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M a g a z i n e

*Lagos Real Estate Fest 2026:
Shaping the Future of Urban
Development*

Building Trust Through Data:
Why Nigeria Needs a National
Property Intelligence Platform

THE INVISIBLE LAYER:
Why Data, Transparency
And Monitoring Will Decide
The Future Of Housing

A portrait of Kennedy Okonkwo, a Black man with short hair, wearing a blue plaid blazer over a white shirt. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a warm, brownish-gold color.

KENNEDY OKONKWO:

Redefining Luxury, Legacy, and
Leadership in African Real Estate

ARCHITECTURE | REAL ESTATE | LIFESTYLE

Vol. 03 No. 15

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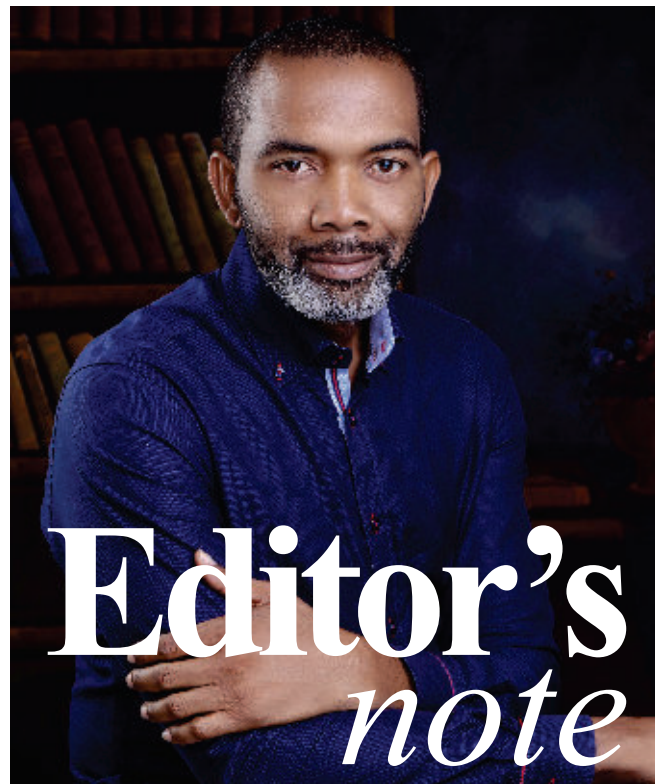
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BUILDING FOR OUR CLIMATE, OUR CONTEXT, OUR IDENTITY

The future of African cities will not be shaped by how closely we imitate other parts of the world. It will be shaped by how confidently we respond to our own realities.

Across Nigeria and much of Africa, we continue to import ideas, materials, and design approaches developed for different climates, cultures, and lifestyles. Glass towers designed for colder regions rise beneath the tropical sun. Housing estates replicate foreign models with little regard for local living patterns. In our pursuit of modernity, we sometimes overlook the wisdom embedded in our own environments.

Yet the most enduring architecture has always emerged from a deep understanding of place. Buildings should do more than shelter us. They should respond to the climate, respect the landscape, reflect the culture, and serve the people who use them. They should harness natural light and ventilation, provide shade where it is needed, embrace local materials where appropriate, and create spaces that feel familiar, functional, and distinctly ours.

But this conversation goes beyond architecture.

It is about identity. It is about understanding that the built environment reflects who we are, what we value, and how we imagine our future. The homes we build, the cities we plan, and the communities we create will ultimately tell the story of our generation.

Africa does not need borrowed solutions for every challenge. We possess the creativity, talent, culture, and knowledge required to design places that are globally relevant while remaining deeply rooted in local realities. We have done it with Afrobeats; we can do it with our architecture and built environment.

As you read this edition, we invite you to imagine what becomes possible when design begins not with imitation, but with understanding. When buildings respond to climate rather than fight it. When development respects context rather than ignores it. And when architecture becomes an authentic expression of identity.

Because the places we build today will shape the lives we live tomorrow.

Imagine What We Can Build.

Peter Aleogena

Editor-in-Chief, Habitat Magazine

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KENNEDY OKONKWO

*Redefining Luxury, Legacy,
and Leadership in African
Real Estate*

In the vibrant heartbeat of Lagos, where skyline ambitions stretch ever higher and luxury becomes an expression of culture, one name continues to echo with vision, power, and purpose—Dr. Kennedy Okonkwo.

More than just a real estate mogul, Dr. Okonkwo is a movement. As the founder and CEO of Nedcomoaks Limited and the convener of Invest in Africa Summit and Expo, he has built more than properties, he has built dreams, redefined what African luxury means, and created access to aspirational living for a new generation of homeowners. His developments stand as architectural testaments to excellence and vision.

But what truly sets Kennedy Okonkwo apart isn't just his success, it's his story. Raised in the densely populated streets of Lagos after the loss of his father at a young age, Kennedy's journey from adversity to affluence is nothing short of remarkable. His story is not a rags-to-riches cliché. It's a study in resilience, discipline, and the refusal to accept limitations.

Every brick he lays, every community he creates, bears the imprint of a man who intimately understands the weight of home, the value of dignity, and the transformative power of opportunity.

Today, Nedcomoaks is synonymous with premium, gated residential estates like Victoria Crest and Dream City,



Dr. Kennedy Okonkwo embodies that rare breed of leadership that sees real estate not just as an asset class, but as a canvas for nation-building and identity reclamation.

As we look to the future of urban Africa, smart cities, sustainable living, and inclusive luxury, it is leaders like Dr. Kennedy who will set the tone, pace, and direction.

Here's to the architect of possibilities.
Here's to legacy.
Here's to Kennedy Okonkwo.

developments that combine elegance with affordability, tech with tradition, and comfort with class. Yet behind the marble floors and manicured lawns lies something more enduring, impact.

Dr. Okonkwo is also a fierce advocate for youth empowerment, gender equality, and pan-African excellence.

Through the Kennedy Okonkwo Programme for Tech Entrepreneurs and his unwavering support for female leaders and startups, he has shown that true legacy is not in what you accumulate, but in what you activate in others.

At Habitat Magazine, we recognize visionaries who don't just build homes but shape futures.





Header: QNWU Design by Marizu QNWU, Our Lady of Victoria Monastery by Localworks, Komba by Thomas Bef Studio, ANCESTRAL FUTURES by Nyny Ryke, RIFT Coffee Table by Vitalli and WAYST Pendant 01 by Alkaline.

INAUGURAL EDITION OF THE AIDA AWARDS

A Global Stage Revealing Exceptional Talents From Africa And Beyond.

COTONOU, BENIN – May 7, 2026 – The [Africa International Design Awards \(AIDA Awards\)](#) is proud to announce the winners of its inaugural 2026 edition, selected by a powerhouse jury of 41 distinguished members representing 18 nationalities — an extraordinary gathering of leading designers, architects, cultural

thinkers, creatives, and educators from across Africa and the diaspora. The response to the first-ever AIDA Awards has been nothing short of remarkable. The program received over **300 submissions from 40 countries**, including **24 nations across the African continent** — from Tanzania to Morocco, and from Zambia to Benin — affirming the depth, diversity, and global resonance of African-centred design today.

"When launching the first edition of the AIDA Awards, we hoped to reveal the extraordinary richness of design rooted in African experience — and what we received surpassed every expectation," says **Astrid Hébert**, Founder of the AIDA Awards.

Submissions were reviewed across four main award categories: **Spatial Design, Product Design, Fashion Design, and Communication Design**. The [jury board](#) assessed each entry not only on aesthetic and technical merit, but on cultural resonance, sustainability, social impact, and innovation — values that sit at the very core of AIDA Awards's mission.

Led by **Bibi Seck** (Founder, Birsell + Seck) as Head of Jury, the panel included voices such as **Coline-Lee Toumson** (Cultural & Artistic Affairs Advisor, Republic of Benin), **Lani Adeoye** (Founder & Designer, Studio Lani), **Selly Raby Kane** (Founder & Artistic Lead, SRK), **Jomo Tariku** (Designer, Jomo Furniture, LLC), **Titi Ogufere** (CEO, Africa Design Network), and **Roberta Annan** (Founder, African Fashion Foundation), **Saki Mafundikwaamong** (Founder & Director of Zimbabwe Institute of Digital Arts (ziva)), **Issa Diabaté** (Managing Director, Koffi & Diabaté Group) - **Juliet Kavishe** (Executive Board Member, Pan Afrikan Design Institute (PADI) many others.

In the **Spatial Design** category, **Bidi Bidi Performing Arts Centre** by Xavier De Kestelier, Felix Holland, Joshua Mutabaazi, Edson Agume, Wilson Sendikwanawa, and Allan Semakula, of **Hassell Studio and Localworks** was awarded "**Architectural Design of the Year**", recognized for its community-built performing arts centre serving over 270,000 South Sudanese

refugees in Yumbe District, Uganda — a landmark in low-carbon humanitarian architecture. **Pearl Jam** by **Nicole Moyo** received the "**Architectural Designer of the Year**", for a public art installation in the Miami Design District that translates Ndebele beading traditions into immersive sculptural form.

The "**Emerging Architect of the Year**" was awarded to **François Abatan** (with Sanny Axelle and Carol Gnimadi) of **Africa Design School** for **OGOUN – Goddess of Iron and Courage**, a contemporary reinterpretation of a Vodoun temple in Benin that bridges tradition and modern spatial expression.

In **Product Design**, **Stitched**, a story of our home by **Tracy Lynch and Cebo Mvubu** of **Clout/SA**, in collaboration with the **Keiskamma Art Project**, earned "**Product Design of the Year**" — a wallpaper, fabric and homeware collection translating the trust's signature hand-stitched embroidery into the interior design market, rooted in the coastal village of Hamburg, South Africa.

Terry Aidoo received "**Product Designer of the Year**" for **Kabila Collection**, a contemporary furniture series inspired by the spatial language of African home courtyards, produced in Italy using responsibly sourced Nigerian sapele wood.

The "**Emerging Product Designer of the Year**" went to **Didier Stéphane Kingnide Gnonlonfoun** of **Beijing Institute of Technology** for **Sport Can**, an innovative recycling device that converts plastic waste into footballs — addressing both environmental and sports access challenges across African communities.

In **Fashion Design** discipline, **The Rowe** by **Charles Johnson** of **World Shoe, Inc.** was named "**Fashion Design of the Year**", a sustainably manufactured footwear innovation produced at a pioneering factory in Akosombo, Ghana, combining high-fashion sensibility with social enterprise and biodegradable EVA foam technology. **Ghizlaine Elmanjra** received "**Fashion Designer of the Year**" for **The Baazz Sneaker**, a luxury fashion brand rooted in radical transparency and African craft

heritage, born from a 1,200m² creative ecosystem in the old Medina of Casablanca.

In **Communication Design, UE au Sénégal - Baie de Hann** by **David Vallier, Olivier Marchetti, and Tampidaro** of **Ag Partners Publicis Africa Group** — commissioned by the European Union in Senegal — was awarded "**Communication Design of the Year**", for a bold awareness campaign addressing the ecological crisis of Hann Bay in Dakar through the work of local urban painter Tampidaro. **Tshepo Masilo** earned "**Communication Designer of the Year**" for the **BIC I Love Africa Pocket Lighter Series**, transforming everyday product packaging into a cultural storytelling platform across Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Cameroon.

The "**Emerging Communication Designer of the Year**" was awarded to **Annabelle Armstrong** of **Greenside Design Center** for **Becoming a Beacon**, an editorial design project mapping Nelson Mandela's life through the structural narrative of a lighthouse.

Bibi Seck, Head of the Jury: *When I was invited to serve as Jury President for the first edition of the African International Design Awards, I realized I had quietly crossed a threshold—stepping, perhaps, into the circle of elders. My grandson calls me Papi Bibi, while many young designers across the continent now call me BibiBaba. It is both tender and telling! As I write these lines, I think of my brothers in creation—Laduma, Christian Benimana, Issa Diabaté, Naeem Bijivi—and so many*

others who are shaping what can only be called a creative revolution across Africa. Every participant in this competition left a mark. What emerges is clear: our community of designers is not only growing, it is maturing—becoming sharper, more inventive, more rooted. Again and again, we witness intelligent responses to our realities, born from within. We see architects committed to imagining the spaces where we will live and work—spaces that are healthy, contextual, and grounded in materials and knowledge inherited from our ancestors. And through AIDA, we glimpse the next generation—those we will not only celebrate, but actively seek, support, and walk alongside.

