

...NOT IN THISDAY STYLE? THEN YOU'RE NOT IN STYLE

THIS DAY

# Style

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2024



**BIODUN SHOBANJO**  
THE GRANDMASTER OF ADVERTISING

## WITH JINGLE BELLS AND GOOD CHEER

May the sweet sound of Jingle Bells and the joy of the season bring you peace, love and laughter. Wishing you a Christmas filled with warmth and unforgettable memories

*Merry Christmas*  
from all of us at Access

SCAN  
HERE



COVER NOTE

Dr. Biodun Shobanjo is today, one of Nigeria's foremost marketing communications practitioners, whose impact on the industry has been nothing short of transformative. He's career spans over 50 years, beginning in broadcasting before making a landmark move into advertising in 1971 with Grant Advertising. By 1976, his leadership abilities were already evident, as he rose to become Deputy Managing Director.



Society

ENO ESSIEN'S BOOK LAUNCH ADVOCATES FOR EARLY CANCER DETECTION

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EDITOR'S LETTER



EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Closing Chapters, Opening Doors

Looking back, this year has been a kaleidoscope of emotions, challenges, and triumphs. From unexpected twists that tested our resilience to fleeting moments of joy that reminded us of life's beauty, it has been nothing short of eventful. We've celebrated milestones, witnessed growth, and learned a thing or two about ourselves along the way. Whether you've spent the year building something new, recovering from life's curveballs, or simply finding the courage to keep moving forward, know that every step has been worth it.

For us here at the magazine, it has been an exhilarating ride as we navigated a dynamic year in fashion, culture, and storytelling. We were thrilled to spotlight emerging designers who shook up the scene, delve into powerful conversations that sparked change, and celebrate the creativity that makes this industry so vibrant. It's a privilege to be part of this community, and as we wrap up the year, we can't help but feel immense gratitude for you—our readers, collaborators, and supporters.

But as much as we love the reflective charm of December, there's something electric about the promise of January. The first day of the year feels like opening a blank journal, the pages pristine and waiting to be filled with stories yet untold. And while there's often pressure to craft lofty resolutions, maybe this year we can try a different approach. Instead of setting goals rooted in perfection, what if we focused on growth, joy, and connection? Let's resolve to show up for ourselves, embrace the unpredictable, and savour the little victories that often go unnoticed.

This week, we are reflecting on some of the stories that shaped the year and looking forward to the ones that will be written in 2025.

Our Year in Review - Nollywood Edition takes you through the blockbusters that made this year one for the books. If there's one thing Nollywood has proven time and time again, it's that our stories—authentically told—are powerful enough to resonate far beyond our shores. From dazzling premieres to films that tugged at the heartstrings, 2024 was a banner year for the industry.

And then, there's life itself. This year was a masterclass in resilience, love, and growth. The feature Lessons Learned—What 2024 Taught Us About Life and Love focuses on the universal truths we rediscovered: the importance of staying connected, the necessity of rest, and the beauty of embracing imperfection. Whether it was learning to love ourselves a little more or cherishing the quiet moments, this year gave us plenty to think about.

As I write this, I find myself reflecting on what this year has taught me. If I had to sum it up, it would be this: life is both fleeting and full. The days may feel long, but the months rush by, and before we know it, another year has slipped through our fingers. That realisation isn't meant to overwhelm; it's a reminder to savour the now, to make space for joy, and to lean into the moments that truly matter.

From all of us at the magazine, thank you for being part of our story this year. Here's to writing an even better one together in the next. May the rest of the year be filled with laughter, love, and a little sparkle, and may the new year bring you everything you've been hoping for—and more.

Cheers to endings, beginnings, and the magic that lies in between.

Love,  
Konye

Mystical GLAMOUR

Polo ...the reward of success

What if your jewellery could do more than complete your look – what if it could tell a story of timeless refinement and ethereal grace? Embrace the light, airy allure of white gold, where each piece is as enchanting and flawless as your inner glow.



Piaget Limelight Gala Watch 18K White Gold Diamond Watch with 60 brilliant-cut Diamonds



Pasquale Bruni Giardini Segreti Double Flower Ring 18K White Gold with Diamonds



Pasquale Bruni Giardini Segreti Small Flower Bracelet 18K White Gold with Diamonds

Pasquale Bruni Giardini Segreti Single Flower Collier in 18K White Gold with Diamonds



Messika Move Uno Pavé 18K White Gold Pavé Diamond Bracelet



Messika Move Noa Pavé 18K White Gold Diamond Ring



Pomellato Together Bangle 18K Rhodium-Plated White Gold Bracelet



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# The Shobi Collective Hosts Surprise Dinner to Celebrate Dr. Biodun Shobanjo at 80

The Metropolitan Club in Lagos came alive on Saturday, December 21, 2024, as The Shobi Collective hosted an exclusive surprise dinner to honor one of Nigeria's most illustrious marketing communications practitioners, Dr. Biodun Shobanjo, who recently turned 80.

With a dress code dubbed the "Cultural Gorgeous" affair, the evening brought together an elite gathering of Nigeria's finest to celebrate a man whose towering contributions have shaped the advertising and marketing industries in Nigeria and beyond.

The event, was a testament to Dr. Shobanjo's enduring legacy, as colleagues, friends, and family shared heartfelt tributes to a man they described as a mentor, a trailblazer, and a visionary.



THE SHOBANJOS: FEMI, ABIMBOLA, JOYCE, DOLAPO OBUAYE, FUNKE SHOBANJO, TUNDE SHOBANJO AND CHI CHI OBUAYA



TOSIN ADEFEKO, FOLUKE AYUBA, FUNKE OSIBOWALE & YESIDE ASEKUN ORIYOMI



KIKELOMO & REUBEN ABATI



ENIOLA BELLO



KEHINDE KEHINDE ASHIRU, ABIMBOLA & KEMI ASHIRU



MODUPE AJAYI, JOHN AJAYI AND CLARA OKORO



TONY & SHIRLEY OBUAYA



SEGUN OSOBA



ALEX ONABANJO



YOMI BADEJO-OKUSANYA, LOLU AKINWUNMI, FUNMI ONABOLU, JOYCE SHOBANJO, BIODUN SHOBANJO, UDEME UFOT, KUNLE OGUNMEFUN, STEVE BABAETO, YOMI SONUGA AND LANRE ADISA



YEMI & FOLASADE OGUNBIYI AND VICTOR SONEYE



PEPE UDE UMANTA & YINKA IDOWU



DUPE ADELAJA & RONKE AKINDELE



JIMI AWOSIKA



FOLUKE AYUBA, BUNMI SONUGA AND TOSIN ADEFEKO

## Eno Essien's Book Launch Advocates for Early Cancer Detection

The importance of early detection in the battle against cancer took centre stage at the highly anticipated launch of *Unstoppable*, an inspiring new book by Eno Essien, breast cancer survivor and CEO of Rhetrak. The event, held in Lagos, brought together influential personalities, medical experts, and advocates to celebrate resilience and amplify the message of proactive health measures.

His Imperial Majesty, Ooni Adeyeye Babatunde Enitan Ogunwusi Ojaja II, Ooni of Ife, served as the book's Chief Launcher. Represented by his wife, Her Regal Majesty Olori Temitope Enitan Ogunwusi, the Ooni underscored the critical role of awareness and early detection in improving cancer patients' survival rates.

A highlight of the event was the announcement of a groundbreaking partnership between Eno Essien and the Ooni's foundation, Hopes Alive Initiative. Together, they will offer free breast screenings for women aged 28 to 40, ensuring early detection and timely intervention. This initiative symbolises a collective step forward in empowering women to prioritise their health.

The event kicked off with an opening prayer by Pastor Good and featured readings from *Unstoppable* by notable figures Oluyinka Soola, CEO of Kapeun Limited, and Affiong Ajiere, Creative Director of Affimma. A lively conversation with the author and a comprehensive book review were led by Adesuwa Onyenokwe, Founder and Editor-in-Chief of Today's Woman magazine.

