NAIROBI DESIGN WEEK 2016

3rd - 12th November

www.nairobidesignweek.com | #NDW2016
THINKPLACE DESIGN MATATU
NDW Pre - Launch
3rd
01:30 PM - 11:30PM
J`s Bar
Muthangari Dr

DESIGN CHILLOUT
4th
6:00 PM - LATE

DESIGN MARKET
12th
10:00 AM - 7PM
Creatives Garage
Kirichwa Rd

NOVEMBER 2016
NDW FORUM

11th
10AM - 5PM

PAWA254
2nd flr Africa Alliance
State House Crescent

MATHARE POLYTECHNIC WORKSHOP

9th
1:30PM - 5PM

10th
10AM - 7PM

Undugu School
Mathare

#TUJENGENASOLAR

5th
2PM - 6PM

Undugu Field
Kibera

FIND YOUR EVENT
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USB mobile charging and a super bright lamp.

BOOM
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FM radio/MP3
MicroSD and Lamp

HOME 120
3 lamps and USB mobile charging

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FOREWORD

It is indeed my privilege and pleasure to welcome you to Nairobi Design Week (NDW) 2016. With design’s influence rapidly increasing across the continent and in other majority world contexts, such a platform is important for the continued growth and development of the world’s economies.

As the preeminent design week in East Africa, it is the role of NDW to nurture the incredible network that it is continually building and continues connecting all corners of the industry.

By focusing on Kenyan artisans and the uniqueness of our informal (jua kali) industry, NDW2016 puts them on centre stage for all the world to see. This year will expose many people to novel ways of designing, creating, producing and doing business. It is important for Africans to learn from the rest of the world whilst remembering what they bring to the global arena of creativity.
We’re back, it’s only year two and we’re absolutely loving where Nairobi Design Week is headed. 2016 has been a year of evolution and growth in all the right areas. With our debut behind us, we took feedback from many partners, guests and participants on what it means to be part of NDW and what it should mean. With a tighter focus and better understanding, the Design Directory is now accompanied by the all new Artisan Listing. Both of these will be permanent features, online and in print, giving people around the world better, direct access to African design.

In 2017 we’ll be centered around expanding our membership base and improving the ways in which we provide exposure. We’re building a community and we want you to be a part of it!

This year we have worked hard to revamp our brand identity, aiming to portray the opportunities that lay between traditional craft and the modern design world. It communicates the hard work, culture and voice of artisans and how their impact Kenya’s design community.

The NDW 2016 guide is designed to give you an insight into the exciting, fun and informative experiences that are being hosted throughout the week. It’s also a handy reference for all your upcoming design needs in 2017, making it as easy as possible to connect with Nairobi’s design community. Take a look through and don’t be shy!
A sigh of relief for Moringa school and all ICT practitioners who were in uproar 3 months ago for the headline: *ICT Practitioner’s Bill To Destroy Innovation in Kenya.* Moringa school blog.

A month later the bill was denounced.

Congratulations to Matwana who recently got featured on CNN. Titled: *Matatu culture: Documenting Nairobi’s ‘museums on wheels’* CNN

The article explores the matatu culture giving Wanyamas’ perspectives.

A big woop for the artisan theme this year with *Nairobi County to market local Artisans globally* Standard Media.

Nairobi County government is set to launch a programme that will market local Artisans to become global entrepreneurs.

Visit our website at nairobidesiwnweek.com for updates.
NAIROBI DESIGN WEEK 2016

ARTISANS

Nairobi hosts an eclectic community of artisans and craft workers. Last year’s NDW opened this topic with a video series on artisans (locally know as jua kali workers) from Kenya’s largest informal settlement, Kibera. This year we are aiming to connect artisans to a wider market and give their work even more exposure.

Translated to hot sun, the name jua kali can be considered a brief history on how the community came about. Mostly men tinkering in the hot sun making just about anything useful, at ‘affordable prices’. This time around we’ll show that Jua Kali and artisanry have developed as a perfect accompaniment to today’s design culture, with handmade craftsmanship experiencing a global renaissance. Today’s artisans have expanded on the products, styles and production methods available, with many becoming a product of their environment. One person’s waste is another’s opportunity to be grabbed.

Earlier this year, the Nairobi County Executive Committee (CEC) Education Youth Sports, Gender Affairs & Culture and Social Service Anne Lokidor announced that the county will promote artisans’ skills and their products to make them recognised internationally.

Ms Lokidor said that in the 2016/2017 financial year, the County government will engage local artisans to participate in product exhibitions that will enhance ease of accesses to global markets and address unemployment problems facing Kenyan youth by promoting artisan talents and increase their economic capacity. We can’t wait to see what’s next.
EVENTS
The word matatu combines Swahili words ‘my’ and ‘three’, having originated from 1960s Kenyan slang for the original price of a ride, 30 Ksh. Matatus are widely known as the most common form of public transportation here in Kenya. Playing host to some of Kenya’s best public art (including portraits and famous quotes), matatus are also one of the most iconic pieces of Kenya’s modern culture - they’re vibrant, colorful and widely understood to be a menace on the roads. Usually heard before they are seen, most matatus have powerful sound systems and overhead lights inside the bus that lend customers an incredibly unique, if risky, travel experience. Despite the vibrancy and cultural resonance that matatus have, many organisations have characterized matatus as a major threat to road safety. Many have tried and failed to address the challenges associated with this form of travel. In short, matatus represent a travel experience that stands to be improved, enhanced, and transformed.

On November, 3rd 2016, ThinkPlace Kenya is organizing the Design Matatu Experience to do just that.

The Design Matatu Experience is a completely immersive, and intensive creative experience that empowers the everyday person to redesign their travel experience. 30 participants from diverse backgrounds, working for NGOS, public and private companies, will be invited to take a ride in the ThinkPlace Design Matatu and collaboratively tackle a design challenge. In short, the participants will be faced with the following challenge:
How can we improve the experience of riding in a matatu?

How can matatus be safer and become an asset rather than a risk?

Our goal for the day is to conduct research on people’s lived experiences on matatus, and use our findings to identify a working solution that can be prototyped and tested with users. In order to do this, participants will apply ThinkPlace’s iterative design methodology. This framework is what ThinkPlace uses in projects everyday to help simplify complex problems, discover latent needs, and learn through making & doing. Traveling through the streets of Kilimani, the matatu will stop at key points of interest with each stop representing a stage in the design process: Intent, Explore, Innovate & Test, Evaluate and Formulate.
**STOP 1: INTENT**

Participants will define the purpose of the strategic question: they define the scope, outline shared goals, reframe the problem and ask focusing questions.

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**STOP 2: EXPLORE**

They will research and discover the human experience of the problem. They will approach users on the street or at nearby stages to ask what works and what needs to change. Participants will learn that the most important insights are often latent - things that people want or need but don’t always tell.

