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## The What If Collection

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THE  
**What If**  
COLLECTION



AISHA JEMILA DANIELS

THE  
**What If**  
COLLECTION

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for my loving mother

# Acknowledgements

It has truly been an evolutionary experience for me in the master's program at VCU Arts Qatar. Having come from a fine arts background, I was initially hesitant and nervous about design. However, the continuous encouragement and mentorship given to me from many directions has made my venture into a new field exciting and memorable.

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# Abstract

The What If Collection is a visual narrative that confronts white supremacy, the social, economic, and political ideology used to subjugate black civilization via colonial rule and enslavement in history and via structural racism today. Many white people have been socialized into a racial illiteracy that fosters white supremacy. This racial illiteracy fails to realize and understand the destructive effects of Western dominance on the rest of the world, particularly on past and present Africa and her diaspora. In response, utilizing discursive design, the collection constructs a counter-story that depicts a shift in the power structure in which the white oppressor is placed in the historical experience of the black oppressed. Moving forward from the past, a contemporary society is visualized where black people are the dominant force.



# Introduction

## Problem

White supremacist and invader of Congo King Leopold II of Belgium said “Evan-gelize the niggers so that they stay forever in submission to the white coloni-alists, so they never revolt against the restraints they are undergoing...”<sup>1</sup> This idea was shared among European nations, and a social order established over 500 years ago continues to exist as a white hierarchical frame known as white supremacy. It’s institutional and structural framework marks anyone who isn’t white as lesser-than and not deserving of equity. White people seem to avoid the meaningful and dynamic conversations on racism, privilege, and equity, as many want to avoid a negative impression and or evaluation about their personality. To be categorized as a racist or having characteristics of entitle-ment is threatening. However, palatable creative art can catalyze the necessary elements of disruption that promote the change needed to realize an end to this social ill that continues to empower a societal structure beneficial to only white people.

## Purpose

The What If Collection is a visual narrative that confronts white supremacy and the reality of the continued subordination of people of color, more specifically black people. The purpose is to bring attention to and ignite the discussion by providing an alternate mapping of racist events, or a past alternative that reimagines what if the white oppressor was placed in the historical experience of the black oppressed. Blogger Phenderson Djèlí Clark questions, “Would the African lifestyle really be so European if Africa was the centre of the world?”<sup>2</sup> The white norm has not disappeared; it festers and contaminates pop culture, consciousness and the general world view. Stories are powerful means for discourse and to direct the attention of others.<sup>3</sup> The What If collection places Africa at the center of the world by providing a speculation of today’s society without western dominance. It’s important to establish that this project is a minuscule study on the vast history of black oppression. In briefly studying the history, a counter-story is produced in the scope of discursive design. The reason for the project is not to provide a practical solution but to communi-cate ideas. It seeks to deliver a message that is provocative enough to ignite contemplation and open eyes.



Precendents

### David Pott: Lifeline Expedition

Efforts have been employed to bring our attention to white supremacy and its global impact. Former teacher David Pott founded a United Kingdom-based non-profit organization in 1997 called Lifeline Expedition. Pott sought to create a safe space for dialogue between white and black people. In effort to foster healing and reconciliation, he engaged white American and European communities in educational experiences with two intentions: exposure to the horrors of slavery and advocacy against dehumanization and racism in contemporary society.<sup>4</sup> The organization facilitated two journeys that involved white people participating with yokes and chains on their bodies (fig. 1). The first journey was called the “Meridian Walk,” which was 250 miles long from Hull to Westminster. The significance of the walk was that the key abolition attempts against the slave trade occurred on that route.<sup>5</sup> The second 40-day journey, involving three major slave ports in the UK, was called the “Sankofa Reconciliation Walk,” It was 470 miles from London to Bristol. They used the word “Sankofa,” an Akan/Asante Adinkra symbol of Ghana, West Africa, because it means to learn from the past to build in the future.<sup>6</sup>



fig 1.  
Photograph of participants in Lifeline Expedition.  
Courtesy of YouTube. 2017.

### Jane Elliott: Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes

Akin to Pott’s way of placing white people in the disposition of black people, teacher and political activist, Jane Elliott, travels internationally to bring attention to racism and its enduring existence. Elliott facilitates workshops that challenge white people to look introspectively at themselves, reflect on their position in society and identify their own racist behaviors and biases. She began her field experiments as an elementary teacher in Riceville, Iowa. On April 5, 1968—the day after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.—Elliott conducted an experiment on her third-grade class, labeling students as either inferior or superior based solely on eye color. Her initiative became known as the “Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes” study. The experiment changed the dynamic of the classroom, and the children quickly succumbed to aggression and discrimination. She sought to expose the realities of racism and to make the participants consider if they were put in that circumstance their whole lives.<sup>7</sup> Inspired by Elliott, African-American hip-hop artist, Clifford Joseph Harris Jr. (T.I.) used her concept in his rap composition “Warzone.”

The video re-enacted incidents of police brutality involving Tamir Rice, Philando Castle, and Eric Garner. However, he used black policemen attacking white victims (fig. 2). The video showed white American boys and men placed in ordinary, harmless scenarios: playing in a playground, driving around, and simply hanging outside. They are then met with the violent fate of being surrounded, pulled over, put in a chokehold, and shot down by black police. T.I. concludes the video with a list of victims of police brutality following an audio clip of Elliott where Elliott challenges her white audience to stand up if they want to be treated like black people in society: “Nobody is standing here. That says very plainly that you know what’s happening. You know you don’t want it for you. I want to know why you are so willing to accept it or to allow it to happen for others.”<sup>8</sup>



Fig 2.  
Still from rapper T.I.'s music video for  
“Warzone.” Photo from Tidal. 2016.