Eno Essien's personal story of resilience, as chronicled in *Unstoppable*, served as the emotional backbone of the event. Her journey through the challenges of breast cancer and her subsequent triumph inspired attendees to confront their own obstacles with courage and determination.



ZOE & ENO ESSIEN



IDARA ESSIEN AND ADESUWA ONYENOKWE



KEHINDE AKINSETE & HM OLORI TEMITOPE ENITAN-OGUNWUSI



AFFIONG AJIERE

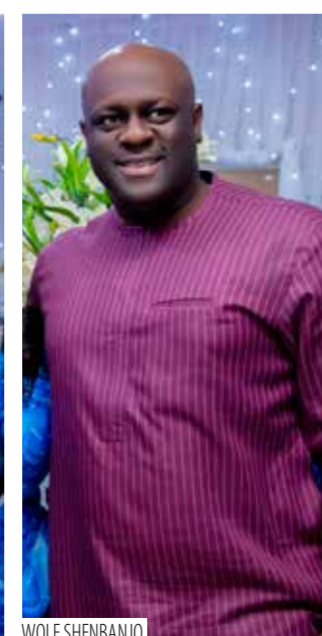


BOLANLE INEGBEDION

IBIRONKE ADEYEMI



DARE ALIU



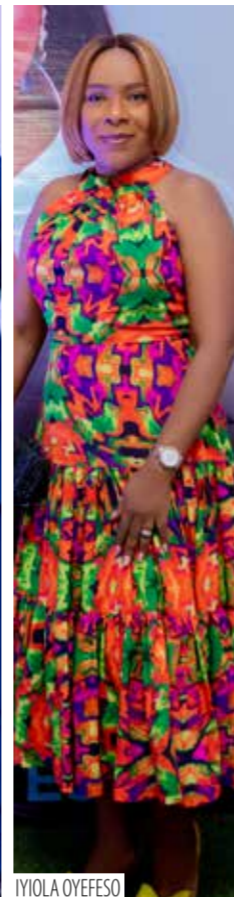
WOLE SHENBANJO



OLIVE EMODI



YOMI BADEJO-OKUNSANVA



TYIOLA OYEFESO



NAOMI ESSIEN



OPE MAKINWA



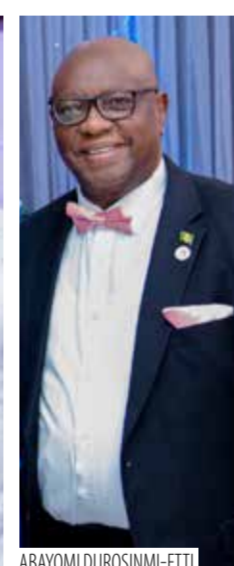
ITORO ESSIEN



KAREN KOSHONI



AYO ANIMASHAUN



ABAYOMI DUROSINI-ETTI



BOLANLE INEGBEDION



RICHARD INEGBEDION



ADEBAYO FAJIMI

## THE YEAR THAT WAS: TOP FASHION TRENDS THAT DEFINED 2024

As 2024 draws to a close, it's impossible to look back without marvelling at the kaleidoscope of fashion trends that defined this year. The fashion world embraced individuality, sustainability, and a touch of nostalgia, creating a year where clothing became more than just a means of self-expression—it became a cultural statement. From vibrant runways to street style, these are the trends that not only set Instagram ablaze but also left an indelible mark on the style landscape.



CHIDERA MUOKA



IFOMA WILLIAMS



**Denim Reimagined**  
Denim had a major resurgence this year, and we're not talking about basic jeans. Designers pushed boundaries with patchwork, deconstruction, and oversized silhouettes. Acid-wash and embellished denim jackets became streetwear staples, proving that the beloved fabric has no limits.



### Quiet Luxury Takes Center Stage

This year, fashion was less about loud logos and more about understated elegance. The concept of "quiet luxury" dominated wardrobes, reflecting the "if you know, you know" ethos. Think well-tailored trousers, neutral palettes, and luxurious fabrics.

**Sheer Genius**

Transparency was the buzzword for 2024, and sheer fabrics dominated runways and red carpets. This trend celebrated daring yet elegant sensuality. It wasn't just about baring skin—it was about layering and creating depth in outfits, allowing wearers to play with textures and silhouettes.



EKI OGUNBOR



NICOLE ASINUGO



LOLA OGUNNAIKE



PAT FANIRAN AND AYONA TRIMMELL

**Sustainability Becomes Stylish**

Sustainability wasn't just a buzzword—it became a necessity. Eco-conscious consumers demanded more from brands, and designers responded with innovative materials and recycled fabrics.



ENIOLUWA ADEOLUWA



**Androgyny's Ascendancy**

Fashion continued to blur gender lines in 2024, with androgynous styles taking centre stage. Oversized blazers, baggy trousers, and unisex pieces redefined what it means to dress confidently.



AKIN FAMINI

**Cultural Couture**

In 2024, the global runway expanded. Designers drew inspiration from diverse cultures, celebrating heritage through bold prints, embroidery, and traditional techniques. Nigerian fashion houses brought intricate craftsmanship to the global stage. The result? A richer, more inclusive narrative that embraced the beauty of cultural storytelling.



WANIFUGA



ANNA BANNER



**Statement Accessories Rule**

This year, accessories weren't just the cherry on top—they were the whole dessert. Oversized earrings, chunky necklaces, and bold belts turned even the simplest outfits into works of art. Footwear also got the memo, with sky-high heels taking over red carpets and street style alike. If there was ever a time to go big or go home, it was 2024.



