

AFRICAN INFLUENCE ON THE FASHION INDUSTRY: INCLUSION AND PLAGARISM

BUF 4700: Contemporary Topics in the Fashion Industry

Adia Titus

AFRICAN INFLUENCE: GOOD OR BAD?

- Christian Louboutin collaborated with Senegalese artists to create the Africaba Tote bag that was made out of Ankara prints. 10% of the proceeds from this collection went to La Maison Rose in Dakar.
- Louis Vuitton along with other designers received scrutiny of the use of African elements in their designs
- What is the difference with how these designers were treated when using African prints/style in their collections?

Christian Louboutin



Figure 1: Christian Louboutin bag

ANKARA PRINTS

- originated from Indonesia and became popular in the West African region (i.e. Ghana, Senegal, and Nigeria)
- brought over by African people who served as mercenaries in the Indonesian Army
- Later made into even more intricate styles making this unique to this region



Figure 2. Ankara Factory (Adamu, 2018).

Louis Vuitton Receives Backlash in Two Instances

Why were people outraged by Louis Vuitton's collections?

BASOTHO BLANKETS

Basotho Blanket (Sotho people)



Louis Vuitton's blanket



Figures 3. Basotho Blanket (Marcopoulos, 2018).

Figure 4. Louis Vuitton blanket (Marcopoulos, 2018).

Plagiarizism?

Marianne Fassler's bag



Louis Vuitton's bag



Figure 5. Marianne Fassler bag (Marcopoulos, 2018)

Figure 6. Louis Vuitton bag (Marcopoulos, 2018)

Machagani Bag

- The LV and Marianne Fassler bags both were released in 2017
- The Machagani bag from South Africa was the influence behind those bags

Stella McCartney S/S 2018



- These designs were part of Stella McCartney's collection in S/S 2018
- She was called out for her lack of diversity while using Ankara prints in her designs
- There was only one African model in her show

Figure 7: Stella McCartney S/S 2018 (Marcopoulos, 2018)

Conclusion

- Inclusion is necessary in order to not seem like a culture vulture
 - Highlighting or shedding light on the inspiration behind one's designs
 - Giving back to the community in some way
-

Citation

Adamu, Z. (2019, January 31). The complex future of African fabric (which isn't African). Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/style/article/african-textiles-dutch-future/index.html>

Marcopoulos, C. (2018, September 24). Six Ways African Fashion Has Inspired Big-Name Designers Worldwide. Retrieved from <https://www.cosmopolitan.co.za/style/how-african-fashion-inspired-big-designers/>

Nwoye, C. (2018, November 25). "Ankara" Your Favorite Wax Print Wasn't Really African and a Chinese Takeover Means it Never Will be. Retrieved from <https://qz.com/africa/1474039/wax-print-african-fashion-and-chinese-importers/>