### Tyler Shields: Lynching

The Ku Klux Klan, an American terrorist group dedicated to maintaining white supremacy, began as an insecure and irrational retaliation to the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, which freed African slaves in the south.<sup>9</sup> After the Civil War ended in 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment was passed to emancipate all black people across the whole country.<sup>10</sup> Shortly afterwards the Reconstruction Era began, which sought to give societal membership to black people.<sup>11</sup> The KKK, however, wanted to make sure black people could not access political, civil or economic rights. They tormented and murdered, most often by lynching, black people along with whoever supported them and challenged white supremacy.<sup>12</sup> Photographer Tyler Shields from Los Angeles created a provocative photograph entitled “Lynching” from his “Historical Fiction” series of 2015 (fig. 3).<sup>13</sup> Considering the KKK’s preference of lynching black people, the photograph was of a nude black man tightly holding a rope that was pulled over a tree branch and wrapped around a KKK uniform-wearing man’s neck as he lifelessly hung above a river.



Fig 3.  
Shields, Tyler. Lynching, 2015.

### Bridget Garnai: Developing Perceptions: Definitions of Self in African Portrait Photography

Several black aesthetic movements have emerged on the African continent and throughout her diaspora. One such is Bridget Garnai’s “Developing Perceptions: Definitions of Self in African Portrait Photography.” She examined the photography of Cameroonian King Njova and Malian Seydou Keita. From those works, she shared two different perspectives of African re-imaging.<sup>14</sup> In 1884, Germany gained colonial control over present-day Cameroon; however, King Njova, of the Bamum Kingdom, kept his kingdom autonomous and used photography to present his self-image (fig. 4). He made sure he represented his culture authentically, positively and in a way that it could be understood on a global level. In contrast, Seydou Keita created a post-colonial African identity that incorporated western symbols in his portraits of local natives (fig. 5). Placed in front of a cloth background, his sitters dressed in European clothing: women wore traditional local jewelry; men confidently wore European wristwatches. Viewers can assume that Keita and his sitters believed those western symbols signified modernity, prestige and status. Keita’s photographic works, unlike King Njova’s, were a product of what Garnai called “colonial residue.”<sup>15</sup> She concluded the article emphasizing the need for Africa to overcome the oppressive, colonial lens to form the true African self-image.



Fig 4.  
Photograph of King Ibrahim Njoya on this throne.  
Courtesy of Face2Face Africa. 19th c.



Fig 5.  
Keita, Seydou. Untitled, 1949/1952.

### Jessica Hemmings: Hybrid Sources: Depictions of Garments in Postcolonial Textile Art

Like Keita, Yinka Shonibare, a British Nigerian visual artist, took from Victorian tradition and fused it with what is known as “African” textiles. Jessica Hemmings states in her “Hybrid Sources: Depictions of Garments in Postcolonial Textile Art:”

The wax prints that Shonibare uses originate in Indonesia. In the nineteenth century, the Dutch tried to produce them at home and trade them back to the Indonesians. This project was largely unsuccessful due to the inferior quality of the cloth. Today, the cloth has come to be a symbol of African pride but has an ironic and certainly not African history.<sup>16</sup>

Utilizing cultural appropriation as did Europeans, Shonibare made a sophisticated and artful statement that has found its place in African art.<sup>17</sup> He played upon the white hierarchal frame that established Africans as the “other,” which contributed to their dismemberment to the world in terms of relevance or importance. Shonibare, using headless mannequins, drew images from interactions between Europeans and Africans to create an installation of them dressed in Victorian styled clothing made from “African” fabric (fig. 6). In this effort, he dehumanized the Europeans and established them as the “other.”



Fig 6.  
Cohan, James. How to Blow Up Two  
Heads at Once (Ladies), 2006.

### Marvel Studios: Black Panther

Unlike Keita and Shonibare’s works that show the integration of African and western culture in clothing, the 2018 Marvel film, *Black Panther*, envisioned an African nation that has never been touched nor influenced by the west. The film follows T’Challa, a superhero Black Panther and king of Wakanda. Wakanda is a hidden and isolated, technologically advanced and economically superior African country that sits upon a fictitious substance called metal vibranium - the strongest substance in the world. *Black Panther* showcased a variety of design elements that merged tribal cultures, traditions, time, space, and technology (fig. 7).<sup>19</sup> Lead costume designer Ruth E. Carter took six months to develop the costuming for *Black Panther*.<sup>20</sup> She sent shoppers to venture throughout the continent in search of authentic African designs. “Textiles were sourced to Ghana, but many African fabrics are now printed in Holland; Ms. Carter rejected those,” said Melena Ryzik of the New York Times in her article “The Afro-futuristic Designs of ‘Black Panther.’”<sup>21</sup> Carter mixed and matched silhouettes, textures, patterns, the past and present to then craft a collection of pan-African, Afrofuturistic costume designs.<sup>22</sup>



Fig 7.  
Ruth Carter and Phillip Boutte Jr.; Ruth Carter,  
Ryan Meinerding and Team; Ruth Carter and;  
Keith Christensen. Marvel Studios, 2018.

## Vitra Design Museum: Making Africa: A Continent of Contemporary Design

In the 2015 exhibition catalog “Making Africa: A Continent of Contemporary Design,” produced by the Vitra Design Museum, the prologue opens with a West African proverb: “Until lions have their own historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunters.”<sup>23</sup> The exhibition featured works of contemporary designers and visual artists that explored pre- and post-colonial Africa. One of the artists in the catalog was Swedish Nikolaj Cyon; he created a graphic map titled “AlKebu-Lan 1260 AH” of pre-colonial Africa with its axis south-up (fig. 8). AlKebu-Lan is supposed to be the eldest name for that continent that was actually by black people themselves, it means “mother of mankind” or “garden of Eden.”<sup>24</sup> The catalog also featured a campaign produced by Swedish Design firm Paradiset DDB and designer Ellen van Unwerth in 2001. The campaign was developed with the fashion label Diesel, in which an uncolonized Africa was advertised in a fictitious newspaper “The Daily African.”<sup>25</sup>



Fig 8.  
Cyon, Nikolaj. Alkebu-lan 1260 AH, 2014.

