

Fashion meets chocolate in Rich Factory-Aero collaboration

 By [Lauren Hartzenberg](#)

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With its unique silhouettes and colourful African prints, Rich Factory designs demand attention. The creative force and founder of the brand is Zambian-born, South Africa-dwelling Rina Chunga, whose passion for the African continent is never far removed from her creative output.



Rina Chunga

For her debut appearance at the recently concluded SA Fashion Week, Chunga collaborated with Aero to launch a collection inspired by the international chocolate brand's 'Let Go Moments' campaign. The result was an eye-catching display of creativity and an exploration of fabrics not ordinarily paired with African designs.

Here, Chunga takes us through her design inspiration for SAFW and shares the highs and lows of owning a budding fashion business.

Briefly tell us about your journey to fashion design.

I've always loved art and being creative and that naturally turned into a lot of sketching. I would sketch beautiful women in stylish clothing and that turned into a love for creating the clothing I would design. During my gap year I got a job with a local Polokwane designer. I brushed up on some skills of the trade and the next year I went to study fashion at Lisof.

How would you describe the Rich Factory aesthetic?

The Rich Factory aesthetic is vibrant, both in colour and in shape. Our pieces are geometrical and African when you first look at them, but as you examine them you see strong Asian and Spanish influences.



▣ ***How did your SAFW collaboration with Aero come about?***

Aero wanted to get their foot in with the fashion crowd and was looking for a fun brand to sponsor for SA Fashion Week. Cheri Yase Kasi who works on the brand contacted me and it was the perfect offer, who wouldn't want to show at SAFW?

▣ ***How did the Aero brand influence the design of your SAFW range?***

Aero gave me a wonderful brief. The brief was #letgofashion, which to me meant taking a moment to let go and saying 'hey, this is who I am' and also taking chances and having fun. I took that story right into my range. I thought of 'let go' fashion moments where someone could just have fun and enjoy themselves through fashion and chocolate.



▣ ***What have been some of the biggest struggles and major highlights on your small business journey so far?***

The biggest struggle with a small brand is funding, even more so if you work with big brands because they have payment schedules and you may not get paid for up to three months after finishing a project you have invested in. Also hiring quality staff. Quality helps costs a lot more but it's something you have to invest in. The major highlights... we are just starting out meaning there are so many more doors to open which means we can keep learning and collaborating.



■ ***What is your advice for aspiring fashion designers in Africa?***

Work hard and keep learning. I think people forget that you can learn from the journey. Take as many part-time gigs as you can; you'll learn a lot that way. The first big job I took I did for free and I went and styled the hell out of that job and I haven't stopped working since.

■ ***What is your ultimate vision for Rich Factory?***

To be the worldwide go-to brand for all African concepts. I would like to get my foot into a lot of different markets, not just fashion.

Keen to see more? Connect with the Rich Factory brand on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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