

**YAV**

YOUNG AFRICAN VISIONARIES MAGAZINE

MARCH/APRIL ISSUE

# **VOL. 1 ISSUE ONE: AFRICAN RENAISSANCE**

**AFRICA AID  
DOING MORE  
HARM THAN GOOD**

**PHENOM ENAL WOMEN  
10 YEAR OLD FEMALE RAPPERS**

**GOLDEN GLOVES  
IMANE KAABOUR  
EDUCATIONAL BOXING**

**12  
YOUNG  
AFRICAN  
VISIONARIES**

**YOUNG AFRICAN FILMMAKERS**

**VISIONARY OF THE MONTH  
MARI MALEK**

**KEEPING AFRICA RELEVANT  
LILIAN BLANKSON**



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear YAV Readers,

Our mission statement is: “Envision Tomorrow Today”, meaning dream and make it happen. YAV Magazine aims to share the stories of real young Africans worldwide making a difference and those who have inspired them. We are different from most magazines because we take pride in providing our audiences a quality publication with not only current news but a magazine with a creative and innovative layout.

YAV Magazine also takes pride in our scholarship initiative which will be our way of staying connected to the communities we serve. To be a young African visionary means to dream big and work hard to provide for those in your community; we at YAV salute you.

Sincerely,

Rebekah A. Frimpong  
Editor/Publisher YAV Magazine





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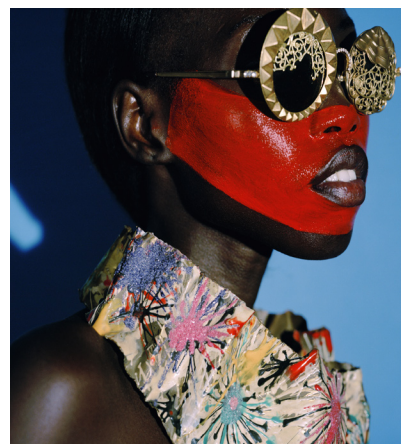
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**Koku Gonza; LOVE**

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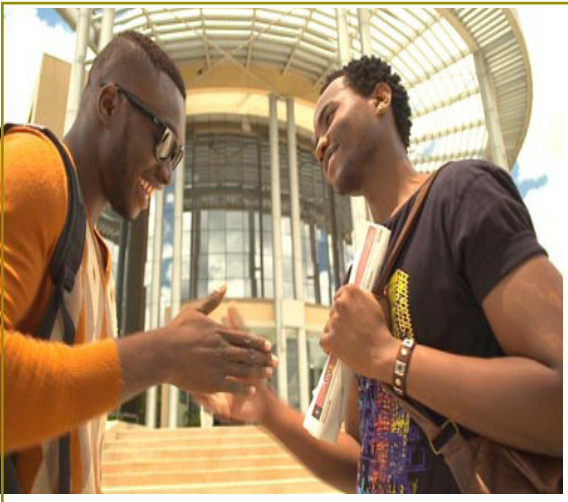


# YAV

YOUNG AFRICAN VISIONARIES MAGAZINE

## ENVISION TOMORROW TODAY

### CONTRIBUTORS **Issue One: African Renaissance**



**MAZUBA KAPAMBWE**

Writer/Blogger-New York and Zambia

MTV Kenya Connect; A Write Up on New MTV Show Shuga



**GILBERT FRANKS DANIELS**

Photojournalist-Kampala ,Uganda

Phenomenal Women: A Photo Expose of the Youngest Female Rappers of Uganda & KAMPALA: Culture Snapshot

#### **African Renaissance: What it Means to Us**

Africa is currently experiencing a renaissance of sorts with young Africans both on the continent and abroad challenging stereotypes, breaking records, and creating new wave art reflecting a global African identity. So what does this mean? With this new movement going on within African communities worldwide, this means a new surge in economic advancement on the continent, new political perspectives, and dynamic art emerging from the influence of this great awakening of the new African spirit. This issue will feature some of the young African visionaries apart of this “African Renaissance”.



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YOUNG AFRICAN VISIONARIES MAGAZINE

## WHO WE ARE

## ENVISION TOMORROW TODAY

# YAV

YOUNG AFRICAN VISIONARIES MAGAZINE

MARCH/APRIL ISSUE

**VOL. 1 ISSUE ONE: AFRICAN RENAISSANCE**



### THE MAGAZINE INNOVATIVE

### OUR BUSINESS ENTERPRISING

### OUR AUDIENCE INSPIRING

### OUR COMMUNITY CREATIVE



### YAV MAGAZINE: MISSION STATEMENT ENVISION TOMORROW TODAY

YAV MAGAZINE SEEKS TO FIND THE MOST INNOVATIVE WAYS TO PROVIDE STORIES TO OUR READERS THAT ARE RELEVANT. OUR ENTERPRISING SPIRIT, ALLOWS FOR A BUSINESS THAT WILL GROW WITH OUR READERSHIP. WE TAKE PRIDE IN THAT OUR AUDIENCE INSPIRES OUR TEAM TO REPORT STORIES OF TRIUMPH, SUCCESS, & INSPIRATION. YAV MAGAZINE IS ALWAYS LOOKING FOR CREATIVE WAYS TO ENGAGE WITHIN THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY OF YOUNG AFRICANS WORLDWIDE.

# YAV

YOUNG AFRICAN VISIONARIES MAGAZINE

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STATUESQUE EVENTS

by Feyisola

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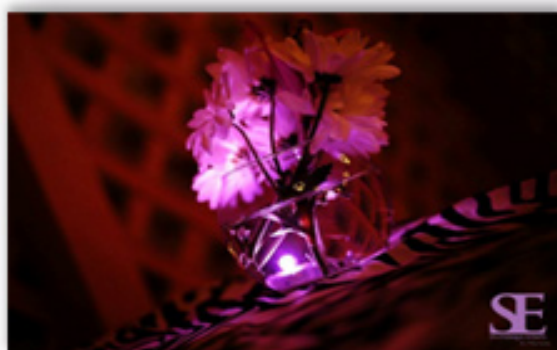
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Maffé Tiga" (Peanut butter stew) is a romantic dramedy about a young African woman who finds that love is the true connection between her heritage and her future. After struggling to make ends meet and relationship trouble, an unexpected letter from her grandmother reveals that generations of women in her family have faced similar challenges. Rather than giving up they pass down a secret that draws them closer to each other and to their dreams. Oumou must decide if she will draw on the wisdom of her family or try to figure life out on her own.



CARAMEL CAPPUCCINO FILMS PRESENTS

A MOHAMED DIONE FILM "MAFFÉ TIGA" PEANUT BUTTER STEW

MARIE JOSEPHINE ZOUMANIGUI MOHAMED DIONE STEPHANIE WILLIAMS PAMELA HOLT

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY MOHAMED DIONE PRODUCED BY STEPHANIE WILLIAMS PRODUCED BY JUDITH MAYER PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER ULUKPO

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MAFFÉ TIGA  
Peanut butter stew

CARAMEL CAPPUCCINO FILMS PRESENTS

# MAFFÉ TIGA

peanut butter stew



MARIE JOSEPHINE ZOUMANIGUI MOHAMED DIONE STEPHANIE WILLIAMS PAMELA HOLT

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Written By Staff and Photos Courtesy of ESFA

## IMANE KAABOUR

Imane Kaabour is a fighter; fighting for African youth in and outside the boxing ring. She is the President of the association Education and Sport for Africa (ESFA) and creator of the new initiative Educational Boxing in Developing Countries program. Kaabour is also an athlete, boxing trainer, and youth instructor. She has 10 years experience in boxing, and three years as a competitive boxer. She was also privileged to be a New York City Golden Gloves semi-finalist in 2010. After obtaining her first degree in Pedagogical Sciences and Education in Italy, she gained experience as an intercultural mediator and educator. Kaabour later obtained a Masters degree in Anthropology and Ethnology. Her interest in fighting sports and the human sciences helps her to improve herself every day, for this reason she is convinced that offering education skills through Educational Boxing to socially and economically disadvantaged kids, can positively change their lives. YAV Magazine got the chance to interview Imane Kaabour and ask her about the challenges she has faced being a female boxer and the her accomplishments thus far in preparation to form her Educational Boxing program coming to Africa.

## **GOLDEN GLOVES-IMANE KAABOUR**

**Q: Can you share with YAV some of the challenges you have faced breaking into the field of boxing?**

Being a female boxer is never easy, especially if you live in a country where women boxing is still little known or little followed. Italy is still a tough ground for women, despite the many struggles and many accomplishments, they are still not totally free to be who they are and what they want to be. In my field as intercultural mediator I haven't found a lot of problems because the job requires you to be a person who knows at least two languages and two cultures, in my case the Italian and the Moroccan. For years I worked mainly with children and women because I was often dismissed as a woman when it came to working with men especially in harsh environments such as the jail even if it was my desire to do this kind of experience. Now that I'm trying to build up my association ESFA Education and Sport for Africa, the challenges that I often face are not my gender or skin color but the fact that I am an intelligent young woman with many ambitions. We live in a country that does not help young people to grow and achieve goals in life. Indeed often if you are an intelligent person and you have good ideas, the bureaucracy, the unsustainable costs, the anti-growth policies, force you to give up or it make you feel that the only solution is to go to another country. Right now I'm working on raising awareness among the local community with boxing and education as means of positive impact on young people's lives. The practical assistance that these two elements together can give them is highly effective. Unfortunately I often face strong cultural barriers that stand against boxing and picture it as an aggressive, violent and harmful sport.

**Q: Do you find discrimination in your field or feel as an African that some things are harder to maintain?**

In Italy there is a lot of xenophobia and racism, raised mainly from the 90s and still going on, thanks to an increasingly angry politic and the media that portray immigrants as an evil to be fought. In fact there are many people who struggle against this attitude and



Italians in general are very hospitable and generous people, so many immigrants feel good in Italy. For example it's not difficult to find a low level job but it is quite difficult to see an African doctor or an Asian bus driver or in general an immigrant working in a high position especially in politics. Things started changing tough, it is going to be a long journey but I'm sure Italy will be soon a real intercultural country. As I said my job requires you to be either an immigrant or to know very well a second language and culture other than yours so being African-Moroccan raised in Italy went to my advantage.

**Q: What inspires you to continue to pursue your dream?**

The dream of finally seeing Africa as a continent that stands up by itself without the need of any help. My biggest inspirations are the men and women who fight for their children to give them a better future, are the kids who despite having little available they are able to create a better future and they try to help people around them. In ESFA we do not believe we can save the world but we know we have potential and a great desire to change positively as much as we can. What we want is to give others the tools that we ourselves have received in the course of our lives. To be literate and have a good education, to have the opportunity to practice a sport, to play like a child when is a child, etc..



**Q: Who were role models growing up?**

My mother. Despite the hard life she had, she has always gone on and she never lowered her head in front of adversity. She taught us to be free and do what is right for ourselves. I will do my best to grow ESFA because I am sure that Africa's future will be more prosperous if we give our youth a better formal education, sport and raise their awareness on issues that concern what is good for our continent. ESFA's motto is "Formal education + Awareness + Sports = Development"

**Q: What has been your greatest achievements thus far?**

We brought our idea to the Italian Boxing Federation and AIBA hoping for their future cooperation, we are working on opening an educational sport center in Genoa, Italy, and we are laying the foundation to open another one in Kampala (Uganda) as soon as the Genoese center will be active and will start showing good results. Unfortunately it is a difficult economic period throughout the world especially in Italy therefore we find many difficulties in fundraising, which is the only mean of support for our project. We are determined to go ahead tough and break down the barriers that we face.

**Q: If you could give advice to young Africans what would it be in regards to success?**

Think of possible goals. Do not settle on unattainable goals, you must have clear objectives that are possible to achieve. As soon as the first goals are achieved you can move to the next ones, and then step by step until you reach the ultimate goal. Think of union, and joining with others who share the same ideas because the union is strength. Then there is knowledge; without knowledge you cannot go anywhere, so you should read and study because life is an open book in front of us just pick it up and start reading. Lastly I would say love. You need to love deeply what you do and the ideas you have this helps you in the hard moments and gives you the strength to go on and not give up.

**Q: What projects are you currently working on?**

Our main project right now is to build up the educational sport center in Genoa (Italy) and make sure it starts working by September 2012. To do this we will organize various events such as concerts and theater performances to raise the first funds. We will also be present in different sport events which will take place in town to introduce ESFA and our mission, and maybe find new volunteers.

**Q: What is next for you? What hopes do you have for the future?**

Personally I'm planning to do a volunteer experience in Kampala (Uganda) for 6 months. I think this experience will help me to know the local culture and give me the chance to come in contact with many organizations with which to collaborate in the future. As for my hopes for the future, I hope that finally many people will see their human rights being respected and that they will be given the opportunity and the tools to build a better world for themselves. Through ESFA and educational boxing we hope to give our contribution.