The campaign included photographic scenes of young and wealthy black people dressed in Diesel clothing enjoying a luxurious lifestyle (fig. 9). The headlines featured: “Birthrate Booms in Italy and Spain,” and “Europe Set Back Even Further;” with the sub-headline: “With an average of 8.7 children born to every Italian woman and an annual GNP per capita below AFRO 45, there is a high risk of looming tragedy in southern Europe.” Another headline reads, “AU (African Union) agrees on financial aid to Europe.”<sup>26</sup> In this alternative universe, European nations became the victims. The campaign envisions Europe as a third world continent with financial and political instability. While Europe struggles to survive, Africa, portrayed in the photographs, is living lavishly and providing aid to Europe.



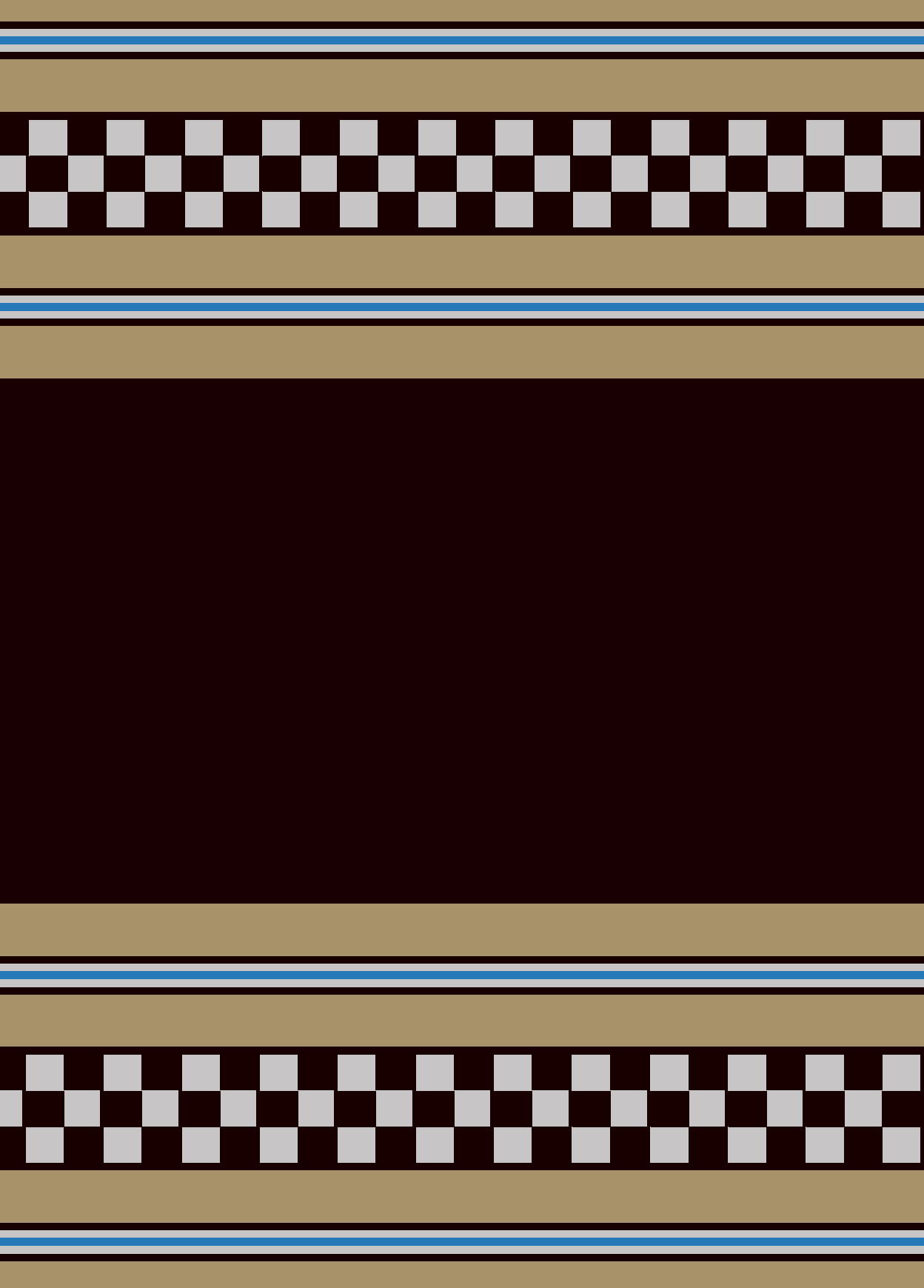
Fig 9.  
DDB Stockholm, Diesel Clothing. AU Agrees, 2001.

## Fiona Mauchan: The African Biennale: Envisioning ‘Authentic’ African Contemporaneity

Lastly, Fiona Mauchan argued how Africa has perhaps unsuccessfully entered the modern world because it did not enter on its own terms.<sup>27</sup> It was forced into the western globalized system that essentially had absolute control. She argued that for Africa to enter the modern world successfully, it must first have a clear understanding of its self-image and representation.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the ideology of the 1930s Parisian movement, Negritude, was a Pan-African collective of Black intellectuals and poets.<sup>29</sup> Lead by Léopold Sédar Senghor and Aimé Césaire, the group was a reaction to colonial racism. Their desire was to define an authentic African identity that was autonomous from the west. In doing so, they explored the African past, pre-colonialization, to re-habilitate what was identified by Mauchan as a “lost national ethos,” as opposed to creating a new African image post-colonization.<sup>30</sup> She explained how some black artists constructed works that promoted “colonial residue,” which is apparent in the works of Keita and Shonibare. In the perspective of Negritude this is considered anti-African. The incorporation of western influences into African artworks was thought to diminish its African character.