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**STOP 3: INNOVATE & TEST**

This phase will help participants generate and rapidly prototype new ideas. Every idea will be prototyped (using basic materials), tested with users and refined to reflect the feedback.

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**STOP 4: FORMULATE**

During the final stage they will create a proposition that describes the future state and how to achieve it. They’ll recommend a set of actions to address the core challenge.
EVENT DETAILS:

The THINKPLACE DESIGN MATATU will be operating on the 3rd of November 2016 from 1:30pm. The participants’ final stop will be the NDW Pre-Launch, hosted by Thinkplace.

The NAIROBI DESIGN WEEK PRE-LAUNCH will be held on the 3rd of November, 2016 from 5:30-8pm at J’s Westlands, Corner of Muthangari Rd and Waiyaki Way, Westlands.

This atypical experience powerfully illustrates that design can be done anywhere: in an office, at work or even on a matatu. The process is iterative and non-linear: while this can sometimes appear messy, by being flexible participants manage to design solutions that are sustainable. Most importantly, this experience will help participants build deep empathy with the everyday users of matatus to ensure they deliver a design that meets real and demonstrated needs -- the critical first step in any human-centered design process.

Find out more about ThinkPlace kenya on our online Design directory at www.nairobidesignweek.com
Creatives’ Garage is a broad-spectrum movement for creatives to network, share ideas, collaborate, learn, gain market accessibility and push boundaries.

A dream to create a space where creatives from all walks of life can come together to network, collaborate and push the boundaries of the creative scene. 3 years later, the dream continues to solidify, partnering with approximately 7,000 (and growing) Creatives who they guide into turning their craft into a source of livelihood.

Creatives’ Garage enables creatives to earn livelihoods with simplicity. After three years of building cultural networks, engaging in cultural activism and seeking out social innovation, they are now focusing on gaining access to markets for creatives.

NDW2016 will launch with a special edition of the popular Friday Chillout. We are excited to host Mugendi M’Rithaa, the president of the World Design Organisation, who will take the stage to introduces this year’s festival. He will be joined by speakers from Aurecon, Sun King and NDW.

Join us for this special sundowner and get introduced to Nairobi’s design scene. Enjoy an evening with your favorite designers, interact with like-minded creatives and meet visitors from across the globe.
DESIGN CHILLOUT
Creatives ` Garage
4th Nov 2016 | 6pm - 12am

PRODUCERS + DISTRIBUTORS
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MADE IN AFRICA 19
KOUNKUEY DESIGN INITIATIVE

TUJENGE NA SOLAR

Undugu Field - Kibera
5th Nov 2016 | 6pm - 12am

#TUJENGEKIBERA RETURNS THIS YEAR FOR A SPECIAL EDITION, FEATURING MORE STORIES OF POSITIVE CHANGE IN THE COMMUNITY.

Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI) is a non-profit design and community development organization, that physically transforms ‘underserved’ communities by partnering with them to, improve environmental, economic, and social quality of life. One of their areas of reach is in Kenya’s largest informal settlement, Kibera. Their project here is called #TujengeKibera, translating to ‘Let’s build Kibera’. It is an online social media campaign and competition initiated by KDI. Over the
years there have been many stories written about Kibera and its residents often portraying the settlement in a negative light; but KDI’s experience working with the communities tells another story. It is aimed at highlighting stories of positive change in Kibera, shifting perceptions, and investing in initiatives with potential in the settlement. These are stories about residents who take responsibility for their environment and try to be the change they want to see, building and operating projects that positively impact their communities.

Stories of people with mentorship programs for children through arts and sports. Stories geared at changing the narrative. Stories of entrepreneurs and artisans.

TujengeKibera launched in 2015 with a fun-filled day and a call to action encouraging Kibera residents to get involved and contribute their stories to the campaign, culminating in a competition. Residents sent in their own proposals for transforming the community and the winner announced in March this year, won a 100,000 Ksh cash prize and investment in their project.

This year, Sun King will join KDI in hosting the event. In the solar tent they’ll be sharing success stories of customers from around the world, promoting access to solar energy through their EasyBuy technology and product range.
KnownAfrique is a Law Social Enterprise with a vision of making the law known by solving social problems through legal solutions. KnownAfrique sets out to promote easy access to the law by linking Law, Technology and Design.

SlumFighters develops, implements and transmits a method to transform informal settlements, together with all stakeholders so that citizens obtain a sustainable and humane life.

Together, KnownAfrique and SlumFighters spread knowledge and understanding in order to fight injustice, corruption and poverty. As a flagship project, both KnownAfrique and SlumFighters will support the Mathare community to set the agenda for upcoming changes. They will start by focusing on the unfolding

‘Slums’ have become a byword for subtle but serious human rights violations. On a daily basis their inhabitants are unable to exercise and receive basic human rights such as: healthcare; housing; sanitation; clean water; legal information and legal representation.

KNOWNAFRIQUE AND SLUMFIGHTERS WANT TO DELIVER ACCESS TO THESE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS.

HOW?

KnownAfrique is a Law Social Enterprise with a vision of making the law known by solving social problems through legal solutions. KnownAfrique sets out to promote easy access to the law by linking Law, Technology and Design.

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Human centered design workshop
Nairobi Design Week
9th / 10th Nov 2016   |   1:00pm - 5:30pm
Empower the Mathare community by assisting in effective utilisation of the school grounds.

Plan for the sustainable use of the Mathare Undugu community school.

Engage county municipality in combined bottom-up & top-down development.

Embrace the complexity of human and urban life, including all relevant aspects ranging from social and economic to legal and spatial.

case of the Undugu School (formerly Mathare Polytechnic), also working together with community organizer Gibson Maina and Undugu principal Mary Moi to make plans with and for the community. They will conduct research, share expertise and hold meetings and human centered design workshops. Here they will demonstrate the way they empower communities legally, spatially and socio-economically. Based on the human centered design process, KnownAfrique will design legal content and avail a Lawkit tailor made for Undugu School.

Goals:

Empower the Mathare community by assisting in effective utilisation of the school grounds.

Plan for the sustainable use of the Mathare Undugu community school.

Engage county municipality in combined bottom-up & top-down development.

Embrace the complexity of human and urban life, including all relevant aspects ranging from social and economic to legal and spatial.

EVENT DETAILS:

The Mathare Polytechnic Human Centered Design Workshop NDW will be operating on the 9th and 10th of November 2016 from 1:30pm to 5:30 pm at Mathare Polytechnic complex (behind Kingdom Hall Mathare)
Often seen as a key component in design thinking’s rise, human centered design (HCD) lets designers investigate social problems, engage users, and prototype solutions to problems that seem out of reach. As it’s name suggests, HCD focuses on people, helping designers gain empathy, understanding and in depth knowledge of key stakeholders via interviews, observation, and immersion.

