



Header: ONWU Design by Marizu ONWU, Our Lady of Victoria Monastery by Localworks, Kombi by Thomas Bef Studio, ANCESTRAL FUTURES by Nnyry Ryke, RIFT Coffee Table by Vitalli and WAST Pendant 01 by Aikaline.

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 \(AIDA\)](#) 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, Birsle + 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 Vigital 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 **Felix Holland, Joshua Mutabaazi, Edson Agume, Wilson Sendikwanawa, and Allan Semakula** of **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 Designer 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 Awards, 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, DEFEA, Decorex Africa, The Fashion Law Institute, and PAID Summit.

[VIEW ALL WINNERS](#)

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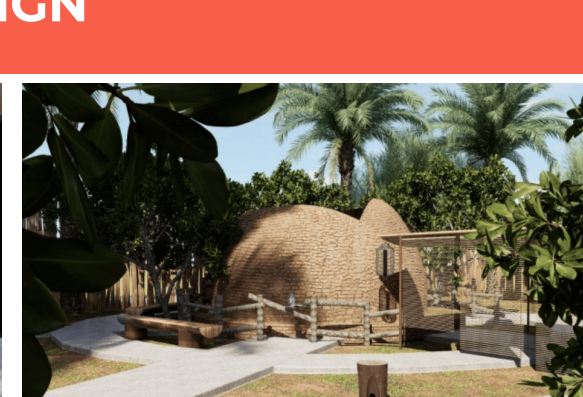
WINNERS IN SPATIAL DESIGN



Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN OF THE YEAR



PEARL JAM
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNER OF THE YEAR



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

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

Lead Designer: Nicole Moyo
Country: USA, South Africa

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

WINNERS IN PRODUCT DESIGN



Keiskamma
PRODUCT DESIGN OF THE YEAR 2026



Kabila Collection
PRODUCT DESIGNER OF THE YEAR



Sport Can
EMERGING DESIGNER OF THE YEAR

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

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

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

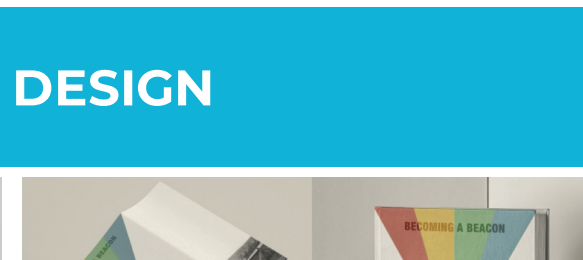
WINNERS IN COMMUNICATION DESIGN



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



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



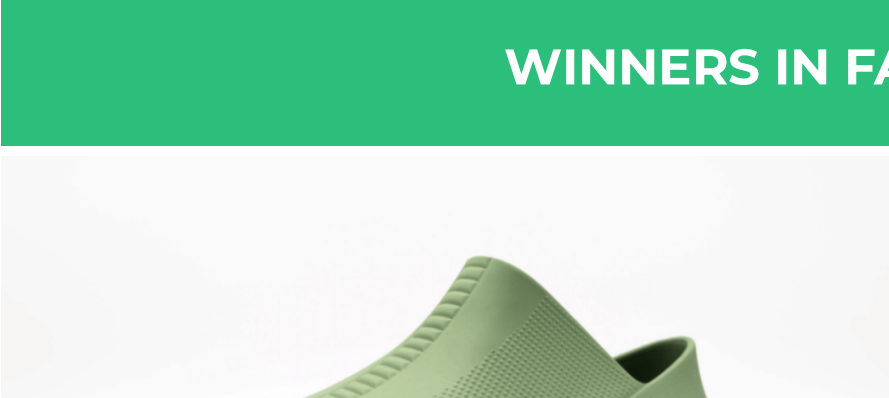
Becoming a Beacon
EMERGING COMMUNICATION DESIGNER OF THE YEAR

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

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

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

WINNERS IN FASHION DESIGN



The Rowe
FASHION DESIGN OF THE YEAR 2026



The Baazz Sneaker
FASHION DESIGNER 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

Lead Designer: Ghizlaine Elmanjra
Country: Morocco

The [Africa International Design Awards](#) are proud to celebrate the remarkable creativity and cultural richness emerging from across the African continent and its diaspora, recognizing the designs that are shaping the future of African-centred design on the global stage.

[VIEW ALL WINNERS](#)

Note to Editors: High-resolution images of the winning projects and the full press kit are available for download at [this link](#). Images are available for press use only and must not be cropped, altered, montaged, overlaid with text, or manipulated in any way. They must be used with captions and photo credits as provided. For press enquiries, please contact press@3cawards.com.

AIDA Awards
The [Africa International Design Awards \(AIDA\)](#) aims to celebrate the quality and diversity of design projects rooted in African cultures, communities, and contexts. Launched in 2026, the program is an inclusive platform that pursues and rewards exceptional creative work across four categories: Spatial Design, Product Design, Fashion Design, and Communication Design. More information at africainternationaldesignawards.com.

The AIDA Awards is a program under the 3C Awards, a leading organization curating and promoting design across the globe. The company represents today's diversity and innovation in lighting design, furniture design, interior design, and architecture. Each brand is a symbol of design excellence around the world, showcasing professional and emerging designers' work to over 120 expert jury members. Developed by Astrid Hébert, the AIDA Awards is managed by 3C Awards, specializing in awards, marketing, media, and events. 3C Expert is a sister company to Farmani Group, founded by Hossein Farmani. Farmani Group, established in 1985, is a leading global organization curating and promoting photography, design, and architecture.

3C Awards is part of Three C Group GmbH, a Swiss-registered company based in Grabenstrasse 15a, 6340 Baar, Switzerland. More information at 3cawards.com.