

Heineken invests in African creativity

LAGOS, Nigeria - Global beer brand, Heineken has unveiled its first Africa inspired fashion collection co-created with talented African designers at Lagos Fashion and Design week as part of its 'Open Design Explorations', a global co-creation programme that connects emerging creatives and gives them a platform to showcase their talent.



In collaboration with Africa's hottest emerging design talent, Lulu Mutuli and Azra Walji, Heineken launched its first-ever African fashion collection, unveiled on the catwalk of the closing show at Lagos Fashion and Design Week on Saturday, 28 October 2017.

The Heineken Africa Inspired Collection is a fusion of the two designers' concepts and is the first of many design apprenticeships that the brand will roll out across the world, going next to Asia.

The *Africa Inspired Fashion Challenge* is Heineken's first design initiative in the region extending the brand's commitment to design and innovation by enriching the consumer experience in bars and at events, while celebrating the richness of the East African design

culture.

The project seeks to generate a rich textile print and fashion forward range for the Heineken Collection; a process that will see Heineken co-creating with emerging creative talents and the brand's partner design studio in Amsterdam.

Ten shortlisted finalists benefited from a three days textile and design workshop in Nairobi in September, led by the Global Heineken design director Mark van Iterson and his design team, in close collaboration with Amsterdam based fashion design house, LEW.

Heineken sought to open the world of fashion to upcoming East African talented designers through an exciting "open innovation" challenge that invites designers from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania to become part of a creative journey to collaborate on a unique Heineken fashion collection, truly Africa inspired.

Heineken ambassadors



After spending a week in Amsterdam developing their designs at top Dutch Fashion House, LEW, Mutulo and Walji will go on to benefit from a year-long programme of coaching from the designers, known for eye-catching print design and innovative corporate fashion. The designs will be produced at scale across Africa to be worn by Heineken ambassadors throughout Nigeria, East Africa and beyond.

One of the first global brands to invest in Lagos Fashion and Design Week, Heineken has been a headline sponsor for the past two years as it emerges as one the most important events in the fashion calendar for supporting new talent and inspiring Nigerian and African consumers.

Lulu Mutuli, 24, whose work gives traditional African apparel a futuristic edge, has worked in top fashion houses in New York including RHIE and OMONDI. She said, "My designs took inspiration from the role African fashion has played in the culture of my country. Combining this rich heritage with the progressive character of the Heineken brand was a challenge I couldn't resist. I used the bold Heineken colour palette, but I added a grey tone and used technical orientated patterns for a modern twist. The asymmetric shapes you can see were a way of incorporating practical elements whilst creating striking and stylish silhouettes."

Azra Walji, 27, is known for her feminine shapes and African inspired elegance, reflected in her winning designs with Heineken. She said, “I am so grateful to Heineken. Sharing my work at Lagos Fashion at Design Week is a career-defining opportunity. I really enjoyed playing with the bold red and green colours – they are so iconic to the brand but also synonymous with the vibrancy of Africa. My designs are inspired by traditional African apparel but with a twist – I love the modern femininity of the trousers and short dresses.”

Empowering talent



Mark van Iterson, director global Heineken design said, “Identifying and empowering talent remains a critical part of our global agenda. We are constantly seeking new co-creation opportunities, to connect with young emerging designers and give them a global stage to showcase their talent, so we are delighted that this initiative has put a spotlight on such talent.

“Nigeria is a growing hub for creativity and commerce and Lagos Fashion and Design Week is helping to influence and define the global fashion landscape. Heineken in Nigeria was one of the first global brands to invest in this vibrant event, seeing the opportunity to support new industry talent with real experience and a global stage. We look forward to extending the programme to other key markets next year.”

The new Heineken African Inspired Collection with Mutuli and Walji launched in style at Heineken Lagos Fashion and Design Week, with items from the collection displayed in style on the runway. After the reveal, award-winning music star, Tiwa Savage, of Jay-Z's label Roc Nation, took to the stage to perform international hits including ‘African Waist’ and ‘All Over’ live for a star-studded line up of guests as award-winning flair bartender Tom Dyer served cocktails during the event.

Lagos Fashion and Design Week 2017 is a multiday fashion extravaganza at the Eko Atlantic, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria, where global designers including Maki Oh (whose fans include Michelle Obama and Beyoncé) take centre stage to celebrate African fashion and culture.

The judges for Heineken's Africa Inspired Fashion challenge in Nairobi which brought Mutuli and Walji to Lagos, included fashion powerhouse and founder of the Lagos Fashion and Design Week Omoyemi Akerele, top Nigerian fashion designer Gloria Wavunno and Tanzanian stylist Rio Paul.