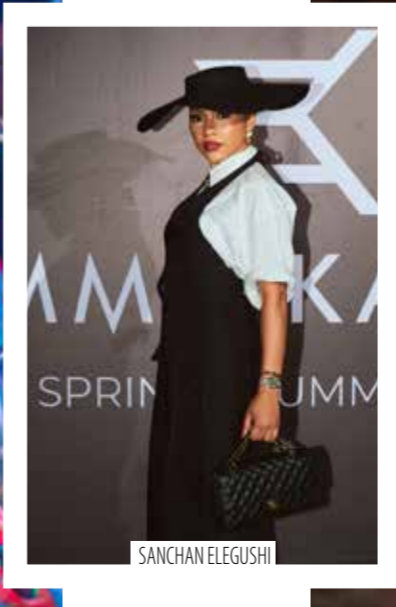
BANKE KUKU



RITA DOMINIC



HE FOLAKE ABDULRAZAQ



SANCHAN ELEGUSHI



WANIFUGA



IDIA AISIEN

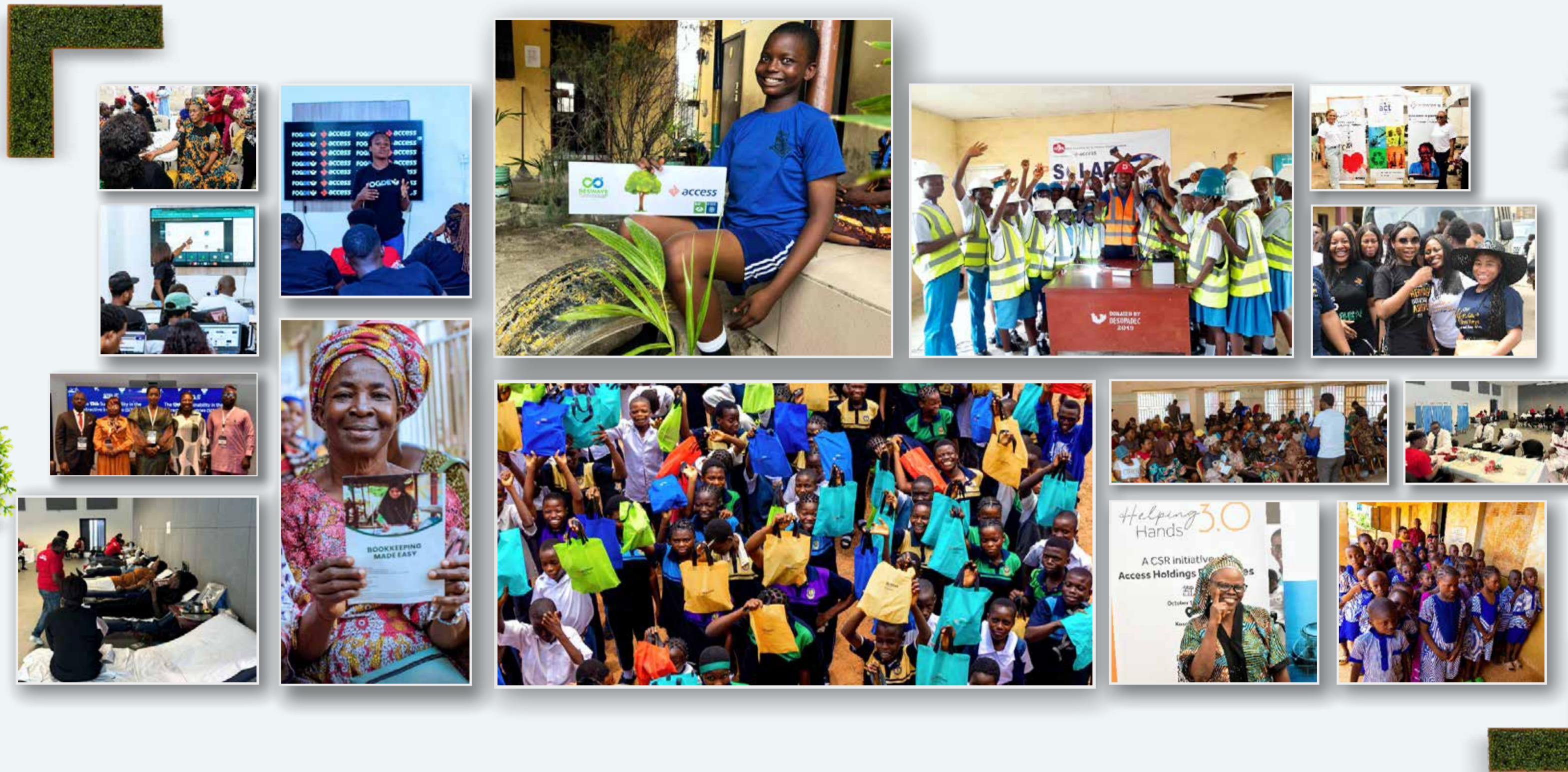


**The Power of the Capsule Wardrobe**

In a year where less truly became more, capsule wardrobes gained momentum. Consumers began investing in versatile, high-quality pieces that could be styled multiple ways. TikTok and Instagram were flooded with videos showing 10 items styled into 30 outfits, promoting intentional shopping over fast fashion. This trend wasn't just practical—it was a celebration of thoughtful fashion choices.



ANGEL ANOSIKE



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- **62,000+** TREES PLANTED ACROSS AFRICA.
- **3 MILLION+** EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING HOURS DEDICATED TO MAKING A DIFFERENCE.
- **5,897** COMMUNITIES IMPACTED.
- **2,000+** CLIMATE CHAMPIONS NURTURED.
- **500,000+** STUDENTS EMPOWERED IN STEAM AND FINANCIAL LITERACY.
- **1,479** NGOs SUPPORTED.

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COVER



# BIODUN SHO BANJO

## THE GRANDMASTER OF ADVERTISING

Dr. Biodun Shobanjo is today, one of Nigeria's foremost marketing communications practitioners, whose impact on the industry has been nothing short of transformative.

He's career spans over 50 years, beginning in broadcasting before making a landmark move into advertising in 1971 with Grant Advertising. By 1976, his leadership abilities were already evident, as he rose to become Deputy Managing Director. But his true legacy began in 1980 when he founded Insight Communications, a pioneering agency that became a key player in shaping the advertising landscape in Nigeria.

A true visionary, Dr. Shobanjo has been behind a series of firsts in the Nigerian marketing communications space. From establishing Quadrant Company, Nigeria's first PR consultancy, to founding All Seasons Mediacom, the first media independent in the country, his contributions have reshaped the industry. His leadership of the Troyka Group, which includes a diverse portfolio of companies in advertising, media, security, and more, has solidified his position as a global business leader.

Dr. Shobanjo's relentless pursuit of excellence and innovation culminated in 2015, when he secured an equity partnership with Publicis Groupe, one of the world's largest marketing communications conglomerates, taking Troyka to the global stage with the formation of Insight Redefini.

Recognized globally for his contributions, Dr. Shobanjo has received over 50 prestigious awards, including the Zik Prize in Leadership and the Africa Brand Leadership Excellence Award. He is also a philanthropist, contributing to education, healthcare, and national development, including his significant donation of the Biodun Shobanjo Multi-Media Centre of Excellence to the University of Lagos.

With an illustrious career, numerous accolades, and a deep commitment to giving back to society, Dr. Shobanjo shares continues to inspire leaders in both business and philanthropy.

In this interview with Funke Babs-Kufeji, Dr. Shobanjo, shares his remarkable journey thus far and reflects on turning 80.

**As you celebrate your 80th birthday, how do you reflect on the journey from your early days in broadcasting to becoming a titan of the advertising world?**

I think it's been a very exciting journey. When I look back 53 years, actually, 53 plus another seven, which is probably about 60 years. That was when I started off in broadcasting and transitioned into advertising 53 years ago, exactly 53 years last week, on the 6th of December. Looking back from Broad Street, where I started as an account executive trainee, to where I am today, it's been a journey of constantly learning, inventing, and reinventing. Meeting all sorts of incredible people on that journey. And I think for me, the joy is looking back at the people that I have met with those who

have impacted my life. Some of whose lives I have also impacted. And when we look at the balance sheet, one cannot but give glory to God. It's been an adventure that if I had the opportunity to live it again, I probably would follow the same path.

**You made a significant career shift from broadcasting to advertising in the early 1970s. What was the driving force behind that decision, and how did that move influence the course of your life?**

It is people who affect other people's lives. I saw people who transitioned from broadcasting to advertising, and I saw the change in their lives. People like the late Chief Banjo Solana, people like the late Segun Ogunbunmi, people like the late



Kehinde Adeosun, and then you have the likes of Chief Olu Falomo, who is still very much alive. And Chief Femi Adeniyi Williams, who is also still alive. And as I said, as a young boy at the time, I just saw some kind of a radical change in their lifestyle. And I felt that, look, I could do with that, and it was a time when the opportunities abounded. I followed my dream. I pursued it. And on December 6, 1971, the door was opened for me. And since then, there hasn't been any looking back.

**You co-founded Insight Communications in 1980, which became Nigeria's leading advertising agency. Looking back, what were some of the key challenges and rewards of building the agency from the ground up?**

It would be modest of one to say it was co-founded. But in the true sense of the word, it couldn't have been co-founded. If you understand that, at the time the company was founded, the young people that I took along with me were all at the executive level. I was at the C-suite. I was the deputy managing director of the company. So, it couldn't have been something we sat down to say, "Can we form a company?". So, it was something that I wanted to do. So, I started the company. But I had to pull people along because I needed other people to work with me. It's not a business for one person. So, I found these young people that I thought had the same mindset as myself. In fact, by the time I called them, the company had been founded and registered. We started in extreme difficulty; we started with one client whose budget was N15,000 per month. We started very small, and we had a working capital of 128,000 Naira, and we had debt of 104,000. So, really, everything in the office was on hire purchase without the help of a godfather.

I, as the leader of the team, the visionary of the company, I knew that we had no alternative but to succeed. And so, we threw everything at it, knocking at people's doors. In 1980, when we started the company, the total advertising spend in the country was not even up to 20 million Naira in total. It was small, and in 1981, 82, and 83, advertising was classified as being in the non-preferred sector of the economy. People didn't quite understand what it was, and people didn't appreciate it, and it was believed all those who worked in the sector were just wasting their time because it was not recognised by the government. To put it in perspective, in 1981, we went to the bank to seek a 10,000 Naira loan. It was turned down because the bank said we were in the non-preferred sector of the economy. Now, that industry today contributes about N650 billion to the Nigerian economy. If we hadn't had the vision that we were playing in a major sector, we would have backed up and withdrawn. But we took a look at what was happening globally with advertising, what is now called marketing communications, and what was contributing to global GDP and stayed in there. And I must tell you that our growth was very rapid. Because by our 10th, 11th year, we had become the number two biggest advertising company in Nigeria.

