

...NOT IN THISDAY STYLE? THEN YOU'RE NOT IN STYLE

THISDAY Style

SUNDAY, JUNE 26, 2022

TIMI ALAIBE
STANDING TALL AT 60



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COVER NOTE



Over the years, Timi Alaibe has rapidly become a familiar face and dominant force in the Niger Delta due to his passion and dedication to ending violence in the region. Speaking to **KONYE CHELSEA NWABOGOR** on the occasion of his 60th birthday, he shares memories of his growing-up years, NDDC days and politics.

EDITOR'S LETTER



EXECUTIVE EDITOR

I choose to be happy!

Oddly, my key takeaway from my encounter with Mr Alaibe is the pursuit of happiness. I still remember him letting out a huge contented sigh, saying, "I am happy, my dear, I am happy," as though happiness was something tangible that he could finally touch, feel and own. It got me thinking of how much downplayed happiness has become, especially in the crazy world we live in; survival is now king and the struggle is the main thing.

The World Happiness Report 2019 surveyed 156 countries and discovered that overall, our global happiness score was only five out of 10. I would say this isn't surprising at all, especially for us Nigerians, given the current climate of political unrest, security issues economic uncertainty, and a recent rise in reported cases of mental breakdowns. In response to these pressures, happiness has become the Holy Grail, defined by different people differently. So when we are asked, "are you happy?" Should the answer be through a universal set of metrics or should it be based on our terms?

So much of our lives are spent finding fault - with ourselves, our lives, with others. We criticise, stress, complain, and judge ourselves harshly without knowing it. The pressure for cultural conformity does not help. Advertising creates needs and desires that we didn't think we had. Social media makes other peoples' lives seem better than ours, and we feel bad about ourselves. So we strive for more - again, the struggle.

As we approach the second half of the year 2022, I'd like to say, despite everything, consciously choose happiness; embrace gratitude, count your blessings, be positive and live life on your own terms.

In truth, life can sometimes throw painful experiences our way, but no matter how difficult it might seem at the time, it's still up to us to keep our heads above water and just breathe. Take a minute to focus on the small or big things that are good in your life. It may feel hard, but the rewards will be worth it.

We are down to the last to last week in June and about ushering in the 2nd half of the year. I hear a lot of people complaining about the issues that have stopped them from meeting up with their goals, and I have this to say: Your goals should not have an expiry date. Stop getting worked up with a laundry list of improvements that will only leave you exhausted. Instead, broaden your perspective and think about long-term goals that will enrich your daily life and that you can realistically conquer.

There's so much going on in the country right now, and sometimes it feels like you can't keep up. Well, over here on Style, we've got you covered. Check out our list of 10 things this week to keep you abreast of all that's going on. There's also something for those trying to get into the art market; Charles Didee Eta shares a beginner's guide to buying Art. Here's wishing you a lovely and restful Sunday. Be positive and chase happiness relentlessly—cheers to a beautiful new week.

Konye

Society

NIGERIA CELEBRATES WITH THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND
This year Her Majesty, The Queen of England, became the first British monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the Realms and the Commonwealth and Nigeria was amongst the many countries that celebrated with the queen on her Platinum Jubilee.

6



THIS DAY **Style**

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Lifestyle & Fashion

- Ten Things This Week 8
- Infuse Colour into Your Living Space 10
- Why Sustainability in Fashion is The New Mantra 11
- Straight Off The Runway 18
- Interview with Sore Dawodu- Martins 19
- 30 Mins With Kuwami Eugene 20
- A Beginner's Guide to Buying Art 21
- Serum: You Should Add One to Your Skincare Routine 22



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THIS WORLD: THE BLACK AMERICAN FIGHT FOR FREEDOM



BY THE PEOPLE
THE ELECTION OF
BARACK OBAMA

STYLE SOCIETY NIGERIA CELEBRATES WITH THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND

By **Funke Babs Kufeji**

This year Her Majesty, The Queen of England, became the first British monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the Realms and the Commonwealth and Nigeria was amongst the many countries that celebrated with the queen on her Platinum Jubilee.

The Queen's Jubilee parties were celebrated in grand style in Lagos and Abuja, with many political and diplomatic dignitaries, government officials, British business groups, celebrities, and friends of the High Commission in attendance.

In Lagos, celebrity musician D'banj, Goya Menor and ARB Music Band thrilled guests with special performances and other musical recitals that portrayed Nigeria's rich culture.

Delivering her remarks at the Queen's Birthday party in Abuja, British High Commissioner, Catriona Laing CB, said:

"I am excited to welcome you to celebrate the Birthday of a remarkable person, Her Majesty The Queen, who is 96 this year. Her Majesty has become the first British monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the Realms and the Commonwealth. Her extraordinary reign has seen her travel more widely than any other monarch, undertaking over 260 official visits overseas, including nearly 100 state visits.

"Throughout years of tremendous change in international affairs, The Queen has been a source of continuity and stability. With her power to transcend politics and geography, she has touched the lives of millions of people in the UK, Nigeria and beyond.



CATRIONA LAING CB, PRESIDENT GOODLUCK EBELE JONATHAN & NAMADI SAMBO

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GLORIA DICK-UDDH & UEMAMAKA OVIA



DARE ART-ALADA REMA & DEOLA ART ALADE



GILL ATKINSON



MR & MRS IFEANYI KALU



BOMA AMIEYEFORI & IFE ADULOJU



GOYA MENOR & CHIM CHALEMERA

Ten Things This Week

STYLE
DESIGN

UTI NWACHUKWU IS SET TO HOST THE REUNION OF THE REAL HOUSEWIVES OF LAGOS



The Real Housewives of Lagos will reunite for special reunion episodes with Utu Nwachukwu starring as the host. The reunion will see all six ladies sit down to speak on issues on the show and situations that also happened off-camera. The Real Housewives of Lagos is a reality show that chronicles the opulent lives of six of the most glamorous women in Lagos, Nigeria. The women include Carolyne Hutchings, Laura Ikeji-Kanu, Chioma Ikokwu, Toyin Lawani-Adebayo, Iyabo Ojo, and Mariam Timmer.



