

Thrifting takes its place in SA mega mall

Second-hand fashion store Thrift By Flav has opened in the Mall of Africa in Waterfall, becoming the first thrift store to open in a super-regional mall in South Africa.



Flavia Mnenza

The thrift store is the brainchild of 22-year-old Flavia Mnenza, who started thrift trading on Instagram in 2018. She soon realised that this approach to clothing shopping is part of a wider worldwide trend and that South Africa is poised to become part of this international shift to sustainable purchasing.

Her efforts to expand into formal retailing were backed by commercial property brokers Rosh Pinah Properties, who raised the idea with Mall of Africa asset managers Atterbury and Attacq Limited.

A growing trend

Thrifting is a growing trend worldwide as a new wave of environmentally-conscious consumers look to minimise textile and garment waste by purchasing quality second-hand garments.

The fashion industry globally is the second highest polluting industry in the world due to its massive consumption of water in the manufacturing process and the millions of tons of microfibres that are dumped annually in the oceans and constrained landfills. Clothing recycling and the sale of quality second-hand garments through thrifting is a counter to this scenario.



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“The thrifting market is still very new but already it is showing signs of being core to the purchase decisions of a new generation of shoppers. We have identified it as a trend that influences the decisions of some shoppers as to when, what and where they purchase goods,” says Michael Clampett, head of asset and property management (retail) of Attacq Limited.

Lucille Louw, MD of Atterbury Asset Managers, comments, “As more people understand the impact of waste on the environment and strive to support the circular economy, sustainable consumption is accelerating. Conscious consumers are championing thrift stores to reduce waste and extend the active life of garments. Innovators in the retail space are responding and revolutionising thrift shopping into exciting modern retail experiences that can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with leading international brands.”

Change in consumer attitudes to the environment

“Innovation does not involve only technology and digital solutions, but also encompasses changing business models and markets. It is clear that thrifting is part of a bigger movement to more responsible purchasing, driven mostly by younger shoppers,” says Clampett.

“We also realise that the impact that thrifting can make on the environment is something that we can either read about in articles and research papers, or we can become part of this movement and develop our own insights on this growing trend in retailing. That means finding ways to implement it in our strategies going forward,” he adds.

Thrift By Flav owner Flavia Minenza says the response to her store has been positive since opening its doors late last month. “The early results have been beyond anything I imagined and I am amazed by how well we’ve done in the first few weeks. Sales have been way better than expected. This shows that there are shoppers out there who have embraced the thrift principle and the environmental benefits that it brings by minimising textile and garment waste.”



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René Styber, director of Rosh Pinah Properties, adds, “As a commercial property broker, we are always looking for fresh ways to add value to our retail clients. We are also committed to supporting young entrepreneurs where we can. For these reasons, we are delighted with Flavia’s progress and the impact thrifting is making in the market,”

Asked whether Attacq sees further opportunities for retailers that focus on sustainability and the idea of repurposing and recycling goods within a mall shopping concept, Clampett concludes, “We are happy to go on a journey with Thrifts by Flav and learn more about thrifting and its market potential. In addition, this obviously forms an integral part of Attacq’s own journey to have a lighter impact on the environment.”

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