRY MULLINS, 31, lives in Crawford, Cape Town, and owns a vintage store, Glitterati Vintage, in The Long Street Antique Arcade.

THE IDEA After working in the hotel industry as a waitress and housekeeper, I needed a change. When I met Michelle Papen, who owned Glitterati Vintage – a store in The Long Street Antique Arcade that stocked a beautiful range of vintage items – I took a chance and asked if I could work for her. I loved the idea of being surrounded by pretty jewellery, handbags and clothing, and was thrilled when she hired me as her assistant. I've been collecting suitcases, clothing and other vintage items for years, so I felt very at home in the store. I really enjoyed my job and when, about seven years ago, Michelle told me she wanted to leave Glitterati Vintage to pursue other interests, I immediately asked her if I could take over the shop.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT Although there were goods in the store, I soon needed to re-stock. To keep costs down at first, I dipped into my personal collection of vintage finds, then sourced items from auctions, antique shops and flea markets.

BREAKTHROUGH MOMENT The shop was originally based in quite a small space,