**Q: In your African country of heritage what are you looking forward to see happen back home?**

Morocco is a beautiful country with an ancient tradition and its economy right now is growing very fast. Unfortunately, there is still a lot of poverty and the educational system is not the best. The children of most of the population do not receive an adequate education and many kids in the countryside and mountains do not have the chance to go to school because the schools are very far, in fact a lot of them walk for hours to get to school. Of course there are many attempts to improvement but what I hope is that there will be more work on social and political level to give a better education to all this kids and so a better future to the country.

**Find out more about Educational Boxing here:**  
**imane.kaabour@mail.com**  
**Facebook: Imane Kaabour (ESFA group)**

# YAV

YOUNG AFRICAN VISIONARIES MAGAZINE

## ENVISION TOMORROW TODAY



EDUCATING OUR YOUTH: YAV SCHOLARSHIP INITIATIVE

### EDUCATING AFRICA'S YOUTH

#### YAV Magazine Scholarship Initiative

YAV Magazine will have a special scholarship initiative that will be available to three promising young African visionaries! We will be rewarding youth in these three fields of leadership:

- Environmental
- Social Awareness
- Health & Science

### HOW TO APPLY

YAV Scholarship Initiative is open to youth in Africa between the ages of 18-29 years old who are promising visionaries. YAV Magazine will be accepting applications for YAV Scholarship Initiative from March 18, 2012 to May 25, 2012. How to apply as well as rules and guidelines can be found on YAV Magazine's website along with all information regarding the scholarship. The winners of the YAV Scholarship will be announced in June 2012 and featured in an issue of YAV Magazine. Further questions about how to apply or to become a sponsor for the YAV Scholarship Initiative contact YAV Magazine at [bgnbpro@gmail.com](mailto:bgnbpro@gmail.com) to get more information.

Visit [www.yavmagazine.com](http://www.yavmagazine.com) to learn more about the YAV Scholarship Initiative



## EDUCATING THRU MUSIC

Written By YAVStaff

Photos Courtesy of Waterfalls

R.F Photography

### **Musician: Mwesigwa Patrick**

shares his hope to bring change in his community through his music. The Ugandan musician currently living in Kenya is working on a new album and is releasing two songs that address the issues of HIV/AIDS and poverty. His first single “She Said” will be release in April and the video as well and is about a young girl finding hope living with HIV/A in a slum in Africa.



Mwesigwa Patrick also known by his stage name Waterfalls, says one of the challenges he faces in getting his music career off the ground is finding the right platform for his art that works well with his message of empowerment. He says: “so many times with my music when I want my music to be played on the radio in Uganda I have been asked to pay money...and working without pay this is difficult.” Patrick further continues: “it is very hard and it is like trying to break through a wall because of all of the corruption, and it is hope that keeps me moving on knowing that I will make it through as long as am still breathing.”

Patrick says he is inspired by the men and women who never gave up. He has been inspired by people like Frank Hopkins, Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, and many other like them. Patrick is currently apart of the acoustic movement in African music right now blending Hip-Hop and traditional acoustic sounds. His new album called *The Incredible Strength* will showcase Patrick’s unique blend of acoustic, R&B, and Hip-Hop music. Patrick hopes to make enough money to one day provide for his himself and his young sisters. “Change is what I long for...seeing graduates get jobs, mothers not having to burn under the sun looking for what to eat, and young men being creators of employment for themselves. For me, I am a musician; if I can find shows to perform that will be a brand new day for me.”





# 12 YOUNG AFRICAN VISIONARIES

**STORIES OF YOUNG AFRICANS  
CHALLENGES & TRIUMPH**

**THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE;  
A MOVEMENT OF SELF ACTUALIZATION  
OF A NEW AFRICAN IDENTITY**

YAV Magazine got the chance to interview twelve young Africans making their marks as entrepreneurs, artists, musicians, activists, and emerging leaders in their communities. We asked them all questions about the challenges they face, their goals, and their success stories. Their stories are inspiring; ranging from a mother who has managed to make “Africa relevant” again establishing a new standard in the music and television market for African musicians; Lilian Blankson shares her achievements as an executive working for BET International. Then there is the story of two young girls, MC Roy and MC Flowers, and their love for hip-hop along with their quest to bring about change for women in their Ugandan





community. Filmmaker Mohamed Dione, shares how he has found joy acting and producing films that challenge stereotypes. Anthropologist and photographer Adama Delphine Fawundu shares her love for photography and using that medium to raise awareness around issues of justice for women and the poor. YAV Magazine reveals with these stories of the unheard voices of young Africans who are challenging the status quo and following the passions that are in their hearts while embracing their African heritage.



BET International executive Lilian Blankson is at the forefront of the music media industry helping develop programs that share international musicians' music with the world. Blankson as a Ghanaian-American feels she is committed to "keeping Africa relevant" when it comes to putting together international music programs for BET. She is most well known for her production of the BET African Cypher featuring Ghana's Hiplife artists like the likes of Reggie Rockstone and has also helped promote artists like D'Banj and Akon. Blankson shares with YAV Magazine a candid interview of her challenges and achievements.

*What have been some of the challenges you have faced breaking into your field?*

I would have to say getting the support and appreciation for African talent and music overall. While BET International has provided a great deal of support, realistically, it is limited in the amount of support it can provide. BET domestic has not quite embraced the African market yet because it has not yet proven its value from a ratings and demographic numbers perspective. We need to be substantiated through numbers so that they can see our value first hand as consumers AND viewers. I am optimistic however about my mission which is aiding to bring western exposure to African artists and talent overall.

*Do you feel as an African, that some things are harder to maintain? For example is it harder to get a job in your field?*

From a general standpoint, I would imagine that to be the case, but personally being born and raised in America, I have not encountered that challenge through my job. I could see however, how that would be a challenge/hurdle for others particularly if their line work does not pertain directly to an international cause or effort. It has been difficult to get the powers that be to understand the potential in Africa and its artists. I struggle with that on a regular basis and I think it is a HUGE area of frustration for me.



Contributed By YAV Staff and Images by R.F.

*What inspires you to continue to pursue excellence?*

First and foremost I would have to say my love and appreciation for God inspires me to be an example daily. When others see what he has done for me, they too may want to know and experience him for themselves. My pride and absolute adoration for my continent also inspires me a great deal. I am also inspired by the realization that I have been involved in many "firsts," such as the first ever African cypher to appear on BET amongst many others. When I see the direct effects and benefits that the artists experience from what I do, and the response from their fan-base, I am recharged and driven to push harder and do even more. Not just through BET, but independently as well - there are a variety of projects I am working on executing through my company, Princess Entertainment & Productions. Finally, I would

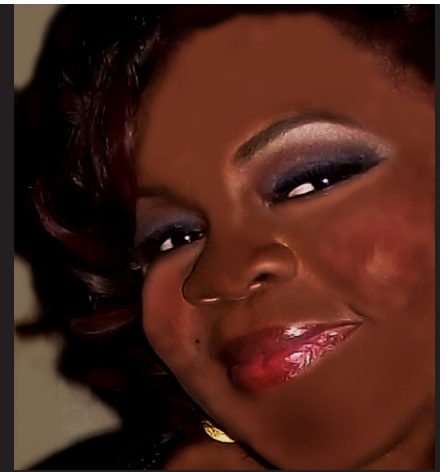
have to say that the love of my life, my nineteen year old son Christian, inspires me tremendously. Watching him grow up and attain all the hopes and dreams I have for him, inspires me to continue to work hard, push on and continue to be an example for him. He has watched me work tirelessly to accomplish my goals and to help him get into college. When he thanks me and calls me his hero, I am so grateful and even more inspired because I know that I am doing something incredibly right!

### ***Who were your role models?***

My parents would be the first. My father (now retired,) worked very hard and always provided excellence in everything that he did - he was thorough, devoted, and meticulous in EVERY aspect of his profession. My mother (now a Reverend,) has always been driven to work very hard and never allows anything or anyone to stand in her way. She is bold, fearless and believes that anything is possible if only you pursue it hard enough. I am considered to be a bit of a workaholic because I honestly feel that there is so much to get done and a small window of time to execute. I want to know that I accomplished a great deal and did not waste time or opportunities - that is the footprint that I desire to leave on this earth. I would have to mention that Jacque Coleman, my very first boss at BET Networks, was also a tremendous role model for me. She was a female television executive - a GIANT accomplishment at a time when the field was male dominated. She taught me to push, fight and command respect by staying current, informed, detail oriented, flawless and creative. The biggest lesson she left me with is the understanding that people did not always have to like me, and many times they would not, but I should make certain that they RESPECTED me by knowing that I was very honest, hard working and professional and always about the business. That advice has made all the difference in my life and my career. I owe my parents and Jacque everything because their influence on my life has been invaluable.

### ***What has been your most precious achievement thus far?***

Personally, it would have to be raising my son and



getting him into St. John's University. It was a dream, but to see it become reality is so gratifying for me as a mother. Professionally there are several: but I will condense it simply by saying "Getting this far." The journey has entailed back breaking thankless work, but when I see how much I have accomplished and the reach of my work, I am humbled, so incredibly grateful and inspired to keep pushing – receiving a F.A.C.E. List Award by Face2Face Africa was the icing on the cake. There is no emotion that surpasses that of being acknowledged for hard work and being appreciated on such an amazing platform. Everyday that I see that Award on my mantle I know that even more is expected of me so I have to push on.

### ***If you could give advice to young Africans what would it be in regards to success?***

It would depend on what they perceive as success. I would tell them that success to me, is derived from passion and not from financial gain or benefits initially. We are currently in a generation of immediacy – young adults who don't always want to put in the time and effort to make impact, but had it not been for others paving the way, these opportunities would not be extended to us today. Those who paved the way in order for us to become successful, did so with dedication, selflessness, and a relentless passion – there was no money involved for their impact so for me, they are the blue print to success. They were often motivated by their belief in what they were pursuing, their passion, hard work and faith in God. Without these qualities, where are we in life? Success and wealth are not always synonymous – nor easily attained. What is



the accomplishment and the impact? Those are the true measures for success and to attain that, you have to be patient, passionate, hard working and very skilled and knowledgeable in the field that you are pursuing.

***What projects are you currently working on?***

My hands are really full and I am driven and motivated to set the bar even higher for myself and attain more benchmarks than I did last year. I continue to write and produce for BET International. I have created a new entertainment series entitled Spotlight, for the network that should launch in a few weeks. We are also implementing a few African videos and Global Premieres on the international airings of 106 & Park in the UK & Africa. This year's BET Awards Best International Act categories are quickly approaching so I am working diligently towards that as well. In terms of writing, I am putting the finishing touches to my African short story collection, Awaiting Fate & Other Talking Texts. God willing, we can get it out by the end of the year. Finally, I am hoping that Princess Entertainment & Productions will be able to pull off an amazing show in Atlanta this year. If the sponsorship comes through for it, it would absolutely be the height of my 12 year career in television & entertainment.

***What is next for you? What hopes do you have for the future?***

There is so much that I want to accomplish – I want to continue to create an awareness, platforms and opportunities for African artists in America and Europe. I want to also continue to direct and produce creative and excellent programming for television and entertainment overall. I have big, big dreams and I am praying that God will make a way for me to attain them because my desire is to make a much bigger impact than I have thus far. Writing more books and creating African films is also my desire for the future. I guess you

can say, I want to remain passionate and relevant as I do what I believe God has called me to do.

***Africa is currently going through a renaissance of sorts, in your country of heritage what is the most exciting thing to you happening or what are you looking forward to see happen back home?***

I would have to say I am very happy with how Ghana is trying to stay current on so many levels – especially with a limited infrastructure in film and music. I see an amazing female director in Shirley Frimpong Manso creating excellent projects such as the Adams Apple series. Music and music video production is slowly on the rise and improving. Ghana's appreciation for music & entertainment has opened the doors of opportunity to A-List American artists such as Trey Songz & Rick Ross, to come and perform in the country. If they didn't see Ghana on the map they would not bother. I am hopeful that the successes in these areas will continue to flourish and perhaps impact other sectors in Ghana such as general politics and our economy. I would also like to see our hospitals and overall health profession receive a major overhaul and facelift – we are in a crisis and need help – NOW!

***Lastly, please let us know where we can find your work?***

You can find my day to day work on BET International available on DSTV and SKY amongst others platforms exclusively in the UK & Africa. My book, Rain Love Poetry & Portraits, is available for purchase at LILIANBOSSMAN@AOL.COM. The website for the book is RAINLOVEPOETRY.COM. Finally, you can keep up with me on Facebook and Twitter Lilian Blankson.

# Feyisola Ogunfemi

Written By YAV Staff  
Photo courtesy of SE



One of the most challenging things Feyisola Ogunfemi faced in becoming an Event Planner was convincing herself she was ready. She studied Computer Engineering and did a lot of work with student groups while an undergraduate sharpened her project management skills eventually helping her take the leap enrolling at NYU to study event planning. Ogunfemi now is finding that her past experiences enhance her ability to work on the logistics and pre-planning for events. Ogunfemi says: “making that first step was definitely the more difficult part”. YAV Magazine asks her more about what inspires her and current projects.

## ***What inspires you to continue to pursue excellence?***

Passion and faith inspire me. When you are passionate about what you do, you almost obsess over what that next step is going to be and connecting the dots that show you how to get there. I also have faith that with Christ, I can do all things, so if He co-signs on an idea I have, I run with it!

