

Media 175
Principles of Digital Photography

Introduces
Thandiwe Muriu
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Presented by Christina Ballew

Thandiwe Muriu

Thandiwe Muriu, born in 1992, is a self-taught photographer born and raised in Nairobi, Kenya where she currently resides teaching workshops.

“Photography is the way I make sense of and respond to the world around me. It is my way to preserve my culture for future generations even as I tackle some of the challenges of my cultural background.”





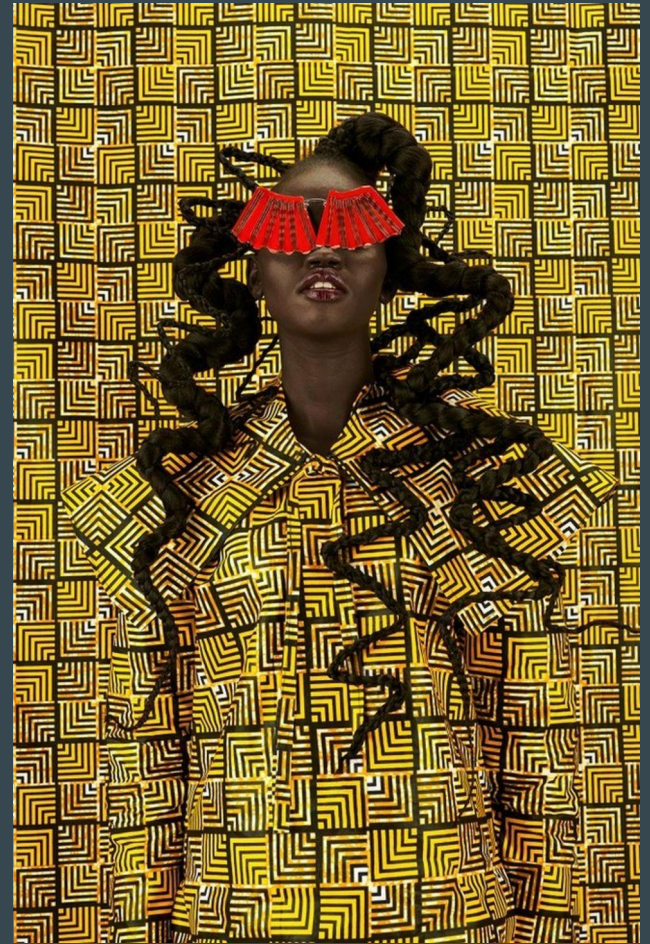
Thandiwe Muriu

Showcasing Africa's unique heritage of vibrant cultures, colour and people while tackling important issues such as identity and self-perception using her signature style of colourful, clean and bold textiles.

Thandiwe Muriu

She creates her own universe, merging Kenyan history and tradition with her very own personal aesthetic.

Sculptural hairstyles, bright prints, everyday objects are transformed into something new and unexpected: portraits that become powerful symbols of beauty and pride.





Thandiwe Muriu

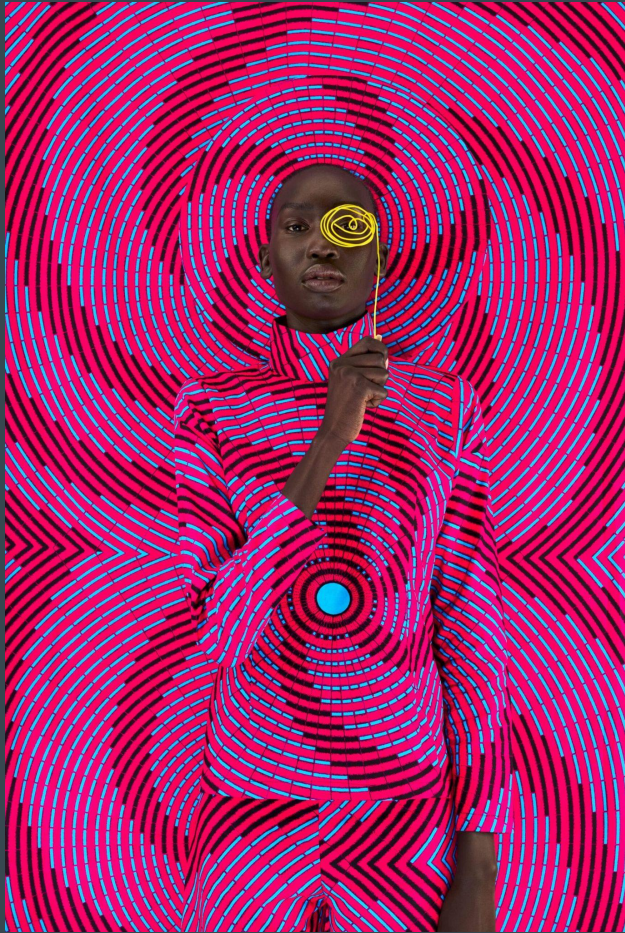
The images in her Camo - short for camouflage - series create an optical illusion where the person in the photograph almost disappears yet it is impossible to ignore: the model both blends in and stands out at the same time.

Thandiwe Muriu

Models of dark-skin are deliberately chosen to challenge what she says is a culture of bleaching in Kenya, where some see lighter complexions as more beautiful.

"It became more than just looking at beauty. It was about asking: 'What are some of the symbols of beauty that we have lost?'"





