



**SS 2015**

**Stella Jean** presents this **Spring Summer 2015** collection with a strong anthropological story characterized by a succession of cultural trompe-l'oeil. The fabrics and their combinations paint a new narrative landscape, where ethical fashion has a central role. This explorative creation is born through the growing collaboration with the Ethical Fashion Initiative of the International Trade Centre (ITC), a United Nations agency. The Initiative enabled the use of hand-woven textiles made by women in Burkina Faso and Mali and jewelry made by Haitian artisans.

The collection is a declaration of intent and confirms Stella Jean's commitment to testifying, sharing and tracing back unimaginable and secular traditions through narrative images. The tones, sometimes epic, at others descriptive or ironic, reveal more than what history books can tell. Here, the textiles act as reporters conveying a collective memory. As a testimony to this engagement, the collection introduces the elegant and retro Doctor Bag - borrowed from an Italian doctor - revisited with the colours of bogolan, the traditional mud-cloth from Mali, and the striped hand-woven fabric from Burkina Faso.

Yet this Stella Jean's Spring Summer 2015 collection is characterized by something new: the emotional return of the designer to her home: Haiti. A country described by André Malraux as "the most amazing experience of the magic art of the 20th century", Haiti was unveiled like never before through 'Art Naïf', a movement marked by active observation built around a simple soul. This artistic perspective is an expression of life, nature and spirit, animated by the market women and their daily multi-coloured vanity, full of dignity. The market, acting as social barometers, is where we can meet these proud vendors adorned with scarves enhancing femininity. Adding to the hustle and bustle of the market, "tap-tap" buses also have a strong presence in recreate this unique atmosphere. The "tap-tap", the traditional means of public transport, are also described as "pop art on wheels". Adorned with subjects belonging to religious, popular and historical tradition; ironic phrases, proverbs or messages; the tap-tap are painted by artists who attend art schools specialized in tap-tap painting. Donkeys, another important means of transportation and labor, and sugar cane, are also recurring Haitian elements that reappear on prints and hand-painted fabrics, completing the visual landscape of this collection.

Thus, this collection is an authentic cultural symposium: a conversation of visions and expressions of distant and contrasting worlds only in appearance, united under an impeccable aesthetic linking Burkina Faso, Haiti, Mali and Italy. A reversal of Babel.

#### **About ITC - THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE'S ETHICAL FASHION INITIATIVE**

The Ethical Fashion Initiative is a flagship programme of the International Trade Centre, a joint agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization.

Stella Jean collaborates with the Ethical Fashion Initiative to produce luxury handicrafts, under ethical and fair conditions, with artisans in Africa and Haiti. Stella Jean has visited Burkina Faso and recently Haiti to develop her collections. The Ethical Fashion Initiative and Stella Jean share ethical principles and values of women empowerment and poverty reduction.

The Ethical Fashion Initiative links the world's top fashion talents to marginalised artisans - the majority of them women - in East and West Africa, Haiti and the West Bank. Active since 2009, the Initiative enables artisans living in urban and rural poverty to connect with the global fashion chain. The Ethical Fashion Initiative is proud of its long-term partnerships around the world including Vivienne Westwood, Stella McCartney, Isetan, Carmina Campus, sass & bide, Stella Jean, Karen Walker, Osklen, Chan Luu, United Arrows and Myer.

The Ethical Fashion Initiative enables Africa's rising generation of fashion talent to forge environmentally sound, sustainable and fulfilling creative collaborations with local artisans.

Under its slogan, "NOT CHARITY, JUST WORK." the Ethical Fashion Initiative advocates a fairer global fashion industry.

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### **About Jewelry Made in Haiti**

The Haitian tradition of Art Naïf and artisanal handcrafts come to life in collection of jewelry developed during Stella Jean's trip to Haiti with the ITC Ethical Fashion Initiative team.

#### **Papier-mâché Fruit**

The papier-mâché fruits are produced in Jacmel, the cultural capital of Haiti and home to the country's largest carnival, for which local artisans craft colourful papier-mâché masks and decorations. The Stella Jean collection was produced by a group of the most skilled artisans in Jacmel. The fruit pieces were made entirely from a mix of recycled cement bags and plant-based starches such as cassava and each piece has been hand-painted with care.

#### **Horn bracelets**

Produced in a Port-au-Prince atelier of around fifty artisans specialized in horn and bone material for the Spring Summer 2015 collection. This animal by-product is washed, cut, shaped and polished to perfection to achieve a smooth and glossy surface. Stella Jean designed these pieces directly with the local artisans during her sourcing trip to Haiti with the ITC Ethical Fashion Initiative.

#### **Fer Forgé Metalwork**

The Stella Jean metal jewelry collection was made in several different ateliers that are part of a large community of metalwork artisans based in Croix-des-Bouquets, on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince. There, the local metalsmiths forged the Stella Jean pendants and bangles out of recycled oil drums using just a hammer and physical strength to create the design. The final items were then hand-painted, making each and every piece unique.