The AIDA Awards are made possible through a growing ecosystem of exceptional jury members, sponsors, partners, and supporters who share a commitment to elevating African design on the global stage. At the heart of the initiative stands the [Africa Design School](#), alongside with two official sponsors [L'École de Design Nantes Atlantique](#) and the [African Fashion Foundation \(AFF\)](#).

The Awards ceremony and conferences will take place in Cotonou, Benin at the end of July 2026.

Program partners include African Female Architects, Africa Fashion Tour, Africa Sourcing and Fashion Week (ASFW), d5mag, Design Week South Africa, Design Week Lagos, Pan Afrikan Design Institute (PADI), Scape Magazine, v2com Newswire, DEFSA, Decorex Africa, The Fashion Law Institute, and PAID Summit.

WINNERS IN PRODUCT DESIGN



Stitched, a story of our home
PRODUCT DESIGN OF THE YEAR 2026

Company: Clout/SA
Lead Designer: Tracy Lynch, Design curator and Creative director Clout/SA. Project director Cebo Mvubu
Contributors: Anelisa Nyongo, Nozibele Nxadi, members of Kelskamma Art Project, Cara Savan wallpaper, Fabric Bank, AAFRICA STORE
Photo Credit: Justin Patrick
Country: Germany, South Africa



Kabila Collection
PRODUCT DESIGNER OF THE YEAR

Lead Designer: Terry Aidoo
Contributors: Festival Divercity
Photo Credit: Matteo Ercole
Country: Nigeria, Italy



Sport Can
EMERGING DESIGNER OF THE YEAR

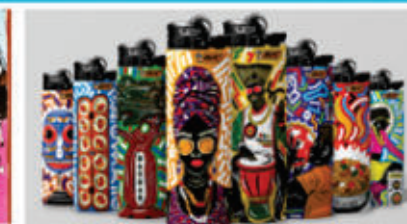
University Name: Beijing Institute of Technology
Lead Designer: Didier Stéphane Kingnide Gnonlonfoun
Photo Credit: Stéphane Gnonlonfoun
Country: China

WINNERS IN COMMUNICATION DESIGN



UE au Sénégal - Baie de Hann
COMMUNICATION DESIGN OF THE YEAR

Company: Ag Partners Publicis Africa Group
Lead Designers: David Vallier, Olivier Marchetti
Other Designers: Annejet Hettinger, Tampidaro
Country: Senegal



BIC I Love Africa Pocket Lighter Series
COMMUNICATION DESIGNER OF THE YEAR

Lead Designer: Tshepo Masilo
Other Contributors: BIC Nigeria Marketing Team
Photo Credit: Tshepo Masilo
Country: South Africa



Becoming a Beacon
EMERGING COMMUNICATION DESIGNER OF THE YEAR

School Name: Greenside Design Center
Lead Designer: Annabelle Armstrong
Professor Names: Robin Turner, Carla Saunders, Caitlin Paige, Nicola Lourens
Country: South Africa

WINNERS IN SPATIAL DESIGN



Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN OF THE YEAR

Company: Localworks
Lead Designer: Felix Holland, Joshua Mutabaazi, Edson Agume, Wilson Sendikwarawa, Allan Semakula,
Design Team: Studio FH Architects, Aquila Gallery, Equatorsun, Dudley Kasibante & Partners, The Landscape Studio.
Photo Credit: Mutua Matheka
Country: Uganda



PEARL JAM
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNER OF THE YEAR

Lead Designer: Nicole Moyo
Country: USA, South Africa



OGOUN - Goddess of Iron and Courage
EMERGING ARCHITECT OF THE YEAR

School: Africa Design School
Lead Designer: Francois Abaton
Other Designer(s): Sanmy Axelle, Carol Gnimadi
Country: Benin

WINNERS IN FASHION DESIGN



The Rowe
FASHION DESIGN OF THE YEAR 2026

Company: World Shoe, Inc.
Lead Designer: Charles Johnson
Other Designer(s): Driven By Charles LLC
Photo Credit: Asia Margo
Country: USA, Ghana



The Baazz Sneaker
FASHION DESIGNER OF THE YEAR 2026

Lead Designer: Ghizlaine Eimanjra
Country: Morocco

THE ARCHITECTURE OF FEELING

Design, at its highest level, goes beyond aesthetics. It becomes a framework for how we experience life. In this space, the intention was not simply to create something beautiful, but to shape an atmosphere that feels grounded, composed, and deeply human.

Every element was guided by rhythm and restraint. The interplay of curved forms, layered lighting, and tactile materials creates a quiet dialogue between structure and softness. Marble anchors the space, warm wood introduces depth, and sculptural accents bring movement, each decision contributing to a sense of balance that is felt before it is seen.

Rather than overwhelm, the space holds. It invites stillness without emptiness, presence without pressure. It allows the user to arrive, to breathe, to exist fully within it.

This is where design transcends function, becoming an emotional experience, carefully composed and intentionally lived.

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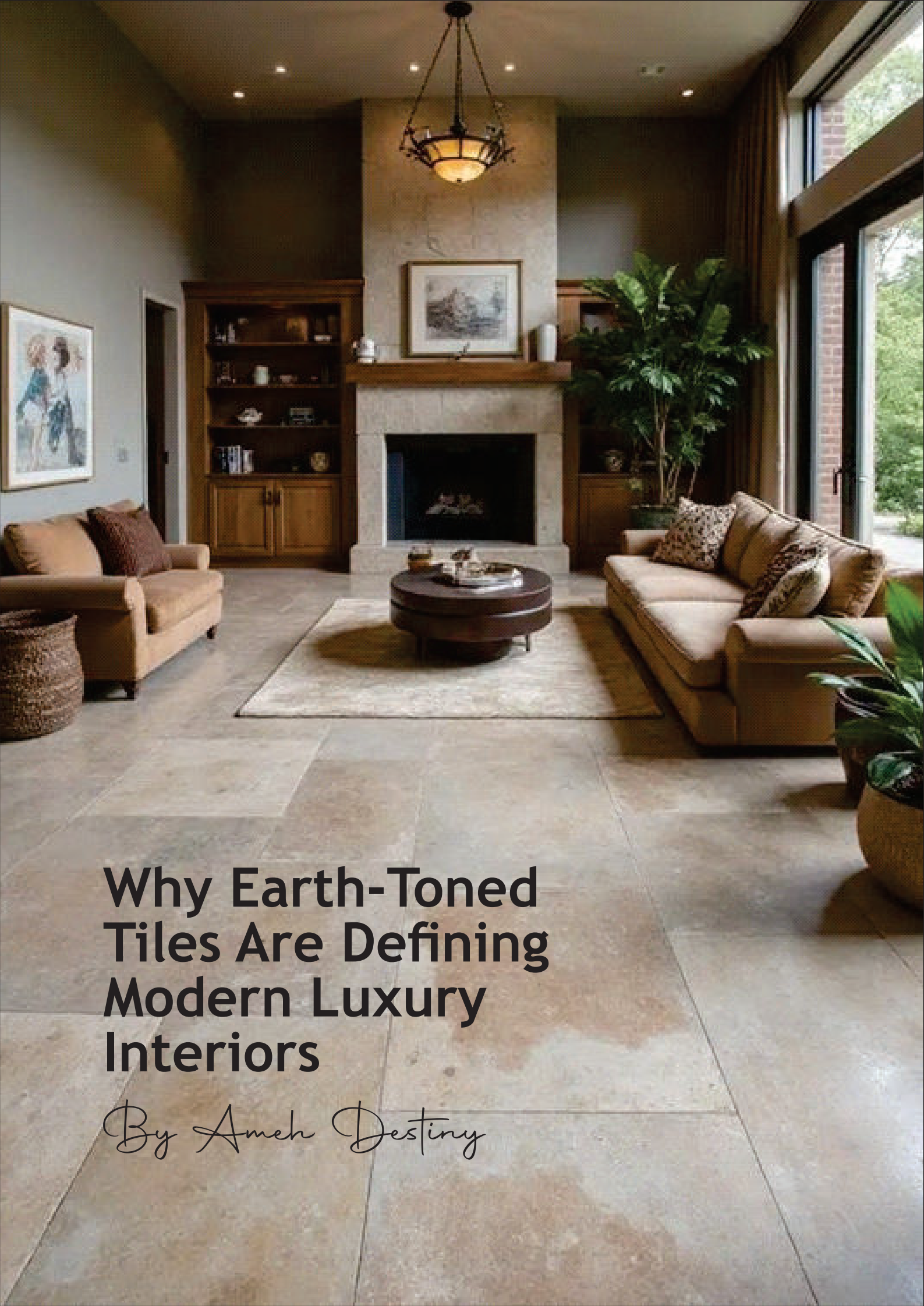
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Why Earth-Toned Tiles Are Defining Modern Luxury Interiors

By Ameh Destiny

For a long time, luxury interiors were designed to impress immediately.

Glossy marble floors, reflective surfaces, bright white finishes and dramatic textures became visual symbols of sophistication. The modern luxury home often prioritized grandeur — spaces that announced wealth the moment one stepped inside.

But increasingly, interior design is moving in a quieter direction.

Today, many of the world's most thoughtfully designed homes are embracing softness instead of spectacle. Warm neutrals are replacing overly polished finishes. Natural textures are becoming more desirable than excessive ornamentation. And among the most noticeable shifts is the growing popularity of earth-toned tiles.

From contemporary apartments in Lagos and Abuja to boutique hotels, cafés and modern African homes, earthy palettes are beginning to dominate interiors. Shades inspired by clay, sand, stone, terracotta and warm brown tones are replacing colder greys and harsh white surfaces.

It is not simply a color trend. It reflects a deeper change in how people now want spaces to feel.

The Emotional Shift in Modern Interiors

Modern living has become visually exhausting. Every day is filled with screens, digital stimulation, noise and movement. As a

result, homes are increasingly being designed not just as functional environments, but as spaces of emotional relief. This is one reason earth-toned interiors are becoming more significant.

Earth-inspired tones naturally create feelings of calm and warmth. They soften spaces visually and make interiors feel grounded rather than overly performative. Unlike glossy surfaces that demand attention, earthy finishes tend to create a quieter atmosphere. They allow spaces to feel lived-in, breathable and emotionally comfortable.

Interior designers around the world are increasingly recognizing that people no longer want homes that only look expensive.

They want homes that feel restorative.

And materials now play a central role in creating that emotional experience.

Why Earth Tones Feel Timeless

One reason earth-toned tiles are gaining popularity is because they feel less trend-dependent than many modern finishes.

Bright whites and cool greys often follow design cycles that eventually feel dated.

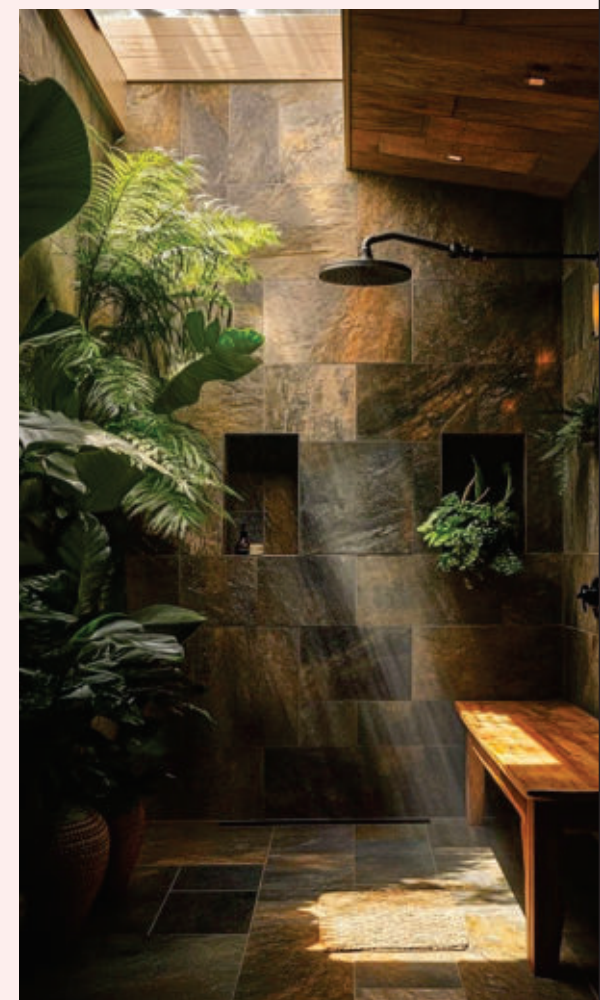
Earth-inspired palettes, however, are closely connected to nature — and natural aesthetics tend to age more gracefully.

Terracotta, warm beige, muted stone, clay textures and sand-colored surfaces feel familiar because they already exist in the natural

world. This gives interiors a sense of permanence.

