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SEPTEMBER 2022

MAGAZINE

NEW

NOMIA

Masiko-Mpaka

A COURAGEOUS WOMEN'S RIGHT ACTIVIST
RAISED ON LOVE AND FEMINISM

MEMORABLE 50 MOST
AWARDS

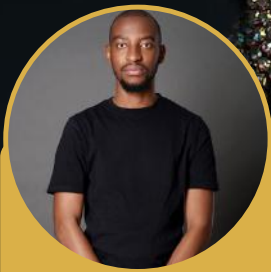
MEET THE CREATIVES



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Nominate your fave for

THE 50 MOST
MEMORABLE
WOMEN AWARDS

NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN FROM OCTOBER 1 – 30 2022.

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THE AWARDS ARE ESTABLISHED TO CELEBRATE 50 WOMEN WHO HAVE DONE SIGNIFICANT WORK TO TILT THE SCALES OF EQUALITY FORWARD. THESE WOMEN DO INTENTIONAL WORK TO ADDRESS INEQUALITY THROUGH PROJECTS DESIGNED TO INCLUDE, FOREGROUND AND AMPLIFY THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN IN THEIR SECTOR AND PROGRESSING SOCIETY AT LARGE.

NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN FROM
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SOCIAL MEDIA (INFLUENCING,
CONTENT CREATION, PLATFORM
CREATION)

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MEDICAL / TECHNOLOGY / SCIENCE
EDUCATION

ARTS / MEDIA / ENTERTAINMENT

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EMPOWERMENT

SPORTS

GOVERNMENT

BUSINESS

ANY OTHER

YOU CAN NOMINATE YOUR CANDIDATE FROM
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WOMEN AWARDS.

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Dear Reader

Spring has sprung, and almost as if by divine complement, South Africans have the unique opportunity to celebrate themselves; their heritage on September 24th. So this month, in full blast, we are celebrating you and me.

Heritage Month is about being true to oneself and celebrating the parts that make up your cultural heritage. Very soon, you will see cultural garb, as a standard, shared all over your social media timelines (We, honestly, cannot wait for the pics).

This month is an important month for South Africans. It allows us free cultural expression which forms the basis of our constitution in a democratic South Africa.

But living in a post democratic South Africa, we also learn that our heritage is often not the linear paths of our biological maternal and paternal lines. Heritage is where we come from, and cultures that make those beginnings as we travel through time.

This month, we will explore culture in the contemporary world. We will explore contemporary commodification of culture through a lens of the Kim Kardashian empire. We reflect on generational equality and the legacies of exclusion in big ticket leadership. We will discuss career pivots and breaking through limiting legacies in the entertainment industry, as well as using contemporary cultures of engagement towards building a career in luxury brands. We will discuss cultural appropriation and appreciation, and Centrally, we will introduce you to Nomathamsanqa Masiko-Mpaka, an academic pan Africanist feminist working at the intersection of Gender, Human Rights, peace and security and transitional justice.

It promises to be a refreshing read. Have a lovely heritage-in-spring month, and a wonderful journey through our feature pages.

From us, at The Feature.

EDITOR'S NOTE

HERITAGE DAY

The Feature.za

NOMATHAMSANQA *Masiko - Mpaka*

Meet Nomathamsanqa Masiko-Mpaka, a courageous women's right Activist raised on love and feminism. Nomathamsanqa is an international academic working at the interface between gender, human rights, peace, security and transitional justice. Governed by her unquestionable need for justice, Nomathamsanqa spends her time ensuring that the concerns and lived experiences of women are an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women benefit equally. How does one become such a force of a woman? Read more about the power path of our cover feature, Nomathamsanqa Masiko-Mpaka

“

WHEN I'M CHALLENGED

I.....

grow and become
the best version of
myself.

-Nomathamsanqa Masiko-Mpaka

”

Who is Noma in her own words?

I am many things... I am a feminist, a pan-Africanist, a Christian, a hodophile, an incurable optimist, and a citizen of Wakanda ☺... I am a mother to two beautiful boys, Amani (3 years old) and Azuri (11 months old). I am a wife to a man who loves me and our children very dearly. I am a sister, daughter, cousin, friend and comrade to many.

