

Laduma! Inaugural Africa Fashion Week to draw world attention

African designers will be scoring the winning goal during the upcoming FIFA Confederations Cup in June, when the inaugural Africa Fashion Week takes place in Johannesburg.

By [Total Exposure](#) 6 Mar 2009



African Fashion International (AFI), which runs Cape Town, Joburg and Durban fashion weeks, has announced that the inaugural Africa Fashion Week will be an eight-day showcase of the continent's leading designers from **12 to 19 June 2009** at the Sandton Convention Centre and will replace the more localised Joburg Fashion Week on this year's Spring/Summer calendar.

"While the world's eyes are focused firmly on Joburg during the Confederations Cup, Africa Fashion Week will make sure that the beautiful game will also be complemented by beautiful and innovative fashion, and use the opportunity to bring the continent's top design talent to the world's attention," says Dr Precious Moloi-Motsepe, AFI chairperson. "Considering that soccer players such as Cristiano Ronaldo and David Beckham - not to mention their wives and girlfriends - are often style icons, it is fitting that the new Africa Fashion Week launches into this global spotlight, "It is our mission to take African fashion to the world and this Pan-African showcase is a fulfilment of that aspiration," she added. Already African influence are being seen in international collections, a trend, which global fashion consultant Claire Hamilton of WGSN New York believes is only going to grow.

"Tribal or ethnic prints have been popular on the runways for several seasons and right now the "African" aesthetic - defined especially by textile patterns, or beadwork - is very appealing." The most recent issue of T Magazine, the fashion supplement created by The New York Times, features a fashion shoot that looks at African motifs in design, showing items from Louis Vuitton, Missoni and Oscar de la Renta in this "African" context.

New York Fashion Week held in February this year hosted an African Fashion Collective featuring designers Xuly Bet (Mali), Stoned Cherrie (SA), Momo, and Tiffany Amber (Nigeria) showing off an array of African inspired collections and presidential prints. The UK Telegraph reported... that "The 'Obama Effect' hit New York Fashion Week, resulting in a style and cultural explosion as colourful and diverse as Africa itself".

Examples of African designers who have already made their mark on the world fashion stage are Azzedine Alaïa from Tunisia, Oswald Boateng from Ghana, Deola Sagoe from Nigeria and South Africa's Marc Bouwer. Added Hamilton "New York's hippest boutique, Opening Ceremony, which is very influential in the young and trendy designer market, highlights particular countries when stocking its store. Previously it has looked to Sweden and Japan. But for spring 2009, it is stock African designers. "

Africa Fashion Week which will feature designers from up to 15 countries is set to become an annual event that will also be held during the FIFA World Cup in 2010. It is envisaged that it will eventually be hosted by different countries on the

continent, with organisers confident that it can evolve into one of the world's major fashion weeks. The culmination of the event will be the African Fashion Awards, which will be judged and granted by renowned fashion industry experts to recognise the contributions and efforts of African designers and those in the fashion industry.

Joburg Tourism Company CEO, Lindiwe Mahlangu commented that by hosting the Confederations Cup and events like Africa Fashion Week, Joburg would once again be cementing its status as a world-class African city. "This initiative from African Fashion International will showcase the very best of Africa's creative design talents to an unprecedented global audience in the run-up to the FIFA World Cup in 2010."

"Just as all the infrastructure and investment tied to the World Cup will benefit the continent as a whole in years to come, the fashion showcase should also leave a lasting legacy beyond 2010, stimulating the sector by taking African fashion to the world" says Dr Precious Molo-Motsepe

For the duration of African Fashion Week, the Sandton Convention centre will be the hub of the collections, exhibitions and entertainment.

"A football match only lasts 90 minutes and fans and media alike will be looking for alternative ways to enjoy what Johannesburg and indeed Africa has to offer," comments Dr Precious Molo-Motsepe.

So play the man(nequin) and not the ball - don't miss this potent African fusion of fashion and football! Visit www.africanfashioninternational.com for more details.

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