**Your pioneering role in Nigeria's marketing communications industry is unparalleled. You've founded several firsts, such as Quadrant (Nigeria's first PR consultancy) and All Seasons Mediacom (Nigeria's first media independent). What inspired you to pursue these innovations, and how did you manage to turn them into such successful ventures?**

We tried to follow the rules. At the time, all advertising companies offered PR as collateral, but the government of Nigeria didn't accept it, and it shouldn't be the case. If you wanted to offer PR, it has to be from a totally different perspective. It must come from a company that does exactly that. And so, we decided to follow the rules and set up the Quadrant Company in 1990.

Basically, we had a small PR department and then turned it into a company. We registered the company and started playing in the field. But we were very clear about what that company had to bring to the industry in terms of professionalism, in terms of expertise, and all. And as I told you earlier on, I took a global perspective of the business. I saw the way the business was running globally. And I knew that media independence was beginning to sprout in different parts of Western Europe and America. And I also was quick to

recognise what that unit was contributing to our turnover. And that it required better expertise, technical skills, and all that. And so, we decided to invest. A couple of years later, other advertising companies also followed. But I think it would not be immodest to say that we then formed the catalyst for what is now called today's Nigerian Institute of Public Relations and the Media Independence Association of Nigeria.

**Tell us a bit more about Troyka**

You know, as we went on our journey, we found out we were sprouting different companies, and we were putting assets and human capital to run these businesses, but at one point in time we felt we needed a holding company structure where we could impact from the Centre what these various companies were doing. So that they could deliver better to their clients. So that we had to quickly build the strength that would support these individual companies and operate with one standard. So that it doesn't matter which of our businesses you went into. The likelihood is that you'll find the same standards in terms of the quality of people, in terms of the look and feel of the organisation, and in terms of, if you want to call it, the culture. So, if you've seen one company, you've seen them all. So that's why we had to create Troyka as an umbrella to give that kind of shade and support to our various individual companies.

**In 2015, you took the bold step of entering into an equity partnership with Publicis Groupe, scaling Troyka to a global level.**

**What was the vision behind this partnership, and what impact has it had on Troyka's ability to compete globally?**

I am a product of international exposure that came through partnerships. When I was building my career, the company that I worked for at the time, Grant, had partners. And I had the privilege of being a student in the London office. And I could see the benefit of the partnership that Grant had with Michael Erickson at the time. So, from when we started, we'd always pursue finding a technical partner that would aid us in the area of manpower development, specifically because with knowledge comes strength. We were quick to recognise that we needed the knowledge. Where would you get that technical knowledge? You have gone to school everywhere in the world, but you need to work with those who have been in the business much longer than yourselves, who operate in a more sophisticated market, so that your guys can learn. From that partnership, we sent people to different parts of the world for training. The benefit of that reflects in the quality of work that we do. That, for me, was very, very important. So, we partnered with the third biggest group in the world, the Publicis Group, headquartered in Paris but with offices in

different parts of the world. What does that do? It opens the door for our people to continue to leverage the strengths of that kind of company into helping us deliver superior quality products and services to our clients locally. And that's why we went into that partnership.

**Having been awarded numerous national and international recognitions, including the prestigious advertising man of all time, what does leadership mean to you? How has your approach to leadership evolved over the years?**

I think you have to talk to those that I have been privileged to lead. But I think that, to be fair, I have gotten more than my own fair reward for the service that I have rendered. I got an award two days ago from the Out of Home Advertising Association of Nigeria, where they gave me an award at the 2024 Legion in the industry. That award marked the 85th award that I would receive in my career. This is very humbling. And I just cannot thank all those who have judged me worthy of these various awards, which include two from two of Nigeria's topmost universities, the Abafemi Awolowo University and the University of Lagos, respectively. Including one that I got from my nation, the officer of the Order of the Niger, the OON by the President, I think in 2022. These things have been humbling for me. As I said earlier, I've been very lucky with the people that I've been privileged to work with. You have your vision; you have a dream. And these people understand the dream. And the key to

that dream, and together we actualise the dream.

**Throughout your career, you've emphasised professionalism and integrity. What advice would you give young professionals on how to navigate challenges while maintaining their values and achieving success?**

Well, life is not that easy. I think there's a mentality out there that you can fast-track everything. You know, you really cannot fast-track everything. It's not possible. Particularly businesses that require professionalism, you have to serve some sort of apprenticeship. And that's what I tell everybody. Look, don't come and tell me about some guy who did some out-of-this-world thing or say to me this guy, who just left school, is sitting in his room and doing something phenomenal with his phone. It can't last. If you want to pursue a professional career in anything, you have to learn. Firstly, you have to come with some knowledge, and then you must have some apprenticeship. Let me give you an example. The longest-serving apprentice that I know of is a fine gentleman called Jimmy Awosika. He's the group managing director of Troika. He's the CEO of the group. He took over from me. He's been serving his apprenticeship for the past 46 years with me. I recruited him in 1978, and he's been with me ever since. If you want to find a man in this country who understands marketing communications, then Jimmy Awosika is the man. He understands it like the back of his hands. And I can point you to a couple of other guys who are doing so well, even who had worked with us. So, and it's not just us; I mean, banking, whatever the profession is, you have to serve some apprenticeship. There's no magic about it. You can move on the fast track, no problem, because you have some extraordinary talents, but for crying out loud, to be able to do it well, you have to serve some apprenticeship. That's my position.

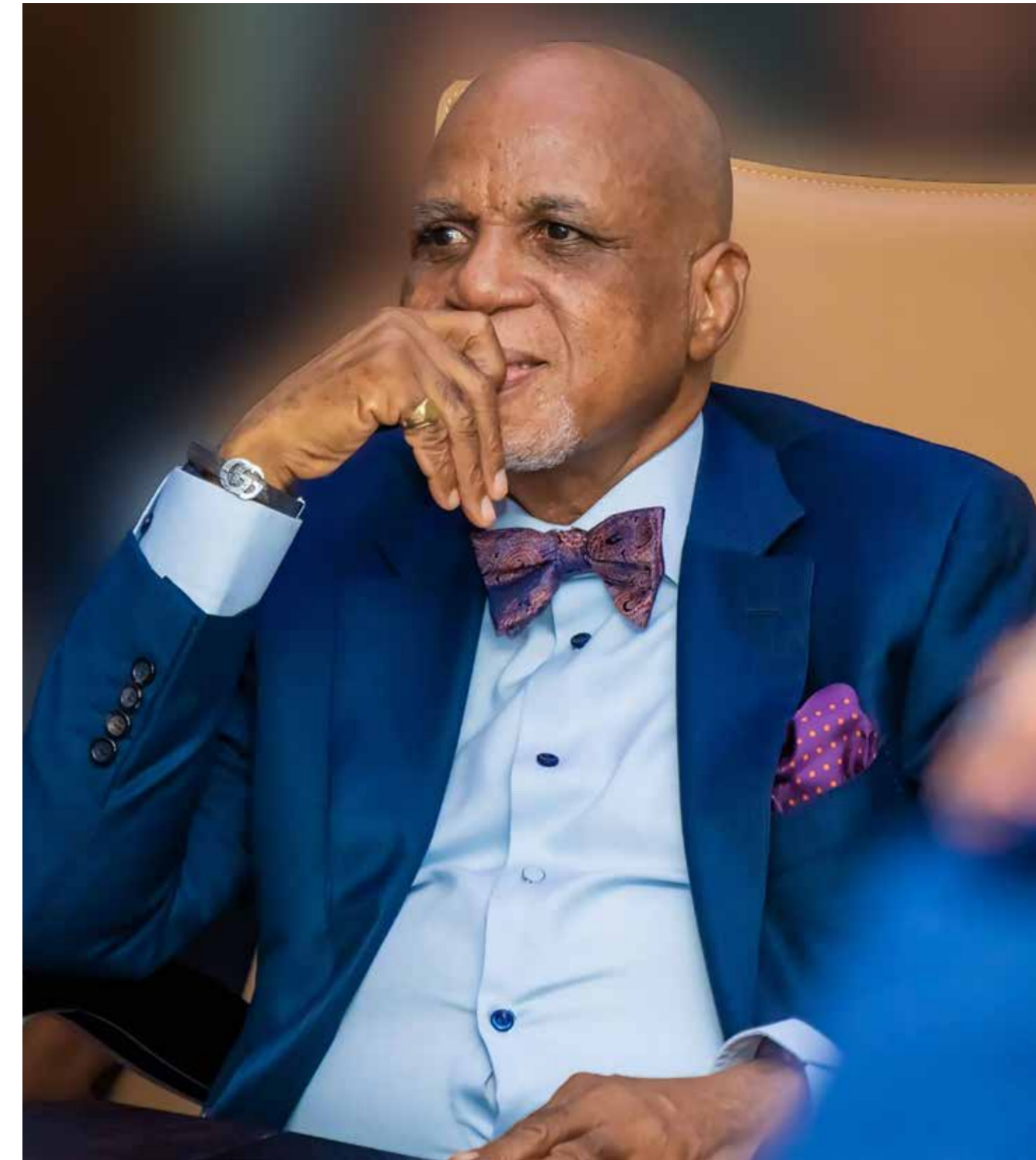
**You are known as a philanthropist with a quiet yet powerful impact. Can you share more about your philanthropic journey and what drives your commitment to causes like the National Cancer Prevention Programme and your contributions to education?**

