

RETAIL

Bloomingdale's unveils Aqua, Studio 189 collaboration

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Bloomingdale's, Studio 189 collaborate on limited-edition collection. Image courtesy of Bloomingdale's

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

U.S. department store **Bloomingdale's** has announced a limited-edition collaboration between its exclusive house brand Aqua and lifestyle brand Studio 189.

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Cofounded by luxury executive and educator Abrima Erwiah and actress and activist Rosario Dawson, Studio 189 is a social enterprise and luxury lifestyle brand that provides a platform to help promote and curate African fashion. The collection features hand-dyed prints produced by Studio 189 artisans in Ghana in summer styles such as dresses, tops, skirts and swimwear.

"We are delighted to have had the opportunity to collaborate with Studio 189 on this beautiful collection," said Denise Magid, executive vice president and general merchandise manager for ready-to-wear for center core, concessions and Bloomingdale's Outlets, in a statement.

"As a brand that works with artisanal communities that specialize in various traditional craftsmanship techniques, Studio 189 brings bold, inspired new looks to our beloved and best-selling Aqua portfolio this summer."

Aqua x Studio 189

The idea for the Aqua x Studio 189 collection, entitled "Akua," was conceived during New York Fashion Week after Bloomingdale's Aqua creative director Erica Ruff Hatfield contacted Ms. Erwiah to collaborate following Studio 189's spring/summer 2022 show last year.

Akua is an Akan female name for a girl born on Wednesday and is derived from deities. Akua is said to be a champion for the cause of others.

According to Ms. Erwiah, Studio 189 produces more than 20,000 yards of hand-made fabric and activates rural communities that are in need of work.



Studio 189 aims to support and promote artisan fashion in Africa. Image credit: Bloomingdale's

The collection features prints produced by Studio 189 artisans using the art of hand-batiking, a process that starts with patterns carved into wood or sponge that are dipped into hot wax and stamped onto cloth. This cloth is dipped into hand-mixed dyes and then the wax is removed to unveil the finished design.

Eleven different hand-batiked prints were created exclusively for this collection, including palm leaves and pineapple motifs, each designed in vivid color palettes.

Aqua x Studio 189 has 17 apparel pieces and eight swim styles ranging from \$48 to \$198.

The Akua collection launches on July 1 at Bloomingdale's stores nationwide and on Bloomingdales.com. To celebrate, Bloomingdale's is hosting events at The Surf Lodge in Montauk, New York until July 4, with special integrations across the property.

The Surf Lodge boutique will be the first to offer the collection and will host a private dinner with Ms. Erwiah and Ms. Dawson, as well as special musical performances.

Last year, U.S. retailer Bloomingdale's unveiled the launch of Aqua x Katrantzou, a limited-edition collaboration between the retailer's best-selling exclusive brand and the award-winning designer.

The 18-piece collection blended the designer's distinct expertise in bold prints with Aqua's trend-driven style. The collection featured four prints Ms. Katrantzou created specifically for the collaboration, centered on animal motifs and vibrant florals ([see story](#)).

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