



**FONDAZIONE
PITTI
DISCOVERY**



Ethical
Fashion
Initiative

**At Pitti Uomo 89 the spotlight will shine on Africa's talents
with GENERATION AFRICA:
the special event by
Fondazione Pitti Discovery and ITC Ethical Fashion Initiative**

After a successful first event held during the 88th edition of Pitti Uomo in June 2015, the **FONDAZIONE PITTI DISCOVERY** and **ITC ETHICAL FASHION INITIATIVE** will partner again for Pitti Immagine Uomo 89 (Florence, 12-15 January 2016) with the special event "**Generation Africa**". With a focus on fashion from Africa, this unique platform will promote young and talented fashion designers from the continent, and show the energy of today's African creative scene.

A runway show scheduled for **Thursday, 14 January, at 2.30pm**, at the **Dogana** (Via Valfonda) will feature four brands already known on the international market that present different facets of the African continent and that privilege manufacturing in their home countries. **AKJP, Ikiré Jones, Lukhanyo Mdinigi x Nicholas Coutts** and **U.Mi-1** will present their *Autumn/Winter 2016-17 men's collections*.

"We continue our collaboration with Pitti Immagine to showcase the creativity of Africa. We want to convey a different image of the continent, one of innovation and diversity with a strong youthful energy for positive change. Pitti Uomo is the perfect platform for the designers to express their vision and show that Africa means serious business." says **Simone Cipriani, Head and Founder of the ITC Ethical Fashion Initiative**.

*"Generation Africa is the chance to open a new window on one of today's most creative scenes - says **Lapo Cianchi, head of Special Projects at Pitti Immagine** - and to give emerging fashion designers the opportunity to have a spotlight, both in terms of communication and real business opportunities. The collaboration with ITC Ethical Fashion Initiative combines these goals with a sensitivity to great social issues, and helps provide answers".*

For *Generation Africa*, the Ethical Fashion Initiative partnered with the Italian association, **Lai-momo** which welcomes asylum-seekers in Italy and promotes cross-cultural exchanges between Africa and Europe with the aim of reducing stereotypes and preconceptions. As part of a joint effort by EFI, Lai-momo and Pitti Immagine to raise awareness on migration, three asylum seekers will model for the show, giving them an opportunity to earn a wage and be part of an empowering international event celebrating creativity from Africa. Continuously striving to improve diversity in the fashion industry, the Ethical Fashion Initiative aims to demonstrate fashion's capacity to support the betterment of society.

*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. 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. The Initiative has been connecting artisans to the global fashion supply chain since 2009. The Ethical Fashion Initiative also works with the rising generation of fashion talent from Africa, encouraging the forging of fulfilling creative collaborations with artisans on the continent. Under its slogan, "NOT CHARITY, JUST WORK." the Ethical Fashion Initiative advocates a fairer global fashion industry.*



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And here are the four participating brands:

AKJP // Keith Henning & Jody Paulsen, South Africa

AKJP (Adriaan Kuiters + Jody Paulsen) is a menswear and womenswear brand founded by South African designer duo, Keith Henning and Jody Paulsen. AKJP's signature is its artful contemporary twist on classic and utilitarian menswear. The development of strong prints and sports-inspired motifs for each collection has become core to AKJP. AKJP uses layering, boxy silhouettes and asymmetrical detailing as a signature styling feature. AKJP has been recognised as one of South Africa's most innovative brands, bringing contemporary and cool to the South African fashion landscape. In 2015, AKJP was one of the finalists at Vogue Italia's Who Is On Next? Dubai.

IKIRÉ JONES // Walé Oyéjidé, USA & Nigeria

Ikiré Jones (pronounced "E-kee-rae Jones") is a menswear company that marries African aesthetics with classic art from all over the world. Each of the brand's pieces tells a contemporary story by using historical artwork as a medium for modern expression. With every collection, the brand places a strong emphasis on societal issues that affect immigrant and transient populations across the globe. Importantly, Ikiré Jones seeks to properly introduce modern African culture to the world. Through clothing, Ikiré Jones seeks to weave together a tighter global community. The brand's tailoring is done in the United States, and its accessories are printed and hand-rolled in Macclesfield, United Kingdom.

