

CT Fashion Week promotes SMME designers

Speaking at the start of Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Cape Town (24-26 July), CEO of the Cape Town Fashion Council (CTFC), Bryan Ramkilawan said, "This event is a key element in marketing the local clothing sector. It's an opportunity for designers to expose their brands to major industry stakeholders, not only locally, but also internationally."



Shana - Shana Morland

As SMME development is a major element of the CTFC programme, emerging designers will be in the spotlight this Fashion Week. It has chosen eight enterprises to have their work showcased on the website of one of its strategic partners, global fashion trend forecaster WGSN.

The selected labels are Lara Klawikowski, Selfi (Celeste Arendse), Shana (Shana Morland), Spilt Milk Designs (Alma van den Berg), Lo (Elzanne Louw), Lazuli (Layla Cassim), Non-European (Tarien Erasmus) and W35T (Nicola West).

Images of their stylish spring/summer collections will be carried on the website - with the potential to reach the global fashion and design community, from influential bloggers to leading fashion editors and retail buyers.

"The website reaches a high volume of industry stakeholders and could help launch them into the international realm. There is potential for niche design that competes on attributes not necessarily based on price. These include fair trade, sustainable production, flexibility, reliability, quality, short run production, design and innovation."

The Fashion Week platform has also gained momentum due to corporate sponsors committing to long-term partnerships with event organisers, making the event more sustainable. Show production is also more professional and the line-up of local designers is internationally competitive. There has also been a marked increase in international media and buyers attending over the past two years.

Cape Town's position as World Design Capital 2014 has also given the local clothing and accessories sector a boost. The city has moved up 27 places in the World Fashion Capital rankings and is now listed at number 27, making it the top-rated African fashion city to watch for creativity and new trends.

"The clothing sector remains a vital part of the Western Cape economy, and has huge potential to grow jobs and boost exports," he concludes.

See the [MBFWCT 2014 line-up here](#).

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