

SEPTEMBER 2026

KHANATURAL

Rooted in Realness

JEFFERSON
JINLONG
LAN



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Editor's Note

Heritage is more than where we come from. It is what lives within us, what shapes the way we see the world, and what we choose to carry forward.

In this Heritage Month issue of Khanatural Magazine, we explore heritage as something living — woven into our everyday lives through identity, culture, tradition, food, work, literature, travel and personal growth.

We are interested not only in what we inherit, but in what we reinterpret. Because culture is not frozen in time. It evolves with us. We take what was given to us, make it our own, and in doing so, create something meaningful for the generations that follow.

This issue is our celebration of an Africa that is deeply rooted yet constantly moving forward. An Africa that honours its traditions while making room for new ideas, new voices and new ways of being.

Rather than placing heritage in one section of the magazine, we have allowed it to become a thread running through every feature. You will find it in the stories we tell, the people we meet, the food we celebrate, the places we explore and the journeys of personal growth we share.

For us, this is what makes heritage truly powerful: it is not only behind us — it is within us, and it is being created by us every day.

Welcome to our September issue.

Welcome to Heritage.
Welcome to Africa.

Khabonina Q
Editor-in-Chief



In this issue...

Jefferson Jīnlǒng Lan takes us on his martial arts journey, where discipline, movement and his passion for acting meet in a story of purpose and self-expression.

We pay tribute to one of South Africa's treasured gifts, Rooibos, while taking you on a journey through some of the country's hidden gems.

In our literary corner, pause and discover a selection of books from some of Africa's young authors who tell stories that speak to who we are, where we come from and what we carry forward.

In our Wellness Corner, Dambisa explores the wellness of belonging — the profound connection between identity, community and the places we call home.

And because heritage is not only what we can see or touch, we explore the unseen. Mokwadi asks the men: "What did our fathers leave us?"

This issue is a celebration of the stories, traditions, people and wisdom that shape us — and the parts of our heritage we choose to carry into tomorrow.

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A portrait of a young man with light blonde hair, wearing a white ribbed tank top, lying on a colorful patterned blanket. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. His right arm is raised behind his head.

JEFFERSON LAN WAS BUILT FOR THIS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SIPHOSETHU FANTI



Martial arts has been part of Jefferson Lan's life since he was two. Acting was the dream he took longer to pursue. From a Kung-Fu academy in Cape Town to Warrior and his latest film, Loved Out, the South African actor has found a way to bring those two worlds together.

KHABONINA QUBEKA

It was freezing on the set of Loved Out, but Jefferson Lan seemed unfazed.

Having spent time with him during filming, what stood out was the way he could be playful between takes and completely focused when the cameras started rolling. He hit his marks, knew his dialogue and seemed able to shut out whatever discomfort came with the conditions.

There is a reason for that.

"It is tough for anybody- Yoh it was cold!- but I guess being martial artist I know how to become comfortable with discomfort which gives me the edge."

Long before acting became his career, martial arts had already taught Lan how to work through discomfort, remain alert and adapt.

His journey began when he was two years old.

"My martial arts journey began like something out of a Kung-Fu movie, starting at the age of 2 years old, yes 2. I have footage to prove it!"

Martial arts was part of the world Lan was born into. His parents were both martial artists, with his father becoming his Kung-Fu master and his mother his father's student and right-hand woman.

In 1990, they opened a Chinese martial arts and health centre in central Cape Town, where they taught Kung-Fu and meditation alongside Chinese medicine and acupuncture.

Lan also grew up navigating the different cultures that make up his family. His father is Chinese-Mauritian, born and raised in Mauritius before moving to Cape Town. His South African mother is Coloured, with Indian, Filipino and German heritage.

"I am a proud South African born and bred."



That heritage would become part of his experience at school.

By seven, Lan had stopped training in martial arts. Primary school had introduced him to different sports, activities and friends, and he wanted to be like every other child.

Instead, he says, children tried to bully him because of his appearance, heritage and small stature.

“This is where my first acting performance and street fight began, because I wasn’t training with my father at the time I pretended or acted like I was and that I knew how to fight.”

He fought back. Sometimes he won. Sometimes, as he puts it, he “got my ass kicked”. Eventually, the fighting contributed to him being expelled from his primary school.

At his new school, martial arts found its way back into his life.

When Lan was 12, some of his friends discovered that his father was a Kung-Fu master and wanted to train with him. Lan joined them. At first, it was simply something fun to do with his new friends.

Then something shifted.

“It was that unknown universal intervention that had me fall madly in love with the art, a gift that was bestowed upon me I tried to dismiss, I have now begun to embody with my body, mind, heart and soul.”

His friends eventually stopped training. Lan stayed.

By 16, he was teaching. He went on to win multiple gold medals, receive South African national colours and become a lineage holder of the martial arts tradition inherited through his family.

Teaching became an important part of his life. For more than a decade, he worked with children and adults from different backgrounds, abilities and age groups. Each arrived with a different reason for wanting to train.

A man in a black martial arts uniform with a red and yellow circular emblem on the chest and a yellow dragon on the leg is in a dynamic pose. He holds a spear behind his back with his right hand and has his left hand raised in a palm-forward gesture. He is in a high kick position with his left leg. The background is a martial arts studio with many weapons on racks.

“This is where my first acting performance and street fight began, because I wasn’t training with my father at the time I pretended or acted like I was and that I knew how to fight.”

For Lan, the reward was seeing what martial arts could unlock in them.

"It was fulfilling being able to provide the tools for someone to empower themselves, to transform, to unlock their full potential, know their worth, and be able to witness this first hand is a beautiful gift every time"

Eventually, however, teaching had to make room for something Lan had wanted for years: acting.

"I'm currently not teaching at the moment", he explained, "long story short, I had taken a break especially to focus on the craft of acting, which is a skill I needed to give my undivided attention to."

Acting, however, was not entirely new to him.

