

Getting to know Design Indaba's creative director - Selly Raby Kane

 By [Beverley Klein](#)

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Design Indaba has been blowing the minds of creatives for the past 21 years. Next year (2017) they'll be taking the awe-inspiring initiatives to the next level with the help of Selly Raby Kane, [Design Indaba's very first external creative director](#).



Kane is a Senegalese fashion designer who spoke at the 2015 event, with a passion for exploring oneiric otherworldliness. View her [Inner Cruise video](#) for a refresher of what she's all about.

We chatted to Kane about what she envisions for next year's event, and what inspires her about design.

 ***What does Design Indaba mean to you?***

Kane: Because I've spoken at Design Indaba and had the opportunity to see it from the inside, it gives me the chance to dive into other people's universe and not just into their results or façade, but into their processes. At the end of the day you get to hear about real human stories, and what was really fascinating to me when I was listening to other speakers, and even just looking at the content on Design Indaba's website – is that there's a focus on humans and a focus on everybody's truth and how you take your truth and put it in the service of design, creation, your community etc. There's a very human approach and it resonates with me a lot.

■ ***Talk us through the link between creativity, design and fashion based on your own sense of style...***

Kane: To me fashion is like a canal, it's a media that I use, and I'm very interested in all the types of media available today for me to use to put in my creativity. That's why I'm exploring virtual reality, I'm working with a production firm in South Africa to imagine what the streets of Dakar would be if we were diving into the urban legends of the city, making all the creatures that our grandmothers used to tell us about and bringing them to life. I just love creating to express the inner voice that I have, it happened to be fashion because as long as I can remember I wanted to be a fashion designer, but now I'm opening myself up to other mediums and Design Indaba is helping me with that.

■ ***How is design, as a whole, important to the African continent?***

Kane: It's very important. What I like the most about design, for example on the streets of Dakar, design is everywhere and everybody is a designer because you need to face your environment and the questions your environment asks of you, and you do that through design, you don't have to be a graduate to create an object that will help you face that environment. That's the part of design that I like about our cities and once we're able to translate that state of mind, those very organic design processes to the world, it would be massive.

■ ***Do more people need to be encouraged to go into design as a profession?***

Kane: I think people are becoming open to the fact that there are other careers and goals in life other than making sure you have a lot of money and security. People are also more exposed to these opportunities with the internet, which provides windows to the world not just your own country. In 2016 I think it's less complicated to tell your parents that you're dropping out of law school and focusing on design.

■ ***Give us some of your top career highlights...***

Kane: Well, Design Indaba is a big one, it's a big opportunity for me, and coming from West Africa to Cape Town and working here, it creates this magical link that connects two cities that I really like. I'm really looking forward to making sure that people where I come from collaborate within the project, I really see it as a project and there are huge collaboration opportunities.

In 2014 during Dakar Biennale, I did a show - a fashion art installation, which gathered a lot of the young creatives from the Dakar sub-culture. It was the story of Dakar being invaded by strange creatures, the city was projected into the future, and it was a highlight for me because so many things happened during that show – it was a fusion between art and fashion and it managed to capture the attention of fashion and art people at the same time, so that was really interesting. In fact, the DJ that produced the soundtrack of that show is now touring the world with that music, so it's changed lives and that to me is a highlight.

■ ***How important is collaboration in design?***

Kane: To me it's a really fascinating process and I really like to share and combine mind sets and energies and to see a result, to me, is a like a magical process. So collaboration is key, sharing is key, we see it in everything even business models that we have, and the more successful are basing it on this idea of collaboration, so I really see it as the present and the future. For example the alien cartoon I mentioned earlier, wouldn't be same without the soundtrack and the other elements that happened, so you need to make sure that all the energies are collaborating to be more visible and it just makes things more radiant.

■ ***What can we look forward to at Design Indaba 2017?***

Kane: What is great about this opportunity is that it's a way to show my universe and invite people into how I see the world. It's going to be very dreamlike, oneiric, a bit playful and there will be a story. I really want to create an immersive experience for people, so when they enter I want them to feel completely elsewhere and be able to read the story through music and design.

Colour us excited to find out more! You can click through to our [Design Indaba special section](#) and view Kane's 2015 Design Indaba talk embedded below:

For more information on the 2017 Design Indaba Festival, please visit www.designindaba.com/festival.

ABOUT BEVERLEY KLEIN

Beverley Klein is the editor of the Marketing Media South Africa section on Bizcommunity.com. With a background in journalism and historical studies, she's dived into the world of industry news, curating content, writing and interviewing thought leaders. She's often spotted in a forest on the weekend and rarely seen without a camera. Follow @BevCPT.

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