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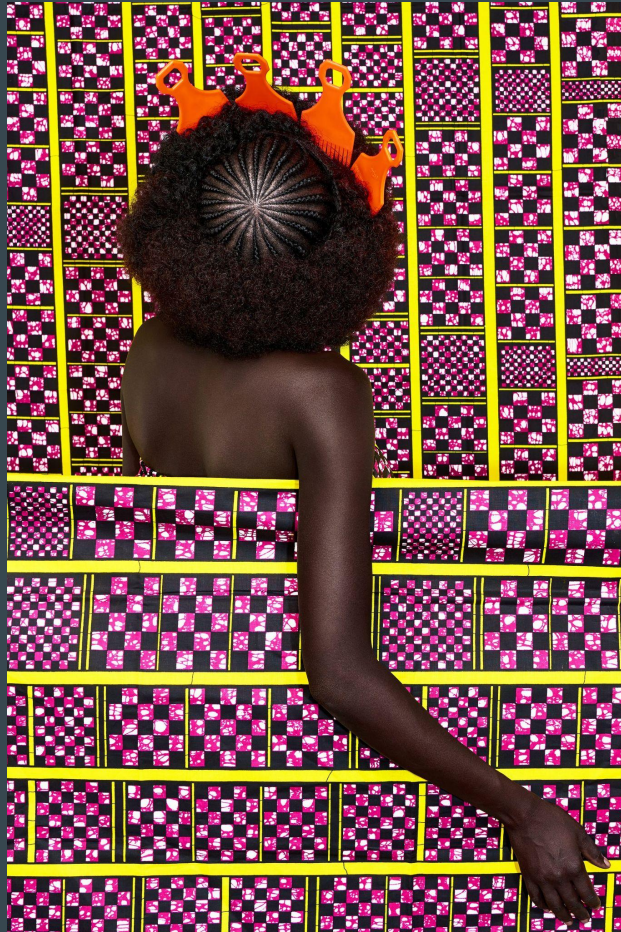
It starts with choosing the fabric, which Muriu describes as one of the hardest but most enjoyable parts. She looks for "something that's really loud with an almost psychedelic quality, as if the fabrics are alive and moving and confusing the eye". She believes each print has a personality and seeks to create images that have layers within them so the longer you look, the more you see.

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Her images are heavily constructed. Every element has meaning as objects are an integral part of their daily lives and are often a big component of beauty culture.

The eyewear, made from soft drinks cans, plastic tea strainers, clothes pegs, bottle brushes and other objects represent the innovative way that many everyday things in Kenya are repurposed for other uses.

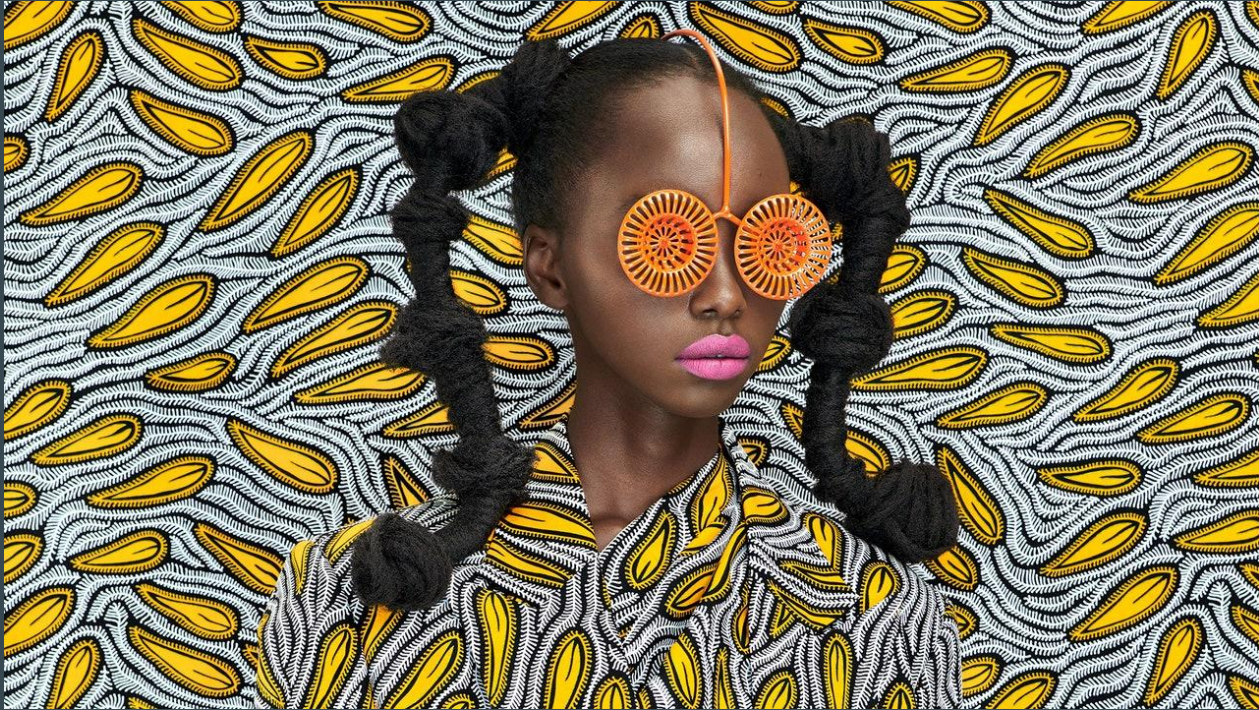




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To every woman, hair is her crowning glory, making the combs of this image a symbolic celebration of the strength, shine and curl of African hair. It is a crown that empowers a woman; a height that she rules because she alone ultimately decides the impact and beauty of her coiffure.

What is your kind of beautiful?



A woman's beauty is not hidden in her face - African Proverb

References

- <https://www.vogue.com/article/a-vibrant-series-by-thandiwe-muriu-celebrates-african-culture-and-heritage>
- <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-57306150>
- <https://thandiwemuriu.com/>