

## Edcon design challenge nurtures young fashion talent

Rails of new designs from Edcon's Design Innovation Challenge cohort are now available at select Edgars stores countrywide. The initiative provided 14 young fashion design graduates with the opportunity to launch their unique designs to the retail market.



Noxi Helu, Helu.

The Edcon Design Innovation Challenge was launched in September 2016 to advance skills development and entrepreneurship in the fashion sector. The initiative provides final year and post-graduate fashion students with the opportunity to hone their skills through learning platforms made available by Edcon, such as the three-month '21 Steps to Retail' training programme – facilitated by the organisers of SA Fashion Week, Runway Productions – a one year-internship at Edcon and mentorship by some of South Africa's acclaimed fashion designers.

Among the Edgars platforms that have given exposure to aspiring young designers is the 21 Steps to Retail fashion show held in June to celebrate Youth Month, as well as the Proudly SA Fashion Show in partnership with Proudly South African, held in September during Heritage Month. At these events, the ranges from the designers drew the attention of Edgars buyers in attendance. Designs selected by the buyers became part of the Edgars Design Innovation Challenge Proudly South African Collection and will be sold in-store under the brand name Edgars DSGN EDT.

This Edgars-exclusive capsule range will be available in the following stores: Sandton City, Mall of Africa and Eastgate Shopping Centre in Johannesburg, Menlyn Park and Kollonade Shopping Centre in Pretoria (Tshwane), Mall of the North in Polokwane, Gateway Theatre of Shopping and Westville Mall in Durban, Canal Walk in Cape Town and Loch Logan Waterfront in Bloemfontein.



Maps Ralephenya

The cohort of designers forming part of the DSGN EDT collection includes Kea Maphologela of Kea.M, Michelle Dindi of Scarlett x Haze, Maps Ralephenya of Court 95, Hlengiwe Gavu of Redemption Royalty and Noxi Helu of Helu.

## Breaking down barriers of entry

Elelwane Pahlana, general manager of transformation at Edcon, said: “We are proud to be breaking down the barriers of entry into the retail industry for these young designers. We have witnessed phenomenal talent in this initiative, and we are pleased that these young designers are getting exposure into the clothing retail industry. It also gives us hope for the growth of the local fashion industry and provides many reasons to continue to support proudly South African produced garments.”

During the manufacturing process the designers were exposed to the intricacies of mass production and were part of the entire process, from choosing fabrics to oversight of the production, giving them invaluable exposure to the retail value chain and delivery into the store.



Kea Maphologela, Kea.M

The 2017 winner of the Edcon Design Innovation Challenge, Lameez Stoltenkamp, who walked away with R20,000 at the time of her win in June remarked: “This has been an amazing journey and I am thankful to Edcon for giving young designers this platform. The experience has changed my life. As young people, this opportunity means so much and has given us the freedom to chase our dreams.”

Edgars will stock just ladieswear in its DSGN EDT range and will embark on a process to manufacture the menswear next year. The Edcon Design Innovation Challenge is an initiative endorsed by Proudly South African, of which Edcon is the only clothing and retail sector member at this stage.

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