But, in a more professional sense, I am a women's rights activist. My professional work in the civil society and development sectors – spanning nearly a decade – lie in the interface between gender, human rights, women, peace and security and transitional justice. My two greatest passions are women and the African continent. I want to see (Black) women and Africans free, flourishing and living full and abundant lives!

Over the past decade, my life's work has been to disrupt and untangle systems and structures that are often gender blind, gender neutral or gender non-responsive. It has also been my pursuit (in my work in civil society and the Development sector), to ensure that gender is not an afterthought in programme design, but rather treated as a standalone consideration in policy design, implementation and evaluation. I am driven by the need to ensure that the concerns and lived experiences of women are an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.

How do you keep yourself motivated in your work?

By surrounding myself with like-minded women, who are supportive, compassionate, ambitious and audacious.

What has been the most difficult obstacles you had to endure along your career journey?

Great loss. In the middle of my MA degree (2011), I lost my mother. She was everything to me. That loss broke in ways unimaginable. I did not think my life would go on; I literally thought it was the end of the world; it felt like the end of the world. The pain of loss was overwhelming and was compounded by the fact that just 7 months prior to my mother's death, my stepfather had also passed away. It was one of the darkest moments of my life. It is only God who got me through that difficult time. Through therapy, prayer, and being planted in a church home, I began to appreciate and accept that God is the only true constant in our lives. While everything around us is subject to change, God never changes. That revelation/epiphany – whatever you want to call it – kept me alive, grounded and hopeful for a better tomorrow. God remains my rock and the one I turn to when the world around me is turned upside down and does not make sense.



“

THE MOST COURAGEOUS
THING I'VE EVER DONE

was wake up, face the world
and try again, when all I
wanted to do was stay in bed
and sleep.

-Nomathamsanqa Masiko-Mpaka

”

Where did you grow up?

Growing up in a town where we didn't always see a variety of career options, and perhaps didn't always echo my own dreams and ambitions, is what really propelled me to be curious about alternative career paths that I could explore.

I've always been curious about human beings, the choices that we make, the way we choose to show up in the world and how we can shift that. I've always been intrigued by how I could grow myself into the opportunities that I wanted. In my earlier years I considered studying journalism because of my passion for writing and research which I was relatively good at.

That evolved over time into the heart of the humanities space where I wanted to explore my interests in people, cultures, societies and how we construct our beingness as people. How this evolved in the workspace was the natural progression into the human capital space.

I grew up in Gqeberha, formerly called Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape. I grew up in a very warm, loving, yet very strict Christian home. We were a family of four: my mother (Nomvula), my stepfather (Mosala) and my younger sister (Lucille). My parents were in education, my mother a high school teacher and my stepfather a primary school principle. Needless to say, the importance of education was instilled in us at a very young age. We were taught; from as long as I can remember, that the only inheritance our parents would leave behind is our education, not riches or any other things.

My family moved from the Township to the suburbs in 1996, just 2 years after the advent of democracy. The aim was to secure a better future for me and my sister, and to be closer to some of the schools that our parents wanted us to attend. We were among the first Black families in my neighbourhood and of course the minority in the former Model C schools.

My mother, who was quite the Matriarch in our family, loved people, she loved God and loved her family beyond my ability to express in words. I believe she was a feminist, not because she said so, but because she lived out the principles of feminism in the way she raised me and my sister, and engaged with my stepfather and others. I believe she is the one who unknowingly and unintentionally planted the seeds of feminism within me.



“

MY GREATEST FEAR IS

not living out my
purpose.

-Nomathamsanqa Masiko-Mpaka

”

“

MY FAVORITE BUSINESS TOOL
OR RESOURCES IS

To keep a work– life balance -> These are words I live by professionally: “Work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. The other four balls: family, health, friends, integrity – are made of glass. If you drop one of these, it will be irrevocably scuffed, nicked, perhaps even shattered.” —Gary Keller.

-Nomathamsanqa Masiko-Mpaka

”

So, other than your very principled and unquestionably feminist upbringing, what was the motivating factor that got you into your field of study and subsequent career?

An unshakeable and unquestionable need for justice. It was also a quest for knowledge and understanding of how the world works; how society is ordered and how it functions.

For context, I hold a Bachelor of Social Science degree with majors in Political Science and Public Policy Administration from the University of Cape Town. I also hold two Master's degrees: a Master of Arts degree in International Relations with a specialisation in Global Political Economy and Conflict Dynamics from Stellenbosch University. I also hold a Master of Science degree in Security, Leadership and Society (Cum Laude) from King's College, London.

