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LADUMA NGXOKOLO, TAKING TRADITIONAL TO MODERN INTERNATIONAL FASHION HEIGHTS – 21 ICONS

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21 Icons Season 3 – Episode 5: Laduma Ngxokolo



From humble beginnings with a R150 sewing machine, Laduma's internationally showcased brand '[MAXHOSA](#)' has now won him multiple awards, scholarships, created jobs and educated people on the importance of using local supplies. His goal was simple: **Create knitwear for Xhosa initiates from local materials.**

After undergoing the Xhosa initiation ritual – an intense 6-month training school marking the transition from boyhood to manhood. Laduma realised when the initiate gave up his old clothes to be replaced with new ones (a symbol of transformation to man) he would receive high-quality knitwear as tradition states – but with few local sources of knitwear, the initiate would have to import international brands like Pringle of Scotland.

“I felt that knitwear brands like these bear no aesthetic resemblance to Xhosa”



So he began creating his own knitwear, using only local material.

“It is our responsibility as young South Africans to take the privileges of our freedom and distribute them to underprivileged and work towards a prosperous nation so that we can create a successful nation that can increase GDP and make a better life for the people living below the poverty line.”

Aiming to modernise Xhosa design and encompass the development of an African country, Laduma took patterns and motifs from different Xhosa clans and recreated them, slightly deviating from the traditional sense. His idea has led to him to win awards and accolades such as

- Presenting the 2011 Design Indaba Conference
- 2014 the Emerging Designer of the Year Award at the African Fashion International Awards
- Vogue Scouting for Africa prize.
- Premium Emerging Designer Award in Berlin.
- South African Society of Dyers and Colourists (SDC) Design Competition

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Most recently his knitwear was showcased in Italy, where he emphasised the inspiration on his work from South African icons Credo Mutwa, Nelson Mandela and Steve Biko.

Previously his work has been showcased in Berlin, Munich and Amsterdam.



Later this year his range will also be on display in Lagos Nigeria, for the Africa International Fashion Week.

Portrait: ‘The Explorer’



Depicting the combination of modern and traditional, the portrait plays on the idea of 'rural boy delivering wares to the city'.

“Hard work opens any doors. Also, people should not focus on the success of external subjects but focus on themselves and their own work as everyone is unique.”



Experience more Icons

21 Icons behind the scenes is on SABC every Sunday from 6 September at 19:27. Alternatively follow their movements on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Or check out the [21 Icons Dont Party feature](#).

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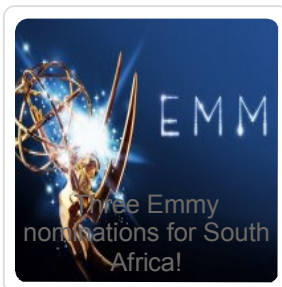
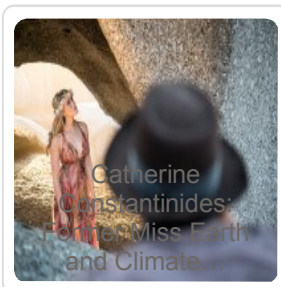
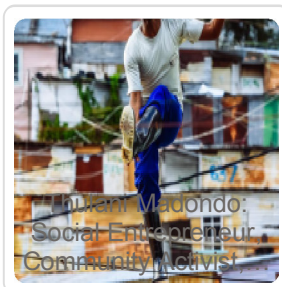
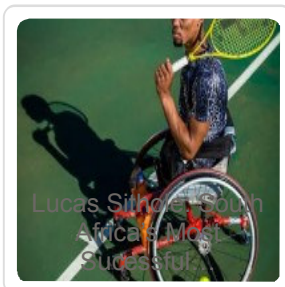
Jordan Coetsee

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"Life isn't about finding yourself, its about creating yourself"

Jordan is a Joburg based student currently studying at WITS. In his free time loves to socialize, screenprint and sometimes dabble in music.

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