

The Thinking Watermill Society | October 2021

Interview with Sandra Hawi

(Founder and Designer at Hawi Designs)



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Introduction

Hawi Designs is a crochet business aiming at creativity promotion in fashion industry by using simple fabrics to create unique outfits in Kenya.

Sandra established Hawi Designs as a sustainable African brand that meshes aesthetics and aspects of slow fashion.

In this interview, The Thinking Watermill Society learns more about Hawi Designs as a growing sustainable crotchet brand.



1. What does sustainable fashion mean to you?

These are clothing designed in an environmental-friendly manner and can also be recycled.

2. How and when did you first come to know about sustainable fashion?

I came to know about it when I started my brand back in 2020. I was trying to learn more about fashion, crocheting the products, etc.



3. Do you consider your brand sustainable and why?

Yes. Most of the crochet products can be recycled to make new merchandise.

I remember back in primary school, we would undo our woolen school sweaters to make school bags. Also, some of the fiber we use in making the outfits, like cotton, are eco-friendly.

4. What inspired your brand?

I went to Kisumu Fashion Week as one of the models and a certain designer struck my eyes with the amazing crochet pieces she was showcasing.

I kept thinking it was possible to crochet a whole piece. I took it as a challenge considering my desire since childhood of being a designer.

I found a way of expressing my creativity to the world in a different way.



5. What are some of the challenges you face as a sustainable fashion brand, and how do you manage them?

Crochet products have not gained popularity in the country or rather, they are not so embraced compared to fast fashion. So, one has to push harder in terms of marketing.

6. Do you think sustainable fashion has a future in Africa, and why?

We have people who are aiming at producing sustainable fashion but it is expensive for common "mwananchi" (citizen) to afford. And, with the presence of fast fashion, I would say we have a long way to go.



7. How do thrift shops impact your business?

Their prices are relatively low, so, definitely it has an impact on something that is still striving.

8. Do you see any difference between Ethical and Sustainable fashion?

Yes, ethical fashion deals with workers' rights and social welfare generally. On the other hand, sustainable fashion deals with the environment and how conducive the fabrics are to the ecosystem.



Thank you for your cooperation on behalf of The Thinking Watermill Society. All the best in your current and future endeavours at Hawi Designs, Ms Sandra Hawi.

Learn More about Sandra Hawi

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About The Thinking Watermill Society

The Thinking Watermill Society is a non-profit organization. In particular, it promotes the debate and exchange of ideas among its members regarding the changes underway in the economic, cultural and social landscape, together with the analysis of the consequences that said changes entail, so as to identify the possible opportunities of economic, cultural and social growth related to said changes.

Our headquarters are in Rome, Italy.

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