## ***Who were your role models?***

Harriett Tubman was one of my biggest role models. She struggled with so much, and had so little, but she used the little she had to help herself and others.

## ***What has been your most precious achievement thus far?***

My most precious achievement thus far has been creating a name for my business which goes beyond just my name. I smile every time I meet someone, tell them my name, and then give them a card and hear them respond “Oh, I’ve heard about this!” I

like that people usually want to reach out to Statuesque Events, not just Feyi.

## ***If you could give advice to young Africans what would it be in regards to success?***

Make a plan, educate yourself and understand what makes you different. There are many people who start something without first having the knowledge of it, knowing what the ultimate goal is or how they plan to get there so they stay stagnant. It’s also very important to seek counsel. Career and financial advice is very important.

## ***What projects are you currently working on?***

I’m working on a whole lot, but to mention a few, I am working with the Global Christian Event Network on their Annual Expo and Awards reception in March, With FACE Africa on their annual gala at the St. Regis Hotel in March, and a number of weddings and birthday parties for the rest of the year.

## ***What is next for you? What hopes do you have for the future?***

Next I plan to continue building and pushing the limit with different events that I work on. At some point in the future, I would like to have a few more full time planners on board so that we can expand to other areas and manage more than one event per day, but for now, I love being involved in every one!

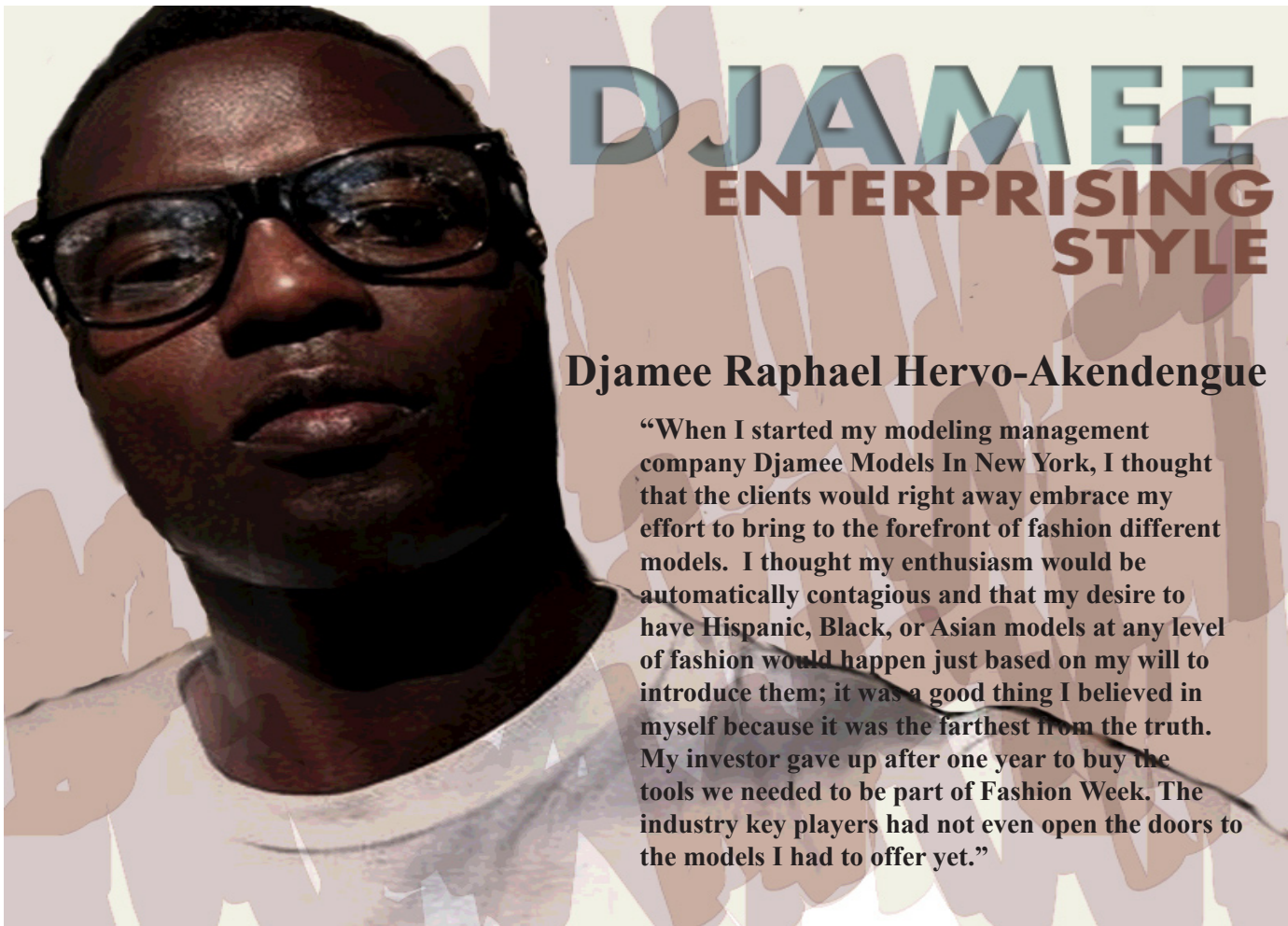
## ***In your country of heritage what is the most exciting thing to you happening or what are you looking forward to see happen back home?***

The most exciting thing for Nigerians right now is watching our Nigerian artists continue to flourish and take bigger stages. Outside of entertainment, there are many things happening in Nigeria as most people may know involving terrorism and the economy, especially following the lift of the fuel subsidy and I look forward to and hope that the government takes a more active role in addressing these issues.

## **Find more on Feyisola Ogunfemi visit:**

[www.StatuesqueEvents.com](http://www.StatuesqueEvents.com), [www.StatuesqueWeddings.com](http://www.StatuesqueWeddings.com), [www.facebook.com/StatuesqueEvents](https://www.facebook.com/StatuesqueEvents), [www.twitter.com/StatuesqueEvent](https://www.twitter.com/StatuesqueEvent) or [www.pinterest.com/StatuesqueEvent](http://www.pinterest.com/StatuesqueEvent)  
Feyisola’s blog : [feyisolas-inspiration.weebly.com](http://feyisolas-inspiration.weebly.com)





## Djamee Raphael Hervo-Akendengue

**“When I started my modeling management company Djamee Models In New York, I thought that the clients would right away embrace my effort to bring to the forefront of fashion different models. I thought my enthusiasm would be automatically contagious and that my desire to have Hispanic, Black, or Asian models at any level of fashion would happen just based on my will to introduce them; it was a good thing I believed in myself because it was the farthest from the truth. My investor gave up after one year to buy the tools we needed to be part of Fashion Week. The industry key players had not even open the doors to the models I had to offer yet.”**

YAV Magazine got to ask Djamee Raphael Hervo-Akendengue to share his experience in the fashion industry as a strategic model consultant, manager, and talent developer. Hervo-Akendengue shares in his own words the challenges in his field of work, how he found success, and what he hopes to see happen in the future with the acceptance of models of African descent in the fashion industry.

### THE CHALLENGE

I have heard a lot of Africans that are in the booking management field, and I feel the challenges we face has to do with the trait of resilience and persistence we often show. I feel the knowledge we have of beauty and sense of style from our motherland origins is an asset. We do not conform when we get into a field instead we lead. But in this industry mostly behind the scenes. It is well accepted to have the head bookers of agencies be from Africa and especially if they speak French; the better. Although, it might not always be the truth just a general assumption, but it was easy for me to develop Stanley Kaplan Talent Modeling Division. It was an opportunity I took even though after a year I had almost no resources left but eventually after 2 years I started getting the castings...it took time. The result: “if I set my mind on a project, I take all the time and persistence I can think of and I work on it until it is at the next level.” For example, when I met a model or an artist I have depth and vision and from a raw diamond I can see them a few years down the line as polished as they will be. The best reward is when I see in front of my eyes the reflection of my efforts.

### **INSPIRATION AND TRIUMPH**

My first role models were my parents. My dad had a career as a diplomat and my mom was a creative housewife. Their classicism and class was always at the back of my mind even in my wildest choices of fashion or work avenues. They had set a standard for me to achieve success. My mom went back to school when most of us were already grown and it hinted to me that it was possible to do the unthinkable and succeed. My greatest achievement so far is to have helped break barriers in the fashion industry by developing some of the most stunning and different models people have seen in a long time for the likes of Robert Knox with more than five worldwide United Colors Benetton ad campaigns. I remember growing up seeing these ads, but I feel I am only just getting started. So, while I am happy and grateful to have introduced recently the first male albino model in the world Shaun Ross, I will not feel that it is complete until he gets the major part in a movie that they usually give people who have go through hours of make up to achieve his natural look. For me, I understand it was a milestone when I saw my name and my picture twice in the *New York Times* in 2008 for doing something good and representing these models.

### **ADVICE TO FUTURE VISIONARIES**

Success is allowing yourself to dream and have the persistence to bring that dream to a master level of completion; in other words decide you will do something and have a strong passion and persistence to see your dream become a reality. Have faith, and forget all the negativity self inflicted or coming from outer sources energy and do not be scared of the unknown...follow your dreams.

### **THE FUTURE & HOPES FOR GABON**

I am currently developing the new rapper producer model actor Young Rahda and introducing a new voice, a singer who is 18 and his name is...you will have to stay tuned but this is BIG we are in the studio right now. I will continue establishing my brand Djamee Enterprise which include future stars "Djamee Model & Talent" and a line of Accessories that I hand made "Studded Spikes by Djamee." I am also working on a book called "V.I.P-Variou Imbeciles Protected" and the new media generated by online promotion.

In Gabon and in Africa, I am looking forward to seeing more young people developing similar businesses to mine without having to worry about how to sustain them. I feel it will help energize the local culture in Gabon and give it more authenticity. It is important to be willing to have a global vision when dealing with artists or models thus it will help our major cities in Gabon being known in the rest of the world through the artists we will bring out. It is happening already (the African renaissance) the old ways of thinking to rely on oil and other resources is already being replaced with more diverse entrepreneurship that is being encouraged at all levels of leadership. I think this is a great message of hope to our growing population.

Find out more about the work of Djamee on his website [www.djamee.com](http://www.djamee.com) which he designed and updates himself daily. This website includes a listing of his clients, his blog, videos, and more.





**In Kampala Uganda, there are two little girls picking up microphones and letting their voices be heard. MC Roy and MC Flowers as two little girls from Kampala using Hip-Hop to bring back joy to their communities and to push their own version of feminism and empowerment. Covered by photojournalist Gilbert Frank Daniels, follow the journey of MC Roy and MC flowers in pictures.**

Copy Right:  
Bwette Daniel Gilbert



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THEIR STORY IN PHOTOS  
MC ROY & MC FLOWERS  
10 YEAR OLD  
RAPPERS OF KAMPALA

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
GILBERT FRANK DANIELS





***SPEAKING TRUTH AND EMPOWERING WOMEN AND YOUTH...***



**MC Roy pictured here at youth conference and radio station in Uganda with MC Flowers. MC Flowers pictured at top with acclaimed Nigerian singer Nneka at special performance at the German Embassy in Uganda.**







# Kwame Andah

Kwame Andah is the co-founder and Director of Marketing & Communications for the NGO Coders4Africa (C4A). Coders4Africa creates and supports a Pan-African community of competent, internationally certified IT professionals focused on developing the IT tools for African Agriculture, Business, Education, Health Care, Government and general social needs. Andah notes that Coder4Africa focuses on the general lack of communications infrastructure beyond major cities (mobile service, internet access, broadband internet service) is a major challenge in African countries as well as the monopoly/non-competitive pricing on communications services that exist in areas where services are provided. Most importantly some national communications regulations do not allow/encourage competition and don't compare favorably with the regulatory regime in advanced economies. YAV Magazine asked Kwame Andah to explain more about Coder4Africa and his vision for the future of IT in Africa.



***Do you feel as an African, that some things are harder to maintain? For example is it harder to get a job in your field?***

No, rather I think about the richness that embodies being African –the essence of, my roots, heritage, culture and pride. I figure having all those innate to me, makes life more fulfilling. I reckon at this point in the economy, it's harder to get a job in any field. The fact that I'm African is not going to be an impediment of success in my reality. Asides from being a co-founder of Coders4Africa, my 9-5 revolves around the world of Web Analytics. At this point, the demand for people in that field outnumbers the available bodies.

***What inspires you to continue to pursue excellence?***

My 9 yr old son Nile and his continued thirst for knowledge is my inspiration. I am also thankful for all other individuals who came before me and created a way/path for us to pursue our dreams. My family is the foundation of why I do the things I do. They have instilled this knowledge in me to always remember to put Africa first, no matter where I am. I was able to attend school in Ghana, Cote D'Ivoire, Egypt, Malta, France, UK and USA thanks to them. All those experiences I learned from travelling are another source of inspiration. My heritage and the deep rooted Ashanti/Fanti culture are the pillars of this foundation that guides me towards excellence. None of the above would have been possible without the constant guidance and protection from the Most High. My inspiration stems from being able to lend a hand to my community in becoming the brainpower for the future African techy.

