

Design Indaba Emerging Creatives set to define SA's fashion industry

[Design Indaba's](#) Emerging Creatives programme, which is supported by the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, has been identifying budding South African talent for 18 years, elevating the careers of designers, artists, filmmakers, fashion designers, illustrators and more. And alums of this elite programme have gone on to change the face of fashion in South Africa and elsewhere, winning international awards and collaborating with major brands.

Thebe Magugu, Thando Ntuli, Rich Mnisi, Laduma Ngxokolo, Crystal Birch, Fikile Sokhulu and the late Nicholas Coutts are just a few of the fashion and accessories designers who went from Design Indaba Emerging Creatives to icons in their own right.



Design Indaba's Emerging Creatives Class of 2023 announced

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This year sees a new class of Design Indaba Emerging Creatives, with four fashion-forward creatives in the mix: Shamyra Moodley, Khumo Morojele, Nokhukhanya Zungu, and the duo of Rucita and Viveka Vassen.

Shamyra Moodley



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An 'accidental designer', Shamyra Moodley began her professional life as an accountant. Now, having taken the leap from the corporate to the creative world, Moodley is designing items that are both kind to the planet and spark joy — each of her intricate designs is created from pieces of donated or reusable fabric.

With a passion for colours and textures, Moodley combines art and fashion to share her narrative about how she sees the world through the lenses of her African, Indian and Irish heritage. In 2021, the Cape Town-based creative won the African Fashion International Fastrack Designer of the Year award, while 2022 saw Moodley chosen as the recipient of the Nicholas Coutts Award at the inaugural Twyg Sustainable Design Awards and debut her first collection at South African Menswear Week.

A challenge for Moodley, whose brand is named LaaniRaani, is upcycling at the kind of scale that can move the industry: 'The combination of legislation, consumer education, the mindset of repurposing wasted fabric, and considered design with scale in mind can bring about an industry shift that benefits our planet and its people,' she says.

Khumo Morojele



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Another sustainably minded designer in the Design Indaba Emerging Creatives Class of 2023 is Khumo Morojele, a Johannesburg-based self-taught designer and creative director.

Morojele's mother, who ran her own boutique, introduced the young creative to thrifting, which led him to make upcycled pieces and share them with friends. 'I had to make do with what I had, and that ties into sustainability,' he says. It is this foundation that he loves most about his relationship with fashion.

Inspired by the vibrant city of Johannesburg and the community of young creatives of which he is a part — as well as by his love for fashion and clothing — Morojele is constantly experimenting with new and innovative approaches using sustainable methods.

The year 2022 was a landmark one for the designer, seeing him take part in the British Council-sponsored Design Futures Lab, the We Are Culture Standard Bank group exhibition, the We Are The Ones Nike Air Force 1 anniversary exhibition,

and a collaboration with French design school Casa93 for Paris Fashion Week.

Nokhukhanya Zungu



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Fashion designer Nokhukhanya Zungu founded Makhosazana, a proudly South African brand that specialises in African contemporary women's wear, in 2021. The brand aims to showcase the beauty of African textiles, heritage and culture, with designs that combine modern silhouettes with traditional African fabrics.

A Witwatersrand University graduate who majored in international relations and psychology, the Pretoria-based creative ultimately found her true purpose in fashion — incorporating into her craft her love of African heritage, African textiles and fashion.

Zungu's introduction to the South African fashion industry came in 2018 when she interned at Ri.Ch Factory, an African contemporary and lifestyle brand founded by Rina Chunga Kutama. In 2022 she was handpicked to participate in the Fashion Lab Project powered by the South African Creative Industries Incubator, which led to a two-month mentorship programme with acclaimed fashion designer David Tlale. During this time she was tasked with creating a collection inspired by a South African icon and chose the legendary queen of South African pop Brenda Fassie.

Rucita and Viveka Vassen



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Rucita and Viveka are a sister design duo from Cape Town with a background in fashion and graphic design. A shared love of creativity, craft, collaboration and an eye for all things bold, vibrant and offbeat led the pair to start their design studio, Ananta, during lockdown in 2020.

After graduating from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Viveka worked at House of Monatic, where she gained industry experience in menswear brands, while Rucita joined her former lecturer's company Good Design, with her expertise lying in art direction, corporate brand identity and web design, as well as 3D application in packaging design and restaurant/interior branding.

During lockdown, the sisters realised their dream was to open a design studio that would not confine them to the respective boxes of 'fashion designer' and 'graphic designer', and instead enable them the freedom to design everything from clothing and bags to furniture and lighting.

Ananta is centred around collaboration: Rucita and Viveka work with craft communities to develop unique, functional art pieces — including their eye-catching handbags — while creating economic empowerment. They believe in a circular economy and aspire to create sustainable, ethical and eco-conscious products.

These four designers are poised to make waves in the fashion industry both locally and internationally, and we can't wait to see what they have in store for us in the coming seasons.

For more:

www.designindaba.com