In luxury design today, timelessness is becoming more valuable than excess. Many homeowners are increasingly choosing interiors they can emotionally live with for years rather than spaces designed purely for visual impact.

Earth-toned tiles support this shift because they feel calm, adaptable and enduring.



The Rise of Quiet Luxury

The growing popularity of earthy interiors also reflects the rise of “quiet luxury.” Quiet luxury moves away from loud visual wealth and instead focuses on:



restraint
 texture
 atmosphere
 craftsmanship
 intentional simplicity
 In this design language, luxury is no longer about proving status through excessive decoration. Instead, it is expressed through materials that feel refined, natural and emotionally balanced.
 Earth-toned tiles fit perfectly within this movement. Rather than competing for attention, they create visual harmony.
 This is especially visible in modern hospitality spaces and luxury apartments where designers increasingly prioritize ambience over extravagance.
 Warm stone-like flooring, matte textures and muted palettes often create interiors that feel more sophisticated than highly polished surfaces. The luxury now lies in how a space feels rather than how

loudly it announces itself.

The African Design Connection

Interestingly, the shift toward earthy interiors also aligns naturally with African environments and aesthetics. Across many African landscapes, earthy palettes already exist:
 clay soils
 stone textures
 sandy tones
 warm sunlight
 natural wood
 muted earth colors
 As contemporary African architecture evolves, many designers are finding ways to reconnect modern interiors with these natural influences. This does not mean replicating traditional architecture directly. Instead, it means creating contemporary spaces that still feel regionally grounded rather than visually disconnected from their environment.
 Earth-toned tiles work particularly well in African homes because they complement:
 natural lighting
 warm climates
 indoor-outdoor living
 textured materials
 organic finishes
 They also create a softer relationship between architecture and environment. Rather than feeling cold or overly imported, these interiors feel more connected to place.

The Influence of Wellness Design

Wellness has become one of the most influential forces

shaping contemporary interiors globally
 People are paying closer attention to:
 stress
 rest
 emotional wellbeing
 sensory comfort
 mental fatigue
 As a result, design is becoming increasingly psychological.
 Colors and materials are now selected not only for appearance, but for how they influence mood and experience.
 Earth tones are especially powerful in this regard because they tend to create:
 warmth
 visual softness
 grounding
 emotional stability
 Unlike harsh white interiors that can sometimes feel sterile or overstimulating, earthy palettes often feel more emotionally comforting. This is one reason wellness-inspired spaces such as:
 spas



boutique resorts
 meditation rooms
 luxury retreats
 frequently rely on natural textures and muted tones. Residential interiors are now borrowing from these same ideas.
 Homes are gradually becoming spaces designed for decompression rather than performance.

Social Media and the New Aesthetic Culture

Social media platforms such as Pinterest and Instagram have also played a major role in the rise of earth-toned interiors.
 Over the past few years, online design culture has shifted noticeably toward:
 warm minimalism
 natural textures
 organic palettes
 Mediterranean-inspired interiors
 earthy modernism
 Highly curated spaces featuring soft beige walls, textured tiles, wooden furniture and muted lighting now dominate many luxury interior feeds.
 Part of the appeal is emotional. These spaces appear calmer and more breathable than heavily decorated interiors. They communicate ease rather than excess.
 As visual culture increasingly shapes design preferences, homeowners and developers are adapting accordingly. Properties that photograph well — especially in warm natural tones — now hold stronger visual appeal in both marketing and lifestyle branding.

Texture Over Shine

Another significant shift in contemporary interiors is the movement away from excessive gloss. For years, high-shine marble and reflective surfaces symbolized luxury. Today, however, many designers are prioritizing texture instead. Matte finishes, handcrafted surfaces and textured materials create more depth and subtlety within interiors. Earth-toned tiles contribute strongly to this aesthetic because they often emphasize material quality over visual noise. This creates interiors that feel:
 softer
 more tactile
 more human
 Texture allows minimalist spaces to feel emotionally rich without becoming visually overwhelming. And increasingly, this balance is defining modern luxury design.

The Hospitality Influence

Modern residential interiors are also being influenced heavily by hospitality design. Luxury hotels and boutique resorts have long understood the emotional impact of earthy materials. Warm stone floors, textured walls and muted palettes are commonly used to create calm, immersive environments. As hospitality aesthetics continue influencing residential architecture, many homeowners now seek interiors that recreate that same feeling of retreat. Earth-toned tiles naturally contribute to this atmosphere because

they evoke relaxation and understated elegance. The home is no longer viewed only as a place of residence. It is increasingly becoming a sanctuary.

Beyond Trend Cycles

Although earth-toned interiors are currently trending, their popularity points to something deeper than aesthetics alone. People are gradually moving away from design choices rooted purely in status display and toward spaces that support emotional wellbeing and everyday comfort. This shift is changing how luxury itself is understood. Luxury today is becoming:
 quieter
 warmer
 more intentional
 more sensory
 And materials sit at the center of that transformation. Earth-toned tiles are not simply popular because they look beautiful. They are popular because they create interiors that feel emotionally easier to live in.

Conclusion: A Return to Warmth

As contemporary design continues to evolve, interiors are becoming less focused on spectacle and more focused on atmosphere. The growing popularity of earth-toned tiles reflects this broader cultural movement toward spaces that feel calm, grounded and restorative. In many ways, modern luxury is no longer trying to overpower the senses. It is trying to soften them. And increasingly, earthy materials are becoming part of that language.

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A Guide To Real Estate & The Life It Builds

Think about your grandmother's home. Not the square footage, the rent, not the community dues — the home.

The smell of Sunday cooking, the creaking third step on the staircase, the backyard where every visit felt like it lasted forever. That home wasn't just shelter. It was the backdrop of a life well-lived. And here is something your grandmother likely understood intuitively, even if she never said it in so many words: owning that home changed everything.

Real estate has always been more than an asset. It is the physical foundation upon which lifestyle is built. Where you live shapes who your children grow up to be, how

you spend your evenings, what kind of retirement you can afford, and whether you leave anything behind for the people you love. The connection between property ownership and life quality is not abstract, it is deeply, daily, personal.

Yet somehow, in a world of instant everything, the long game of real estate investing feels almost unfashionable. Stocks move in seconds. Crypto surges overnight. Why tie up your money in bricks and mortar when digital returns seem so much more exciting? The answer, if you are willing to look just a little further down the road, is written all over the Lives of people who invested early a little decade ago and are quietly, comfortably reaping every rewards today.

Why Right Now Is The Right Time

Every generation has a reason to wait. Prices are too high, Interest rates are too uncertain, market might dip. These are real concerns but



they are also the exact same concerns people expressed in 2005, in 2012, in 2018. The people who acted despite those concerns are not worried about them anymore. The people who waited are still waiting.

The fundamental truth about real estate is that land does not reproduce. The city that is growing today, the neighborhood that feels slightly too expensive right now, will feel like a bargain in the next fifteen years.

Population growth, urbanization, inflation, and the basic human need for housing create a structural demand that does not go away. Every year you delay, you are not just missing out on potential appreciation, you are paying rent that builds someone else's wealth instead of your own.

There is also a deeper cost to waiting: the cost of the life you are not yet living. The security of knowing you own your home. The freedom to renovate without asking permission. The ability to let your children grow roots in a single place. The coincidence that your monthly payment is building something permanent, not disappearing into a landlord's pocket. These are quality-of-life

The Lifestyle Dividend — What Property Actually Pays You

Investors speak constantly about financial returns, but real estate pays what you might call a lifestyle dividend — a stream of daily, non-monetary benefits that compound just as powerfully as any yield. Stability is the first dividend. There is a proven psychological difference between renters and owners that goes far beyond money.

Homeowners report higher life satisfaction, stronger community ties, and better mental health outcomes. Knowing that your home cannot be sold out from under you that your rent cannot spike without warning, that you can paint the walls any color you choose, these freedoms are priceless in the truest sense of the word.

Space and intention are the second. When you own, you invest in your environment. You plant the garden. You build the kitchen you actually want. You create a space that reflects who you are and supports the life you are trying to live.



Renters, by necessity, remain temporary guests in someone else's vision. Owners become the authors of their own domestic story. Generational wealth is the third and perhaps the most powerful dividend.

The property you buy today may become the asset that pays for your child's education, your own retirement or your grandchild's first home. Real estate is one of the very few wealth that travel across generations, turning a single wise decision to a legacy that outlast you.

Starting Is Simpler Than You Think

The most common barrier to real estate investment is the belief that you are not ready, that you need more savings, more

certainty, a better salary, a perfect market. In reality, readiness is rarely found; it is built. The first conversation with a mortgage broker, the first property viewed, the first calculation comparing monthly rent to monthly mortgage, these are the steps that transform real estate from an abstract aspiration into a concrete plan.

You do not need to buy a mansion. A modest apartment in a growing area, held for ten to seventeen years, can be transformative. A rental property that covers its own mortgage builds equity while generating income. A home in an up-and-coming neighborhood purchased slightly below your ideal can become significantly above your expectations Within a decade. The important thing is not to find the perfect property, it is to begin.

The people who look back without regret are not those who waited for the perfect conditions. They are the ones who decided that an imperfect start was definitely better than a perfect delay. The Life on the Other Side of the Decision Close your eyes for a moment and picture yourself Fifteen years from now. If you invest in property today, what does that life look like?

Perhaps it is a home fully your own, mortgage paid down considerably, children raised in a space that has known birthdays and holidays and ordinary Tuesday evenings. Perhaps it is a rental property that generate passive income, enough to take that trip, fund that dream, and reduce the hours you have to work. Perhaps it is simply the quiet dignity of financial security- knowing that whatever comes, you have an asset no one can take from you.

Fifteen more years of renting, of market-watching, of waiting. The same rent payments, the same uncertainty, the same conversation with yourself about whether now is the right time. Choice, ultimately, is not really about real estate. It is about the life you want to build. Real estate is simply the most time-tested, tangible, livable way to build it. And the best day to start building as your grandmother's creaking staircase will tell you is always today.

Where To Begin

1. Speak to a mortgage broker before you feel



ready, understanding your numbers changes everything.

2. Research growth corridors in your city, invest where infrastructure is heading, not where it already arrived.
3. Consider starting with a smaller property to get into the market rather than waiting for the ideal one.
4. Link in decades, not months. Real estate rewards patience more than any other asset class.
5. Every penny paid into your own mortgage is a money of equity. Every naira of rent is gone forever.

Six Ways Real Estate Changes Your Life

1. Roots & Stability: A fixed address builds community bonds, school continuity for children, and the deep psychological ease of permanence that renting can never replicate.
2. Compounding Wealth: Property appreciates while your mortgage balance falls a double-engine wealth builder that quietly closes the gap between where you are and where you want to be.
3. Freedom to Flourish: Own your space and you own your choices paint, renovate, garden, and build. Your home becomes an expression of your life, not a landlord's investment strategy.
4. Inflation Protection: As the cost of living rises, so does the value of real property. Owning real estate is one of the

most reliable natural hedges against the erosion of purchasing power.

5. Passive Income Potential: A second property, a rented room, a holiday let — real estate can generate income streams that quietly fund the lifestyle upgrades you have been putting off.
6. Generational Legacy: Property can outlast a single lifetime. Decision you make today could provide security, opportunity, and a head start for children and grandchildren not yet born.





The Invisible Layer:

WHY DATA, TRANSPARENCY AND MONITORING WILL DECIDE THE FUTURE OF HOUSING

By John Oamen, Cutstruct CEO

There is a persistent, romanticized myth in the real estate and construction industries: we believe that buildings are constructed from concrete, steel, glass, and labor. Buildings are constructed out of capital and trust.

Without capital, the steel never leaves the foundry. Without trust, the capital never

leaves the bank. For decades, the global construction industry has managed to build cities relying on a fragile, traditional version of trust: reputations, legacy relationships, firm handshakes, and fancy architectural renderings.

But the ground beneath us is shifting. We are currently navigating a macroeconomic environment defined by tightened liquidity,

soaring material costs, and extremely slim margins.

Within this modern landscape, developers, financiers, and institutional investors recognize a fundamental truth: effective management requires visibility, and financial backing should be contingent upon the ability to monitor progress.

At its core, this is about simplifying how developers operate. When expectations are clear and information is accessible, better decisions follow. If developers know better, they will do better.

We must look beyond the physical structures we build and focus relentlessly on the "Invisible Layer": data, transparency, and real-time monitoring.

Dashboards Over Promises

Trust in construction has always been built through relationships. A handshake. A reputation. A well-designed brochure. A confident projection.

However, today's capital is more disciplined. Institutional investors, private equity firms, and sophisticated developers are no longer persuaded by narrative alone. They want visibility. They want verification. They want control.