Turning design thinking into a formal, codified process has given it global recognition and encouraged more organisations to incorporate it into their strategies. In their search for quick business results and armed with a lack of design’s nuances, many have cut corners in their approach, diluting the process to a state that has some leading thinkers in the industry asking “What’s next?”.

The NDW Forum gathers several of East Africa’s preeminent design thinkers for an opportunity to discuss the state of design thinking, its future and how we can learn from its successes and failures. The discussion will explore learnings from projects in an African context as well as further afield. In Nairobi, Think Place are strengthening public systems through more effective, efficient and high-integrity service delivery in fields such as education, social protection and energy generation. Their work to increase financial inclusion focuses on mobile money, micro-loans & savings, micro-insurance and
agricultural finance innovation. Through their iterative design methodology, they use design thinking as a base to frame and solve complex problems. Also based in Nairobi, IF Ventures focuses on developing projects at the intersection of social responsibility and billion dollar growth opportunities. They co-create new businesses with clients by managing the design build process in key test markets. This has led them to develop an evolution of HCD that they call Design for Implementation (DFI), focused on integrating design as a problem solving methodology into the wider business creation process.

In Uganda, Design Without Borders have worked with UNICEF in setting up a mobile phone-based birth and family registration system, a national child help line, and an SMS-based information and reminder system for pregnant women and young mothers. U-report is an SMS-based crowd sourcing system where young people from every district in Uganda report on issues in their communities, such as the presence of school teachers in classrooms, drug theft, impersonation, and abuse. At the time of writing over 120,000 young people are enrolled. Their approach to HCD has allowed them to adapt and modify the process across countless industries. The team at Sun King knows a thing or two about valuing and understanding their customers. Having built a rural distribution network across 54 countries, it’s no surprise Patrick Walsh, the CEO still carries out regular field research trips. Celebrating the sale of their 6 millionth light, they’ll be sharing some of the stories and challenges they’ve encountered on their journey.

NDW Forum will discuss the future of design thinking. Speakers will give stories from their own experiences of successes and failures, analysing how we might navigate design’s next evolution and where it will take us.
DESIGN MARKET

Creatives ` Garage
12th Nov 2016 | 6pm - 12am

PHOTOGRAPHY BY VI` ENLE
Being a multi-disciplinary collective space for Nairobi’s creatives to share ideas, collaborate, learn, and gain access to market opportunities, this will provide an opportunity for artisans and exhibitors from a wide range of disciplines to showcase their products and services to the general public. With the mix of exhibitors on offer, it will be educational, interactive and friendly atmosphere. The event hosts a dynamic and unique selection of design thinkers and crafts.

Exhibitors will include design organisations and artisans from across the industry. Visitors will have the opportunity to pick through local, high quality design objects. It is bound to be a day filled with fun activities and special entertainment. Come indulge in delicious food and drinks from your favorite vendors, shop a wide range of goods, and interact with Nairobi’s vibrant creative scene.
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Everything created from the hands of an artisan tells a story, and Artisan and Fox is on a mission to share these beautiful stories with the world.

We’re discovering and providing hidden makers access to the international markets. Currently Artisan and Fox works on the ground and collaborates with local community groups in Nepal, Bangladesh the Philippines and Kenya. Through our monthly subscription box, consumers can discover quality and authentic artisanal products, and go on a vicarious journey to the mountains of Nepal, or the pristine beaches of Philippines.

Their mission is simple: to provide economic opportunities to underprivileged artisans by bringing local micro-enterprises and community groups online, and to share the human story behind each product. What makes us unique is our 50/50 promise. We literally share 50% of our profits with our artisan partners. This is in line with our commitment to the ethical production of crafts, and fostering sustainable livelihoods for our artisan partners.

WE ARE LAUNCHING OUR CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN FOR THE SUBSCRIPTION BOXES IN FEBRUARY 2017 WHERE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO FIND WORK BY NDW ARTISANS
ARTISAN & FOX

ARTISAN AND FOX IS A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WORKING TO BRING ARTISAN MICRO-ENTERPRISES ONLINE THROUGH ITS MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION BOX.
VICTORIOUS BONE CRAFT - Bone and Horn

Founded in 2006 by Jack Nyawanga and two other skilled craftsmen from Kibera, Victorious Bone Craft utilizes bones and horns from butcheries and slaughterhouses to make beautiful handcrafted products. These include necklaces, earrings, key holders, spoons and hair clippers, which are sold in both local and international markets. In a bid to make the youth more independent, Victorious Bone Craft offers training to men and women from across Kibera. Thereafter, the trainees are free to establish their own workshops and bring their products to market. Victorious Bone Craft is environmentally conscious, ensuring that their trainees are made aware of responsible dumping mechanisms. The group hopes to increase their production capacity through training more youth to join their workforce.

BARAKA MENZA - Tyres

Baraka Menza is a young, enthusiastic social entrepreneur from Kibera, who saw an opportunity to transform dumped tyres into unique sandals. After Baraka completed college in 1998, he was unable to secure employment.

He got into this business after he had learned, for two years, how to make sandals from tyres and spent another year refining production. Finally in 2002, Baraka started his own business. He creates the sandal designs himself, and also takes custom orders. In the beginning, it was difficult to for him to find a space to operate, as well as to source other supplies. Since then however, Baraka has been able to employ three more people who help in production on a permanent basis. When he is on a strict deadline, Baraka hires more workers on a temporary basis. Despite the fact that he has the capacity to produce
CRAFTED 3 WAYS

MOSES OJOWI - Brass

Kibera-based artisan Moses Ojowi makes brass products from scrap metal and other recyclable materials, sourced locally from the Kenyan community. Prior to starting his own business in 2008, Moses was employed in a company that also made brass products. He decided to start his own business because he was really enthusiastic about learning more, and further developing the skills he had acquired. Moses chooses to source his materials locally because he believes it boosts the local economy and empowers small businesses. The use of recyclable materials means that his business is environmentally responsible and ethical. Moses purchases a small percentage of his brass materials from retail outlets within Nairobi; among some of the scrap materials he uses to make cast products are water pipes and old padlocks. Moses has a wide product range; his cast brass products include rings, pendants and bangles. He also makes non-cast products from brass sheets and wires, and these include earrings, bracelets and necklaces. In addition, he makes products that combine horn, bone and brass as well. Moses trades his products through established local networks. He also receives customization orders from the international market. However, his biggest challenge are the middlemen by whom he often feels cheated. He hopes to gain access to more direct markets in the future.

in bulk, Baraka says that he has always faced a challenge when it comes to finding a consistent larger market for his products. Baraka says that his family is his biggest source of inspiration. Through referrals from friends and his established local networks, Baraka has been able to sell his sandals throughout the community.
Sun King is a for profit social business that develops and manufactures honest, reliable and high quality solar products designed for people living off the electric grid. Sun King products range from the cute and surprisingly bright Pico up to Solar Home Systems that offer 3 full ceiling lights and a separate solar panel. Each product has been created through thousands of hours of observation, immersion and user research to give the end user the most value and best quality possible.

