

In between the lines



Meeting

Deola Sagoe

Queen of African design

Scribd.

MEETING DEOLA SAGOE

Deola Sagoe – Queen of African design –

It is early afternoon when we touch down at Lagos International Airport and as we walk out of the arrivals hall, we are immediately engulfed in a wave of hot, humid air. I take off my jacket and before I even start looking where to go, a smartly dressed man walks up to us.

“Welcome to Nigeria!” he says with a smile. “My name is Fauzi, we were in touch via email to arrange our meeting. Please follow me, our car is waiting.” I am immediately struck by his perfect British accent.

Our chauffeur-driven car heads towards the city and we soon hit dense traffic. As we inch forward in the Lagos rush hour, Fauzi briefs us in preparation of our meeting with Nigerian fashion designer Deola Sagoe.

“Deola started working in fashion more than 20 years ago when she joined her mother’s label as a junior designer,” he says. “Her very personal style is inspired by her culturally diverse education on three continents. She picked up different ideas and cultural trends around the world, but Africa remains her greatest inspiration – the different textures and colours, the culture, the people, the vibe – she calls it ‘African Soul’.”

Fauzi explains that he and Deola recently started working together where he would take care of the business side of her fashion-design company. “Like most artists, she just wants to create beautiful things – she isn’t very business-minded,” he comments with a little smile.

Meanwhile our driver has managed to extricate himself from the traffic jam and turned onto the 12-kilometer Third Mainland Bridge. “We’re going straight to Deola’s atelier on Victoria Island,” Fauzi says as we speed across Lagos Lagoon. “She’ll be meeting us there.”

Surrounded by Lagos Lagoon to the north and the Atlantic Ocean to the south, Victoria Island is clearly a more upmarket area, with brand-new high-rise office buildings, modern hotels and fancy shops.

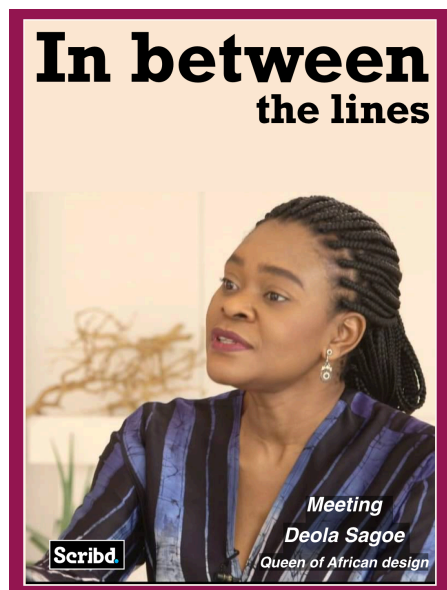
“So how successful is Deola’s brand today?” I ask.

“The future looks bright” Fauzi says. “Deola has a haute couture and a prêt-à-porter line and the brand is slowly making a name for itself around the world – Deola is also showing her collection at the New York fashion Week.

“How do you see her wider role as an influencer of African fashion though?” Anouk asks.

“She has given 21st-century African fashion design a tremendous boost – her work is the clearest expression of African identity imaginable. Through her designs, Deola is spreading African culture, influencing the image of Nigeria and acting as a goodwill ambassador. In my opinion it is ground-breaking work.”

Our car stops in front of a sleek two-storey building with an unmistakable African look and feel. “This is it!” I tell Anouk as we get out of the car. “Get ready to meet princess of African fashion.”



Deola Sagoe
Fashion Designer

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