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SALT OF THE EARTH



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International Fashion Showcase
London Fashion Week

West Wing Galleries
Somerset House
11-24 February 2019

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Salt of the Earth examines the concept of power and submission through the talismanic properties of jewellery and adornment. Exploring the complex historical, political and chemical properties of salt, the collection forms part of a conceptual installation at Somerset House during London Fashion Week 2019.

The pieces look at salt's ability to poison, erode and decay using the process of patina and conversely the material's ability to create, rejuvenate and give life – the literal and physical manifestation – crystallization.

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With the ever increasing effects of globalization, Salt if the Earth looks at our place as Kenyans culturally and geographically and the opposing act of 'salting the Earth' as a metaphor of colonial conquest and the factors such as politics and environmental impact that shape our place in an ever-shifting geo-political landscape.

Prior to colonialism, Kenyans were a disparate population of tribespeople from the Bantu, Nilotic, Kushite and coastal Swahili. Never a nation and never entirely under the rule of a kingdom until the arrival of the British Empire. Although varying approaches were applied to governing, colonists regarded the people they ruled to be vastly different to their Western sensibilities.

Colonial rule essentially reorganized local life, affecting access to land, resources, property, authority structures and had huge cultural ramifications including dress. Dress and adornment has always been a tool for individual self-expression and social identity but also as a tool for subjugation and conformity. The bodies adorned with animal skins, feathers, beads became a source of derision despite the innate connection to nature and the spiritual symbolism to status and rites of passage.

Post colonial times meant we were and are constantly under the western gaze. Internally, pursuing equality and personal freedoms that democracy dictates yet still playing to western perception and stereotypes to some level.



The West Wing of the Somerset House was home to the Salt Office from 1702 till 1798, which sat alongside the Naval Office. The Salt Office was responsible for collecting domestic and British territory taxes on salt which was once a precious commodity that garnered significant revenue for the government.

One of the most significant uprisings related to salt was the Salt March on Dandi, led by Gandhi as an act of 'nonviolent civil disobedience' in 1930. It was a direct and symbolic revolt to an 8.2% taxation on salt that effectively touched the poorest people the most. Gandhi said, "Next to air and water, salt is perhaps the greatest necessity of life."

Our aim is to strongly root an aspect of the political and economic significance of salt to the space/ location, which could be a powerful tool in the storytelling aspect of power and currency in the story of salt.





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"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?
It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."
Matthew, 5:13. From the King James Bible of 1611

Salt of the Earth - Idiom - basic, fundamental goodness in a person
Salting the Earth - the act of spreading salt on land to poison it, rendering it infertile

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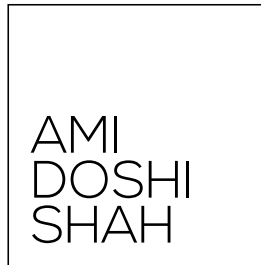
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Creative Direction & Photography:
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