LUKHANYO MDINGI x NICHOLAS COUTTS // Lukhanyo Mdingi & Nicholas Coutts, South Africa

South African designers Lukhanyo Mdingi and Nicholas Coutts collaborate on this Autumn/Winter 2016-17 collection to illuminate each other's aesthetics. The design partnership combines Mdingi's minimalist approach with Coutts' distinctive signature weaving style. Together, the designers create a menswear collection that embodies strength, empowerment and contemporary sophistication. Lukhanyo Mdingi interprets minimal aesthetics with his clothing, finding the balance between line, form and texture. Mdingi creates minimal looks that are distinct and powerful, with a flare of contemporary elegance and sophistication. Nicholas Coutts' signature is creating garments that are textured and uses fabrication to create a pleasing contrasting visual. Influenced by the Arts & Crafts movement, Coutts specialises in using handwoven fabrics and hand knitted items.

U.Mi-1 // Gozi Ochonogor, Nigeria & UK

U.Mi-1 (pronounced you.me.one) is a contemporary brand for the modern cool man. It tells a different side of the African fashion story with collections inspired by Nigerian culture, architecture and art. Headed by Nigerian designer Gozi Ochonogor who calls London, Tokyo and Lagos her homes, U.Mi-1 collections are a blend of British tailoring aesthetic with the hallmark of Japanese artisanship and African spirit, delivering innovative designs and quality. Best described as tailoring with a twist, U.Mi-1 focuses on style, comfort and quality with interesting detailing that the wearer discovers anew.

*A special thanks to **Lai Momo** and **Africa e Mediterraneo** for their support in the show preparations. www.laimomo.it*

*The ITC Ethical Fashion Initiative and participating designers thank **Aveda** and **MAC Cosmetics** for their services during the event www.salonecontrasto.it www.maccosmetics.com*



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AKJP

AKJP Autumn/Winter 2016-17 Inspiration

The starting point for our Autumn/Winter 2016-17 collection came in the form of music. We were inspired by the re-released version Herbie Hancock's 1973 'Watermelon Man'. The iconic whistling sound in the intro and outro of this song was made blowing into a beer bottle imitating *Hindewhu*, a style of singing/whistle-playing found in Pygmy music of Central Africa. The combination of synthesizers, funk and trickled bass brings to mind the dense plant-life and exotic birds, which exist in the subtropical landscape of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. With Pygmy culture and the lush Durban landscape in mind, our collection continues experimenting with print and appliqué motifs. The easiness of dressing for comfort and practicality are inherent to a lifestyle situated in nature. With this collection we combine elements of dressing for the wilderness with sophisticated urban sportswear. The collection mimics nature's effortless ability to make one feel calm, centred and grounded. The AKJP Autumn/Winter 2016/17 collection aims to marry the feeling of an African summer to the practicalities of a European winter.

About AKJP

Essence: An artful contemporary twist on classic and utilitarian menswear

AKJP (Adriaan Kuiters + Jody Paulsen) is a menswear and womenswear brand founded by South African designer duo, Keith Henning and Jody Paulsen. AKJP's signature is its artful contemporary twist on classic and utilitarian menswear. The development of strong prints and sports-inspired motifs for each collection has become core to AKJP. AKJP uses layering, boxy silhouettes and asymmetrical detailing as a signature styling feature.

AKJP has been recognised as one of South Africa's most innovative brands, bringing contemporary and cool to the South African fashion landscape. In 2015, AKJP was one of the finalists at Vogue Italia's Who Is On Next? Dubai.

AKJP originated from Keith Henning's fashion brainchild, Adriaan Kuiters. In 2013, Keith partnered with Jody on his collection for the 2013 Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Cape Town. This marked the first event where the brand was presented as AKJP. Jody contributes his taste in seasonal prints, textures and colours to Keith's minimal and functional aesthetic.

