

DRAWING INSPIRATION FROM AFRICA, ITS PEOPLE, SHAPES, COLOURS, LIGHT AND ARCHITECTURE, THESE LOCAL DESIGNERS ARE PRODUCING UNIQUE, WORLD-CLASS FASHION.

OUT OF THE BOX





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Alice Heusser

LALESSO IS:
A RANGE OF SUMMER RESORT FASHION IN SKIN CARESSING COTTON AND CHIFFON SILKS.

Who's behind the label? Alice Heusser (pictured above) and Olivia Kennaway (based in Kenya).

Inspiration: The captivating beauty of the East African 'khanga', also known as 'lesso.'

Lalesso is defined by: Flowing, easy-to-wear styles in striking, exotic prints, each bearing a singular, quirky Swahili proverb, with provocative translations such as: "Your wife is like a fruit, look after her."

Alice and Olivia have for some time been designing their own fabrics, imparting the range with an increasingly contemporary take on the traditional Kenyan Khanga.

Worn by: Sienna Miller, Kate Moss, singer Estelle and Kimora Lee Simmons (spotted in the front row at Lalesso's show at Cape Town Fashion Week in July 2011).

Feel good factors: In 2009 Lalesso initiated SOKO, an independent, charity-based, eco and ethical clothing production unit that supports local Kenyan talent and provides employment to Kenyans. SOKO is used by several international designers as well as by Lalesso who have appointed the project to handle the day-to-day running of their in-house production workshop.

Lalesso is also a Carbon Zero company. Their carbon emissions are calculated and they donate funds which are used to provide devices such as fuel saving cookers which reduce global carbon emissions by an amount which renders Lalesso's net emissions zero. See www.soko-kenya.com.

Accolades: Alice and Olivia received the Glamour Magazine 'Woman of The Year' 2010 Award and the 2009 Fashion Innovation Award from EFF (Ethical Fashion Forum)

Prices R600 to R5 000

Get it from: www.lalesso.com

Lalesso is distributed to 20 countries, mostly in Europe and to island destinations such as Zanzibar, Maldives and in the Caribbean.



Lani Edwards

SQUAREMOON BAGS ARE:
UNIQUE LIMITED EDITION HANDBAGS AND LAPTOP BAGS WHICH ARE, LITERALLY, PRACTICAL WORKS OF ART.

Who's behind the label? Interior designer, Lani Edwards, who thanks to her métier, possesses a superior understanding of form versus function. Lani, who is a study in individuality and self-expression, has in addition to her bag addiction, a shoe obsession and a footwear collection which incites paroxysms of breathless envy among any generally assembled female and/or cross-dressing congregation.

She's inspired by: Everything! "I see handbags in structures, nature, shapes, negative spaces, positive spaces, in the way the light catches something".

Squaremoon bags are defined by: Utter unpredictability. To say Squaremoon bags are a solution to the average is an understatement. Each handbag in the collection is custom designed and made by hand, using high quality fabric and finishes. No more than three of each particular bag are produced, so you're unlikely to meet another person with the same bag as you. Should you chance upon such an individual, Lani advises that you waste no time in striking up a friendship in honour of your mutually impeccable taste.

More reasons to love them: "We do not use any leather – nothing is bled for these accessories!" says Lani. Local manufacturing of all components reduces the brand's carbon footprint and the fabric coating is a clear, water-based, moisture and dirt repellent finish that is ECO 100 approved.

Prices R1 400 to R4 500

Get it from: www.squaremoonbags.com

UNDACOVA IS:
A FUNKY RANGE OF FASHION UNDERWEAR FOR MEN AND WOMEN.

Who's behind the label? Chris Kilchling and Percy Ndada.

Inspiration: Percy and Chris saw a gap in the market for fashionable male underwear. "It's all about looking good with your pants down," says Chris. Each season's look is inspired by different elements, but always with an African twist.

This spring, nautical designs and the theme of love give the range its direction.

Undacova is defined by: Striking graphics and slogans which are whimsical or witty and tongue-in-cheek.

Designed with a young and fashion-conscious customer in mind, the label has a predominantly fresh and energetic feel.

"It's sexy without being kinky or tacky, but it's definitely exciting," says Percy.

Judging by the virtually hysterical response to the Undacova show at Cape Town Fashion week 2011, he's not far off the mark. (See page 17 and 19)

More reasons to love it Undacova is a 100% South African Brand (designed and made in South Africa.)

Prices R99 to R109 for men's briefs

Get it from: selected Woolworths. Street in Greenside.

Design Indaba Pop Up Stores and online at

www.undacova.com ↗



Chris Kilchling and Percy Ndada