THE EXPO 2020 DUBAI SHOW SITE WILL BE RENAMED EXPO CITY DUBAI

The Expo 2020 site in Dubai will reopen as Expo City Dubai, a "future city" comprising homes, businesses, and recreational facilities. The development on Dubai's outskirts, purpose-built at \$7 billion for the six-month Expo that finished in March, will host offices for Dubai port operator DP World and German conglomerate Siemens.

80% of the original infrastructure and buildings will remain, including the falcon-themed UAE pavilion and Al-Wasl Dome, the Expo centrepiece lit up by colourful projections.

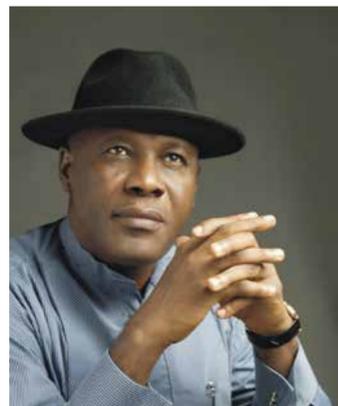
INEC'S BID TO HALT VOTER REGISTRATION ON JUNE 30 UNSUCCESSFUL



Justice Mobolaji Olajuwon of the Federal High Court in Abuja has rejected the Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) plan to conclude voter registration on June 30, 2022. She granted an order of interim injunction following the hearing of an argument on motion ex parte by Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP). SERAP and 185 other concerned Nigerians had filed a lawsuit against INEC, asking the court to "declare unconstitutional, illegal, and incompatible with international standards the failure of the electoral body to extend the deadline for voter registration to allow eligible Nigerians to exercise their rights".

FORMER MINISTER ORUBEBE RESIGNS FROM PDP

Former minister of Niger Delta Affairs Godsway Orubebe has resigned his membership of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). He made this known in a letter addressed to the National Chairman of the party, Iyorchia Ayu, which stated that the party had failed to learn lessons from its electoral defeat in 2015. He also noted that there was currently nothing on the ground to show that the PDP was prepared to wrestle power from the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2023 general elections.



AFROPOLITAN RAISES \$2.1 MILLION FOR THE CREATION OF A DIGITAL NATION

Afropolitan, a community-as-a-service startup, has announced that it has raised pre-seed funding of \$2.1 million. Founded by Eche Emole and Chika Uwazie, Afropolitan is creating a Digital Nation to enable all Africans to build abundant lives. According to its manifesto, it is working on building a network that comprises the best that Africa and the diaspora have to offer across art, finance, tech, health, sports, and media.

BIODUN OYEBANJI WINS THE EKITI GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION



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FUEL SCARCITY HITS LAGOS

A scarcity in Fuel has hit Lagos, the Federal Capital Territory and other parts of the country, resulting in motorists spending hours at filling stations. For oil marketers, the solution to the worsening fuel queues across the country is for the Federal Government to approve an increase in the pump price of the commodity. The approved pump price is currently N165/litre, but marketers are kicking against this rate, saying that it is no longer sustainable going by the global crisis in the energy sector.

PRESIDENT BUHARI NOMINATES SEVEN NEW MINISTERS



The President, Major General Muhammadu Buhari (ret.), has nominated seven persons for screening and confirmation by the Senate for appointment as Ministers. The nominees are Henry Ikechukwu – Abia State, Umama Okon Umama – Akwa-Ibom State; Ekuma Joseph – Ebonyi State; Goodluck Nana Obia – Imo State; Umar Ibrahim Yakub – Kano State; Ademola Adewole Adegoroye – Ondo State; Odo Udi – Rivers State.



IKE EKWEREMADU AND WIFE ARRESTED IN LONDON, CHARGED WITH ORGAN HARVESTING; DENIED BAIL

Ike Ekweremadu, former deputy senate president, and his wife, Beatrice, have been arrested and charged to court for bringing a child to the UK for organ harvesting.

According to a statement by the Metropolitan police, the couple were arrested following an investigation by the force's specialist crime team after they were alerted of potential offences under modern slavery legislation in May 2022.

The Ekweremadus have been denied bail and subsequently remanded in custody. The case has also been adjourned to July 7th.



BEYONCE RELEASES NEW SINGLE FROM UPCOMING ALBUM

For the first time in two years, Beyonce has released a new single. The song "Break My Soul" was released initially only on Tidal, the streaming service co-owned by her husband, Jay-Z. The single is expected to be featured on an upcoming album, "Renaissance," which will be released July 29. The new album is expected to follow her 2016's hit album "Lemonade."



STYLE
DESIGN



INFUSE COLOUR INTO YOUR LIVING SPACE

By Usiade Isioma



Adding the right colours to your living space could take it from drab to fab and lighten your mood at home. There are so many inventive and creative ways to do this. Feel like your home needs this, keep reading for some tips to help achieve this.

Colourful Accessories

Adding vibrant accessories is one of the simplest ways to infuse colour into your space. Consider brightly coloured cushions, flower vases, lamps, and rugs. You can experiment with different styles but select colours that complement and enhance coziness.

Add a splash of colour to one side of the space.

Pick an easily observed side of your room and add a dash of vivid paint. This will improve the appearance of your room, especially if the other walls and furniture are a neutral colour.

Be creative with your under-foot mat.