About the designers, Keith Henning & Jody Paulsen

Keith Henning is Dutch South Africa-born designer with a degree in industrial and furniture design. Keith self-trained as a fashion designer as part of a radical career change. He set up his own brand, Adriaan Kuiters in 2011. Quickly garnering the attention of the South African fashion crowd, the brand was stocked by key retailers. In 2012, Keith opened a store in Cape Town with fellow designer and friend, Jessica Harwood. The store features forward-thinking South African designers.

Jody Paulsen has a degree and masters from Michaelis School of Fine Art. Jody's work as an artist has been recognised in South Africa with several awards and he has also gained acclaim abroad at the Milan Art Fair. His work has been shown at the Goodman Gallery Cape Town in 2011, and the Pretoria Art Museum in 2010. Pursuing his interest in fashion Jody collaborated with Keith Henning in 2013 and has since been part of the AKJP journey.

Keith Henning & Jody Paulsen Statement

"Presenting our AW16 collection at Pitti Uomo is a huge achievement for our brand, as it would be our first runway show in Europe. We are honoured to participate in 'Generation Africa' at Pitti Immagine and proud to be amongst the four selected African designers."



Ikiré Jones Autumn/Winter 2016-17 Inspiration

After Migration

Our latest collection is inspired by the stories of those who have crossed oceans and borders in search of a better home. Much has been made of the "migrant crisis" that has increasingly affected Europe in recent years. What strikes us most is the notion that at the core of all of the tragic headlines, migrants are ordinary people. Each of these people is an individual who has fought insurmountable odds to get to where he or she now lives. They are men and women with families to feed. Others are men and women who had to leave their families and loved ones behind. It is our hope that by casting these migrants in an elegant light, we can for a moment, brighten the perceptions of them, and remind others that such misfortune could befall any of us. We also hope to show what beauty strangers from a foreign land can introduce to our lives, if we just let them in.

About Ikiré Jones

Essence: Ikiré Jones marries African aesthetics with classic art, using history to tell a contemporary story

Ikiré Jones (pronounced "E-kee-rae Jones") is a menswear company that marries African aesthetics with classic art from all over the world. Each of the brand's pieces tells a contemporary story by using historical artwork as a medium for modern expression. With every collection, the brand places a strong emphasis on societal issues that affect immigrant and transient populations across the globe. Importantly, Ikiré Jones seeks to properly introduce modern African culture to the world. Through clothing, Ikiré Jones seeks to weave together a tighter global community.

The brand's tailoring is done in the United States, and its accessories are printed and hand-rolled in Macclesfield, United Kingdom.

About the designer, Walé Oyéjidé

Walé Oyéjidé founded Ikiré Jones in 2013 and is the brand's designer and creative director. The brand is inspired by his Nigerian heritage while remaining rooted in European textile design. Walé's work has been recognised at the "Making Africa" contemporary design exhibit shown at the Vitra Design Museum and Guggenheim Bilbao. He has also lectured about his design work in the United States, Brazil and France.

Walé is also a writer, artist and musician. Walé worked as an attorney before setting up his own brand. Esquire Magazine noted Walé as one of the best dressed men in the United States of America.

Ikiré Jones Statement

"As a menswear designer, it has been a dream of mine to attend Pitti Uomo for years. Even before I worked as a designer, I always wanted to come because I knew that this was ground-zero for menswear. This is where the people with the most creative eyes, and natural flair for tailoring, are found. It's very much a rite of passage for anyone who loves menswear to be here. I had always said that I did not want to go to Pitti until I had a serious reason to be there. By appearing in the Generation Africa fashion show thanks to the Ethical Fashion Initiative, it appears that I've found a worthwhile reason to justify my presence at the legendary Pitti Uomo."

