

AFRICAN WOMEN TO WATCH IN 2015

2015 is set to be the year of the African woman. Indeed, according to the African Union, it is to be the 'Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063' – the theme of the 24th Ordinary Session of the Summit of the African Union on 30-31 January. Africa has long been gifting the world with bright young female entrepreneurs in all fields, from fashion to music, from energy and gas to media. We set out to meet the new crop of women ready to take the world by storm in the New Year – some you will already know and others you will soon get to know. By **Sinem Bilen-Onabanjo**



FAVOUR LUCKY

Nothing verifies "one to watch" status better than a "One to Watch" title, which is exactly what the 16-year-old Nigerian model Favour Lucky clinched at the 2014 Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Africa. The winner of Nigeria's Next Supermodel 2012, she has also walked at Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Cape Town and Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Johannesburg, and is fast establishing herself as one of the rising stars of the African modelling industry. With her unique baby face and versatility beyond her years, Favour is definitely "one to watch" on international runways in 2015.



OKWIRI ODUOR

Hopes were high for the rising star of Kenyan literature when, at only 21, her novella *The Dream Chasers* was highly commended at the Commonwealth Book Prize in 2012. Now 24, the Nairobi-based writer is fast becoming a household name after winning the Caine Prize for her short story *My Father's Head* in July 2014. A 2014 MacDowell Colony fellow, Okwiri – currently working on her debut novel – is considered one of the “most promising voices from Africa south of the Sahara”. Her latest story *Ragdoll* appeared in *Africa 39*, an anthology of the works of 39 sub-Saharan writers launched at Port Harcourt Book Festival in April 2014.

NHLANHLA NCIZA

What a year 2014 has been for singer Nhlanhla Nciza. Back in April, her group Mafikizolo won big at the South African Music Awards (SAMA) with eight awards. June saw her clinch both the MTV Africa Music Award for Song of the Year, with ‘Khona’, and also Best Group alongside fellow Mafikizolo band member, Theo Kgosinkwe, followed by a spectacular performance the same month at the BET Awards in Los Angeles where Mafikizolo was nominated for Best African International Act. Despite numerous personal tragedies, including losing her daughter in a car accident in 2009, Nhlanhla’s star keeps rising. With a booming solo career and her rebranded clothing line NN Vintage receiving rave reviews, the 36-year-old singer is set to continue her upward trajectory in 2015.



RAHIMA MOHAMED

London-based Zimbabwean Rahima established her RAAAH label in April 2014 and overnight became the designer to watch when she stormed the runway at Africa Fashion Week London 2014 with a stellar debut of her “Fly/Fly High” collection, informed by a celebration of colours, bold shapes and vintage inspired pieces. Then came RAAAH’s foray at Zimbabwe Fashion Week 2014 in September. Already a hit with celebrities such as Tiwa Savage, Rahima designs ready-to-wear as well as made-to-measure looks pitched between the High Street and the high end. With a new collection in the works, Rahima is set to be the designer to watch in 2015.

EVA OMAGHOMI

Who would have thought that a Nigerian woman is part of the team that organises media engagements for the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge (aka William and Kate)? A leading member of one of the UK’s most high-profile press offices, Clarence House, Omaghomi is deputy communications secretary to Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall and also helps manage the media for Prince Harry. She has been involved in planning major high-profile events, including William and Kate’s 2011 wedding, and led the media strategy for Prince Charles representing the Queen at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Sri Lanka in 2013. Most recently she led the media logistics for The Royal Family’s attendance at the 70th anniversary D-Day Commemorative events in Normandy. We can’t wait to see what Eva has in store for 2015.



LAMI PHILLIPS

For Afro-soul fans, singer/songwriter Lami Phillips is not a new name. Since her 2009 return to her native Nigeria following her formative years spent in the UK and US, Lami has had major hits including ‘Know’, featuring MI, ‘Ori Mi Wu’ featuring Ice Prince, and most recently ‘Romantic Boy’ featuring K9 – all alongside motherhood and her humanitarian work as a UN Envoy and Oxfam Ambassador. In 2015, Lami will add yet another feather in her cap as she spearheads a multimillion-dollar venture with Nigeria’s first holistic production and digital agency, which aims to bring world-class production values to Lagos in a state-of-the-art one-stop hub of audio, video, photo and print production. Oh, and let’s not forget her sophomore album ‘Pieces of Love’ set for release on Valentine’s Day, promising a more mature soul sound.





