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# We chatted to Miss South Africa, Sasha-Lee Olivier about the importance of telling your story

'Your darkest moments can indeed give birth to the lightest and the brightest.'

by Caryn Welby-Solomon

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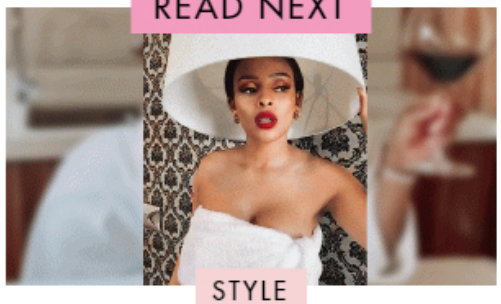
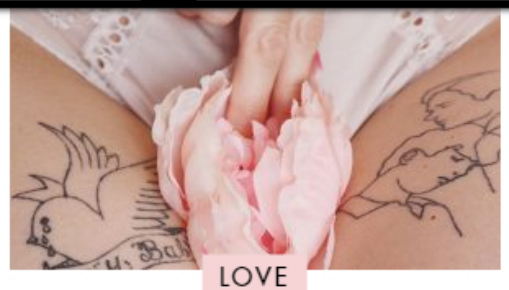


STYLE

We did a photoshoot with Kefilwe Mabote during lockdown (yes, you read that right!)



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by TAYLOR ANDREWS, CARINA HSIEH AND

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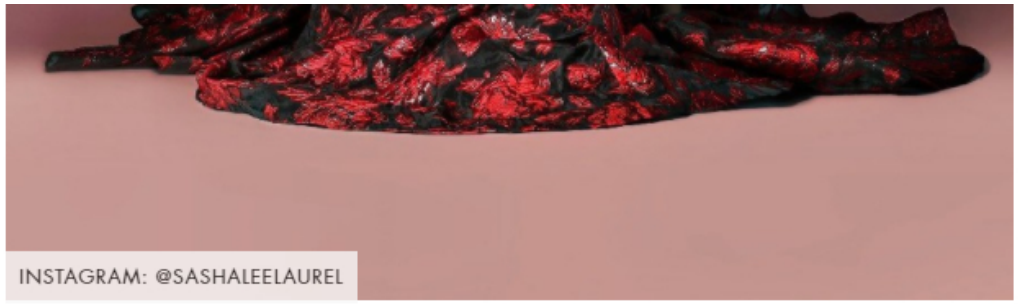

INSTAGRAM: @SASHALEELAUREL

It has been an eventful year for South Africa. In August 2019, Zozibini Tunzi has crowned Miss Universe South Africa and Sasha-Lee Olivier was named Miss World South Africa. And then in December, when Zozibini took on the title of Miss Universe, Sasha-Lee Olivier comfortably slipped into the role of Miss South Africa.

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wearing her crown with honour and grace. During the Miss World pageant, Sasha-

assault.

We caught up with Sasha-Lee to talk about her what made her enter Miss SA, her #ItsNotYourFault campaign and her advice for future Miss SA contestants.

## Meet Sasha-Lee Olivier:

**Were you excited to take on the mantle of Miss South Africa?**

**Sasha-Lee:** I think it was more nerves because it's not really about the recognition, it's about the responsibility you have to serve and wondering whether or not you actually had the capacity to fulfil what you set out in the first place so I think I was more nervous. But I have grown comfortable with regards to where I am right now because it just takes getting used to because it's just such a big responsibility.

By TAYLOR ANDREWS, CARINA HSIEH AND HANNAH SMOTHERS

BEAUTY

Kylie Jenner just clapped back at this hairstylist on Instagram

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Good Morning South Africa! I'm humbled and so incredibly excited to take over the reigns from our Miss Universe as Miss South Africa 2019! ✨🇿🇦✨ I cannot wait to see what is in store and to continue the great work we started in 2019! All my Love! ❤️ – Sasha-Lee🇿🇦 @lfpgroup @suninternationalza @mnettv 📸 @willembotha 💄 @fahmidah_moosa 👩🏾‍🦱 @hairbyjako 👗 @_mode_co 🔳 @centralsquaresandton

*A post shared by* SASHA-LEE LAUREL *(@sashaleelaurel) on Jan 15, 2020 at 1:40…*

**What do you hope to aim during your reign?**

**Sasha-Lee:** I hope that together with the parties involved that we get to break the chains of silent shaming and fear amongst those who have survived sexual assault. I hope that we bring comfort to those people at this time and get to a place where

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**Sasha-Lee:** I saw the Miss South Africa platform for what it is, it is something that has been instrumental in alleviating the various socio-economic issues we have as a country. I felt that that would be my responsibility to be apart of that difference especially for those that had been marginalised for the longest time and those who have indeed survived sexual assault.