***Who were your role models?***

My role models are people who stand up for their rights; folks who despite the odds, hardships, and setbacks placed in their path continue to follow their dreams. My role models are all the freedom fighters and revolutionaries who created their own paths and trails for the betterment of their people. My role models are parents who instill knowledge and wisdom in their children, and teach them that impossible is nothing. My role model is he/she who faces defeat and rises up out of the ashes to try again. My role models are everyday people.

***What has been your most precious achievement thus far?***

C4A had a successful year in 2011. As a community benefiting organization our strategy was to first galvanize software developers and IT professionals across Africa. We held conferences in Mali, Senegal, Ghana and Kenya and were able to create an ecosystem of 900+ IT professionals in Africa and the Diaspora.

**Conferences**

1. C4A Senegal Conference January 2011
2. C4A Mali Conference January 2011
3. C4A Ghana Conference May 2011 (Sponsors: Oracle, Bentley Systems, Ecoband.Net, AITI, JUGAfrica)
4. C4A Kenya Conference August 2011 (Sponsors: IBM, Microsoft, Strathmore University, iLabAfrica, ComputerAid Intl, Safaricom)
5. C4A Burkina Faso Conference February 2012

**Workshops Conducted**

- C4A In Action (Senegal) 5 workshops conducted. Included boot camp style training for a total of 400+ attendance - Sponsored by Microsoft, Oracle, SupInfo and IDev1
- C4A In Action (Ghana) 1 workshop conducted (Java 7 event) - Sponsored by Oracle

Internship for 2 C4A members

- Placed in 2 local Senegalese companies: Allopapiers SARL and IDEV SARL

C4A gives a monthly stipend to each intern.

In terms of personal achievements outside of C4A, I would say the most precious was also being granted an exclusive license to market an academic competition software by the US Department of Energy's Princeton



Plasma Physics Lab. This was at a time when I was laid off and looking to go into business for myself. I created the then Internet Marketing company Kreative Waves which I later sold. Read more <http://www.pppl.gov/PPPLnews106.cfm>

***If you could give advice to young Africans what would it be in regards to success?***

Expand your mind, and believe that there are no limits. Read. Look for common solutions to problems that exist in another countries and their relevance to yours. There may be an opportunity to improve upon it and make it available in your location. Pray. For wisdom and guidance in all things you do and decisions you make. Believe you are already successful, plan your work and work your plan.

***What projects are you currently working on?***

We are organizing 2 events, one in Burkina Faso and another in Ghana. Themed 'Coders4Africa In Action', the first goal is to regroup and discuss current C4A projects



and activities. Participants help us choose a particular technology they want to discuss and we hold a coding session and demo based on the technology of choice. The other goal is to bring together under one roof local programmers and startups companies. Tech Firms, interesting and local enterprises. The idea is for them to showcase their activities but also work with the audience in trying to find solutions to their current IT projects.

**We are also building the following:**

- Elimu: a Universal School Management Systems with web and mobile capabilities (open source)
- a farming inventory system that will market African farmers crops and products
- LinguAfrica: a centralized repository of all identified African languages. The system relies on patterns and similitudes between languages. LinguAfrica is able to classify and group languages that are very similar in vocabulary, grammar and syntax.
- GeoSeek.me: a POW locator – spawned by the war in Ivory Coast and helping displaced individuals locate their families and loved ones.
- Mfishing: a fishing industry management system that will allow mobile input from fishermen and web for data management and KPI.

I am also a musician in my spare time and I am working with a label on some music that is socio-politically conscience. Music is my backbone, my *raison-d'être* and the strength to keep-keeping on.

***What is next for you? What hopes do you have for the future?***

I am learning to be still and listen to that voice inside of me. For now we have a lot of work to do for Coders4Africa, myself and the other co-founders -Amadou Daffe, Ali Kone, Ibrahim Cisse, Moustapha Cisse and Vincent Muller. Our hope for the future is that Africa will be catapulted to the forefront of Information Communication Technology (ICT) through the initiative we have embarked on. We are learning as we go along, and hopefully many more technopreneurs of African decent will continue to contribute and give back to their respective communities.

***Africa is currently going through a renaissance of sorts, in your country of heritage what is the most***

***exciting thing to you happening or what are you looking forward to see happen back home?***

Most importantly for me, I am hoping that Africans learn to rely on each other to solve our problems. Through this renaissance hopefully we can learn to be self-sufficient and love one another. One of the things that is exciting for me is the rate at which mobile usage has sky-rocketed back home. More people are getting access to the information they need/want without the use of a desktop. Internet usage is also becoming cheaper which in turn is allowing more people to get online. It is really making the world a smaller place and providing solutions/tools for African Agriculture, Business, Education, Health Care, Government and general social needs.

**Find out more about Kwame Andah's projects by going to Google and searching Coders4Africa.**

Website: [coders4africa.org](http://coders4africa.org)

Facebook: [facebook.com/pages/](https://facebook.com/pages/Coders4Africa/187440224606459)

[Coders4Africa/187440224606459](https://facebook.com/pages/Coders4Africa/187440224606459)

Twitter: [@coders4africa](https://twitter.com/coders4africa)

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/groups?about=&gid=3792478&trk=anet\\_ug\\_grppro](https://linkedin.com/groups?about=&gid=3792478&trk=anet_ug_grppro)





I was really blessed to have some amazing role models. My parents, my 3 older sisters, Miatta Fahnbulleh, Brandy, Shania Twain, Anita Baker, Gwen Stefani just to name a few.

***What has been your most precious achievement thus far?***

Waking up & watching my dreams materialize everyday is my most precious achievement.

***If you could give advice to young Africans what would it be in regards to success?***

I would say define it for yourself. For some people it's a big house & a fancy car for others it's traveling world & adventure. Find what you love and build your life around that.

***What projects are you currently working on?***

I'm performing my recently released project, Portrait 25, collaborating with some amazing artists and working on my iAfrica campaign with some awesome organizations.

***What is next for you? What hopes do you have for the future?***

I want to continue to inspire the world with my words and to be better everyday as a human being, as an African woman, and as an artist.

***Africa is currently going through a renaissance of sorts, in your country of heritage what is the most exciting thing to you happening or what are you looking forward to see happen back home?***

Liberia is experiencing the return of so many of it's people now that we are post conflict. I am looking forward to our development and our contributions to our nation and the world.

**Find out more about Nyna Touch and listen to her music on her website: [www.nynatouch.com](http://www.nynatouch.com)**

Nyna Touch, prides herself on representing her Liberian culture and was formerly Miss Liberia USA 2010. Now she prides herself on her passion of making music. She works as a TV host and has been working on her new released EP "Portrait 25". YAV Magazine got a chance to catch up with the Liberian diva and ask her about her goals for the future.

***What have been some of the challenges you have faced breaking into your field?***

Overcoming stereotypes of what a woman of color should sound like, look like and be like.

***Do you feel as an African, that some things are harder to maintain? For example is it harder to get a job in your field?***

No, in fact my culture has enhanced my work greatly.

***What inspires you to continue to pursue excellence?***

Being a positive example to others & my legacy.

***Who were your role models in life and in music?***

# MODEL CITIZEN

## Idia Aisien



Idia Aisien is a Nigerian model and humanitarian, who is intelligent and focused on her future educational goals and making a difference in her community. Aisien voices in depth with YAV Magazine the challenges she feels African models face today and how she has overcome those obstacles.

Written By YAV Staff and Photo By Zach Bowens

### ***Making the decision to become a model, what was your biggest challenge?***

I would say one of the biggest challenges I have faced was letting people tell me who I am or what I can achieve. I woke up one day and I had to shut everybody out. It took a while and a lot of discipline, but it has been a blessing, because I no longer doubt myself. I simply look forward and work harder and harder everyday.

### ***Do you feel as an African, that some things are harder to maintain?***

I definitely think that in the fashion industry things are very difficult for women of color as a whole. As an African model it gets even trickier, because most people picture the very dark skinned and bald models so most lighter skinned girls may find it harder. I have actually been told in the past, by a designer, that my skin tone is too “in between.” As far as the media industry goes, I think it is sometimes hard to cross over to international reporting due to language barriers or having a different accent that is not refined or polished. It makes it harder for an international audience to relate or understand.

### ***What inspires you to continue to pursue excellence?***

I think I am mostly inspired by life in itself, because waking up in the morning assures me that I have another chance to do things better than I did the day before. I am also inspired by all the great things that great people have done, because success would be impossible without persistence. I want my life to show people that anything is possible and I want to justify all the support and love I have gotten from my friends and family.



### ***Who were your role models?***

I look up to people that affect change or are the best at what they do. The first person would have to be Barack Obama for obvious reasons—he has changed history. The second is the late Nigerian journalist, Dele Giwa, for his courage and fairness in reporting. Learning about him inspired me at age 12 to go into the field of Journalism. And last but not least, the third person is Naomi Campbell because she is strong and graceful in one of the most cut-throat industries. Cliché or not, no other model has done it like she has. People have always said modeling cannot be a long term career but she's still standing, it's really amazing.

### ***What has been your most precious achievement thus far?***

My most precious achievement was being able to go to college and finish with a degree very young. I have met many people who do not have the same opportunities or means. I have also met other people who are very confused about what they want and that could happen to anyone so I just think it is a blessing.

### ***If you could give advice to young Africans what would it be in regards to success?***

The best advice I can give to anyone is to think outside the box and believe in yourself. Go for what you want and fight for the experiences that will make you happy, because you are the only one you have to answer to in the end. The best way to succeed is to imagine what you want to leave behind in this world, or just think of how you would like to be remembered. Also, aspire to make a positive impact on everyone you come in contact with and think about ways to improve the perceptions of our continent, because everyone has a part to play and no matter how small it's still equally important.

### ***What projects are you currently working on?***

I am presently the face and spokes model for a new hair campaign by a company called Sway Hair. I am also the Brand Ambassador for a clothing company called I Am Not A model. The company's primary focus is to promote healthy beauty and brand models as more than average pretty girls, by proving that



**Photo Provided By Sway Hair**

models also give back and perform their social responsibilities such as volunteering, caring about poverty, education, politics and the environment.

### ***What is next for you? What hopes do you have for the future?***

Right now I see grad school in my near future. I will be studying International Affairs or PR. I can't wait to be done with school so I can focus on my career. I also intend to take my modeling career to the next level—my focus now is getting to work with the best in the industry.

### ***Africa is currently going through a renaissance of sorts, in your country of heritage what is the most exciting thing to you happening or what are you looking forward to see happen back home?***

I am from Nigeria and my country is focused right now on rebranding itself. There are a lot of exciting developments mainly in our tourist attractions, and the fashion and entertainment industries. However, I can't wait to see more improvements in our political structure, and I also think we need to focus more on our foreign relations, defense and infrastructure.





# Mohamed Dione

Filmmaker and Actor, Mohamed Dione shares with YAV Magazine how he has made it in film industry while maintaining his cultural identity. Dione shares his current film projects and who inspired him to be successful.

## **What have been some of the challenges you have faced breaking into your field?**

Some challenges I've faced breaking into my field of acting are challenges that most actors face in the early stages of their careers. Things like representation are important because it's your representatives that can get you auditions that lead to work. Also quality roles; there are few quality roles and many actors fighting for those roles. You really have to set yourself apart and sometimes find your niche so you can really shine and that's when previously closed doors of opportunity will open for you. Acting and film-making are life-long challenges.

## **Do you feel as an African, that some things are harder to maintain? For example is it harder to get a job in your field?**

It's not necessarily easy to get a job in my field and often there aren't many opportunities. So you find yourself creating projects to keep yourself busy in between jobs and stay productive. African or not it's a tough business. But once you get a gig

Written By YAV Staff Photo By T.E.S. Images

or create a gig it can be maintained. With hard work and dedication you can do alright.

## **What inspires you to continue to pursue excellence?**

My big dreams; I've always dreamt really big. The realization of my dreams motivates me like no other thing. I'm on a mission. There are things that I need to get done before I leave this planet. There are stories I want to tell, people I want to inspire, things I want to learn, places I want to visit, things I want to change, and lives I want to upgrade. Through acting and film-making, I feel I can realize all my dreams and do so much more. I just really love and enjoy what I do.

## **Who were your role models?**

My mother and father are my role models. They fought to be where they are in life today. They showed me the world and gave me the world. They taught me to be ambitious and goal oriented whilst never forgetting where I came from and where I wanted to go. They instilled in me a hunger for knowledge and a mission to help others through my chosen medium or the medium that chose me. They are truly great people. One a fashion designer/restaurateur/ and UNESCO goodwill ambassador and the other a career diplomat and international businessman. Above all, great loving parents.

## **What has been your most precious achievement thus far?**

I think my most precious achievement thus far has been writing, producing, directing and co-starring in my own short film “Maffé Tiga” (Peanut Butter Stew). Throughout my acting career I’ve acted in films, TV shows, commercials, and plays and also modeled with big names in big projects. But the joy of seeing a project I conceived years ago develop into a final product has been amazing. To watch it go from my brain to the page to the screen just motivates me to do more. And I will. Acting is my first love. But because of the life I’ve lived and the things I’ve experienced I think it’s my duty to tell my story. Our stories. If you want to see more accurate depictions of your life or more stories you can relate to. Make them! The world is yours.