What advice would you give to others feeling hopeless or challenged about reaching their goals or doing what they desire to do?

I would recommend that they start keeping a Gratitude Journal. Practicing gratitude can be an antidote to sadness and hopelessness. It has been proven that practicing gratitude can rewire our brain to improve our levels of happiness and content. By making the conscious habit of expressing appreciation on a regular basis, for big and small things alike, can transform our lives. Having an attitude of gratitude is about choosing to be grateful and choosing to be thankful for what you have and the people that matter.



“

IF I COULD GO BACK IN TIME,

I would change
nothing!

-Nomathamsanqa Masiko-Mpaka

”

GENERATION EQUALITY: REALISING WOMEN'S RIGHTS FOR AN EQUAL FUTURE'

The global theme for International Women's Day 2022 was "Changing Climates: Equality today for a sustainable tomorrow", a theme that is about recognising and amplifying the important role women and girls around the world play in addressing climate change.

Against this backdrop, is a global pandemic and a tumultuous economic climate. When we zoom into both, we see the big role that women and girls play in sustaining their families, their communities and their countries, a role that boys and men reportedly, did not take up to a similar degree. When we zoom even closer, we can then identify a wide "impact disparity" between girls and boys, and men and women, during global economic, health and environmental crises. It seems that there is a trend of sustainability in the leadership roles that girls and women take up, and often, are forced into.

When we focus the lens to South Africa, we will find that much of this is true, so much that this dynamic almost lends itself to a pipeline of care and sustainability focused roles that begin in the home and lead straight into the work-place. The General Household Research survey 2021, conducted by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), revealed that 42% of households are led by women, and in most cases women are generally underpaid compared to men, even while they shoulder much more domestic responsibilities. The research further points out that 57% of female respondent's vs 49% of men rated household expenses as a significant source of financial stress, and 52% rated the cost of food as a financial stress factor vs 42% for men.



It is evident that there is a trend of women doubling down on roles focused on care and sustainability, particularly during moments of crises, even when these crises, whether local or global, impact women the most. During the global pandemic, women were reported as one of the most vulnerable groups. Similarly, when it comes to climate change and economic downturn, women are still one of the most vulnerable groups, yet, will lead the charge to creating better living conditions for everyone.

Historically, the prioritization of girls came about as an agenda & fight that was led by African women during the 1995 Beijing Conference. The declaration which was written almost 25 years ago is startlingly relevant today as we see the gender equality gap widen more and more. At the conference, Hilary Clinton said, “Women comprise more than half the world’s population, yet women are 70% of the world’s poor, and two-thirds of those who are not taught to read and write. Women are the primary caretakers for most of the world’s children and elderly, yet much of the work we do is not valued – not by economists, not by historians, not by popular culture, not by government leaders”.

Women have so, historically, demonstrated a balanced leadership style that is more focused on collective advancement, than it is on individual opportunity attainment. So, it then becomes interesting that there is such a great gender equity gap, when it comes to leadership, and opportunity in big ticket leadership. But, we have been beating this horse since the late nineteenth century, and not much has occurred to increase access to opportunity for women. While there are many policies in place to secure inclusion, it hasn’t occurred at a fast enough pace, and perhaps it is time to ask ourselves, inclusion to what?

“Inclusion” implies an existing space or cannon that women want access to. In reality, women don’t want inclusion, we want collective and collaborative leadership. “Inclusion” implies that systems, organisations, governments and communities do not belong to us. “Inclusion” implies that these systems, organisations, governments, communities and countries belong to men, and that is the issue at hand. Women are not asking for inclusion, we are asking for equality and equity. We want to lead with and not in a tiny space, at the end of the table, created for us by men.

It is time for us to be more intentional about equality. That means that we must do away with language that implies that we do not belong, that we do not deserve and that we are not part of. We need to continue to challenge policy makers to create more policies of equality and equity for women, and less policies of inclusion.

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WRITTEN BY SIBONGILE KHUMALO

OPINION

THE FEATURE MAGAZINE | SEPTEMBER 2022 ISSUE

OPINION

THE CULTURAL SHAPESHIFTER WE KNOW AS KIM KARDASHIAN.