Lukhanyo Mdingi x Nicholas Coutts Autumn/Winter 2016-17 Inspiration

The MDINGI COUTTS Autumn/Winter 2016-17 collection stems from tangibility. This concept was a source of inspiration to create a body of work that evokes fabrications and fabric types that embody feel and texture.

With Nicholas Coutts' distinct weaving techniques and Lukhanyo Mdingi's traditionalist approach to minimalism and basics, the two used Africa's natural landscape to conceptualise the overall aesthetic of the collection.

The Mdingi x Coutts collaboration results in a collection full of contemporary design pieces which exude timeless elegance and sophistication with a flare of African heritage and culture.

About Lukhanyo Mdingi x Nicholas Coutts

Essence: Strength, empowerment and contemporary sophistication.

South African designers Lukhanyo Mdingi and Nicholas Coutts collaborate on this Autumn/Winter 2016-17 collection to illuminate each other's aesthetics. The design partnership combines Mdingi's minimalist approach with Coutts' distinctive signature weaving style. Together, the designers create a menswear collection that embodies strength, empowerment and contemporary sophistication.

Lukhanyo Mdingi interprets minimal aesthetics through his clothing, finding the balance between line, form and texture. Mdingi creates minimal looks that are distinct and powerful, with a flare of contemporary elegance and sophistication.

Nicholas Coutts' signature is creating garments that are textured and uses fabrication to create a pleasing contrasting visual. Influenced by the Arts & Crafts movement, Coutts specialises in using handwoven fabrics and hand knitted items.

About the designers, Lukhanyo Mdingi & Nicholas Coutts

Lukhanyo Mdingi studied Fashion design at Cape Peninsula University of Technology in South Africa. Lukhanyo set up his own brand, Lukhanyo Mdingi in 2015. Since, his talent has been recognised with several awards in South Africa (including Emerging Creative by Design Indaba 2015, ELLE x Mr.Price Rising Star Competition in 2013.)

Nicholas studied Fashion Design at the Academy of Fashion in Cape Town and graduated in 2013. The same year he won the ELLE Rising Star Design Award which catapulted him into the South African fashion industry. Nicholas Coutts has showcased at Cape Town Fashion Week and Africa Fashion Week in 2014.

Lukhanyo Mdingi & Nicholas Coutts Statement

"The Lukhanyo Mdingi label is extremely humbled and excited to be part of the 89th edition of Pitti Uomo. Not only will we showcase our Autumn/Winter 2016-17 collection but it will also mark my joining forces with fellow South African designer and brand, Nicholas Coutts.

Together the two of us have the chance to go beyond as spring-boards of inspiration to fellow African's and showcase our capabilities as young independent emerging businesses on a reputable international platform.

We hope this will encourage and create a scope towards African fashion and culture. Gaining much needed exposure that will energise Africa's landscape of fashion designers and textile and retail industries."



U.Mi-1 Autumn/Winter 2016-17

Who Am I?

The U.Mi-1 Autumn-Winter 2016-17 collection presents the second instalment of the Yorubas, a tribe in Southwest Nigeria. Gozi takes inspiration from tribal marks, a dying tradition of specific identification and beautification marks designed on the face or body. These are presented as bold appliqué within jackets and trousers, and as pleats in shirts. Textured fabrics and subtle raw edges create another layer to the scarring theme. Stripes are used to great effect with a colour palette reminiscent of the traditional Yoruba *Asooke*. The collection while shining a light on beauty which does not conform to a Western or modern ideal, remains in itself very modern and sophisticated. Like scarring it bears a permanent signature of Nigerian heritage.

About U.Mi-1

Essence: Tailoring with a twist inspired by Nigerian culture with a British and Japanese aesthetic

U.Mi-1 (pronounced you.me.one) is U.Mi-1 is a contemporary brand for the modern cool man. It tells a different side of the African fashion story with collections inspired by Nigerian culture, architecture and art. Headed by Nigerian designer Gozi Ochonogor who calls London, Tokyo and Lagos her homes, U.Mi-1 collections are a blend of British tailoring aesthetic with the hallmark of Japanese artisanship and African spirit, delivering innovative designs and quality. Best described as tailoring with a twist, U.Mi-1 focuses on style, comfort and quality with interesting detailing that the wearer discovers anew.

