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# PRESS KIT

## AFRICAN LUXURY HERITAGE BRAND AWARDS 2020 & 2021 BY LUXURY CONNECT AFRICA



**SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY  
PARIS, FRANCE**

# PRESS BRIEFING

## AFRICAN LUXURY HERITAGE AWARD 2020 & 2021

### BY LUXURY CONNECT AFRICA

On 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 during Paris Fashion Week, LUXURY CONNECT AFRICA held its annual *African Luxury Heritage Awards*, which recognises the outstanding contribution of African luxury brands and designers to the creative and business spheres of the African luxury economy.

The event was a dual awards ceremony for 2020 and 2021 due to the covid pandemic and was held in collaboration with the South African Embassy in France at the residence of the Ambassador of South Africa to France and Monaco.

The Award for "*African Luxury Heritage Brand of the Year 2020*" was given to the haute couture designer Imane Ayissi, whose expert crafting of African traditional textiles into haute couture creations led him to become the first designer of Sub-Saharan African origin to be invited to the prestigious French haute couture body, the Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture in 2019.

The Award for "*African Luxury Heritage Brand of the Year 2021*" was given to the women's and men's ready-to-wear designer Laduma Ngxokolo who created the brand Maxhosa in 2011 to celebrate the centuries-old creative and cultural heritage of his Xhosa origin. Maxhosa has since attained global renown including seasonal presentations at New York Fashion Week.

The two awards were presented during an intimate luncheon by His Excellency, Tebogo Seokolo, the South African Ambassador to France and Monaco, with the participation of Uche Pézard, Founder & Chief Curator of LUXURY CONNECT AFRICA, and in the presence of notable media and fashion personalities, including fashion legend Suzy Menkes, star stylist Jenke Ahmed Taily and designer Thebe Magugu.

In his keynote speech, **His Excellency, Tebogo Seokolo stated that** "*Fashion has always been an important part of the human cultural experience since antiquity. In Africa in particular, it's a medium of artistic expression and cultural identity. It is through African fashion that Africa's rich regal culture has been represented over the ages, demonstrating both African heritage and luxury. The recipients of today's award have not only demonstrated excellence in their craft but are the embodiment of luxury heritage in fashion. For that, we honour them. By producing their own African luxury brands that compete on the world stage, they're also contributing to the wider continental agenda of repositioning Africa in the world, a priority that is central to my country's foreign policy.*"

In her introductory speech, **Uche Pezard remarked that** "*Africa's rich creative and cultural heritage, which has excelled through skilled craftsmanship for centuries is today being propelled on the world stage by the extraordinary designers and creators who we are proud to know and recognize through this award. The excellence of their craft is transforming Africa's present and will safeguard Africa's future. We're very proud of them and continue to be inspired by them.*"

In his thank you remarks, **Imane Ayissi stated** "*I'll like to thank everyone who has brought some spotlight and support to my career in fashion. The road has been quite long, and we continue to strive to bring another facet of Africa's know-how to the attention of the world. In the process, we celebrate African fashion and Africa's beautiful stories because our continent is full of energy and talent and it's our duty to elevate this for the world to appreciate.*"

In his thank you speech, **Laduma Ngxokolo stated** "*Thank you to you all for recognizing our work through this platform. May African luxury grow from strength to strength, not just through the glamorous side of fashion but especially through economical development within our continent. May we grow our export industry and make Africa a great continent again as it should be.*"

The African Luxury Heritage Awards was launched in 2018 and is given annually to the African luxury heritage brand that has shown the most consistency in projecting its African heritage; the highest level of excellence in its creativity and craftsmanship; the most innovative output in its products and services; and the richest representation of diversity and sustainability in its brand DNA. African Luxury Heritage Awards is proudly supported by the Embassy of South Africa in France in its mission to promote South Africa and Africa's fashion excellence in the fashion industry.

## QUOTES



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*"Africa's rich creative and cultural heritage, which has excelled through skilled craftsmanship for centuries is today being propelled on the world stage by the extraordinary designers and creators who we are proud to know and recognize through this award. The excellence of their craft is transforming Africa's present and will safeguard Africa's future. We're very proud of them and continue to be inspired by them." - Uche Pézard, Founder & Chief Curator, Luxury Connect Africa*



*"I'll like to thank everyone who has brought some spotlight and support to my career in fashion. The road has been quite long, and we continue to strive to bring another facet of Africa's know-how to the attention of the world. In the process, we celebrate African fashion and Africa's beautiful stories because our continent is full of energy and talent and it's our duty of elevate this for the world to appreciate." - Imane Ayissi, Founder, Imane Ayissi Haute Couture (recipient of the African Luxury Heritage Brand of the Year Award 2020)*

*"Thank you to you all for recognizing our work through this platform. May African luxury grow from strength to strength, not just through the glamorous side of fashion but especially through economical development within our continent. May we grow our export industry and make Africa a great continent again as it should be" - Laduma Ngxokolo, Founder, Maxhosa (recipient of the African Luxury Heritage Brand of the Year Award 2021)*



# PHOTO GALLERY

## AFRICAN LUXURY HERITAGE AWARD 2020 & 2021 BY LUXURY CONNECT AFRICA

### PHOTO GALLERY LINK:

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## ABOUT LUXURY CONNECT AFRICA

LUXURY CONNECT AFRICA is the pioneer luxury business resource platform dedicated to reviving luxury in Africa and accelerating its growth and contribution to the continent's economic and social transformation.

The platform was created to enhance Africa's rich creative and entrepreneurial heritage through the culture and excellence of craftsmanship and to use this to transform Africa's socio-economic landscape while boosting the opportunities for African luxury heritage brands to become successful global businesses and providing international luxury brands access to Africa's burgeoning opportunities.

Through elevating African heritage luxury brands internationally, LUXURY CONNECT AFRICA is ensuring the continuity of Africa's rich creative legacy and changing the narrative of the continent; while as boosting the socio-economic landscape.

Since our creation, LUXURY CONNECT AFRICA has launched several initiatives and hosted numerous events gathering over 5,000 people, in collaboration with the brands and artisans and generated collective value through the different components of our ecosystem.

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