The title of this article might lead you to think that it's about Cultural Appropriation. In some ways it is, but not entirely. This article is about money, particularly Kimberley Noelle Kardashian's chameleonesque quality to attract it by her mere proximity to cultures.

'Her proximity to whiteness makes her more palatable to investors' said tik toker, Harriett Pinero. This perspective was triggered by the announcement of Kim Kardashian's Private Equity firm, SKKY, in early September 2022. As found in Forbes digital, SKKY is a private equity firm which plans to invest in consumer, digital, media, hospitality and luxury companies. For those of us unsure of the magnitude of this business move; private equity firms manage investment capital from institutional investors or high networth individuals to acquire equity ownership of companies through strategies like leveraged buyouts and venture capital. This kind of equity attainment prospect is eons ahead of equity attainable from just influencing and selling lip kits.

So what does this have to do with culture? The lip kits are where it all began....

You might remember Kim Kardashian, the "exotic" beauty who sustained her fame through proximity to Black culture i.e. appropriation of Black women's features, styles and hairstyles and "leveraging it for the creation of a fashion and beauty empire" (Time Magazine). Yes, her. Kim Kardashian has built her wealth by leaning into Black cultural presentations and commodifying them. She has done that by appropriating Black culture, packaging it, and selling it back to Black and White consumers alike. Kim Kardashian has sold the exotic i.e. Black looking White woman image across the globe and consumers ATE IT UP. Consumers bought body enhancing (shapewear) products through skims, and they also bought lip kits through KKW beauty. Across the world, consumers bought "features" of Black women to install or add on to their personal presentation. Through this, and as it was happening, Kim Kardashian was extending her portfolio.

OPINION

Well now, Kim Kardashian is seemingly shifting gears. Now, the mogul is leaning toward what appears to be a whiter appeal. This shift has been tracked over the last few months by cultural critics who have engaged widely on Kardashian's revert to a whiter/ White woman aesthetic. Fans of Kardashian have noted reduced tanning, no overlined lips, the sporting of blonde hair and a thinner and less curvy body type. It seems that the Armenian star is, what many critics say, "now cosplaying whiteness". And it was only with the announcement of SKKY that many fans and Kardashian conspirators began to understand why.

Anyone who has spent a day working in a big corporation should be able to tell you that the proximity to white culture, in personal presentation at work, is understood to have a more professional appeal. The way employees dress, do their hair, the way they adjust speech and tone (to be more white sounding), even the languages they use are curated towards this professional appeal; a whiter appeal. Kim Kardashian, who is also the daughter of known PR mastermind, Kris Jenner, understands this appeal and is using it to her advantage.

Big corporations are legacies of big white money. When you deal with big white money, you are dealing with legacy money. Legacy money is uncompromising in its demand to retain it and keep it within its very small circles. Legacy money only invites, into these circles, parties they trust, and it is easier when said parties resemble who they are; in person and in principle. As creator, Harriet Pinero, has said, by this whiter presentation, it is easier for Kim to attract the big white money kind of investors who are essential to establishing and increasing the portfolio of her new private equity firm.

Right now, Kim Kardashian is treading this line carefully. Kim understands that culture is a commodity, and whether we decide to nail her to a cross or celebrate her, she has used it to excel in business. Is Kim Kardashian a cultural/race profiteer or excellent business woman? that's an excellent question for which the answer only you can decide. As a brand, Kim Kardashian has done an excellent job moving between cultures for her bottom line. The launch of SKKY is the epitome of how Kim Kardashian has played the race and culture game to immeasurable success in business.

That's my thought and opinion for the week,
Sibongile Khumalo
Communications Specialist.

OPINION

THAT GUY FROM GUCCI; LEVERAGING

Positions in luxury brands not only open doors in terms of work experience and elite connections, but they are also known as one of the highest paying positions in the world due to unlimited earnings caps.

The list of in-demand jobs includes roles as sales representatives, which are conventionally looked down on, but have proven to be one of the promising high potential earning roles. In this role, when one has good communication skills and good marketing skills, there is no telling how far you can go in the world of luxury brands.

It is often said that “the value of a product is its price”, but with the luxury goods industry, the value of our products boom regardless of the state of the economy. Over the years, we’ve seen economies around the world go from good to bad, but the high-end luxury space industry has managed to survive, almost unscathed.