Past Alternative



## Method

Historical research and image analysis facilitated the ability to generate what could have occurred alternatively. The research revealed how racial stereotypes, narratives, and interpretations, reflective of slavery and colonization, have been used to assert the white hierarchal frame. It is necessary to confront the loss of importance of these historical tragedies that need to be addressed and redressed by presenting a past alternative.

## The Past

The trans-Atlantic slave trade, of the 15th to 19th century, was one of the most monstrous misfortunes caused by white people that has violently killed an estimate of 150 million Africans.<sup>32</sup> African slaves in the United States suffered barbarous and inhumane treatment by white people and by black people who were coerced to destroy their own.<sup>33</sup> The slaves were overworked, underfed and lived in dreadful conditions. Often, they were made to wear iron collars arounds their necks and drag heavy chains while working in the plantation fields. They were often stripped naked and hung by the arms to have their backs whipped until unconscious or dead, in addition to their limbs being cut off.<sup>34</sup> If a slave tried to run, but was caught, they were mutilated, burned, shot dead or hung. Black people lived in constant terror while enslaved, causing psychological trauma and lasting impairment on their well-being.<sup>35</sup> Moving forward, from 1865 to 1909, King Leopold Louis Philippe Marie Victor of the Belgians ruled over “Belgian Congo”—what is known today as the Democratic Republic of Congo. He was obsessed with establishing imperial power along the Congo river basin.<sup>36</sup> Unfortunately, for the people who lived there, he was successful in his obsession, and formed the Congo Free State (basically his own personal property) in 1885. He initially portrayed himself as a philanthropist who wanted to introduce the black people to the “good” of Christianity and establish a commerce “partnership.”

During the year 1876 in Brussels, Leopold hosted an international conference for explorers and geographers at his royal palace.<sup>37</sup> The conference led to him hiring British-American explorer Henry Morton Stanley, who too was obsessed with Central Africa. Stanley stayed along the Congo River basin for five years, working to persuade black chiefs to see the merits of their “philanthropist” mission and to sign treaties. Once the treaties were signed, the regime began, and trading posts were immediately set up. In little time, Leopold became notorious for his savagery inflicted against the black people of Congo. The region he exploited possessed tremendous material wealth, including wild rubber, palm oil and ivory. Leopold’s soldiers went into the villages and kidnap families, who were then coerced into slave labor for pursuit of his irrational and unattainable quotas.<sup>38</sup> Unmet quotas resulted in beatings, lashings, and mutilation. Elders and children who were unable to work fast enough lost their limbs. Anyone who rebelled against his regime was slaughtered in effort to terrorize villagers into complete submission. Ten million natives lost their lives during Leopold’s regime, marking it one of the most horrific genocides in history. Once the British government received notification of this, Leopold was overthrown, and the authority of Congo was transferred to the Belgian parliament in 1908.<sup>39</sup>

## Outcome: The Alternative

Visualized is a black colonizer or slave master (Master Baba) dressed in a casual, yet regal, traditional African dress- and a white slave, draped in chains wearing a worn-down galabiya, or long robe. Referencing slavery and African continental colonization (Leopold’s regime in Congo) the narratives are combined into one plantation setting. The portraits take the viewer through the white slave’s experience on the plantation. He’s whipped for not meeting the production quota (fig. 10), in which exposure of the wounds and scars on his back from whip lashes is then presented (fig. 11). The slave gets his right hand removed because he was unable to meet the quota (fig. 12). In the “Pointing left in Ghana Gesture: How a taboo on the use of the left-hand influences gestural practice” by Sotaro Kita and James Essegbey it said, “In Ghana, there is a general taboo on left hand use. Giving, receiving, eating, and drinking with the left hand are rude by virtually all members of the community.”<sup>40</sup> Thus, by removing the right hand of the white slave, he has no choice but to live the rest of his life haunted by taboo. To conclude, presented is a portrait of Master Baba and his slave in front of the plantation field. Master Baba is standing tall while gripping on the chains wrapped around the slave’s neck, left wrist, and right wrist with his hand removed. The slave is on his knees to perceive him as an animal and lesser-than (fig. 13). The photographs are documented in black and white with grain, strong contrast, and negative film processing imperfections to portray them as retrospective.





fig 10.

