

THE OFFICIAL INTERCONTINENTAL FASHION MAGAZINE

# TRENDSETTERS

ONLY

ISSUE | 008

Madonsela with Tse and Poo

Rewriting the global luxury  
at the Paris Fashion Week

## MaXhosa

The recent showcase of MaXhosa Africa at PFW isn't just another runway show; it's a signal of a seismic shift in the global fashion industry.

## Hauptfleisch Jani

Unleashing Effortless Rebellion

In the heart of CapeTown menswear shoot was curated to make a statement



Trendsetters Only magazine is available on our website, use the QR CODE provided

Photography by Luke Kitchin @luke.kitchin



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FIND US ON ALL PLATFORMS

# Editors notes

This issue moves with a rhythm that transcends borders, blending cultures, cities and creative identities into a unified yet diverse narrative. Issue 008 reflects a generation that refuses to be defined by geography, tradition or expectation, instead embracing fluidity and change.

From Johannesburg's spirit of reinvention, to Cape Town's evolving creative pulse, and Kenya's bold, fearless fashion energy, we capture Africa in motion—a continent actively shaping its own global narrative. Each city contributes a distinct voice, yet together they form a powerful collective vision.

Our lens also turns to Milan, where heritage meets modern disruption. Here, influence is not imitation, but an ongoing dialogue—between tradition and innovation, established capitals and emerging voices redefining the industry.

At the heart of this issue are local designers. Their work speaks through story, texture and form, expressing identity, resilience and vision. As always, Trendsetters Only remains committed to individuality, diversity and fearless creativity, amplifying voices that deserve a global stage.

*Lesley Moyo*  
Founder & CEO  
TrendsettersOnly

“Unfiltered, unapologetic, & in motion this is a generation shaping its own global story.”



# TREND'ERS

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BEHIND TRENDSETTERS

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## Trendsetters Assemble: Imprint's Star-Studded Pop-Up Redefines Luxury at Mall of Africa

Writer: Thokozile Mabuza

Imprint South Africa has unveiled its first exclusive pop-up store at the Mall of Africa in Johannesburg, opening on February 4, 2026. The limited-run space invites fashion lovers into the brand's distinctive universe, where African heritage and contemporary design come together through pieces that celebrate identity and storytelling. Every piece tells a story worth wearing.

The opening marks a major milestone in Imprint's 10-year journey. Founded by self-taught designer and creative director Mzukisi Mbane, the label has grown into one of South Africa's most influential fashion voices. Following a standout 2025 that saw Imprint collections presented on runways in Paris, Shanghai, New York, and Cape Town, Mbane continues to position African design within the global luxury conversation. His work is recognised for its bold prints, cultural references, and a refined Afro-futuristic aesthetic.

Located at Shop 2117, Level 5, Crystal Court, Entrance 20 (The Sook space, near Tommy Hilfiger and Lacoste), the pop-up runs until February 12, 2026. The space features ready-to-wear, accessories, and limited-edition pieces, offering visitors a chance to experience the brand up close. The launch attracted a stylish crowd of celebrities and fashion insiders, creating an atmosphere that reflected Imprint's growing cultural impact.

Imprint  
Founder, Mzukisi Mbane



Imprint models at the Pop-up store launch at the Mall of Africa



# Fashion Vibes Milano

By Lesley Moyo



A CELEBRATION OF GLOBAL COUTURE AT MILAN FASHION WEEK

The Fashion Vibes Milano showcase on February 28, 2026, at the historic Centro Ambrosiano in the heart of Milan transformed Milan Fashion Week into a vibrant global dialogue of couture, heritage, and contemporary elegance. Curated as an exclusive runway experience, the event brought together an international lineup of designers presenting haute couture, bridal, conceptual, and artisanal pieces during Women's Fashion Week Fall/Winter 2026–2027.



# Going *beyond* Looks



KICKING OFF THE RUNWAY, LUXE LIVING FASHIONS UNVEILED PUISSANCE SCULPTÉE ("SCULPTED POWER"), A MASTERFUL EXPLORATION OF CONTROLLED FEMININITY. THE COLLECTION TREATED THE FEMALE FORM AS ARCHITECTURE, USING ENGINEERED SILHOUETTES, CORSETRY, SCULPTED BODICES, AND PRECISE TAILORING TO CONVEY STRENGTH THROUGH RESTRAINT AND INTENTIONAL STRUCTURE RATHER THAN EXCESS.