About the designer, Gozi Ochonogor

Gozi Ochonogor studied Software Engineering at Imperial College London and menswear design at Central School of Fashion London. An astute pattern-cutter, her approach to tailoring is like that of an engineer - with a zeal for perfection and attention to detail. Having lived in Nigeria, the United Kingdom and Japan, Gozi describes herself as a world citizen and believes that it is through our similarities that we begin to appreciate our differences. This ethos is at the heart of U.Mi-1.

Gozi Ochonogor Statement

"I thank the Ethical Fashion Initiative for the opportunity to show my collection at Pitti Uomo. EFI's support for artisans in the African continent is commendable and I applaud the entire team for their dedication and drive in proving that it is simply opportunities that hinder success stories."

U.Mi-1 kindly thanks Nigerian artist, *Babajide Olatunji*, for permitting the use of his "Tribal Marks Series I & II, Charcoal & Pastel on Paper 2013-2015" for the U.Mi-1 Generation Africa show projection.



About Lai-momo

Lai-momo is a cooperative that provides services in communication, carries out research and provides technical assistance for development. Through our work, we find solutions to the challenges of a multicultural society, specialising in issues around migration, European integration and relations with Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

Immigration is an important focus for us and at Lai-momo we aim to facilitate the development of an integrated society. Our approach provides support to individuals and groups to empower them and increase their capacity to actively manage their own lives and take part in community activities. For this, we implement a **community-based approach** by working with local municipalities and supporting them through counselling services specific to the citizens, territorial agencies, educational institutions and local volunteering associations.

Lai-momo & Asylum Seekers

Since July 2014, Lai-momo has helped run a reception center which hosts almost 300 asylum-seekers in the Bologna province. In February 2014 Lai-momo expanded this activity with the Prefecture of Bologna and several municipalities with the goal to open and manage emergency reception facilities in the Bologna Province for asylum seekers to find refuge. Lai-momo is also part of Bologna's SPRAR (*Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati*) project, which raises awareness on issues related to asylum and international protection. With the current mass arrival of asylum seekers to Europe, Lai-momo has created *Asylum Corner*, an editorial project presenting different perspectives, from "grassroot" social workers, political/institutional actors, associations and not-for-profit organisations' staff. www.asylumcorner.eu.

Africa e Mediterraneo

Lai-momo publishes a bi-annual journal called "Africa e Mediterraneo" which explores cultural, historical and societal aspects of African countries (Contemporary Art, Photography, African Fashion, Tourism and Heritage Promotion, Comics and Cartoons ...). Africa e Mediterraneo has grown into a not-for-profit platform that supports communication, education and research projects that encourages learning on contemporary Africa and contributes to the coexistence of populations from diverse ethnicities brought to Europe through migration. Africa e Mediterraneo has a pioneering role in the study and the promotion of African cultural expression and production both in Italy and abroad. The organisation has a particular vocation in supporting comics by African authors. Since 2002, it has promoted *Africa Comics and the Africa e Mediterraneo Award* for the best unpublished comics by African authors, it the only prize dedicated to authors from all over Africa. Since 2004, Africa e Mediterraneo works on *Comics for Equality* (part of the European Union funded development and intercultural education project), promoting intercultural awareness by involving comic artists with migrant background and developing educational initiatives in more than 10 EU countries.

Statement from Andrea Marchesini Reggiani, President of Lai-Momo

"Lai-momo and Africa e Mediterraneo have always paid serious attention to the images and concepts of contemporary Africa. The partnership with ITC Ethical Fashion Initiative represents a great occasion to build valuable and concrete paths together with artisans and the creative talent of this continent, through specific and innovative actions for asylum-seekers and the territories that host them."