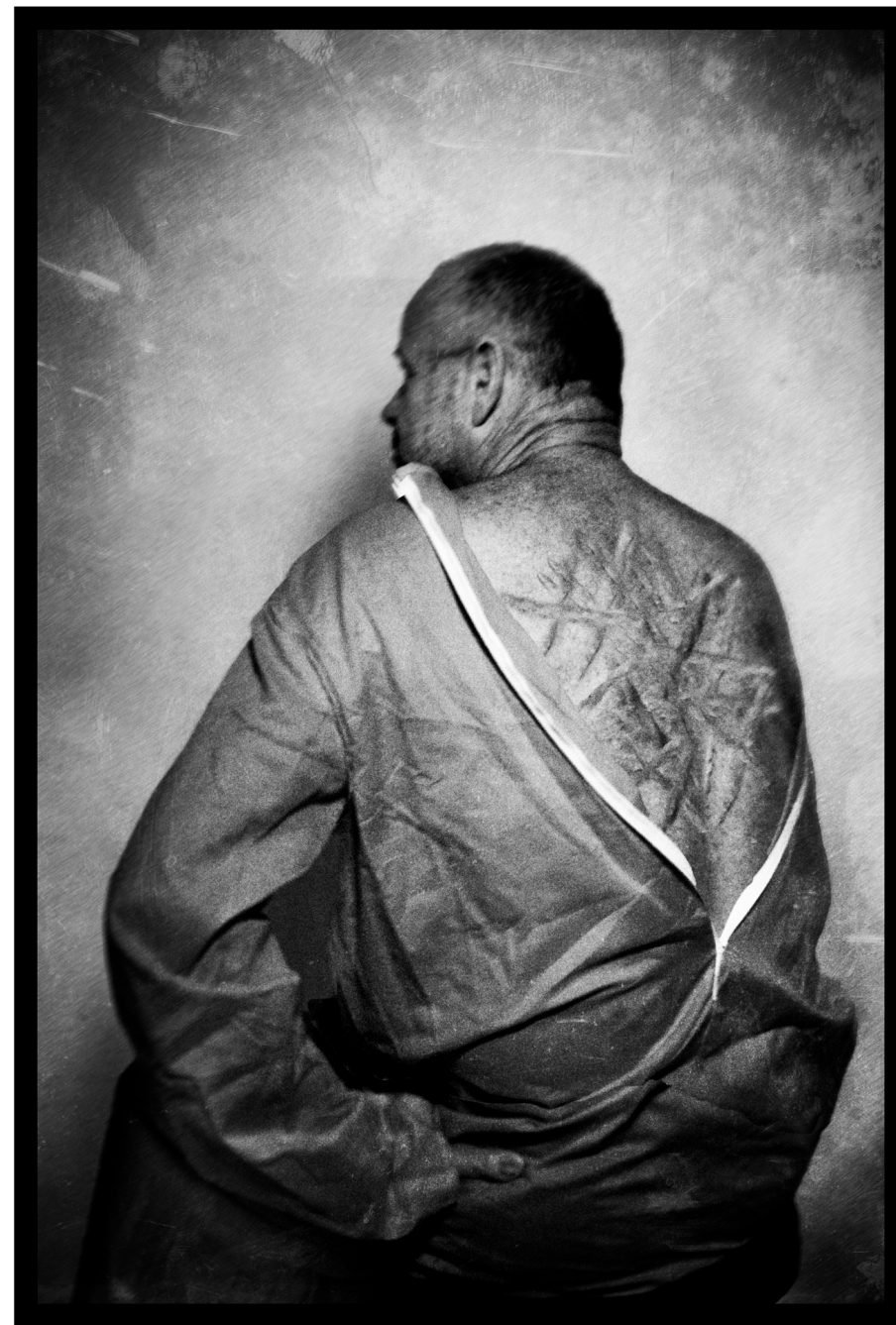


fig 11.



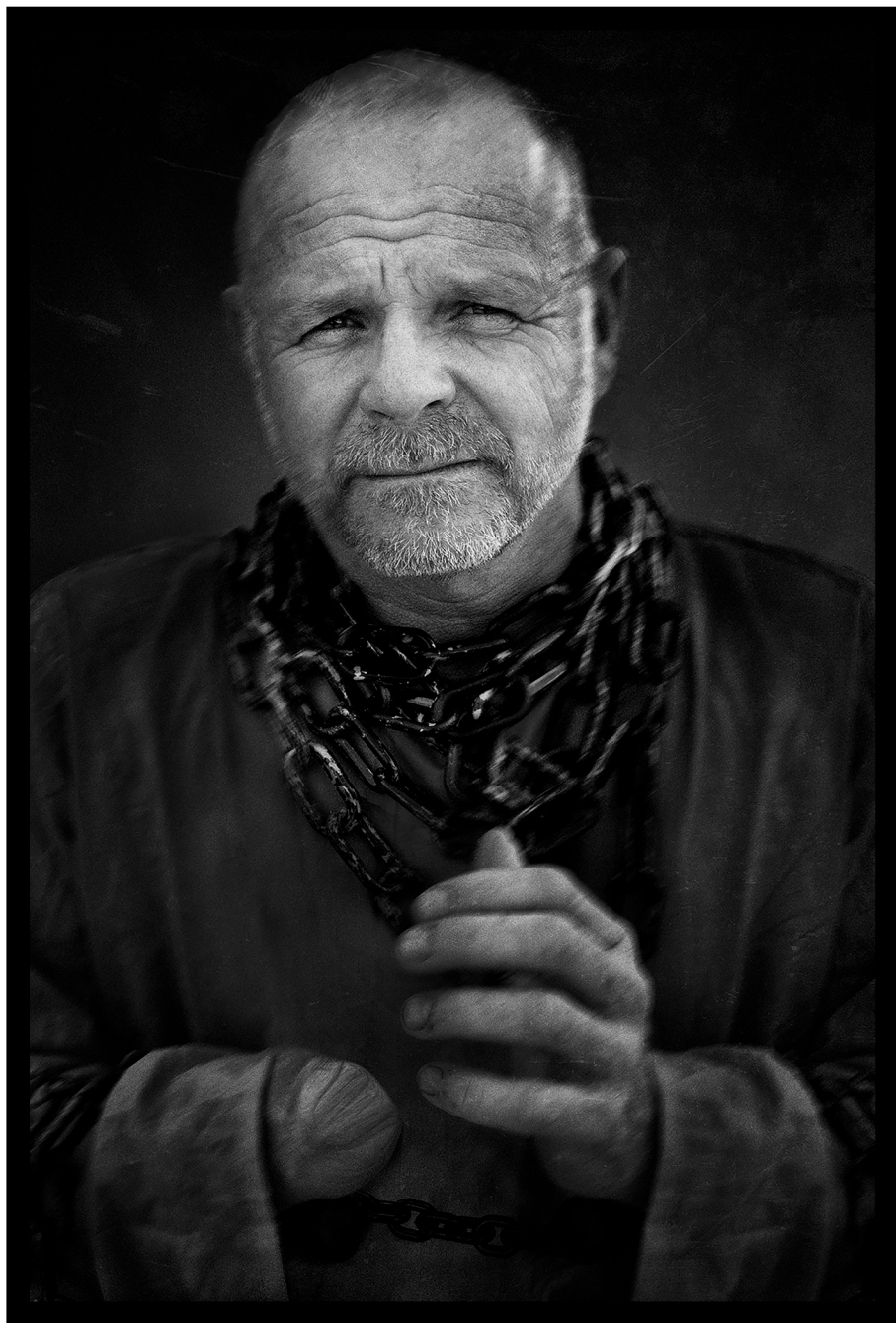


fig 12.

