



TANIA BABB

Voluptuous and rounded, dreamy and ethereal, self-possessed and aloof. Tania Babb's famous fat ladies lean against tables, or absentmindedly drape snakes around their necks in her Sandy Bay home. Lovingly crafted out of clay and then carefully painted, each one is unique - except perhaps, for the generosity of their thighs. Tania's unusual attraction to fat ladies evolved from her love of shape. and reflects a certain wry sense of humour. "they fill volume and space ... there's also a certain comical appeal to them. I think. They're women with vooma.' Recently these women proved their universal appeal when they were noticed by an agent who saw her work in a gallery in Cape Town (permanently exhibited at three venues in the

city) and asked Tania if she'd be interested in having an agent in the UK.

She was. She is. And she's doing very well, thank you. In March '92. her statues will be exhibited at the Country Living Magazine Fair in London. Tania is matter-of-fact about her remarkable talent. 'I'm lucky.' she says. 'that my work is commercial. It's really not something I wrench out of my gut and puke out on to the floor.'

She started off studying Fine Art at UCT but changed to graphics at the Ruth Prowse School of Art. 'Art school is an ideal,' she says. "The real world is different. There's no really secure creative environment - it's all business. and business is money. Creativity takes second place.' 'This realisation is what made her decide to leave advertising, where she had been safely ensconced as a junior artist for three years. 'There must be good experiences in advertising, but I didn't have any,' she notes. She decided that the time had come to pursue what really interested her: her own art. Now she works in a gallery two days a week and as a hostess at a restaurant because 'when you're alone all the time and you work from home you begin to forget to brush your hair and you shlep around in old Tracksuit pants and all that. Working in the restaurant keeps me on my toes, and being in the gallery is interesting because I'm in a position to see what people are buying. it's good to get out there and be with people again. It sorts you out.

Tania is sorted out. She doesn't drink or smoke. She goes to bed early and can be found with her equally healthy dogs. Sebastian and David on the beach at 5am. Her immediate goals are to finish the latest consignment for the UK and to build a bathtub in her mossy courtyard. Languishing in warm water overlooking the ocean will probably only add to her serenity, and to her status as one of the most angst-free artists in the country.

Suzv Brokensha
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