"My acting journey is quite an interesting one, and it's not the textbook route. I started out modelling as a child from 5 years old, doing photography shoots and TV commercials for national and international brands. As I grew up, I moved towards mainly TV commercials because I remember my model agency telling me I'm not tall enough to be a model. I took drama in primary school and remember my teacher telling my parents to send me to an acting school as she saw potential in me, but it never came to fruition."

He continued with drama during his first two years of high school, but when the time came to choose his subjects, drama was not the route he followed. His life was already full.

At the time, Lan was teaching martial arts with his family, working as a personal trainer and studying Chinese medicine and acupuncture, while continuing to appear in television commercials.

Yet acting remained somewhere in the background.

"I was however, still living with a deep desire to pursue my dream of being an actor, but I was bound by fear."

Burnout eventually forced him to stop and reconsider where his life was heading.



"I put it out to the universe, and I said to myself that if I don't land a gig in one year, then this path is not meant for me."

Jefferson Lan

During that period, he decided to give acting a proper chance.

"I put it out to the universe, and I said to myself that if I don't land a gig in one year, then this path is not meant for me."

Then came the phone call that changed the direction of his career.

"Out of the blue, I get a call from a mixed martial arts (MMA) coach whom I trained with in Johannesburg, and he told me his friend who's a casting director from Los Angeles is looking for Central Asian/South East Asian actors in Cape Town for the second season of a series called *Warrior*."

Lan had no idea what *Warrior* (an Emmy winning show) was at the time.

That changed when he discovered the story behind it.

"I had no idea what it was, only to find out it was one of Bruce Lee's unfinished scripts being brought to life by his daughter Shannon Lee."

For someone who had grown up immersed in martial arts and was finally taking a chance on acting, the opportunity felt particularly significant.

Lan received audition material for two characters and began preparing. He learnt his lines, rehearsed in front of the mirror and relied largely on instinct.

Then came the audition with casting director Bonnie Lee Bouman.

"I had never been that nervous in my life, but I gave it my all."

When Bouman asked where he had studied acting, Lan considered pretending that he had formal training. Instead, he told her the truth. He had none.

She put him forward for the role and encouraged him to seek training to develop his craft.

Two weeks later, he received the call.

“It was fulfilling being able to provide the tools for someone to empower themselves, to transform, to unlock their full potential, know their worth, and be able to witness this first hand is a beautiful gift every time.”

Jefferson Lan

Lan was cast as Shan, one of the new Hop Wei recruits on the show.

The opportunity had come within the year he had given himself.

From there, his acting career began to take shape. He went on to play a supporting lead in the kykNET film *Strooi*, followed by a lead role in eVOD's *A Queens Labola*. More recently, he appeared in *Loved Out*.

Although Lan stepped away from teaching martial arts to concentrate on acting, the discipline has never really left him.

On set, he believes focus is not about becoming rigid or shutting everyone else out.

“We’re all human beings doing what we love, and we need to also have fun doing it.”

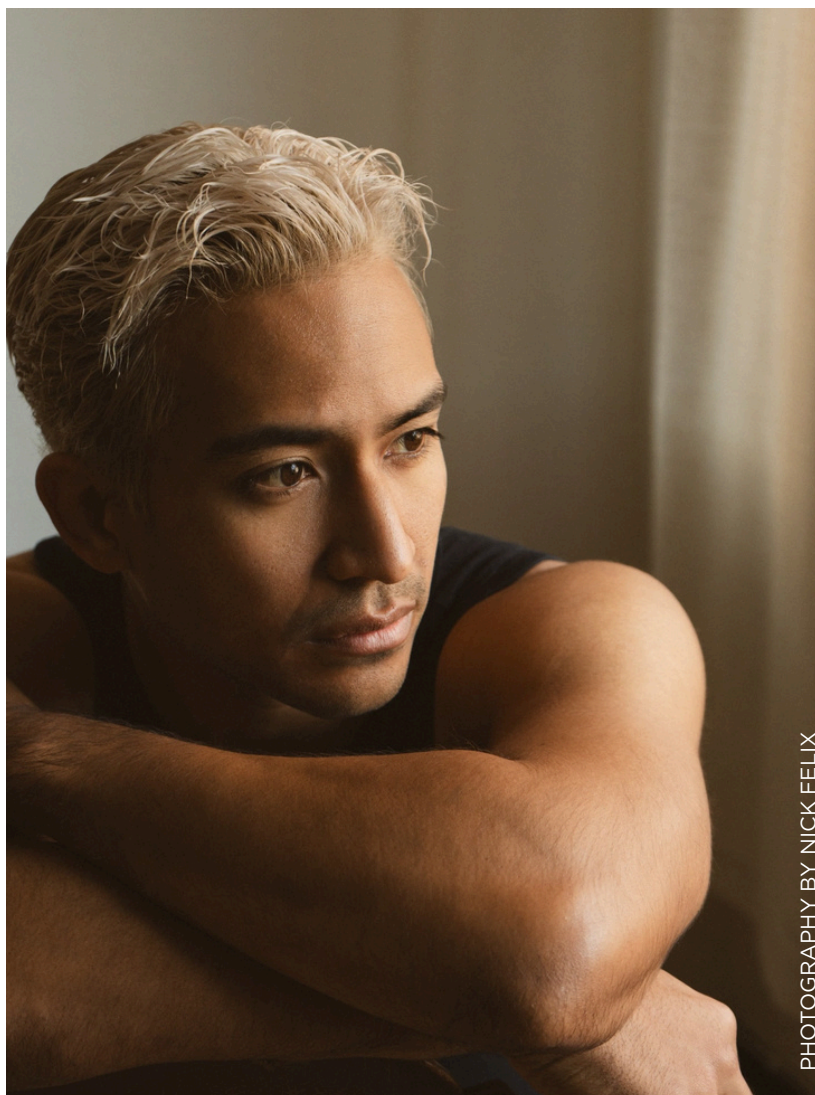
For Lan, it is about being present enough to respond when a director changes direction, support another actor through a difficult scene and remain aware of the crew working around him.