AMMA ASANTE

Born in London to Ghanaian parents, film director Amma began her media career as a TV child actress, appearing as a regular in the British school drama *Grange Hill*. Leaving acting behind, she directed her first feature film, *A Way of Life*, in 2004. It won her several awards, including the Carl Foreman Award for Special Achievement at the 2005 BAFTAs and she was described by *The Times* as “one of the most exciting prospects in British cinema to emerge in the past 12 months”. She made her second feature film, *Belle*, in 2013 and in 2014 was again honoured by BAFTA. An Honorary Associate of the London Film School, Asante is certainly one to continue watching.



TINASHE

The 21-year-old singer/songwriter, dancer, actress and former model of Zimbabwean descent is fast proving to be the latest international star in the making. Following two critically acclaimed 2012 mixtapes, ‘*In Case We Die*’ and ‘*Reverie*’, and a third in 2013, ‘*Black*’, she released her debut album ‘*Aquarius*’ on the RCA label in October 2014. Between the ages of 14 and 18 Tinashe was part of the girl group *The Stunners*, which split in 2011. Now with her first single ‘*2 On*’ peaking at number 24 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart and ‘*Aquarius*’ debuting at number 17 on Billboard 200, Tinashe is set to be one of the hottest names in R&B in 2015.



GUGU MBATHA-RAW

The 31-year-old actress of British and South African descent had her major breakthrough in 2014 despite a career in acting spanning almost a decade. In Amma Asante’s 2013 film *Belle*, Mbatha-Raw made waves as the eponymous historical character, Dido Elizabeth Belle, a mixed race aristocrat in 18th century Britain. In 2015, the actress is set to go stellar with roles in *Jupiter Ascending* and *The Whole Truth*. She is also set to star in the upcoming drama *Concussion*, starring Will Smith.



TOYIN ODULATE

Nigerian entrepreneur and founder of Olori Cosmetics, an African-themed beauty company established in 2013, with a range of hair, bath and body care products, Toyin is one of the pioneers of organic beauty products made with African ingredients. She has garnered a decade of experience in the international beauty industry as a senior executive for French cosmetics giant, L’Oreal, managing multiple beauty brands across Africa and the Middle East, where she honed her skills in beauty brand marketing and business development for emerging markets. With a heritage in blending natural products, the granddaughter of Jacob Sogboyega Odulate – the inventor of the Nigerian household remedy Alabukun Powder – Toyin is set to take the beauty world by storm in 2015 with plans to launch a haircare brand and expand distribution across key sub-Saharan markets.

AND THE ONES TO KEEP UP WITH...



