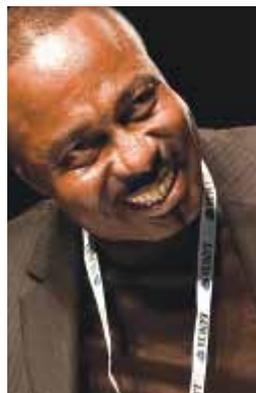
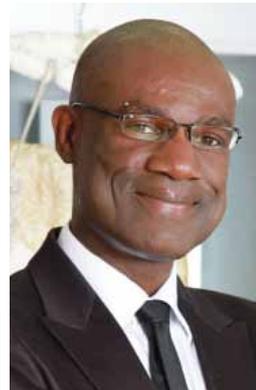
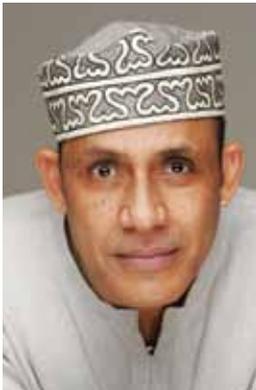


(Fashion Special)

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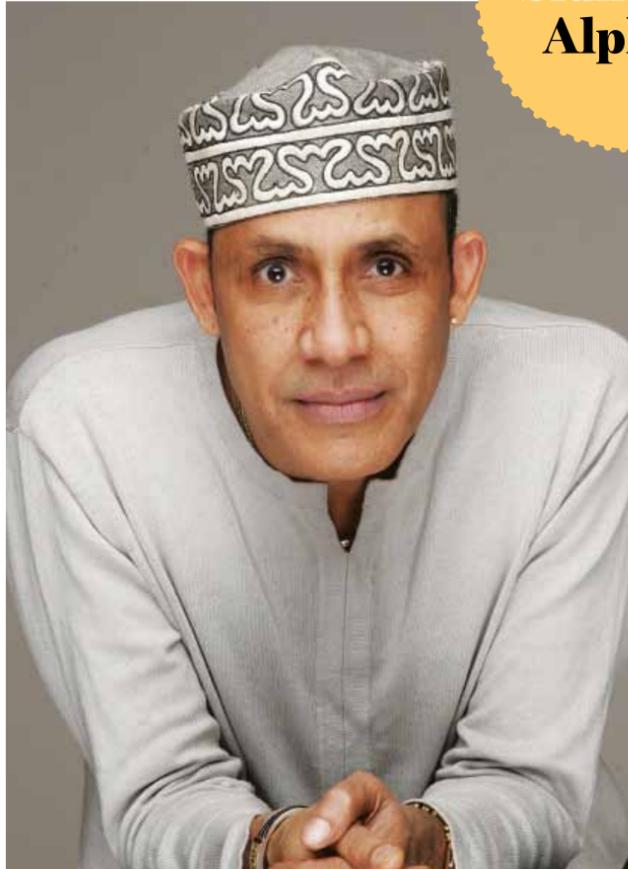
Africa's Top 10 Male Fashion Designers



Fashion Special

Africa's Top 10 Male Fashion designers

Seidnaly Sidhamed Alphadi



are a faithful ambassador to African roots, but they also depict the best of pan-African design.

Alphadi was born on 1 June 1957 in Timbuktu, Mali, of a Touareg father from Niger and a Moroccan mother, both traders. Growing up in Niger with his eight brothers and sisters, Alphadi discovered at a very early stage the fun of putting make-up on his sisters and mother. He would also spend hours watching Bollywood films admiring the work of make-up artists and how they would enhance women's beauty. But growing up in a Muslim country meant that fashion was an area forbidden to boys. His father wanted him to become a doctor or to take over the family business. After completing his baccalaureate, Alphadi chose to study tourism in Paris. Coming to Paris enabled him to get closer to the world of fashion. He started attending shows and taking evening classes at the Chardon Savard Workshop. At the end of his studies, he returned to Niger to work as director of the Tourism Ministry. Nevertheless, his passion for fashion did not diminish and he continued to hone his training in fashion design.

In 1983, he decided to devote himself entirely to fashion. Two years later, he created his first Haute Couture range, which he introduced to the world during his first fashion show at the Paris International Tourism Exhibition. It was a runaway success Alphadi has gone from strength to strength ever since. He now organises fashion shows in many parts of the world including Niamey, Abidjan, Paris, Brussels, New York, Washington, Quebec and Tokyo. He is also the proud owner of a number of boutiques in Africa, the United States and Europe which bear the internationally acclaimed label: ALPHADI.

In 1987, the French Federation of Couture and Ready to Wear awarded him the accolade of "Best African designer", which is just one of the many international awards he has been bestowed over time. He also holds breathtaking fashion shows around the world, which without doubt set a benchmark for the African continent.

Despite all his success, Alphadi has never betrayed his roots or the richness of his traditions. His designs tell the story of a people - the ancient reference points of Songhai, Zarma, Bororo, Hausa and Touareg.

Words by Name

"Alphadi's couture designs are a faithful ambassador to African roots, but they also depict the best of pan-African design"

Meet Alphadi - real name Seidnaly Sidhamed Alphadi - a pillar of the creative world of African fashion. As one of Africa's best known male designers, he has made Africa proud in Europe, America and, of course, Africa itself, scaling many hurdles on his way up. His creations, as seen opposite, are breathtaking. *Fériel Berraies Guigny* profiles the icon.