In 2016, Sun King launched the EasyBuy programme, allowing customers to pay for products in installments through the Angaza technology, giving millions more people the potential to access solar energy at affordable prices.

With Kenya leading the charge in solar activations across East Africa and Nairobi acting as its hub of innovation, Sun King decided a major office in Nairobi would not only give them access to local customers, but also local talent. To understand a customer a company needs to immerse itself in their culture and the prominence of Kenyans in the Sun King office is a pleasure to see, joined by colleagues from India, China, the USA and many other corners of the world.

Nairobi Design Week 2016 is proud to be sponsored by Sun King, a company that shares our vision for changing the world through design, by offering efficiently engineered products and game-changing distribution strategies.
PORTABLE SOLAR STUDY AND TASK LIGHT

6 MILLION SUN KING LAMPS HAVE BEEN SOLD ACROSS 54 COUNTRIES.
In August 2016, Nairobi Design Week hosted six undergraduate and masters product design students from De Montfort University, UK. Our mission was to give them a flavour of the creative and business opportunities that Kenya has to offer and make them fall in love with the country. In such a short time it's impossible to see everything, but NDW was perfectly positioned to create a tailor-made, focused experience that engaged the students throughout.

To travel the world, experience new cultures and make new, international friends is an investment for a lifetime. As part of the University’s #DMUGlobal programme, we flew from London to Nairobi to immerse ourselves in a new culture, with the aim of helping to design and market solar lighting products.

We arrived in the middle of the night and after some sleep settled into the hustle and bustle of Nairobi life. On our first day we visited the University of Nairobi, meeting design peers and learning about their approach to design. Our first weekend provided an excursion to lake Naivasha, where we camped next to hippos, ate around a campfire and had a perfect opportunity to familiarise ourselves with the Sun King products that we’d spend the week working with. After a relaxing introduction, we were excited to kickstart our trip and get involved in the Nairobi design scene.

ThinkPlace provided a great, one day workshop which introduced us to the process of human centered design (HCD). Within hours we were challenged to get out on the streets and start interviewing people straight away – an intimidating and enthralling experience. We learnt how to analyse these interviews, creating unique insights that can lead to exciting new products or solutions. The following days allowed us to put these skills into practise by visiting Sun King customers in Limuru and Machakos, talking with locals about the products they owned and needs they had, and learning to empathise with people whose lifestyle was very different from ours.

Upon arrival back at the Sun King offices, we analysed the material we had collected and brainstormed a myriad of ways we could better market solar products in rural areas. The ideation session was not only great fun but it also provided and eclectic mix of serious and wacky ideas. With feedback from the Sun King team, we narrowed down to a few concepts and developed them further with low fidelity
prototypes, presenting the results to the CMO, Melissa Lo and her team. This experience was life changing for the students. It opened their eyes to a world outside the UK and enabled them to develop new design methods and approaches. The links we developed through NDW were invaluable and over half of the group are already exploring ways to return to Kenya and continue this work. We will continue developing this partnership and can’t wait to come back in 2017!

Dr Timothy Whitehead
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
HUMPHREY GATERI
@NAIROBIPHOET

Humphrey Gateri is a passionate Kenyan photographer living in Nairobi. He comes from a family of 4, his mother and two brothers. Humphrey worked as a freelance photographer for NDW for most of 2015, and had a number of projects like the Artisans of Kibera series. We caught up with the busy photographer to interview him on how he got into photography, and his journey from the NDW office to his rise to stardom.

On how he got into photography

I used to be an electrical engineering student at the University of Nairobi where I was supported by my uncle, however, financial hardships took a toll and I had to withdraw from school for a while. During this “break”, I picked up a small digital Panasonic camera at home and started taking photos of my friends and things around me. I upgraded to a DSLR which belonged to my friend Ricky, and whenever I got gigs, I would split the money with Ricky. With time, I used my savings, as well as additional funds from my brother and other friend Ken, to buy my own SLR to take photos with. After that, I met Adrian the creative director of NDW and started doing some freelance work for NDW.

What inspired your passion for photography?

I think the passion for photography has always been there within me, the biggest mistake I ever made was trying to suppress that. Eventually, I picked up a camera and found out with time that I could do more with it. I think that’s when it all started. The people around me also inspire me; there are a couple of photographers whose work inspired me back then, to take up photography seriously.
A Nikon D3200 with a 50-35 and the kit 18-55 although I think a Nikon full frame camera would work best for me. However, I keep in mind that it is never about the gear, I think one can do as much with a crop sensor compared to a full frame sensor SLR.

Here’s the thing, I found out that most photographers are mean with information and with the art itself. I think they feel threatened so they don’t necessarily want to help you become a better photographer. Luckily, I was able to maneuver my way and contacted a well-known photographer on Instagram. He responded and invited me to one of his shoots where I studied his work and his style. Although he wasn’t one of the easiest people to work with, I was able to learn a lot on my own. If you know what you want, you have to swallow your pride and work, regardless of the conditions.

What camera are you sporting now?

What are some of the unexpected hurdles you’ve faced in trying to become a top notch photographer in Nairobi?

Who is your favorite Kenyan photographer and why?

Sarah Waiswa, she goes by @lafrohemien on Instagram, her work is just simply amazing. She likes to call herself a phoet; photography and poetry, it’s a combined word. My style is different from hers but I just love the way she is able to tell stories through her portraits. Someday I’d love to tell stories the way she does.

What is the most important/biggest thing you learned from working at NDW?

I’d say the entire experience opened me up to the art field and I am thankful to NDW for that. The biggest thing I learned from that was to continuously improve on my photography skills.

Find out more about Humphrey Gateri on Instagram - @nairobiphoet
What we would want in our design community is something easy to operate and as easy to maintain and repair, with reliable printing and excellent build quality. The Ultimaker 2 is the tool. It only takes a couple minutes to get the machine set up and powered on. It doesn’t try to hide the fact that it’s a 3D printer, but it also doesn’t look like transformers could be real. Held together by steel bolts and framed in extremely durable stuff called Dibond, Packaged in its flight case, we think this could handle a matatu ride out to shags. A single click wheel resembling the 1st gen iPod adorns the front. This combined with the simple menu system ensures that operation is as simple as possible. The only connectivity for transferring 3D files is an SD card slot next to the screen.

Since the birth of Aleutia’s 1st fanless pc, a fit for purpose energy efficient fanless computer, ready for the dry and dusty rural environments the T1 and R50 are the result of many iterations of design and development through the use of materials selection, copper has infused a gorgeous natural colour simultaneously increasing thermal conductivity to birth a unique design. The R50 is a small and powerful system capable of running graphics design and 3D programs. Felix uses it everyday for Aleutias design projects.