**If you could give advice to young Africans what would it be in regards to success?**

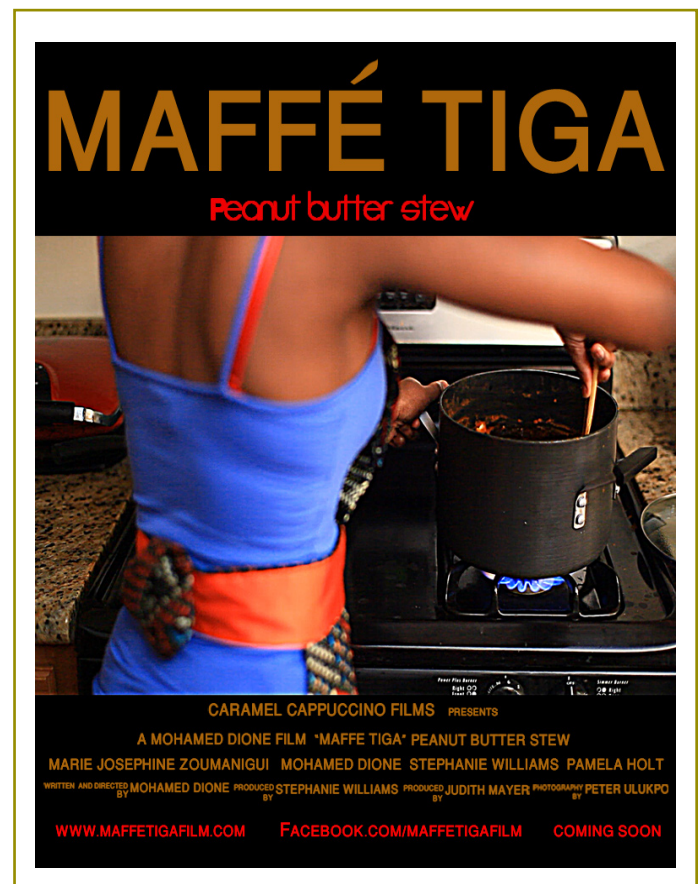
Don’t ever stop believing in yourself. Learn from the journey and respect the journey. It’s part of the process. It will prepare you for your destination. Also collaborate with like minded individuals who share common goals. It will accelerate your success. Keep the dream alive and do the work.

**What projects are you currently working on?**

Just finished shooting a guest spot on a new show for CBS called “NYC 22” produced by Robert Deniro. Also worked on a pilot for Comedy Central with Al Shearer. Have some films coming out this year including Andrew Dosumu’s Restless City, Simon Brands “Default” and also my short film “Maffé Tiga” (Peanut Butter Stew) which is in the festival circuit.

**What is next for you? What hopes do you have for the future?**

I’m currently in talks to act in some film projects. I’ve been travelling around the world a lot. I’m also writing and developing a feature film version of my short film “Maffé Tiga”(Peanut Butter Stew). Also writing and developing a web-series called “The Battle of Africa” and much more. I hope to use cinema to bring Africans together and to tell great stories. I hope to bring an Oscar back to Africa and open a chain of movie theaters back home in Guinea and all over Africa. I hope to collaborate with great artists and do great work and last but not least have a great time doing it.



**Africa is currently going through a renaissance of sorts, in your country of heritage what is the most exciting thing to you happening or what are you looking forward to see happen back home?**

The thing that I’m looking forward to seeing in my country is the death of tribal rhetoric and the generational transfer of ignorance. As a result of recent elections, the countries major ethnic groups have been clashing back home in Guinea. The saddest part about it is that the idea that one tribe is superior than the other even made its way here in America and in the Diaspora. Some Guineans living in America supported these ideas that lead to ethnic tension all over the world. Granted not every Guinean shares these views, I hope to use cinema to educate and inspire those who do share these views to think differently. We are all the same. We are one. No one is worth more or less than the other.

**Check out more of Mohamed Dione’s work:**

[www.maffetigafilm.com](http://www.maffetigafilm.com)  
[www.mohameddione.com](http://www.mohameddione.com)  
[www.caramelcappuccinofilms.com](http://www.caramelcappuccinofilms.com)  
[www.imdb.me/mohameddione](http://www.imdb.me/mohameddione)





## **Adama Delphine Fawundu Creates Powerful Documentation & Art**

Photo Provided By Adama Delphine Fawundu  
Written by YAV Staff

**P**hotographer and anthropologist, Adama Delphine Fawundu has been making her mark by exhibiting prolific photos of empowered women and candid moments with some of today's most celebrated African musicians. Her unique use of her art subjects are thought provoking and beautiful at the same time. YAV Magazine got to interview Fawundu about photography and her current work.

*What have been some of the challenges you have faced breaking into your field?*

Breaking into photography was a challenge that I welcomed because it was something that I completely fell in love with. One challenge was costly equipment, especially for someone new to the field. However, it made me determined to get some good jobs so that I could afford great equipment. Outside of the direct challenges are the societal challenges. I am in a field that was used historically to create degrading and stereotypical images of Africans. In fact, these images set were sought of a justification for human rights violations against Africans both on the continent and throughout the Diaspora. Rather than shunning this tool, I use it as a means to tell another story, a humane one. Photography is still one of the leading mediums responsible for maintaining a warped and stereotypical view of Africa and people of African descent today. I feel that the only way to address this issue is to use my vision to create powerful documentation and art.

*Do you feel as an African, that some things are harder to maintain? For example is it harder to get a job in your field?*

Of course prejudices exist against all of my attributes: African, woman, mother, black, however,

I really don't pay any attention to it. So you will never hear me say I didn't get the job because I'm this or that - all I know is that I have big visions and they will all come to life.

***What inspires you to continue to pursue excellence?***

I am driven by my visions; creativity literally flows through my brain every day. I feel stagnant if I am not constantly producing something.

***Who were your role models?***

When I first started, I was inspired by the works of Chester Higgins, Mary Ellen Mark, Roy DeCarava, Sally Man, Eli Reed and Diane Arbus. Coming across their works introduced me to the idea of a photo essay/photography book. Later on in my research, I came across photographers like Seydou Keita and Omar Ly and was completely blown away.

***What has been your most precious achievement thus far?***

I am in the process of creating my most precious achievement. I've been back and forth to Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal creating a photo essay on an African Urban music culture. I plan to travel more this year. Words cannot explain the feeling that runs through my body when I am in the midst of my work.

***If you could give advice to young Africans what would it be in regards to success?***

Give your passion 110 percent. It sounds cliché but - make it happen. If you can see it, then, there is nothing stopping you from achieving your goals.

What projects are you currently working on?

I am working on a photo essay/multi-media project on African Urban music culture. I am also working on a series of self-portraits titled, "African Identity?" Finally, I am working on a series on young Black and Latino males in America.

***What is next for you?***

I have some shows coming up. March 1st solo exhibit at El Museo del Barrio: touched: A traveling photo exhibit featuring Black and Latina women affected by HIV/AIDS that is March 9 – April 27, it is a group exhibit "Mothers, Daughters, Sisters and Scholars." An art exhibit featuring artists from across the New York to honor the recipients of the "First Annual Celebration of Women in Arts and Culture Awards." Curated by Myrah Brown Green. Opening reception 5:30 p.m. Friday, March 9, Aaron Davis Hall Gallery. Group exhibit - THE BOX THAT ROCKS 30 Years of Video Music Box and the Rise of Hip Hop Music & Culture, Guest Curated by Dexter Wimberly from March 10 – May 28, 2012.

I would like to continue to exhibit and share my work around the world. I am very interested in bridging solid communication and collaborations between Africans and African-Americans, Caribbean etc. Pan-Africanism is the way. I also see myself developing some sort of industry in Sierra Leone.

***Africa is currently going through a renaissance of sorts, in your country of heritage what is the most exciting thing to you happening or what are you looking forward to see happen back home?***

I am looking forward to seeing homegrown socially conscious industries developing in Sierra Leone. I love that place, it is so beautiful with so much potential.

**More of Adama Delphine Fawundu's work can found on her website:**

**[www.delphinefawundu.com](http://www.delphinefawundu.com)**



# Senya Donkor

# A BRIGHT FUTURE

**Do you feel as an African, that some things are harder to maintain? For example is it harder to get a job in your field?**

I feel being an African means pushing twice as hard as the rest, in school, in the work place, and in life period. I was once told “You are an African model and on top of that you are a brown skin African woman, you are competing with other models that fit the criteria but still have not made it in to the industry: making your chances very slim”. Sometimes we all need to hear comments like this, to help up strive to make a difference.

**What inspires you to continue to pursue excellence?**

I am only 19 years old and I already have worked mentoring 35 kids and still counting. The children at Compassion is Love in Action are my true inspiration! Being able to help others who can't help themselves is the number one thing that inspires me to continue to pursue excellence.

**Who were your role models?**

I find it very tough to identify a particular role model because actually I view myself as mine own role model as a humanitarian with a new source of gumption. Aside from myself I can say my main role model is my big sister Sonia. She is not perfect, but she has completed almost everything I thought seem to be impossible. She is going to be graduating this summer with her Associates degree and continuing onto receive her Bachelors degree.

**If you could give advice to young Africans what would it be in regards to success?**

Success is when you learn to crawl before flying, a great man Martin Luther King Jr. once said: “In order to be great one must learn how to serve, because everyone can serve.”

**What projects are you currently working on?**

I am currently working on building The Bright Foundation and we have partnered with an orphanage in Sunyani, Ghana called Compassion is Love in Action. I try not to talk about what I am going to do till it has come to past.

*The current pageant title holder of Miss Ghana USA 2011, Senya Donkor deems her highest achievement is being able to dream with her eyes open. Donkor shares her deepest passions and why she enjoys working with her new program The Bright Foundation.*



**What is next for you? What hopes do you have for the future?**

I cannot tell you exactly what is going to be next for me in my future; I can only pray that what I hope for is what the Man upstairs has planned for me. I will graduate from college, travel to many countries in Africa, and to visit the needy orphanages to help reconstruct those orphanages and keeping in mind The Bright Foundation's mission statement: “Reconstructing an Orphan's Home Is Reconstructing Her Heart.”

**Africa is currently going through a renaissance of sorts, in your country of heritage what is the most exciting thing to you happening or what are you looking forward to see happen back home?**

I want to see Ghana with factories, workshops, new roads, and corporations. Ghana has to realize that change is not going to come unless we go for it. Ghana already knows how to crawl it's time we start walking, to put aside our differences and walk together as a family.

Learn more about The Bright Foundation on the Facebook profile and follow on Twitter @Bright\_info as well as visit the blog at BrightFoundationSupport.blogspot.com .

# LEADERSHIP RULES

Stephanie A. Arthur, MPA

Written by YAV Staff  
Photo Courtesy of S.A.A



**S**tephanie A. Arthur shares some of the challenges she has faced creating spaces where a minority woman's voice could be heard, solicited, and valued within government affairs specifically within corporate lobbying. Being that there are not many Black women in her field, let alone one who has strong ties to an immigrant community she has been successful through her civic engagement. Her spirit challenges her fellow colleagues, legislators etc. to see the correlation of key local or national policies and the impact it has on the African community. Arthur cites that an example of this is "when you look at socio/political topics like Immigration Reform, voting, re-districting, or equitable healthcare...every other immigrant group or community becomes the face or the proxy for these issues. Whereas, there is a challenge getting people to recognize these issues impact the African community in a significant way". Arthur further adds: "it does take strategy and relationship building to get your voice heard and things accomplished. I found that being an African woman is an asset! As a unique voice in the conversation or at the decision making table I use my cultural ethnicity to my advantage. When people realize that ...oh...she has a community she is lobbying for that they want to understand or that they want to build a relationship with, their eyes and ears began to open. The added challenge comes in getting them to see why they should support, endorse, or invest in an initiative for the African community". We ask Stephanie A. Arthur to share with YAV Magazine why she is inspired to pursue excellence, who inspired her, and her hopes for future African leaders in her own words. Read what Arthur had to share with us.

## **Destined for Greatness**

I was not destined for greatness for the sake of myself, but destined to do great things that positively impact people. There is a big difference! I believe everybody has an unavoidable assignment on this earth, and mine is to create a pathway for the voiceless to have a mighty and effective voice. Your life is defined by what you do between the dashes (i.e. born-died), how you impact the world and the lives of others within that dash determines your greatness. I am in pursuit of that!

## **My Role Models**

My role models begin with my mother....though she did not have a formal degree or pursued higher education... she is one of the smartest, politically savvy women I know. She is my role model because her quest for knowledge is insane. She reads everything and anything and when she doesn't understand she researches it, or reads her pocket size dictionary. (You have to see my 65 year old Ghanaian mother on investopedia.com or politico.com very funny). My point is that knowledge is power...and she is not willing to let adversity keep her in the dark. My notable role model is Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf because I truly believe she epitomizes strength, perseverance, and the right attitude towards leadership. African politics is male



dominated and to be in a position where you can be steadfast in your vision for your country despite adversity and rise above the resistance is commendable. I asked her a question before at a forum (What is it like being a woman president in a male dominated field?) She said to me... “Never let your gender define your opportunities. You have to be an intelligent, qualified, strong individual ....who just happens to be a woman”. You have to love how candid and real this woman is.