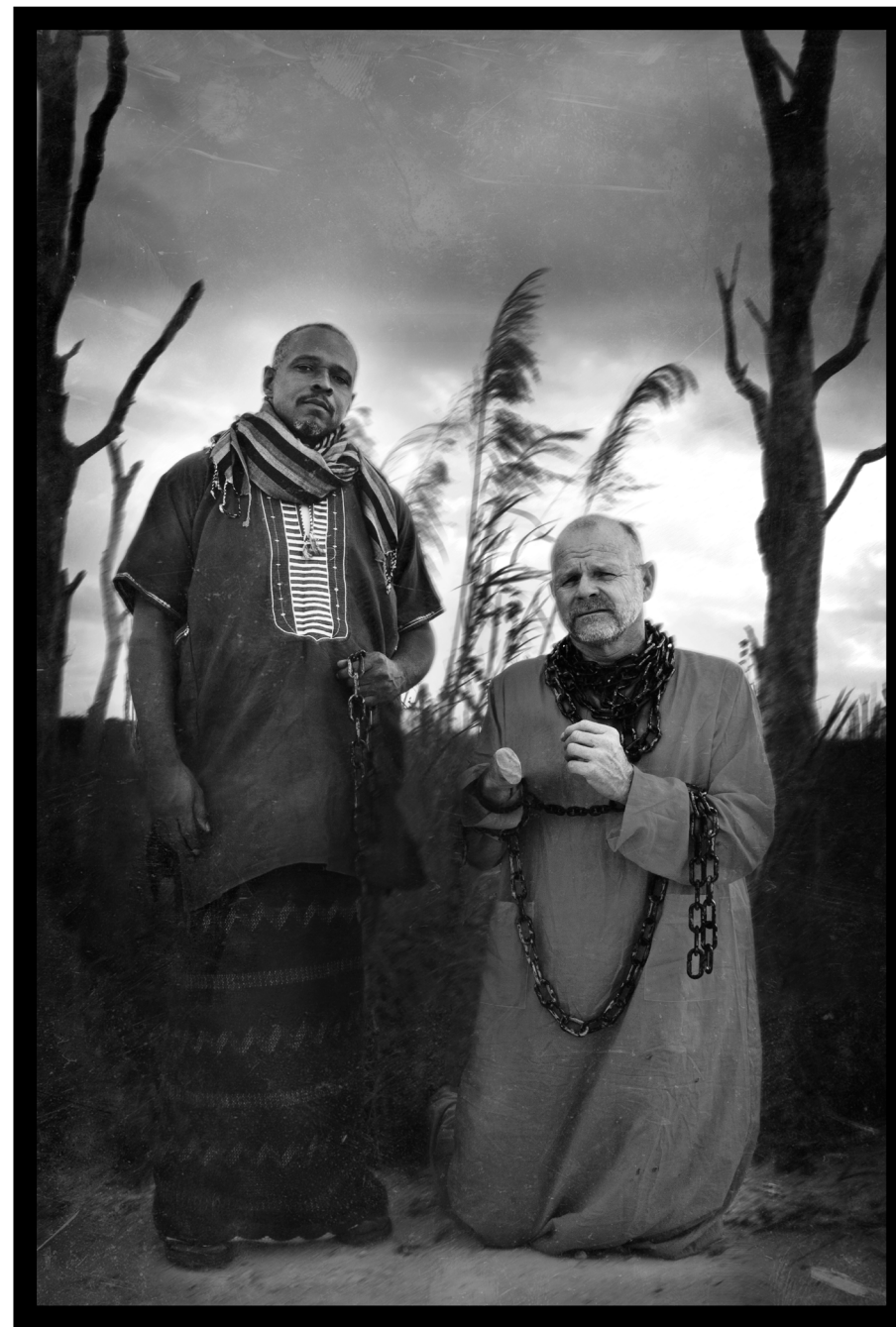


fig 13.





## Present Speculation



## Method

Discursive design, or design-for-debate, is the umbrella for critical, speculative and design fiction. It's the use of objects abstractly or intentionally to elicit discussion. Its reason for being is not to provide practical solutions to everyday problems but to communicate ideas. It seeks to stimulate human emotions, challenge thoughts and open eyes to the surrounding world. Discursive design provides a space for conceptual art and social theory. Discussed formerly was Diesel's "The Daily African" campaign, which portrayed Europe as a third world continent and Africa as a power force through headlines. However, the images accompanying those headlines did not necessarily reflect that. The black people were dressed in western clothing (Diesel) and placed in upper-class western settings. In response, utilizing discursive design, imagined is a world where black aesthetics and culture are recognized as the lead exemplar of society. Moving forward in time from the past alternative, the present speculation is visualized in the form of magazine covers entitled Jarida La El KEBULANI meaning The African Journal. The magazine covers' images are accompanied with headlines and short descriptions that establish El KEBULAN (Africa), meaning the mother of mankind,<sup>41</sup> as a first world continent and Qeqqaza Bota (Europe), meaning the cold place, as a third world continent that is suffering from self-image, education, and economic difficulties.

## Garment Design

Roland Barthes' "The Language of Fashion" explains the how dress is a sociological and historical object. "So it is expressly on the level of the social that dress must be described, not in terms of aesthetic forms or psychological motivations but in terms of institution," stated Barthes.<sup>42</sup> Thus, to establish the institution of black dominance dress is the core signifier. Parallel to the costume designs of *Black Panther*, the garments worn by black people are inspired directly from tradition, having Pan-Africanism as its key for contemporaneity. The cutting patterns came from collages of historical photographs of various tribal members across Africa (fig. 14). The traditional clothing worn in the photographs were segmented to see how they would look if they were mixed and matched. For the fabric's print design, African numeration systems and their relation to mysticism and taboos were the inspiration (fig. 15). The numeration systems defined zero, three, four, and nine to have special significance. The Guji Oromo people of Ethiopia called zero, *mara*, meaning to round or return.<sup>43</sup> The Akan people of Ghana associate the queen mother with three and the king with four. While the Dogon people of Niger say woman is four and man is three.<sup>44</sup> The Dogon, along with the Yoruba people in Nigeria, have a four-day week system, and the third day is considered the critical day. An expression of the Yoruba people is, "The world has four corners..."<sup>45</sup> Akin to this, a father of the Twareg people, found across North and West Africa, would say to his child, "I give you the four corners of the world, because one cannot know where one will die."<sup>46</sup>