If you’re not solving problems with design, you’re just creating them - Salehe Bembury
Kenya’s first makerspace is rapidly establishing itself as a key component of Kenya’s Silicon Savannah. Housing an electronics lab, 3D printers, a CNC plasma cutter and fully kitted workshops, all your prototyping needs are solved locally in the company of some of the most knowledgeable and enthusiastic people in the business. Mark Zuckerberg’s recent visit has only increased the well earned hype. At Gearbox they love to build things. “More importantly” they say, “we love to build things together”. They achieve this most enjoyably through community projects. For each one, they pick a challenge based on what interests them and their members, and what problems they see around Nairobi that might be solvable.

“Starting with a meetup to kick things off, we spend one or two months designing, prototyping, and building a solution. Community-inspired, community-funded, and community-driven, these projects teach us a lot about how to design and build for Nairobi.”

Their recent ‘Precious Plastic Project’ aims to make recycled plastic useful around Nairobi, and Kenya, by making interlocking bricks for low-cost construction and 3D printing affordable prosthetics for children (who tend to outgrow traditionally fabricated prosthetics far too fast). In the coming year, NDW looks forward to exploring the synergies between such projects and Kenya’s jua kali (artisan) industry. NDW’s network gives us the ability to make connections oversight as we keep building and connecting Kenya’s design community.

Gearbox offers well priced training sessions and prototyping services as well as accepting contracting enquiries. Their new, flexible timetable keeps them open ‘til 9 pm, even on Saturdays! You can meet them at the NDW2016 Design Market.

Find out more about Gearbox at www.gearbox.co.ke
DESIGN THINKERS
Elmar Stroomer has a master degree in Strategic Product Design from TUDelft. He has led a wide variety of product development projects and organised international design competitions. He has understanding of working in emerging economies and bringing innovations to new markets. Elmar has worked in Surinam, India and Vietnam. In 2012 he founded ACT Africa Collect Textile Ltd in Nairobi, Kenya, a company that collects and recycles used textiles and footwear. In 2014 Elmar started his current position as Lead Designer at Design without Borders in Uganda.

It is in the very nature of DwB’s’ work, that we frequently find ourselves working with a wide variety of different product segments; ranging from mine-clearing equipment to products for learning and training. In my view, the value of the design contribution does not lie in the technical expertise, but in understanding of the needs of end-users and connecting the needs and the knowledge of the different stakeholders, synthesising it into a functional solution.

DwB is one of the few professional design firms that apply HCD in humanitarian and development collaborations, and have done so for many years. What sets DwB apart from other actors in the field is that we have long-term presence in the countries we work in. In order to make sustainable changes, we always seek to transfer knowledge about design methodology and innovation to our partners and we do this by immersing ourselves with the partner and context over time. We also design with people, involve stakeholders and target users to achieve results that are relevant and sustainable. Instead of dropping off products that have been created from afar, our designers live and work in East Africa, designing solutions that can be manufactured and distributed locally.
ThinkPlace Kenya uses design thinking to tackle complex problems in emerging markets across Africa. Our goal is to help non-profits, companies and government entities design products, services and programmes with human needs and wants at the centre.

At ThinkPlace, we see the design thinking process as a means to equalize the voices of all stakeholders, who then can collaboratively contribute to the design process. Our latest project aims to better understand the determinants behind financial giving for low-income communities in Kenya.

Using design thinking as a problem-solving methodology has gained traction in the recent years but it also comes with its own unique challenges around scaling, measurement and evaluation, and building trust within the process. While the power of design thinking is still being realised in the region, we believe ThinkPlace is uniquely positioned to advocate for the need of human-centered design in Kenya and beyond.
FELIX TAO

Aleutia Computers

Felix is a multicultural designer, developing cool and unique products for communities that need them. Well executed product design can inject a great array of emotion within users, stirring curiosity and encouraging engagement.

PROJECTS AND VIEW

Since Michael Rosenberg, founder of Aleutia, started the company’s journey with fanless energy efficient computers, we have encountered and observed obstacles leading us to design solutions within the energy sector. Design thinking has supported our organic growth by providing us with countless insights on the value and importance of data, increasing in parallel with the energy needs of an ever growing global population. It is more important than ever to design beautiful, affordable and effective solutions that directly answer customer’s unspoken needs. Our newest product draws on Aleutia’s extensive experience of hundreds of solar computer installations in Africa. The Solar Enabler allows users to independently control and monitor energy usage in their homes. Through a 7” touchscreen, multiple AC outputs and smartphone connectivity, it can be programmed to control a wide range of devices throughout the home.

REVIEW:
THE SOLAR ENABLER

Intelligence that Empowers

Designed and crafted in England and drawing on Aleutia’s experience of hundreds of solar computer installations in Africa, the S5 is equipped with a 2G-connected Quad Core CPU and 7” touchscreen for you to control your home. Monitor your energy usage and turn your devices on and off through your smartphone. With control of 4 AC Outputs, the SolarEnabler can be programmed to turn on your waterpump when you have surplus energy, such as during a weekday afternoon.
Tyler has helped design and build 6 inclusive business concepts in Africa and South Asia, and is now creating IF to codify a venture development approach focused on building solutions to intractable challenges.

IF works at the intersection of social objective and core growth opportunity. For example, they recently completed a business design project with a Fortune 200 client and IDEO.org, which aimed to create affordable household appliances that complemented the company’s FMCG brands, and identify a way to link FMCG consumption to financial health.

IF is now creating a design approach that overcomes limitations in deploying HCD as an inclusive business creation methodology. Grand challenges increasingly require distributed, inter-disciplinary, and multi-sector teams to create solutions with scale and longevity, and HCD alone is not a complete problem-solving method in this context.

IF takes the position that designers play key roles in a larger creation process -- including problem understanding, solution generation, and product development -- and are best utilized within an effective and efficient venture decision environment. Iterative concept development is complemented by methods for advancing the policy environment, route-to-impact, and partnership ecosystem. IF deploys this foundational structure in a way that enables designers maximize creativity and create lasting impact.
The NDW team would like to thank all our supporters who made NDW 2016 possible.
A CONTINENT OF UNTOLD STORIES

Meet the Africa you don’t know on designindaba.com

Fashion by Edward Sempa for Catherine & Sons
Many stories about fundis and artisans end with ‘but that’s just the way they are!’ Often referring to poor workmanship or missed deadlines, this is an unfortunate reputation some have built for the informal creative community. Few of us have taken the time to delve deeper into why this is the case. After all, it is ‘them’ who lose out in the long run. Locally, KYM (Kazi ya Mkono, translating to work done by hand) has a low income.

