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Meet Mimi Shodeinde, a British Nigerian designer who explores material and form in her new capsule furniture collection.

INSIDER | Profile

Miminat Shodeinde
/ Furniture
Designer &
Founder,
Miminat Designs

We speak to the
women bringing
emotion, identity and
cultural storytelling
into design

compiled by PAMELA WILLIAMS-MAGQASHELA

Meet the Mavens

What sits at the heart of your design aesthetic?

At the heart of my design aesthetic is storytelling. I'm drawn to spaces and objects that carry emotion, memory and a sense of cultural continuity. I'm influenced by organic forms, craftsmanship, architecture and the quiet details that make a space feel human. I always want design to feel intentional — not just visually beautiful, but emotionally resonant too.

How does your Nigerian heritage shape your work?

My Nigerian heritage is foundational to how I see design. There's a richness in our textures, materials, symbolism and way of living that naturally finds its way into my work. Whether through form, rhythm, materiality or storytelling, I'm often drawing from cultural memory. I think there's something powerful about creating contemporary work that still honours where you come from. I also often name pieces using Yoruba words as a way of honouring language, identity and the cultural narratives that continue to inspire me.

Which women have influenced your journey most?

Absolutely my mother. Her strength, presence and the way she carried herself have shaped so much of how I see the world and approach my work. Creatively, I've also been deeply inspired by Barbara Hepworth and Lina Bo Bardi. I'm drawn to women who created with conviction and understood that design can be both functional and expressive.

What advice would you give young African women entering creative industries?

Don't feel pressured to separate your ambition from your identity. Your perspective is your strength. The things that make you culturally specific, emotionally nuanced or creatively different are often what make your work compelling. Be curious, refine your craft relentlessly and never feel you need to dilute who you are to be globally relevant. Authenticity travels.

What conversations should women in design be having more openly?

I think we need more honest conversations around access, authorship, leadership, sustainability and the emotional realities of building a creative career. There's also room to speak more openly about navigating ambition without apology, defining success on your own terms and creating healthier creative ecosystems. Representation matters, but so do retention, visibility and equitable opportunity.

What do you hope women feel when experiencing your spaces?

I hope they feel seen. I hope they feel a sense of softness, power, comfort, beauty and emotional connection. Good design creates atmosphere, but great design creates feeling too. If someone feels inspired, grounded or emotionally moved, then the work has done what it was meant to do.

Does femininity naturally influence your work?

Yes, I think femininity naturally informs my work. For me, femininity can mean intuition, softness, strength, fluidity, complexity and emotional intelligence. Those qualities often appear in the forms I'm drawn to and the atmospheres I create. I'm interested in design that feels alive and emotionally expressive, and femininity is certainly part of that. miminat.com

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE'*

