

Laduma Ngxokolo, Imane Ayissi named African Luxury Heritage Awards winners

On 1 October, during Paris Fashion Week, Luxury Connect Africa held its annual African Luxury Heritage Awards, which recognises the outstanding contribution of African luxury brands and designers to the creative and business spheres of the African luxury economy.



Source: Luxury Connect Africa

The event was a dual awards ceremony for 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid pandemic and was held in collaboration with the South African Embassy in France at the residence of the Ambassador of South Africa to France and Monaco.

The awards were presented during an intimate luncheon by Tebogo Seokolo, the South African Ambassador to France and Monaco, with the participation of Uche Pézard, founder chief curator of Luxury Connect Africa, and in the presence of notable media and fashion personalities, including fashion legend Suzy Menkes, star stylist Jenke Ahmed Tailly and designer Thebe Magugu.

Imane Ayissi and Laduma Ngxokolo honoured

The award for African Luxury Heritage Brand of the Year 2020 was given to Cameroonian haute couture designer Imane Ayissi, whose expert crafting of African traditional textiles into haute couture creations led him to become the first designer of sub-Saharan African origin to be invited to the prestigious French haute couture body, the Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture in 2019.

The award for African Luxury Heritage Brand of the Year 2021 was given to the South African women's and men's ready-to-wear designer Laduma Ngxokolo who created the brand Maxhosa in 2011 to celebrate the centuries-old creative and cultural heritage of his Xhosa origin. Maxhosa has since attained global recognition, leading to seasonal presentations at New York Fashion Week.



Source: Luxury Connect Africa

Repositioning Africa on the world stage

In his keynote speech, Tebogo Seokolo stated: "Fashion has always been an important part of the human cultural experience since antiquity. In Africa in particular, it's a medium of artistic expression and cultural identity. It is through African fashion that Africa's rich regal culture has been represented over the ages, demonstrating both African heritage and luxury.

"The recipients of today's award have not only demonstrated excellence in their craft but are the embodiment of luxury heritage in fashion. For that, we honour them. By producing their own African luxury brands that compete on the world stage, they're also contributing to the wider continental agenda of repositioning Africa in the world, a priority that is central to my country's foreign policy."



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In her introductory speech, Uche Pezard remarked: "Africa's rich creative and cultural heritage, which has excelled through skilled craftsmanship for centuries is today being propelled on the world stage by the extraordinary designers and creators who we are proud to know and recognise through this award. The excellence of their craft is transforming Africa's

present and will safeguard Africa's future. We're very proud of them and continue to be inspired by them."

Accepting his awareness, Imane Ayissi said: "I'll like to thank everyone who has brought some spotlight and support to my career in fashion. The road has been quite long, and we continue to strive to bring another facet of Africa's know-how to the attention of the world. In the process, we celebrate African fashion and Africa's beautiful stories because our continent is full of energy and talent and it's our duty to elevate this for the world to appreciate."

In his thank-you speech, Laduma Ngxokolo stated: "Thank you to you all for recognising our work through this platform. May African luxury grow from strength to strength, not just through the glamorous side of fashion but especially through economical development within our continent. May we grow our export industry and make Africa a great continent again as it should be."



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Celebrating African heritage, craftsmanship and ingenuity

The African Luxury Heritage Awards was launched in 2018 and is presented annually to the African luxury heritage brand that has shown the most consistency in projecting its African heritage, displayed the highest level of excellence in its creativity and craftsmanship, shown the most innovative output in its products and services, and exhibits the richest representation of diversity and sustainability in its brand DNA.

The awards platform is supported by the Embassy of South Africa in France in its mission to promote South Africa and Africa's fashion excellence in the fashion industry.

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