Alphadi is the founder of the International Festival of African fashion (FIMA), and is also chairman the Federation of African fashion designers (FAC). Through his African fashion events and the biannual FIMA, he has always strived for just recognition of African culture and fashion. His career, which spans 20 years, has been a constant struggle as he has fought to put African fashion in its rightful place - among the industry's best. An unrelenting fashion activist and a visionary, he has managed to introduce his fashion house into the inner circle of luxury.

For Alphadi, Africa's creations are synonymous with richness and diversity. His creative universe is the totality of his life, his multiculturalism and his human encounters. His couture designs



Alphadi's creations are underpinned by African richness and diversity

Fashion Special

Africa's Top 10 Male Fashion designers

John Kaveke



kanga, a traditional fabric worn by East African women, and comes in a variety of bold designs and bright colours. "I like it because of the history that surrounds it," he explains. "It's said that kanga is not a kanga unless it has the wise sayings written on it and it's a metaphor that holds a message in Swahili (one of Kenya's national languages). I also like this fabric because of the variety of patterns made of natural cotton grown in the region." Kaveke also uses leather, denim, recycled fabrics, suede and knitwear, tie and dye cottons, linen, silk and Maasai beads in his creations, which express boldness, vitality and individuality as demonstrated in his London debut, the Spring Summer 2012 collection 'Askari Kanga'. He adds that his use of Kenyan fabrics is because "it's easy to access due to it being locally produced and I want to look at it being part of reviving the local textile industry in Kenya. There is so much rich heritage, yet so little effort to generate a sustainable business from it. It's time to change that!"

Though Kaveke has been likened to a 'rebel' by his industry peers because he pursued a career believed by many Africans to be best suited to women, today his designs can be seen on runways on both sides of the Atlantic, from Nairobi to Lagos, London, Barcelona and New York. He has been involved with numerous projects locally and internationally, including the Sarajevo Fashion Week (Bosnia), Swahili Fashion Week (Tanzania), M-Net Face of Africa (Nigeria), National Dress Design Team (Kenya), Uganda and Hub of Africa Fashion Weeks, Festival for African Fashion and Art (FAFA Kenya) and the International Smirnoff Fashion Awards. Kaveke remains a designer with a sense of social and ethical responsibility. He is committed to mentoring aspiring designers and the Maasai Women's Group in Kiserian, which his brand offers sustainable income to by working closely with them. Asked why giving back was important to him, Kaveke says: "I did not come from a well privileged family but had a content upbringing. A lot of what we have was a struggle to acquire. So I learned to share the little I had even if you needed all of it. I have carried this concept in my brand to have a social responsibility to society and thus why I choose to work with local communities." Kaveke plans to continue building on the foundation of the brand he has created, with a firm focus on ensuring he has a solid base in Kenya, before expanding to other regions of the continent.

Words by Name

"The use of Kenyan fabrics is because 'it's easy to access due to it being locally produced and I want to look at it being part of reviving the local textile industry in Kenya'"

John Kaveke is one of Kenya's leading designers and among the continent's up and coming talents. He recently made history as one of the first Kenyan designers to showcase a collection at the London Fashion Week, where he wowed audiences with his tailored jackets, shorts and T-shirts dabbled with colourful Maasai beaded necklaces.

With over 10 years experience in the industry, Kaveke started out as a fine arts artist but says he wanted more from art than drawing. After discovering his passion for fashion, he went on to study fashion design in Kenya and Spain. While in Spain, he worked for several fashion labels before he started his own brand, Kaveke, a bespoke men's and women's line. According to Kaveke, his brand is about the personal touch given to each piece he creates. "I want my client to feel special and important with each design I make for them," he says.

Brand Kaveke is a "contemporary afrocentric lifestyle brand with a twist of sophistication and edge", while maintaining a cosmopolitan flair. A big proponent of indigenous Kenyan fabrics, Kaveke told *New African Woman* that his favourite was the



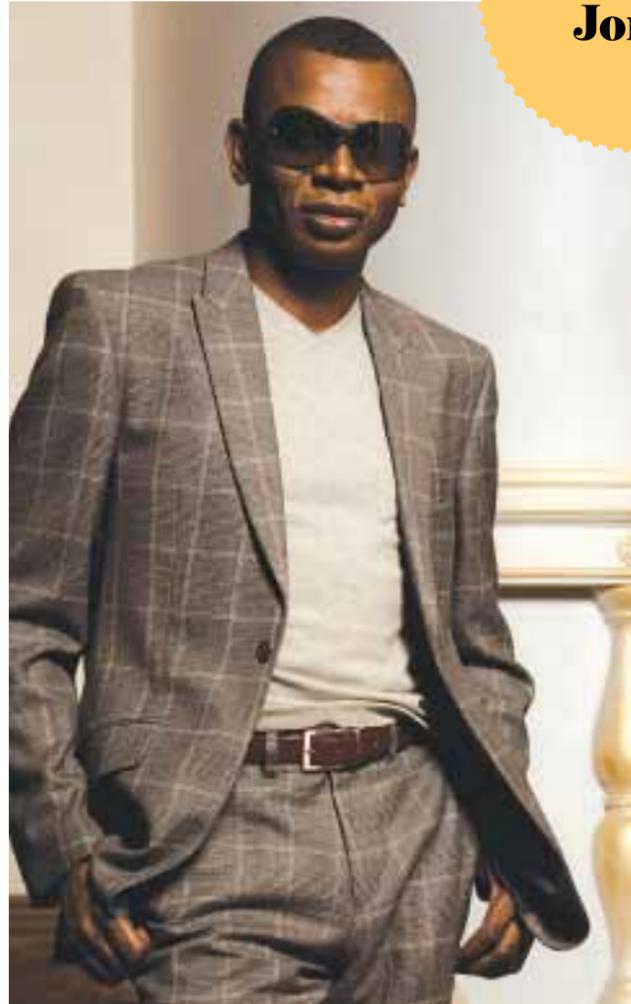
Kaveke's designs combine sophistication and edge for a contemporary lifestyle