### **Precious Achievements**

The creation of my latest venture The African Leadership Project for Civic Engagement & Economics “ALPCEE”). I am proud of this because I truly believe everyone has the potential to be strong leaders and their potential has to be tapped into, nurtured, & branded. Everyone isn’t going to be a civic leader, but can demonstrate their fearlessness, their purpose, and have a profound impact in this world. I want to also use the platform of this organization to build non-traditional leaders within the African community those who might’ve migrated here to the U.S. and feel as though they have no voice.

This initiative is bigger than me, I developed the ALPCEE so that I can create a leadership pipeline for those looking to make a significant difference in the world, nationally, locally, or on their block, to enhance their civic and business acumen, as well as increase the financial literacy of my people.

### **Advice to Young Africans**

I would encourage young Africans to seek out careers and opportunities that they are passionate about and the monetary reward will come. There is nothing worse than working in a career that makes you unhappy. Soon it will take a toll on you emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Also look for opportunities where you can bring your uniqueness and your ethnicity to table. What I mean is look for opportunities where Africans aren’t really represented so that YOU can be the one to introduce the “African” experience and perspective. It makes you valuable to the opportunity and then people will solicit

YOUR voice, when trying to learn about the African community. It allows you to accurately tell our story. There is nothing worse than someone who has no connection to our culture trying to create what they think the African is or wants.

Don’t fall into “DOGMA” someone else’s perception of what you should be and what you should do.... only YOU determine what success looks like in your life...it doesn’t have to be notoriety, fame, or the pretentious stuff. If you are happy with your goals and accomplishments then that is all that matters. Lastly, there is no such thing as luck....success happens when opportunity meet preparedness. Try to prepare yourself by reading, studying, and learning the field you want to get into so when opportunity knocks you can take advantage.

### **Current Projects And Future Hopes**

The project that I am working on currently is growing my non-profit the African Leadership Project for Civic Engagement and Economics. My aim is for it to be the premier leadership institute for leaders within the African community. I’ve been partnering with really great like-minded organizations and government entities who believe in my vision. From leadership workshops, to voter registration drives, and neighborhood leadership initiatives we are really developing able, smart, committed and sincere leaders who want to make an impact. Our first initiative is a partnership with the NYC’s Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs on a Neighborhood Leadership Initiative throughout the 5 boroughs. This initiative will provide grants to participants for a community project that will positively impact the lives of local residents.

I am proud to say that ALPCEE was instrumental in ensuring that a little over 50% of the seats for this program city-wide were occupied by Africans. Additionally, another project that I am working on I co-partnered with my cousin called Adowa’s Legacy Inc., this initiative is really to create awareness for socio-civic issues plaguing the various regions in Africa and in the Diaspora. Our goal is to leave a legacy of awareness, service, and action to those that are coming behind us.

We create awareness for issues like breast cancer,

autism, and HIV-AIDS prevention, Malaria etc. by raising money, hosting fundraising events and education forums, and creating media campaigns. This project is about calling people to action on issues that may or may not directly affect them but they feel compelled to do something about.

The next phase of my career (God willing) is to pursue another graduate degree preferably in law and to work in Government Affairs for a leading Civil Rights Organization. My ultimate goal is to grow in my industry and eventually have an opportunity lobby on issues that have a national platform and that impact so many lives. Immigration Reform and Mandatory Minimum laws are a current passion of mine.

### **Getting Excited About Africa**

I am excited about my peers and colleagues who were born and raised here in the states taking a leap of faith and building very fruitful lives back home in their native, Ghana at such early stages in their careers. It is very noble and patriotic to take your skill sets, talents, and use your scholarship to help advance your country. Ghana is a wonderful, thriving country, however it has the potential to be better and the idea that young professionals see themselves as a part of that process is inspiring to me.

When I was a teen to my early twenties by society's standards it wasn't cool to be "African". Everyone around me (including myself) was acclimating to a western lifestyle, had only American friends, and wouldn't dare wear anything that connected them to the African culture. Now that I am mature and wiser the beauty of being African ....and a Ghanaian is irresistible to me. Now more than ever I see my peers taking on initiatives, and ventures with Africa in mind. Leaving their lucrative paying careers to do something that their passionate about back home in Ghana and not regretting a moment of it. That inspires the hell out me, and who knows I may get a one way ticket soon to Accra and build a life back home.

Find Out More About the African Leadership Project and Stephanie A. Arthur

[www.africanleadershipproject.org](http://www.africanleadershipproject.org)

twitter: @africanslead

Facebook: African Leadership Project & Adowa's Legacy Inc.





**KWABENA JONES** SONGSIWROTE  
WHENIWASTHINKINGTHETHINGSIWAS  
THINKINGSOIRECORDEDITYEAHMEIN!

AVAILABLE ON ITUNES

*Lola Haroun enjoys designing clothes that are a reflection of her Nigerian culture. Haroun also enjoys the close relationship she has with her family and finds them an inspiration as well as her faith. Haroun's fashion line is called VQ Fashions and is her passion. She shares with YAV Magazine her inspirations.*

**What has been some of the challenges you have faced breaking into your field?**

Breaking in to the fashion industry, for me, hasn't been easy or instant. Being 21 and still in school, I have to deal with prioritizing; focusing on school and at the same time not losing sight of my goals for my line. Starting out small, designing/sewing for friends and family, there's also the challenge with people wanting favors and forgetting that I'm trying to build a business. There are many more challenges but in the midst of it all I just remember that it may be hard and it may take a while, but it will all be worth it in the end.

**Do you feel as an African, that some things are harder to maintain? For example is it harder to get a job in your field?**

I don't think being African has any limitation on you. The fashion industry especially is not gender or race specific. Whatever stereotype or status quo that has been set should only make you want to rise above and beyond and prove yourself. It is true that growing up may not have been luxurious for some Africans but if you were raised with the same morals and principles I was, then you'll know that the most important thing you need is faith [in God], determination, and support.

**What inspires you to continue to pursue excellence?**

No matter how rough the path gets, I never undermine myself. The one thing that keeps me inspired is my faith in God. According to Jeremiah 29:11, I have a great future ahead of

## Fabricated Fashion: Fashion Designer with a Passion for Style and Life

**Lola Haroun**



Written By YAV Staff Photo Courtesy of VQ Fashions

me. Also, having a very supporting family gives me the strength to go on. I continue to press on because I have confidence in myself and my talent and I believe the world will see and appreciate that one day.

**Who were your role models?**

My number one role model is my late grandmother, Olive Olujimi Ajayi. I learnt what I know by watching her. Next is my mother. Her strength amazes me. I still cannot fathom how a person can stay strong through numerous trials and I admire that. To me, she's the epitome of a true mother. My role model in the design field is Yinka Shonibare. Lastly, although unconventional, I admire my younger brother, Dapo. His determination, drive, and [harsh] criticisms inspire me. He is the one person that really challenges me.

**What has been your most precious achievement thus far?**

There are so many achievements I hold dear but I can say the most precious so far is my work being featured in the upcoming issue of African Bride Magazine.

**If you could give advice to young Africans what would it be in regards to success?**

The one advice I would give to other young Africans would be to never give up on their dreams. It's easy to get discouraged and lose sight on your goals but you have to stay inspired and keep your eye on the prize. As Confucius



said, “Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” The feeling on persevering through hardships to achieve your goal is priceless. It is okay to dream big!

**What projects are you currently working on?**

I am currently putting together a spring collection that would be launched at a show in University of Maryland. I am excited because this would be my biggest audience yet. Also, I am finally giving in to all the requests and putting together my online store. It is expected to be open in April.

**What is next for you? What hopes do you have for the future?**

In the near future, I would be opening a fashion, beauty, and photography studio in Nigeria. Also, when I am done with school, I plan on teaching until I can establish my own daycare facility.

**Africa is currently going through a renaissance of sorts, in your country of heritage what is the most exciting thing to you happening or what are you looking forward to see happen back home?**

It gives me pleasure to see all the existing and rising designers in Nigeria; Ituen Basi, Jewels by Lisa, Deola Sagoe, only to name a few. The idea that people are starting to push themselves past their limitations is impressive. People are starting to give in to their creativity, not only in fashion, but in all areas. It is good to know that a majority of the things that I used to look for in foreign countries can now be found in my own.

**Lola Haroun’s work can be found on her website: [www.vqfashions.com](http://www.vqfashions.com).**





# SOULPURPOSE

body beauty style spirit

building a global brand





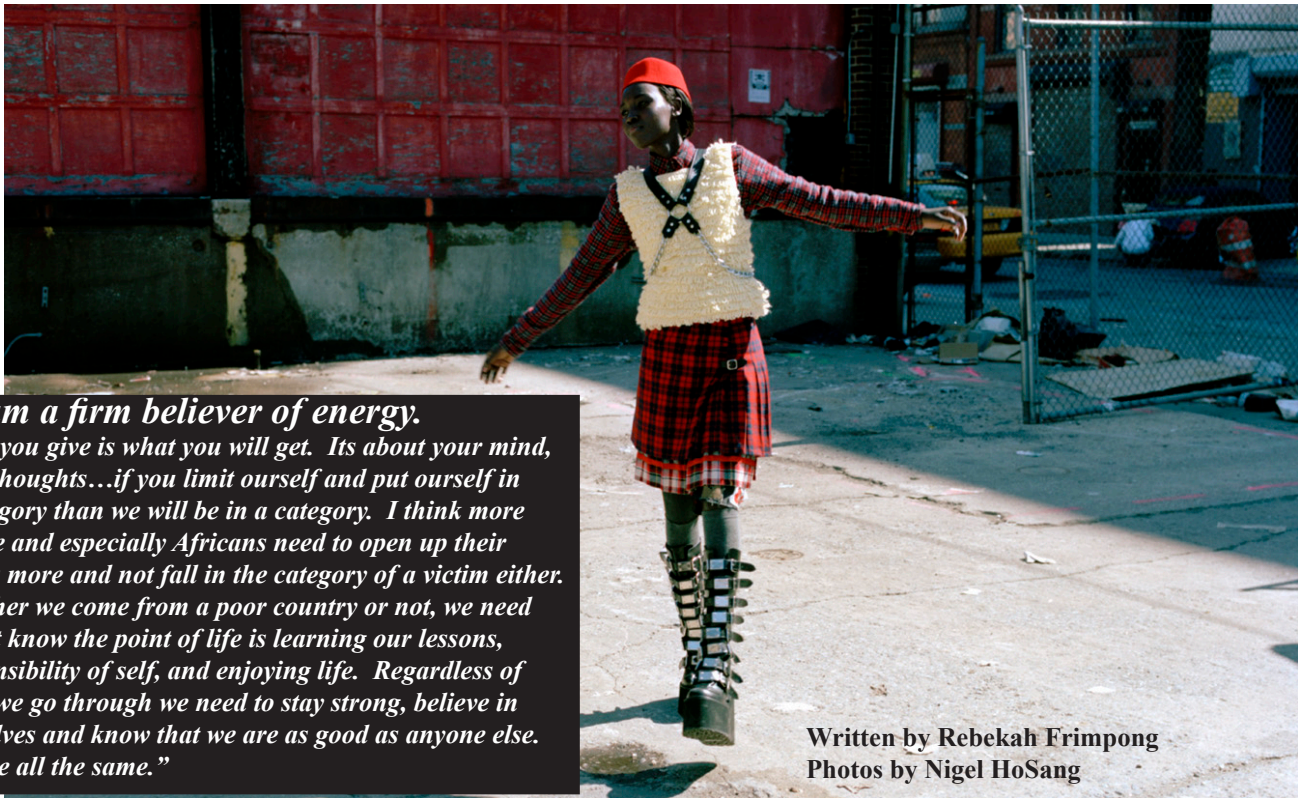
VISIONARY OF THE MONTH

# BEAUTY SKIN DEEP



**M**ari Malek is a female model and DJ who remembers where she came from; giving back to her community in Southern Sudan, this African beauty is finding a way to bring clean water to communities and inspire change in her Southern Sudan.





***"I am a firm believer of energy.***

*What you give is what you will get. Its about your mind, your thoughts...if you limit ourself and put ourself in a category than we will be in a category. I think more people and especially Africans need to open up their minds more and not fall in the category of a victim either. Whether we come from a poor country or not, we need to just know the point of life is learning our lessons, responsibility of self, and enjoying life. Regardless of what we go through we need to stay strong, believe in ourselves and know that we are as good as anyone else. We are all the same."*

**Written by Rebekah Frimpong  
Photos by Nigel HoSang**

YAV Magazine's visionary of the month is Mari Malek. This Southern Sudanese model, DJ, and humanitarian is able to capture audiences with her bold style and intelligence in a unique way. As the co-founder of Southern Sudan Initiative which benefits the Lost Children of Southern Sudan, Malek is illustrating that community cannot be forgotten. She is a role model for young African woman because she is true to herself and open minded. Her beauty is reflected in her photos with her intense stare and dark ebony skin, Malek's allure is undeniable. Mari Malek shares with YAV Magazine her need to give back to her community in Southern Sudan and her mix of fashion and music as a model and DJ.

