

Ackermans extends its body positive 'I am me' campaign with nude colour lingerie collection

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Following the success of its star-studded Valentine's lingerie campaign which featured the likes of Busiswa Gqulu and Pearl Modiadie, Ackermans is once again shaking up the country with its latest nude colour lingerie campaign; a natural progression of the retailer's "I Am Me" (#iamme) movement.

Produced in conjunction with the retailer's lead creative agency 99c, what sets this latest campaign apart is that it stars eight women from different walks of life; women who are not celebrities or who fit the mould of the professional model.

Says Shameema Maloon, Advertising Specialist at Ackermans, "#iamme said to the nation that rather than hide or grudgingly accept your flaws, these so-called 'imperfections' are what make you unique." The response to #iamme from women across the country was so overwhelmingly positive, that Ackermans decided to involve some of these women in its next lingerie campaign.

A call for women to feature in the next campaign was shared nationwide via #iamme's celebrity spokeswomen, and the country responded. Eight ladies were ultimately chosen to appear in Ackermans nude colour lingerie campaign: Mahlatse Machete, Dineo Ramodike, Samukelisiwe Mfuphi, Sibongile Mangena, Sive Nqonji, Sizah Busane, Deirdre Pasquallie and Ithereng Morulane.

"This time round the focus is on our nude colour lingerie collection, which is available in a wide range of shades to suit different skin tones, and in an extended range of sizes and styles. We felt that the simplicity of this collection highlighted our models' natural beauty, explains Maloon. "It is also one of our most popular lingerie lines, as it offers customers comfort, choice, functionality and quality, at an affordable price."

As with the previous celebrity-driven campaign, the models are beautifully depicted in the visuals with virtually no retouching - and with curves, stretch marks and bumps on proud display.

It was this same spirit of authenticity that inspired women to respond to the retailer's call for models. Explains, Sive Nqonji, one of the models, "The (previous) campaign celebrated women for who they were. I related to the celebrities that I saw on screen; there was no photoshop, but these women were happy and owning everything on themselves!"

Says another model, Sizah Busane, "The campaign taught me that all women have insecurities and we can go far if we support, encourage and show love to one another."

Maloon says that the retailer is focussed on adding value to the lives of its customers beyond merely selling product.

"We want to encourage women to celebrate their individuality. We want to show women other women they can relate to in our campaigns – women who share the same insecurities, dreams and struggles – and that we celebrate these women."

Meet the 'real' women behind Ackermans' latest lingerie campaign

When Ackermans' star-studded #iamme campaign debuted earlier this year, it was unbeknownst to eight women below that they would follow in the footsteps of their favourite celebrities and feature in Ackermans' next lingerie campaign.

We took a moment to get to know these phenomenal women and to find out what inspired them to join the #iamme movement.



I AM LIMITLESS

Sizah Busane (30): Sizah is an HR administrator and hails from Mandeni, KwaZulu-Natal. She has a passion for the arts and describes herself someone who is all about positive energy and uplifting & empowering those less fortunate. She joined the campaign to show others that all body types are beautiful.

What words of encouragement would you share with other women? *Own your throne! We are all different and beautiful, and as a women we need to support and encourage each other instead of bringing each other down.*



I AM ENOUGH

Sibongile Mangena (26): Based in the City of Gold, Sibongile is a Dietician who describes herself as an African Goddess. As someone who is fearless, hard-working and passionate, Sibongile says that seeing her idols Busiswa & Rami embracing their insecurities motivated her to join the campaign.

What was your reaction when you were told you'd be part of Ackermans new lingerie campaign? *I was shocked, excited and emotional all at once. I felt so honoured because it served as confirmation that my persistence on this journey of self-love is paying off.*



I AM DARING

Dineo Ramodike (20): Dineo is a full time student from Bloemfontein, and describes herself as a bubbly, inquisitive person who has a burning passion for life. She enjoys partaking in activities that challenge her.

What inspired you to be part of this campaign? *My weight loss journey inspired me to be a part of this movement. I wanted to voice my story and experiences as a young lady who has loose skin and 'too many' stretch marks. I wanted to show every other young lady that they are beyond what they are labelled. I wanted to encourage other women to love their bodies in all forms and cherish its ability to transform and take us through the journey of life.*



I AM FREE

Mahlatse Machete (31): Mahlatse is from Bushbuckridge and considers herself an unapologetic introverted-extrovert, who is not afraid to make her voice heard. She is passionate about improving her community, running an NPO that addresses child development in the townships of Pretoria.

How has your involvement in the campaign changed your life? *It gave me more confidence! Before the campaign, there was no way I was ever going to take off my clothes in front of so many people and dance while at it. But I did it - as a result I now wear whatever I want without*

feeling awkward and worrying about who is looking. Also, seeing how the other women involved in the campaign embraced their flaws in front of the camera really boosted my confidence.



I AM BEAUTIFUL

Deirdre Pasquallie (32): Deirdre is a radiographer based at the Mitchells Plain hospital in Cape Town. She enjoys socialising with friends and family. She is also a natural hair advocate, passionate about equipping her community with information on how to take care of their hair.

How has the campaign changed you as a woman? *Meeting the other woman who were part of the campaign meant everything. Each one had a different story yet we had so much in common. All of us had some insecurity that we have overcome. It was so empowering to be surrounded by woman who celebrated their flaws because we all shared the same reality, which is that our flaws are not what defines us. It is only you that can decide whether it is a 'flaw' or not. This experience has made me treasure my journey of self-love.*



I AM CONTENT

Samukelisiwe Mfuphi (22): Samukelisiwe is a Durban-based student from Estcourt. She describes herself as an ambitious person who loves a good challenge. She is also Busiswa Gqulu's biggest fan! Busiswa inspires her to accept herself as she is, to be happy and to seek opportunities for growth.

What has the campaign taught you about yourself? *The campaign has taught me not to accept defeat, and more importantly to not see myself through the eyes of others.*



I AM POWER

Sive Nqonji (27): Sive is a part-time student studying towards a BCom in Economics. She is also a junior bookkeeper and cashier at Chicken Express. She describes herself as a strong, independent and introverted woman. She has been a local radio presenter, short movie producer and a muse for upcoming artists in her area.

What inspired you to take part in the campaign? *There are certain parts of my body that I disliked. I couldn't bear the thought of people seeing the parts of me I didn't find attractive, which significantly dented my self-esteem. When I turned 27 this year, I vowed that I would celebrate who I am from that day on and this campaign is an example of me doing just that. Also what better way to do it than on a national scale?!*



I AM LIBERATED

Ithereng Morulane (24): Ithereng is an Anthropology Honours student at the University of Cape Town who enjoys writing poetry, hiking and going on adventures with friends & family. She describes herself as an ambitious, positive & fun-loving individual.

What has been the highlight for you? *I have two significant highlights; the first one was meeting and getting to know the gorgeous women part of this campaign. It was so refreshing to be surrounded by intelligent women, who I could laugh with and just be myself. I learned so much from every one of them. Another highlight was observing & experiencing the entire production process; from being in front of the camera to behind the scenes.*

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