

ENABLING MZANSI'S

makers



Zaid Philander has carved a successful niche in the world of sustainable design – and now he is empowering others to do the same. By **Eugene Yiga**

As a lad growing up in Cape Town's pre-hipster-era Woodstock, Zaid Philander was adept at taking things apart to see how they worked. Like any distracted youngster, he usually lost interest before putting them back together. Today, though, he runs a thriving fashion label, I Scream & Red, that specialises in reassembling recycled materials, turning them into eye-catching accessories.

It was his older sister who taught Zaid to cut, sew and design from books. While other children played outside, Zaid was hand-sewing hems, stitching on buttons, and doing the jobs seamstresses loathe – such as unpicking hemlines and cutting patterns from brown paper.

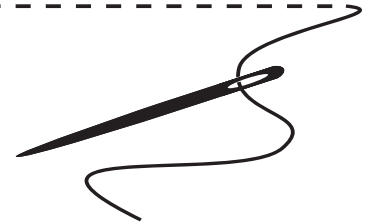
When he was seven, Zaid's family bought an industrial sewing machine, fuelling his ceaseless fascination for the kind of creativity it enabled. He says he recalls being too short to reach the pedals,

so he and his sister used a crutch and a hosepipe to construct a contraption that enabled him to sew. →





Zaid's vision was to create fashion accessories in a socially conscious way, using planet-friendly materials.



It wasn't long before he was making simple garments for family and friends.

After studying environmental awareness, Zaid decided to combine his passion for garment manufacture with his interest in sustainability by starting his own fashion design and production company. His vision was to create fashion accessories such as handbags using planet-friendly materials and he would strive to be socially conscious, too. This sustainability-focused niche within the fashion industry is complemented by a strong desire to empower others, particularly people with physical disabilities. 'We teach people with disabilities how to design bags made from recycled seat belts, reused upholstery, and rejected sample fabric books,' says Zaid.



'All our makers are taught at their own homes, eliminating travel time and allowing them to work in a pressure-free environment on a flexi-time basis. They create a product that is made with 100% love and with the skills to sustain employment to significantly improve their lives.'

In the quest to minimise the impact of production, I Scream & Red sources all materials within close proximity of manufacture. They also only use non-toxic pastes for screen printing and sources organic cottons for stitching and lining. They empower people with disabilities, offering them sewing and design classes, and provide training to people who wish to start a business of their own.

iscreamandred.co.za ■

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