

Fashion collection dedicated to women facing violence

The key piece in Gert-Johan Coetzee's new collection, which will be revealed at SA Fashion Week this Saturday, is inspired by a sea urchin. These delicate, graceful sea creatures would be defenceless if it weren't for their sharp spines - and that image of defence came to mind when Coetzee was conceptualising his new collection.



"There has been so much violence against women in the news this year already and I wish we could eradicate that. GJC is all about making women look and feel beautiful, and I started thinking imagine clothes could become armour to protect defenceless women," said Coetzee.

"That is why I decided to dedicate my Spring/Summer 2013 collection to women who face violence, and why I approached Shout, whose message that we should stand up and not be silent really resonates with me," he explained.

Three-dimensional printing

In designing the elements needed to bring the image in his mind to life, Coetzee, always looking for the cutting edge, collaborated with the Vaal University of Technology to bring the latest in high technology to the catwalk. Three-dimensional printing is a miraculous-seeming technology that creates previously impossible geometries in single pieces, limited only by the designer's imagination.

Coetzee is very excited about the results. "I cannot wait for everyone to see the collection on Saturday. I have gone for a wearable collection that recalls the 1960s and 70s in terms of design, but enhanced with some really fantastical elements, which was made possible with the advanced 3-D printing technologies."

The face of Coetzee's last collection, Thando Hopa, is also involved this time around and thrilled by the involvement with

Shout. "Gert has shown what he can do in raising awareness of albinism, so I know this initiative will be just as powerful," said the young prosecutor who has redefined perceptions of albinism since she was given a platform by Coetzee last year.

Coetzee is in the process of finalising a suitable project with Shout to get involved with. Shout chairman Gavin Koppel said: "There are many people doing great things, who don't have Gert-Johan's influence, and for him to throw his weight behind such a project can make all the difference. The project that we are looking at provides washable sanitary protection for schoolgirls in rural areas, and we are confident that with Gert-Johan's involvement thousands of girls' lives will be improved."

Gert-Johan Coetzee Spring/Summer 2013 at SAFW on 13 April 2013 has been sold out, but the highlights of the collection will be shown again later that same night at a special show at Hush nightclub in Rosebank. Call +27 (0)11 447 0203 for more details.

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