Would we advise you to consider making a career change? well it just depends on what you are currently doing for a living and where you want to be in the upcoming years. If you want to change your current prospects, perhaps the next place to look into is luxury retail.

We had the pleasure of speaking with one such talented sales representative in the luxury brand industry; Mayibongwe Ndlovu aka “Mayi”, who reckons that now is a great time to get into the industry.

“More and more companies are hiring sales people to help with reach out and client engagement”, says Mayi, affectionately known as ‘That guy from Gucci’ on Social Media and other social circles.

Mayi, or ‘That guy from Gucci’ is a 29-year-old senior client advisor for one of the world’s most famous fashion brands ‘Gucci’. With his fox-like communication skills and knowledge of what sells, he uses his social media page to advertise and attract clients for the big brand. This has, to this day, helped him generate a substantial and satisfactory number of followers which have proven a conversion to sales.

“I honed my marketing skills and customer gaze by mastering the versatility of social media and using it as a tool to learn what attracts customers, product design, pricing and strategy in the industry.”

Mainly influenced by online content creators of brands such as LV and Gucci, Mayi launched his own content site. Gucci gave him a platform to interact with their customers, and he saw an opportunity to launch the page. When South Africa hit the Covid-19 pandemic, Mayi was one of those who took advantage of staying at home. He paved the way for sales through virtual engagement, and as the country started to open back up, he then started to meet customers in places convenient for them, building up their sales relationships and his sales record.

Although sales had not always been his career plan, Mayi began his content creation journey in 2020, after being in the retail industry for a little over six years as a casual worker for companies such as Mr Price. He then started with Guess and eventually had to leave University due to lack of funds to continue and instead of remaining idle, he continued to pursue his career. This is where he began his journey towards luxury brands.

“A client advisor’s duties mainly consist of assisting clients in terms of styling and selection of items for the client. The job consists of the advisor taking clients through the brand regardless of how much knowledge they have of the brand and helping them to pick out whatever works for them. This role comes in handy for clients as some people know exactly what they are looking for, and others not so much, however through the help of an advisor both clients are happy.”

Mayi expanded his career through posting items that are available at the store, which has made shopping a lot more convenient for Gucci clientele. Clients and prospective clients are able to get the information they require on what they are interested in, without having to go to the physical store.

So, if you are an aspiring sales consultant or a current sales consultant with the desire to work in the luxury brands industry, this might be the business for you. “There is a lot of growth that comes with working in the luxury retail space”, says Mayi, reflecting on his experience. He says although working in retail has its ups and downs, he highly recommends that more young people get into retail, when the opportunity presents.

“In terms of qualifying for a job in luxury spaces, people don't have to go through the steps I went through to get the role they desire. I started at a department level store, then on to a premium level store, affordable luxury, then ended up in high-end luxury. Things are different now. It all depends on the experience you have in retail, your ambition and innovation techniques.”

Mayi’s technique of reaching customers through social media was innovative. Mayi leveraged the global pandemic and many opportunities offered by the growth of technology to expand his market. With over 80% of marketers now using social media to market their brands, businesses will soon no longer need a physical office. Mayi was proactive in his initiative and it led to business growth. Perhaps it is now time for a lot more businesses and employees to seriously consider what Social Media can do for them.

WHEN HAVE YOU FELT YOUR WEAKEST?

Imagine pacing through the busyness of life (as we often do) navigating the many twists and turns, making decisions from the moment you open our eyes (is it tea or coffee this morning or am I going hard with cardio or laps around the pool) to the very moment when your head hits the pillow (do I book my pedi for tomorrow or next week?).

Your mind is constantly making a series of decisions whether consciously or subconsciously. However, what happens when the very vessel that you highly depend on to be operating at maximum capacity encounters somewhat of a malfunction? What happens when your brain goes into overdrive, your body goes into overload or both? What happens when you feel at your weakest, be it mentally or physically? What then? What now?

Surely you cannot possibly afford this set back right? Granted, the demands that life places on an individual are immense at most times, in fact now more than ever millennials are the biggest cohort worldwide that are the most educated generation ever and arguably have the most influence in society. We are at our peak but why is there this common thread of feeling weak?