We are the driving force behind their nonchalant attitude, bargaining for small discounts without putting thought into the effort put behind it. This is the primary reason given by artisans for their sometimes lacklustre work ethic and practices. The second reason is lack of knowledge. A surprising number of artisans picked up the skills they have as a means to an end.

Their creativity was a hobby, not nurtured for positive reasons, but pulled from a need to earn in a culture that looked down on arts, while still hypocritically craving beautiful and well designed things. In a country that has told millenials and generations before them that ‘real careers’ are for the likes of lawyers and doctors, it’s our duty to show the population otherwise, something that has been achieved in many countries around the world. Kenya needs to catch up.
Our aim is to operate at all times on firm, ethical principles and as a company we take our responsibilities to our employees, and our relationships with our suppliers very seriously.

Sandstorm Kenya’s website sums up their philosophy perfectly. They used to make luxury safari tents, mostly for international markets and expatriates. Today they use the same skills and materials to create beautiful bags at their workshop in Karen, Nairobi. The vision now is ‘Made in Nairobi’ for Nairobians. We met the driving force of Sandstorm, the formidable Mark Stephenson, and took a tour behind scenes of the bags’ creation. After being welcomed at the workshop entrance, the tour began as though it was a catch up chat. Our presence in the workshop only interrupted work for a few seconds at a time, by another cheerful greeting from a member of staff, then back to business. Mark gets asked a work related question, he answers, steps out to get a tool, comes back and proceeds with the tour. This is the atmosphere throughout. The tour provides valuable insights for businesses working with artisans. Every process has its designated area and is accounted for and every artisan has their responsibility. Everything works. Sandstorm Kenya’s journey has enabled them to create desirable jobs for happy, seasoned, reliable and incredibly skilled artisans. It serves as a valuable example for others looking to do the same. The workshop is open to the public and welcomes those wishing to receive a free, personal tour of Sandstorm’s manufacturing process.
Located in the heart of Nairobi’s furniture district, Ngong road, Workshop Nairobi brings tools, skills and business to local craftsmen. The Workshop was created in 2015 to bring together local artisans and furniture manufacturers to create modern, hand-crafted furniture using locally sourced materials. It aims to be a space for creative and collaborative thinking, training, and designing, to develop local talent and open new markets for Kenya’s furniture industry.

The team behind Workshop Nairobi are tasked with setting an example for the jua kali culture. That being the case, it looks like the job is in the very best hands. Collectively the workers’ experience adds up to decades of work in the Kenyan furniture industry, with the founder of a furniture making social enterprise, a skilled carpenter with over 10 years experience working in different carpentry companies, a qualified woodworker and first aider, a design lead and achieved scholars bringing in research implementation, impact evaluation and behavioural economics.

The workshop represents an opportunity for both skilled and self taught furniture artisans, carpenters and forgemasters to capture the essence of their trade. They will revise and broaden the applications of their skills, develop a design mentality and learn business operations. Workshop Nairobi represents an even bigger picture than better quality and more variety in Kenya's furniture scene. It is presenting a challenge to other artisans to do the same. Already, artisans have seen that unoriginal designs and poor work ethics can limits their sales. All other skills required to be successful as an artisan are now being questioned and the desire to improve has been sparked.

We want to see these stories of passion being shared.

“THERE IS SOMETHING DEEPLY SATISFYING IN SHAPING SOMETHING WITH YOUR HANDS. PROPER ARTIFICING IS LIKE A SONG MADE SOLID. IT IS AN ACT OF CREATION. - Patrick Rothfuss
BECOME AN NDW ARTISAN MEMBER

For 1000Ksh only you can be a part of Nairobi’s design community for which comes with a 12 month listing in the Design Directory in print and online at www.nairobidesignweek.com
DESIGN DIRECTORY

OUR MISSION IS TO GIVE AFRICAN DESIGN THE GLOBAL EXPOSURE IT DESERVES WHILE BRINGING THE COMMUNITY CLOSER TOGETHER TO COLLABORATE, LEARN AND SHARE.

The NDW design directory makes it easier than ever to discover and access the services of designers and creative organisations. We are also available online at www.directory

1. Aleutia
2. Amani institute
3. Archidatum
4. Artisan and Fox
5. Cave
6. Craft Africa
7. Creatives’ Garage
8. Design without Borders
9. Diana Opoti PR
10. Dictum
11. Docubox
12. FAFA
13. GearBox
14. GoDown Arts Centre
15. GoodLife
16. Honey From The Moon
17. iHub
18. Kenya Bamboo Centre
19. Kibó
20. KikoRomeo
21. Kipato Unbranded
22. KnownAfrique
23. Kounkuey Design Initiative
24. Kuona Trust
25. KUWA
26. Ma3route
27. Moringa School
28. Open Design Cape Town
29. PAWA254
30. Ramara
31. Slumfighters International
32. Soko
33. Stonehouse Ltd
34. 98 Crafted
35. The Foundry
36. Thinkplace
37. Unity Makers
38. Tosh
39. Unity Makers
Aleutia has created “the computer reborn”, a fanless and energy efficient PC to fit the African environment. The features make it possible for the computers to survive both in dusty and hot environments as well as in places with little access to energy as it is optimised to work on solar power. Currently Aleutia is working on several different education and healthcare projects that aim to improve the life standards of the African population in rural areas.

Amani Institute prepares the next generation talent to tackle global challenges by filling the gap between university and the workforce through a new approach to higher education. Amani aims to inspire and support universities to continue on their path adapting to the demands the 21st century is placing on higher education to train the new professionals and leaders the world needs to meet the global challenges we are facing.

Architecture is about setting marks. We aim at creating awareness about Architecture in Africa and informing the world about Architecture in its context and contribution to its society. We envision a continent without boundaries. One where ignorance does not hinder beautiful living spaces. That's why day by day we struggle to inspire the brightest minds, and every day brings us closer to the dream.
Cave is a young design bureau that provides a combination of creative services in architecture, interior, landscape, and furniture. We like to question the origin of ideas while responding to the varying climates in which we operate. Our design process explores the construction of systems and structures that complement the human condition. A return to the limitless curiosity of early man that investigates how our built and natural environment influences the way we live and work and vice versa.

Artisan and Fox is a social enterprise on a mission to discover the stories of hidden artisans across the globe through its monthly subscription model. By collaborating directly with artisans across Nepal, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Kenya, Artisan and Fox provides these hidden makers unprecedented access to international markets through its e-commerce platform. Through Artisan and Fox, consumers receive a curated box of quality artisanal crafts every month, alongside the story of the makers.

Craft Afrika is a social enterprise that identifies, creates and supports market access opportunities for contemporary artisan and design products, specifically within domestic and regional markets. They are hosts of Afrika Handmade Symposium and Gallery, an annual event that promotes domestic consumption of locally made artisanal and design products.
Design without Borders Uganda Limited (DwB) is a product and service design consultancy firm in Kampala-Uganda and is linked to Design without Borders foundation in Oslo, Norway.