They want to see the numbers.

Not at the end of the quarter. Not summarized in static reports. But in real-time, living, breathing data that reflects exactly what is happening on-site, as it happens.

This is the shift from promises to dashboards.

A dashboard does not negotiate. It does not exaggerate. It does not forget. It simply reflects reality. And in doing so, it changes the conversation entirely.

When a financier can log in and track material deliveries, monitor project milestones, and verify fund utilization down to the last unit, trust is no longer abstract. It

becomes measurable.

Visibility Drives Behavior

What happens when every stakeholder in a project knows that their actions are visible?

Everything changes.

In opaque systems, inefficiencies thrive. Delays can be explained away. Costs can quietly inflate. Disputes become inevitable because there is no single source of truth.

But introduce true, system-level transparency, and behavior begins to shift.

Contractors become more disciplined because progress is tracked against clear benchmarks. Developers make faster, better decisions because they are operating with real-time intelligence, not outdated reports. Financiers gain confidence because they can see exactly how capital is being deployed.

Most importantly, accountability becomes the default, not because it is enforced externally, but because it is embedded into the system.

When data is visible, immutable, and shared, it creates alignment. It reduces friction. It removes ambiguity. And in doing so, it unlocks a level of efficiency that traditional systems simply cannot achieve.

Defining the Invisible Layer

So what exactly is this "invisible layer"?

It is not a single tool or platform. It is an ecosystem.

It is the integration of data capture, monitoring systems, financial tracking, supply chain visibility, and reporting infrastructure into a cohesive, real-time framework.

It sits beneath the physical project, quietly collecting, processing, and distributing information that allows every stakeholder to operate with clarity.

Think of it as the operating system for construction. Just as modern businesses cannot function without digital infrastructure, modern housing projects cannot scale without this underlying layer of intelligence. Without it, every project becomes a reinvention of the wheel, dependent on manual processes, fragmented communication, and delayed insights. With it, projects become system-driven. Predictable. Scalable.

From Analog to System-Driven Execution

The traditional construction model is inherently analog. Information is siloed. Communication is reactive. Decisions are often based on incomplete data.

This model may work for small-scale developments. But it breaks down entirely at scale. As cities expand and housing demand accelerates, the margin for error shrinks. Delays become more expensive. Mismanagement becomes more visible. And the cost of opacity becomes untenable. To meet the demands of the future,

the industry must transition from fragmented processes to integrated systems. This means rethinking how projects are managed from the ground up. It means embedding data capture into every stage of the lifecycle, from material supply to execution to delivery. It means ensuring that every transaction, every movement of material, every milestone is recorded and accessible.

And importantly, it means making these systems simple and usable for developers. When the process is clear and the information is easy to understand, execution improves naturally. If developers know better, they will do better.

The Investment Perspective: Risk, Reimagined For investors, the implications are profound.

Construction has historically been viewed as a high-risk asset class, not because of inherent volatility, but because of limited visibility. Once capital is deployed, it often enters a black box.

The invisible layer changes that.

By providing continuous, real-time insight into project performance, it transforms how risk is understood and managed.

Instead of relying on periodic updates, investors can track leading indicators. They can identify issues early. They can intervene before problems escalate.

In essence, they move from passive observers to active participants. Projects that are fully instrumented, where data flows seamlessly and transparency is built into the system, become fundamentally more attractive. Not because they are immune to challenges, but because those challenges are visible, measurable, and manageable.

Scaling Housing Requires More Than Capital

Across many regions, the conversation around housing is dominated by a single question: how do we unlock more capital?

It is an important question. But it is not the only one. Capital alone cannot solve the housing deficit. In fact, without the right systems in place, it can exacerbate inefficiencies.

What the industry truly needs is the ability to deploy capital effectively, at scale, with confidence.

And that requires infrastructure, not just physical infrastructure, but digital infrastructure.

The invisible layer is what enables scale. It ensures that as projects grow in size and complexity, they do not collapse under their own weight. It provides the structure needed to coordinate multiple stakeholders, manage vast supply chains, and maintain consistency across developments.

The Future Will Be Transparent

We are entering an era where opacity is no longer tolerated. The future of construction belongs to developers who are willing to operate with clarity.

But transparency does not happen by default—it requires intention and structure.

As a developer, if you want to be part of this transparent future, you will need to start with a few fundamentals. You will need to standardize how your project data is captured, from materials to milestones to cash flow.

You will need to document your processes clearly so that every stage of execution can be tracked and verified. You will need to adopt systems that provide real-time visibility, not delayed reports.

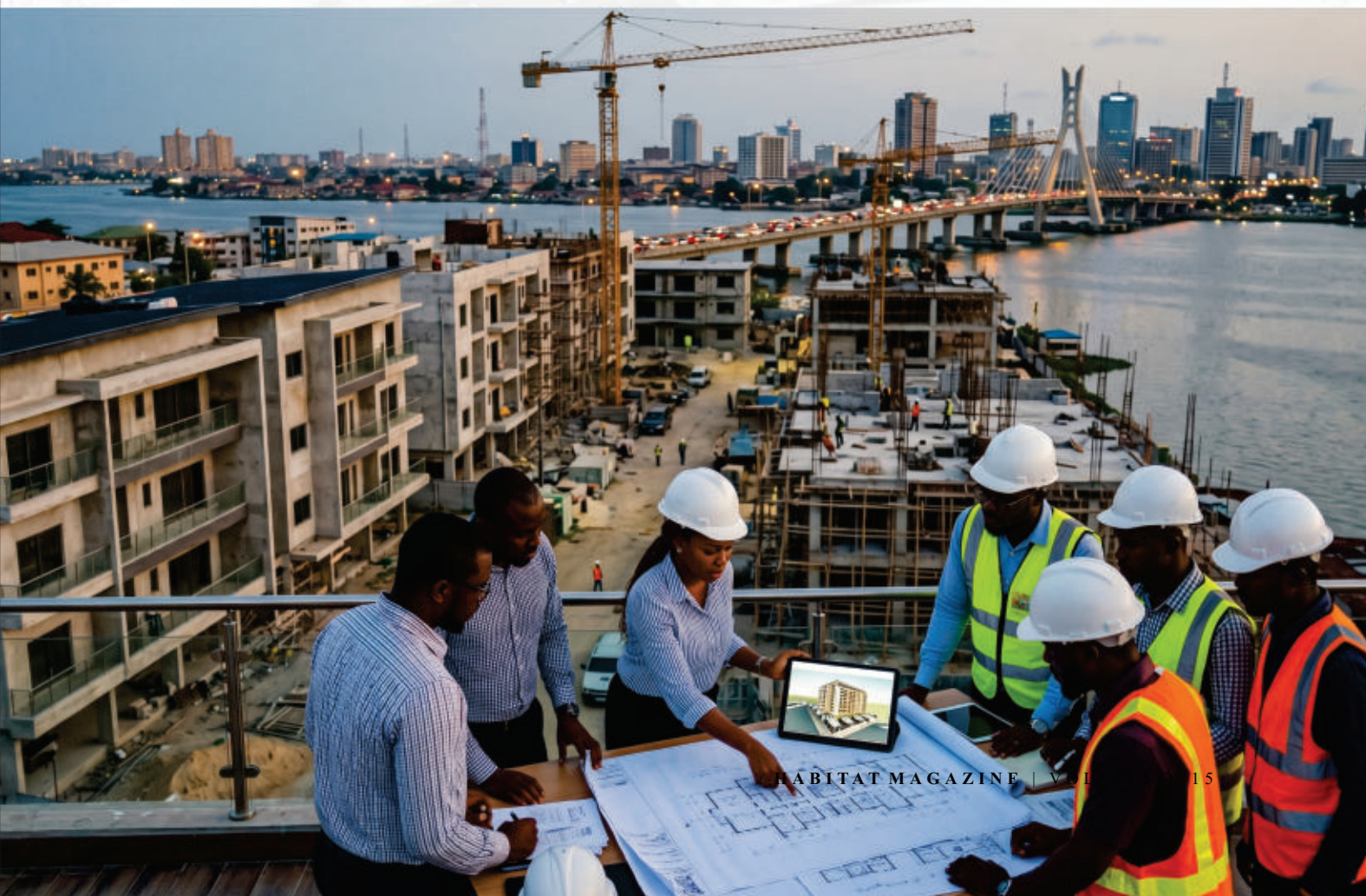
Building What Cannot Be Seen

The irony of modern construction is this: the most important layer of a project is the one you cannot see.

It is not poured into concrete. It is not assembled on-site. It does not appear in architectural renderings.

But it determines everything. It determines whether timelines are met or missed. Whether budgets are controlled or exceeded. Whether investors return or retreat.

As the industry evolves, the winners will be those who understand this shift operationally. They will invest as much in their data infrastructure as they do in their physical assets. They will prioritize transparency as rigorously as they prioritize design. They will treat monitoring not as an afterthought, but as a foundation.



The New Geography of Wealth: Where Nigerians Are Buying Property in 2026



Sangotedo, and parts of Ikorodu are increasingly viewed as long-term appreciation plays rather than speculative land purchases. What makes these locations attractive is not merely affordability. They sit at the intersection of employment growth, logistics infrastructure, and expanding residential demand. The future Lagos investor may be less concerned about owning

property in the city centre and more interested in owning property along the city's next economic spine

Abuja's New Frontiers
Abuja is experiencing a similar evolution.

As premium districts such as Maitama and Asokoro mature, investor interest is moving toward Lugbe, Karsana, Kubwa, Gwagwalada, and other emerging districts surrounding the capital. These areas benefit from growing infrastructure, expanding road networks, and sustained housing demand from civil servants, professionals, and young

families. For investors seeking stable rental income alongside moderate appreciation, Abuja's growth corridors are becoming increasingly difficult to ignore.

The Rise of Secondary Cities
Perhaps the most significant shift in 2026 is the growing relevance of secondary cities.

Ibadan has become one of the country's most compelling property stories. Improved connectivity through the Lagos-Ibadan transport corridor, industrial expansion, and population spillover from Lagos are driving both residential and commercial demand. Awka is benefiting from improved infrastructure and growing institutional presence, while Uyo's reputation for quality infrastructure and planned economic expansion is attracting investors looking beyond traditional markets. Asaba, strategically positioned as a commercial gateway between regions, is increasingly attracting residential and hospitality investments

These cities may not dominate headlines, but they increasingly dominate conversations among forward-thinking investors.

The New Wealth Map
What connects these emerging locations is not geography but economics.

They share common characteristics:

- Expanding infrastructure
- Growing populations
- Increasing commercial activity
- Lower entry prices
- Strong long-term demand fundamentals

The wealth creation opportunities of the next decade may come less from buying into already-established luxury districts and more from identifying locations where development and demand are only beginning to converge.

The Habitat Perspective

Every generation of real estate investors faces the same challenge: distinguishing between today's prestige and tomorrow's opportunity.

Ikoyi was once emerging. Lekki was once speculative. Abuja was once a distant government project.

The investors who built significant wealth in those markets were not the ones who arrived when everyone else did. They were the ones who recognized the signals before the crowd.

In 2026, those signals are becoming increasingly visible across Nigeria's growth corridors and secondary cities.

The new geography of wealth is being drawn right now.

The question is whether investors will see it before it appears on everyone else's map.



For decades, the Nigerian real estate conversation has revolved around a familiar trio: Ikoyi, Lekki, and Abuja. These locations have become symbols of wealth, status, and premium property ownership. But in 2026, a quiet shift is taking place.

The smartest investors are no longer asking, "Where is everyone buying?" They are asking, "Where will everyone be buying next?"

Across Nigeria, a new geography of wealth is emerging. Infrastructure projects, population migration, industrial development, and changing work patterns are creating entirely new investment corridors. The next generation of wealth may not be built in Nigeria's traditional hotspots, but in the cities and growth axes currently flying under the radar. The lesson is simple: by the time a location becomes popular, much of the upside has already been captured.

Following the Infrastructure
Historically, real estate value follows

infrastructure. New roads create accessibility. Rail lines expand commuting possibilities. Ports, industrial zones, and commercial hubs attract businesses and workers. Housing demand inevitably follows.

Industry reports continue to identify infrastructure-linked corridors as some of the strongest-performing segments of Nigeria's property market in 2026. This explains why investor attention is increasingly shifting away from established luxury districts toward emerging growth corridors where development is still unfolding.

The Lagos Expansion Story Continues
While Lagos remains Nigeria's economic powerhouse, the investment narrative has moved beyond Victoria Island and Lekki Phase 1.

