

Fashion forward with Leah Misika

 By [Beverley Klein](#)

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Leah Misika is the founder and managing director of La Mode Fashion. She's a design creative whose love for fashion and background in retail management makes for a well-balanced integration of disciplines.



Leah Misika

She studied at Miami's International University of Arts and Design (IUAD) and has since worked in multiple retail environments, both locally in the Republic of Namibia and in the United States.

Under her direction, La Mode specialises in the identification of proverbial voids in the marketing efforts of retailers and their marketers. For the consultancy arm of the business, Leah is charged with creating advertising programmes, assisting retailers with branding efforts, analysing existing advertising campaigns and monitoring brand quality.

At La Mode, she creates brand touch points with consumers through print and social media and has mastered the art of brand engagement, which is a fairly disruptive concept in Namibian fashion retail marketing. By focusing on engagement programmes that monitor the reactions/responsiveness of consumers to new products and branding initiatives, her campaigns are always consumer-centric with the long-term objective of developing brand loyalty.

Leah has an online blog and also writes in the "weekender" section of the *Namibian* newspaper. She writes about her dreams of a better fashion world in Namibia for herself and all aspiring fashion designers. She also created 'fashion fiend', a weekly fashion TV programme that was aired nationally and continues to provide content online via YouTube.

In 2014 she won an award for African Female Designer of the year in Ghana West Africa and was featured on CNN's African voices in 2016, as one of the future commercial fashion culture providers for Namibia.

▣ *How did you get started in the world of fashion design?*

Misika: I fell in love with fashion when I was 9 while watching Fashion TV. But how I really got into the industry was moving to Miami, Florida to do my Bachelors in Fashion Design. I worked for a company called Anatomie Style; where I was involved in everything from design, production, quality control and sales and I worked there through most of college.

It was the biggest eye opener to the industry I was getting myself into and I loved it. I later interned at Ramona La Rue, worked at Perry Ellis as a design assistant to the associate and assistant designer for a line called Cubavera, and I managed a high-end niche store called Babalu Miami. All these experiences led me and aided me in starting my own fashion business.

▣ *What are the biggest challenges facing design?*

Misika: The biggest challenges facing design right now is originality and copyrighting. Being a creative your biggest challenge is to create something unique, and your worst nightmare is that someone else might reap the accolades of your brilliance.

▣ *Explain the importance of design in Namibia*

Misika: The design industry is very important in Namibia. Although it is not yet recognised as a lucrative industry yet, there is a general understanding that there is something to it.

▣ *What trends do you predict this year in the industry?*

Misika: With the industry growing more and more competitive I predict to see a lot of Namibian products and brands will set their focus on making an international mark rather than just targeting the local market. I also see the growth in the production and manufacturing industry. With designers on the rise it is almost inevitable that the production industry will have to expand to meet production demands.

▣ *What would you like to see more of in the design industry?*

Misika: I would like to see Namibian designers collaborating more. I would like to see operational design associations and councils that can guide the industry as a whole. I would like to see Namibian designers showcasing on international platform and attracting buyers to Namibia. It doesn't help to have the talent, increase production capacity and not have a proper platform to sell. We need buyers to see what we are doing here.

▣ *What does design mean to you?*

Misika: Design is my life. I still have dreams about my dream. This is an industry I would die to be apart of where others only design to be apart of theirs. There is nothing I want to do more than this.

Visit her blog www.lmlamode.com and follow her on Twitter and Instagram [@LMLamode](https://www.instagram.com/LMLamode).

Keep checking our [Design Month section](#) as we explore everything design throughout February.

ABOUT BEVERLEY KLEIN

Beverley Klein is the editor of the Marketing Media South Africa section on Bizcommunity.com. With a background in journalism and historical studies, she's dived into the world of industry news, curating content, writing and interviewing thought leaders. She's often spotted in a forest on the weekend and rarely seen without a camera. Follow [@BevCPT](#).

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