Bruce Lee provides a fitting reference point for the way Lan thinks about that readiness: “A good martial artist does not become tense, but ready.”

For a man who began learning Kung-Fu before he was old enough to understand what it might eventually mean for him, martial arts have become far more than something he knows how to do.

Acting took longer.

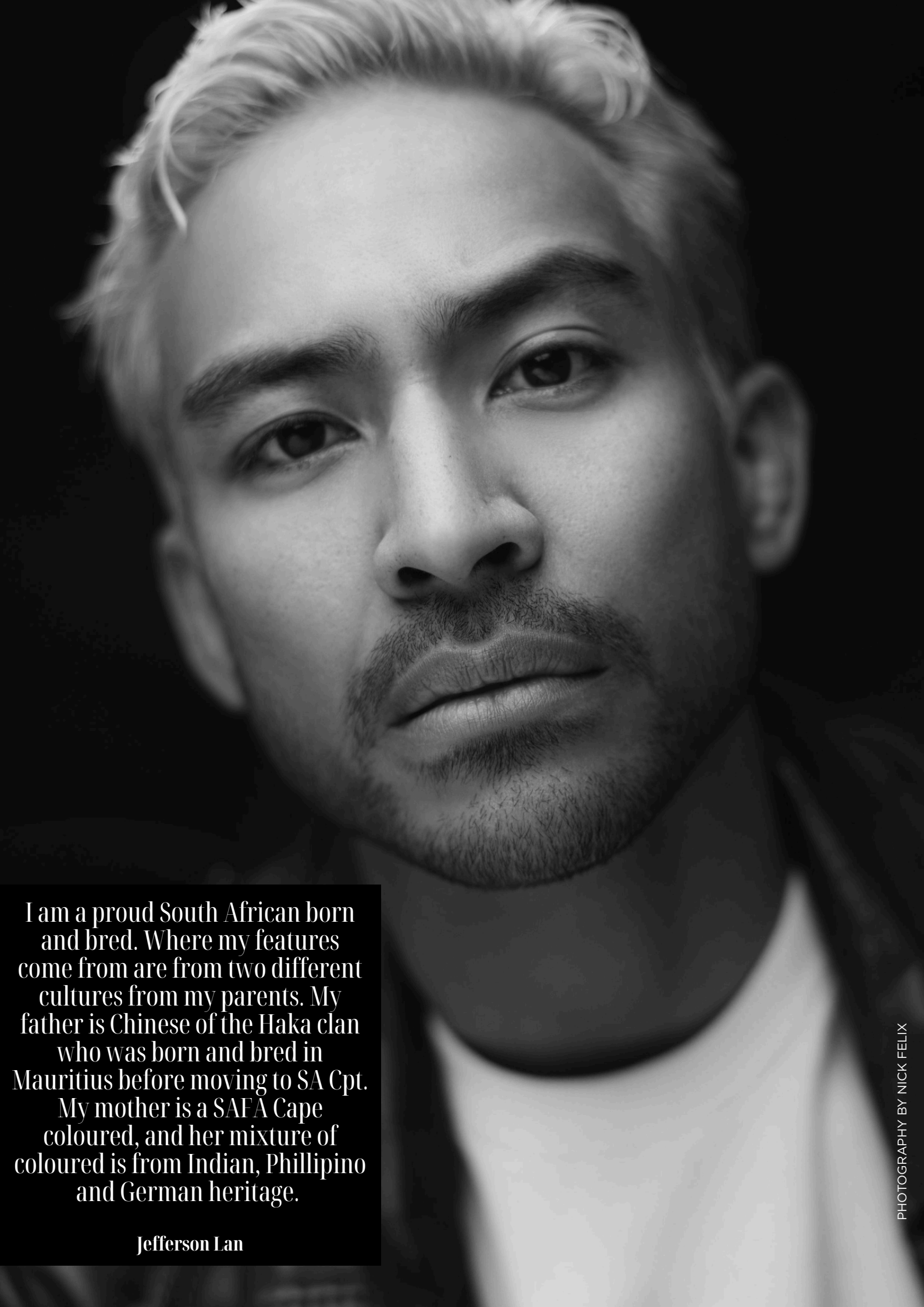
But when the opportunity finally came, Jefferson Lan already knew something about being ready.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY NICK FELIX



PHOTOGRAPHY BY SIPHOSETHU FANTI

A black and white close-up portrait of a man with light-colored, wavy hair and a light beard. He is looking slightly off-camera with a serious expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

I am a proud South African born and bred. Where my features come from are from two different cultures from my parents. My father is Chinese of the Haka clan who was born and bred in Mauritius before moving to SA Cpt. My mother is a SAFA Cape coloured, and her mixture of coloured is from Indian, Phillipino and German heritage.

Jefferson Lan

FOR THE LOVE OF ROOIBOS

KHABONINA QUBEKA

There are few things as distinctly South African as rooibos.

The rooibos plant, *Aspalathus linearis*, grows in the rugged landscape of the Cederberg and surrounding parts of the Cape. It is a plant shaped by this particular soil, climate and place, and one that has become part of South Africa's story.

Long before rooibos found its way into teabags, beauty products and wellness rituals, people understood the value of the plant that grew around them. Over generations, that knowledge was carried forward, turning rooibos into something familiar to many of us: brewed in our homes, shared around tables and reached for without much thought about the remarkable plant behind the cup.

Perhaps that is what makes rooibos so special.

Something so deeply rooted here has travelled far beyond South Africa. Today, people around the world know the distinctive red colour and earthy taste of rooibos. Yet its story still begins here.

And it is not only a story about tea.

Rooibos is a reminder of what can happen when we value what grows on our own soil. An indigenous plant has become part of food, beauty and wellness, finding new uses without losing the connection to where it comes from.

At KhaNatural, that relationship between nature, heritage and the present matters to us. We believe there is something powerful about looking to the ingredients that have been around us for generations and discovering how they can continue to have a place in the way we live today.

Rooibos does not need to be reinvented to be relevant.