Fashion Special

Africa's Top 10 Male Fashion designers

Adebayo Jones

"Promoting African fashion is key to Adebayo... and he brings his sense of history and fashion design to his work"



for his day and evening wear that is bold, opulent, colourful and a mixture of rich fabrics.

The Versace of African fashion, he retains elements of couture and despite pushing boundaries his classical training is evident in his designs' construction and in every stitch.

Promoting African fashion is key to Adebayo. He was using African fabrics, damask and lace for his designs before it became as popular as it is today. He is credited for popularising the use of Aso Oke and Kente Oke, which he used to stunning effect producing corsets as outer wear that have become one of his signature designs.

His accolades are many. He has received the Best Nigerian Designer of the Diaspora Award and his show 'Style with Adebayo Jones', which is about to start a new season, is one of the most popular on BEN TV. He exhibits at trade shows and his clothes have appeared on BBC TV's 'Clothes Show' and in national magazines including *OK!* and *Inside Soap*.

In recent years, Adebayo has worked as an international stylist where he has achieved great success for his creative abilities and flair in customising and accessorising outfits.

Africana, his new collection to be launched soon, returns to his African roots. Here, he gives traditional outfits a dramatic lift with the use of luxurious corsets over traditional tops.

Adebayo brings his sense of history and fashion design to his work and is often lecturing on the work of African designers who came before him, and European icons such as Yves St Laurent.

Like Yemi Osunkoya of Kosibah, with whom he is friends, Adebayo is an African icon who gives back by aligning himself with charities and mentoring new designers.

Words by Name

"The Versace of African fashion, he retains elements of couture and despite pushing boundaries his classical training is evident in the construction and in every stitch"

Multiple award winning couture designer Adebayo Jones has a career that spans 25 years. During this time, he has dressed celebrities, socialites and some of the most beautiful African women in the world - including a Miss World.

This London based designer travels the world to judge and headline fashion shows and encourage new talent.

Though he studied for a history and sociology degree, it is fashion that took his passion. In 1998, he attended the Central School of Fashion where he honed his craft learning design, pattern cutting and garment construction. He worked for designers Isabell Kristensen and Katherine Hamnett before launching the Adebayo Jones label.

Although he also designs wedding dresses, Adebayo is famed

Adebayo is famed for bold, opulent and colourful designs, in rich fabrics



Fashion Special

Africa's Top 10 Male Fashion designers

Adeyemi Osunkoya (Yemi)

"I was very excited though a bit apprehensive when I started the business as I'd never worked for any other designer – and who sets up a couture label in a recession straight out of fashion school?"

Years later, Yemi, the third child of four boys, graduated with a textiles degree from the University of Ife in Osun State followed by a fashion qualification from the Paris Academy School of Fashion, London, which incorporated the classical techniques of pattern making and hand craftsmanship.

Yemi launched Kosibah Creations, named in honour of his mother, in September 1991 during the recession.

He says: "I was very excited though a bit apprehensive when I started the business as I'd never worked for any other designer – and who sets up a couture label in a recession straight out of fashion school?"

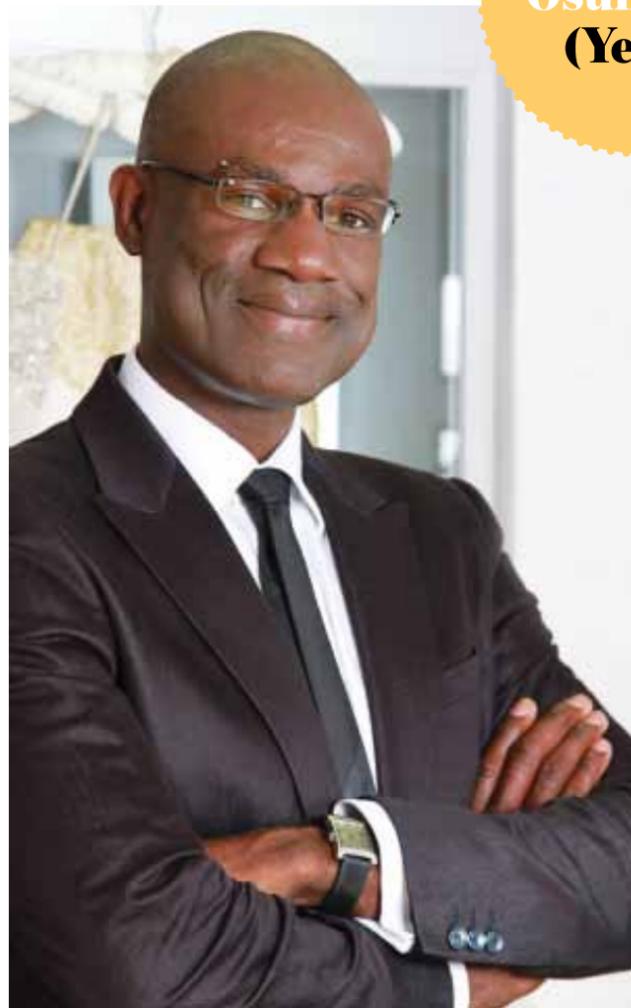
Twenty years on, Kosibah (he dropped the word Creations in 2009 on launching a secondary logo) is a couture label of elegance, impeccable craftsmanship and notability.