**Q: What have been some of the challenges you have faced in your field?**

I would say any field comes with its own challenges, its just about who wants it the most. I am a female model and DJ. Being a model comes with a lot of rejection such as: "you don't fit the look", or "you are too short" or "too fat" and etc. The most important thing is to just be true to yourself and never give up! Know who you are and what you are worth!

**Q: What inspires you to continue to do what you do and who were your role models?**

Life, my struggles and my family. I want to bring inspiration to life, to people, to everything I do. The more I inspire, the more I get inspired. I would say my mother and grandma are my role models. They are both strong African women, even though my mother was very hard and strict on me, She is the reason I am as strong as I am today. I used to get angry at her (all us African kids know how our parents get lol) but now I just want to thank her.

**Q: What has been your greatest achievement thus far?**

I think I have done a lot so far but it is only the beginning. My most precious achievement is the charity that my cousin Dut Deng and I started for our country. It is called Southern Sudan Initiatives Inc. and we aim to help our country be more self sufficient. I am a little bit over people giving food, clothes and water to Africa or African Charities...why not make a farm and create more jobs? Build a school and create the future? Build a water pump and give people clean water and life? So, the fact that we want to give our country something more permanent is a huge accomplishment to me.



**Q: If you could give advice to other young Africans what would it be in regards to success in life?**

Don't forget where you came from, don't forget your country, and your struggles. Let's learn and go back home and give hope to others, let's stand by each other and support each other. Most importantly, get that education and never let your struggles be a negative aspect in your life, instead take it as a blessing and strive to be stronger! Like Ghandi said " Be the change you want to see in the world."

**Q: What projects are you currently working on?**

Currently I am work on raising funds to build our first water well/pump in my village in Southern Sudan. Like I mentioned earlier, we are in desperate need of clean water. My birthday is coming up on April 24th, so I started a fundraiser campaign dedicated to "clean water" only. The Project is called "Water Creates Life!" I want my birthday dedicated to raising money to build the pump. So I am asking everybody to help, you can find more info at [www.watercreateslife.blogspot.com](http://www.watercreateslife.blogspot.com)

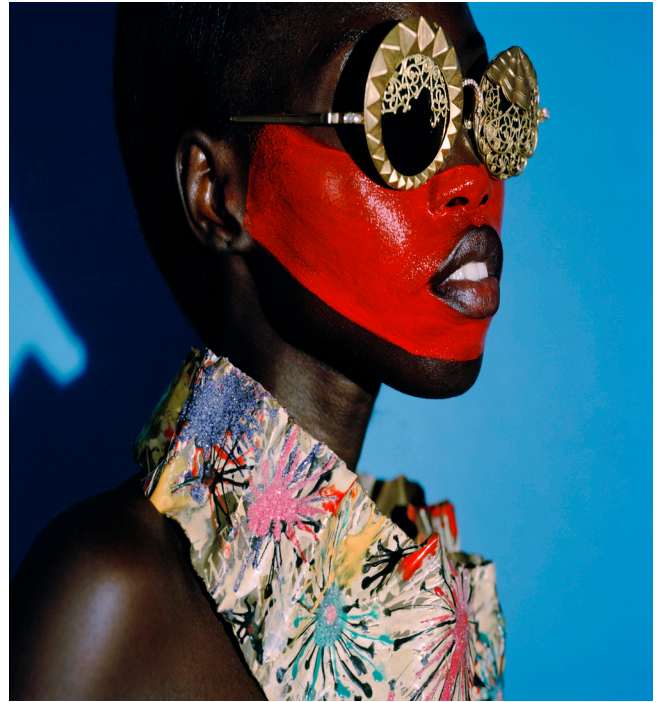
**Q: What is next for you? What hopes do you have for the future?**

Next is creating more projects to benefit everyone as a whole. I want to continue working on modeling, DJ'ing and making our charity projects happen. By the end of 2012 I would like to at least have a few water pumps in my village.

**Q: Africa is currently going through a renaissance of sorts, in your country of heritage what is the most exciting thing to you happening or what are you looking forward to see happen back home?**

The most exciting thing in my country is our recent independence. We became independent after decades of war in July, 9th 2011. Juba, the capitol of Southern Sudan is now one of the fastest growing cities in the world. A lot of oil and building is going on, I just hope we can still maintain some of our rituals and culture.

Mari Malek Model/DJ/Philanthropist  
[www.southernsudaninitiatives.org](http://www.southernsudaninitiatives.org)  
[www.watercreateslife.blogspot.com](http://www.watercreateslife.blogspot.com)  
[www.djamee.com/dj-stiletto.html](http://www.djamee.com/dj-stiletto.html)



*Photography By Nigel HoSang  
Make-up by Sophie Ono  
Glasses by Mecura*

# AFRICA AID; DOING MORE HARM THAN GOOD



The continent of Africa has been receiving aid since the 1960s after the collapse of colonial regimes across the continent. Now economists and politicians are asking: Is administering aid to Africa at the same rate as in previous decades going to help Africa grow and maintain sustainable programs? Is Africa aid dead?

## ORGANIZATIONS GETTING IT RIGHT:

Even with the growing distrust of NGO's and charities and foundations that claim they benefit Africa, there are organizations that are truly working to have sustainable programs in Africa and encouraging Africans to build Africa rather than rely on aid.

Here are a few organizations YAV Magazine feels are getting it right:

- HealthRight International-Kenya
- African Women's Development Fund
- Bisila Bokoko African Literacy Project
- FACE Africa
- Trees for the Future

## JOIN THE CONVERSATION:

Visit YAV Magazine online and join our current poll: "How Do You Feel About Africa Aid"? We want to hear from our readers what they think about the current situation of aid in Africa and if they feel Africa still needs to have many aid programs continued on the continent.

Answer the YAV Magazine Poll with these multiple choice selections:

- Reform is Needed
- Current Aid and NGOs are Great
- I Want More Information About This
- Africa is Never Going to Not Need Aid

## ISSUES AID IS TARGETING IN AFRICA:

- Healthcare Systems and Disease Prevention
- Education and Building Schools
- Agriculture and Environmental Programs
- Child Welfare and Orphanage Reform
- Food Security
- Human Rights and Refugee Outreach
- Peace and Conflict Resolution
- Micro-Loans and Financing Education

## LOOKING AT THE FACTS:

Looking at statistics of how much aid has been administered to Africa and then looking at the number of countries in Africa that are considered to have stable economies and governments, there is a divide and a lack of infrastructure in place to sustain aid programs or address the issues that these programs are suppose to eradicate. There also seems to be a correlation between the amount of aid administered and the political climate in African countries. This link could explain the occurrence of corruption and the lack of infrastructure in place in many countries in Africa to turn aid based programs into sustainable programs. Even the countries in Africa with growing economies and stable political climates are finding it hard to predict how foreign aid will fair in developing the future of African societies. In addition, the benefits from aid across the board are not very clear because of conflicting data being reported. Countries like Sierra Leone, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Burundi, and Mozambique rely heavily upon foreign aid as apart of their economy, so in the future will countries like these be able to have economies that are not dependent upon aid? This question remains to be unanswered. The good news is; business is booming in countries like Ghana and South Africa due to the market demand and high consumer confidence and HIV/AIDS is no longer an African problem but rather a global problem with more emphasis put on prevention and education helping rates of infections decrease. Education reform and development is also on the rise in many African countries due to the technology surge. Technology is allowing the youth in African countries to connect with educators and more educational resources.

## WHAT KONY 2012 BOUGHT TO LIGHT:

The release of the controversial video "KONY 2012" from the organization Invisible Children about Ugandan extremist Joseph Kony raises many questions in regards to the image of Africa, foreign aid to the continent, and the power African people have in Africa. Exploitation of African youth, women, and refugees is at an all time high with the use of new media mediums like YouTube. Many NGO's, charities, and aid programs based in the US or in Europe are using offensive internet campaigns to raise funds to make profit while the money they claim goes to Africa is often not seen. The reality is that many organizations with aid based programs that are suppose to provide services to Africa are in turn using "Africa" as a marketing tool to further political agendas or make profit. At this point, the only people who can change Africa in a way that will truly reflect the diverse cultures, social-political ideologies, and government infrastructures are Africa's future leaders and the African people themselves.

Written by YAV Staff



# Koku Gonza Mugarula



## It Is All About L.O.V.E.

*Talented Tanzanian singer songwriter currently based in Chicago shares with YAV Magazine her vision on music and how the love of music has inspired her life.*

**Q: What have been some of the challenges you have faced breaking into your field?**

The challenges I have faced breaking into my field are marketing and promotions. Adequate marketing and promotions can make or break any artist. As an artist, the last thing on my mind in the creative process is “How am I going to market this song?” However, the continuous

struggle to break into the realm of my true audience only inspires me to persevere.

**Q: Do you feel as an African, that some things are harder to maintain?**

I don't feel that being African has caused any hardships in my field, actually, the opposite has occurred. I have experienced more opportunities in my favor as an artist due to my apparent African descent. The African culture has always been a trend in every era of music. Africans seem to struggle to maintain the purity of tradition and the root of the culture when presenting art sometimes which can appear conflicting. The conflict in maintaining culture is apparent when I listen to or watch African American music video and I see the same materialistic things glorified in African music. I sometimes get the impression that the African youth do not understand the value of ancient culture.

**Who were your music role models?**

My role models are Sade; I appreciate how she keeps her artistic life public and her private life private while still maintaining an audience and creating great music. Sergio Mendes; I love how his music bridges the gap between cultures by fusing traditional sound with pop. Mariam Makeba; her contribution to world music and exploring other African cultures amazes me as much as her voice inspires me.

**What has been your most precious achievement thus far?**

My most precious achievement is existing in the music industry as an indy artist and creating a pavement designed for my foot steps of



**Photos Courtesy of MixerPot**

success. I have produced three albums in the past three years without a budget, sophisticated studio and big name collaborations, these are goals I envisioned but struggled through.

***If you could give advice to young Africans what would it be in regards to success?***

Keep your success pure and never give up regardless of how many people believe in you. Love, will and discipline are the ingredients to achievement.

***What projects are you currently working on?***

I am writing some new material based on true relationship experiences. The project will reflect my romantic struggles in finding balance and trusting love set to world-beat/dance music.

***What is next for you? What hopes do you have for the future?***

The next thing on my path is a trip to Europe in the near future. I hope to expand my artistry into the field of education as well as entertainment in other countries. Collaborations are a definite goal for the next project.

***Africa is currently going through a renaissance of sorts, how do you feel your music is reflective of this?***

My music is a reflection of the African Renaissance because of my knowledge of the traditional folk style of Tanzanian music. My father Longfellow Mugarula implanted the sound of Tanzanian folk music in my soul before I even knew how to speak. That style of music still shines through and is the root of my music. The renaissance of Africa is properly fusing the old with the new and keeping style fresh, which I intend to do.

**www.kokugonza.com-website**

**Twitter - @gogokoku**

**iTunes -Koku Gonza**

**YouTube - KokuGonzaMusic**

**Bandcamp - Koku Gonza**



## LOOKING TO THE STARS

**Akua Agyemang**

*This young female filmmaker born in Ghana but raised in America is looking to take filmmaking in a new direction.*

Photo Courtesy of Akua Agyemang

YAV Magazine got to ask Akua Agyemang how feels about being a filmmaker and the challenges she faces. Here is what she had to say to our YAV staff writer.

***Q:Being a filmmaker, what has been the most challenging thing for you?***

For me it has been more of an emotional challenge, trying to remind yourself you are at least as good as the next filmmaker despite not having a degree in the arts, and that females do have talent and can manage a team in field that is predominately male. However more importantly, finding the funds to produce the projects the way you envision. As far as getting financing for projects that generally showcase “my people”, it is a bit of a challenge because the audience is not considered big enough for most investors to want to invest. I continue to pursue excellence because filmmaking is my career, but more importantly, it’s my destiny and purpose. God gives me the vision and I make it happen to the best of my ability.

***Q: What are you currently working on and what have been some of your greatest achievements?***

All of my achievements are precious to me but I would have to say my docu-drama series *I Got a Story to Tell* is the most challenging but also the most awarding. It allows me to showcase ordinary people that have overcome extraordinary circumstances. I am currently going into production on my TV show entitled *I Need All 3*. It’s about a southern African woman who has fallen in love with three different men for different reasons. None of them are the total perfect match and eventually she finds out that no man can complete her, she must first be complete with herself and find God for herself. I am also finishing up writing a feature film



that is faith based. I hope to be the best African or female writer/director ever. I like that Ghana's quality of films are stepping up. I do believe however we have a long way to go.

