

Missibaba's new collection is wild in whimsy

By  Maroefah Smith

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Handmade leather accessories maker [Missibaba](#) recently unveiled its *Where the Wild Things Are* collection. The brand showcased the new pieces along with the women who make them at its studio in Woodstock, Cape Town.



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Gobbler

The new collection is inspired by Maurice Sendak's 1963 children's picture book *Where the Wild Things Are*. Founder and designer Chloe Townsend found the inspiration from her young son who plays in a world of monsters and dragons. Townsend believes the world is in need of some joy and playfulness so she's invited us into this world with a whimsical collection that makes you feel like you're playing make-believe.

The collection features updated pieces of the brand's existing styles with exquisite details. Three new styles have also been introduced; the Gobbler, a belt bag with a red velvet 'mouth', the Morticia, a basket bag inspired by the Addams family matriarch; and the Hairy Eyeball, a spiky circle bag. Other pieces in the collection include the Issie, a fun fringe bag named and modelled after the Japanese lake monster; Beetlejuice, a Nairobi sling that details summon up a certain "bio-exorcist" and darker counterpart named Incy Wincy; and Little Shop of Horrors, a harmless Sgt Pepper with lovely flowery details that won't bite.



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Issie

While admiring the new pieces, attendees were also allowed to mingle with the incredible women who make all these remarkable pieces. The bags are all made by hand at the studio and involve a lot of teamwork as each 'department' creates and puts together a part of the bag, including the rivets.

To demonstrate the teamwork, they put together some leather earrings for everyone. All you had to do was select your style and material and these women started weaving their magic, seamlessly going from one section to the next.

Townsend gives us some more insight on the collection's inspiration, the construction of the bags, and those darling earrings.

■ ***What's the inspiration for this new collection?***

A yearning for joy, playfulness, and freedom in the present world, we drew on the wilder fantasy landscape of our childhood where the blur between reality and make-believe was non-existent.

Elements derived from the environment that children love playing in were used as inspiration. The forest, the garden, the beetles, and bugs. Fluffy suedes and bright colours that mimic nature have been the drive of the design process.



■ ***How did this fantasy world influence your use of colour, theme, and texture?***

Playing with vivid colours, textures, and elements from the outside world where kids amuse imaginary creatures, we shaped our own. We've used our signature metallics with earthy tones and suedes to embody these creatures. The Gobbler, Beetlejuice, and Incy Wincy can move in new habitats like the Wild Garden and the Little Shop of Horrors, while the Hairy Eyeball and Morticia gaze over the backdrop and the wild it brings.

■ ***How have you played with construction this season? Particularly The Morticia Bag.***

The Morticia bag is our take on a basket, but a basket with sass and sophistication, like its namesake. It can be used on any occasion from the office to a Saturday market. The construction is simple and strong. Instead of weaving like a traditional basket, we've created a mesh effect by punching out the diamond shape that runs through the collection.



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We enjoy that the nature and feel of the bag will be ever-changing as its contents are revealed. It is completely seamless and solid brass rivets are used to assemble the precise template. All your valuables will be safe and out of sight in the detachable clutch within.

■ ***Talk to us about the Missibaba's take on the trendy circle bag.***

Rediscovering our existing bag shapes and introducing new ones like the Hairy Eyeball came organically as we designed and worked with the motifs. It wasn't necessarily following a trend but what worked with the form and a timeless shape.



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Hairy Eyeball

■ ***Have you included the playful earrings range in this collection?***

We would never miss a new earring opportunity. We have two new designs and an exciting new gold disc stud.

ABOUT MAROEFAH SMITH

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