

African Fashion International celebrates 15 years of fashion

 By [Meagan Duckitt](#)

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The Mother City was set alight as the Cape Town International Convention Centre hosted the 15th Annual Cape Town Fashion Week (CTFW) by African Fashion International from 23-25 March 2023. The venue was beautifully adorned with painted African art sculptures and guests were free to enjoy a choice of refreshments from the cash bar to the complimentary gin bar.



Image by Meagan Duckitt

Now in its 15th year of conception, AFI provides a platform for designers to showcase their talent. The Fastrack programme is the brainchild of Dr. Precious Motsepe and has delivered exceptional talent inclusive of Thebe Magugu, Rich Mnisi, just to name a few. Avinue Bontsa assisted at the pop-up stores and explained that the AFI is an all-inclusive initiative welcoming designers at all skills levels to showcase.

More specifically - The AFI Fastrack programme is a talent recruitment programme that sources students from fashion institutions across South Africa and based on their entries, finalists are selected to showcase their range. These finalists are further mentored and provided skills to prepare them for the fashion industry at large.

Precious Motsepe introduced Shameera Moodley, last year's winner who addressed the finalists and explained her journey and the opportunities the platform provided her. One of the highlights was her visit to the UAE and being awarded the opportunity to showcase internationally. Her range 'Laani Raani' produced from offcuts and recycled fabrics, certainly did not resemble anything close to 'home-made'. The opulent interest fabrics including satins, brocades, silks and natural fabrics, merged with meticulous designs, and artistic silhouettes was the perfect recipe for pure excellence. She clearly proved she deserved her win.



Image by Meagan Duckitt

All designers who showcased collections were exhibited in the foyer and allowed guests the opportunity to view and purchase the range in their allocated pop-up stores. This provided them a closer look at fabrics, designs, textures and the AFI sales staff explained to customers the concept behind each range.

Highlights

On Day 1, some of the stand outs were House of Nala which included beautiful rich red velour fabric and silhouettes included mid length empire style dresses, and cape coats finished with beautiful black fur trims and pearl necklaces and applique. Menswear displayed more relaxed silhouettes which included boucle bomber and jogger sets, placement print Tees, and dungarees.



Image by Meagan Duckitt

Cape Town's very own Temple Boys entertained the crowd, before K Moraba and Collective showcased their exquisite tailoring. Pops of colour such as rich camels were anchored with black, white and rust. Menswear included layering over structured suiting whereas ladieswear focused on floaty feminine silhouettes with bellsleeves, bustier pants sets, and body-hugging dresses.

Chip Oh Neal ended off the evening with their natural fabric combo's which included neutrals with denims with handcraft details and embroidery, tie-dyes, striped linens, and patch applique details.

DJ and producer DJ Zinhle kept the crowd entertained as she ended off the evening.



Image by Meagan Duckitt

Day 2 included Alia Bare, Malondie Kaylaamiel, Gvilint and highlights included Imprint, who's showcase was accompanied by a group of African dancers and singers. The designs were equally breathtaking and included signature prints accessorized with hats, scarves, and ladies wore bright footwear. Cape style dresses and bell sleeves with maxi dresses were key silhouettes on females. The range was a declaration of 'Postcards of Africa' a call for all of us to know who we are, to go home wherever it may be, and remembering those less fortunate to have a home.



Image by Meagan Duckitt

The ever talented Young Stunna completely changed the atmosphere when he had the crowd on their feet with his charisma and energy.

Another standout was Kat Van Duinen, whose playful occasion range sported silhouettes inclusive of exaggerated puffed sleeves, ruffled dresses, balloon skirts, and fabrics included flirty lace, gorgeous taffetas, lurex fabrics and bold colour provided the perfect juxtaposition of fun versus sophistication.

Saturday's shows included Hugo Flear, Scalo, Otiz Seflo, and Taibo Bacar.

Overall the anchoring trend of all designers was the celebration of femininity as well as masculinity – each designer interpreting it as they perceive it. Feminine figure-hugging and floaty silhouettes finishing with cascading sleeves, exaggerated hemlines, ruffles and statement shoes and hats.

Prints were a variation of African, be it clashed or even abstract, as well as lots of interesting fabrics and details such as hand embroideries, fringe and unfinished applique. Menswear featured strong tailoring, layered silhouettes and a sense of masculinity and strength.



Image by Meagan Duckitt

The showcase was nothing short of breathtaking and every year African Fashion International moves forward in leaps and bounds, and this year was no exception. We are excited to see what our future holds for African designers.

For more information on how to showcase, visit <https://africanfashioninternational.com/>

ABOUT MEAGAN DUCKITT

Meagan is a fashion designer, stylist, writer and public speaker. She owns a small clothing business called Calista Clothing and enjoys using her knowledge to empower women.

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