

World-class e-commerce photography studio opens in Durban

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StudioK, an all-in-one compact photographic studio for professional e-commerce shoots, is officially opening for business in Durban North in January 2022. The studio, which is supported by the well-known Studio[K]irmack in Cape Town, brings best-in-class automated product photography technology to the port city, including the advanced Orbitvu Alphastudio XXL - the first of its kind in South Africa.



Shaun Burgin

Co-founders Shaun Burgin, Lance Howarth and Craig Bellingham are “beyond excited” about the launch of StudioK, and ready to assist businesses with their e-commerce product photography needs. “Setting up shop here makes a lot of sense, given that Durban is where you find so many of the country’s major import warehouses,” says Burgin. “It means quicker – and more affordable – turnaround for photography projects, since the assets are often close at hand.”

“We aim to become the e-commerce photography and content solution of choice in KwaZulu-Natal,” adds Bellingham, whose company has done numerous projects for clients including work for adidas, Puma, Pick ‘n Pay Clothing, Jeep, Dunns, Sealand, HiTec and many leading brands – since opening Studio[K]irmack in 2008. “StudioK will offer world-class technology and services, with technology that offers automatic background removal, so that clients can create ready-to-use on-model, packshots, 360-degree spins and videos in a matter of minutes.”

The day-to-day running of StudioK operations will be in Burgin’s hands, as the managing director and majority shareholder. Bellingham, who is CEO of Studio[K]irmack, will work closely with StudioK from the Mother City, providing guidance and assisting with overflow work and specialist production requirements as needed. “As their business partner, our robust design and video capabilities underpin what StudioK has to offer,” he explains. “And vice versa, of course.”

“It’s absolutely essential for anyone with an online retail presence - whether they are a large or small company – to have high-quality visuals today,” says Burgin. “To put it simply: great photos get conversions, while those of a lower quality do not. Web customers can’t physically touch your products, so you need to make sure you are giving them as full of a virtual experience as possible.”

It was the idea of this optimal experience for the end user, together with efficiency and versatility for businesses, that informed the design of the StudioK facilities. Over a period of four months, the studio came to life in Kensington Square; all clean lines and neat features, and soon to include a 5m x 4m infinity wall (making it one of the largest in Durban and also rarity in the region, and something that Bellingham believes will excite Durban photographers) and the first Orbitvu XXL machine. Orbitvu has a global footprint, and is used widely for automated product photography in the United States, Europe and Japan. Bellingham is an official agent for the brand in South Africa.

“StudioK is fully equipped to handle both small and large products, as well as live models,” says Bellingham. “The tech has a built-in backlit turntable and full-sized powerful LED lights, and allows us to upload the end images directly to a retail

website, or wherever else the client needs them to go. Basically, if they send it, we'll capture it – and fast, too.”

In 2022, StudioK will be focused on establishing itself as Durban's leading e-commerce photography and content studio. Looking further ahead, Bellingham and Burgin have even bigger plans – including exploring interactivity and user experience in the rapidly evolving world of e-commerce.

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