IRA LANGEVIN followed with the poetic capsule ORIGAMI: 14 FORTUNES, a sacred language in fabric inspired by Japanese origami traditions, shrine elements, and the legend of a thousand cranes.

Guardazel brought ethereal lightness with its couture collection, emphasizing transparency, movement, and poetic femininity through printed sheer fabrics with subtle shimmer, layered tulle, and satin volumes. Atelier Ancheita Italy presented the Eternal Collection, a heartfelt tribute to the timeless beauty and confidence of the mature woman across life's stages

Italian-Mexican designer Milagros Ancheita fused Mexican cultural heritage with Italian haute couture excellence, delivering impeccable tailoring, luxurious fabrics, and artisanal details that harmonize with the body while celebrating inclusive femininity in every shape, curve, and hue. Jewelry took center stage with **\*\*Indira & Isidro\*\***, showcasing handcrafted luxury in .925 silver, gold, precious stones like opals, topazes, emeralds, and pearls. Blending traditional Mexican craftsmanship with contemporary design, their pieces told stories of cultural heritage, sophistication, and identity, expanding their global presence after prior Fashion Vibes appearances.



MOHIKAS by Archana Soni debuted RASA NOVA in Milan, reinterpreting the ancient Indian concept of Rasa (emotional essences) through bold, contemporary lenses.



# FUATA MOYO

## COMMANDS THE STREETS

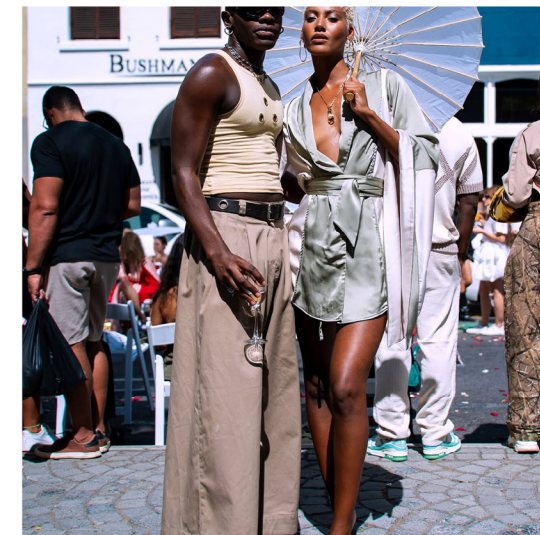
### Her heARTbeat Rules Bree

Fuata Moyo, founded by the Mbiola siblings, has built a distinctive identity through vibrant wearable art pieces and impactful community initiatives. In February 2026, their heARTbeat event reimagined the streets of Cape Town as a stage, using Bree Street as a runway to showcase sustainable fashion while promoting collective empowerment and cultural storytelling.

On February 21, 2026, Fuata Moyo unveiled the (Re)Love Exhibition at Vault On Bree. The event featured upcycled denim garments, highlighting the brand's commitment to sustainability and innovative fashion. Guests experienced a curated display celebrating the beauty of repurposed materials and emphasizing the importance of eco-conscious practices within the fashion industry.

The following day, the streets of Cape Town were transformed into a vibrant runway during the heARTbeat street fashion show. A female-only show curated by Lucien Mbiola as part of the Bree Street Sundays initiative, it celebrated local designers and provided a platform for self-expression and artistic exploration. The event demonstrated how fashion can connect communities and inspire creativity.

Fuata Moyo's influence extends beyond fashion. Through their non-profit initiative, the Mapendo Project, they support those in need by using art and design as tools for positive change. Their collaboration with Heineken on a capsule collection further reflects their innovative approach to merging art and commerce while championing African creativity.