Sometimes, honouring heritage is simply about recognising the value of what has been there all along.



KHANATURAL SEAMOSS
ROOIBOS COCONUT SOAP



FOGO ISLAND, CAPE VERDE



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DABOOST

AFRICA BEYOND THE OBVIOUS

BY KHANATURAL TEAM

The places we remember most are rarely the ones where we have ticked off the most attractions.

They stay with you because of a song, a plate of food, a strange encounter, a view we were not prepared for or a story that only made sense once we were there.

Sometimes, the rest of the world simply catches up.

The 2026 FIFA World Cup has put Cape Verde on a lot more travel wish lists.

But Cape Verde is only one of the African places worth looking at differently.

From Côte d'Ivoire and Kenya to a stretch of South African beach, these are destinations that give you a story to bring home.



MALINDI BEACH, KENYA



YAMO USSOUKRO, CÔTE D'IVOIRE



CAPE VIDAL, SOUTH AFRICA



FOGO ISLAND, CAPE VERDE

The island is dominated by *Pico do Fogo*, an active volcano rising 2,829 metres above sea level. The landscape around Chã das Caldeiras is extraordinary: black lava fields, volcanic slopes and pockets of green growing out of soil shaped by eruptions. The most recent eruption began in 2014 and destroyed much of the villages of Portela and Bangaeira. People returned and rebuilt. Today, communities continue to live and farm inside this dramatic volcanic landscape.

That fertility produces another surprise: wine and coffee. There is something wonderfully Cape Verdean about standing in terrain that looks almost lunar and discovering vineyards growing from the volcanic soil. Fogo asks you to rethink what an island holiday can look like.

The world may have arrived because of football, but we are certain that they will stay curious enough to discover the volcano and the other special islands of Cape Verde.



CAPE VIDAL, SOUTH AFRICA

Cape Vidal is a true hidden gem. Part of the thrill is getting there. You drive through the Eastern Shores of iSimangaliso Wetland Park, scanning the bush for wildlife, before the road eventually gives way to the Indian Ocean. Nothing quite beats a game reserve that ends with pristine beach and magnificent sand dunes.

It is also properly wild. Some of traveller's most spine-chilling and adrenaline-inducing wildlife encounters have happened around Cape Vidal. They become funny stories once your heart rate returns to normal. In the moment, they are a reminder to pay attention, keep your distance and remember whose environment you have entered.

What is amazing is how many people in KwaZulu-Natal still do not know about it. Some live barely two hours away. They are missing out.



YAMOUSSOUKRO, CÔTE D'IVOIRE

We love Akwaba, the AFCON Côte d'Ivoire 2023 anthem by Magic System, Yemi Alade and Mohamed Ramadan. Every time we hear it, we can't help but think about Côte d'Ivoire. The country remains an easy recommendation: fashion, coffee, chocolate, excellent food and an energy you understand better once you experience it.

Then there is Yamoussoukro.

The political capital moves differently from Abidjan. Its wide roads and monumental buildings prepare you somewhat for the *Basilica of Our Lady of Peace*. The church is enormous. Seeing the dome, columns, stained glass and grounds in person is almost spiritual. You understand the scale intellectually before arriving.

Standing underneath it is another experience entirely.

Give the city time. Its architecture carries much of the ambition and complexity of Côte d'Ivoire's post-independence story.



MALINDI, KENYA

Malindi is a treasure. You will see tuk-tuks, a strong Italian influence, the Vasco da Gama Pillar, good food and snorkelling with fish that steals the bread from hands before you could properly bribe them with it.

Malindi gives you warm Indian Ocean water, white sand, coconut palms and the kind of coastal atmosphere that makes checking the time feel unnecessary.

Its history makes the experience richer.

This is part of the Swahili coast, shaped by centuries of African life, trade, faith and movement across the Indian Ocean. Nearby Gedi, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, reveals the remains of a sophisticated Swahili settlement connected to those trading networks.

Go to the beach. Take the tuk-tuk. Eat well. Get into the water. Then make time for the history lessons.

— KHANATURAL — SEAMOSS



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CECILIA MPHA

Choosing To Win



CHOOSING HERSELF

Sweet Savannah founder Cecilia Mpha took a chance on her business when there were no guarantees. That decision brought her to Decorex Joburg 2026 with a collection that saw her leave as the Capitec Rising Star Award winner.

BY KHANATURAL TEAM

What do you call that feeling when life throws its hardest jabs at you, makes everything seem impossible, and yet something in you still refuses to give up? You keep going. You find another way. You make the decision that, somehow, you are going to survive it and perhaps even come out stronger on the other side.

Cecilia Mpha knows that feeling well.

The founder and creative director of Johannesburg-based fashion brand, Sweet Savannah, has had to rebuild, reconsider and, ultimately, choose herself. That same never-say-die attitude would later lead her to take a chance on her business and invest in a pop-up at Decorex Joburg 2026.

She arrived with the Inferno Collection: Winter Edition, inspired by the volcanic landscape of Fogo in Cape Verde. It is a collection shaped by ideas of fire, disruption, strength and renewal themes that, perhaps unintentionally, mirror Mpha's own journey.

The gamble paid off. At Decorex Joburg, Mpha was named the 2026 Capitec Rising Star Award winner.

"Winning this award was a moment of profound validation," she says. "It felt like the community was finally seeing, recognising and honouring the vision I've poured my heart into."

For Mpha, though, the real story began before the award. It began with the decision to keep going.

"Choosing myself wasn't just a decision. It was an act of deep self-love, self-worth and self-awareness," she says.

"Sweet Savannah is a living piece of my soul, and giving up on it meant giving up on myself."

Fogo means "fire" in Portuguese, an appropriate name for an island dominated by an active volcano.

For Mpha, it offered much more than a dramatic reference point.

"The Inferno Collection draws its soul from the majestic Fogo Volcano in Cape Verde, a striking symbol of raw power, beauty and resilience rising out of disruption," she says.

That inspiration becomes clearer when looking at the clothes.