If you are a product of my own kind of circumstance and you anchor at where you are, you have to look back and say, you need to do something; you need to give something back to society. I lost my father as a 13, 14-year-old boy. My father was the breadwinner of the family. And I had siblings, and I happened to be the first child. My mother was a petty trader. So that actually changed the course of my life. If you are able to wriggle out of that, and then you become a professional of very high standing as I have turned out to be, then the least you can do is to impact society with the things that you do in terms of helping people, particularly in a society like ours, helping people through education, through communal help. Because to be honest, government cannot do everything. It's not possible. I've done, I keep doing my little bit.

When the University of Lagos approached me that I should help with the School of Media and add one floor to their building, which was the brief at the time, I agreed on the basis that I would send my people there to take a look. They went and took a look and saw that the building could not carry one floor. I said to the university, I'm sorry, I can't do it because the building will collapse; I opted out. But they were persistent, so we decided the best thing to do was build from scratch a two-story, multifunctional media school which I did.

**Looking back at your career and the incredible milestones you've achieved, what would you say is your greatest legacy? What do you hope people will remember you for, both in the professional world and beyond?**

I think that I would very much like to be remembered as someone who changed the face of marketing communications in this country.



*We were quick to recognise that we needed the knowledge. Where would you get that technical knowledge? You have gone to school everywhere in the world, but you need to work with those who have been in the business much longer than yourselves, who operate in a more sophisticated market, so that your guys can learn.*

*I think that I would very much like to be remembered as someone who changed the face of marketing communications in this country. Because indeed, when the history of marketing communications is written in this country, I suspect that a fair amount of space will be devoted to what I contributed.*

Because indeed, when the history of marketing communications is written in this country, I suspect that a fair amount of space will be devoted to what I contributed. I gave it the bounce that it required. I was also lucky to be the president of our association at some point in time, where I waved the flag and was selling what we were doing as an organisation.

**As you celebrate your 80th birthday, what are your personal reflections on ageing, success, and life in general? How do you continue to find fulfillment and purpose in the later stages of your life?**

You know it's funny how age just grips you. Suddenly I am 80; I can't believe it. I don't look or feel 80, to be honest. I'm lucky in that sense. But you know, you suddenly look back and say, eight zero. It's all like yesterday. I have spent the past three years of my life just generally enjoying myself. Which is incredible. For me, advertising is a profession that you enjoy every day because there's something

different every day. The briefs are different, so it's plenty of fun. And that's what I reflect on in my life. I've enjoyed every minute of it. Of course, there have been stresses as well; make no mistake about it. I remember in my early days when we couldn't pay salaries on time. We still pay but instead of paying on the 26th of whatever, we probably pay on the 10th of the following month. I remember those days; I remember hitting the streets and all that. But all of those days have flown away. I am in good health. I walk one and a half hours every morning except on Sundays. I think what I spend my time now really enjoying is my grandchildren

## LESSONS LEARNED: WHAT THIS YEAR TAUGHT US ABOUT LIFE AND LOVE

The close of the year always brings with it a swirl of emotions. We think about the wins, losses, laughter, tears, and, perhaps most profoundly, lessons. This year has been no different. Life has taught us resilience, love has shown us its many faces, and through it all, we've emerged wiser. As we look back, here are the poignant lessons we've gathered about life and love that just might inspire your next chapter.

### 1. The Art of Letting Go

If there's one universal truth life keeps teaching, it's this: not everything is meant to stay. Whether it's a friendship that fizzled out, a career path that no longer served, or a romantic relationship that ended, this year reminded us that letting go doesn't mean failure. It



means growth. Love, in all its forms, can only thrive in spaces free of resentment and unmet expectations. The hardest—but most liberating—lesson was learning that release is a gift, not a loss.

### 2. Love is a Verb, Not Just a Feeling

Fairy tales make love seem effortless, but reality has its own script. This year, we learned that love requires action. It's in the little things: showing up for a friend during a tough time, taking out the trash without being asked, or simply listening—really listening—to your partner. Love thrives on effort, and even though it sometimes feels messy or inconvenient, it's this active participation that builds the strongest bonds.

### 3. The Importance of Alone Time

In the chaos of life, we often forget the value of solitude. This year, solitude became a sanctuary. Whether it was taking long walks, journaling, or just sitting in silence, we realized that being alone isn't lonely. It's an opportunity to reconnect with ourselves, to understand what we truly want and need—not just from others, but from life. And when we bring our best, most self-aware selves to our relationships, love blooms in ways we never imagined.

### 4. The Power of Vulnerability

Vulnerability is the birthplace of love and connection. But let's be honest—it's terrifying. This year, we learned to lean into discomfort and share fears, dreams, and flaws with the people who matter. Vulnerability doesn't always guarantee a happy ending, but it does guarantee authenticity. And isn't that what love is all about? Being seen, truly and wholly, and still being embraced?

### 5. Boundaries Are Sexy

Let's talk about boundaries—because, wow, did we learn their importance this year. Boundaries are not walls; they're bridges to healthier relationships. They teach others how to treat us

and remind us that love doesn't mean self-sacrifice. Whether it was saying no to an overbearing colleague or refusing to entertain toxic behaviours in a relationship, boundaries became our superpower. And the best part? The right people respected them.

### 6. Life is in the Small Moments

This year taught us to savour the mundane. Life isn't just the big milestones—it's the in-between moments that truly matter. It's sharing a quiet cup of coffee with your partner, dancing in the kitchen to your favourite song, or receiving an unexpected "thinking of you" text. Love isn't always grand gestures; it's found in the seemingly ordinary moments that make up a life well-lived.

### 7. Forgiveness is Freedom

Holding onto anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to suffer. This year, many of us learned the liberating power of forgiveness—not for others but for ourselves. Whether we were forgiving a partner for past mistakes or letting go of our own regrets, we discovered that forgiveness doesn't condone bad behaviour. Instead, it frees us to move forward, unburdened by the weight of yesterday.

### 8. You Can't Pour from an Empty Cup

How many of us ran ourselves ragged this year, only to crash and burn? If this year has taught us anything, it's that self-care isn't selfish—it's essential. Whether it was scheduling a therapy session, indulging in a spa day, or simply saying no to one more obligation, we learned that taking care of ourselves is the best way to take care of others. After all, love flourishes when we nurture our well-being first.