Number nine for the Guji Oromo people represents the transition between the end and the beginning - leaving one dimension to progress to a higher one. However, it can also be associated with a critical moment like illness or death.<sup>47</sup> Thus forth, the print design is structured into an array of lines that symbolize *mara* as they are wrapped around the human figure, in addition to being grouped into three, four, and nine. Altogether the garments are representatives of life (*mara*), femininity (three), masculinity (four), death (nine), and divinity or mysticism (special significance of the numbers). The primary colors used for print was defined by *isishunka*, or the traditional bead color convention, of the amaMchunu people in Natal, South Africa. Their convention arranges seven defined colors, and two of those colors are blue and white. From a Mchunu informant, documented by the Natal Museum in Pietermaritzburg, confirmed the traditional meaning assigned to blue is "together we can go far" and white is "my heart is pure (clean)."<sup>48</sup> These colors, being primary in the print, indicate the unity, progression and purity of black people and that they are the ruling class. While the black people wear these intricate garments that symbolize their high class, the white people wear very simple African clothing. *Isishunka* defines pink as "you are very poor, without cattle" and can specifically represent the inability to pay the price for a bride.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, the pink African clothing indicate that they come from poverty and are low class, hence they were enslaved and colonized.



fig 14.

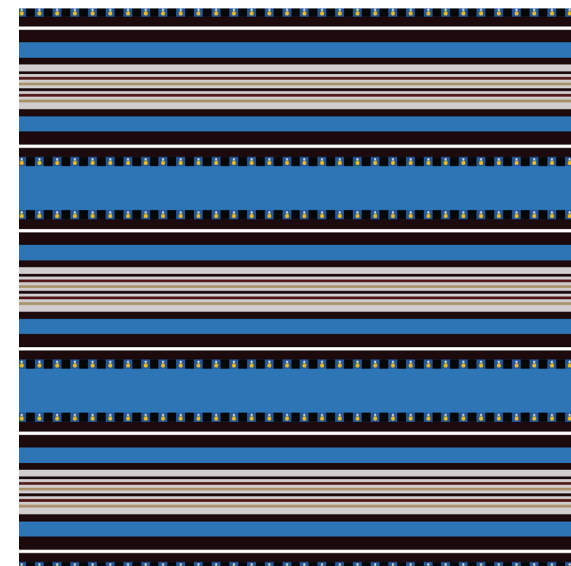


fig 15.

## Object Design

While observing photographs of various meetings, conferences and assemblies between African continental leaders and/or leaders of her diaspora, I noticed the standard tableware used is British porcelain (fig. 16). This prompted a question: why can't the traditional African vessels for liquids be the standard tableware for these meetings? Thus, in creating tableware for such a gathering, I drew from African tradition and chose the calabash gourd fruit (fig. 17). Made hollow, the fruit is used widely throughout the African continent as a beverage utensil (fig. 18). Using the organic forms of the calabash gourd as a model, I replicated it in glazed ceramics and created a functional tea set. The tea set is titled "Kyungu ena Mabakuli ya Shai," meaning tea pot and bowls (fig. 19).



fig 16.



fig 17.



fig 18.



fig 19.



Outcome



Issue 3

Typically, advertised culture coerces the normalization and materialization of whiteness. For instance, the advertisements for mainstream fashion brands predominantly incorporate white models and possibly there may be one black model. The headline of issue three of Jarida La El Kebulani reads: “The Beauty Ideal: The Effects of El Kebulani Standards of Beauty on White Women.”

Article blurb says:

White women are vulnerable to the effects of El Kebulani standards of beauty because these standards emphasize skin colors and hair types that exclude white women, especially those of very fair skin and extremely straight hair. This article explores the white woman’s internalization of El Kebulani beauty standards precipitated by media and society. Additionally, it explores the related outcomes of this internalization on white women’s self-perception.

The blurb continues with:

Featured is an article on white women and their exposure to the mainstream beauty standards ubiquitously communicated in every aspect of daily life. Research has shown that the exposure has greatly influence white women’s body image and attractiveness ideals. Given the history of slavery and colonization, beauty standards are based on idealized depictions of black women’s physical features, which can be difficult and almost impossible to attain for white women.

Sub-headline reads: It Takes Courage for a White Person to Speak to a Black World.

Description states:

The black power structure traps white people in black imaginations and experiences. It takes courage for a white person to speak to a black world, a world that renders white people invisible unless they attempt to assimilate, emulate, and alter their appearance to look like that of black people. Qezqazawi writers are challenging the stereotype of white people being the ‘unattractive primitive barbarians’ as they attempt to establish their own, unique concept of beauty.

The image for the cover is a lifestyle portrait of a group of young adults: two are black and one is white, with the intention of advertising the normalization and materialization of blackness or African-ness (fig. 20).



fig 20.



Issue 4

Issue four’s headline introduces: “Schools in Qeqqaza Bota Introduce a New Required Text: The Heroism of Master Baba by Aisha JD.” The feature caption says, ‘Exclusive Interview with Local Qeqqazawi School Administrator on Government Mandated Reading Requirement.’ The article blurb provides a synopsis of the required text and reason why the Qeqqaza Bota government is making it a requirement:

Master Baba of El Kebulan was one of the most famous leaders of African Expansion into the west. He became an icon that is responsible for the survival of white people living in a barbaric society. This first edition of the biography of Master Baba presents his life and quest for Qeqqaza Bota. For those who benefitted white people by conquering them, Master Baba was an impactful figure. Including new archival material and information gained from El Kebulani Intelligence (EKI), this first edition is a valuable introduction to a pivotal figure. It also supplies rich literary text for educators and their learners. Qeqqazawi Public Schools established performance standards that specify the level of proficiency a student must reach to meet content standards in all subject areas. These standards set benchmarks for what students should know and be able to do. History is a weak subject area for Qeqqazawi youth. Therefore, the government mandates JD’s biographical book as a required text to increase the students’ historical knowledge, improve overall literacy (reading, writing, listening, speaking), and facilitate proficiency in all content.

