

Albertus Swanepoel: The milliner of New York on the future

A lover of beautiful things, a designer of luxury goods and an all-round nice guy happens to also be a hat designer on the little island of Manhattan. Daniel Scheffler chats to him as the year comes to an end about life, luxury and what's to come in the New Year.

“I can definitely see a strong movement towards more ecologically sound fabrics, and that is all about leaving a smaller carbon footprint. Designers are using more natural fibers” said Albertus who believes that designers are also looking at growing their own cotton, using authentic organic dyes as to cut back on the waste and using true craftsman for handmade details in clothing. He continued by saying “I see it like the slow food movement; there is almost a slow fashion movement”.

“Seeing that the world is moving so fast consumers want to be comforted. I wonder what Diana Vreeland would say about this,” said Albertus as he speaks about recently having read her biography by Eleanor Dwight. “She has inspired me with her work at Harper’s Bazaar and then of course at Vogue”.

“On the flip side of the coin are the technological innovations in fabrics – where I have seen huge companies, like Uniqlo, are developing fabrics that retain heat, or vice versa, prevents perspiration” said Swanepoel as his concern is that these advances take a massive amount of computers, testing and ultimately waste. “It is ultimately up to the consumer which path he or she will take” he continued. And so Albertus said, “This and more will affect how luxury and luxury goods get made, sold and bought”.

Albertus Swanepoel has in his career won the Coty Award in South Africa, been one of the two runners-up for the CFDA Vogue Fashion Fund Award, been nominated for the Swarovski CFDA Accessory Award & Best Accessory Designer at the WGSN Awards and has exhibited at Victoria and Albert Museum in London. He has also collaborated with a host of New York designers including Diane Von Furstenberg and Alexander Wang.



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