The Lekki-Epe corridor continues to attract investors because of major economic drivers including the deep seaport, industrial developments, and expanding transport infrastructure. Areas such as Ibeju-Lekki, Epe,

BUILDING TRUST THROUGH DATA: WHY NIGERIA NEEDS A NATIONAL PROPERTY INTELLIGENCE PLATFORM

In every mature real estate market, one resource quietly powers smarter investments, faster transactions, and greater confidence: reliable data.

Unfortunately, this remains one of the biggest missing pieces in Nigeria's property ecosystem.

Today, buyers often struggle to determine the true value of a property. Investors make decisions based on fragmented information. Developers rely on assumptions about demand and pricing. In many cases, multiple versions of the same story exist, creating uncertainty and exposing stakeholders to unnecessary risks.

The result is a market where misinformation can thrive, fraud becomes easier to perpetrate, and genuine opportunities are often overlooked.

As Nigeria's real estate sector continues to evolve, the need for transparency has never been more urgent.

A Solution Worth Implementing

Imagine a National Property Intelligence Platform—a PropTech solution designed to become the single source of truth for Nigeria's real estate market.

Such a platform could aggregate critical information including:

- Property sale prices
- Rental values and trends
- Land ownership records
- Development approvals and permits
- Infrastructure updates
- Neighbourhood and demographic analytics

By combining artificial intelligence, verified institutional data, and crowdsourced market intelligence, the platform could provide real-time insights that empower everyone from first-time homebuyers to institutional investors.

Rather than relying on hearsay or outdated

market reports, users would have access to accurate information that supports informed decision-making.

Why It Matters

The value of reliable property data extends far beyond convenience.

For investors, it means greater confidence in evaluating opportunities.

For developers, it provides clearer insights into market demand, helping them build the right products in the right locations.

For financial institutions, it improves risk assessment and lending decisions. For government agencies, it offers a more transparent framework for planning, taxation, and urban development.

Most importantly, it helps protect ordinary Nigerians from misinformation and fraudulent transactions.

Building a More Transparent Market
Nigeria's real estate sector has enormous

potential but unlocking that potential requires more than new buildings. It requires trust.

Trust is built when information is accessible, accurate, and transparent.

A National Property Intelligence Platform may not be the most visible innovation in the industry, but it could become one of the most transformative. By creating a reliable foundation of market intelligence, Nigeria can move closer to a real estate ecosystem where decisions are driven by facts rather than speculation.

In the future of Nigerian real estate, data will not simply support the market—it will define it.

Habitat Magazine's Ideas Worth Implementing Series explores practical innovations capable of transforming Nigeria's built environment. A National Property Intelligence Platform stands out as one of the most impactful solutions for creating a smarter, safer, and more transparent property market.





BUILDING BETTER: FIVE SOLUTIONS TO FIVE PRESSING CHALLENGES IN SUSTAINABLE REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

As cities continue to expand and populations grow, the conversation around sustainable real estate development has become more important than ever. Yet sustainability is often viewed as a luxury, a concept reserved for high-end developments and international markets.

The reality is different. In countries like Nigeria, sustainable development is no longer merely an environmental consideration; it is a practical response to some of the most pressing challenges facing the built environment. From unreliable power supply and water scarcity to rising construction costs and poor maintenance culture, sustainability offers solutions that improve both profitability and quality of life.

The question is no longer whether we should build sustainably, but how.

Here are five pressing pain points in real estate development and five solutions worth implementing.

1. The High Cost of Sustainable Buildings

One of the biggest barriers to sustainable development is the perception that it is expensive.



Solar energy systems, energy-efficient technologies, water recycling infrastructure, and environmentally friendly materials often require higher upfront investment, discouraging many developers.

However, the focus should not be on initial cost alone but on lifecycle value. Innovative financing models can help bridge this gap. Green mortgages, sustainability-linked loans, and shared infrastructure systems allow developers and homeowners to spread costs over time. Rather than installing individual solar systems for every home, entire communities can benefit from centralized renewable energy infrastructure.

The result is a development that costs less to operate, offers greater energy independence, and delivers long-term savings for residents.

2. Dependence on Generators and Unreliable Power Supply

Across many Nigerian cities, access to reliable electricity remains a major challenge. Residential estates and commercial developments often rely heavily on diesel generators, leading to rising operational costs, noise pollution, and environmental concerns.

The opportunity lies in developing energy-resilient communities.

Estate microgrids powered by solar energy and battery storage can provide consistent electricity while reducing dependence on fossil fuels. Advances in energy management technology also make it possible to monitor consumption, optimize usage, and improve efficiency across entire developments.

For developers, reliable power is no longer just an infrastructure requirement, it is a

competitive advantage and a defining feature of modern communities.

3. Water Scarcity and Inefficient Water Management

Water remains one of the most undervalued resources in real estate development. Many projects continue to rely exclusively on boreholes, placing increasing pressure on groundwater reserves while creating long-term sustainability concerns.

The future lies in circular water systems.

Rainwater harvesting, greywater recycling, water-efficient fixtures, and smart leak detection technologies can significantly reduce water consumption. These systems not only lower utility costs but also improve the resilience of communities during periods of water shortage.

Sustainable water management is rapidly becoming a necessity rather than an option, particularly in rapidly urbanizing environments.

4. Property Deterioration Caused by Poor Maintenance

Many buildings lose value not because they were poorly designed, but because they were poorly maintained.

Across residential estates, office complexes, schools, and healthcare facilities, maintenance is often reactive rather than preventive. Problems are addressed only after systems fail, resulting in higher repair costs and declining asset value.

A shift toward Building Maintenance-as-a-Service offers a promising solution.

Under this model, property owners subscribe to structured maintenance programs that include routine inspections, equipment servicing, facility management, energy audits, and digital asset monitoring. This approach transforms maintenance from a cost center into a value-preservation strategy.

For investors and property owners, maintaining assets effectively is one of the most sustainable decisions they can make.

5. Buildings That Ignore Climate Reality

Many buildings are designed without sufficient consideration for the climate in which they exist. Excessive heat gain, poor ventilation, and overreliance on mechanical cooling systems increase energy consumption and reduce occupant comfort.

Climate-responsive architecture provides a better path forward.

Design principles such as natural ventilation, strategic building orientation, shaded outdoor spaces, courtyards, reflective roofing materials, and tropical modern architecture can dramatically improve comfort while reducing energy demand.

Good design should work with nature rather than against it.

In a tropical environment, sustainable architecture is not simply an aesthetic choice—it is a practical and economic necessity.

The future of sustainable real estate is not defined by expensive technologies or ambitious environmental targets alone. It is defined by our ability to solve real problems facing real communities.



Affordable operating costs.
Reliable infrastructure.
Efficient resource management.
Long-lasting buildings.
Healthier and more comfortable environments.

These are not distant aspirations. They are achievable outcomes when sustainability is integrated into the way we plan, design, build, and manage our developments.

As the built environment continues to evolve, the greatest opportunities will belong to those who recognize that sustainability is not just about protecting the planet—it is about creating communities that are more resilient, more valuable, and better equipped for the future.

The challenge before us is clear. The opportunity is even greater.

Imagine what we can build.



LAGOS REAL ESTATE FEST 2026

Shaping the Future of Urban Development

The recently concluded Lagos Real Estate Fest 2026 once again demonstrated why it has become one of the most influential gatherings in Nigeria's real estate ecosystem. Bringing together developers, investors, policymakers, financiers, architects, consultants, technology providers, and other key stakeholders, the event served as a powerful platform for dialogue, collaboration, and innovation.

At a time when cities across Nigeria are experiencing rapid urbanization and increasing pressure on housing, infrastructure, and public services, the conversations at this year's festival were both timely and necessary. The event highlighted the critical role that real estate plays not only in economic growth but also in shaping sustainable, inclusive, and resilient communities.

One of the defining themes of the festival was the need for greater collaboration between the public and private sectors.

Industry leaders emphasized that addressing Nigeria's housing deficit, improving urban infrastructure, and attracting long-term investment will require coordinated efforts, innovative policies, and a shared commitment to national development.

Technology and innovation also featured prominently throughout the event. From proptech solutions and smart building systems to digital financing platforms and data-driven market insights, discussions reflected an industry that is increasingly embracing technology as a catalyst for growth, efficiency, and transparency. Sustainability emerged as another key focus. As climate concerns continue to influence development practices globally,

stakeholders explored strategies for creating greener buildings, energy-efficient communities, and environmentally responsible developments that can meet the needs of future generations.

Beyond the conference sessions and exhibitions, Lagos Real Estate Fest 2026 reinforced the importance of networking and partnership-building within the industry. The event provided opportunities for meaningful engagement among stakeholders, fostering relationships that have the potential to drive new investments, projects, and collaborations across the sector.

Perhaps the most significant takeaway from this year's festival was a renewed sense of optimism.

Despite economic challenges, rising construction costs, and evolving market dynamics, the conversations throughout the event reflected confidence in the long-term prospects of Nigeria's real estate sector. The industry continues to demonstrate resilience, adaptability, and a willingness to embrace new ideas and opportunities.

As the curtains close on another successful edition of Lagos Real Estate Fest, the message is clear: the future of Nigeria's cities will be shaped by innovation, collaboration, sustainability, and visionary leadership. The insights shared, partnerships forged, and opportunities created during the festival will undoubtedly contribute to the ongoing transformation of the built environment and the advancement of the real estate industry.

Lagos Real Estate Fest 2026 was a reflection of an industry determined to build better cities, create lasting value, and shape a more prosperous future for generations to come.













The Nairobi Neighborhoods Shaping the Future of Modern African Real Estate

By Ameh Destiny

One thing I love about Nairobi is that most spaces are green.”

It is a simple observation, but perhaps one of the most accurate ways to understand the city.

Unlike many rapidly growing urban centers where development often overwhelms nature, Nairobi still breathes. Trees stretch across residential streets. Gardens soften concrete walls. Quiet estates exist only minutes away from commercial districts. Even in areas experiencing intense urban expansion, traces of greenery remain deeply woven into the city's identity.

That balance between urban growth and environmental openness is part of what makes Nairobi increasingly important in

conversations around modern African real estate.

Over the last decade, the Kenyan capital has evolved into one of Africa's most influential urban centers — attracting multinational companies, diplomatic communities, foreign investors, entrepreneurs, creatives and a rising professional middle class. But Nairobi's transformation is not simply about skyscrapers or luxury apartments. It is about lifestyle.

Different neighborhoods across the city are shaping different versions of what modern African urban living can look like. Some prioritize exclusivity and privacy. Others embrace density, mixed-use living and youthful energy. Some still preserve older residential identities while slowly adapting to

new economic realities. Together, these neighborhoods are quietly redefining the future of African real estate.

Gigiri: Where Diplomacy Meets Luxury Living

Among Nairobi's most prestigious neighborhoods, Gigiri stands apart for its international identity.

The area is home to:
the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON)

UNEP headquarters
numerous embassies and diplomatic residences

As a result, Gigiri has developed into one of the city's most exclusive and globally connected residential districts.

Unlike many luxury neighborhoods across Africa that rely heavily on high-rise developments, Gigiri remains notably low-density. Apartments are relatively uncommon here. Instead, the neighborhood is dominated by:

expansive standalone homes

diplomatic residences

gated compounds

heavily landscaped properties

The atmosphere is intentionally calm and private.

According to a Nairobi-based civil engineer familiar with the city's residential structure:

“Gigiri is peaceful and green, and you'll mostly find expatriates working with international organizations and embassies. You rarely find apartments in this area.”

That observation reflects a broader global trend in luxury real estate:

exclusivity increasingly favors space, privacy and environmental quality over density.

The neighborhood's greenery also contributes significantly to its appeal. Mature trees, quieter roads and larger plots create an environment that feels separated from the intensity of central urban districts.

Gigiri attracts:

diplomats

international executives

expatriate families

NGO professionals

high-net-worth individuals

Its architecture often reflects international residential standards while maintaining Nairobi's openness and natural integration.

Approximate Property Market

Luxury homes frequently exceed KES 100 million (\$770,000+)

Premium rentals often range from KES 300,000–1 million monthly (\$2,300–\$7,700)

Prices vary based on plot size, proximity to diplomatic zones, security infrastructure and property management standards.

Lavington: The Quiet Stability of Old Middle-Class Nairobi

Long before Nairobi's apartment boom accelerated, Lavington represented a different version of urban aspiration.

During the 1990s, the neighborhood emerged as a prominent middle-class residential district characterized by:

family-owned homes

quieter estates

lower-density planning

long-term residential stability

Even today, Lavington still retains much of that identity.