Truth is nothing can ever fully prepare us for a moment of weakness; we all perceive, and process various life changes differently based on our intrinsic and learned thresholds. But here is my take on how to actively work through these moments of weakness:

1 Identify the feeling and give it a name that way you know exactly what you are dealing with

2 Speak up! Reach out to your tribe for support; whether it be through a professional like a psychologist or your trusted band of friends that you can leverage as sounding boards

3 Remember who you are, purposefully recall your past accomplishments and write down future aspirations, that way you have your “why”

4 Don't take yourself too seriously! Enjoy the journey while getting to your destination, embrace taking on new challenges that scare you

5 Have fun; before you know it what was once your weakness will soon become familiar ground then you'll move on to the next adventure

My thing is when I feel my weakest; I accept the challenges, grab hold of the lessons presented, emerge wiser and pay it forward for like-minded people. Picking yourself back up again is a lifelong exercise, do it deliberately, confidently and decisively.

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BONGI MLOTSHWA

FROM PAGEANT QUEEN, ACTRESS TO MAKE-UP ARTIST: CAREER PIVOTS IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES.

When you google Bongi Mlotshwa, what you may find is a very glamorous and popular image of a youthful Miss Soweto beauty pageant contestant. What many people don't know is that renowned South African Make-up artist used to be first princess to the Miss Soweto beauty pageant, and during this time, she already knew where she wanted to go with her career.

In the summer of Bongi's Miss Soweto media run, in an interview with Radio Bob in the 80's, Bongi knew and very clearly stated her ambitions to become a Make-up artist. This was not a very popular or aspiring career path among her peers during this period, but it was a path for Bongi who knew that what she wanted was "to paint people's faces", although she was not entirely sure how this would take shape.

As a natural performer and entertainer, she started her career in speech and drama at FUBA. Here she began to double down on her ambition for make-up through her acting career. The pivot was seamless, and today she holds three awards and 32 years of experience as a makeup artist in the media and entertainment industry.

In her early days, Bongi used to make acting appearances on South African favourite, Soul City: the institute, along a star-studded cast which included Lillian Dube, Bonnie Mbuli and Jerry Mofokeng. She also made a few appearances on Generations, but more significantly she served as head of make-up for Generations, Generations: The legacy, Muvhango and Uzalo. Bongi also served as Make-up artist in the most current and most talked about series, The River.

While her resume Boasts a glowing career, Bongi shares that her journey in her industry has been financially challenging over the years. Bongi therefore advises young people entering the entertainment industry to always have a second or third avenue or source of income ready to sustain themselves, should it come to that. Bongi shares that the entertainment industry is at a stage where it is not as protected as other industries like corporate or governance. Benefits like UIF and medical aid are not standardised in the entertainment industry, so they will always be things one needs to take care of for themselves. Bongi believes if the industry can be more regulated, there will be better risk management and people in the industry can be better protected, especially as an industry that makes a considerable amount of money. For Bongi, artists are held equally responsible to pay taxes, therefore operating like a freelance industry cannot be normal. More than this, she also notes that as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, media and entertainment industries were essential for the spread of information and entertainment, and to this end, it is evident that we need better regulatory structures to care for the people behind these jobs.

In the meantime, Bongi's experiences have led her to train young people in her industry. As an entrepreneur herself, she understands that financial challenges are not unique to her. Therefore, she hopes to secure funding to enable her students with the opportunity to get the required skills and advance in the makeup industry.

To support Bongi with her initiative, please feel free to reach out to her.

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION VS CULTURAL APPRECIATION

Why is Cultural Integrity Sacred?

During Heritage Day, the celebration of cultures happens across South Africa. The advent of colonialism in Africa brought along with it the punitive erasure of many African cultures in favour of a separatist ideology that centres European culture for the prospect of access to economic opportunity. However, even with these punitive European structures, many Africans maintained their cultures throughout the years. Et consequat id

In the case of South Africa, many of these African cultures are celebrated in the month of September, on heritage day. These African cultures, with Asian and European cultures all have equal opportunity to celebrate together and apart. As this is happening, it remains important to create awareness on being respectful of one another's cultures, particularly in a contemporary South Africa that is becoming an ever-growing melting pot of global cultures. So, let's take a look at the difference between cultural appropriation and appreciation

What is Cultural Appropriation?