A striking rug in vibrant colour adds



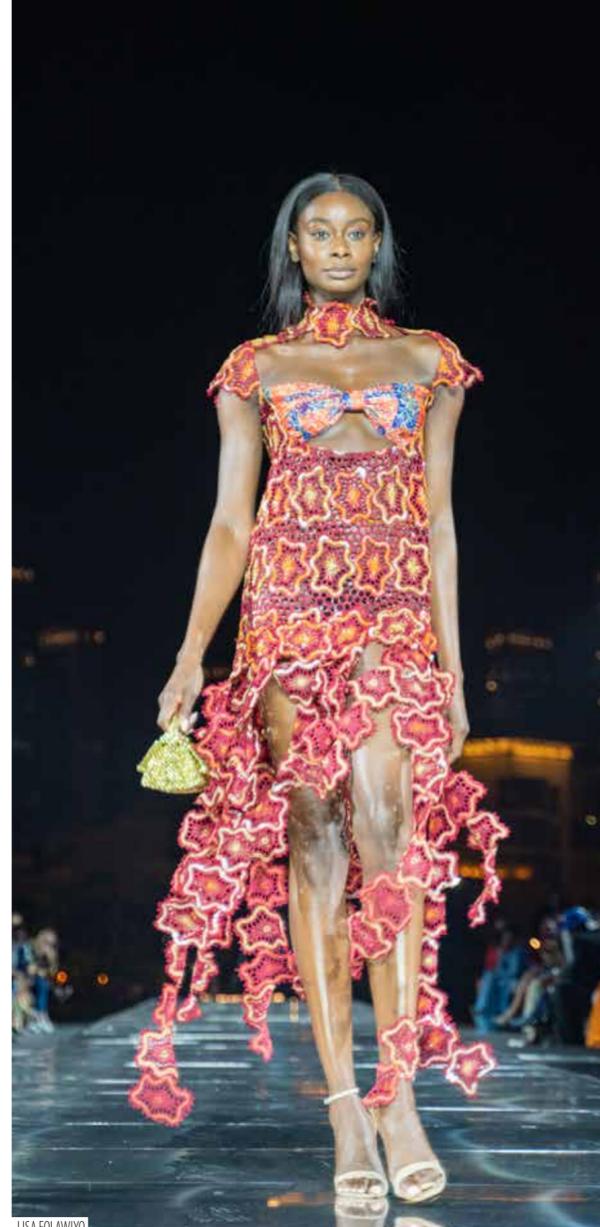
texture to your space, making it look more eclectic and softer while embracing the room's design.

Colourful artwork designs.

Do you realize that putting frames on empty walls makes them look more pronounced? Hang your favourite colourful framework to make a statement; the colour not only enhances the appeal of the artwork but also makes the wall look polished.

Go bold with your furniture.

A pop of colour with your furniture will accentuate the room's look and make it look stylish. The curtains and blinds are not left out.



LISA FOLAWIYO



KENNETH IZE

WHY SUSTAINABILITY IN FASHION IS THE NEW MANTRA

By Charles Didee Eta

Fashion's representation as a significant source of expression is noticed and appreciated. Still, the fact remains that it wouldn't probably stay that way for a longer time if we don't begin to reshape the concepts of how healthy, reasonable and functional garments can be for us, provided we are thinking about sustainability on an eco-friendly level.

For this reason, most of the fashion industry and its stakeholders are now clamouring for sustainable fashion—an umbrella term for clothes that are created and consumed in a way that can be, quite literally, sustained while protecting both the environment and those producing garments.

With a carbon footprint accounting for over 10% of the global greenhouse gas emissions, there's no secret that the fashion industry is destroying the environment. A change is needed, from creating more awareness towards sustainable fashion practices to taking an active role in making a change.

Sustainable fashion has put us all in a position to do better by projecting the creators of sustainable paraphernalia and ensuring we are consuming the same thing. By doing this, we begin to protect our community.

As we advance, a holistic approach to sustainability will involve tackling issues like overproduction, and waste, supporting bio-diversity, eliminating CO2 emissions and generally reducing pollution. Another fundamental approach would be paying the most suiting wages to those responsible for production. And giving them the best conditions necessary for carrying out their work.

A big shout out to fashion brands already improving on the well-being

of others by making use of materials that can easily be recycled, which in the long run is instrumental to no waste at all. Previously, most clothing were more petroleum-based, made from polyester, fossil fuels, acrylic and nylon material which required way more energy during production. On the other hand, natural or recycled materials require no chemical treatment, less energy, little water use and no fertilizers to grow. As a matter of fact, organic fabrics made from sustainable wood pulp like Tencel, linen, hemp and organic cotton happen to be biodegradable, which goes easy on the environment and serves as the alternatives we need for a safe world free of artificial options.

Now that we are aware of the adverse effects of these chemicals everywhere, including in our bodies, we must stay advising others and reach out to brands that aren't conforming to the 360° take on sustainability in fashion by either calling them out or asking them questions. Nigerian brands like Kenneth Ize, Nkwo, and Lisa Folawiyo, to mention a few, have decided to stick to their guns by maintaining the natural route, letting us know that fashion consumers need to keep a watchful eye on the kind of fabrics we buy.

Henceforth we should be more aware of fashion brands concerned for your future, not just your coins.



HAMRA OBAIGBENA



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COVER

THE PRINCIPAL



Fresh from the private sector, where he had a thriving career in Banking, Nigerians would first get a glimpse of Timi Alaibe when he was appointed as the Executive Director, in charge of Finance and Administration, at the then newly created Nigerian Federal Government's Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). Over the years, he rapidly became a familiar face and dominant force in the Niger Delta due to his passion and dedication to ending violence in the region. Having proven to possess striking leadership qualities, he was eventually appointed Managing Director in 2007, a position he held until 2009.

Not long after, Timi would heed another call to serve his country from President Yaradua, who then floated a Presidential Amnesty Programme as part of his efforts to curtail restiveness in the Niger Delta region. He was appointed as an adviser on Niger Delta Affairs and coordinator of that programme. Over a decade later, The Principal, as he is fondly called, is still standing tall. With interests in dredging, civil construction, offshore marine logistics and support services and politics, Timi Alaibe will forever be a force to reckon with. Speaking to **KONYE CHELSEA NWABOGOR** on the occasion of his 60th birthday, he shares memories of his growing-up years, NDDC days and politics.

