

Creating Noonouri - high fashion's virtual darling

 By [Lauren Hartzberg](#)

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Immaculately-dressed, globe-trotting and adorably doll-like, [Noonouri](#) has made an enviable splash in the world of high fashion - but she only exists on the web.



Noonouri in Valentino. Image via [Instagram](#)

In just over a year, the pint-sized virtual influencer has collaborated with some of the biggest names in luxury: from Saint Laurent to Versace, Riccardo Tisci and Dior, to SA's own Rich Mnisi and Thebe Magugu.

A lifetime project

While the CGI model was officially introduced to the world on 1 February 2018, she's lived almost forever in the mind of her creator Joerg Zuber, the MD at Munich-based creative agency Opium.



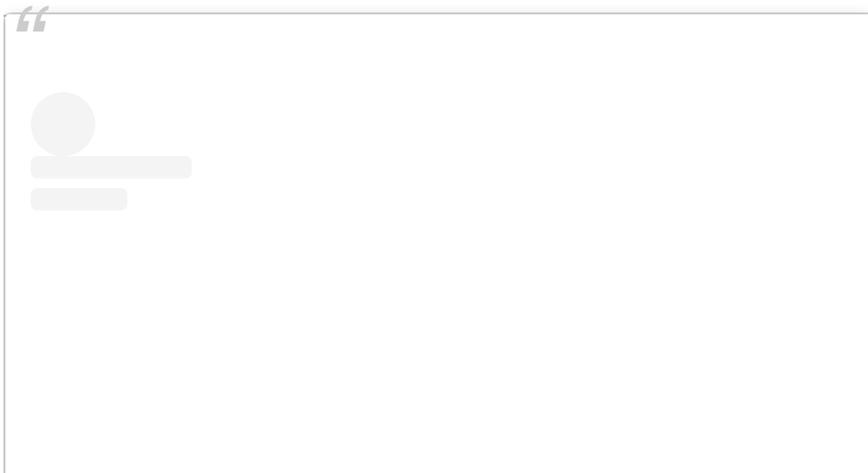
Joerg Zuber speaking at CNI Lux. Image credit: Heather Shuker

Speaking at the Conde Nast International [Luxury Conference](#) in Cape Town this month, Zuber shared that the idea of having his own doll followed him around since his childhood.

When he was 5 years old, his mother gave him money to buy a magazine, and he returned to her with a *Vogue*, enamoured by its images of beautiful women adorned with fashionable clothing and hairstyles. But his mother wasn't pleased.

"I wanted to have a doll that I could dress up in clothing and do its hair and makeup, but of course at that time it wasn't considered appropriate for a little boy to do."

"She's 1 year old in the fashion industry, but she's been living with me for over a lifetime," Zuber said.





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feeling Africa 🍀🍀🍀🍀🍀 @trevor_stuurman lava dress originally worn by @manthe.ribane 🍀🍀🍀🍀 @moyobybibi for #BlackPanther #advertising . . #africa #hypebeast #doll #highsnobiety #dolls #tribute #art #lensofourlives #digital #haute couture #noonoouri

A post shared by noonoouri (@noonoouri) on Apr 11, 2019 at 5:16am PDT



ine influencers started gathering steam. His many pleas for investment were met with 'no we don't need a digital character', 'her head is too big', 'her eyes are too big' or 'she isn't sexy enough'.

So he funnelled all his money and a significant amount of time into her creation, and brought her to life himself.

Noonoouri in a nutshell

Noonoouri is 1.5 metres tall, lives in Paris, and she loves couture and chocolate. Depicted as a 19-year-old, she celebrates her birthday on 13 September, the date Zuber sketched her. "That means she's a Virgo, so she's very organised and disciplined," Zuber quipped.

She was created in the image of Naomi Campbell and Kim Kardashian. The former Zuber described as having an "other-worldly beauty" that he's always admired, while Kardashian he calls "the face of social media".



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A post shared by [noonoouri](#) (@noonoouri) on Jul 9, 2018 at 12:42am PDT



community of Instagram followers, along with
Vogue's Suzy Menkes, model Alessandra Ambrosio and designer Marc Jacobs.

Zuber said that everything Noonouri does must fit into her CCC manifesto: cute, curious and couture. Cute she certainly is, but she's also on a mission to learn as much as she can, and as a lover of high fashion she's a stickler for quality.

Noonoouri has also been designed to be socially aware. This means that on one day she could be sharing her top 10 Beyoncé videos, and the next concentrating on mental health awareness. She also embraces the various cultures she's emerged in on her travels.





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A post shared by [noonoouri](#) (@noonoouri) on Mar 16, 2019 at 6:35am PDT



to be a voice for the voiceless - specifically for children, animals and nature, which are her key social concerns.

Features and collaborations

While fellow CGI models [Shudu Gram](#) and [Lil Miquela](#) closely resemble real humans, Zuber said it was important to him that Noonouri doesn't look like a real person.

"I believe the human should be in front of her. Noonouri is not a substitute for real humans. It's her dream to become one, but she never will, of course. The human is always above her."

However, in collaborations with brands like Yves Saint Laurent, for example, the fact that Noonouri is a digital creation works perfectly, with CGI being used to suspend reality and bring luxury garments to life.

The CGI influencer also delivered a beauty tutorial in [collaboration with Kim Kardashian Beauty](#), a project that took Zuber a full 6 weeks to produce. And she took over Dior's official Instagram account for two days as the label presented its Cruise 2019 collection in Paris.

Noonouri also made the leap into print, appearing on six fashion magazine covers to date.



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But as a CGI influencer, will Noonouri grow up alongside her young fashion-loving following? Zuber says yes.

“She will grow and I will age her. Sometimes I even try to make you feel as though she's eaten a bit too much chocolate. Maybe she will have a broken arm one day. I try to make her really authentic.”

ABOUT LAUREN HARTZENBERG

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