Unlike rapidly commercializing districts, the area continues to attract:

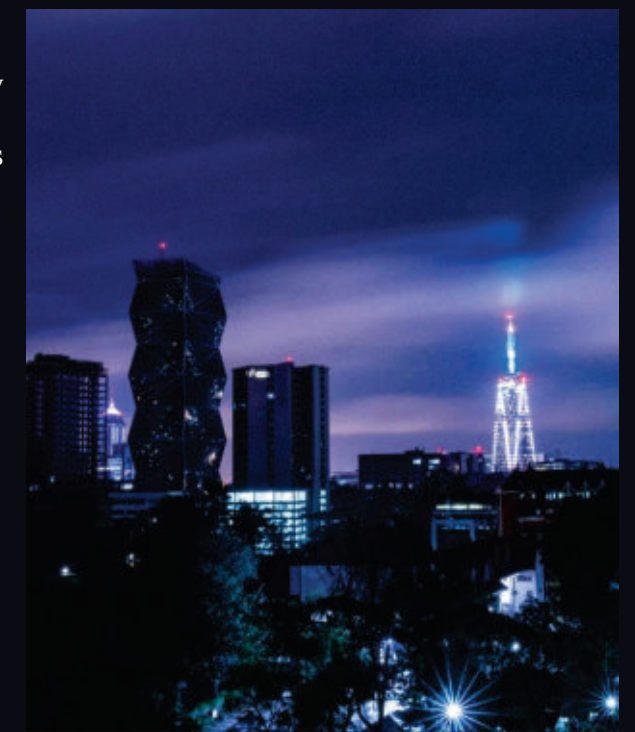
families

established professionals

long-term homeowners

upper-middle-class residents

Many residents still live in homes they personally own rather than short-term rentals or investment apartments.



A Nairobi-based civil engineer familiar with the area explains:

“Lavington was a middle-class neighborhood from the 1990s. Most people there live in houses they also own, and even today, it still feels quieter and more residential compared to some of the newer apartment-heavy areas.”

That quiet stability has become increasingly valuable in modern cities where congestion and overstimulation are becoming everyday realities.

Although apartment developments have gradually entered the neighborhood, Lavington still retains a softer urban rhythm than rapidly densifying districts like Kilimani. Streets remain noticeably greener, homes sit farther apart and the area continues to appeal to residents seeking a balance between accessibility and calmness.

For many Nairobi families, Lavington represents a version of urban life that feels grounded — modern enough for convenience, yet spacious enough for emotional comfort.

Approximate Property Market

Apartments: KES 12–45 million (\$93,000–\$350,000)

Standalone homes often exceed KES 70 million (\$540,000+)

Monthly rentals range from KES 100,000–400,000 (\$770–\$3,100)

Property value is heavily influenced by:
proximity to major roads
land size
security
compound greenery
modern renovations



Kilimani: The Rise of Nairobi's “New Money” Lifestyle

If Lavington represents Nairobi's older middle-class identity, Kilimani reflects the city's newer urban ambitions. Over the past decade, the neighborhood has transformed dramatically. Once dominated by modest residential homes, Kilimani is now one of Nairobi's fastest-growing apartment districts, with cranes and high-rise developments reshaping its skyline almost constantly. Luxury apartments, rooftop lounges, serviced residences and short-let developments have become increasingly common.

According to local insight: *“Kilimani was also a middle-class neighborhood, but lately*

they are building a lot of apartments. It's an area with 'new money,' and you'll find many foreigners who visit Kenya — especially Nigerians — staying there because there are beautiful apartments.”

That phrase — new money; captures the identity of Kilimani remarkably well.

The neighborhood increasingly attracts:

young professionals
entrepreneurs
digital workers
expatriates
foreign visitors
lifestyle-driven investors
Unlike older residential areas centered around permanence, Kilimani thrives on movement and flexibility.

Residents are often drawn to:
modern interiors

serviced living
proximity to restaurants and nightlife
convenience
short commuting distances
social atmosphere

The architecture itself reflects changing urban priorities. Many developments now emphasize:

gyms
rooftop terraces
swimming pools
coworking spaces
concierge-style services
smart security systems
In many ways, Kilimani mirrors broader shifts happening across Africa's emerging urban middle and upper-middle class: people increasingly want homes that feel experiential rather than merely functional.

However, rapid vertical expansion has also introduced concerns about:
traffic congestion
infrastructure pressure
overdevelopment
reduced environmental spacing
Yet despite these concerns, Kilimani remains one of Nairobi's most commercially attractive residential districts and a major symbol of the city's modern real-estate confidence.

Approximate Property Market

Apartments range from KES 8–35 million (\$62,000–\$270,000)

Luxury penthouses can exceed this significantly

Monthly rentals range between KES 80,000–350,000 (\$620–\$2,700)

Short-term rental demand has also increased significantly .

due to tourism, business travel and regional migration

Westlands: Nairobi's Commercial and Lifestyle Powerhouse

Few districts capture Nairobi's global-facing energy more than Westlands.

The area has evolved into one of East Africa's most important commercial and mixed-use zones — combining:
corporate headquarters
luxury apartments
entertainment
restaurants
nightlife
shopping centers
hospitality spaces
within one rapidly developing urban ecosystem. The skyline itself reflects this transformation.

Glass towers and high-rise developments increasingly dominate the district, many occupied by multinational firms such as:

Deloitte
KPMG
PwC

regional tech companies
international consulting firms
Yet despite its commercial activity, Westlands still maintains an atmosphere many residents describe as surprisingly calm and livable.

A Nairobi-based civil engineer notes: *“Westlands has many high-rise buildings, but most are used by companies, especially international ones like Deloitte, KPMG and PwC. It's also peaceful. For residential spaces, you'll either find the super-rich living in estates like Kitusuru or the middle class.”*

That dual identity is what makes Westlands particularly fascinating.

On one hand, it functions as a business hub. On the other, it remains deeply residential in surrounding pockets.

The district reflects a modern urban principle increasingly shaping cities globally: integration.

People increasingly want to:
live near work
reduce commuting
access entertainment easily
experience lifestyle
convenience within one environment

Westlands responds directly to that demand.

The area has also become a symbol of Nairobi's internationalization. Foreign businesses, regional investors and multinational talent increasingly concentrate within and around the district, reinforcing Nairobi's



reputation as one of Africa's leading business capitals.

Approximate Property Market

Luxury apartments: KES 15–60 million (\$115,000–\$465,000)

Premium monthly rentals: KES 120,000–500,000 (\$930–\$3,900)

Properties near commercial zones, malls and entertainment districts generally command higher prices.

Beyond Real Estate: What Nairobi's Neighborhoods Reveal About African Urban Living

What makes Nairobi particularly compelling is not simply the architecture or rising property values.

It is the diversity of urban experiences existing within one city.

Each neighborhood reflects a different version of contemporary African aspiration:

Gigiri prioritizes diplomacy, greenery and exclusivity

Lavington reflects residential stability and family-centered living

Kilimani embraces modern density and lifestyle culture

Westlands represents commercial integration and global urban energy

Together, these districts reveal an African city actively shaping its own identity rather than merely copying Western urban models.

Importantly, Nairobi's evolution also highlights a broader shift occurring across the continent: modern African real estate is becoming increasingly lifestyle-driven.



Residents today are asking not only:

“How big is the house?”

But also:

Is the environment peaceful?

Is there greenery?

Is it emotionally comfortable?

Does it support modern living?

Does it feel connected to

opportunity and lifestyle?

That shift is quietly redefining

luxury itself.

Conclusion

A City Designing Its Own Future

Nairobi's real estate story is still unfolding, but the direction is becoming increasingly clear.

The city offers one of the strongest examples of how African urban living is evolving beyond traditional ideas of status and ownership.

Modern luxury is no longer defined solely by size or prestige.

Increasingly, it is defined by:

experience

flexibility

convenience

emotional wellbeing

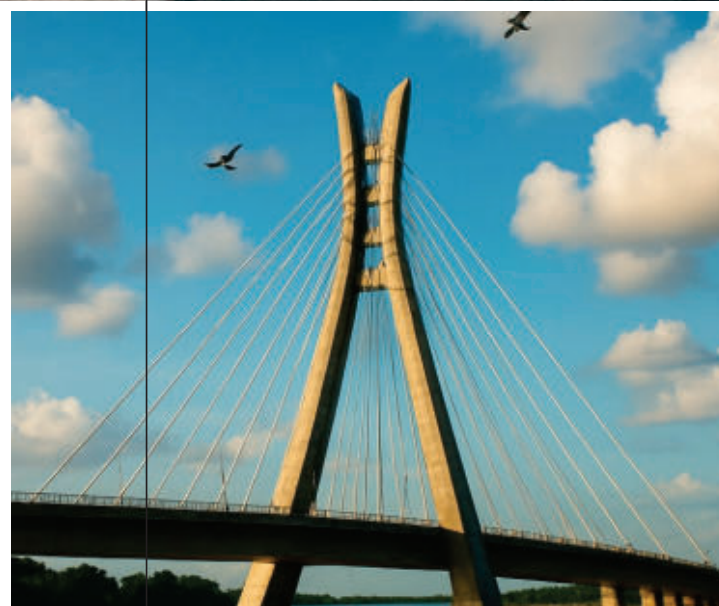
environmental quality

And perhaps that is why Nairobi continues to stand out.

Even as it modernizes rapidly, the city still leaves room for trees, openness and human experience — qualities many global cities are struggling to preserve.

In Nairobi today, development is not simply reshaping skylines.

It is reshaping how African cities imagine the future of living itself.



THE URBAN DICHOTOMY: **LAGOS AND ABUJA** TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

Tomisin Juliet Faoye

Lagos and Abuja are easily the two most influential cities in Nigeria. Lagos stands as the high-energy, somewhat chaotic, vibrant, commercial capital, while Abuja is the illustrious, serene, administrative capital. These two cities, both within the same nation, and both of which have at some point been the capital cities of Nigeria, could not be any more different. Lagos is the place people go to make their dreams come true in business and, in the entertainment space. It is the Hollywood of Nigeria, the place where one can truly rise from zero to hero. From its port to its thriving lifestyle structures, Lagos offers a world of opportunities. The city has seen young people build their lives from the ground up, and seen SMEs become world-

class business establishments.

Beyond being fertile ground for dreams, Lagos is a city that never sleeps. Its vibrant nightlife, colourful expressions of culture, heavy saturation of lifestyle and hospitality facilities, and active entertainment industry make Lagos a place to experience. Lagos is a loud city that sprawls unapologetically across the island and the mainland. Lagos has commerce in its DNA. Here over 20 million people share space, power and success, resulting in a good kind of chaos; an experience that can be both thrilling and overwhelming.

The city of Abuja might as well be the very opposite of Lagos. In this city that was designed and master-planned with absolute

intention, the order is visible, and expectedly so. Abuja is the seat of power of the nation. The place where the movers and shakers of the political realm takes abode. The concentration of power in this capital city is so high that an almost mythical aura accompanies it. Federal ministries, government parastatals, foreign embassies and consulates, international NGOs, all these and more make their abode in Abuja. Here life is serene, calm, almost even predictable. It is the very heart of the nation, so politics feels more tangible here.

Different as they may seem, these two cities represent the unique landscape that Nigeria possesses; a place where you can have life as you want it. If you're looking for big opportunities, speed and excitement, Lagos would be a great pick. But if you're seeking a quiet life, one that is luxurious, orderly and comfortably predictable, Abuja would be just right. Some say that people go to Lagos to

make money then return to Abuja to spend it. Lagosians argue that Abuja is unbearably boring, while Abuja residents declare Lagos to be too chaotic and unpredictable for peaceful living.

Both urban cities and yet very diverse, Abuja and Lagos make up a unique dynamic that every country needs to balance its social equation. Just like America has a New York and a Washington DC, and South Africa has a Johannesburg and a Pretoria, the Lagos-Abuja duo is one that Nigeria cannot be without. So, life in Nigeria can be as wild as it can be tame, as loud as it can be quiet and can certainly be as unpredictable as it can be serene.

So, the next time someone shares with you their Nigerian experience, it might be wise to ask if they experienced the vibrant colourful Lagos lifestyle, or the peaceful tranquility of Abuja, or perhaps the wonderful atmosphere of 35 other states, each with a unique one-of-a-kind feel.

