



TAKING IT ALL IN: Yilmaz Erd visited the Daily Dispatch recently. Picture: THEO JEPHTHA

German walker discovers heartbeat of Africa one step at a time

BOMIKAZI MDIYA

Yilmaz Erd's exploration of Africa on foot began in January at the continent's most southerly point at Cape Agulhas, and he hopes to reach Tunisia in 2½ years.

Erd, 35, who has Kurdish roots, hails from Hanover, Germany. He is documenting and capturing the beauty of the continent as he walks. This week he passed through East London.

"I started walking early this year, and the main reason is to capture Africa's beauty and explore its cultures. I have realised that Africa is the most misunderstood continent.

"Back in my home country there is a misconception that Africa is all about tribes, is an undeveloped continent and is not technologically advanced.

"The goal is to walk, document, take pictures and videos,

and show a side of Africa that is not known, and to interact with locals I come across.

"I start my day at sunrise and conclude it at 3pm so that I can find a camp spot and settle for the night. For me, the best way of travelling is through walking to get first-hand experience of the people.

"I chose the most southerly point to the northernmost point — Cape Ben Sakka in Tunisia — to see the continent's diversity and also get an idea of the direct effect of climate change."

His route from SA will take him through Botswana and then Zimbabwe.

Erd relies on dry food, and noodles and nuts are among his favourite ingredients. It took him a year to save up the money to fund his walk, he said.

"So far the main highlight for me is the hospitality from South Africans I have met. They are

incredible and very supportive.

"Some have tried to give me lifts, and others offer me water, food or a place to spend the night."

Despite enjoying the journey thus far, he has had his challenges.

In Chalumna, East London, the tide took him while he was crossing the river.

"I walked into the river with my bag wrapped in plastic and a stick in my other hand to guide my steps in the water.

"But in the middle of the river I could not touch the river floor with the stick for the next step.

"I slipped and fell into the water and, as I was about to surface, the current hit me," Erd said.

"I really struggled to swim as everything was heavy with water, and I had my stick in one hand and the bag in the other, but eventually I was able to escape."

Pool contractor defends himself against claims of shoddy workmanship

Suppliers were to blame for his inability to complete jobs, says Coetzee

BOMIKAZI MDIYA

An East London-based pool contractor accused of shortchanging several of his clients reached out to the Dispatch this week to respond to the allegations levelled against him in Weekend Dispatch, dated 11 March.

On Monday Andre Coetzee visited the paper's offices after he had not responded to questions posed to him at the time the original story was being written.

In his defence, he said the work that he had

done on the pool projects was worth what he charged.

Although his website still reflects that he trades under the name Splashcuzzi Pools, explaining why a customer's proof of payment reflected a different name, he said he now trades under Poseidon Pools.

"I opened Poseidon Pools in 2016, and closed down Splashcuzzi pools, after 17 years of trading under that company, due to the recession and junk status."

Confronted by the numerous complaints of incompetence, with additional families having come forward after the story appeared in print, he said suppliers were to blame for his inability to complete the jobs on time as he

had delays with getting the materials needed.

"The way I work is that a client makes a payment before each and every step towards the completion of their pool.

"If they cannot pay me before proceeding to the next step, then I cannot carry on with the job.

"Those who complained about my services know that I work like this.

"This was a choice I took four years ago, and it's how I render services after I had completed a pool project and was not compensated."

He said one of his clients went on social media to say she was not pleased with his ser-

vices.

"The posts on Facebook led to my company missing out on the opportunity of an R80,000 pool project after the client saw the posts earlier this year."

He said last week a client chased his builder off their property when he had wanted to resume work.

The contractor showed the Dispatch a sample of a wall built by his builder, not of the construction of a pool.

Some of Coetzee's clients have accused him of being rude, arrogant and dishonest, but he disputes that.

In last week's Dispatch a homeowner in Vincent was reported as saying the contractor had started building a pool for the family in January, promising to complete the job in about six weeks.

"The pool project started in January and it was such a disaster ... I had to pay a third party to tear it down after paying him R95,000."

He said before the construction took place, the contractor had met with an engineer and architect to show him how the homeowner had wanted the pool to be constructed.

Talking to the Dispatch last week, the engineer, who did not want to be named, who was reported to be the brains behind the dream pool and who was hired to oversee the contractor's work, said: "After excavation had taken place, the contractor presented himself as a person who had an idea of what was expected of him.

"His workmanship was poor, despite the instructions I had given him.

"Looking at that project in isolation he was not able to deliver to the client's expectations."



SORRY STATE: An incomplete splash pool of one of Andre Coetzee's former clients. Picture SUPPLIED

DailyDispatch PUBLIC HOLIDAY ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINES

ADVERTISING DEADLINES FOR ISSUE MONDAY, 20 TH MARCH 2023	
Display:	Thursday 16th March 2023 at 15:00
Classified Display:	Friday 17th March 2023 at 10:00
Classified Smalls:	Friday 17th March 2023 at 12:00
NO PUBLICATION - TUESDAY 21 ST MARCH 2023	
ADVERTISING DEADLINES FOR ISSUE WEDNESDAY, 22 ND MARCH 2023	
Retail Display:	Friday 17th March 2023 at 12:00
Classified Display:	Monday 20th March 2023 at 10:00
Classified Smalls:	Monday 20th March 2023 at 12:00
ADVERTISING DEADLINES FOR ISSUE THURSDAY, 23 RD MARCH 2023	
Retail Display:	Monday 20th March 2023 at 12:00
Classified Display:	Wednesday 22nd March 2023 at 10:00
Classified Smalls:	Wednesday 22nd March 2023 at 12:00