

2Bop's Anthony Smith on fostering the spirit of community in fashion

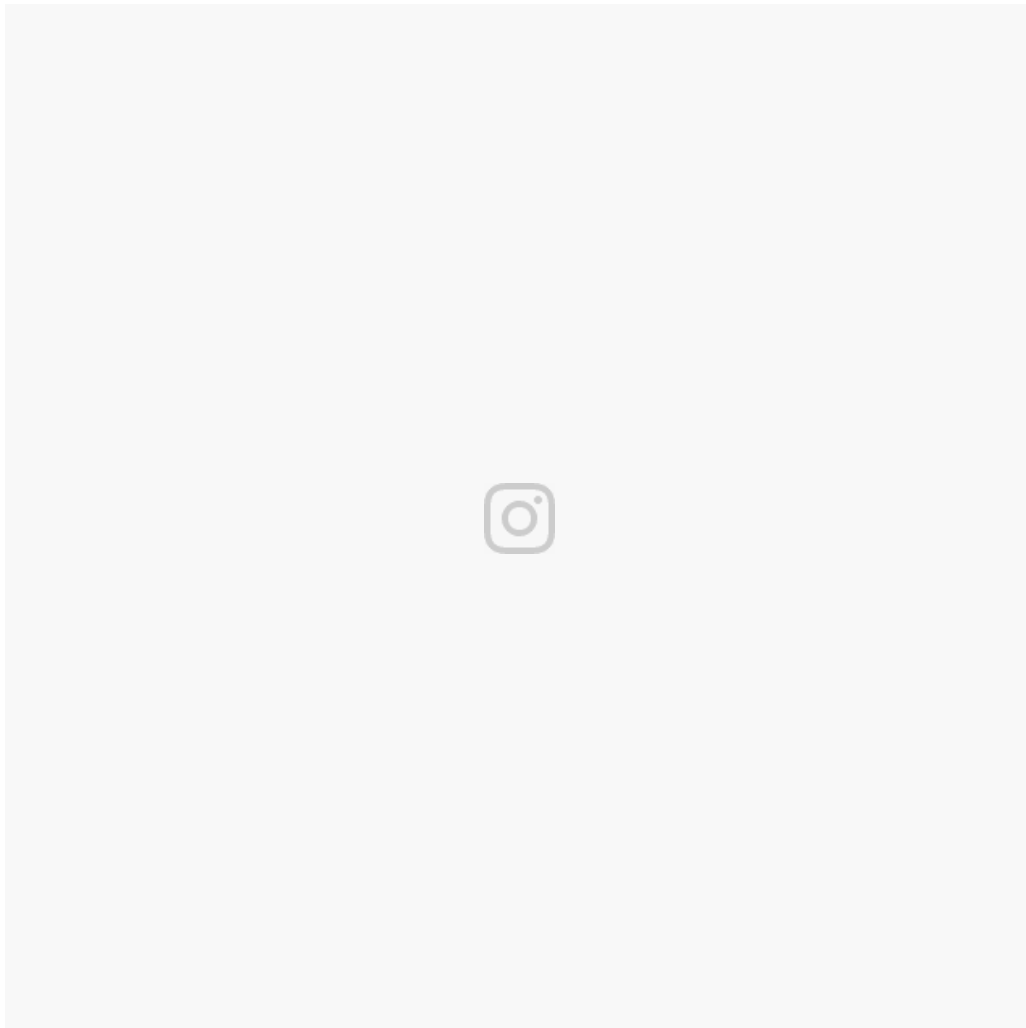
By  Lauren Hartzenberg

21 Feb 2018

Cape Town-based clothing label 2Bop started its life in 2004 as a way to turn a passion for classic video games into a form of expression. Its apparel is inspired by - and somewhat of a tribute to - the games that were popular in South Africa at corner shops and arcades in the 1980's and early 1990's.