### 9. Communication is Key

This one seems obvious, but wow, did we see its importance this year? Misunderstandings, unmet expectations, and conflict all stemmed from poor communication. We learned that love is as much about what we say as how we say it. The magic words? "I feel," "I need," and "I appreciate." When used often and with intention, they transformed relationships, deepened connections, and built trust.

### 10. Gratitude Changes Everything

Lastly, this year reminded us to be grateful—not just for the good days but also for the hard ones. Life's challenges often hold the most profound lessons. And love? It's not always perfect, but it's always worth celebrating. Whether it was a partner's patience, a parent's unwavering support, or the simple joy of being alive, gratitude turned ordinary moments into extraordinary ones.

## "WE THREE QUEENS" BY ABAYA LAGOS.

Abaya Lagos recently unveiled its much-anticipated Anniversary Collection, aptly titled "We Three Queens," to commemorate a decade of redefining modern modesty. Designed by the illustrious Salihat Rahaman, the collection again highlights the brand's unwavering commitment to elegance, sophistication, and the celebration of femininity.

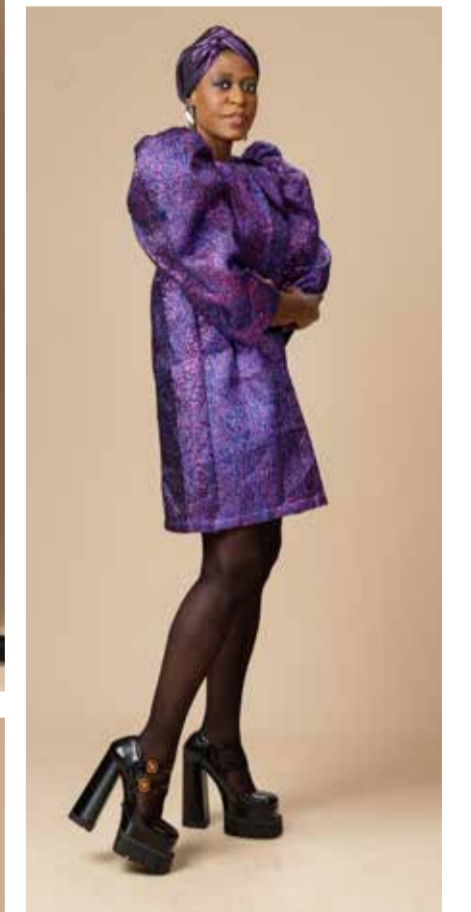
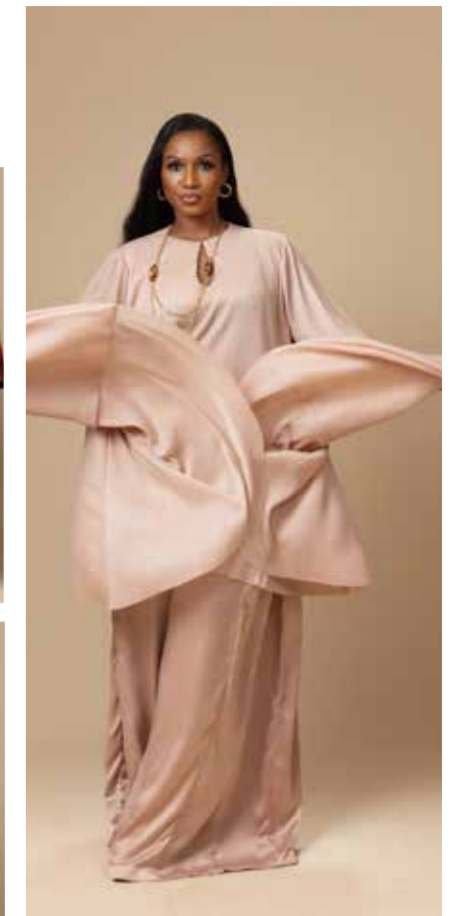
The name "We Three Queens" is both evocative and symbolic, drawing inspiration from the timeless strength, grace, and resilience of women everywhere. It speaks to the multifaceted identity of the Abaya Lagos woman—regal yet relatable, modern yet rooted in cultural heritage. Salihat Rahaman's vision is unmistakably present in every detail, from the choice of fabrics to the exquisite tailoring, ensuring that the collection remains true to the brand's ethos while pushing creative boundaries.

The first thing that captivates about "We Three Queens" is the sumptuous selection of fabrics that form the foundation of the collection. Metallic sequins shimmer like stardust, adding a celestial quality to the pieces. Velvets, lush and inviting, bring a tactile richness that invites touch and admiration. Ornate brocades, with their intricate patterns, lend a touch of opulence that harks back to the grand traditions of royal attire, while chiffons, light and ethereal, imbue the designs with a sense of effortless grace. Together, these fabrics create a visual and sensory feast that captures the spirit of celebration and the essence of timeless luxury.

Salihat's genius lies in her ability to take these luxurious materials and craft them into classic and contemporary silhouettes. The collection's clean, structured lines allow the fabrics to shine, proving that simplicity when executed with precision, can be the ultimate statement of sophistication.

Within the collection, there is a sense of inclusivity and intention. For the woman who prefers timeless elegance, there are flowing, understated designs that speak to a quiet confidence. For the trendsetter, daring interpretations of the abaya blur the lines between modest wear and high fashion.

The colour palette of "We Three Queens" is a masterclass in balance, harmoniously blending Abaya Lagos' signature metallics with a fresh infusion of muted pastels. Gleaming golds and silvers evoke a sense of regality, while soft lilacs, powdery blues, and blush pinks introduce a gentler, more romantic dimension. This interplay of bold and subtle hues mirrors the complexity of the modern woman, who moves seamlessly between strength and softness, tradition and innovation. The result is a collection that feels both striking and wearable, offering something for every mood, moment, and occasion.



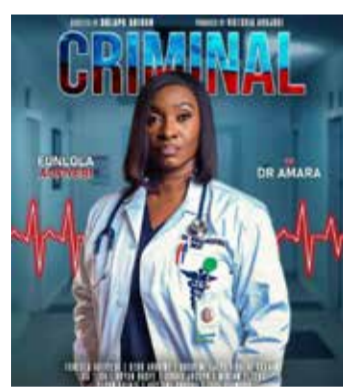
# YEAR IN REVIEW: NOLLYWOOD EDITION

As the curtains close on 2024, Nollywood stands tall, having delivered a plethora of cinematic experiences that thoroughly entertained audiences locally and globally.

We must give it to filmmakers who have pushed creative boundaries and gone beyond the norm to explore complex narratives while showcasing our culture.

Here's a look at 10 Nigerian movies that did it for us in 2024:

By **Bukola Amoboye**



### 1. Fame and Fury (November- YouTube)

After her movie, 'Unexpected Places' went viral on YouTube, actress and producer Bimbo Ademoye dropped the next Bombshell, 'Fame and Fury' in November. The movie, starring Daniel Etim-Effiong, Uzor Arukwe and Bimbo Ademoye, centres on a young actress with a promising career whose love life basically switches from frying pan to fire.

The movie had fans debating for weeks and was undoubtedly a pleasant watch. This was definitely a fan favourite of all the YouTube movies released this year. It is a testament to the increased influence the streaming platform is set to garner in the movie industry in the coming year.

### 2. Momiwa (May- Amazon Prime)

Biodun Stephen gave us another heartfelt family drama with Momiwa, exploring themes of motherhood, love and loyalty. The movie starred Uzor Arukwe, Blessing Jessica Obasi and Iyabo Ojo in lead roles. Its emotional depth and authentic storytelling made it enjoyable and relatable.

### 3. Lisabi: The Uprising (September- Netflix)

Produced by Lateef Adedimeji, Lisabi delves into history and culture, bringing to life a tale of courage and resistance. Filled with stunning performances and visuals and a powerful narrative that earned it critical acclaim, it was certainly among our favourites this year.