In a most recent social media wave, social media users took to their timelines to lambast Kim Kardashian (again) for cultural appropriation (again). The backlash was in response to a daily mail article that highlighted Kim Kardashian, Her daughter, North West, and International pop star Lizzo, trend setters for wearing nose earrings - which the article dubbed as the latest fashion accessory. Many Social media users expressed their discontent at this article, and at Kim, North and Lizzo on the basis of cultural appropriation. Many users indicated that the nose ring, as styled by these three celebrities, is worn in the same style as South Asian women wear for their sacred cultural objectives. This was, in no uncertain terms, another instance of cultural appropriation.

Cultural appropriation is taking aspects of a culture without paying proper respect to that culture, or participating in a cultural activity without an expressed invitation to participate in cultural activities, by that culture. While this might seem like a minor issue to the people outside of the culture, it is an issue of great concern for the people inside the culture. When one appropriates a culture, they take part in sacred traditions with a superficial lens of setting a trend or wanting to appear more exotic. Often, cultural appropriators are ignorant of the cultural significance of the styles, ritual or activities they appropriate, and in this sense disregard the heritage of the particular group whose styles they are using.

Cultural appropriation is a violation of the sacredness of a culture. It is, in many ways, a cultural theft, particularly in cases where these cultural styles and artefacts get commodified. A most common example that has been historically overlooked are dreadlocks. Dreadlocks of different forms have existed throughout many cultures. But, it was popularised by the Rastafarian culture, and even became synonymous with it. For Rastafarians, dreadlocks are not just a hairstyle. Instead, they are a religious symbol of reverence.

For the Rastafarian community, the style of locking hair, to the Rastafarian style, especially when combined with Rastafarian style of dress and use of hemp or smoking cannabis recreationally, in the mainstream, is offensive. The cultural significance of these cultural elements are not understood by many who incorporate these sacred cultural elements to their social lifestyle. And while many argue that adopting these elements is not the same as adopting the culture, what remains true is that elements of a culture are used without consent, and without giving proper homage to the cultural community.

There is a stark difference between cultural appreciation and cultural appropriation, but the difference is simple; it is Respect. Cultural appreciation is when one is invited into a culture, gets educated on the culture and granted permission by the cultural group to educate, spread awareness or share elements of that culture with others. A very simple example is when you are invited into a cultural event by members of a cultural group and then invited to dress in the style of the group to that particular event. In this case, you are invited into a cultural event where each of the selected artefacts and styles of dress on display have a particular significance to that event

Cultural appreciation is reverence and respect for the culture by people outside of the culture. Appreciation seeks to learn all that is allowed to learn in the culture. An invitation is needed because parts of a culture can be closed unless one is invited in by community members.

Culturally appreciative people want to connect with cultures to foster understanding and compassion. This humble act creates a bond between different cultural communities as knowledge and customs are shared instead of stolen without compensation.

In my opinion, cultural appreciation is a purpose behind celebrating Heritage Day in South Africa. It should therefore be in the minds of all South Africans that our cultures are unique and beautiful. Sharing them, respectively, with the world creates a oneness that deserves one word: ubuntu.





FOOD O'CLOCK:
SPRING BREEZEFUL
BEVERAGES

Kgopotso Boshomane

A glass of smoothie with strawberries and oats. The smoothie is a light pinkish-orange color, topped with a generous amount of rolled oats and a fresh strawberry. The background is a light blue surface with scattered oats and strawberries.

BANANA AND STRAWBERRY SMOOTHIE WITH OATS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup of frozen banana
- 1 cup of frozen strawberries
- 1/2 cup of raw oats
- 1/4 cup of fresh naartjie
- cups of plain yogurt

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine all the ingredients in a blender
2. Blend till smooth and serve immediately

ENJOY!

PASSION FRUIT AND LEMONADE

(with homemade passion fruit)

INGREDIENTS

- 115g granadilla pulp
- 2 cups of castor sugar
- 1 cup of water
- 1 tsp of vodka(optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Over low heat, add 1 cup of water in a saucepan. Add castor sugar, granadilla pulp and vodka
2. Give it a stir till the ingredients are dissolved
3. Increase the heat to medium to bring it to boil
4. Remove it from the heat and allow it to cool
5. Strain and store it a sealed jars.

You can store this syrup for 2 weeks in a fridge