“The hardest part was confronting the fear of the unknown. Stepping into complete uncertainty and surrendering the need for control was terrifying.”

CECILIA MPHA

Long, structured coats appear in shades of copper, rust, ash, muted brown and charcoal. Their metallic surfaces catch the light unevenly, giving some pieces an almost weathered quality.

A burnished copper belted coat recalls heated metal. Another longline design moves between silver, brown and grey. Seen together, the collection shifts from darker mineral tones into warmer shades of bronze and copper.

There is no need for a literal volcano motif. Instead, Mpha appears to be interpreting what surrounds it: scorched earth, mineral surfaces, heat and the changing colour of the landscape.

Her own description of the collection speaks to that meeting point between earth and lava, stillness and movement. It is an exploration of power, but also of what remains after disruption.

That idea has particular resonance for a designer who has had to confront uncertainty in her own life.



SHELI MASONDO ON THE SET OF SHAKA ILEMBE.
IMAGE: SHELI MASONDO/INSTAGRAM

“The hardest part was confronting the fear of the unknown,” she says of rebuilding.

“Stepping into complete uncertainty and surrendering the need for control was terrifying.”

Her faith became important during that period.

“In those quiet, testing moments, I chose radical faith, trusting deeply that God was guiding my steps and holding my future.”

Sweet Savannah’s relationship with the continent begins with its name, which pays homage to the African savanna.

But Mpha’s interpretation of African fashion does not always rely on the references one might immediately expect.

“Every collection I craft is a love letter to the African continent,” she says.

Her interest lies in its natural heritage: landscapes and natural wonders that can be translated into clothing.

“My African heritage is the bedrock of everything I create,” she says. “Each collection is designed to educate and connect my audience with the continent’s natural heritage and wonders, one garment at a time.”

Inferno shows what that philosophy looks like in practice.



Fogo becomes colour. Volcanic earth becomes texture. Fire appears in copper, bronze and rust.

It offers another way of thinking about what makes a fashion collection African. The reference does not necessarily have to announce itself through print or motif. Sometimes it can begin with a place.

For Mpha, however, the beauty of an idea still has to coexist with the realities of building a business.

“Pure creativity comes first because without a product that I believe in, there is no business to run,” she says.

“Once that vision is perfected, I step into my business mindset to structure, scale and sustain it.”

That is where Decorex became important.

The pop-up gave Sweet Savannah an opportunity to put the work in front of a new audience. The award that followed gave Mpha something more: confirmation that the vision she had kept working towards was connecting with people beyond herself.

She says the recognition has since created greater visibility for the brand and opened conversations around collaborations and retail opportunities. It has also changed the way she thinks about success.



“It isn’t defined by external status or material wealth,” she says.

“To me, true success is measured by inner peace and joy. It is the spiritual fuel that keeps you growing on your journey.”

And she is already thinking about what comes next.

Mpha is producing the Inferno Collection: Summer Edition while preparing to launch Sweet Savannah’s online store. Pop-up activations and private fashion shows are planned before the end of 2026, followed by the introduction of a new collection in 2027.

There will undoubtedly be more difficult decisions as the business grows. Creativity will have to meet commerce, opportunity will have to be weighed against cost, and not every idea will arrive with the certainty of success.

But perhaps that is what starting again teaches you.

Sometimes you do not wait until everything is perfectly aligned.

Sometimes you choose yourself first.



TOCHI EZE, ATHAMBILE MASOLA, TLOTLO TSAMAASE, MUBANGA KALIMAMUKWENTO AND ZULAIKHA PATEL

The Authors We Are Reading Right Now

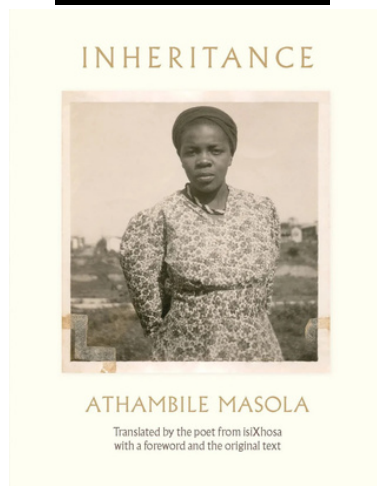
BY KHANATURAL TEAM

INHERITANCE ATHAMBILE MASOLA

THERE IS SOMETHING SATISFYING ABOUT SEEING ISIXHOSA AND ENGLISH SITTING SIDE BY SIDE ON THE PAGE.

Athambile Masola's *Inheritance* was first published in isiXhosa as *Ilifa*. The 2026 bilingual edition presents Masola's own English translation alongside the original poems, giving readers another way into the work while keeping isiXhosa visible as the language from which it grew.

Masola writes about love, Black womanhood, history, freedom and the unfinished questions of post-apartheid South Africa. The collection is especially interesting for anyone who has wondered what gets lost when African writing reaches us only through English.



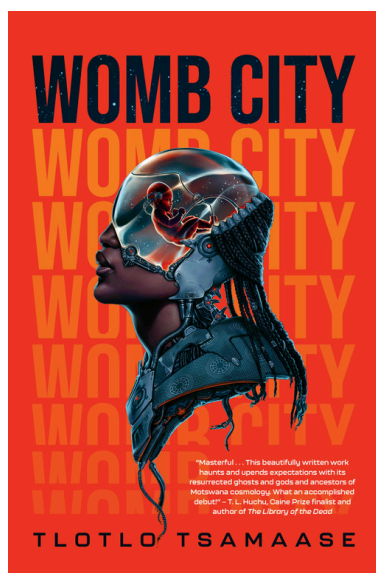
YIBA NESIBINDI NJENGAMI! ZULAIKHA PATEL

SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS ABOUT HERITAGE BEGIN BEFORE ADULthood.

Zulaikha Patel was 13 when she challenged discriminatory hair policies at Pretoria High School for Girls and became part of a wider South African conversation about race, hair, dignity and institutional rules.

