



science book about the sun that my dad got for my siblings and I. So, finding out a few years ago that Diata, which happens to be my middle name, actually begins with Sun definitely renewed my inexplicable attraction to it. It is incredible the effect its energy has on life here on earth!

**V. L. K. Djokoto: Quite profound! Akpene, how did you get into modelling?**

**Akpene Diata Hoggar:** The first memory I have of my interest in modelling was with my childhood friend, cat walking on our porch when we were about 5/6 years-old. I didn't actively pursue it until my first year in university when my sister's friend got a camera and had been exploring photography as a hobby. I casually experimented with it for a while initially, just for fun. But I eventually grew deeply passionate about it.

**V. L. K. Djokoto:** You've worked with quite a number of prominent photographers. Who has been your favourite photographer to work with?

**Akpene Diata Hoggar:** \*Gasps\* That's a really difficult one, I'd say Daron Bandeira because he introduced me to a different type of modelling, focused on lifestyle and travel, which is a great blend of most of my interests... fashion, beauty and travel. I also enjoy working with Twins Don't Beg, they're Bloggers and Event Photographers. Being the official photographers of Miss Universe Ghana, I've grown really attached to them and they've contributed a great deal to the experience.

**V. L. K. Djokoto:** I've noticed you are also into Yoga. How has that impacted you as a person?

**Akpene Diata Hoggar:** Final year in University was filled with so much anxiety. I started pulling out my hair unconsciously, got relatively jitterier and insomnia crept in too! So,



after graduation, I had a strong desire to set a good tone for how I'd want to live.

My dad, who is a Buddhist, suggested yoga and I decided to give it a try. In the last two years I've been practicing, I've noticed a shift in my mental health and general self-awareness. I'm calmer, more in tune with myself and I'm learning the complex art of mastering my thoughts, feelings and emotions.

**V. L. K. Djokoto:** What's been your favourite fashion brand to work with? And what is it like being a part of someone else's creative process?

**Akpene Diata Hoggar:** I've had the privilege of working with so many notable fashion brands in Ghana and I must say so far, my favourite to have worked with was Ophelia Crossland who designed my evening gown for Miss Universe finale. As for being involved in someone else's creative process, it made me appreciative of diversity.

It's interesting to see how different processes work for different creatives. But at the end of the day, they have one thing in common; results.

**V. L. K. Djokoto:** Are you considering a life in politics at some point in time?

**Akpene Diata Hoggar:** \*Laughs\* For now I'm adverse to it but never say never!

**V. L. K. Djokoto: Congratulations on being crowned Ms. Ghana Universe! You were absolutely fantastic throughout the entire competition. What was it like representing the Republic of Ghana at Miss Universe?**

**Akpene Diata Hoggar:** It felt like nothing I can possibly describe; the experience brought with it priceless lessons. One thing I can say for certain is how proud I am to be Ghanaian. Whatever path I decide to take in the future will always include my people and my country at the very centre of it. 🇬🇭

## 'AKPENE DIATA HOGGAR'

# EXCLUSIVE Q&A WITH MISS UNIVERSE GHANA 2018

**B**y **V. L. K. Djokoto** Akpene Diata Hoggar dazzled us all with her striking beauty, radiant eloquence and exquisite style when she represented Ghana at the renowned international pageant, Miss Universe 2018, held in Thailand last year. Akpene is a supermodel, entrepreneur and social activist. She graduated from the prestigious Ashesi University in 2016 with a degree in Management Systems Information and gained employment shortly after as a business analyst at

*Craft Education, working there for almost a year. A consummate innovator, she co-founded the consulting firm Creatives Anonymous in September, 2017 and is also a creative consultant at the Accra-based digital agency start-up Sundiata Studios. Hoggar also established Peer Relief, a youth-oriented initiative that seeks to bring mental health to the fore of national attention. And as an avid writer, she loves to travel and often blogs about her experiences. I had a chance to sit down with the reigning Miss Universe Ghana 2018*

*and ask her a few questions about the pageant, pop culture and her career aspirations. Read about our conversation here:*  
**V. L. K. Djokoto: Where does your obsession, or should I say, fascination with the sun stem from?**  
**Akpene Diata Hoggar:** I read somewhere, recently, that being born in the morning, which I was, influences one's personality and productive hours. Before then, I had always found the Sun and how it worked intriguing. As a child, I vividly remember being particularly fond of this big red