Check out Akua Agyemang's website:  
[www.starrstuddedentertainment.com](http://www.starrstuddedentertainment.com)

## **SANKOFA BELIEVER** FILMMAKER SAM KESSIE

*This Ghanaian filmmaker is bringing back the element of tradition to her nouveau style of filmmaking.*

Written By YAV Staff

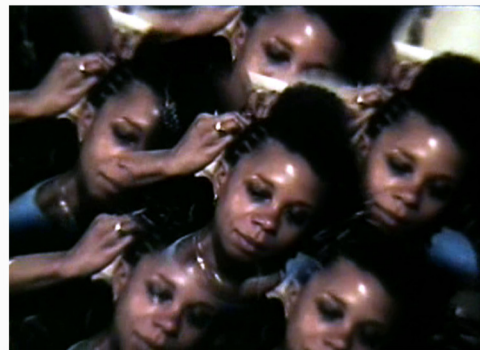


Sam Kessie is a British-Ghanaian filmmaker who recently has gained acclaim for her documentary film *Zoom Zoom-The Professor* about the former Ghanaian WBC boxer Azumah Nelson which was selected to be apart of the National Geographic "All Roads Film Project 2011: Women Hold Up Half the Sky Film Series". Kessie also recieved notice at the SoCal Film Festival of 2011 with the music video she directed "No One Knows" for international musician and producer M3NSA. Kessie also directed M3NSA's single "Fanti Love Song". Through Kessie's film production company Sankofa Pictures she is able to make films that truly embark on the craft of storytelling as well as involve cultural context. Kessie takes the art of filmmaking seriously and acknowledges the importance art can play in shaping society. Kessie has started a program called the TKA Foundation and works alongside the project AKOSIA in Ghana West Africa. The TKA Foundation allows Kessie and a team to teach film workshops in Ghana West African during the summer to less fortunate children. The TKA Foundation and Kessie work with the children over the summer showing them how to make films from teaching them writing, direction, costume design, cinematography, and acting as well sound production. At the end of the summer program the TKA Foundation holds a film festival showcasing the children's work.

Find out more about Sam Kessie's films and videos on her website: <http://samkessie.com> and information about the TKA Foundation.

## **MORE THAN HAIR** **CULTURAL IDENTITY**

FILMMAKER AKOSUA ADOMA OWUSU



Pictured Are Stills from *Split Ends*, *I Feel Wonderful*.  
Written By YAV Staff

Akosua Adoma Owusu is a Ghanaian-American filmmaker who received a MFA degree at the School of Film/Video and Fine Arts from CalArts in 2008. Owusu's films are informed by traditions in experimental filmmaking, ethnography, and cultural representation. Recently, she made headlines with her experimental film *Me Broni Ba* (My White Baby).

Owusu has exhibited worldwide, including at The Museum of Modern Art, The Studio Museum in Harlem, Centre Pompidou, The Smithsonian Institute, Rotterdam Film Festival, Viennale, and the London Film Festival as well as among others. Owusu's work has been featured in The New York Times, SF Weekly, Film Threat and ArtForum.

Her films include *Intermittent Delight*, *Drexciya* and *Me Broni Ba* (My White Baby)—all of which won several Best Documentary awards, including a Golden Gate Award Nomination at the San Francisco International Festival in 2009. *Me Broni Ba* is being distributed by The Cinema Guild. Owusu also was a featured artist at the 56th Robert Flaherty Seminar and recipient of Focus Features Africa First and a Creative Capital Grant in Film/Video. *Me Broni Ba* will be a participating film in the Studio Museum's exhibition, The Bearden Project at the end of March 2012.

*Split Ends, I Feel Wonderful*, Owusu's latest film will go on to screen as part of the Images Film Festival's 25th Anniversary in Canada from April 12 – 21. Then it will participate in International Competition of the 58th International Short Film Festival Oberhausen in Germany from April 26th-May 1st.

Currently, Owusu is working on her first feature film called *Black Sunshine* which is about an interracial love affair of a promiscuous Ghanaian hairdresser, her European lover, and her albino daughter. The film was recently awarded a Creative Capital Grant and it was recently reported on the popular independent film blog Indiewire.

Learn more about Owusu's film project on the Creative Capital website: <http://creative-capital.org/projects/view/740> and learn more about her award winning film, *Me Broni Ba* (My White Baby) through it's educational distribution deal with The Cinema Guild in New York.

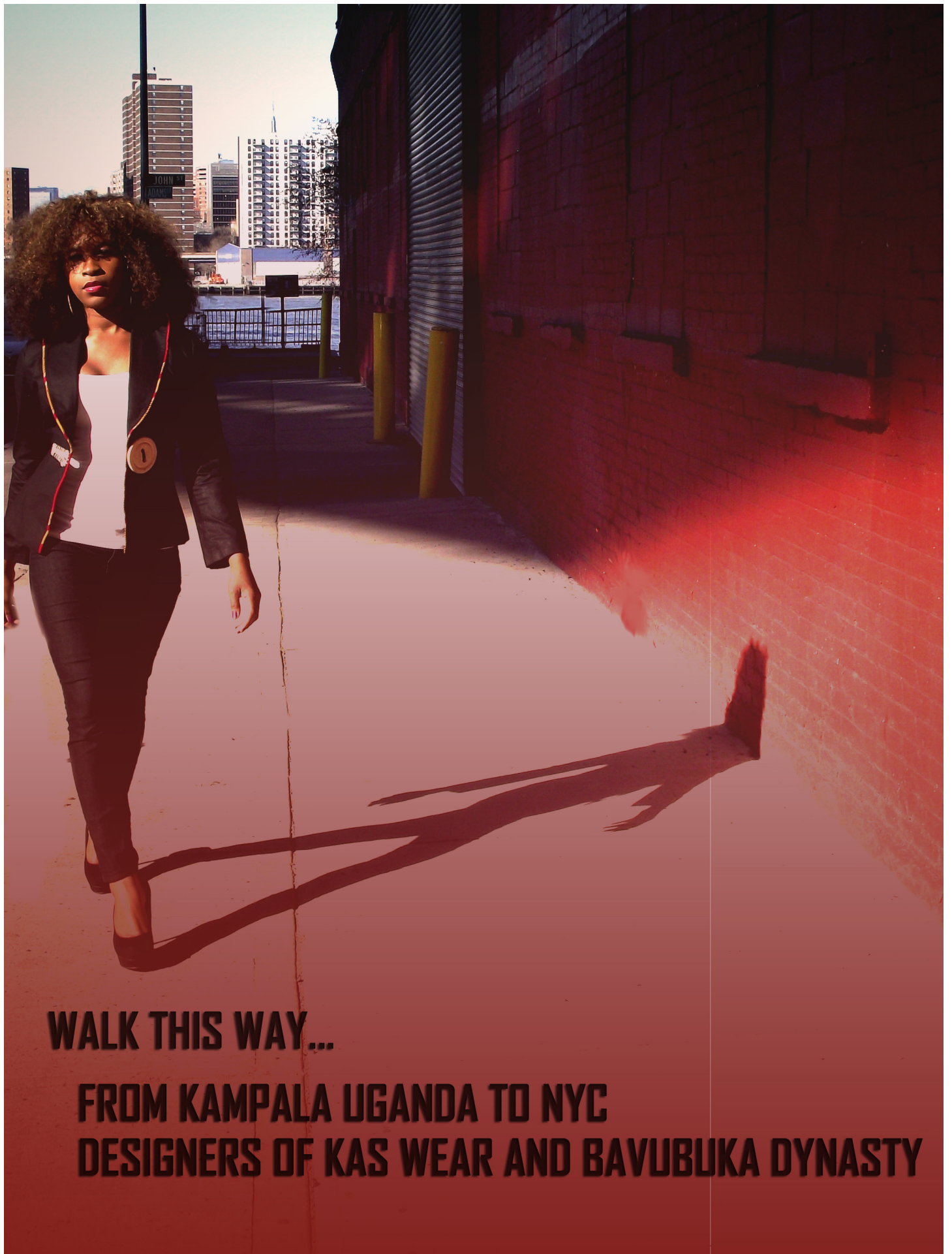
Links to Akosua Adoma Owusu's Films:  
[www.akosuaadoma.com](http://www.akosuaadoma.com)  
[www.mebrowniba.com](http://www.mebrowniba.com)  
<http://thebeardenproject.studiomuseum.org/akosua-adoma-owusu/>



Written By Mazuba Kapambwe Photo Courtesy of MTV Base

CNN's Inside Africa featured some of the cast from the MTV Base and MTV Staying Alive Foundation produced scripted show *Shuga* in October and December 2010. Now, almost two years later, the second season of the show has gained in popularity. Four shows in, viewers have already been treated to cameos from Nigerian musicians WizKid and Banky W, in addition to new characters and more dramatic plotlines. Set in Nairobi, Kenya, *Shuga* follows the lives and loves of a group of college students. *Shuga's* strength lies in its realistic portrayal of friendships, hopes and interconnected sex lives. The majority of actors may be Kenyan, but they can easily be any group of friends in any African country. The show's message is clear; HIV/AIDS education and prevention, but it delivers this in a "non –preachy way". This method seems to appeal to the over 20,000 Facebook fans and over 3000 Twitter followers who regularly engage in post-show talks discussing certain episode scenes and offering their suggestions. Shot by the acclaimed director Wanuri Kahiu (of The Film *Pumzi* fame) , MTV Base, UNICEF and other donors have created a show that seems to be effecting real change amongst communities dealing with the reality of contracting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. The evidence is seen in the countless tweets from fans who say that the show has helped them commit to leading more sexually responsible lives. *Shuga* can be watched by viewers in Africa on MTV Base, or online via [mtvshuga.com](http://mtvshuga.com) .





**WALK THIS WAY...**

**FROM KAMPALA UGANDA TO NYC  
DESIGNERS OF KAS WEAR AND BAVUBUKA DYNASTY**

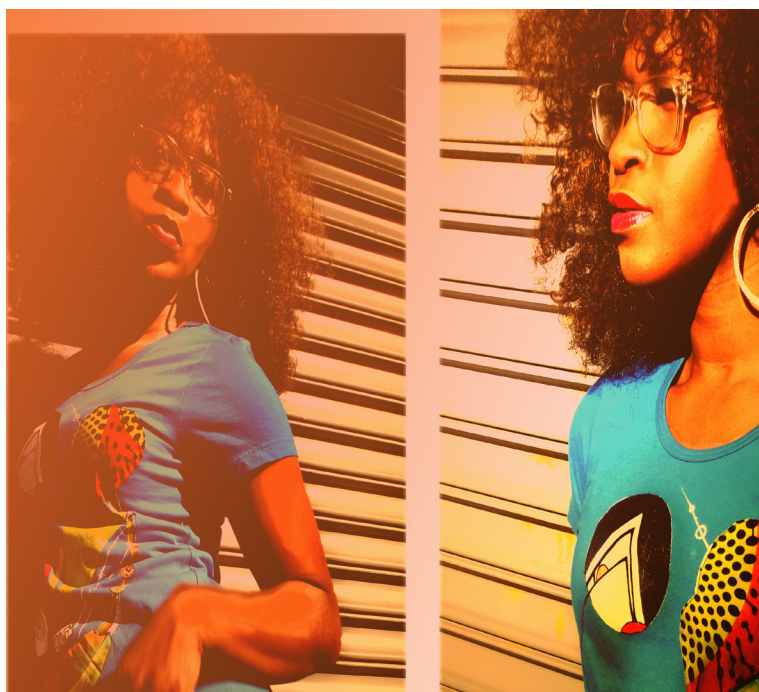


PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
**RAF PHOTOGRAPHY**

MODELS OLA YUSSUF & TATIANA WYNN



*Bavubuka Dynasty has comprised collections of couture, ready to wear, and active wear in it's fashion line. The Ugandan and Canadian based company is making clothes that will help sustain the youth of the Bavubuka Foundation. YAV takes the fashions of KLA (Kampala) and brings them to BK (Brooklyn).*











### **Featured Designs:**

**SPOKEN TRUTH T-SHIRT**

**DESIGN BY SZANIE TEE**

**KAS WEAR BLAZER**

All clothes are made to support the Bavubuka Foundation in Uganda. The Bavubuka Foundation is a non-profit organization that has Hip-Hop based youth empowerment programs. The Bavubuka Dynasty fashion line will officially launch in the summer of 2012.





Bwette Daniel Gilbert

CULTURE SNAPSHOT

# KAMPALA

PHOTOS BY GILBERT FRANK DANIELS

A look at Kampala, Uganda-the city of “bodas”,  
skyscrapers, natural wonders, and vibrant people.



Bwette Daniel Gilbert







Brette Daniel Gilbert



Brette Daniel Gilbert



Kampala is a city full of energy, whether you are going to the market or downtown to main shopping centers and districts, the city has much to offer. The are poetry nights, dance clubs, Lake Victoria, and national landmarks to visit in the city. This is Kampala Uganda through the eyes of photographer and journalist Gilbert Frank Daniels.

**Want to submit pictures from your country to YAV Magazine's culture section. Send photos and credit to [bgnbpro@gmail.com](mailto:bgnbpro@gmail.com) with the title " Culture Snapshot".**







# 54 KINGDOMS

'It's a Kulture, not a Brand'



Sankofa Travel Bags (coming soon)  
Gaza & Gazettes Accessories (now available)  
Photo by Avaloni Studios  
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