Yiba Nesibindi Njengami! brings that story to younger readers. Published in isiZulu and available in several South African languages, the children's book opens conversations about courage, identity and the right to question rules that make you feel smaller.

Its place on this list is deliberate. Children inherit stories about who they are long before they have the vocabulary to challenge them. Giving them different stories matters.



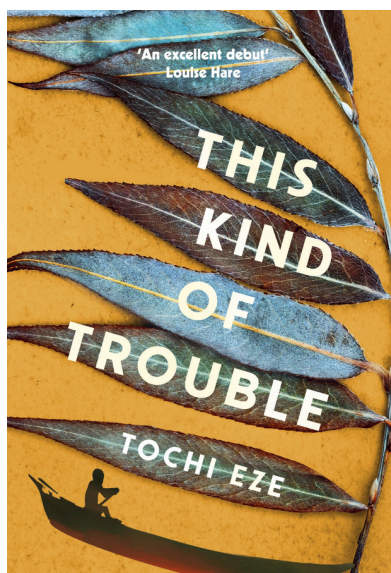
WOMB CITY TLOTLO TSAMAASE

IF YOUR IDEA OF HERITAGE WRITING STOPS AT HISTORICAL FICTION, TLOTLO TSAMAASE WOULD LIKE A WORD.

Womb City takes ancestral belief, cultural memory and contemporary anxieties about power into a futuristic Botswana shaped by surveillance, patriarchy and technology.

Tsamaase blends Africanfuturism, horror and cyberpunk while keeping the story grounded in a recognisably Batswana cultural world.

The future here has roots. The novel asks difficult questions about bodily autonomy, memory and who gets to control the systems people inherit. It is strange, unsettling and ambitious, in the best way.



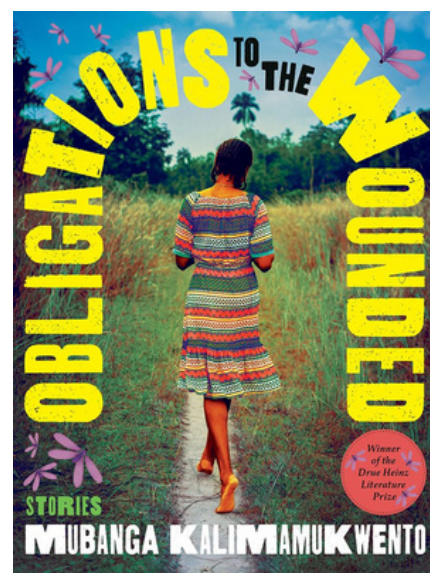
THIS KIND OF TROUBLE TOCHI EZE

FAMILIES ARE VERY GOOD AT PASSING THINGS DOWN. UNFORTUNATELY, THAT INCLUDES THE THINGS NOBODY WANTS TO TALK ABOUT.

Tochi Eze's 2025 debut follows a Nigerian family across generations, tracing how belief, personal choices, migration, silence and unresolved hurt continue to shape people long after the original moment has passed.

A family can inherit love and belonging alongside patterns that should have ended years ago. Readers who enjoy layered family sagas will find plenty here.

Eze is interested in what happens when the younger generation starts asking questions everyone else has learnt to avoid.



OBLIGATIONS TO THE WOUNDED MUBANGA KALIMAMUKWENTO

MUBANGA KALIMAMUKWENTO TURNS HER ATTENTION TO ZAMBIAN WOMEN AND GIRLS LIVING AT HOME AND ABROAD, AND THE TITLE TELLS YOU IMMEDIATELY THAT THIS WILL NOT BE LIGHT READING.

The linked stories move through family obligation, migration, religion, relationships and the gradual loss of language.

Kalimamukwento also shifts form, using folklore, letters and digital conversations to tell stories about people negotiating where they belong.

The collection won the 2024 Drue Heinz Literature Prize. What makes it linger is the idea that leaving home does not necessarily loosen its grip. Sometimes distance makes you more aware of everything you carried with you.