Writer: Thokozile Mabuzza

# How “Everyday Cape Town” Repositions Fashion Within South Africa’s Creative Economy

By Mkhethwa Baloyi



**I**N a fashion industry often preoccupied with imported validation, Paris runways, Milan showrooms and global fashion week recruits

A Cape Town-based production offered a quieter but far more strategic intervention. Everyday Cape Town is not simply a fashion film. It is a study in placement. A recalibration of context. Produced through a collaboration of stylists, filmmakers, icolourists, art directors, and designers, the project positions African fashion inside African lived environments, public transport, pavement Infrastructure, and open-air markets, without romanticising or diminishing those spaces. It treats them as design environments. That decision is critical. The sculptural knitweauur by ZyliZe Studio, founded by Carlize van Zyl, interacts with Cape Town’s buses and concrete structures as if they were part of the garment’s architecture. Texture meets steel. Movement meets infrastructure.

***A reminder that South African fashion does not need relocation to be legitimised.***

The result is tension, but not contradiction. The garments do not feel displaced. They feel embedded. As Creative Director and Stylist Panashe Ndhlovu explains, the choice of these everyday settings was deliberate and deeply rooted in authenticity: “During my location recce, I was intentionally searching for spaces that felt authentic—places that represent Cape Town in a real way, not just an aspirational one. Public transport and the city streets felt like the perfect choice because they’re such a central part of daily life.



Rather than isolating garments in sanitised studio spaces, the production integrates them into the rhythm of the city.



**THESE ARE THE SPACES WHERE PEOPLE MOVE BETWEEN HOME AND WORK, WHERE STORIES UNFOLD QUIETLY EVERY DAY.**

What better place to shoot than where the rhythm of the city truly lives? It felt honest. It felt grounded.

And visually, those environments carry a raw beauty that often goes unnoticed. In the market scenes, pieces sourced from The Lease Concept extend the narrative further. The platform’s rental-based model reflects a growing shift within South Africa’s fashion economy toward circular systems and slow consumption. Featured designers include:

The Ano Set by Kilentar, The Adora Patchwork Dress by Hertunba, The Eto Double Layered Raffia Kaftan by Eki Kere, The Mina Tassel Knit Gown by Hanifa..



**THESE  
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**THEY SUGGEST THAT CONTEXT DOES NOT DILUTE VALUE, IT**

Panashe Ndhlovu further articulates the intentional styling and overarching message:

“The style is truly modern African. All the garments featured in the shoot were created by African designers, which was very intentional. I wanted the fashion to reflect an Africa that is contemporary, expressive! The looks are bold, beautiful, and fun, while still feeling rooted in identity. Overall, the message is simple: African fashion is dynamic. It belongs everywhere, even (and especially) in the everyday spaces we sometimes overlook.”

What makes Everyday Cape Town particularly relevant to the South African fashion industry is its collaborative structure. The production was led by Creative Director and Stylist Panashe Ndhlovu, whose placement of garments within lived Cape Town environments anchors the project’s visual philosophy. Direction, cinematography, and editing were executed by Zembe in collaboration with Puzzle Production, ensuring that the film’s language carried the same intentionality as the styling itself. Colour grading was handled by Tashtoefy in partnership with Half & Halve, refining the tonal atmosphere of the film.



# ANCESTRAL AVANT-GARDE:

How *MaXhosa Africa* is Rewriting the Global Luxury Script

Writer:  
Nsuku Khosa

The recent showcase of *MaXhosa Africa* signals a seismic shift in the global fashion industry. At Paris Fashion Week, South African brand MaXhosa Africa presented its Spring/Summer 2026 collection, marking its fourth season on the official PFW calendar.

Founded by *Laduma Ngxokolo*, the showcase involved 30 meticulously crafted looks, blending traditional Xhosa motifs with modern silhouettes. The event honored heritage while celebrating the late South African Ambassador to France, underlining the brand's commitment to cultural diplomacy.

MaXhosa treats heritage as a living blueprint, not a relic. The collection, *Izipho Zabadala* (Gifts for the Ancestors), fused geometric patterns with futuristic tailoring, proving that African fashion can set global standards rather than simply inspire them. Each garment embodied technical mastery, permanence, and identity in a world of fleeting trends.