### 4. Funmilayo Ransom Kuti (May- Amazon Prime)

This biopic celebrates the legacy of Funmilayo Ransom Kuti, a trailblazer in Nigerian activism and politics. The film's inspiring narrative and stellar performances brought history to life, making it a cinematic triumph. A special nod to Kehinde Bankole, who absolutely bodied this role and further cemented herself as one of Nollywood's finest actresses.

### 5. Christmas in Lagos (December- Amazon Prime)

This heartwarming holiday film perfectly encapsulates the spirit of Lagos during Christmas. From IJGBs to Detty December theatrics to partying and owambe, it definitely is the perfect holiday movie. With its vibrant cinematography, relatable characters and guest appearances, we simply can't stop talking about it.

### 6. Everybody Loves Jenifa (December- Cinemas)

The return of Funke Akindele's beloved character, Jenifa, certainly brought laughter and nostalgia to fans. This sequel, which combines humour with a meaningful exploration of societal issues, is another blockbuster off The Funke Akindele Network and is currently still taking cinemas across the world by storm.

### 7. Ajosepo (April- Cinemas)

Centred on the intricate dynamics of family relationships, Ajosepo brought together some of our favourite older actors, such as Ronke Oshodi and Yemi Solade, with cameos from Baba Latin, Ayuba and K1.

### 8. Seven Doors (December- Netflix)

Femi Adebayo really said not to sleep on him. After his wildly successful 2023 hit, 'Jagun Jagun', he dropped a new project, 'Seven Doors', which still has many viewers talking. A suspenseful masterpiece, Seven Doors takes viewers on a thrilling journey through mysteries and unexpected twists. Its unique storytelling and outstanding performances set it apart as one of our favourites of 2024.

### 9. Criminal (May- Amazon Prime)

Funlola Aofiyebi gave her all in this movie, giving an amazing performance as the indomitable Dr Amara, who stood in defiance of a dangerous criminal demanding treatment for his injured brother after a busted operation. Its sleek direction and compelling performances kept viewers on the edge of their seats.

### 10. House of Ga'a (July- Netflix)

It's almost hard to believe that Bolanle Austen-Peters gave us two unforgettable movies this year: Funmilayo Ransom Kuti and House of Ga'a.

A haunting exploration of power and betrayal, House of Ga'a delivered an intense cinematic experience.

Femi Branch totally outdid himself in this movie and we won't be surprised to see him get nominations during award season. It takes us back to Chidi Mokeme's performance in Shanty Town (2023) and we are immensely grateful to all of these actors who keep giving their all.

# 10 WAYS TO WRAP UP THE YEAR FEELING EMPOWERED AND MOTIVATED

By **Funke Babs Kufeji**



stressing about due dates or late fees, and who knows? You might even find you save a little extra by eliminating those sneaky charges. It's a simple step, but the peace of mind it brings is priceless.

### 3. Buy in Bulk and Save Big

Still, buying single items? Stop! Bulk shopping is your wallet's best friend, especially if you're feeding a family or hosting gatherings. It's a proven money saver and helps cut down on those frantic mid-week store runs. Whether it's pantry staples, toiletries, or snacks for the kids, buying in bulk is a financial game changer.

### 4. Give "Not My Type" a Shot

We've all been there - scrolling or swiping past someone because they don't fit that perfect mental checklist: height, career, looks, etc. But what if your soulmate doesn't come in the package you imagined? Lowering those rigid, often unrealistic standards could open doors to unexpected and meaningful connections. It's not about settling; it's about broadening your horizons.

### 5. Lock in Your Self-Care with Advance Massages

Book three months' worth of massages in one go. Why? Many spas offer discounts for advance bookings, and having those sessions on your calendar ensures self-care becomes a non-negotiable priority. When the reminder pops up, you'll thank yourself for planning ahead.

### 6. Invest in One Luxury Skincare Product

Instead of chasing every trend, pick one premium skincare product that works wonders for you and commit to it. Millennials stepping into their 40s swear by this approach—it's freeing, cost-effective, and simplifies your routine. Choose quality over quantity and make restocking it a priority.

### 7. Master the Art of Saying No

This one's life-changing saying NO. It's empowering, liberating, and absolutely essential for your mental health. Whether it's a last-minute favour or an event you're dreading, remember this—you don't owe anyone an explanation. A firm "no" is a gift to yourself and sets the tone for a healthier 2025.

### 8. Explore a Local Staycation

Forget passports and long-haul flights—adventure is closer than you think! Plan a staycation in a nearby town or even within your city. You'll uncover hidden gems, experience local culture, and save money while still scratching that travel itch.

### 9. Book Your Health Screenings in Advance

Take charge of your health by prescheduling your mammograms, pap smears, and peri-menopause tests for the year ahead. It's proactive and responsible and ensures your well-being remains a top priority in 2025.

### 10. Enroll in a Free Course

Want to level up? Take advantage of free courses offered by top institutions like Harvard or platforms like Coursera. Whether it's a quick 4-week program or an 11-month deep dive, enhancing your skill set is always a win. Bonus: certifications look great on your CV and can open doors to new opportunities.



### 1. Boost Your Savings Game

A small tweak, big rewards: What if increasing your savings or retirement contributions by just 1% could set you up for long-term financial security? Many people overlook this easy win. That extra percentage might seem trivial now, but it compounds over time, paving the way for a more stable future. Take a moment to reevaluate your financial plan and give your future self a gift.

### 2. Automate Your Payments and Transfers

Put on your big-girl (or big-boy) pants and take control of your finances by setting up automatic payments for at least one of your monthly bills. No more

# Is Bae a Keeper or Counterfeit?

As we get closer to a new year, it's time to reflect on what and who we're bringing into 2025. Let's be real: relationships can be messy, thrilling, and downright confusing. But one thing's certain—wasting time with frogs isn't on anyone's resolution list. That's why dating tests are the ultimate cheat codes in the game of love. Think of them as relationship pop quizzes, giving you a sneak peek into whether bae is the real deal or just a cleverly disguised counterfeit. Ready to put your love life to the test? Let's dive in.

## The Provider Test: Is He Ready to Step Up?

Looking for a life partner who's got your back? The provider test can give you some early answers. Here's the scenario: create a small, hypothetical issue that requires money—think "car repair" or "emergency bill." Then, sit back and observe.

Does he step up without hesitation? Or does he mumble excuses, suddenly disappear, or act oblivious to your need? True providers thrive on problem-solving and generosity, while counterfeits often flake out when it's time to show up. No, this isn't about gold-digging; it's about finding someone who's willing

to invest in you when the chips are down. If he passes this test, you might just have a keeper on your hands.

## The Prayer Test: Divine Clarity at Its Finest

This one's gone viral on social media for good reason. Dubbed "the removal prayer," it's a simple yet powerful plea: God if this person isn't meant for me, remove them from my life. Sounds intense, right? But here's the catch—you need to be ready for the answer.

Whether it's through a sudden breakup, an unexpected revelation, or a gut-wrenching truth, this prayer rarely misses. Just know that if you're not strong enough to let go, the universe might just yank them out before you even get to "Amen." It's not about being vindictive; it's about asking for clarity and trusting that what's meant for you won't miss you.

## The Soup Test: Effort Speaks Volumes

The soup test isn't just about the soup; it's more about what the act signifies—putting in effort, showing care, and being thoughtful. People usually bring it up when they're just starting to get to know someone or when things are complicated. How someone reacts to this gesture can reveal much about

their emotional state and readiness for a relationship.

For instance, do they get all excited and thankful? Do they downplay it like it's nothing? Or do they seem a bit awkward with the attention? Even though these reactions might seem small at the time, they can actually point to bigger emotional issues.