2011 has been a golden year for Yemi. In July, he attended a special reception hosted by Prince Charles and two months later, celebrated his 20th anniversary with the launch of 'Bienvenue 20', a collection of 10 wedding dresses inspired by ballet as seen by their names such as Margot. He went on to work on a fashion shoot with top wedding photographer Damien Lovegrove, participate in the Luxury Wedding Show 2011 with some of the most influential experts in the wedding industry and raise money for charity.

Though he dresses celebrities, he is a designer for every woman, likening himself to a structural engineer for his ability to take at least three inches off a woman's waist – the art of corsetry. Yemi Osunkoya is one of Africa's iconic fashion designers who has embraced digital technology to build a significant online presence.

Words by Name

"He is a designer for every woman likening himself to a structural engineer for his ability to take at least three inches off a woman's waist – the art of corsetry"



Adeyemi Osunkoya (Yemi for short) is the creative director of Kosibah and a multi-award winner including two-time Bridal Designer of the Year, Diamond Recognition from National Weddings UK and inclusion as one of the 100+ Black Achievers.

In a year that has seen black models on the catwalk for Christian Dior's Fall 2011 collection, *New African Woman* pays tribute to the 'African Dior' for his use of corsets, boned bodices and evening gowns, paying homage to history with a modern feel and an emphasis on femininity.

Yet it is in wedding dresses where the comparison with Dior ends. Yemi's interest here can be traced to the society weddings he attended as a youngster in Nigeria, which his father, a medical doctor, and mother, a nurse, encouraged.

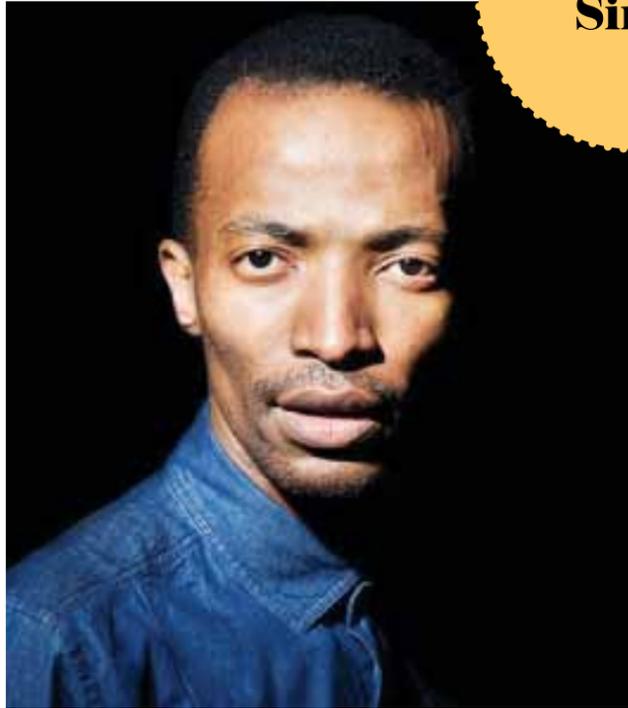
An emphasis on femininity has forged a distinctive look for Yemi's collections



Fashion Special

Africa's Top 10 Male Fashion designers

Thula Sindi



"My Mom and Dad are very easygoing and support my career choice, plus I think to them fashion design seemed a more stable choice than fine art."

He continues: "Growing up I didn't particularly have style icons and even now I really don't. I appreciate the beauty of an item of clothing versus the wearer themselves ...and I do love being surrounded by beautiful and well-made products and items."

"I'm inspired by the modern woman, her needs ...how she chooses to dress, express herself and navigate her complex life. That complexity inspires me to create items of clothing that enhance and streamline her lifestyle."

"To me 'creativity' is my work, therefore I don't wait around for inspiration, I work constantly and keep archives of my sketches and concepts so I have a virtual vault of creative ideas to use whenever it's time to produce a new collection."

"I do what is authentic to me and my customer, whether it be fashion shows or collaborations with a major retailer like Edgars. It is all organic growth and governed by the greater plan for my business."

"Capital for growth and cash-flow for sustainability is the biggest challenge for fashion/design enterprises in SA, without major capital injections it is difficult for a brand to go from a small business to being a key player in the retail space."

"To be a successful designer: (A) Who am I making these clothes for? (B) Why would somebody want to buy these clothes? (C) How can I get this client I am appealing to, to know about these clothes?"

"Answer those three honestly and you will be well on your way to building a successful design enterprise."