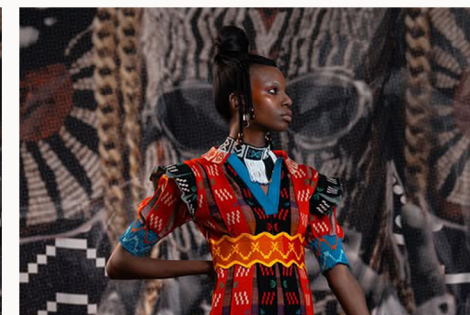
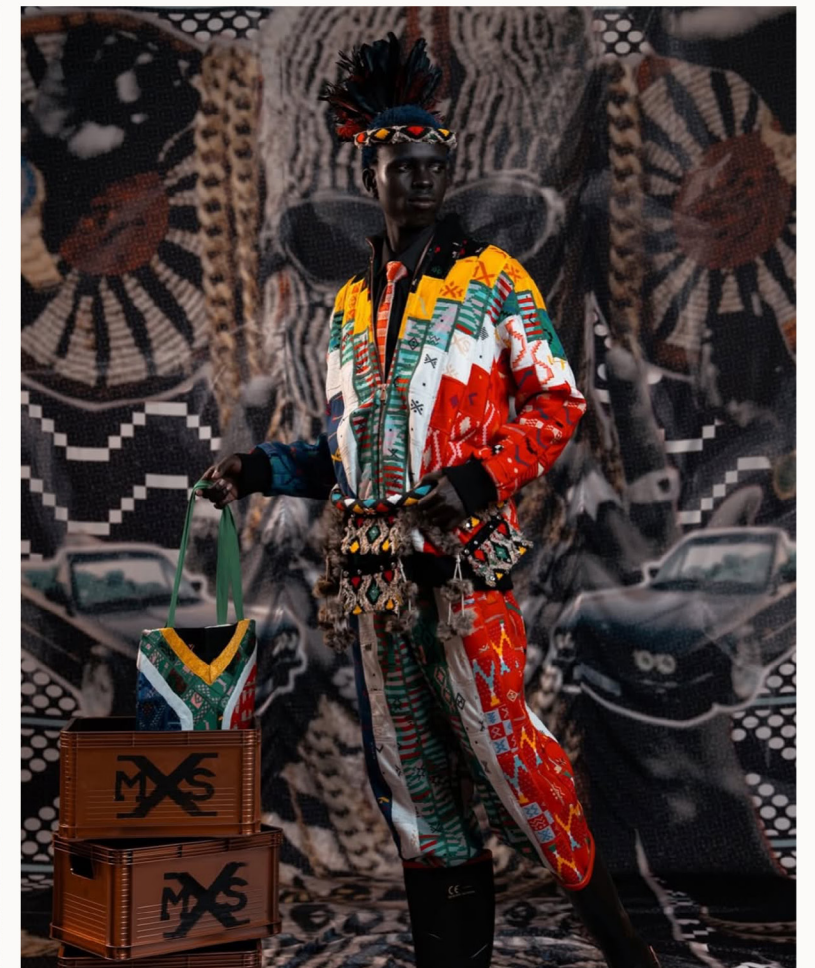
The runway also signaled a shift in global fashion power. For decades, "African-inspired" often meant Western interpretation. MaXhosa positions Africa as author, blending ancestry and innovation into elevated luxury. Textile innovation, refined tailoring, and bold cultural storytelling demonstrated that culture is dynamic, capable of leading conversations on the world stage.

As the lights dimmed, the message was unmistakable: African luxury is present, deliberate, and authoritative. MaXhosa Africa claimed a seat at the table, translating ancestral stories into the most sophisticated language of contemporary fashion.