DwB employs local and international designers and offers human centered design services to private and public clients and partners, NGO’s and development agencies in the East African region. We share skills and knowledge with our clients and partners and work with them to design scalable solutions to the challenges they face.

Our goal is to impact local communities through design, contributing to economic growth and solving social problems.

We provide the following services:
- Design and development of new products and services
- Re-design of existing products and services
- Production and system optimization
- User research and context analysis
- Field testing of products and services (product evaluation)
- Design workshops

Creatives garage is a broad-spectrum movement for Creatives to network, share ideas, collaborate, learn, gain market accessibility and push boundaries. It was formed out of past frustrations faced by its founders in the creative industry such as lack of funding, under pricing, lack of talent appreciation, me too-ism syndrome, education and practical sessions, lack of networking opportunities, undercutting and lack of exposure lead to the realisation of creating a platform that could address these issues.

www.creativesgarage.org
Creatives.Garage
cr8vesgarage
Diana Opoti PR is an African based communications agency with its official base in Kenya. Unique to the region, Diana Opoti PR provides effective and integrated communication strategies for brands that are looking to raise their profile and enhance their positioning in the region.

Dictum is an African integrated communications and public affairs firm. We offer full service reputation management by supplying high impact value analysis, strategy, design and digital solutions to the continent’s most progressive and ambitious leaders in the public, private and social sectors. The firm operates under five core areas which are, Dictum Research (DR), Dictum Advisory (DA), Dictum Strategic communications and public affairs (DSP), Dictum Creative concepts (DCC) and Dictum Digital solutions (DDS).

DOCUBOX (EADFF) is East Africa’s only Documentary Film Fund that offers our growing documentary film community, film grants as well as opportunities to learn, exchange ideas, network internationally and benefit from a nurturing/supportive regional family.
The GoDown Arts Centre is home to Kenyan creativity in arts and media. The centre has contributed significantly to the growth, recognition and visibility of local artists collaborating with other artists from across the globe. The godown arts centre promotes professional development through training workshops that are held throughout the year while creating an environment for innovation and collaboration between artist, having an exhibition gallery where exhibitions can be shown and meetings and performances held.

The Festival for African Fashion and Arts (FAFA) was set up in 2008 during the post-election violence which took place in Kenya. As many countries throughout the region continue to know human rights abuse, civil unrest and war, FAFA aims to change perceptions of other communities one mind at a time by exploring and bridging cultures through fashion, art and music.

Many of Kenya’s greatest challenges – from providing clean energy to solving the sanitation crisis – require hardware-based solutions, but building hardware locally is incredibly difficult. Kenya’s designers, engineers, and entrepreneurs need affordable access to quality tools, and an ecosystem of support to provide an on-ramp to manufacturing. Gearbox is building this ecosystem, offering training in design, prototyping, and manufacturing, along with low-cost access to world class facilities, so you can design in Africa, for Africa.
We blend an earthy look and feel into our bags and furniture. Love, delicacy, care and protection are the vision behind our team’s hard work with the exemplary attention of a bee, constructing the beauty of its honeycomb world superfluously from the hide of nature, year after year, and yet still, continually developing its process of creation. Our unique concept called “Design your own” allows you, the customer, to explore your own taste in a custom made product.

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www.honeyfromthemoon.com
zeebandesign

HUB

Email: goodlifer40@gmail.com
Website: www.ubgoodlife.com

Founded in Rwanda ‘Good Life Ltd’ is a social enterprise that aims to introduce fresh hand crafted luxury designs to local craftspeople for sale to hotels and affluent homes in East Africa. Now based in Gigiri, Nairobi, they employ disabled weavers based in Mombasa’s Bombolulu Workshop to make our luxury hammocks. Their goal in 2015/16 is to provide more work for disadvantaged artisans who are currently suffering from the downturn in the tourist market.

IHub is a vibrant and collaborative workspace where entrepreneurs and innovators can come up with ideas and develop solutions. The aim is to provide an inspiring environment that lowers the barriers to entry for many young would-be entrepreneurs and to fuel an ecosystem of innovation and technology. The iHub community includes individual developers, designers, creatives, researchers, scientists, engineers, technologists, as well non-tech people looking to launch startups.
Kibo is an innovative mobility concept that seeks to solve the mobility gap in Kenya and other frontier markets by improving the safety and sustainability of motorcycle transport. The concept consists of the K150 motorcycle, designed in Kenya, built for Africa, as well as professional rider training and 6 months after-sales support.

Kibo can be described as one of East Africa's leading fashion labels with their pieces having been worn by many celebrities. Inspired by the beauty of African design, the founder Ann McCreath started the company with the desire to help create jobs in rural areas and make unique, high quality products for retail. KikoRomeo is based in Nairobi, where they produce gorgeous, ethically made designs out of African fabrics, cut to international fashion trends.

Kenya Bamboo Centre does everything that has to do with bamboo. They produce quality products such as furniture and home accessories as well as offer training in bamboo crafting. Kenya Bamboo Centre is committed to improving a sustainable environment and to promote employment by empowering people through teaching them technical skills in crafting. Kenya Bamboo Centre has worked together with several organisations to improve the environment and support livelihood of the poor through income generating activities.
Kipato Unbranded sells jewellery “by everyday people, for everyday people”. This is a social enterprise that works together with local artists to promote their talents. Kipato Unbranded seek to empower people from all backgrounds by giving them access to markets. They aim to keep everything as simple as possible. By focusing on using natural materials, such as brass, recycled bone and beads, they create beautiful jewellery by the skills of the local talents.

“In whatever you do, always find a missing link and bridge the gap”

**Ignorance of the law = Injustice = Corruption = Poverty.**

Over 400 million Africans live in poverty. We believe that easy access to legal information, allows people exercise their rights, hold leaders accountable, tackle corruption and fight poverty. KnownAfriqueLLP is a for-profit social enterprise seeking to enhance the African economy by bridging the gap between the law and the people.

Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI) partners with residents of impoverished areas to develop and implement design solutions that improve physical, economic, and social quality of life. They call the low-cost, high impact environments they create Productive Public Spaces.
Kuona Trust is a centre for supporting visual arts and works as a platform for innovation through art and creativity. Kuona Trust support artists with mentoring, educational programmes, training, international exchange as well as displaying artists’ work through exhibitions. Founded by the National Museum of Kenya, Kuona Trust seek to promote cultural exchange and increase the role of visual arts in Kenya.

Kuwa’s overarching goal is to improve the lives of the urban poor by working hand in hand with communities to develop and empower them to address their issues and develop solutions. All proposals incorporate participatory methods in their approach in order to encourage, promote and advance participation to all stakeholders. Kuwa endorses the notion that all people have a right to the city and therefore aims to work towards urban planning.

