

S O U T H A F R I C A N

GARDEN & HOME

Plus

Art that's
right for you

Sensory
treats
at Susu
Bubble Tea

Inside an
indigenous
aloe garden

VIVID VEGGIE
BOUNTIES

P.82

Colour
UNBOXED

DEFY THE GLOOM

INTERSPECIFIC CLIVIAS | CREATE A GEOMETRIC ARTWORK

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Susu Lovely!

The Susu Bubble Tea Cafe recently opened its doors in Green Point and we were more than ready to pop by and explore their world of colour

BY YASHNA BALWANTH



← Fabric Feels

The furniture was all custom built for the space, with Giraffe Designs handling the **fabric for the upholstered furniture**, Imaterial Textile Printers for the **grid fabric** that was custom designed and Hertext being the go-to for the remaining fabric.

Make an Entrance →

The curved wall installed at the first entrance guides the customers directly to the counter for their orders and payment.



Bubblin' Under

A concept kiosk that quickly spread its wings into a fully-fledged store is just the beginning for the rebranded Momo, operating under the new identity of Susu Bubble Tea. Owners Henry Francisco Castillo Kanashiro and Samuel Boaz are the brains behind bringing authentic Taiwanese bubble tea to our South African shores back in 2018. Little did they realise they'd stumbled across a novel idea that we as South Africans fell in love with from the first flavour to the last!

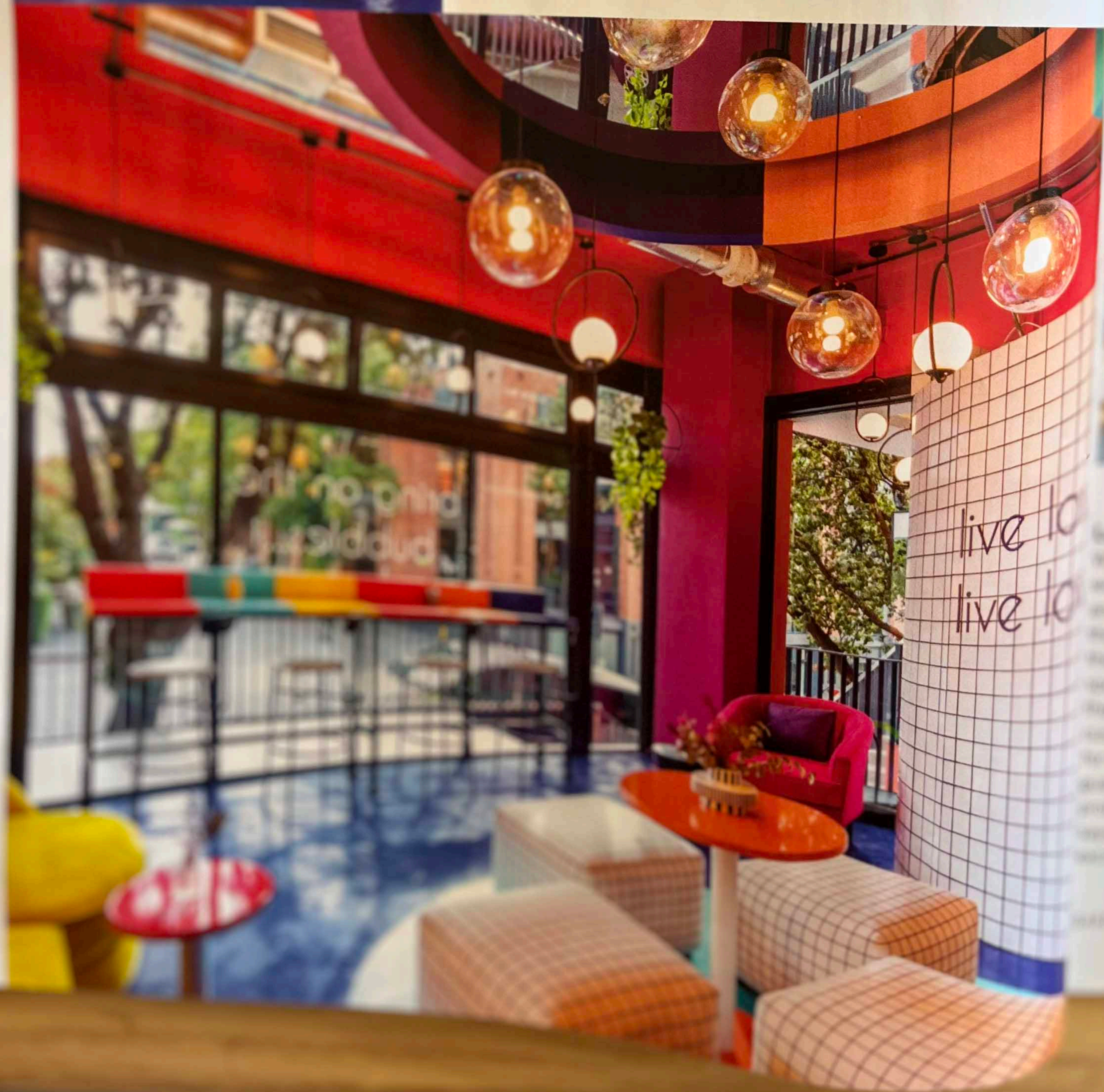
Mel Cook, founder and interior designer of Cooked Studio worked with the team on their first kiosk in Canal Walk back in 2018, so it was a no-brainer that she was the go-to when it came to designing the concept store for Susu. Mel's brief for the store was simple: 'Go all out,' and boy did she do just that. The trust that Sam and Henry had in her made the project that much more fun. 'They trusted that I'll figure it out,' says Mel, 'and them having that sense of faith in me is what made the project probably one of my favourite projects I've worked on – in terms of the experience and being able to work so freely with what I could create.'