From what we know, the early stage of your life was quite simple. What was it like growing up in the 60s?

I was born in Warri. When the war came, we moved to Lagos. My dad was in the military. That was his second iteration in the military because he fought in the Second World War. We then relocated to Lagos. I was an Ajegunle boy from the onset because that was where I lived at the time. I attended Isoko School, Apapa. I remember walking to school. Not on bare feet, though; back then, we had Cortina shoes. Growing up, we had to deal with the challenges of having a father who was at war, leaving us with just our mother. She was very hardworking. As a young boy, we experienced the struggles of a mother who did everything to ensure her children went to school. Back then, we had to go to lesson at 4 pm because our mum was at the market selling. Me and my brother, and it was quite interesting. When I grew older, I helped her hawk. She received food like Plantain, Ogbono, Sweet Potato, Dried and Catfish from the village, and we hawked them through the streets of Ajegunle. That was the beginning of what gave us the initial drive. My mother was hardworking. Maybe those genes followed me because it was not rosy from the start. But when my dad was settled in Port Harcourt, he returned to Lagos and took my siblings and me to Port Harcourt. We went to Port Harcourt via the sea in a military vessel. The beauty of it was that the day we landed in Port Harcourt was when the war ended. It was exciting. That move made me a Port Harcourt boy. The first place we stayed was Rainbow town. It's called Trans Amadi these days. Growing up, our movement's dynamism was agitated by our dad. From Port Harcourt to Jos, back to Port Harcourt, then to Lagos state.

Some people don't know that you were in banking early in your career. In fact, Four banks in 15 years. How did this shape your work when you joined the NDDC in the early 2000s?

Oh definitely, banking came with the characteristics that made you up. As a banker, you have to be disciplined. The profession's ethics shaped my mind and the transparency of my work. It's a whole lot; the integrity that is expected, the corporate governance, the accountability issues, and even the communication skills. Team building, people and time management, and service delivery; one of the critical things that built and prepared me for public service. And you know the nature of the organisation we took over from. OMPADEC was the defunct interventionist organisation managing activities of the Niger Delta. At the time, it was like an intervention agency. When NDDC was created, we had to take over the responsibilities of OMPADEC, and we were received with huge expectations. Due to OMPADEC's failure, the people didn't want to see another failure in the newly created NDDC.

The politicking was tough; the expectations were high. So those of us who were given that opportunity came with everything to ensure we did not fail.

Given the background of my professional career, I had to ensure that the appropriate governance structures were immediately instituted. When our Governing Board commenced work, we engaged the services of reputable management consulting and accounting firms, such as KPMG, Deloitte, and Crowe Dafinone and Co. Later when I became MD, the services of Accenture was handy for implementation of NDDC Transformation project. So it was that kind of reputation we brought to the job to change the perception of inefficiency and lack of effective service delivery in the civil service.... A perception that was prevalent in the defunct organisation. I am talking about the reputation of the Chairman at the time Chief Onyema Ugochukwu, a celebrated journalist, and then the Managing Director Engr Godwin Omene, who was DMD of Shell. These were the first-class set of people we had, and we didn't

want to fail. We brought to that job cumulative years of experience, years of corporate governance, and years of management at the strategic level. That accounted for some of the successes we had at the time.

Being a pioneer member of management at the NDDC, do you think the commission has fulfilled its mission of facilitating sustainable development in the Niger Delta 22 years after its creation?

I will give you a straight answer; this is probably the first time I am talking about it. The commission has not and will not fulfil its objectives as espoused by the law to intervene in sustaining the development of the Niger Delta unless and until they resuscitate and implement the Niger Delta regional development master plan. That plan was first published in 2006 and celebrated all over at the time. President Obasanjo championed it with all the development partners keying into a conscious integrated master plan that was going to address the economic, the infrastructural, the environmental and the socio-political challenges of the Niger Delta. I am talking about initiatives that involve rural and community development and human development needs. This plan went through months of stakeholder consultation and input from different sectors, about 32 sectors at the time. I wouldn't say it was a perfect plan, but it was a starting point for a conscious and planned development in the Niger Delta. However, as usual with government initiatives, subsequent managements of the commission ignored the plan. In fact, some didn't recognise the plan's existence and continued the same way as OMPADEC. The Master Plan was a guide that would have helped streamlined the sustainable development agenda of the Niger Delta. Before the design of the master plan, we had an interim master plan which was a short-term strategy to ensure some quick impact projects in the Region. The Master Plan laid out the medium-term and long-term sustainable development activities that will help address some of the challenges of the Niger Delta. It would have resolved the previous failures of the half-hazard development activities of previous intervention agencies if the master plan had been implemented. What is happening today is representative of the fact that a conscious coordinating framework was not followed. In subsequent times, specifically September 8, 2008, during the President Yar'Adua administration, the Niger Delta technical committee was inaugurated. I was a member of that committee headed by Bar. Ledum Mitee to start the Ledum Mitee Committee. It was charged with the responsibility to collate, review and distil the various reports, suggestions and recommendations on the Niger Delta from the Willinks Commission Report (1958) to the present, and give a summary of the recommendations necessary for government action. The committee was also to appraise the summary recommendations and present a detailed short, medium and long term suggestion to the challenges in the Niger Delta. It was during this that the Niger Delta ministry was formed. These set of ideas were available for people at the helm of affairs at the NDDC to take advantage of. Unfortunately this has not happened till date. I believe we will not see any significant progression from that interventionist agency because there's no conscious plan which has the buy-in of the Niger Delta people being followed. We may probably see a marked progress when a new board, in accordance with the establishment law, is appointed and encouraged to go back to the drawing board. It will be their responsibility to review, reactivate and update the various plans...that's when we

We brought to that job cumulative years of experience, years of corporate governance, and years of management at the strategic level. That accounted for some of the successes we had at the time.





can see some light at the end of the tunnel.

