

# Serious play

Re-interpreting the world is easy when you have clay, papier mâché and great globs of talent.

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*IN MOULDING, SHAPING AND DETAILING THE MEMORIES* of youth, sculptural artist Erica van Zon carefully crafts abstract representations of the world around her. The result? Thoughtful, delightful and occasionally awkward objects and installations.

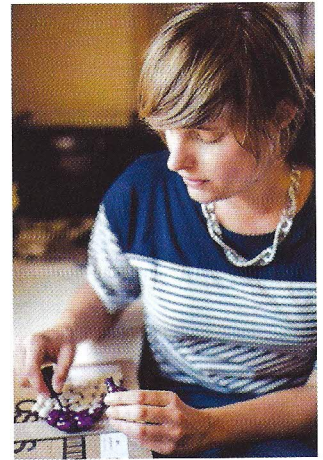
Recognisable for her unique art practices which pull you in with playfulness and a sense of nostalgia, Erica has quickly made a name for herself in the art world, both here and internationally.

Challenged by bringing to life concepts that are hard to understand, Erica's work often pays homage to popular culture and to her New Zealand upbringing. "My sculptures are re-makes, fakes and abstract representations of things in the world around me," she says. "I take inspiration from literature, film, TV, other artworks, my past and my daily life. I notice these objects, let them sit with me for a while, and then have an overwhelming urge to re-make and re-mix them with my own aesthetics and knowledge."

Bright, bold and brash, Erica's new body of work is inspired by a collection of threads from memories of her early home life and objects, and moments from books she has been reading. This collision of ideas, thoughts and concepts is woven together into an assortment of objects that are sometimes highly constructed and sometimes wonky and clumsy.

The humorous and astute use of mundane objects is easily recognisable and endearing. "I've been working with the idea of cognitive dissonance or distancing – how you imagine the world that you are reading, the disappointment when the world is created by someone else. I enjoy the slippage between reality and my clumsy way of making things. I love humour in art."

Expanding her material repertoire from papier mâché and clay and adding sculpey, leather and wax, there are more amusing musings on our shared visual culture to come. [ericavanzon.com](http://ericavanzon.com)



**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT** *Swimming Pool Rug* (2012), and *The Wash Rug* (2013), both canvas, wool and cotton. Erica's workbook with *Fake Fool's Gold* and *Doughnut* (2014), clay and acrylic. Having waited for the sculpey to harden, the painting process begins, carefully applying layers to each individual piece. *Fake Fool's Gold* (2013), clay, gold and silver leaf. **OPPOSITE** Erica in her Wellington rooftop studio.