

AVANT-GARDE INCLINED, **CHRISTINE GROVÉ** SPEAKS TO NIGERIAN-BORN EMMY COLLINS WHO CREATES ATTIRE FOR THE MAN WHO NEEDS MORE THAN JUST A SUIT

# Unstamed



**W**ith his designs that include a vast range of colour, remarkable twists on rock 'n roll and classic style, his garments promise glass-cut tailoring and radiate exclusivity. Collins speaks fondly of his childhood in Nigeria, spent in the company of good friends who always had an eye for style and a flair for individuality. Now based in London, Collins has ventured out to South Africa, bringing his creations to the Johannesburg public through 24 Fevrier Homme boutique clothing store at the Radisson Blu Gautrain Hotel in Sandton.

#### How would you describe your range for this year?

I never fit the mould. It's never about what's in vogue. It is timeless and unique. The style is quite subdued and doesn't show too much colour overall but is highlighted in accent details and accessories. It's all about the cut and quality of craftsmanship, original design and unique patterns.

#### What are your favourite pieces for autumn?

Coats and jackets have always been my favourite. I love the way they are cut and the way they feel on the body. For me it's all about the coat or jacket, going into winter, you should invest in a great coat that suits your style and defines you as an individual. Not just for warmth, a jacket or coat can make your outfit and it adds sophistication and purpose to any occasion.

#### Tell me about mixing classic with retro?

It's all about edge. If you take the Prince of Wales check, which is a classic print, and add a prominent or unusual colour, it presents a challenge. Working with colours on traditional designs, when you have classic fabric and add a striking detail - it creates mood and drives the edge. The cut is also very important; it needs to be perfect to ensure the contrast between the design and the detail. I am a perfectionist when it comes to the perfect cut of a piece.

#### What kind of man wears Emmy Collins?

The confident man who believes in himself. He doesn't want to fit the mould and wants to stand out from the norm without being ridiculous or flamboyant. What he's wearing is important to him and he is concerned about his style and the statement he's making. You have to have that personality that makes you special. The accessory to the piece is you - you are as individual as an accent accessory.

#### Who are your icons?

Definitely the biggest influence would be the Nigerian musical activist Fela Anikulapo Kuti. He really paid attention to detail with the way he dressed - it all fitted like a glove. My friends and I would go to where he was performing and I would hide behind a pillar and watch him; he really inspired me with his controversial air. Music plays a huge role in inspiring me, especially nostalgia from the 1970s, when fashion was so spot on.

#### You've established yourself around the world, where is home for you?

London, without a doubt. I am a Dutch citizen, but after establishing myself there, the Netherlands became too small for me - so I moved to New York and grew as a designer, but returning to London was the best decision for me. I feel it is my niche. Also the East End in London is the new West End. People from the East End have attitude and further inspire the theme of edge in my works. This is why I set up my showroom in Shoreditch.

#### What is your most notable achievement?

For me personally it's about just receiving recognition for my work, and that I am able to bring inspiration to the world. My work is very niche and particular, so for people to feel inspired and look good in the clothes is enough for me.

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