Some people would say the commission has outlived its usefulness. Some have even asked that it be scrapped. What would you say to that? As someone who was part of the system?

When you next hear that kind of statement, ask the person if the objectives for which the NDDC was established have been achieved. If not, then nobody should be talking about scrapping it. The pain I have when it comes to the Niger Delta is that people are too quick to say scrap and not scrap. There are Federal Ministries failing and worsening the economic and security conditions of our country. We're hearing of departments of the Federal Government where people are stealing grandiose amounts, N80 billion, and

more yet, nobody is discussing about scrapping them. The backbone of the economy today is oil and gas from the Niger Delta, and people suggest scrapping it ??? Let's rework the governance structure of the NDDC and populate it with competencies to make it a better organisation. We did not scrap federal ministries and departments when they failed in their responsibilities. That's off the table. We thank God that the NDDC is an establishment of the law, so scrapping the NDDC is a mundane discussion

Let's talk about your life in public service. Asides from your work at the NDDC, you were also a Special Adviser in the Presidency and took charge of the Presidential Amnesty Program, which brought peace to the Niger Delta. Would it be fair to say this is one of your most significant

achievements?

My background does not make me take pride in anything I do. I have lived a life of conscious hard work in any responsibility I am saddled with. It's like telling me that when I was in the bank, the transformational work I did at the time was probably my best. I can't say that. I see the next challenge as the potential best. I am a highly futuristic person. Talking about the amnesty program, that was a time Nigeria was almost bankrupt as a result of the activities of some of our youth in the Niger Delta. As of May 2009, Shell declared a force majeure in the Niger Delta because they lost at least 250 barrels per day. NLNG had reduced its operation to 58% because it lost \$2 billion that year. Cumulatively, the oil industry was losing \$166 million daily. So that was where we were when the President summoned me and saddled me with the responsibility of disarming our brothers who were involved in taking up weapons against the system. And in his wisdom, he declared Amnesty on the 25th of June 2009. The mandate was to stabilise, consolidate, and sustain the security conditions of the Niger Delta. And in doing that, he said we should disarm all who those have carried weapons against the Nigerian state as a precondition for the Federal Government to deploy sustainable development in the Niger Delta region. In return, the federal government would demobilise, rehabilitate, and reintegrate the delegates (as I now call them, not the militants) into purposeful activities. The responsibility was high and was serious. I had to physically go to the militant camps, as they called them at the time. It was a presidential responsibility; I had to do it. I had to go to the camps and engage them one on one. I used the non-violence approach to engage. I used the weapon of love. I'm also from the Niger Delta, so they could relate. Also, I had implemented projects in those communities, so I knew their challenges. There were real challenges, not cosmetic. We had to address them. Luckily this was a President that was ready to listen. So, we had to build confidence with all the militant leaders and their groups and consciously disarm them. I can't take credit because I was not the only person involved. There were quite a lot of governors and stakeholders. But we did the engagement. Even your Publisher, Nduka Obaigbena, was involved at some critical points because we had to travel to hold certain meetings, all in a bid to bring about peace. And we succeeded within the time frames we were given to get all the militants agitating at the time to disarm. When we started, the oil production volume was almost below 750 barrels per day. By the time we had concluded, we were back to about 2.4 million barrels per day. That was the impact of the amnesty program, and that is why I say even to those carrying arms in various parts of Nigeria today, you must engage. You must have people from the specific communities where people are being terrorised. There must be people who know the characters at play... they are not ghosts... who must be constructively engaged to achieve peace.

For example, where there is an attack state or location, I believe there must be indigenous persons from the state or community or location that know the possible elements at play and who government representatives can engage... it is not rocket science. We did it, even though I ended up in the hospital when I finished. You will read all about that in my book. Anyway, it would help if you had people ready to engage. If you must follow the path of peace, there must be an opportunity to engage.

Aside your achievements under the commission, what else have you done in your capacity to give back to the people of the Niger Delta region?

I will not try to praise myself. I believe those who are beneficiaries of what I do are in the best position to respond to your question. I will give you an example because she's late now. My wife of blessed memory had an NGO that trained older people. It was called FREE. It's still in existence. Family Reorientation, Education, and Empowerment. She taught women and men, especially the elderly, to read and write. Before now, in most of our communities, the women only recognised the naira in colour. Children will write letters to their mothers in the village, but they couldn't read them. So, she subjected them to classrooms. Throughout her time in the Niger Delta, she had 5000 students in various communities. To the extent that UNESCO recognised her work. In fact, the wife of the President at the time, Mrs. Turai Yaradua, was given an opportunity to speak at the Unesco conference because of my wife's work. She was given a UNESCO prize for literacy. She also won the Confucius Prize in China. So those were things that got recognition, even though my late wife didn't want that, it was the recipients that spoke, she didn't market her activities. What we do in the world to impact people's lives is not something we want to use to enrich our reputation. The Almighty orders things you do in his name, and only he can grant you such accolades.



Let's talk about your foray into politics, in which you are still very much involved. Why was this the next step for you after leaving the NDDC?

I didn't go into government immediately after NDDC. I took a break, but I was not allowed to enjoy it. I finished my work at the NDDC in April, 2009, and President Yar'Adua called me back by June 2009. So, I was not allowed to enjoy my break. I was trying to psyche myself into being a single man, having lost my wife at the same year. So I thought to rehabilitate myself. I was called back to action. It wasn't politics. I actually resigned from the government in 2010. When I resigned, I returned to Lagos to set up a Marine logistics company I currently run. That's what I do. I will characterise myself as a businessman in politics.

What are your views and expectations on the upcoming Presidential elections? Every Nigerian has an opinion on this. Please share yours, first as a Nigerian and then as a politician with vested interests?

