

Change Makers campaign highlights ATIFY's conscious couture

Up-and-coming fashion designer Lukhanyo Mdingi has joined the Smirnoff Change Makers campaign, which highlights local and international creatives who are bringing attention to issues plaguing society and are making a positive change around them.



His communal label, ATIFY (Africa This Is For You), uses ethically sourced and locally-produced textiles to create soulful pieces that celebrate the spirit of African design and heritage as well as the hands of those who craft the apparel.

For his use of fashion as a medium, that not only creates fantasies but also acts as a tool for activism, the Change Makers campaign is shining a light on Mdingi on Smirnoff's social media platforms. "The aim is to encourage all South Africans to take up the trend," says Smirnoff marketing manager, Kyle Lesch.

Community impact

Although Mdingi has only been in the fashion industry for four years, he is swiftly rising to the top and bringing other talented locals with him. While working with a small community of ladies to produce the cross-cultural inspired collections, he learnt about the impact that opening trade with China has had on the local textile and clothing industry, with close to 500,000 people losing their jobs.

He also realised that the majority of the women he and other designers employed were over 50, meaning that the craft of sewing and the skills used to create ornate garments would be lost, once these women retire.

Wanting to ensure a sustainable South African textile and clothing industry, Mdingi has collaborated with Learn to Earn. The organisation has a special division in Khayelitsha dedicated to developing unemployed people by providing them with training that enables them to gain sewing skills and an understanding of the production line process. Graduates are employed by the division and manufacture handmade high-quality corporate gifts, conference bags and promotional items, helping them to become self-sustaining.

He has also partnered with Krafthaus, a small textile business that specialises in locally produced and ethically-sourced wool fibres, to create his unique garments.



Panâh: An ethical fashion production house in Kenya

14 Mar 2017



Empower, promote, nourish

"Our ATIFY movement aims to empower, promote and nourish our African creative landscape. We believe in the significance of using our African resources and fellow artisans as a means of retelling the intention of our communal label, which values the imperative benefits of paving a promising and richer industry through the use of storytelling and collaboration," says Mdingi.

Mdingi has represented South Africa's ethical fashion industry in countries such as Italy and England and was featured in the award-winning series, ETHETICS, which explores and celebrates ethical and socially responsible brands around the world.

"Mdingi is making a contribution not only to our country's clothing and textile industry, but also to the futures of our young, emerging fashion designers – a true Change Maker," concludes Lesch.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>