The sub-headline states: Are white people becoming more illiterate?

Description says:

Low literacy rates among elementary and secondary education students are widespread in Qeqqaza Bota. Despite increases in funding, by El Kebulani organizations, rates continue to decline. People with lower levels of literacy have fewer opportunities and are likely to face tremendous social problems such as unemployment, ill health, generational poverty, and incarceration. Once individuals are incarcerated, it is even more difficult for them to improve their circumstances.

The cover image is of the administrator placed in an intimate setting, suggesting the interview is taking place in his personal home. He is dressed in a casual galabiya, reading the newly government mandated text (fig. 21).



fig 21.



Issue 6

Issue six establishes the financial instability of Qeqqaza Bota, for the white continent is in constant need of assistance from wealthy El Kebulan. This is clearly defined in the headline that reads: El Kebulan Queen Agrees to Continue Development Aid to Qeqqaza Bota.

Description states:

El Kebulan generates a tremendous impact on the aid landscape in Qeqqaza Bota. Unlike most continents, El Kebulan does not officially disclose its aid information. However, a research study published recently claimed El Kebulan committed 350 billion units of Gold to foreign aid between 2000 and 2011. The emergence of El Kebulan as a major player in the development of Qeqqaza Bota increased competition with the other continents, especially in terms of using foreign aid as a venue to strengthen the power held over developing Qeqqaza Bota. El Kebulan’s development assistance is their pathway for investments with major returns. Consequently, Qeqqaza Bota is on top of the list for foreign aid. Driven by rich mineral and natural resources including gold, diamonds, oil, rubber and other resources, the unexploited continent’s economic potential is apparent to other nations. El Kebulan has plans of expansion and plans to establish a development cooperation agency to coordinate its foreign aid on a wide-scale. This will give El Kebulan an advantage as an economic power over the entire world!

Sub-headline says:

Qeqqaza Bota Continues to Suffer Inflation. The following description reads: ‘As Qeqqazawi currency persists to descend, inflation hits 74 percent in Yekatit (February). Qeqqaza Bota’s inflation rose to 83 percent in Yekatit from 60 percent in Meskerem (September).’ Said the El Kebulan statistics agency on Hamus (Thursday). The starved continent continues to struggle with an economic crisis. Economic conditions in Qeqqaza Bota have been challenging. The high inflation rate and the general increase in price levels coincide with a significant rise in the El Kebulani Gold price against the Qeqqazawi Dolari.”

The cover image is of a black woman (El Kebulan Queen) and a white woman (Qeqqaza Bota leader) sitting together having shai (tea) from the traditional vessels of El Kebulan. They are placed in an African-styled meeting room, suggesting the news press were invited in to capture the moment when El Kebulan’s Queen agrees to continue the development aid to Qeqqaza Bota (fig. 22).



fig 22.



## Issue 9

The headline of issue nine says: It's That Time Again! El Kebulani Fashion Week! The blurb expresses the wealthy black continent's ability to host extracurricular activities like a fashion week:

El Kebulan is about to host its fashion week in the Songhai region this year! The event brings thousands of people and millions of gold units into the region for a 'week' of private shows for an industry audience along with public showings for fashionistas. The women's and men's wear that will hit the international souqs next season get their first presentation here for retailers and press. The El Kebulani Fashion Council will orchestrate and release the official Fashion Week schedule and presentations.

Sub-headline questions: Does EKFC-backed Project Seek to Capitalize on Qeqqaza Bota Fashion by Giving Designers Access to El Kebulani Markets?

Description states:

Marketing on a global scale remains to be a stumbling block for Qeqqazawi fashion brands. Qeqqaza Bota fashion brands rely on their local souqs, as well as the Qeqqazawi designers. El Kebulani Fashion Council (EKFC) makes a difference by preparing Qeqqazawi designers to work with El Kebulani retailers. Qeqqazawi people debate if the initiative is just another way for their 'wealth' to end up in El Kebulan's pocket. However, it is apparent that the initiative is more helpful than harmful.

The cover image is of a young black man walking, suggesting his portrait was taken for an exclusive of the upcoming fashion week (fig. 23).



fig 23.

# Conclusion

In conclusion, the world has seemingly dismissed the horrors black people faced and still face, thus continuation of assessing what has been done and what persist to occur is necessary. It is important to acknowledge that the What If Collection is a refined draft of just the beginning of what can flourish into an extensive exploration. For world building, analysis of each subtle development in social, economic and structural concerns are necessary. I plan to continue documenting this speculative world through, not just only photography, but through other medias and mediums. The project's visual re-adaptation of history and current events can truly redefine and transform the black person and their place in society. And, for the world, to see is to heal, and to heal requires stepping forward. Apart of this progress it, inevitably, includes recognizing and remembering to then continue the fight against white supremacy.

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Aisha Jumila Daniels

The What I Collection

The What I Collection is a series of garments that explore the relationship between the body and the environment. The collection is inspired by the concept of 'What I' as a way of life, where the individual is defined by their relationship to the world around them. The garments are designed to be versatile and adaptable, reflecting the idea that the individual can change and grow over time. The collection is made from sustainable materials and is designed to be worn in a variety of ways, reflecting the idea that the individual can adapt to their environment.

JARIDA L.A. El Kebulani? The What I Collection

JARIDA L.A. El Kebulani? The What I Collection