"My first show in Paris in 2007 was the highlight of my career because it is the time I managed to solidify my aesthetic and find my voice as a designer"

"I have an aversion to partnerships unless it does not disturb the product I create, ie my partnership with Edgars, which is a distribution partnership. I still 100% create and manufacture and merchandise my product."

Words by Name

"I'm inspired by the modern woman, her needs ...how she chooses to dress, express herself and navigate her complex life. That complexity inspires me to create items of clothing that enhance and streamline her lifestyle"

Thula Sindi matriculated from the National School of the Arts in Johannesburg and studied at LISOF (London International School of Fashion). He started his first job - as head designer at Dutch textile company Vlisco - the day after he graduated. He convinced his employers to show at South African Fashion Week in 2005, and called his friends Malcolm Kluk and Palesa Mokobung to help him organise the show.

In February this year, Thula started developing his own range, which hit the runway at SAFW 2006, a year in which he earned a semi-finalist spot at the Nederburg Rare fashion finds contest.

Thula has shown his collections in Hong Kong, Beijing, New York, Lagos, Paris and many other cities across the world.

He now produces his effortlessly elegant womenswear from his Illovo studio in Johannesburg ...dressing well known clientele such as Dr Precious Moloi-Motsepe, Terry Pheto, Azania Ndoro, Penny Lebyane, Liezel v.d Weasthuizen and Caprice, to name a few. Born in Klerksdorp in South Africa's Northwest Province, Thula first became fascinated by fashion in his mid-teens.

"I was primarily interested in fine art but the fashion-bug bit me around 16," he says. "I found fashion a perfect medium to mix colour, concept and proportion ...and the immediate and dynamic nature of the fashion business was another factor that attracted me to the biz."

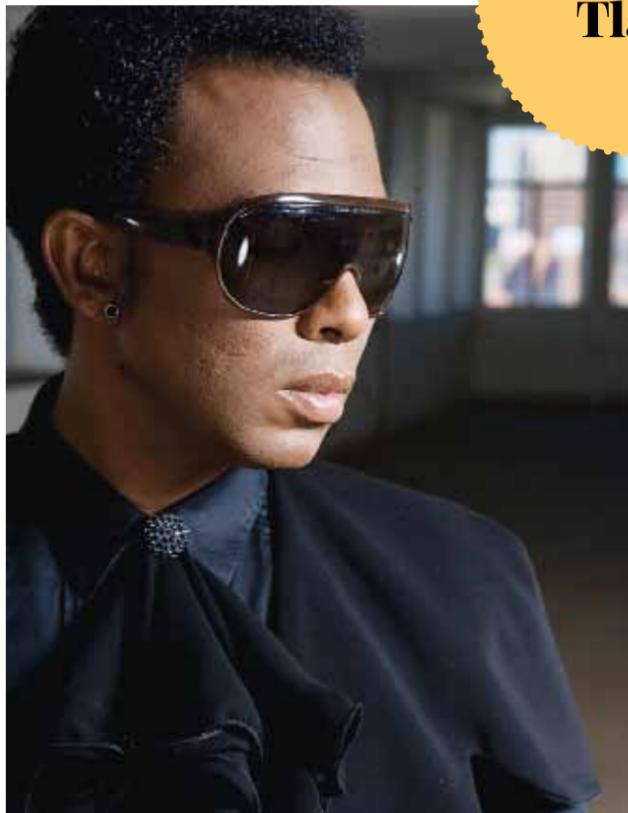
Colour, concept and proportion – three of Thula's key fashion principles



Fashion Special

Africa's Top 10 Male Fashion designers

David Tlale



including South African celebrities, television and radio personalities strutting up and down the runway in Tlale's ebullient designs.

His collections have been shown at the world's most famous fashion capitals including New York, Milan and Paris Fashion Weeks. Continentally, he has dominated the runways of Swahili and Arise Fashion Weeks, Cape Town, Joburg and African Fashion Weeks respectively, to resounding plaudits and admiration from his peers and fashion critics. For Tlale, fashion is about innovation, being daring and, of course, the dramatic, as he continuously pushes the boundaries.

Tlale's accolades include Best New Designer at the Elle New Talent Competition, 2003. This would set him on the path for global dominance. He remains committed to become a 'premier' fashion brand in South Africa and the global fashion landscape. He has been nominated twice for the Marie Claire Prix De Excellence De Le Mode as best Emerging designer. In 2008, he created what was termed a showstopper for British supermodel, Jourdan Dunn at the Virgin Mobile Cape Town Fashion Week. That same year, he showcased his collection as part of the De Beers Shining Light Collection in Washington DC. In 2009, Tlale was awarded Fashion Designer of the Year at the Arise Africa Fashion Awards, where he presented his ready-to-wear collection. Tlale has fast set the scene that he is limitless, with his vision to passionately shape the future of couture and fashion in South Africa, as well as on a global level. Tlale's dedication, passion and pioneering achievements have formed the basis of his brand's growth and the principle of sustaining sheer elegance underlies all that DT stands for.

Creatively astute, Tlale is also business savvy with an entrepreneur's mindset. He recently opened his flagship store in Sandton, Johannesburg, to a warm reception and approval from celebrities and ordinary citizens alike. From Tanzania to Nigeria and Angola, his dominance and reign in the industry knows no boundary and refuses to be relegated to South Africa alone. It is Tlale's belief that "you bring it home to the people (Africa) first before you take on the rest of the world". Tlale has established himself as more than a fashion brand, for he is creating an experience and taste of panache and affluence on a global perspective. He says it best with the words, "Life is an occasion, celebrate it in style, elegance and pure indulgence of a David Tlale original".

