

CELEBRATING FASHION DIVERSITY

Highlights from SA Fashion Week Spring/Summer 2024

The SA Fashion Week (SAFW) Spring/Summer 2024 (SS24) season officially got underway, marking the event's 28th year with an impressive 73% of its designers dedicated to sustainable and ethical fashion production.

Held from April 18 to 20 at its partner venue, the Mall of Africa, for four consecutive years, SA Fashion Week Spring/Summer 2024 was supported by several significant brand partnerships, including a momentous collaboration with iconic beauty brand L'Oréal Paris.

Staying true to tradition, the three-day event opened with the renowned Mr Price New Talent Search, which has been a launch pad for many successful design careers. The competition continued to champion gender neutrality, inclusivity, and diversity.

"SAFW did not only unearth, nurture, support, and market the designers, we also developed makeup artists, hairdressers, and gave fashion students the opportunity to experience the marketing side of fashion first-hand," said the director of SAFW, Lucilla Booyzen.

Over the years, SAFW harnessed the power of collaboration to create impact. One such partnership was the Fashion Bridges-I Ponti della Moda initiative between SAFW and the Italian embassy.

In its fourth year, the initiative propelled local designers to create export-ready, distinctive, and global designs with a sustainable ethos. Booyzen emphasised the project's aim of "laying the foundations of strategic, long-term co-operation between Italian and SA fashion industries, with special attention to youth, inclusivity, and sustainability."

Joburg-based womenswear designer Viviers, the latest Fashion Bridges participant, debuted at SAFW in April 2023 with her collection, *Karoo – Land of Thirst*, presented alongside Italian designer Federico Cina. The collection had been previously shown at Milan Fashion Week. Viviers' work with artisans supported the promotion of the SA clothing, textile, and luxury industry while helping to preserve the country's heritage of craftsmanship. Her ongoing collaboration with Cape Wools SA and Mohair SA encouraged the use of natural fibres as sustainable design choices.

PERFORMATIVE INSTALLATION

Viviers continued this journey of synergy with her SS24 collection, *Re-*



ABOVE: *Biji la Maison de Couture*
 TOP RIGHT: *E-Mania*



official makeup partner for the event. L'Oréal Paris joined forces for a show with local designer Birgit Gibbs of Biji la Maison de Couture to present bold, sophisticated looks that embodied confidence and inclusivity. The show, themed "Walk Your Worth," celebrated the diversity of women and featured more than 30 actresses, influencers, and public figures transforming into "runway stars."

Expanding on this, Booyzen said: "The beauty of diversity is a core value of the SA Fashion Week. This is reflected in everything from the unique stories that inspire our designers to the distinctive quirkiness of the models that convey their original creativity to the world so eloquently. The commitment to mindful luxury as expressed in the L'Oréal Paris 'We're Worth It' campaign is therefore a perfect fit with our own vision for a kinder, more inclusive, global fashion culture."

In a cross-border regional meeting of fashion minds, designers from Mozambique Fashion Week took the stage

trace, Re-memory, Re-set, Re-culture, an earth-conscious collection that united our shared origin stories. The collection was first presented as a performative fashion installation at Milan Fashion Week and was shown again this season at SA Fashion Week as part of the Fashion Bridges show, alongside Italian womenswear designer Andreãdamo.

Another significant milestone for SAFW was the collaboration with L'Oréal Paris, as the beauty brand served as the



ABOVE: *Andreãdamo*

on the third day of SAFW. Though SA designers had showcased in Mozambique for more than a decade, it marked the second official iteration of the SAFW/Mozambique Fashion Week collaboration.

REGIONAL COLLABORATION

The partnership aimed to introduce Mozambican designers to the SA market and vice versa. Three Maputo-based designers showcased their distinct flair and creative perspectives at SAFW.

Phumzile Zondo, the creative mind behind E-Mania, was among several designers on the continent who took part in the SAFW/HAFW collaboration.

“SAFW collaborated with HAFW (based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) in partnership with the British Council on a project to create synergy with other Fashion Weeks across the continent. This included a fashion residency programme in which we worked with an established designer from SA and other African



ABOVE & TOP LEFT: *Ephymol*
LEFT: *Viviers*

countries on a Virtual Reality Fashion Showcase,” Booyzen said.

The programme brought together designers from SA, Ethiopia, Accra, Swahili, and Lagos Fashion Weeks. “The selected designers embarked on an immersive journey in Ethiopia, beginning with cotton picking and continuing through the textile creation process.” This experience led the designers to create three distinct outfits using handwoven textiles, which they showcased on the runway. E-Mania featured these pieces in

by *south african fashion week*
/photography by *eunice driver photography*
its upcoming collection presented on the
final day of SAFW. 📍