As a Nigerian, I am interested in the progress of this country. The sorry state we are in is something that should worry any right-thinking stakeholder. Therefore, I will expect INEC to conduct a credible election that is free and fair. And I will expect electorates to conduct themselves well so that we do not again present ourselves as a shame to the world. As a Nigerian, I want a credible election that does not end in judicial resolutions. I am completely detrailed. All I want is the best man for the job. Talking about a credible election, Jonathan did it in 2015. even when he was one of the contestants. And so, it beholds President Buhari to come through with the same legacy. In fact, the only legacy I want to see from President Buhari is the credibility shown in this next set of elections. That, for me, is enough to give a new vista of life to the polity on ground. As a politician, you are aware of my political party. Thank God the PDP has shown in 2019 and 2023 that they are the purveyors of democracy. They have demonstrated a reputation for being able to deal with internal politics at the presidential level. Two credible presidential conventions have been held in 2019 and 2023. The only thing that remains is the General Elec-

tion. So as a politician and as a PDP man, I'm hoping we will win the next election.

How do you feel about turning 60? What's life like these days? When you are not politicking, what are you up to?

I feel young and happy, thankful, and grateful to the Almighty God for life. Grateful to him for leading me through challenges, both physical and spiritual. For his blessings: children, family, and grandchildren. I have five grandchildren, and I am happy. When I'm not politicking, I like music and hanging out with my friends. I play squash, and I try to swim with my grandchildren.

Did you ever consider getting re-married after you lost your dear wife? It's been 13 years, I believe.

As I told you earlier, This is an emotional question; it makes me sad when asked. I believe it's also very personal. At the appropriate time when marriage is due, you will know.

Looking back at your life experiences, both ups and downs, what is that one lesson you have learned?

One major one is patience. Then forgiveness, care, maintenance of relationships, and being close to God. Sometimes life throws you challenges, and you believe you are macho and can deal with them, forgetting there is a God. When I was a little younger, I had so much drive and was very aggressive in my life pursuits. I came up with the slogan, "Delay is dangerous." I wanted to get things done on time. With time, I began to see that there are vulnerabilities in life. There are natural things to deal with. If you are not patient to see those things, you will fall into the abyss of the valley of those who do not listen, and you will go like the fly that followed the dead to the grave.



I will give you a straight answer; this is probably the first time I am talking about it. The commission has not and will not fulfil its objectives as espoused by the law to intervene in sustaining the development of the Niger Delta unless and until they resuscitate and implement the Niger Delta regional development master plan.



As a Nigerian, I want a credible election that does not end in judicial resolutions. I am completely detrailed. All I want is the best man for the job.

The stigma behind wearing second-hand clothing and accessories is fast becoming a thing of the past as consignment stores and online discount platforms are now becoming the go-to for discounted designer items. This week we speak to Sore Martins of The LuxeEvo, who talks about getting into the consignment space and how important it is to make sure you are buying the real deal with pre-owned luxury items.

Consignment stores have, over the years, become a recognised fashion retail outlet, especially for luxury goods. Tell us why did you decide to go into the business?

I have always been interested in luxury fashion because I grew up with my grandmother, who owned a fabric store in the 70s late into the 90s, and I used to sit in her stores for hours as she discussed with her customers the styles they had in mind for the fabrics. I started my business by selling new designer bags and shoes at discounted prices, which helped establish me as a reputable person when looking for authentic yet discounted luxury fashion items. But then I was quick to notice, like myself, that a few people who bought from me would either get bored with their bags or want something else. Back in the day, we would dispose of the bags by giving them out or simply throwing them away, which is bad for the environment as they are not disposed of properly, and that is why we are very much about sustainability. I moved to the UK and soon realised there was a market to tackle this, and I grabbed the opportunity.

What are the risks of the business, and how can they be managed?

The biggest risk is letting a fake item slip through your door. There are some super fakes, but thankfully we are well equipped to know the difference. People tend to focus on a mistake, no matter how small. They will forget all the good and only remember that error. One slip up, and the business is tainted. One must be careful always to authenticate an item. If unsure, seek 3rd party opinion. Another factor is dealing with trust. Oh, there is no way this person



The biggest risk in luxury consignment is letting a fake item slip through your door

SORE DAWODU-MARTINS



will ever buy or own a fake bag. No, thank you, just like customs at Heathrow departure, everyone gets checked at The LuxEvo, well, in this case, every item, lol.

Authenticating products is a big part of consignment. How do you ensure at The LuxEvo that consumers are getting the real deal?

I am a certified authenticator, forever studying, forever learning. I never act like I know it all. Once a course is available, I enroll and learn. Authentication is a rigorous process. It is not just looking at a bag and nodding. I pay attention to the stitching on a Chanel bag, the number of diamond squares on the flap, the feel of the leather on a Goyard bag, and what the serial number means on a Dior bag. For instance, does it correspond with the year of production? I can sometimes tell from how a bag sits, the puffiness, and so many things not so obvious to the ordinary eye. As I said, I may not know it all, so we use independent 3rd party authenticators and a site that uses AI. We use this for our top-of-the-range purchases. For Hermes, we also use one of the most trusted authenticators in the world. Our customers rest assured as they know our authentication process is extremely thorough.

What advice will you give anyone who wants to buy from a consignment store so as not to be sold a fake for real?

Buy from a reputable person or store. Familiarise yourself with what you are buying. If in doubt, ask questions ask lots of questions. If the seller is hesitant, they don't have enough experience as an authenticator to assure you, or they are simply trying to pass on a knockoff. Either way, walk away.

I must make sure that whatever I am selling to you is authentic, so I must make you comfortable in your purchase by answering all your queries/enquiries, and I always encourage and welcome lots of questions. I still get a few; how are you sure, and then we move on to a more extensive research and explanation. As an independent authenticator, I charge a small fee, so you can also contact me should you need such services.

Though consignment stores have been around for a while, many still have misconceptions. What common misconceptions do people have about consignment shopping, and why are they false?

