



**MEDIA RELEASE:**

**July 2016**

## **Biography**

Stephen grew up in Kathu, a small town situated in the heart of the Northern Cape, bordering the enigmatic Kalahari. His career objective from early childhood was to become a dentist, but as the years progressed fashion as a vocation resonated with him and this elicited a creative spark of realisation that fashioning a woman in luxurious fabrics and effortlessly styling her in a manner reminiscent of a mythical deity would leave both designer and muse with a contented smile.

Stephen studied at Elizabeth Galloway Academy of Fashion design in Stellenbosch. After graduating top of his class in 2007 and receiving several awards as a young design student, he was determined to leave his mark in the South African fashion industry.

Shortly after graduation, he was appointed as designer, product developer and PR-liaison at the Cape Town based accessory leathercraft company, Cape Cobra, which specialises in the design and manufacture of exquisite exotic leather goods for local and international clientele. Within this well-established luxury company a stable platform unveiled for this young designer. Stephen had the privilege of working with top International brands in the pursuit of developing their exotic leather accessory collections, whilst absorbing the creative energy and knowledge of these global icons. He kept his passion for bespoke couture alive after-hours, by creating gorgeous gowns for his private clients, mostly brides, and frequently participated as a young designer at fashion events and design competitions.

A chance meeting in 2010 with Teresa Joubert, close friend and fellow designer, culminated in a 2-year business partnership and the founding of the Gelieft Brand – mainly specialising in bridal wear. As a formidable design duo they were dedicated to perfection and the achievement of the highest aesthetic ideal in their elegant creations.

At the beginning of 2012, Stephen relocated to the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town and joined the eminent house of couture and prêt-a-porter, Rosenwerth - one of the most acclaimed names in the South African fashion industry. Under the creative leadership of both Elzbieta and Gabi Rosenwerth, Stephen cultivated a profound understanding of the modern woman's style and a discerning eye for luxury fashion.

In 2014 he took up the position of studio manager and assistant designer at Gavin Rajah - a fashion house that is synonymous with fine craftsmanship, luxurious finishes and fine fabrication. This Cape Town based atelier is famed for producing couture garments for their loyal clients around the world. The success of the brand has been built on a consistent standard of workmanship and creative excellence. While working under the guidance of Gavin Rajah, Stephen had the honour of traveling internationally and immersing himself in the fundamentals of managing a successful international brand – he counts this as one of the most rewarding experiences of his career.



## **Birth**

6 July 2016, is a significant milestone in Stephen's life as it marks not only his 30th Birthday, but also the fulfilment of a lifelong pursuit to establish and launch his own brand within the fashion industry. He has attained the ability to connect knowledge, past experiences and creativity to successfully drive his brand. His bespoke gowns are described as "Unique pieces that are not aimed at camouflaging a woman, but dressing and enhancing her feminine character."

## **Logo & Emblem**

Stephen's own handwriting was incorporated into the logo to add authenticity and a hint of flamboyance. The brand's visual identity represents his design aesthetic which is feminine, modern and glamorous.

The emblem, an illustrated line diagram of a multifaceted cut ruby with the number 1986, refers to Stephen's birthstone and to the year of his birth.

The Ruby has always been a talisman of passion, protection and prosperity, in Stephen's life. It symbolizes the sun, and its glowing hue suggests an inextinguishable flame within the stone that legends claim would shine through even the thickest cloth.

## **Stephen van Eeden Atelier**

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