Mellow Yellow

The bud vases around the store are all from The Space, with the address Banana Booth from the team at Render.

Pops of Greenery

While real plants are to have, sometimes they aren't the most practical for a store so all the plants were artificial. The artificial plants all done by NAAK.



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Mel Cook's Tips For The Books

Things to consider when designing your very own shop space

Flow

There are a few questions you should ask yourself, such as if the pay points are easily accessible and if the products or services are well promoted. Designing the floor layout will tie in with how the customer engages with the space.

Materials

Carefully choose the materials that will treat you well over time. Good materials may be a bit more pricey in the beginning, but will serve you well for a longer period.

Trends

While trends are great for the time being, their expiry date is a lot quicker than we expect. Be mindful of which trends you'd like to use in your space to avoid it ageing quicker than you would like it to.

Quality

This point cannot be stressed enough. Quality should never be compromised because beautifully finished spaces speak about how you see your brand. Rather take your time to invest in great quality than rush to have it finished.

Let's Play

While Mel isn't exactly a minimalist (in her own words), she still kept the space highly functional and full of fun. 'I love seeing people integrate into the space. Seeing people enjoy the space is one of the most rewarding feelings,' mentions Mel when speaking about designing in general. For Susu, the inclusion of a seesaw and swing allows the customers to engage with the space while waiting for their tea. 'Witnessing how people let their guard down and bring out their inner child is probably what I love most about this space,' says Mel. The interactive elements not only excite the eye, but allow you to fully immerse

yourself in the experience that Mel and her team have created.

Colour me Crazy

'When I started this project, I asked the client if I could make it loud, could I go crazy, and they gave me all the freedom I could've wanted. Having such an open brief can be a bit daunting at times, but with a little refined curiosity, we managed to figure it out in the end,' says Mel when she thinks back to the beginning of Susu. Her main inspiration for the heavily coloured and busy space came from Japanese and Asian influences, and their fearlessness to trust in colour. The concept of play



challenges. From falling bananas to the installation of a ceiling mirror, Mel certainly pushed the boundaries on what this space could do. 'The ceiling mirror was a real challenge and a very fun concept. The seamless transition from the actual space into the mirror space was achieved with clever lighting techniques. We also took the light fitting covers off so there is a continuous light from globe to globe when you look at the mirror, almost creating a portal into a whole other world,' says Mel when asked about the difficulties through the project.

Another area that required a bit more research was the Feng Shui element, which had to be considered, especially from a financial perspective. With Feng Shui, it is always about balance and providing a calm and easy-flowing space by how the items and floor space are planned. With the shop having two entrances, it was important for the customer to clearly be guided, and hence the installation of the curved wall at the first entrance aids the customer to the counter. Mel and her team managed to complete this project within just a few months regardless of all the challenges and ups and downs they seemed to face. And with the support they have received from the locals, Susu Bubble Tea has definitely made its mark here in Cape Town.

cookedstudio.com

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Seeing people enjoy the space is one of the most rewarding feelings

came about and anime characters were also a big influence as she began designing Susu's own little character for the store. Conceptualising what it would be like to become the character and create an entire world for the Susu mascot was only the beginning of how the colourful space came about.

With multiple moodboards and Mel's no restraint on colour choice, the brighter the better was the go-to for this space. 'We wanted to create a space that was focused on many details, not forgetting that it should look great from every single angle. Every spot in the store should be Instagram worthy and it would also help not congregate the customers to just one spot,' mentions Mel on fulfilling an Instagram- and Tiktok-worthy space. 'We wanted each corner to tell a story and to make it an experience throughout.'

Finding the Flow

In doing so, the space was not without its own set of

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← Seesaw Surprise

Creating interactive elements within the shop help immerse the customer into the experience and to simply enjoy the space.

↓ Colour Impact

From the graphics on the wall to the brightly colored sofas, there is no dull area wherever you look. Every corner is totally Instagram worthy, for sure.



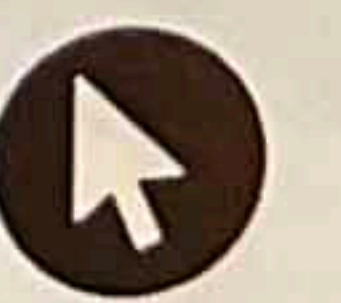
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