Consignment stores are resale stores. Most serve as a middleman between buyer and seller. If you want to sell your item, I'll do that for you at a commission. I take off the headache of haggling and doubt about the authenticity of the item being sold or bought. The biggest misconception in Nigeria is the superstitious belief that wearing something already worn by another means that you are stepping into their unknown destiny. I would say laughable, but it is a very serious thing, quite spiritual for some. That superstition is a significant hindrance. Also, thinking because one wears or buys preloved, they are poor. Some items are no longer readily available in stores, and you can only find them on the second-hand market. Chanel has stopped using exotic leather, and so has Burberry, so where would you find such? On the resale market. Even celebrities buy preloved and flaunt it, so I have no idea why people turn up their noses at preloved. Another misconception is thinking everything in a consignment

store has been used or worn. No, we get many unworn items in their original condition, as they came straight from the factory. That is the difference between preloved and pre-owned.

With so many players in the resale market, why should consumers buy from The LuxEvo instead of turning to other competitors?

The LuxoEvo is an established, experienced and trusted reseller. We have just recently launched a site where customers can upload their items and sell confidently, so we have moved from just being another consignment store. All items are authenticated before being sent to their new owners.

I do not take my job as an authenticator lightly, I have all sorts of certifications from numerous training courses, but the learning never stops. With continued learning, our expertise is second to none, our reputation is key, and gladly it is solid. So, buyers are rest assured all their purchases have passed all checks before landing on their doorstep and in their closet.

What advice do you have for someone who may want to go into the consignment business?

Make sure you have an in-house authenticator and are also familiar with what you sell. Never take on an item based on trust; you must check and ensure it is what it should be. Engage independent authenticators when necessary. In this business, you can only establish yourself as one who doesn't sell fakes. That is when customers trust you. Discretion is also key. Celebrities and private buyers prefer anonymity. There is still a lot of misconception regarding preloved in Nigeria, so people like to deal quietly.



VALENTINO'S SPRING/SUMMER 2022

Anne Hathaway rocks her dress with matching shorts, champagne-coloured heeled sandals, and a dazzling diamond choker necklace for the Bulgari dinner in Paris.



STRAIGHT OFF THE RUNWAY

By Usiade Isioma

If pictures are worth a thousand words, then this simple monochrome appeal says it all. The Valentino's spring/summer 2022 collection featured this fluorescent yellow shirt dress, and we are in awe. The sleeves on this vibrant, dreamy ensemble make it more than just a shirt. It makes a statement that will not only brighten up your wardrobe but will stand you out from the crowd.



Morin Oluwole keeps it effortless by wearing the dress with a simple slip-on, a great hairstyle, and neutral makeup. Excellent for a Sunday family lunch or an indoor get-together.

Always one to make a statement with her outfit choices, **Nkiru Anumudu** looks resplendent in this shirt dress which she paired with a matching-coloured hat.

I SPENT 30 MINS WITH KUAMI EUGENEGHANA'S "ROCKSTAR"

It's a rainy Saturday morning in the city of Lagos. Two Gen Zers are bonding over the traffic situation, the music scene in Ghana, meeting Phyno at the club in Lagos, and so much more.

By Ayo Lawal

The time is about 11:15 am. I finally arrive at the house Kuami Eugene is staying for a short 5-day visit to Nigeria. Oblivious of my presence, he struts down the stairs shirtless, rocking just the bottoms of a purple 2-piece lounge set. He notices an unfamiliar face among his small crew of 4 people. Hew mutters something in a Ghanaian language that probably translates to "Who is this guy?" – Not after saying hello first.

"First of all, sorry for being late." – I mention as he settles into the spot next to me on the couch. "The traffic choke", I quickly add as I segue into my first question; "What's the traffic like in Ghana?" "I mean, there's traffic everywhere in the world", he responds. "Anywhere that has cars, there's traffic – it's just normal. But Lagos, it's crazy here." As he says this, I remember encountering aggravating traffic the few times I've been to Accra and trust me to bring that up. "It's definitely not as much as Lagos", he countered with a huge grin on his face.

Kuami Eugene is arguably one of the biggest hitmakers out of Ghana. At 25, he's delivered a steady stream of songs that have consistently shaken the charts since his career began in 2017. Over time, his hit-making prowess has only grown stronger and stronger with each new release. Of course, it wasn't always like this. If you listen to any of Kuami's songs, you can rarely miss his signature sound with the tagline "rock star" – Something he's now colloquially called on the streets of Ghana. "It's not the rockstar that comes with a guitar, tattoos, and ripped jeans. My kind of rockstar is about my story. The rocks on one side, because I come from the rocks, I come from hardship. Coming from the rocks, I became a star. That's what made me the rock star that people talk about." Growing from being in a talent competition to becoming one of the top-rated artists in your country is no easy feat – A self-made rockstar.

Born to Alex and Juliana Marfo in Akim Oda, Ghana, his interest in music started at a young age. This led him to sing in the church, where he also learnt to play the drums, keyboard and guitar. "Did you always know it was music?" I ask. "I wasn't that child that wanted to be a doctor or a lawyer – no. Mine was always music, but I became sure after I turned 15." "15? Did you sing a lot as a kid?" With so much enthusiasm, he responds, "Yeah, I was a church boy. I was playing instruments in the church, I was introduced to music by the church, and it's been part and parcel of me – I'm still a church boy." "It's been music all my life", he adds as he reiterates his point.

This hunger for music, plus his skills that have been sharpened playing in church, motivated him to contest in season 5 of the Ghanaian reality competition show – MTN Hitmaker. He finished the competition in third place. So many people enter talent shows and still don't get to

live the dream – even when they win. "Do you know where the drive and motivation to take the Kuami Eugene brand to the next level came from?" He leans back into the chair before answering, "To be very honest, it was after I didn't come out as the winner of the competition." The whole room is filled with laughter at this point; he then continues, "Obviously, I had some moments where it felt like everything didn't go well and was thinking it is going to be an extremely long journey. I knew I had to pick myself up, clean myself up – he looks at himself from top to bottom as he says this – and get back in the game. I have to work extra hard – harder than the person that won. Not winning honestly gave me the zeal to step ahead. The fact that I didn't win made me strong."

