

SUN PEOPLE

No more masking tape for Louis

By Karen Paul

THE days for sticking up his paintings with masking tape outside chic art galleries are over for the now renowned artist Louis Jansen van Vuuren.

That's because Louis, who once made it through each day on a diet of second-hand baguettes in Paris, is now opening up his own gallery above his home in Tamboerskloof which he will open with an exhibition of his paintings, ceramics and furniture on December 6.

The first thing that struck me when I entered his remarkable home is his fascination with the colour blue. He agrees

that it is very magical to him.

"Blue is a very difficult colour to work with. The colour seeps through other colours - it is rather like dye. I like the challenge of painting blues on blues to make it work. My passion for blue is not superficial, it runs through my veins. Proof of this is my twelve year old daughter - her name is Blou!"

Louis, who is also a senior lecturer in graphic design and illustration at Michaelis at UCT, started painting in the early '60s after graduating with a BA

Hons at Stellenbosch University. His work has been exhibited regularly since 1966 throughout South Africa in many major, private, public and corporate collections.

When times were bad during one of his spells in Paris, Louis went to the Blondelle, a really famous chic gallery, "where you virtually had to make an appointment to get inside.

"I stuck my paintings on the outside wall of the gallery with masking tape. People said to me, 'What's your stuff doing out here?'

It should be inside!"

The forthcoming exhibition presents a series of visions through the interior to the outside world, often looking through a window or a door onto something else.

It portrays his visual experience of Paris, Venice, Rome, Cairo, Luxor, Alexandria, Fez and Marakesh, with the 'tour' ending up in Cape Town.

An unusual and striking feature of Louis' work is the way he combines contrasting perspectives and materials within one piece of work - for example the use of gilt and mudcloth

in a chair from Mali. Another interesting idea is the use of the exhibits themselves - the actual chairs and vases - as subject matter in the paintings and the linking of the different artworks by a unifying pattern or design.

Louis' exhibition is taking place on Monday, December 6 until 11 from 10 am until 4 pm or by appointment.

At the end of our "lekker chat" I asked him for confirmation of the spelling of 'Marakesh'.

"I can do it for you in visuals", he joked, "but not so well in words!"