"Disadvantaged areas during apartheid South Africa had little to offer in terms of exposure to cutting edge international design or computer technology, but the bootleg arcade games that used twenty cent pieces (a 2Bop) to play at the corner shop were a window into what was happening in the outside world," states the company.

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A post shared by Twobop Apparel (@2bop) on Mar 9, 2016 at 4:01am PST

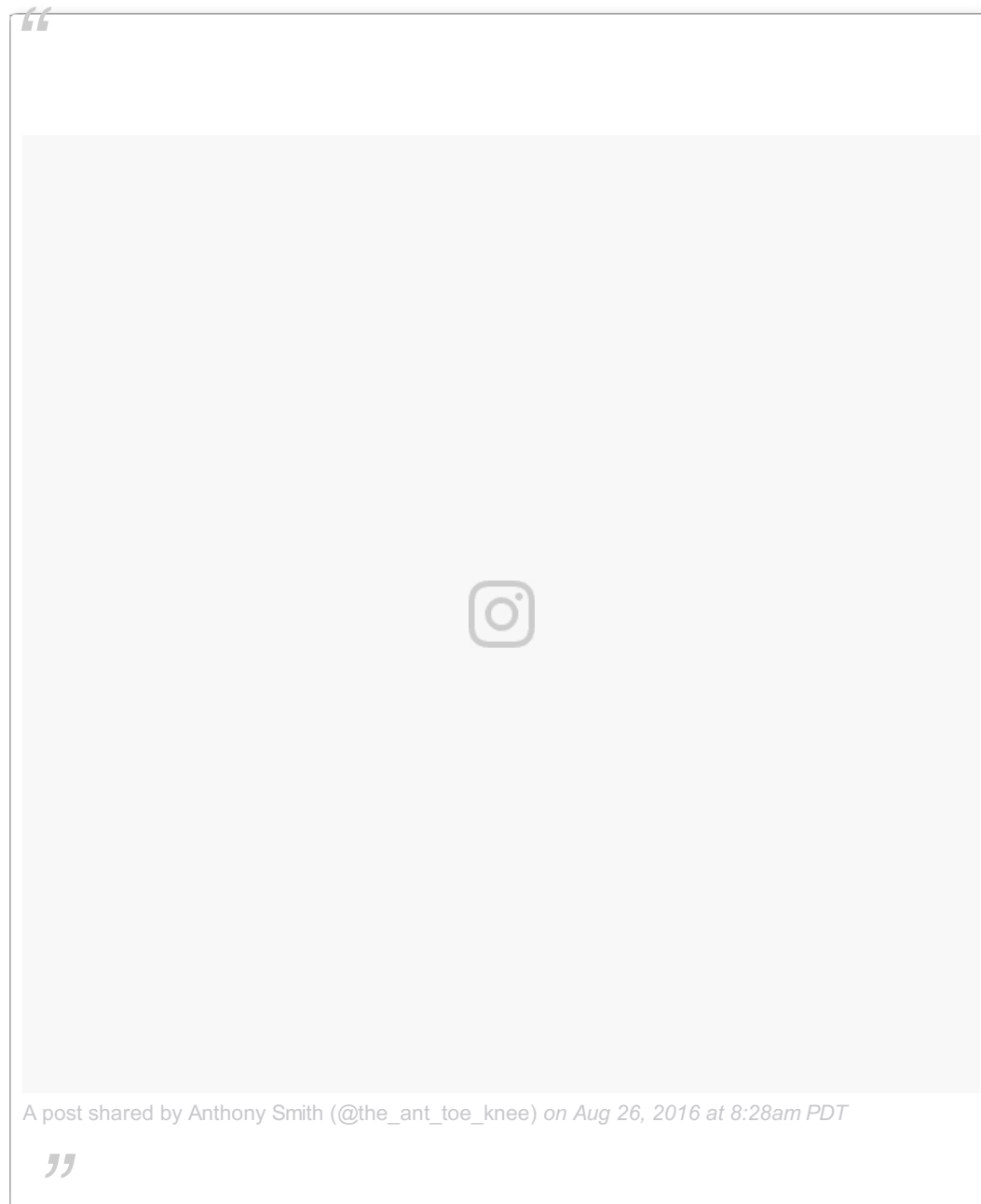
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The label's aesthetic is thus informed by the interface, game and graphic design that characterised these videos games, no doubt imparting a sense of nostalgia in the wearer.