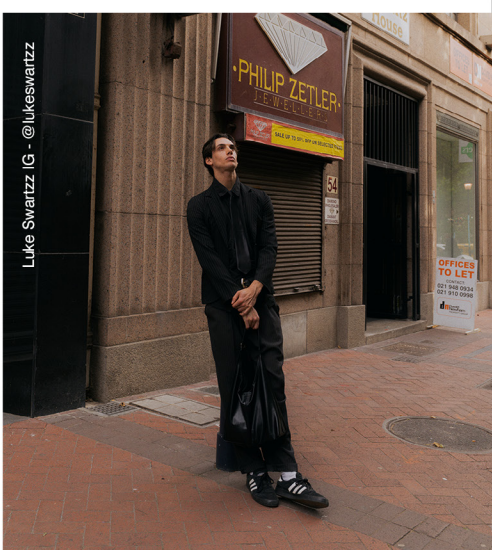
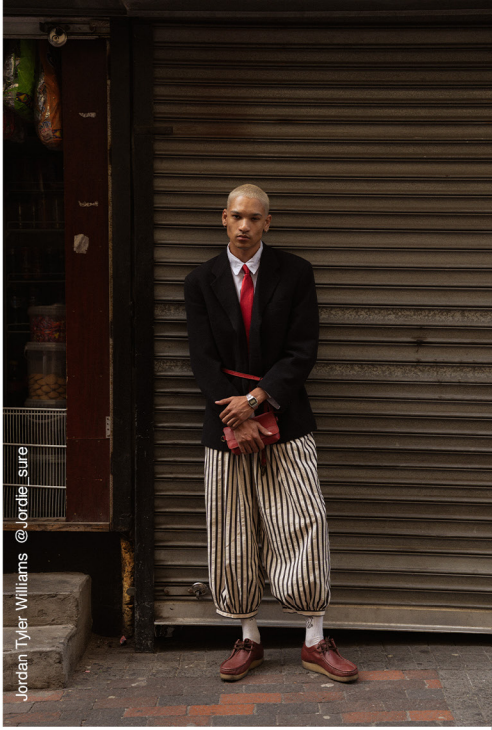
## *Izipho Zabadala*

"Gift for the Ancestors"

by MaXhosa Africa



Jani Hauptfleisch  
Cape Town Based Stylist



# Unleashing Effortless Rebellion

Jani Hauptfleisch's  
Cape Town Menswear  
Revolution

In Cape Town, stylist Jani Hauptfleisch is redefining menswear through a bold editorial shaped by the city's raw, creative energy. The shoot draws on local textures, landscapes and cultural rhythm, transforming them into a striking visual narrative that feels both contemporary and grounded.

Set across dynamic urban spaces and natural backdrops, the imagery blends polished editorial styling with spontaneous, unguarded moments. The environment becomes central to the storytelling, reflecting how style exists in everyday life—fluid, expressive and deeply personal. Through this contrast, Hauptfleisch explores masculinity in a more open, nuanced and authentic way.

Her aesthetic focuses on relaxed silhouettes, layered garments and a sense of effortless movement, emphasising individuality and emotion. Ultimately, the project reinforces fashion as a platform for storytelling, challenges traditional norms and celebrates Cape Town as a leading creative hub shaping contemporary menswear.

Writer: Thokozile Mabuza  
Photographer: Luke Kitchin @luke.kitchin





THEBE MAGUGU AND BELMOND MOUNT NELSON HOTEL CELEBRATE A HISTORIC PARTNERSHIP

By Elize Maelane-Mckleim

## A LEGACY UNVEILED

The launch of the Magugu Suite and Magugu House marks a defining moment in African luxury fashion and hospitality. In spectacular celebration of African excellence, visionary designer Thebe Magugu and the iconic Belmond Mount Nelson Hotel unveiled the highly anticipated Magugu Suite and Magugu House a partnership that transcends conventional collaboration and solidifies Magugu's position as a pioneer in the global luxury fashion landscape. The grand launch event, held at the legendary "Pink Lady" nestled beneath Table Mountain, was nothing short of extraordinary.

Meticulously curated and beautifully executed, the evening commemorated a relationship that has evolved from early support into a profound creative alliance one that has championed Magugu not merely as a designer, but as an African artist reshaping the narrative of luxury on the global stage. The Belmond Mount Nelson Hotel's commitment to Thebe Magugu began long before his meteoric rise to international acclaim. The hotel recognized his exceptional talent early on. In 2019, Magugu made history as the first African designer to win the prestigious LVMH Prize for Young Fashion Designers a breakthrough moment that placed South African design

on the global luxury stage. The Mount Nelson's unwavering support continued as they provided him with a prestigious platform through their annual Confections and Collection show in 2022, an initiative that has become a vital launchpad for emerging South African designers. The grand unveiling attracted South Africa's most prominent figures, creating an atmosphere of excitement and pride. Among the distinguished guests were LVMH brand ambassador and entertainment icon Boity, the multitalented singer and television personality Nandi Madida, and the grammy award-winning musician and producer Zakes Bantwini. Their presence underscored the cultural significance of the moment a true celebration of African artistry and excellence.