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YOUR BEARD

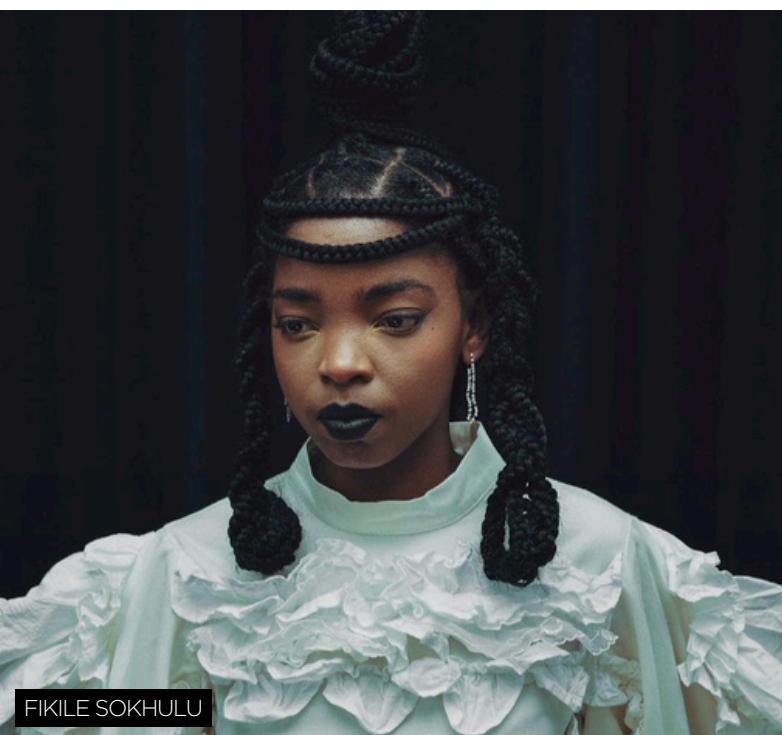




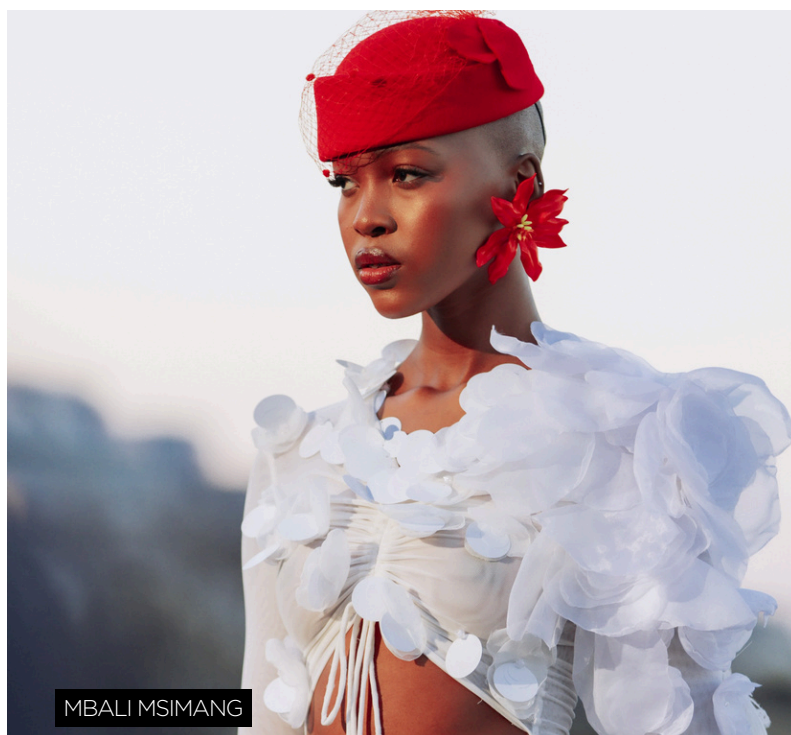
TSHEPISO MALEMA



ZANDA ISAACS



FIKILE SOKHULU



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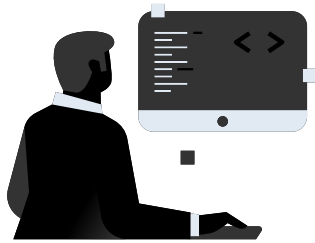
The Four Young Achievers We Admire

Meet four young South Africans making bold moves, breaking new ground and giving us plenty of reasons to keep watching.

BY KHANATURAL TEAM

TSHEPISO MALEMA

Tech Entrepreneur



Tshepiso Malema did not build Flockify because somebody told him agriculture needed another app. He built it because he lost money.

After disease wiped out about R50,000 worth of poultry before he could detect the problem, the farmer and software developer started creating the tool he wished he had had.

That solution became Flockify, an agritech platform helping farmers manage livestock, keep records, monitor flock health and connect to markets.

What started as something Tshepiso built for himself has grown into a platform with more than 800 users. In 2026, Flockify won first place in the Agri-Tech Innovations for Food Security category at the BRICS+ Youth Innovation Summit and later placed among the top three in the Africa-Asia AgriHero Challenge.

FIKILE SOKHULU

Fashion Designer



Fikile Sokhulu has been quietly building one of those fashion labels you can recognise before somebody tells you whose clothes you are looking at.

Her signature is unmistakably feminine: considered silhouettes, softness, craftsmanship and a recurring conversation with nature.

From graduating in fashion design and entering the South African Fashion Week New Talent Search, she has gone on to show repeatedly at SAFW, collaborate with Mr Price and represent South Africa through the Fashion Bridges programme connecting the local industry with Italy.

She has also invested in understanding the business behind creativity, studying brand and business management in Milan. We are watching to see how big the Fikile Sokhulu universe can become.

ZANDA ISAACS

Wellness Entrepreneur



Before there was a business, there was simply a mother making herbal tea at home. Zanda Isaacs grew up watching her mother, Sibongile, use plants and herbal remedies as part of everyday family wellness knowledge that had itself been passed down through generations.

Zanda saw something worth carrying forward. Together, mother and daughter built Ting Tang Tea, transforming those family traditions into a contemporary South African wellness brand.

The company has since grown beyond the kitchen table, building a team and a range that includes teas, tonics and other wellness products, while finding its way into retail and online channels.

What we admire is that Zanda has not treated African ingredients as something exotic to be rediscovered. She simply understood their value and built a business around telling that story ourselves.

MBALI MSIMANG

Fashion Model



Known for her now-iconic, showstopping walk, Mbali Msimang has become a familiar presence on South African runways.

She's walked at major fashion events including Joburg Fashion Week and South African Fashion Week, and is repeatedly booked for shows by respected designers and fashion brands, including David Tlale and Malondié.

In 2025, she was named Best Emerging Model at the Fashion Industry Awards of South Africa.

Veteran model Andiswa Manxiwa has also singled Mbali out as one of the new-generation models she is watching.

She may still carry the word "emerging", but she has already put in the runway work.

WHAT DID OUR FATHERS LEAVE US?

BY MOKWADI WA MOMPEDI

When we talk about heritage, we often talk about what can be seen.

The clothes we wear.
The food we eat.
The languages we speak.
The music we dance to.
The places our families come from.

But heritage is more than what we can put on a plate or wear on our backs.

Sometimes, heritage is something much quieter.

It is the way our fathers taught us to greet people.
The way our mothers taught us to respect elders.
The stories told around the dinner table.
The language spoken when emotions become too deep for English.

And sometimes, heritage is the weight we inherit without ever asking for it.

We Inherit More Than Names
Every generation leaves something behind.

Our fathers leave us stories, values, traditions and memories. They leave us ideas about responsibility, family, work and manhood.

Some of those lessons are beautiful.

A man's word should mean something.
Take care of your family.
Respect your elders.
Work hard.
Stand by your people.
Don't forget where you come from.
These lessons have value. They deserve to survive us.

But our fathers also inherited their own wounds. And sometimes, without meaning to, they pass those wounds down too.

Not Everything We Inherit Must Continue
There is a difficult truth about heritage:

Not everything old is sacred.