Since its early days, the 2Bop brand has become a streetwear staple within Cape Town's fashion circuit, with growing

influence across the country and abroad. It has amassed a loyal following of fashion fiends who closely follow brand developments and cheer on its successes from the sidelines. Its community-driven design does an impressive job of consistently resonating with its followers, and in return receives the kind of brand devotion many of SA's fashion houses would envy.

2Bop's founder, designer and director Anthony Smith has been selected as one of the 12 finalists in the [inaugural Threads Accelerator](#). Smith is in the midst of a 12-week bootcamp designed to boost South Africa's up-and-coming fashion designers and turn them into powerful fashion CEOs. The programme winner receives a package that includes a trade trip to Europe to meet top retailers and buyers, a sponsored Mercedes Benz for one year and an SME banking starter pack from Standard Bank.



A post shared by Anthony Smith (@the_ant_toe_knee) on Aug 26, 2016 at 8:28am PDT

In between all of that, the 2Bop team also showcased its newest collection at the SA Menswear Week event held in Cape Town recently. We caught up with Smith to discuss the new Autumn/Winter 2018 range, 2Bop's community of brand advocates and how to balance creativity with the business of fashion.

📌 **Tell us the 2Bop origin story. How did the label start out?**

I grew up skateboarding in Port Elizabeth in the 90s and was influenced by skateboarding's DIY ethos and always wanted to start my own clothing brand. I was one of those "game kop" kids that were obsessed with video games and used that medium and culture as the main inspiration behind 2Bop.

■ ***What was the inspiration behind your SAMW AW18 collection?***

No one thing in particular. Going back to our brand essence and our roots and utilising our main logo, which we've ironically never actually used on our garments in print form.





Credit: Simon Deiner / SDR Photo





Credit: Simon Deiner / SDR Photo

■ ***What goes into preparing for a showcase like SAMW? And does it feel like it's all worth it once the show's over?***

Ulfah, one of our designers and creative directors, put in all the hard work. She feels that it's where you're able to get a response and get to test out future designs on an audience.

■ ***2Bop has become one of the most prominent homegrown streetwear labels, especially in Cape Town. What do you think the brand has done differently to attract and retain such a loyal following?***

We've always done our own thing and had a strong idea of who we were. We don't look outwardly for inspiration, rather referencing our own histories and obscure interests and I feel it translates.



Credit: Simon Deiner / SDR Photo

Your customer base is somewhat of a distinct community. Is this something you've actively encouraged or did it happen haphazardly?

We're open and have always encouraged sharing, be it through social media or through events at our main store, Corner Store. We've always fostered the spirit of co-creation, collaboration and community.



Credit: Simon Deiner / SDR Photo

How do you balance creativity with the business side of the brand?

It's not easy. One has to be disciplined not to veer too far off in either direction and to know your strong points and weaknesses and buttress yourself with talent that can accommodate that. But we have to remind ourselves why we began this in the first place and always remember to have fun and play.





Credit: Simon Deiner / SDR Photo





Credit: Simon Deiner / SDR Photo

■ ***What would you say is at the heart of the streetwear resurgence we've witnessed over the last number of years?***

Globalisation and the growth of social media and access to the internet. I also don't think it really went anywhere, its just

always evolving.



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Maroefah Smith 16 Feb 2018



■ ***How would you like to see fashion, menswear in particular, evolve over the next decade?***

I'd like to see more African brands making an impact on the global fashion economy. I'd also like to see more sustainable products and sustainable fabrics become more economically viable.

Visit [2Bop online](#) for more info, and connect with the brand on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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