Ma3route is a mobile, web and SMS platform that helps citizens to share and access info about transport and current traffic conditions for their city. Ma3Route shows how crowdsourcing transport data provides an avenue for improved transport policy and urban development through citizen participation.
At Moringa School tomorrow’s developers are being taught the important task of coding. Seeing the high demand for talented developers and programmers this school has taken on the task of equipping high-potential and pro-active students with mobile and web development skills. Students learn to code from a world-class curriculum with top quality teachers and mentors to support them in the process. Moringa is one of the founding partners of Nairobi Tech Week.

Design is the unifying thread that links innovation, education and community as the building blocks of a sustainable, inclusive, prosperous society. The Open Design Cape Town Festival brings these concepts together in a 12-day programme of inspiration, discussion and discovery. It’s a platform for showcasing ideas, sharing experiences and building relationships. The programme comprises a mix of mostly free events including workshops, talks, open studios, tours, technology demonstrations, maker workshops, exhibitions, activations and more.

PAWA254 is the Artivism Hub, based in Nairobi, Kenya home to some of Nairobi’s greatest Creative Industry experts, students and enthusiasts. PAWA254 is also a co-working space that offers workshops, trainings, forums and events for artists who are creating for social impact. PAWA254 empowers young professionals and disadvantaged youth to effect social change through new innovative projects. It is the first of its kind in Africa.
RAMARA is a design house based in Nairobi, Kenya. Founded in 2004, RAMARA has grown with the vision of providing the highest quality furniture and interior solutions to our clients. Our furniture range comprises modern hardwood furniture, all designed by our design team. Our design expertise has received international acclaim, the most recent being a design quest award for our Lily tables.

SLUMFIGHTERS international helps and empowers people in and around slums. We develop, implement and transfer an integral process in order to transform (in)formal settlements together with all the (in)formal stakeholders so that the occupants get a decent and sustainable life. We believe we should better work together for the benefit of all of us. Therefore we develop tools and methods to enable the bridging of the gap. And crossing it!

Soko is an ethical women's accessories brand producing handmade jewelry from up-cycled materials. All our products are designed in Kenya and produced by a network of artisan entrepreneurs across Kibera, Dandora, Rongai, and other parts of greater Nairobi. Soko artisans produce beautiful, on-trend products for a global consumer base. Our jewelry is available at hundreds of boutiques in the U.S. and Japan, and U.S. retailers such as Nordstrom and Anthropologie.
Stonehouse specialises in intermediate and appropriate technology for the African environment. Currently they are building 47 solar powered computer labs for the Safaricom ‘47 in 1’ project, as well as a security app called ‘Guard On’ to help night watchmen stay alert. The company is promoting food security by bringing attention to a precision planter designed for use by small scale farmers that reduces fertilizer costs and increases yields for less energy and time spent.

The Foundry is a network of premiere office space and coworking community designed to support your business growth. With locations in Nairobi, our office includes universal 24/7 access to beautiful custom spaces, giving you maximum flexibility with minimum maintenance. Our spaces focus on design + function so every element of our environment promotes your creativity, collaboration, and connections.

Inspired by culture, we are a bespoke furniture company driven by the desire to commemorate design as seen by our forefathers. Taking time to research and understand different approaches to design across the world’s cultures through travel, art, history and literature, we respect every individual’s appreciation of aesthetics. Paying attention to detail, our designs tinker with our conceptualized findings and combine them with modern forms, making every piece or set unique and the only one of its kind.
ThinkPlace is a global strategic design and innovation consultancy focused on helping organisations develop strategies to achieve social impact, and designing programs, products and services that deliver on those strategies. ThinkPlace takes a human-centered approach and is committed to co-designing solutions that communities, staff, stakeholders and organisations can implement. ThinkPlace addresses pressing social challenges by investigating the context of the problem, deeply understanding the experience of those affected by it, and inviting a wide range of stakeholders to actively participate in the process to generate meaningful, appropriate solutions. ThinkPlace’s methodology is iterative - ideas and solutions are prototyped based on user insights and tested throughout the design process, ensuring greater sustainability in the long term. With hundreds of projects across Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand, ThinkPlace has a strong track record in solving meaningful problems and creating positive social change.

As a designer at the intersection of design thinking and experience design in Africa, Tosh designs with a love for User Experience. It’s central to everything he does. He’s passionate about simplicity, ease of use and aesthetic beauty. The scope of his work includes strategy, interaction and visual design, as well as prototype development.
Tunapanda Institute trains young adults in design, technology, and business skills in the outskirts of Kibera regardless of the person’s ability to pay. Their 3-month intensive training programs enable young people to find good jobs with forward-looking companies in Nairobi, engage in creative self-expression, and even become teachers to pass on the skills and knowledge. A non-profit organisation, they also generate revenues doing digital work for clients.

Founded in 2014, Unity Makers is a bespoke furniture company in Nairobi that designs and produces contemporary furniture. Our mission is to become the leading furniture design and production house in Kenya and the region, identified for our contemporary minimalist design but with stunning detail and response to function while delivering first class customer care. We produce from locally sourced raw material, designed by our young and talented designers and handcrafted by experienced technicians. At Unity Makers we believe in sustainable timber harvesting with minimal waste during production. We are looking to venture into pieces using locally abundant materials but which are new and unconventional to the local furniture industry to create pieces that speak both to art and function. Additionally, we shall be deploying joinery techniques not yet seen on the Kenyan market while reaching out to the emerging market of young professionals with high quality but affordable collection of staple pieces.
At Vi’enle Photography, we are a family working together to better serve our community. For us photography is life and we’ve come together to bring you an outstanding service. Our motto ‘capturing beauty at it’s best’, is seen throughout our Art. We deal in Fashion, Wedding, Events, Product and Portrait photography. We want you to be part of our evergrowing family, so give us a call we are friendly and lovable.

We’re a multidisciplinary team of media specialists transforming brands and consumer experiences with innovative content for local and international markets. We are first and foremost storytellers, with a relentless commitment to finding the very best way to tell a story. Often called ‘Africa Whisperers’- we harness the creativity of experienced filmmakers, writers, directors and media specialists to create dynamic experiences that move consumers into action.

Workshop Nairobi, located in the heart of Ngong Road furniture district, is a training and manufacturing workshop designed to support informal furniture makers to maximise their business potential. We offer training which supports craftsmen to innovate new designs, expand practical knowledge such as joinery and finishing techniques, as well as develop soft skills in customer service, marketing, pricing and small business management. We provide access to machinery, tools and a digital design resource center. We connect craftsmen to new markets through online and local sales support.
Unconventional

We blend what is with what might be to create what is possible.

We’re engineers... we’re Aurecon.
TEAM

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Printed by:
Advance Litho Limited
Africa Design

Published by Africa Design November 2016.
Event and Speaker listings were correct at the time of printing but may be subject to alterations. Check directly with the venues.

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