10 AFRICAN CITIES RESHAPING GLOBAL PERCEPTIONS OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN LIVING

By Ameh Destiny

For decades, conversations about African cities were often dominated by the same narratives — overcrowding, poor infrastructure, informal growth and underdevelopment. But across the continent, a quieter transformation has been taking place. A new generation of African cities is increasingly redefining how architecture, infrastructure and urban identity are understood globally. These cities are not simply expanding economically; they are developing stronger design cultures, more ambitious skylines, modern residential districts and more intentional urban experiences. Importantly, this shift is not about copying Western cities. Many African urban centers are beginning to develop identities that feel both globally relevant and regionally grounded. From Kigali's structured urbanism to Nairobi's creative neighborhoods and Cape Town's landscape-integrated architecture, African cities are increasingly becoming part of global conversations around design, sustainability and modern living

These are ten cities helping reshape the way the world sees African urbanism.



10. ADDIS ABABA The Diplomatic Capital of Africa

As headquarters of the African Union, Addis Ababa occupies a unique position within Africa's urban landscape. The city's architecture reflects this diplomatic significance, blending monumental institutional buildings with rapidly

expanding commercial and residential developments. Infrastructure investments and transport expansion have also contributed to Addis Ababa's growing influence as a continental political and economic hub. Increasingly, the city represents Africa's diplomatic future.



9. ZANZIBAR Where Heritage and Tourism Architecture Coexist

Unlike many rapidly modernizing cities, Zanzibar's architectural power lies in preservation. Its historic Stone Town remains one of Africa's most culturally significant urban

environments, with centuries-old Swahili, Arab and colonial influences shaping the city's visual identity. At the same time, luxury hospitality projects and boutique resorts are introducing contemporary coastal architecture that still respects local materials and historical context. Zanzibar demonstrates that modernization does not always require erasing heritage.



8. CASABLANCA The Fusion of Heritage and Contemporary Urbanism

Casablanca has long occupied an important place in conversations around African architecture. The city blends: French colonial influences Art Deco heritage Islamic architectural traditions contemporary commercial development This layered architectural identity has allowed Casablanca to evolve into one of North Africa's most visually distinctive cities. Its urban landscape reflects both historical continuity and modern ambition



7. DAKAR Africa's Cultural Capital in Motion

Dakar's growing influence comes not only from infrastructure, but from culture itself. The city has become increasingly recognized for: art fashion creative industries music design This creative energy is gradually influencing its architecture and urban spaces as well. Contemporary galleries, hospitality spaces and creative hubs are reshaping parts of Dakar into a city where cultural identity and modern design increasingly intersect.



6. ACCRA The Rise of Afropolitan Luxury

In recent years, Accra has emerged as one of Africa's most influential lifestyle destinations. The city's rise has been fueled partly by the growth of an “Afropolitan” identity — a globally connected African lifestyle culture blending creativity, luxury, entrepreneurship and heritage. Neighborhoods such as Airport Residential and Cantonments increasingly feature contemporary residential developments, luxury hospitality projects and design-conscious spaces that appeal to both local professionals and the African diaspora. Accra's architecture reflects confidence without excessive spectacle.



5. LAGOS

The City of Creative Energy

Few African cities possess the intensity and cultural influence of Lagos.

Despite its infrastructural complexities, Lagos continues to shape global conversations around:

- entertainment
- fashion
- technology
- luxury living
- African creativity

Districts such as Ikoyi, Victoria Island and Eko Atlantic increasingly showcase ambitious high-rise developments and luxury residential architecture that mirror the city's economic aspirations.

Lagos represents a city constantly reinventing itself through energy and ambition.



4. CAPE TOWN

Where Architecture Meets Landscape

Cape Town's architectural identity is deeply connected to its geography.

Few cities integrate landscape and urban design as seamlessly as the South African coastal city. Contemporary homes often

prioritize:

- natural light/ocean views
- environmental integration
- minimalist spatial design

This relationship between architecture and nature has helped position Cape Town as one of Africa's most internationally admired design destinations.

The city demonstrates how environmental context can shape architectural elegance.



3. NAIROBI

The City Redefining Creative Urban Living

Nairobi's growing influence is not only economic — it is cultural.

Over the past decade, the Kenyan capital has developed a stronger identity around:

- innovation
- entrepreneurship
- design culture
- creative urban living

Neighborhoods such as Karen, Kilimani and Westlands increasingly feature:

- contemporary apartments
- co-working hubs
- lifestyle cafés
- boutique hospitality spaces
- wellness-focused developments

This transformation is being driven largely by a younger generation of professionals reshaping what modern African city living can look like.

As one Nairobi-based architect observed: *"The future of African cities will not only be built through infrastructure, but through creativity and human-centered design."*

Nairobi increasingly feels like a city designing itself around lifestyle rather than simply expansion.



2. KIGALI

The City Reimagining African Urban Order

Few African cities have transformed global perception as rapidly as Kigali.

Known for its cleanliness, organized urban planning and expanding infrastructure, the Rwandan capital has increasingly become a symbol of structured African urbanism.

Its carefully maintained roads, regulated development policies and environmentally conscious initiatives have positioned Kigali as one of the continent's most closely watched urban centers.

Architectural projects such as the adaptive reuse-focused Norrsken Kigali House further reflect the city's growing confidence in combining innovation with cultural sensitivity.

Kigali represents a broader African conversation around intentional city-building.



1. CAIRO

The Eternal City Balancing Ancient and Modern Identity

Cairo remains one of Africa's most architecturally complex cities.

Ancient monuments, Islamic heritage, colonial structures and rapidly expanding modern developments exist simultaneously within the Egyptian capital's urban fabric. Massive infrastructure expansion and the rise of Egypt's New Administrative Capital continue reshaping the country's architectural future while maintaining one of the deepest historical urban identities in the world. Cairo's significance lies in its ability to embody both continuity and reinvention.

A New Global Conversation About African Cities

The growing visibility of these cities reflects something larger than architecture alone.

Across Africa, urban centers are increasingly becoming spaces where:

- identity
- creativity
- infrastructure
- lifestyle
- culture
- modern ambition

intersect.

Importantly, these cities are not evolving in identical ways. Each represents a different expression of modern African urbanism.

Some prioritize structure and planning. Others thrive through creativity and cultural energy. Some preserve heritage while others embrace futuristic expansion.

Together, however, they are helping challenge outdated perceptions about African cities and redefining how the continent is viewed globally.

The future of African urbanism is no longer a distant conversation.

It is already being built.



MYYA JONES

Myya Jones is the Founder & CEO of Do Good Foundation, a global institution advancing transformational leadership, innovation, and cross-continental collaboration throughout the African diaspora. Originally from Detroit, Michigan, Myya relocated to Lagos, Nigeria in 2024, where she is leading the launch of Do Good Foundation's Global Headquarters — a dynamic hub designed to connect entrepreneurs, creatives, investors, and changemakers across Africa and the diaspora.

Prior to founding Do Good Foundation, Myya spent over seven years at Google in Account and Sales Management before transitioning into building platforms and communities centered on diaspora connection, cultural impact, and global African leadership. Her work and influence have been recognized by Teen Vogue, NBCBLK's 28 Under 28, and AT&T Dream in Black, where she was honored as a Future Maker.

Through her work, Myya is passionate about building infrastructure, creating opportunities, and cultivating meaningful partnerships that strengthen the relationship between Africans on the continent and throughout the global diaspora.



Interview Questions for MYYA JONES

CEO, Do Good Foundation

1. Can you tell us about your journey and what inspired the vision behind the Do Good Foundation?

My journey, along with the vision behind Do Good Foundation, has been deeply guided by God. Since I was a young girl, service, leadership, and giving back have always been core values of mine, so in many ways, “doing good” has always been a part of who I am.

Do Good originally began as Do Good Detroit, focused on creating impact within my hometown community. In 2024, Do Good Nigeria was established, and both now operate under the umbrella of Do Good Foundation — two chapters serving their communities while aligned under one global vision rooted in faith, purpose, and transformational leadership.

2. How would you describe the mission of the foundation in today's global landscape?

When I first founded Do Good, my vision was to help shift the mindset of the African diaspora from scarcity to abundance. I understood that generations of slavery, colonization, and systemic narratives have impacted how many people of African descent see themselves and what they believe is possible for their future.

One of my greatest goals has always been to challenge inferiority complexes and imposter syndrome within our communities. Despite the brilliance, innovation, and resilience of African people globally, many still struggle

to fully recognize their own power and potential.

Today, through the establishment of our Global Headquarters in Lagos, we are focused on leadership, connection, and innovation through leadership training, summits, cultural immersion experiences, strategic partnerships, and investment initiatives. Our mission is to equip leaders across the diaspora to build institutions, strengthen communities, and create sustainable impact with purpose, excellence, integrity, and faith.

3. The establishment of your Global Headquarters in Lagos is a major milestone. Why was Lagos the chosen location?

I truly believe Lagos was a God-ordained decision. Since 2019, I felt a growing spiritual pull toward Nigeria, and over time that calling became stronger and clearer. When I finally visited my ancestral homeland, I immediately knew that God was calling me to expand Do Good here.

What began as an agreement to spend one year in Nigeria doing impactful work evolved into something much greater. I chose to stay, and through that obedience and alignment, God opened doors beyond what I could have imagined — including blessing us with a beautiful headquarters space for the foundation.

Lagos represents energy, innovation, culture, resilience, and opportunity. It is one of the most influential cities on the continent and a powerful place to build bridges between Africa and the global diaspora.

4. How important is real estate and physical infrastructure in building long-term impact for African communities?

Physical infrastructure is incredibly important because it gives vision a place to live and grow. Ideas need intentional spaces where people can gather, collaborate, create, and build community.

Infrastructure also creates legitimacy. It demonstrates commitment, sustainability, and long-term vision. When people can physically experience a mission, it becomes more tangible and impactful. Spaces have the power to inspire innovation, connection, and transformation.



5. Are there specific architectural or lifestyle elements being incorporated into the headquarters to reflect African excellence and identity?

Absolutely. The Global Headquarters is intentionally being designed as a strategic hub where leaders, innovators, entrepreneurs, creatives, and changemakers from across the African diaspora can convene to exchange ideas, build institutions, and turn vision into action.

The space will include areas for podcasting, private meetings, collaborative workspaces, networking, and community engagement. Every detail is being thoughtfully curated to foster creativity, excellence, warmth, and collaboration.

The design aesthetic reflects both modern African excellence and the spirit of community. Elements of the color palette spark creativity, while the open kitchenette and communal areas are designed to feel welcoming, intentional, and relationship-centered.



6. How do you balance purpose-driven leadership with personal wellness and lifestyle?

I'm a firm believer that God does not operate in confusion or chaos. If something disrupts my peace or does not align spiritually, I have learned not to force it or keep it around. Protecting my peace has been one of the greatest ways I've sustained my mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being while leading at a high level.

Beyond that, I prioritize clean eating, regular exercise, prayer, rest, wellness treatments, and intentional moments of stillness. I also travel often, which helps keep me inspired, balanced, and connected to the world around me. I believe leadership is most effective when you are healthy, aligned, and spiritually grounded.

7. How important is cultural immersion in creating meaningful connections across continents?

Cultural immersion is extremely important because genuine understanding happens through lived experiences and human connection.

One of my original visions was to bring members of the diaspora from Detroit to Nigeria annually for service-learning experiences. That vision has since evolved into something much larger through the establishment of our headquarters and our “Be My Guest” cultural immersion initiative.

Through “Be My Guest”, we bring members of the African diaspora back to Nigeria to experience the culture, people, history, and opportunities firsthand. It creates space for healing, reconnection, collaboration, and long-term investment in the continent.

8. What challenges have you observed in cross-continental collaboration, and how can they be addressed?

One of the greatest challenges is misinformation, assumptions, and stereotypes. Many people assume Africans on the continent and Africans in the diaspora are vastly different, when in reality we share far more similarities than differences.

A lot of these perceptions have been shaped by media narratives and historical division. The solution is intentional education, storytelling, representation, and firsthand experiences that allow people to truly connect across borders.

Programs like “Be My Guest” help bridge those gaps by allowing people to engage directly with one another, build authentic relationships, and develop a deeper understanding of shared identity and collective potential.



9. What legacy do you hope the Do Good Foundation will leave in Africa and globally?

I pray the legacy of Do Good Foundation is one rooted in radical faith, purpose, integrity, and service. I hope we help shift mindsets and empower people to fully embrace their gifts, walk confidently in their purpose, and lead with excellence and compassion.

More than anything, I hope Do Good becomes a community that develops generations of ethical, visionary leaders who create meaningful impact throughout Africa and the global diaspora.

10. What advice would you give to young entrepreneurs, developers, and changemakers looking to create impact-driven projects?

My greatest advice is to put God first in everything you do. I truly believe that when God is leading your path, things align with greater clarity, purpose, ease, and abundance.

There will always be challenges, but when your work is rooted in purpose and integrity, the right people, opportunities, and resources will align with your vision. Stay disciplined, remain faithful, and focus on building something meaningful that serves others beyond yourself.