THE EVENT ITSELF WAS A MASTERCLASS IN CURATION, WITH EVERY DETAIL REFLECTING THE SOPHISTICATION AND INTENTIONALITY THAT BOTH MAGUGU AND THE MOUNT NELSON ARE RENOWNED FOR.

Guests were treated to an immersive experience that seamlessly blended high fashion, interior design, and cultural storytelling, with the Magugu House representing the epitome of Afro-centric luxury. A bold statement that African design belongs at the pinnacle of global hospitality. In a groundbreaking collaboration with celebrated South African artist and designer Zanele Muholi, Magugu has created a space that is both deeply personal and universally resonant. Every element of the Magugu House has been thoughtfully conceived, marrying African couture sensibilities with sophisticated interior design. The result is an environment that feels simultaneously contemporary and timeless, luxurious yet warmly inviting a space that speaks to the richness of African creative expression. For Magugu, the crown jewel of this collaboration is the Magugu Suite a breathtaking villa that serves as a living tribute to his Sotho heritage.



From the moment guests enter, they are enveloped in a carefully crafted narrative of cultural pride and artistic excellence. The suite's custom designed chandelier commands immediate attention, its form and materiality drawing inspiration from the traditional craftsmanship of the Sotho hat, while embracing modern luxury aesthetics. Throughout the space, subtle yet powerful references to Sotho culture emerge in the textiles, the color palette, the architectural details, and even in the exquisite finishes of the en-suite bathroom. Magugu explained, "This suite is a celebration of where I come from, executed with the kind of excellence and attention to detail that the Belmond Mount Nelson is legendary for. It's about showing the world that African heritage and world-class luxury are not just compatible they're inseparable."

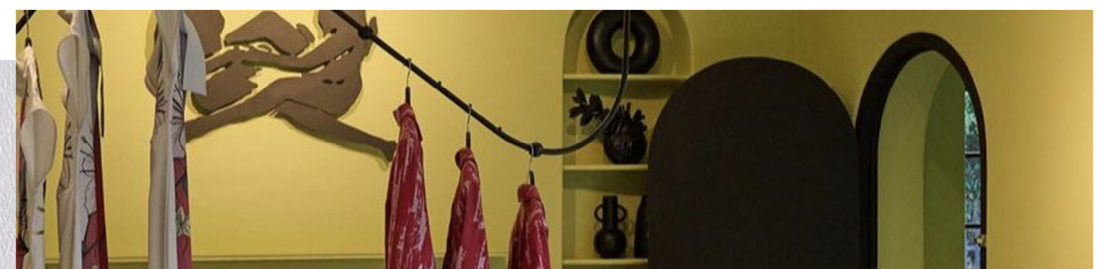




The Belmond Mount Nelson Hotel has long been celebrated for its commitment to preserving heritage while embracing contemporary excellence. This partnership with Thebe Magugu represents the perfect embodiment of that philosophy honoring the past while boldly stepping into the future. The hotel's willingness to dedicate permanent spaces to an African designer's vision speaks volumes about their understanding that true luxury lies not in homogeneity, but in authenticity and cultural depth.

**The Magugu Suite and Magugu House stand as testament to the power of collaboration rooted in mutual respect and shared values.**

This launch represents far more than the opening of beautifully designed spaces it marks a pivotal moment in the recognition and celebration of African creativity on the global luxury stage. Thebe Magugu's journey from emerging designer to LVMH Prize winner to having a dedicated house and suite at one of Africa's most prestigious hotels is a narrative of triumph that will inspire generations of African creatives. As guests departed the launch event, there was a palpable sense that they had witnessed something historic a moment when African fashion, art, and hospitality converged to create something truly unprecedented.