"What are you doing in Lagos? Are you here for anything specifically or just vibes?" "Far from vibes, brother", he says. "I'm here for a lot of PR, but mostly to link with my artist friends from this side."

Kuami Eugene is not an unknown name in the Nigerian music industry. Nigerian artists consistently tap him to deliver on smash singles now and then. A catalogue of hit songs with Nigerian superstars like Davido, Ckay, Falz, and Blaqbonez back this claim. "You have several smash hits with Nigerian artists.

Why are you so able to integrate your sounds into the typical Nigerian afro-beats genre?" "When you really think about it, there isn't much difference between Ghana and Nigeria. The culture is almost the same, there are slight differences, but it's almost the same. The people, our complexion, our sound, our vibe, our kind of music, it's more like the same. We're like brothers, and our similarities make it very easy for us to blend our sounds."

"Obviously, blowing up and making friends with the people up there in the industry helps a lot. I met Phyno in the club yesterday, and we were vibing – Now we're actually meeting up to go record. It's just like that; you have to work to get this attention, and once you do, you can't waste that opportunity." "What do you think of Lagos nightlife? It was popping, yeah?" "You guys are wild!" he sharply responds. "You do a lot of things we don't do there; I was introduced to new things we don't see in Accra." Lagos is known for its nightlife. It's not hard to find people



My kind of rockstar is about my story. The rocks on one side, because I come from the rocks, I come from hardship. Coming from the rocks, I became a star. That's what made me the rock star that people talk about.



STYLE
DESIGN &

STYLE
DESIGN &



Art By Dennis Ojokha



Art By Nkechi Enufido



Art By Tolu Oshiki

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO BUYING ART

By Charles Didee Eta

This article is meant for anyone who is just coming to grips with purchasing Art, whether it is a hobby or a financial investment. The first thing you need to know is that it is subjective, which explains why it comes in various forms of expression. When done correctly, Art collection can also be very lucrative. Still, reading? Then this article definitely is for you. Follow these few tips, and you are on your way to purchasing Art like a pro.

1

Identifying Your Taste & Budget

This is an important place to start from as it's imperative towards moving forward with a purchase. If you don't feel like you know your preferred taste in artworks, I suggest you visit as many galleries as possible and connect with every piece that comes your way. Carefully select the ones most resonating with the purpose to buy and, most importantly, your budget; the rest is considered history.

Get accustomed to Artists

If Art is really an interest, then there is a need to research artists who can serve as a source of inspiration. In that case, building a friendly or business relationship is key, mainly because you're probably a novice and would need as much knowledge as possible. It makes it easier to know the tricks of the trade, but that's not all; it will also help you hear of insider events and openings that will save you lots of quality time and effort.

Attend Art Shows & Document Your Buys

To progress as an art collector, you'll need to be part of the art community by physically being active at the exhibitions, auctions and the like. You will build a following of actual artists, art enthusiasts, and potential clients. Plus, it's imperative to document these moments whether you buy or not. You'll see that eventually; they will serve as breadcrumbs for actual business transactions or at least something beneficial.

Protect Your Investment

We all know that there is a lot of money at stake when it comes to artworks, and because of this, we also know that it's important to take care of these masterpieces so there are no losses in the long run. Depending on where they are kept, measures should be taken to avoid damage. Such safety precautions like getting insurance and placement inside a transparent case or in an art vault would not be a bad choice. Even if it's inside your home, never underestimate the fact that anything could happen.



FOLU STORMS AT-ART-X-LAGOS-2021



FACE SERUMS
YOU SHOULD
ADD ONE OF
THESE TO YOUR
SKIN CARE
ROUTINE

From dry, oily to combination skin, boost your skincare regime with our pick of the best facial serums.

By Funke Babs-Kufeji



Lacome Advance Génifique

If there is one face serum that is best for every skin type and gives a 100% result, it must be the Lancôme Advanced Génifique serum. This hydrating serum adds radiance, luminosity and glow to the skin in as short as seven days. It is richly packed with antioxidants like vitamin C to fade hyperpigmentation and boost collagen production and hyaluronic acid to boost hydration. It makes the skin stronger, healthier and more resilient, thereby working against premature ageing.



The Ordinary Buffet

This cheap and cheerful serum is a top seller from the Ordinary brand and sells out faster than you can say ordinary! It is a multipurpose formula serum specifically formulated to address wrinkles, dryness, and loss of firmness. The all-star serum is oil-free and has a cult following of skincare enthusiasts.



Estee Lauder Advanced Night Repair

This is another skincare serum that is a hit amongst skincare enthusiasts. It's formulated with the patented Chronolux Power Signal Technology, which helps to smooth the appearance of any emerging fine lines or wrinkles. Alongside its age-defying properties, it helps boost a radiant complexion too and aids in retaining moisture.



La Mer Revitalizing Hydrating Serum

What's not to love about this serum. It is a lightweight formula elevated by a potent alga blend that provides the skin with deep nourishment, helping to target dryness, fine lines and wrinkles, dull skin, and uneven texture. If you have money to splurge on skincare, then the La Mer brand is it. It's worth every kobo spent, and you will use it until its last drop.



Biologique Recherche Serum Iso Placenta

Though a little pricey, this serum gets you desired results. It is made of three active ingredients which stimulate the skin's natural healing process. The core of its formula is Biometric Placenta which mimics the composition of the placenta to provide the skin with all the growth factors it needs to rebuild itself, and Carob and Scotch Thistle extract to boost regeneration action to help rebuild various skin layers.



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