Words by Name

"For Tlale, fashion is about innovation, being daring and, of course, the dramatic, as he continuously pushes the boundaries"

An innovative and influential force, David Tlale has built a brand founded on the traditional and modern aesthetics of fashion, creating bold designs with memorable elements. An award-winning designer, renowned for being at the cutting edge, Tlale's designs defy expectations and convention and they epitomise artistry at an infinite level. He can be described as a man for whom fashion is a legacy. The brand, David Tlale (DT) was established over five years ago, and has become a household name in South Africa. Today, it is acclaimed as a label that "impenitently employs unpredictable use and understanding of fabric, colour and texture". His brand has and continues to redefine fashion for the modern African man and woman, and stands its own ground in a marketplace that is equally packed with talent. Tlale's distinction is "attributed to the sheer design erudition and precision that challenges mediocrity".

Described as Africa's "most celebrated fashion designer", Tlale is also notorious for elaborate and 'over-the-top' fashion experiments. Earlier this year, for his Autumn/Winter 2011, *Made in the City* collection, he made history when the Nelson Mandela Bridge was turned into 284-metre long ramp with 92 models,

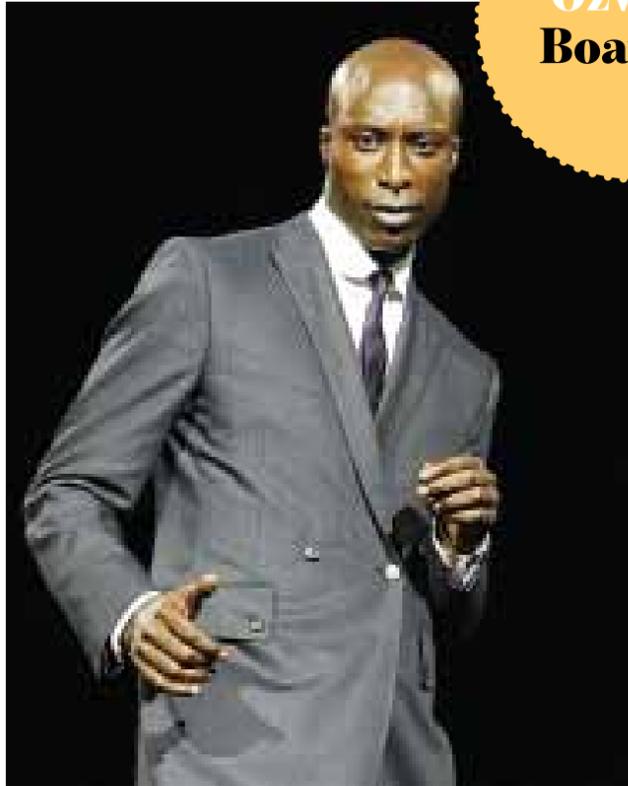


Tlale continues to redefine African fashion and always challenge mediocrity

Fashion Special

Africa's Top 10 Male Fashion designers

Ozward Boateng



When you think of Ozward Boateng, the words flamboyant, chic and suave come to mind. Dubbed as “the peacock of Savile Row” due to the exuberant fabric and colours he uses in his ready-to-wear collections and the bespoke suits he is most renowned for.

Boateng is the son of a Ghanaian teacher Kweshi and his wife Mary who was a seamstress, and to whom he attributes his love of colour in his designs especially the colour purple as it reminds him of the purple mohair suit she made for him at the age of five, and which became his favourite childhood outfit.

Indeed effortless chic and gorgeous, but we New African women also love the fact that the “suave one” also keeps true to his roots is always proud to fly his Ghanaian flag wherever he goes. He also wants to make a difference in Africa's developmental efforts, and as such, in 2007, he founded Made in Africa, an organization which he runs with two business partners to promote wealth and self sufficiency as well as help develop profitable commercial businesses that could expose African business opportunities to international investment.

How did he get here? Yes, a love story folks. His interest in clothes began at a tender age of 16 while a computer student at the London Technical College, and his inspiration was the girl he

dated then!

“She was incredibly artistic,” Boateng has said about her. “She could paint, sculpt, design clothes, everything.”

One day his girlfriend asked him to help out on a fashion show she was participating in. Despite his protestation that he could not sew clothes, the girlfriend convinced him to try it out. “She showed me how and for some reason it was easy.” And as they say, the rest is history.

Thereafter Boateng began making clothes for himself and was surprised by the reaction his self-tailored gear elicited among his peers. And who in their college-life wouldn't have a confidence boost if you all your friends like your fashion style - and proudly, they were your own designs? Boateng was unsurprisingly therefore motivated to switch his computer course to fashion design.

It wasn't long, before Boateng began to work and sell his designs from a studio in London's East End and at just 18 years of age, his clothes were selling in London's trendy King's Road in Chelsea. In 1993 he opened a store in one of London's trendiest streets, Portobello Road.

Today Boateng is affectionately described as “one of the British fashion industry's larger than life characters.” And if his range of designs, both ready-to-wear and the much-sort-after custom-made suits are anything to go by, this statement is so apt.

