



PRESS RELEASE

MONDAY 16 AUGUST 2021

OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE VIRTUAL MUSEUM OF NAMIBIAN FASHION

The Museums Association of Namibia (MAN) in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Gerda Henkel Foundation, the Berlin Ethnographic Museum (EM), the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, the University of Namibia (UNAM) and the National Museum of Namibia (NMN) hereby invites all Namibians and all citizens of the world to attend the Virtual launch of the Virtual Museum of Namibian Fashion at **11:00 on Friday 20th August 2021.**

MAN is currently working in partnership with the NMN and the UNAM on a project funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation. This collaborative project seeks to unlock the healing and creative potential of the colonial collections from Namibia held at the Ethnologisches Museum (EM) in Berlin, Germany, and the Ethnographic Collection at the National Museum of Namibia in Windhoek. It reconnects the collections with each other and with their heritage communities, researchers, and artists in Namibia.

As part of the project, staff of the NMN, scholars, and students from the UNAM, and staff of the MAN have been facilitating workshops with heritage experts and researchers, community representatives, and artists to engage with the collections at the NMN and conducting fieldwork with digitized collections in heritage communities throughout the country.

The project's aim is to reactivate knowledge about the objects, document immaterial cultural heritage, and provide a vital source of inspiration for artists and designers. The knowledge thus created, including oral histories and artworks, will be shared with the wider public in an online database, a publication, and an exhibition at a newly founded Museum of Namibian Fashion (as well as in an exhibition at the NMN in Windhoek to be conceptualized in the second phase of the project). By reconnecting stakeholders in Namibia with colonial collections from Berlin and Windhoek, the project seeks to engage with colonial trauma, spur new cultural production and, envision decolonial creative futures.

MAN believes that museums should be living 'organisms' that should be updated regularly and able to easily adapt to change. With that said, MAN has realized that the COVID-19 pandemic requires museums to adapt and to do things differently. **As a result, the idea of a Virtual Museum of Namibian Fashion was birthed and with funding from UNESCO, the development of the virtual museum was made possible.**



GERDA HENKEL STIFTUNG





The Virtual Museum will be **officially opened by Ms. Merja Iileka, Chairperson of the Fashion Council of Namibia**, and will feature addresses by different stakeholders and a Musical Performance by Namibian multi-award-winning artist, **Big Ben**.

The website enables visitors to view items and to interact with them by adding comments as well as submitting photographs for possible display in the virtual museum. Ndapewoshali Ndahafa Ashipala from MAN said, "The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that we need to adapt and learn to do things differently. A virtual museum of fashion could create an interactive educational space where we can also showcase Namibian culture to both local and international audiences".

The galleries in both the virtual and physical Museum will be as follows; Bead and shells, Hair and headdresses, Leather and Animal Skin processing, Metal Accessories, Plants, Bones and rocks, Tattoos and body scarification, Textiles, The People's Gallery, and Deep Roots, New fashion: The 'Deep Roots, New Fashion' Gallery showcases the work of Namibian fashion designers who incorporate features from our cultural roots to create new styles with a uniquely Namibian flavour. The Museum of Namibian Fashion will be based in Otjiwarongo, Namibia, and will be launched in late 2021 or early 2022.

If you have an item, information, or photographs that you think should be part of the collection of the Museum of Namibian Fashion, then you can contact MAN on info@museums.com.na or +264 61 30 22 30. Further information about the project can be found on the MAN website www.museums.com.na

Watch the official launch and opening on YouTube: Museums Association of Namibia
Watch the official launch and opening on Facebook: Museums Association of Namibia

SPEAKERS

Mr. B. Djaffar Moussa-Elkadhum, Head of Office at UNESCO Windhoek

Ms. Maria Caley, Chairperson of Museum of Namibian Fashion

Mr. Kavenauarue Tjiworo, Documentalist based at the National Museum of Namibia

Mr. Kevanhu Alfred Muifi, Curator of the Museum of Namibian Fashion

Ms Merja Iileka, Chairperson, Fashion Council of Namibia

PERFORMANCE BY

Performance (Big Ben-Otanda)

Please note that the link to the Virtual Museum of Namibian Fashion will be shared on the MAN Youtube Channel, Website, and Social Media Pages during the launch.



GERDA HENKEL STIFTUNG





Virtual Museum of Namibian Fashion Official Launch

Friday

20th August 2021

11:00

Watch on YouTube: Museums Association of Namibia

Watch on Facebook: Museums Association of Namibia

Speakers

Mr. B. Djaffar Moussa-Elkadhum, Head of Office at UNESCO Windhoek

Ms. Maria Caley, Chairperson of Museum of Namibian Fashion

Mr. Kavenauarue Tjiworo, Documentalist based at the National Museum of Namibia

Mr. Kevanhu Alfred Muifi, Curator of the Museum of Namibian Fashion

Ms Merja Iileka, Chairperson, Fashion Council of Namibia

Performace by
Big Ben



unesco



Ethnologisches Museum
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin



GERDA HENKEL STIFTUNG



Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture



Museums Association of Namibia
Making Museums Matter - Since 1990