Some of the things passed from generation to generation need to be questioned.

The belief that men must never cry.

The idea that authority must always be feared.

The expectation that a father provides financially but does not necessarily have to be emotionally present.



The belief that men must never cry.

The idea that authority must always be feared. The expectation that a father provides financially but does not necessarily have to be emotionally present. The notion that asking for help is weakness.

These ideas may have made sense in another time. Perhaps they helped previous generations survive circumstances we will never fully understand.

But survival is not always the same thing as healing. And honouring our fathers does not require us to repeat everything they did.

Sometimes, honouring them means taking what was good, understanding what was harmful, and having the courage to do better.

We Are Not Our Fathers

Every man eventually reaches a point where he has to decide which parts of his inheritance belong in his future.

We can love the men who raised us while acknowledging their imperfections.

We can respect where we come from without allowing the past to dictate where we are going.

Perhaps it is:

What are we leaving our children?
Will they inherit our language?
Our stories?
Our traditions?
Our sense of community?

Will they know the names of the people who came before them?
Will they understand where their family comes from?
Will they know what their name means?

But beyond all of that, will they inherit healthier men?

Fathers who say "I love you." Men who apologise when they're wrong. Men who are strong enough to be gentle.

Men who understand that providing for a family means more than putting food on the table.

Men who know that presence is also provision.

Heritage Is a Living Thing

Heritage cannot survive simply by being remembered once a year.

It survives when we speak the language.

When we tell the stories. When we teach the children. When we cook the food. When we dance the dances. When we respect the elders. When we preserve what matters.

And when we have the courage to evolve what no longer serves us.

We are not museums.

We are living descendants of people who survived, loved, struggled, celebrated and dreamed long before we arrived.

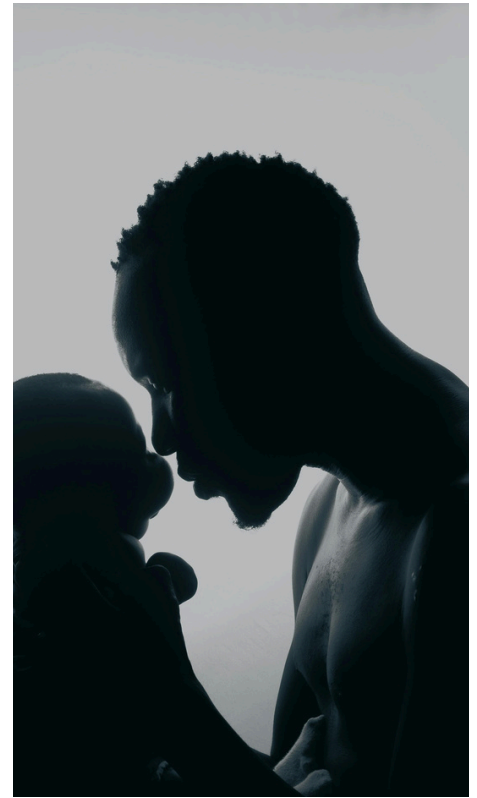
Their story did not end with them.

It arrived in us. And now we have a responsibility. To decide what continues. To decide what changes. And ultimately, to decide what the next generation will call their heritage. So this Heritage Month, perhaps we should ask ourselves a question that is more uncomfortable than "Where do I come from?"

We should ask:

"What will those who come after me say they inherited from me?"

Because one day, we will become someone's history too.



Mokwadi is a writer, business strategist, and lawyer by training. He is passionate about the intersection of African identity, wellness, and digital storytelling. When he's not helping creatives build impactful brands, he's writing stories that challenge the status quo and inspire new ways of thinking.

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THE WELLNESS IN BELONGING



BY DAMISA MAQOGA

By now, we get the sense that the idea of wellness has changed. There are many things around us that have shifted the way we understand what wellness is.

Access to information has also made us more conscious. When we speak about taking care of ourselves, the conversation has expanded from therapy, exercise, journalling, meditation, boundaries and rest to associating wellness with most things that bring us closer to our respective versions of joy.

One aspect of wellness I had not considered until recently is that wellness, in its own way, can also be heritage.

Many of us grew up in settings that bring us joy when we reflect on them today. So much so that when we go through difficult periods in the present, we sometimes look back at those memories and find a sense of comfort and calm.

There are also so many things we grew up doing that we never called wellness. Playing outside, for example. We reference it now as a great childhood memory, but there was more happening than we probably realised.

Children from different homes and sometimes different age groups gathered, moved their bodies, laughed, argued, made up and created memories together.

Then there was being around family. Eating together. Visiting people. Going home. Sitting around talking for hours. Having neighbours who knew you and relatives who checked in, sometimes a little too much.

We didn't necessarily think of any of that as taking care of our emotional health. It was just life.



That made me curious about whether there was actually something in it.

While researching this piece, I came across the World Health Organization's work on social connection. Its 2025 report found that around one in six people globally experiences loneliness, with the organisation recognising social connection as an important part of our overall health and well-being.

Closer to home, a South African study involving 3,418 adults aged 40 and older in rural communities found that around one in five experienced acute or chronic loneliness.

Lack of social engagement was among the factors associated with loneliness, alongside living alone, depressed mood and poorer life satisfaction.



It made me look at some of our everyday habits differently.

Maybe the point is not that life was better before. It wasn't. We also know more now. We have better language for mental health, understand the importance of boundaries and are increasingly able to recognise when professional support is necessary.

But perhaps having more information does not mean everything that contributes to wellness has to be new. Sometimes it is simply being around people.

There is something about returning home and hearing familiar voices. Sitting at a table longer than you planned to. Being around people who know your history. Having someone notice when you are quieter than usual.

And as our lives become busier and more individual, those moments can become easier to lose.

Perhaps this is where heritage and wellness meet for me.



Heritage isn't only what we wear, eat or celebrate. It can also be found in the ways we have learned to connect, gather and make space for one another.

The beauty of knowing more about wellness today is that we can be intentional about what we choose to keep.

And connection might just be one of those things.

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