A born trailblazer, Ozward Boateng is truly our proud African emblem in the hallowed halls of such names as Saks Fifth Avenue and Barneys New York, and London's high-end and famous Savile Row, where he opened his flagship store on Vigo street in 1995.

Undisputedly too, the Ozward Boateng name is also the lead attraction to celebrity clientele. And doesn't he have devoted following! The list could go on and on for our “African Alexander McQueen” celebrity devotees: Mick Jagger, Seal, Herbie Hancock, Usher, Will Smith, Sir Anthony Hopkins, Keanu Reeves, Tinie Tempah, George Michael, Laurence Fishburne, Pierce Brosnan, Richard Branson, Wesley Snipes, Lennox Lewis, Chris Tucker, Eddie Murphy, Lenny Kravitz, Rev Jesse Jackson, Idris Elba and Michael Essien to name but to name but a few!

Other accolades include his 2003 appointment as the first Creative Director at Givenchy Homme.

A man of great presence, standing at six-foot, four inches Boateng is his own walking advertisement for his clothes - nobody looks better in an impeccably tailored single-breasted slim-line, fuchsia pink-lined suit than Boateng himself.

Ladies, here is more to why we should love our Men-in-suits and wearing the O.Boateng toursers!

Words by Name

Ladies, here is more to why we should love our Men-in-suits and wearing the O.Boateng toursers!



Tlale continues to redefine African fashion and always challenge mediocrity

Fashion Special

Africa's Top 10 Male Fashion designers

Mustafa Hassanali

His personable and affable demeanour in parallel with his bohemian work of art has made him amidst the premier and popular designers in Tanzania.

Africa's largest fashion event. Now in its fourth year and due to be held Arusha, come November, it is a dynamic platform for young Tanzanian designers gain exposure and visibility. It also aims to bring seasoned designers from other African countries and talented designers from Swahili speaking countries to showcase their creativity, which celebrates African fashion to an international audience, market their art and network with a diverse array of clientele.

A medical doctor by profession, Hassanali takes his social responsibility to heart, which has led to the creation of the brand, **Fashion4health**. He uses his platform as a designer to bring much needed awareness to medical challenges through charitable events, which include, 'Breast Cancer Awareness' and 'Violence Against Women,' held every year to raise funds to help victims in Tanzania. He also supports the Zanzibar Mental Hospital and his interest in women's issues has led Hassanali to establish Tanzania Women Entrepreneurs Network and Development (TWEENDE), with the aim of empowering women.

A fashion designer with an entrepreneurial mindset, Hassanali also runs a media and events company, 361 Degree, which he hopes will become the East Africa's leader in providing creative, concise, customised and cost-effective event, media, PR and social networking solutions. This is in addition to plans for a fashion school for those interested in the industry to learn everything about fashion and design. His word to young designers is to always stay focused and work hard.

Words by Name

Doing something new and beyond and the Swahili Fashion Week proved to be just that, creating a new standard and now perceived as the most sought after fashion event in the world.



Mustafa Hassanali at 30, is the man for whom, fashion is a religion. Esteemed as one of Tanzania's most revered designers. Hassanali's designs, which are described as flamboyant are a fusion of the deeply embedded cultural heritage of Tanzanian society with avant-garde, hip and contemporary styles. Known for showcasing for collections, every year, he described his 2010, Parfum d'Amour collection as "A sensual collection Inspired by the Love of Life aptly timed for the St Valentines Day. It's a collection for the Women of Confidence, Power and Prestige. The Gowns are Elegant and Exquisite to the Core flaunting Feminine Fragrance of Sensual Spirituality"

Hassanali's brand has taken him to the Mediterranean fashion Festival in Sicily, Italy, India International Fashion and Arise Fashion Weeks, Durban and Cape Town Fashion Weeks, Kenya Fashion Week and other shows in Nigeria, Cameroon, Uganda and Mozambique. Hassanali also participated in Fashion for Relief in 2009, organised by British Supermodel Naomi Campbell. His passion to foster talents within the Tanzania fashion industry has seen him create the Swahili Fashion Week, East and Central



Tlale continues to redefine African fashion and always challenge mediocrity

Fashion Special

Africa's Top 10 Male Fashion designers

Zekaryas Solomon

“A factor that Solomon says fuelled his desire to pursue a career as a fashion design was because he and his friends often struggled to find clothes in styles to suit them, and to fit a naturally lean or athletic build

For Zekaryas Solomon, originally from Eritrea, a dress is “never just a dress, but can be worn and styled in limitless ways. From a twisted, wrapped, or flipped look, where each garment becomes unique to the wearer.” He draws inspiration from his Eritrean heritage, re-interpreting traditional costumes with a futuristic, functional edge. An architect by profession, which is evident in the structure of his designs, he harboured a secret passion for fashion for years until 2009, when he took the plunge and decided to follow his dream and went back to study at the London School of Fashion.

Another factor that Solomon says fuelled his desire to pursue a career as a fashion design was because he and his friends often struggled to find clothes in styles to suit them, and to fit a naturally lean or athletic build. It was his vision to create clothes that could adapt and transform to meet the demands of modern life, while expressing a sense of individuality. A dream that has come to fruition as Solomon was among a handful of selected designers to showcase their creations at the inaugural Africa Fashion Week London (AFWL).

