

Application under the « Sustainable » theme

**Bio:**

"Ngadi Smart is a Sierra Leonean Photographer based in Côte d'Ivoire, whose focus is on documenting Cultures, Subcultures and Intimacy. Her photographic work has long been focused on how people self-identify and choose to present themselves in front of the lens. As of late, her interest has been documenting Black sensuality and culture through an African lens and point of view. She aims to show as many representations of African people, and what it means to be African, as she can."

**Artist Statement:**

This is a story on the many facets of the word Latitude: More than a system for mapping the world, latitude also means "freedom of action or choice." Atmos Magazine asked me to capture the meaning of Latitude in my culture, through the lens of fashion. In keeping with the magazine's mission, we were conscious of our environmental impact: only local models & designers, materials and fabrics were used, with an eco-responsible vision. Côte d'Ivoire's fascinating architecture always evokes a feeling of nostalgia for the past. One of those places in particular is Grand-Bassam, the old French-colonial seaside town which was once the nation's capital, and is now a UNESCO World Heritage site. It is filled with arresting 19th and 20th-century architectural ruins; It embodies, on the one hand, colonial architecture and town planning, based on the principles of functionalism and adaptations to climatic conditions, and, on the other hand, a community of the N'zima people, which demonstrates the permanency of indigenous cultures, despite serious environmental issues.

Indeed, from late September until the beginning of November, unprecedented coastal floods swallowed the streets and homes of the Quartier France of Grand-Bassam, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The main roads suddenly became impassable unless by canoes. Numerous historic sites were severely damaged.

Coastal erosion, caused by climate change, is a growing problem for West African nations. The region is losing more than \$3.8 billion a year to coastal erosion, according to a recent World Bank study. Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire) is the worst-hit country and has lost \$2 billion to the rising sea levels, nearly 5% of its GDP.

For this shoot, I really wanted to capture this atmosphere of traditional and modern African culture which reigns heavily throughout Bassam, now at risk of erasure.