11. What does “home” mean to you in the context of identity, culture, and community?

Home is anywhere God is.

Five Nigerian Designers Pioneering The Eco-friendly Fashion Movement

By Tomisin Juliet Faoye

The global fashion industry is expanding rapidly, and Nigerian designers are certainly not left behind.

With new brands springing up every day, the industry is expanding to accommodate new forms of fashion and eco-friendly fashion might as well be one of the fastest rising niches in the industry today.

Eco-friendly fashion, also called sustainable fashion, refers to clothing and fashion items designed, produced and consumed in ways that minimize environmental damage. The goal of this form of fashion goes beyond just looking good; it focuses on reducing

waste, utilizing sustainable materials, conserving resources, protecting the ecosystem, and ensuring fair labour practices. The items are usually made using organic materials, recycled textiles, and any other materials that can reduce carbon footprint. It also dwells on the idea of circular fashion and longevity, ensuring that the clothes last and can be used repeatedly either through rentals, thrifting or any other means. Here in Nigeria, young designers are taking the eco-friendly fashion route and are thriving in it. So here are five Nigerian designers pioneering the eco-friendly or sustainable fashion movement.



1. NKWO ONWUKA – NKWO:

Nkwo Onwuka is a well-known sustainability expert and the founder of the NKWO brand. Her brand is a leading force in the eco-friendly fashion space in Nigeria and is focused on reducing textile waste through innovative, artisanal production.

The brand is known for its signature DAKALA cloth which is made by transforming discarded denim and textile waste into unique materials through a modern strip-weaving technique.



2. TEMILADE SALAMI – TUNTUNRE:

Temilade Salami is a marine biologist and an environmental activist. She founded the Tuntunre brand in 2026 in a bid to contribute significantly to the eco-fashion industry in Nigeria.

Tuntunre crafts beautiful bags, footwear, and accessories using discarded denim. The brand supports local artisans and provides 'green jobs' for women. In its first month, the brand is said to have upcycled 150 pairs of jeans, thereby saving over a million liters of water.



3. FLORENTINA AGU – HERTUNBA:

Florentina Agu is an art director, fashion designer and the founder of Hertunba, a sustainable fashion brand based in Lagos, but delivering astonishing sustainable designs around the world. Her ready-to-wear garments blend contemporary high fashion with traditional weaving techniques, producing outcomes that are not only unique and stylish, but also eco-friendly.



4. EKI KERE – ABASIEKEME UKANIREH:

Abasiekeme Ukanireh is the creative force behind Eki Kere, a sustainable fashion brand that transforms traditional Nigerian masquerade culture and locally sourced raffia into contemporary, eco-friendly fashion.

The brand prioritizes natural fibers that decompose, thereby reducing the carbon footprint left by the fashion industry. The brand collaborates with local artisans, thereby preserving cultural heritage.



5. TUNDE OWOLABI – ETHNIK

Tunde Owolabi is an artist, designer and the founder of Ethnik, a sustainable fashion brand that specializes in creating a wide range of handcrafted, afrocentric fashion accessories including footwear, bags, belts, phone cases, and luxury home accessories, while incorporating aso-oke, the traditional handwoven Yoruba textile. The brand is deeply rooted in culture, sustainability, and creativity.

These brands are not only preserving the environment and conserving energy. They are re-imagining what was once ordinary, creating something new out of the old and transforming mundane things into luxury fashion items.



May Of High Fashion

MET GALA VERSUS AMVCAs

By Tomisin Juliet Faoye

With the Met Gala and the African Magic Viewers' Choice Awards (AMVCAs) holding only a few days apart, the internet was aflame, placing both events side by side for a comparison of high fashion and excellence in style.

The Met Gala, formally called the Costume Institute Benefit, is an annual fundraising gala held on the first Monday of May to support the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute in New York City. Known as fashion's biggest night, it marks the opening of the Costume Institute's annual fashion exhibition and brings together celebrities, designers, and influencers to showcase extravagant outfits based on a specific theme.

The Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards (AMVCA) is an annual award ceremony by MultiChoice that recognizes outstanding achievements in television, film, and digital content creation across the African continent. Launched in 2013, the event has evolved into Africa's most prestigious film and television awards ceremony, frequently described as the continent's equivalent to the Oscars or the Met Gala due to its celebration of both cinematic talent and high fashion.

This year, the Met Gala theme was Costume Art, with the dress code "Fashion is art." Celebrities went above and beyond to honour the theme, stepping away from just fashion into full-blown costumes. From alien to robot-inspired looks, attendees certainly went the extra mile.

Some outfits stood out massively, dazzling viewers across the world. Heidi Klum appeared in a custom foam and latex gown,

designed by Mike Marino to look like a living statue. Beyoncé wore a stunning custom gown by Olivier Rousteing featuring a skin-tone mesh base adorned with a detailed diamond skeleton.

Cardi B wore an elaborate, sheer lace Marc Jacobs dress with highly exaggerated shoulder padding. Chase Infinity wore a Thom Browne gown covered in over 1.5 million sequins and 600+ colours, inspired by the Venus de Milo. Kylie Jenner wore a surreal Schiaparelli design that appeared to be peeling away in layers. Naomi Osaka wore a white Robert Wun gown featuring delicate feather detailing designed to look like spurts of blood.

When the AMVCAs held a few days later, African stars brought high energy to the red carpet, serving looks that were simply unforgettable.

Standout celebrities included Nana Akua Addo, the Ghanaian fashion icon who dominated the night with three separate structural masterpieces. Her most talked-about looks were a silver architectural dress by Abasswoman inspired by Germany's Cologne Cathedral, a "Living Stone" earth-textured mermaid gown, and a spiral fish-scale gown from Srushti Patil's The Unbound Collection.

Osas Ighodaro delivered two highly ambitious custom Veekee James creations. The first was a striking crimson column gown with a towering, tiered structured collar. The second was a silver ball gown whose skirt was engineered from 400 repurposed metal sponges.

Chioma Goodhair rocked a breathtaking, l

iquid-gold artistic gown by designer Amy Agomi, featuring immaculate top beading and structural precision.

Among the men, Akin Faminu redefined black-tie couture in a sharp black suit by Deji & Kola, embellished with fluid silver and white beaded scrollwork tracking down the sleeves and trousers.

Tobi Bakre brought undisputed Yoruba royalty to the carpet in a richly styled traditional agbada by Deji & Kola, completed with a custom-crafted brass staff.

Stan Nze captivated fashion critics in a majestic, polished black cultural ensemble that boasted remarkable creativity.

Kanaga Jnr stole the show in an impeccably tailored, highly detailed custom piece by Rogue titled 300 Hours of Devotion.

Winning Best Dressed Male and Female for the night were Faith Adewale in a gallant outfit by Echo Lagos, styled by Chris Nunies Awudey, and Sultana Farida Auduson in a dazzling Medlin Couture dress.

Standing out for creativity was Reality TV star and entrepreneur, Queen Mercy Atang's bread dress. The dramatic gown was

designed by Toyin Lawani of Tiannah's Place Empire and made from over 500 loaves of bread to promote Mercy's bakery brand, Swit Cakes & Desserts.

Other designers whose work appeared on the AMVCA runway include: Amyaghomi, Deji and Kola, Bibi Christophers, Ohlanna Bu Zikora, The Sevon Dejana, House of Dova, Veekee James, Eimage by Bukola, Oga Okoro, Somo by Somo, Maya and Stitches, Finiee Couture amongst others.

Across both events, what cannot be denied is the remarkable creativity of designers and stylists in creating outfits that not only dazzle but tell stories.

It is, however, worth noting what differentiates a Met Gala runway from an AMVCA one: the rich expression of indigenous African culture. From fabrics like aso oke to full head-toe traditional looks, Africans never shy away from a chance to express our heritage.

As we celebrate this year's high fashion, we anticipate next season, knowing for a fact that the game steps up every year. It appears there's no limit to how high fashion can go, and we're set for it!





BEHIND THE SCENES



NOW SHOWING IN
CINEMAS NATIONWIDE



MOVIE REVIEW: FUNKE AKINDELE'S BEHIND THE SCENES

By Tomisin Juliet Faoye

Funke Akindele is easily one of Nollywood's biggest names. The last few years have seen her break box office records and surpass her own benchmark repeatedly.

Her latest masterpiece, and the current highest-grossing film in Nollywood, *Behind the Scenes*, proves to be wholesome and completely worth the hype.

The movie follows the life of Aderonke Faniran, a wealthy business magnate who is the financial pillar of her extended family and friend group. She funds her older sister's lavish lifestyle, finances her brother's many unyielding ventures, and supports her friends' businesses and lifestyles. When Aderonke is suddenly diagnosed with Lupus, she embarks on a frantic mission to gain insight into what life would be like for her two young children when she dies. With the help of her best friend and lawyer, Victor, she fakes her death, and this leads to an unraveling that reshapes her views on life and family.

In this movie, Funke Akindele transforms a simple story into something deeply profound, proving that while there are no new stories, there are new ways to tell old ones. Many things in *Behind The Scenes* stand out. First off, the plot twist of Aderonke's death being fake comes as a beautiful surprise, as the movie plays out in a way that keeps this fact from the audience for a while. Another beautiful thing the film does is the way it features well-rounded supporting characters. Because the film is one that deeply explores human social and emotional behaviour, we see a depth to the characters that makes us

connect more to them.

Oluchi and Johnson, Aderonke's domestic staff, are loyalists to the core; the kind of people that stay on the boat even when it is sinking. All through Aderonke's ordeal and even after her supposed death, they stick with her and her children, going out of their way to ensure that the kids are well taken care of.

Her older sister, Adetutu, proves to be viciously selfish; the kind of person who only goes after her own interests, even at the expense of others. While Adetutu is not the only person who takes advantage of Aderonke, she proves to be the most selfish of them all.

Many would agree, however, that one of the most wholesome characters in the film is Adewale, Aderonke's younger brother, played by Tobi Bakre. While at the beginning of the film he proves to be razz, stubborn, and lacking in ambition, when Aderonke "dies," he steps up, defends her children, and fights against Adetutu when she insists on selling off some of the properties. Just seeing him grow up and step up in the face of hardship adds a depth to the movie that is simply heartwarming.

Of course, Aderonke reveals herself in the end, leaving everyone in utter shock, and nemesis catches up with the guilty parties as they pay for their crimes. Aderonke fights the illness and puts her life back together, offering forgiveness to her offenders. Many may wonder why Funke Akindele's films are so successful. While this must be brought on by many factors, one thing that stands out is that her movies often tell stories that are close to home; stories that we all can relate to.

Thus far, Funke Akindele continues to break her own records, and we can only imagine that future productions will continue to do so. *Behind the Scenes* is indeed a testament to her creative genius.

The movie features A-list actors including Scarlet Gomez, Funke Akindele, Tobi Bakre, Iyabo Ojo, Adebawale Adebayo, Destiny Etiko, Uzor Arukwe, Uche Montana, Ibrahim Chatta, Ini Dima-Okojie and more.

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HABITAT PUZZLE CHALLENGE

Find all 12 hidden words.
Some words are very well hidden, so look carefully

A	V	R	E	Z	U	E	R	B	Q	T	K	R	C
M	B	O	C	J	Y	C	F	X	V	E	M	O	F
G	O	D	A	T	Q	N	B	W	H	W	J	Y	G
N	L	B	D	K	M	D	N	C	I	Q	F	A	N
T	W	I	L	K	V	I	L	L	A	G	E	B	M
O	N	X	Y	U	P	S	V	H	G	R	D	K	W
V	P	A	K	Z	E	E	X	T	A	T	X	Q	E
G	I	H	R	A	O	R	Z	P	O	Y	Z	A	K
H	T	L	N	U	C	F	O	U	R	U	H	T	F
E	Q	D	L	Y	A	Y	C	C	Q	R	C	B	M
Z	C	F	G	X	N	T	F	S	K	A	O	C	T
B	Y	S	F	O	U	M	S	F	F	H	N	W	I
H	S	N	W	S	T	G	B	E	T	J	C	D	E
F	M	E	J	C	O	I	O	Y	R	M	I	T	H
M	L	L	C	D	Y	N	M	I	S	Z	E	U	N
G	A	T	A	B	E	L	K	K	X	W	R	H	E
I	P	I	V	Y	Z	M	Y	D	D	R	G	N	R
U	F	H	S	A	O	J	Q	P	F	G	E	Z	H
S	E	G	Y	O	Y	R	E	Y	B	H	J	F	A
Q	A	X	Z	D	N	G	H	J	I	M	D	Y	F

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