

THE OSiC CERAMIC MURAL

Inside the recently opened OSiC: Oppenheimer Science and Innovation Centre, there is the most wonderful ceramic mosaic by ceramic artist Jacqui van Zyl from SeedPod Studio. We asked her to provide some insight into her process and the evolution of this wonderful piece of art.

I first started working with clay about 15 years ago, it was a great creative outlet for me as I pursued a corporate IT career. The versatility of clay, allows you to be a sculpturer, potter, painter and general 'play dough' artist. From tiles, to bowls, jugs and vases there is just so much that you can make ... from the functional to the purely artistic it gives you a large field of play.

The SeedPod Studio was borne through my passion for all things handmade, from ceramics to decoupage, paper craft, beadwork and of course mosaic. Known to often combine these crafts and create 'mixed-media' type works it made sense to start combining the medium of clay with mosaic.

The Ridge project began with an image - brought to us by Jilly Lester, a parent at the school, of a man who was 'created' out of a DNA helix. This was a great starting point as we considered exactly what it would be like for the students to be in the new science lab; young minds experimenting with formula's and raw materials to create new discoveries, young minds investigating what the world is made of; from the molecules that make us up, to the planets in the solar system and then of course not forgetting the natural world too. We needed to combine all these elements together.

With all commission work you need to look carefully at the space where it will be erected, not only the physical dimension and shape of where it will ultimately be, but also the content of the mosaic in the context it will be viewed in. Being for a boys preparatory school we thought it would be great for the work to be not only a great statement piece for the entrance but a discussion point between the students and in fact all that view it. We chose what we thought were key and recognizable elements from nature and science, the challenge was to get these elements to work together to tell a visual story of science and life.

At the SeedPod we have a really talented team of people who all worked on the project - from the initial designs and drawings, making of the clay pieces, to the painting, glazing and mosaicing elements - this has been a really exciting project to work on. We deliberated on shapes, colour and final assembly of what would go where and how it would all work together. The final result was a unique statement piece for the school that we hope will encourage and engage the learners and excite minds, young and old, to the wonders of science and our natural world.

Special thanks go to Jilly Lester who had the vision for this project and who helped to make sure the installation was a success.

Jacqui van Zyl
Ceramic Artist