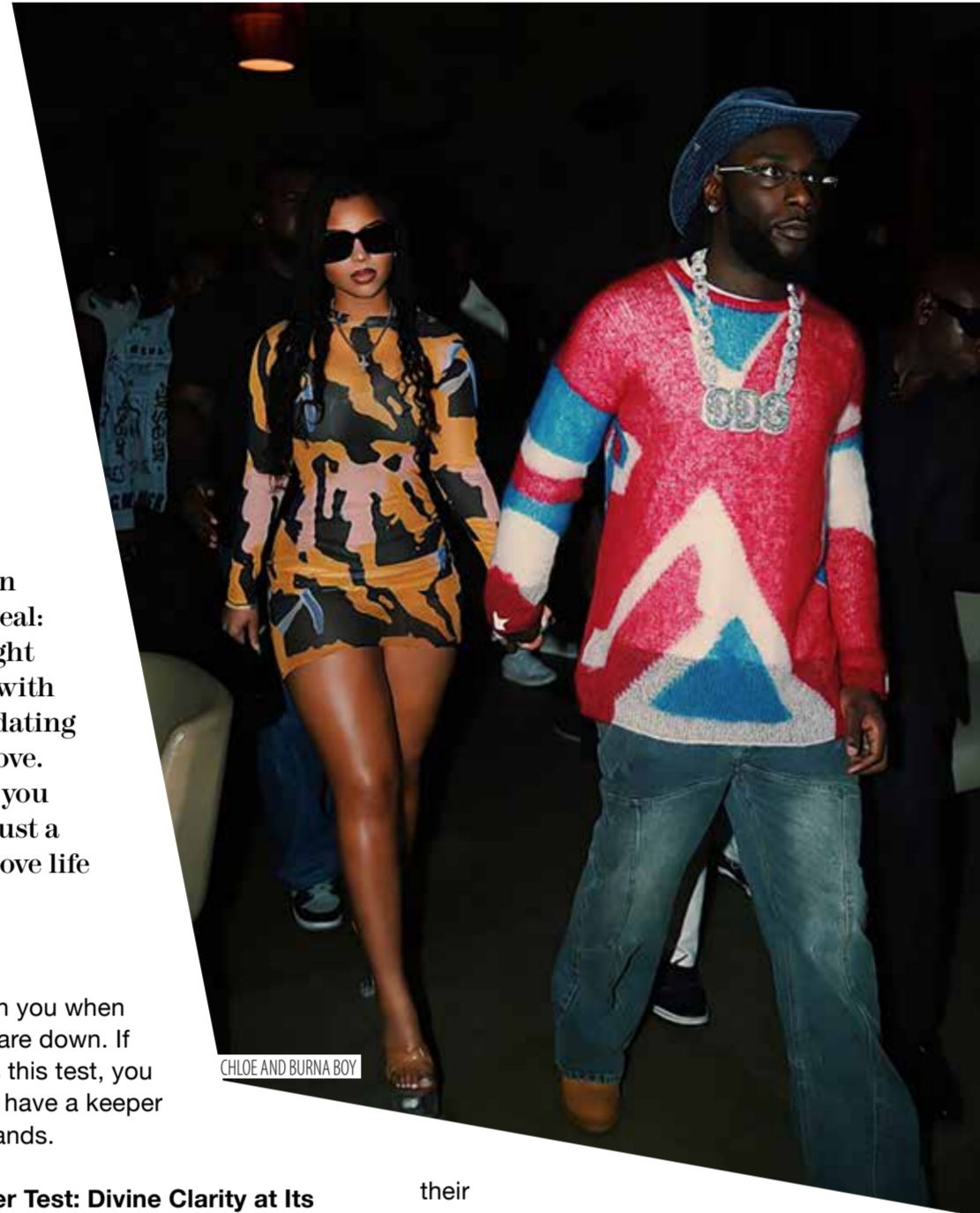
## The Sick Test: Who's There When You're Down?

Life happens, and sometimes it hits harder than a bad flu. Enter: the sick test. It's the simplest way to gauge someone's empathy and dependability. Next time you're feeling under the weather, pay attention to their response.

Do they check in, send comforting messages, or show up with soup and tissues? Or do you get a lukewarm "Aww, feel better" and radio silence? It's not just about how they treat you when you're shining; it's about how they care for you when you're at your lowest. If they can't show up during the sniffles, they likely won't during life's bigger storms.

## Final Thoughts: Take the Test, Trust the Results

Dating tests might sound like games, but they're far from it. They're fun, insightful, and sometimes brutally honest tools to help you avoid heartbreak and wasted time. Whether you're testing for generosity, emotional maturity, or just basic decency, remember this: a counterfeit will always reveal itself under pressure. And a keeper? Well, they'll ace every test without even realising it.



CHLOE AND BURNA BOY



PAULO AND IYABO OJO

# 5 BEAUTY RESOLUTIONS FOR 2025

By Funke Babs Kufeji

## 1. Skincare Goals

### Take Stock of Your Skincare Habits

Are you double cleansing like a pro or just splashing water and calling it a night? Take a hard look at your skincare routine and identify what's working—and what's not. Awareness is the first step to transformation.

### Set Clear, Glow-Worthy Goals

Wishing for perfect skin is nice, but getting specific is better. Whether it's banishing breakouts, fading dark spots, or finally nailing that dewy glow, define your skincare targets and work towards them. Goals make your journey purposeful.

### Sunscreen Is Non-Negotiable

Let's make sunscreen our daily BFF—not just for sunny days, but every day. A swipe of SPF protects your skin from UV damage and premature ageing. Think of it as an invisible shield for future you to thank you for.

## 2. Haircare Goals

### Understand Your Hair's Love Language

Is your hair screaming for hydration, or does it need a little volume boost? Learning your hair type and needs is the secret to finding the right products. Tailoring your routine to your hair's personality will work wonders.

### Embrace the Deep Conditioning Life

Say hello to silky, strong strands with regular deep conditioning. Weekly masks or treatments can revive tired hair, leaving it lush and full of life. Consider it a spa day for your tresses.

### Experiment with New Looks

Feeling stuck in a hair rut? 2025 is your year to shake things up. Go bold with a pixie cut, flaunt beachy waves, or try vibrant colours. Change is fun, and your hair deserves to have fun too.

## 3. Makeup Makeover

### Tame the Makeup Mayhem

If your makeup bag resembles a war zone, it's time for a clean-up. Toss expired products, organise your favourites, and keep only the essentials. A neat stash means a smoother, stress-free morning routine.

### Dare to Play with New Styles

Step outside your comfort zone.

Try that graphic eyeliner trend or rock a bold red lip you've been eyeing. Switching up your look can be as exciting as it is empowering. You might just discover a signature style you didn't know you had.

### Invest in Quality Tools

Filmsy brushes and cheap products? Leave them in 2024. High-quality tools and well-formulated products make application a breeze and ensure a flawless finish every time. Treat yourself—it's worth it.

## 4. Self-Care as a Beauty Ritual

### Pause. Breathe. Be present.

Mindfulness and meditation aren't just trendy—they're transformative. Whether it's five minutes of deep breathing or a full yoga session, nurturing your inner peace will reflect on your outer beauty.

### Fuel Your Body for Radiance

Beauty starts from within. Eat nutrient-rich foods and stay hydrated. Pair this with regular exercise, and you'll not only feel energised but also see the results in glowing skin and stronger hair. **Prioritise Relaxation** Stress is the ultimate beauty thief. Combat it by carving out time for activities that soothe your soul, whether soaking in a warm bath, journaling, or indulging in your favourite hobby. Your mind, body, and skin will thank you.

## 5. Commit to Clean Beauty

### Go Green with Your Beauty Choices

Why not give your skin (and the planet) a treat? Clean, eco-friendly products are the way forward. Opt for brands that prioritise gentle, natural ingredients and sustainable practices.

### Support Sustainable Brands

Every purchase is a vote. Choosing brands championing eco-conscious values allows you to invest in a greener, more ethical future. Plus, sustainable beauty products often deliver fabulous results without compromising the planet.

### Be Ingredient-Savvy

Know what's in your products. Learn to decipher ingredient lists and seek out transparent labelling. Bonus points for eco-friendly packaging—it's a win-win for your skin and the Earth.

As we step into 2025, there's no better time to refresh your beauty game with simple yet impactful resolutions. This isn't about overhauling your routine overnight but about small, intentional tweaks that bring big rewards. Whether upgrading your skincare, diving into fresh makeup looks, or embracing self-care as a lifestyle, these five beauty resolutions guide a radiant, confident, and more beautiful year ahead.



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