# DUAFE: Rewriting the Graduate Collection as Legacy

By Mkhethwa Baloyi

There is a difference between a graduate collection and a reckoning. One asks to be marked. The other leaves a mark. DUAFE created by Theophilous Ramohlale of STADIO School of Fashion does the latter. It does not feel like a student trying to prove technical ability. It feels like someone trying to preserve something before it disappears. At its core, this collection is about a woman. Not a muse. Not an archetype. A mother. What makes DUAFE striking is not its symbolism alone, but its restraint. The narrative unfolds in four emotional movements. The opening garments are almost reverent in their softness. Fabric falls in long, unforced lines. Nothing grips the body aggressively. There is space. Air. A suggestion that the woman at the centre of this story begins whole, not in fragments waiting to be assembled. In a fashion culture obsessed with deconstruction, this choice feels radical. Wholeness, here, is the starting point. Gradually, structure enters. The drape begins to hold its shape. Lines become more intentional.



This is where DUAFE subtly explores becoming —that quiet phase of womanhood where identity isn't declared, but discovered through ritual and repetition.



The reference to the wooden comb (the duafe), is less about ornament and more about care. About the daily, almost invisible acts that shape dignity. Then the mood tightens. You feel it before you intellectualise it. Texture grows heavier. Silhouettes rise closer to the neck.



The garments no longer float, they brace. This is the emotional centre of the collection: loss. Ramohlale lost his father at the age of two. The gravitational pull of that absence sits inside this chapter, but the focus remains on the woman who endured it.

Grief is not performed theatrically. It is internalised. Held. Cowrie shells appear not as decoration, but as language. Historically used across parts of Africa as currency and sacred adornment, they carry connotations of value, protection and ancestral continuity. Within DUAFE, they read as something even more intimate: proof that protection can coexist with vulnerability. That wealth can mean emotional endurance. The garments in this phase feel almost protective as if the body inside them has learned to stand differently. And then the final transformation arrives, not as spectacle, but as reclamation.

Red enters. Strength expands outward. The posture of the wearer changes. There is no longer containment — there is presence. An ostrich leather corset references traditional African scarification, but it refuses to aestheticise pain. Instead, it reframes it. What was once wound becomes archive. The body is no longer marked by survival; it is marked by authorship.

**Healing, DUAFE suggests, is not about becoming someone new.**



It is about gathering every former version of yourself and standing with them intact. Across just four looks, the collection accomplishes something many established designers struggle to articulate: emotional coherence. Nothing feels decorative. Nothing feels outsourced. Every reference is metabolised. And that is where the industry conversation begins





John Kaveke combined Samburu influences with Japanese silhouettes, expanding cultural reference while maintaining clarity of origin. Yevāna translated pastoralist beadwork into contemporary garments, while Kítu Kidzo

incorporated Swahili coastal elements into modern tailoring. Each collection demonstrated how heritage can inform design at a structural level. Beyond aesthetics, Nairobi Fashion Week continues to strengthen its role as industry infrastructure. Growing buyer interest, stronger production standards, and long-term investment signal a shift toward scale and sustainability. The result is a fashion week focused on strategy, collaboration, and the continued development of a regional fashion economy.



## FROM SHOWCASE TO INFRASTRUCTURE

The narrative that African fashion is still “emerging” has run its course. Held in Nairobi from 28 to 31 January 2026, Nairobi Fashion Week Season 8 unfolded with the composure of a platform that no longer seeks validation, building its own space within the global fashion conversation. The event demonstrated a maturing ecosystem built on collaboration. Designers are working with networks that include beadworkers, textile artisans, and stylists as essential partners in the production process. Craft here, operates as a structural system, embedded in how garments are conceived and constructed.



Sustainability also functions as a practical framework rather than a marketing narrative. Upcycling and working within material limits were operational realities long before “circular economy” became standard language in Paris. Season eight’s quiet strength was its refusal to translate this for an outside gaze. That refusal to over-explain signals maturity.

# Nairobi fashion week

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Theophilous Ramohlale

## DUAFE

*What makes DUAFE striking is not its symbolism alone, but its restraint*

## Nairobi Fashion Week

Season Eight  
From showcase to  
infrastructure

## 2026: Buy Local Summit

by Proudly South African  
Showcasing local creativity & innovation

Photographer: Imash Minoka @imashminoka



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