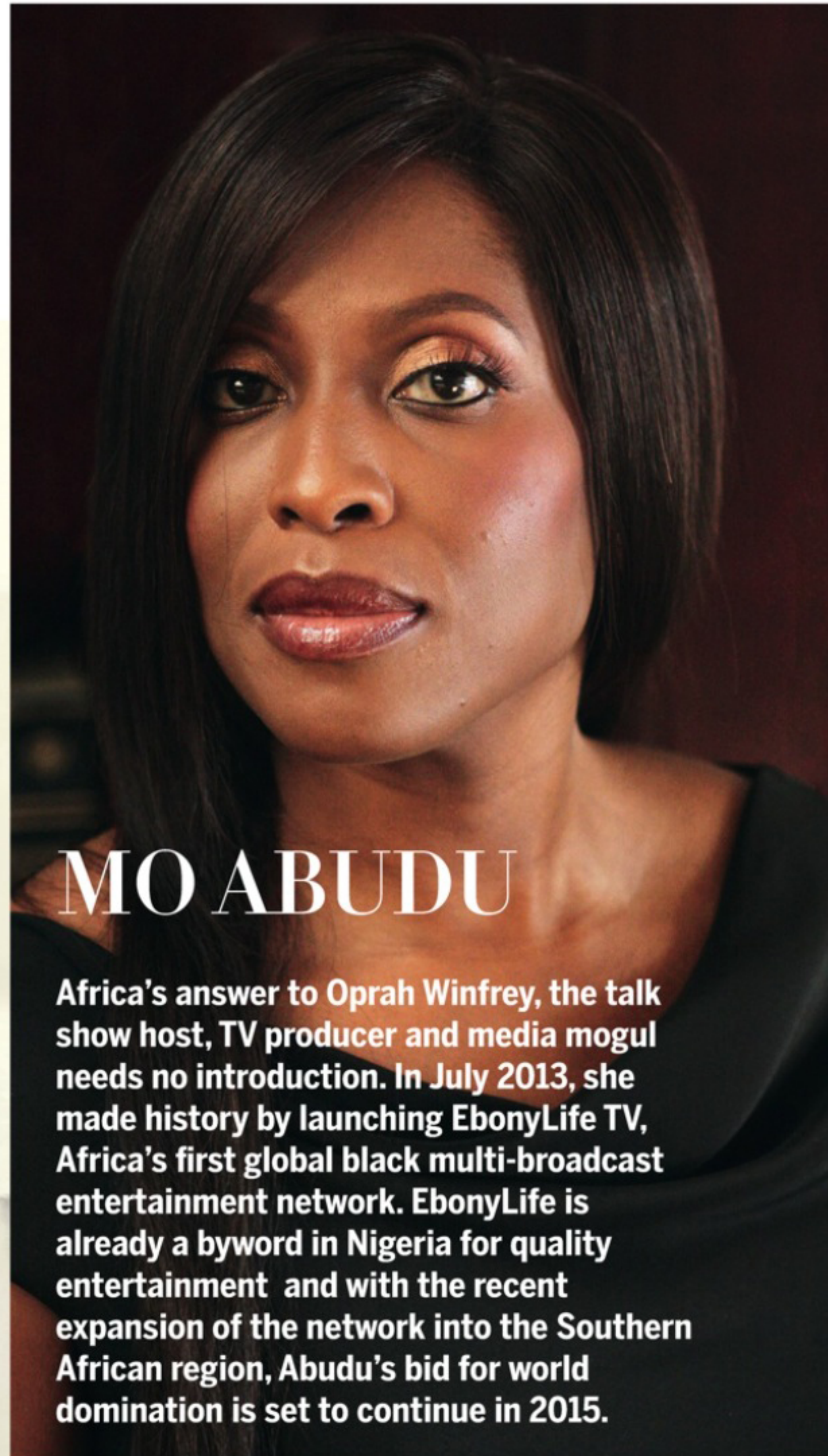
LUPITA NYONG'O

Without a doubt, Nyong'o owned 2014, with her Academy Award for her role in *12 Years a Slave*, her Lancome and Miu Miu campaigns, as well as being named 'The Most Beautiful Person' by *People Magazine* in April and 'Woman of the Year' by *Glamour*. Don't think the 31-year-old actress will rest in 2015 as she is set to star in *Star Wars Episode VII* and, working with Brad Pitt's Plan B, to produce and star in the much anticipated adaptation of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel, *Americanah*.



KWANGU LIWEWE

With over two decades experience working for both the print and broadcast media in Southern Africa, West Africa and the United Kingdom, Liwewe has developed a keen interest in Africa's social, political and economic issues and reported on major events across Africa such as the coup in Mali, elections in Nigeria, Senegal and Liberia as well as ongoing terrorist attacks in Nigeria. As executive producer and presenter of eNews Channel Africa's current affairs show *Africa 360*, Liwewe is set to continue reporting Africa's hottest stories in 2015.



MO ABUDU

Africa's answer to Oprah Winfrey, the talk show host, TV producer and media mogul needs no introduction. In July 2013, she made history by launching EbonyLife TV, Africa's first global black multi-broadcast entertainment network. EbonyLife is already a byword in Nigeria for quality entertainment and with the recent expansion of the network into the Southern African region, Abudu's bid for world domination is set to continue in 2015.



RONKE ADEMILUYI

The Nigerian entrepreneur made history in 2011 with the first edition of Africa Fashion Week London, giving a platform to emerging and established African and African-inspired designers. With the fifth anniversary of the show, which has become a must-attend event on the London fashion calendar, and a recently launched concession boutique on London's Oxford Street, stocking African designers from across the world, Ademiluyi is certainly one to continue watching in 2015.



PHUTI MAHANYELE

From the township to the top of the boardroom, the CEO of Shaduka Group has established herself as a force to be reckoned with in the business world, as the youngest black woman to head up a multimillion rand conglomerate. 2015 will see her star shine brighter as Mahanye makes it her priority to push the renewable energy agenda in a bid to maximise the energy resources across the continent.

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SPECIAL
REPORT

Mercedes-Benz

FASHION
WEEK
AFRICA

AFRICAN
WOMEN
IN
TECH

WELLBEING
Tame that
TUSH!

“Let’s
not forget
Chibok
Girls”

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UK £3.00, USA \$4, Canada
\$4.50, Euro Zone € 4.50, CFA
Zone F.CFA 2000, Ethiopia R 50
Egypt EE 20, Gambia Da 120,
Ghana GH¢ 10.00, Kenya KShs
350, Jamaica \$680, Liberia
US\$ 3.00, Mauritius MR 150,
Nigeria N 500, Norway NOK 50,
Sierra Leone LE 15,000, South
Africa R35, Sweden SKr 33,
Switzerland SFr 5.00, Tanzania
TShs 5,400, Uganda USh 8,700,
Zambia ZMK 25.

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Beauty
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