

GENERATION NOW

Back to Black: Kulture2Couture

CASSIE FITZPATRICK, WGSN 07.12.07

Boasting a rambunctious posse of new designers, the Kulture2Couture event returned to the V&A for its third year. A highlight of London's black history season, the event is growing in size and stature. WGSN reports.

High profile support from A-list celebrities included supermodels **Naomi Campbell, Alek Wek**, and American entrepreneur **Damon Dash**, who acted as an ambassador for the event.

A weekend of fashion shows, workshops, makeover masterclasses, exhibits and seminars celebrated and showcased the work of the new and emerging black designers.



Damon Dash, Naomi Campbell and Ozwald Boateng



Naomi Campbell

The event was once again a great success with **visitors numbering in their thousands**. This year the fashion show - staged three times a day in the Raphael gallery - drew in industry insiders and keen fashionistas, who queued round the block for entry.



Nkwo Onwuka, winner of the Phoenix Award

Nkwo Onwuka scooped the **Phoenix Award** with her Afro-bohemian collection. **Strength and femininity** combined, as Onwuka drew **inspiration from the freedom and innovation of the 60s and 70s** and fused it **with African influences**.

- **Kulture2Couture** is an initiative set up by the Mayor of London and is **now in its third season**.
- This year's ambassador was the **millionaire entrepreneur, Damon Dash** who said: "K2C is a strategy, not just an event. It is part of an important journey and process of showcasing, acknowledging, championing and paying tribute to the cultural, creative and inspiring talents of African and Caribbean designers in the fashion industry."
- **Kulture2Couture's Trailblazer Award** recognises the achievement of an inspiring person, and this year the award went to **Fay Fullerton, Head of Production Costume at the Royal Opera House**. Fullerton has been at the Royal Opera House for 29 years, working her way up from a junior costumier to head cutter and eventually to her current position, which she's held since 1999.
- The event was **presented by Brenda Emmanus**, author and entertainment correspondent for BBC London.

www.kulture2couture.com

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Gavin Pierre Medford

Gavin Pierre Medford was featured in WGSN's London off-schedule report earlier this autumn. His **sexy, extravagant sense of style** was showcased again at the Kulture2Couture event.



Yemi O by Kosibah

Yemi O by Kosibah is the new diffusion range from Kosibah Creations. Specialising in contemporary bridal and eveningwear, the new range delighted the crowd with great shapes, **clever corsetry and boned bodices**.



Yemi O by Kosibah

Yemi O by Kosibah

Saint-Hill Couture

Yemi O embraced glamour with many designs favouring an **elegant hourglass silhouette**.

Saint-Hill Couture revealed the label's extensive experience, which was evident in the choice of **luxurious fabrics and sumptuous embellishment**, immaculately finished.

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Rom ero Bryan

Design tutor at the London College of Fashion, and already a celebrity favourite, **Rom ero Bryan**, conjured up a spot of urban magic by **reworking the little black dress**.

Other striking pieces included **sexy dresses in show-stopping metallic pink and green**. Bryan's sexy, feminine bias-cut minidresses are worn by **celebrity clients** including Amerie, Beyonc  Knowles, Cameron Diaz, and the Sugababes, for whom he has created one-off pieces.



Patrick Kevin

Patrick Kevin

Antoinette Olivia

Other designers in the showcase included **Antoinette Olivia**, Patrick Kevin and Rufus who celebrated a more youthful approach to fashion.



Rufus

Music, street and sport were the obvious **reference points for Rufus**, who fused sporty separates with garish animal-print tights - giving his kaleidoscopic collection a great street edge.



Maame Baryeh

Also running riot with her vibrant colour palette, look out for **Maame Baryeh**. Baryeh is an established designer for both men and women and is **due to make her debut at London Fashion Week next February**.

She showed chunky, hand-knitted cardigans and huge, oversized, wooden buttons that added a **handcrafted feel to the quirky collection**. For men, the designer concentrated on fine knits and bright clashing stripes.



Stoned Cherrie

Stoned Cherrie

Tina Atiemo

Stoned Cherrie is the label of **Nkhensani Nkosi** who creates wearable feminine pieces, often with vibrant colour highlights and a **great sense of energy**. Nkosi has been **nominated for the Marie Claire Prix d'Excellence**.

Finally, **Tina Atiemo** sent her models down the catwalk barefoot in traditional printed fabrics. Heavily **influenced by her Ghanaian upbringing**, Atiemo utilises local Ghanaian materials and craftsmanship, including hand-woven fabrics and hand-beading with cowry shells.

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