**What was the best and the toughest part about the Miss South Africa pageant experience?**

**Sasha-Lee:** The great parts – I've always said I'm a product of the conversations that resonate with me the most so by far I've had the most interesting conversations with so many people from so many walks of life and it's definitely shaped me. I

appreciate that so much. Fun parts like getting to drift a Mercedes Benz around in a skidpad and the challenging parts especially when I had to release my Beauty With a Purpose project. Then I found myself having to recommit to my service, realise there is so much work that I still need to do with regards to healing too.

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Today as you took your first step out into the universe, you carried not only your story- but the story of millions. Oh, how the world needed you Queen- no longer can we function in the parameters of what is. It's up to us to show up and command our space- Amen 🙏 #zozitunzi

*A post shared by* SASHA-LEE LAUREL *(@sashaleelaurel) on Dec 9, 2019 at 11:40…*

How did it feel to represent South Africa at the Miss World pageant?

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represent our country but I had two proud moments. One being the Head-to-Head challenge, it was the first time when I felt like I had a conversation with everyone in our country and not only in our country but in the world in fact and the second thing was when our country was one of the six countries chosen to participate in the debate held at the Oxford Union. It was definitely an honour to be one of the six formidable women who stood up there and spoke about what they were passionate about, their suggestions, or ways forward with regards to the issues each country was then facing.

**Was it challenging to share your experience as a sexual assault survivor with regards to your #ItsNotYourFault campaign?**

**Sasha-Lee**: It was challenging sharing my story. I often found myself having to recommit to telling the story that's why I understand just how important it is getting everyone to space where they understand that it's not their fault. That together they can break the chains of silent shame and fear because this is what is essential in the healing process. I was very much of the understanding that when I took that step on the 9th of August that I took it not only for myself but for so many women and men all over the world. As much as it was difficult, this was my duty, it was my responsibility that I had to carry.

**Can you tell us more about what you aim to achieve with the #ItsNotYourFault campaign?**

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with the aftermath of trauma and just how difficult that experience is. It aims to bring comfort to these individuals and restore their dignity by reminding them that is indeed not their fault.

What do you feel that you are most passionate about?

Sasha-Lee: I am the most fulfilled person when I am in my classroom around the kids in my class. Not only in a position as their teacher but to be fair I feel as if

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state of unbecoming and getting to a place where I am.

What have you learned about yourself through the Miss South Africa journey?

I've learnt that I'm much stronger than I thought I was. I've learnt that innately that I have the capacity to fulfil this role all along but it was on me to find that or bring that out within myself and together with a team of people who believe in me get to a place where we can achieve something like this.

Who are your role models?

There are so many people you can draw inspiration from and so many role models and I think they all have a place to play within our lives in certain instances. Like Oprah, she has been so instrumental in my story and my growth and who I have become as a person. But with all due respect I think that as much as that has played such a big role right now I find myself looking towards myself and what it is that I've survived. Because I have to constantly keep reminding myself that I have been through something that is tough and that means that I can get over the next hurdle. So in this season that I'm in now, I look inward a lot more as opposed to looking outward for inspiration.

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"We delight in the beauty of a butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty! "- Maya Angelou Forever thankful to @keys_fashion for creating this butterfly inspired gown. The significance behind it will always mean the WORLD to me!

A post shared by SASHA-LEE LAUREL (@sashaleelaurel) on Jan 28, 2020 at 9:21...

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You have the answer I think everyone to the lead up to this is looking for the template in trying to get to a place where they are the most prepared for every single question that comes their way but you have the answer you just need to trust yourself to deliver it in that particular moment.

### What legacy do you want to leave behind?

I hope to be remembered for the idea that your darkest moments can indeed give birth to the lightest and the brightest.

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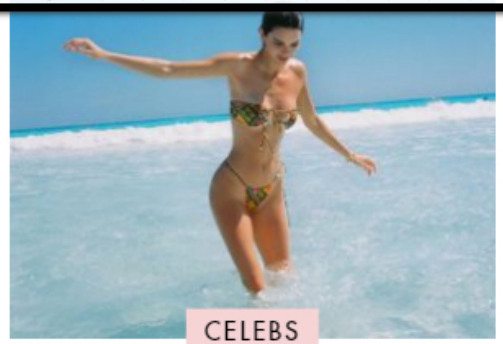

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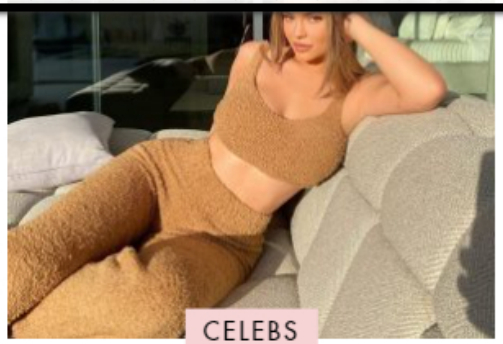

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Kylie Jenner accidentally posted a photoshopped pic and immediately deleted it