



FRESH FINNISH DESIGN

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BY 2030,
ONE-FIFTH OF
THE HELSINKI REGION'S
INHABITANTS WILL BE FOREIGN-BORN.

THE FINNISH CAPITAL IS ALREADY HOME TO A NEW CREATIVE
CLASS OF ACCLAIMED INTERNATIONAL DESIGNERS SUCH AS UGANDAN-BORN LIFESTYLE
BRAND CREATOR LINCOLN KAYIWA, AMERICAN JEWELLERY DESIGNER LINDA TOYE,
AND JAPANESE TEXTILE PRINT ARTIST SAWAKO URA.



Lincoln Kayiwa
and his Aakkoset
bookcase, which
sells for just over
27,000 euros.



STYLE COUNSEL

n person, **Lincoln Kayiwa** is soft-spoken and immaculately dressed in the modern yet classic gentlemanly style that's found in London, Milan and New York. Born in Kampala, Uganda, the Helsinki-based designer and his work have been featured in *The New York Times*, *Elle Decoration*, *Living Etc*, and a host of other international interior design glossies.

His limited edition furniture and housewares ranging from bookshelves to hangers, chopsticks and chairs have a playful yet clever cosmopolitan tone that marries the dynamic Ugandan crafts tradition with Nordic minimalism.

"When I came to Finland in 2003 I was trying to merge my African experience with this new Finnish experience, which is why my design is more like *objet d'art* that tends towards artistic sculptural, although there are elements of minimalism there," says Kayiwa, whose father was an architect. "I grew up with the elements and principles of design, such as 'less is more,' and so on," he adds.

Kayiwa's *Aakkoset* ("ABCs") Bookcase, which is inspired by the children's "Alphabet Song," features 26 individual shelves, each the shape of one of the alphabet's letters. It sells for just over 27,000 euros. And eight have already been sold.

Why does it cost 27,000 euros?

"The idea is that because the lifestyle brand is sustainable, the products are not mass-produced, the focus is on quality, and they are made to last a lifetime. They're also made in limited editions, and produced through a subcontractor using very high-end machinery, materials and techniques, as well as some handmade phases," replies Kayiwa. "The bookshelf is an *objet d'art* in that it works remarkably well when it's empty. It doesn't have to have books on its shelves, whereas a regular bookshelf with no books on it could be an eyesore."

After attending Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London, Kayiwa moved to Helsinki in 2003 to enrol at Aalto University. "It's one of the best design institutions in Europe, perhaps in the whole world," he says. "One of the blessings of Finland is top notch, top quality education that's essentially free."

Kayiwa, the father of two young preschool-aged children, is taking Finnish lessons with the goal of passing the language proficiency test and applying for Finnish citizenship.

This year he plans to release some high-end plastic versions of his work including baseless picnic glasses that can be propped up in the snow for a post-sauna or post-ski drink.

He's also very excited about the possibilities of 3-D printing.

"You can sell the file and someone can print it, irrelevant of location. I like that mobility and that kind of spontaneity."

KAYIWA.FI