Solomon's name is also the name of his brand, which he describes as a high concept fashion label comprising of ready-to-wear and individual bespoke tailored garments for men and for women.

His favourite choice of fabrics are stiff linen, cotton and denim. Solomon says they give his style shape and make his creations look dynamic, voluminous and very masculine. While he prefers silk and chiffon for his women's wear because he is able to achieve the smooth, soft, feminine and curvy shapes he wants.

Despite being relatively new in the industry, Solomon has his sights on achieving some great feats like setting up a business, opening his own flagship store. It is his ultimate goal to develop an international brand.

We at the New African Woman wish him well and will be sure to keep you posted about his journey.

Words by Name



Tiale continues to redefine African fashion and always challenge mediocrity

Fashion Special

Africa's Top 10 Male Fashion designers

Kofi Ansah

His unique use of quilting, embroidery and appliqués has become a signature mark that means his creations stand out among many.

out among many. His collections have graced the runways, from Europe to the US and cross Africa. His creations can be found at retail shops on both sides of the Atlantic, from South Africa to Ghana, the US (Saks Fifth Avenue) and UK.

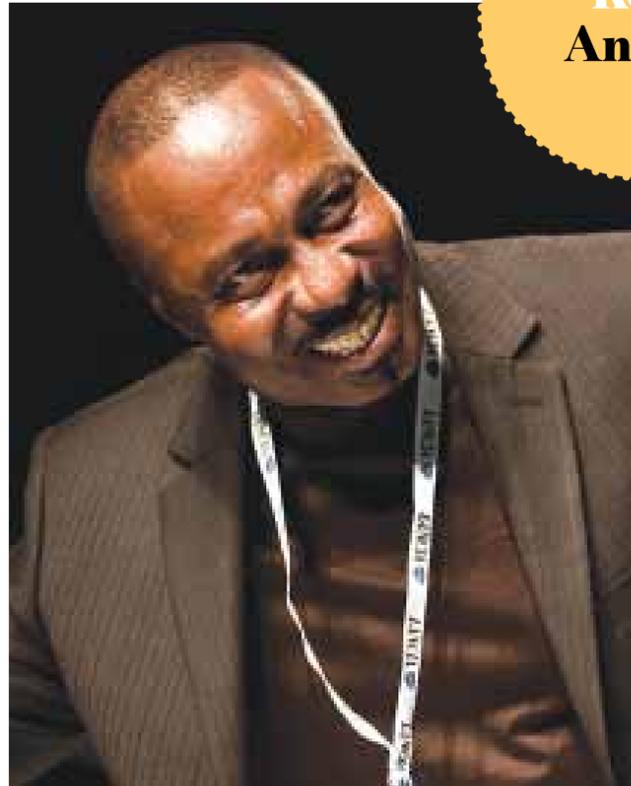
Ansah believes he inherited his creative talents from his parents. His father, a traditional chief from Senya Breku, Ghana Central Region, is a classical musician and photographer and encouraged him to pursue his interest in art and design. His brother, Kwao Ansah is a filmmaker and has twice been a winner at the FESPACO Film Festival.

Ansah returned home to Ghana in 1992, after spending 20 years in Europe. He said he came back home to contribute to the development of the Ghanaian clothing industry. While his return to Ghana has inspired him to blend richly textured and bold colour prints of his homeland into his designs, which have been well received, he is equally committed to see the Ghanaian textile and fashion landscape grow in economic prominence. He serves as the fashion consultant to the Ghana Textile Printing Company (G.T.P). His input has helped steer G.T.P to becoming one of the leading textile companies in the country since 1995 with its unusual wax prints, which are widely sold in Ghana and West African markets. Ansah is also the clothing industry expert of the P.S.I Round Table on clothing and textiles.

A major player on the African fashion scene, he is the founder and former president of the Federation of African Designers. Through Artdress, he trains local designers with potential to international standards. For the future, Ansah says he wants to re-enter the US and European market on a bigger scale. Watch out!

Words by Name

He came back home to contribute to the development of the Ghanaian clothing industry. His return to has inspired him to blend richly textured and bold colour prints of his homeland into his designs.



With his distinct eye for detail and individuality, Kofi Ansah has earned himself the reputation of an avant-garde designer, who is well revered in his native Ghana, and among fashion connoisseurs worldwide. A graduate of the Chelsea School of Art, London with honours in Fashion Design and Design Technology. His apprenticeship within the fashion industry found him working in established fashion houses like Guy Laroche in Paris, and Cecil Gee, London. Ansah soon earned himself a stake among the elite British couture collection.

Renowned for his innovative and elegant designs, Ansah is the founder of ARTDRESS, a design and creative company through which he runs his labels, Kofi Ansah Couture and Kofi Ansah Design Collection. An award winning designer, his accolades include, the African Fashion Awards, 2000 and the prestigious Ghana Quality Awards Diamond Division for clothing and textile with Artdress, 2003. Ansah designed the anniversary fabric for the Ghana @ 50 Golden Jubilee Celebrations and in 2008, he also designed costumes for the opening of and closing ceremony of the CAN, African Cup of Nations, held in Ghana. And in 2009, he was the chief designer at the Festival of African Fashion and Arts (FAFA). His unique use of quilting, embroidery and appliqués has become a signature mark that means his creations stand



Tale continues to redefine African fashion and always challenge mediocrity