



ATTENTION TO DETAIL: A model in a design by **Nake Ape**

GOOD TASTE: Fashion designer Shaldon Kopman was responsible for dressing Samuel L Jackson when he was in the country to shoot a new film

PHOTO: VELI NHLAPO

Perfect fit for Jackson

Sandiso Ngubane

RUY Phillipe, the man in charge of wardrobe for a film recently shot in South Africa and starring Samuel L Jackson, was wandering about town looking for fabric.

It was in a building in downtown Johannesburg where he discovered designer Shaldon Kopman's showroom and so began a relationship that would see Kopman dressing Jackson for the locally shot movie *Kite*.

Due in cinemas only next year, the entire movie sees Jackson dressed in garments designed by Kopman.

"I've always admired his style, not just in movies, but his personal style," Kopman says of Jackson. "You know, he's not young anymore but he still manages to keep it together."

Kopman says Jackson's initial response when he walked into his studio the first time was not one of enthusiasm.

"He didn't even acknowledge me at first until his wardrobe stylist introduced me. He just went straight for the rails and

MOVIE STAR GIVES DESIGNER THE EDGE

started looking through. He then pulled out one of our jackets from the rail and said "This is what we're after."

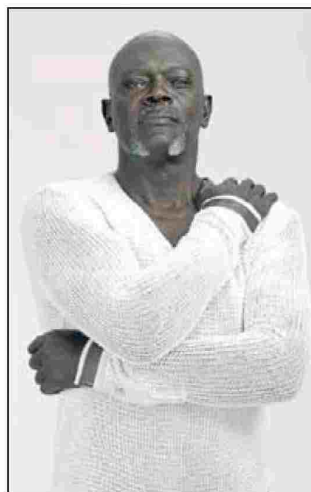
Jackson not only ended up wearing clothes designed by Kopman, but went on to wear a pair of hemp pants from Kopman's Naked Ape label at this year's MTV Movie Awards.

In a GQ Magazine interview, Jackson also praised Kopman's workmanship.

"His taste fits mine perfectly... I enjoy clothes and I like to collect unique and well-crafted pieces. I think Naked Ape is a worthy addition to my collection."

Jackson also ordered 10 scarves that are being sent to him in the US. They are made from fabric handwoven by women in Swaziland. The scarves cost R2 800 a piece.

The price of buying locally



STYLISH: Samuel L Jackson

made fashion has always been a talking point as people wonder why they are paying as much as one would expect to cough up for a Gucci suit when the clothes are locally produced.

"You cannot compete with China," Kopman says of the

cheap labour that makes it cheaper to get clothing made in Asia's factories.

"And because of that you've got to raise the quality and start thinking exports as opposed to just thinking local."

Perhaps dressing and getting the support of a star as big as Jackson will be that turning point for Naked Ape as Kopman seeks to expand his business from being a small luxury start-up to being a major player in the South African fashion landscape.

He already has converts in the local market who, above and beyond the quality he offers, appreciate the service guarantees that come with supporting a small South African fashion business.

We found one such customer in Kopman's showroom.

"I was his very first customer," Eddie Bannaman said as he fitted some jackets at the showroom while Kopman's employees took measurements.

"The brand speaks to me. Shaldon doesn't just make clothes, he finds out the kind of person you are and tailors that around you."
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