

# The 2018 Durban Fashion Fair winners are...

The winners of the seventh Durban Fashion Fair (DFF) were recently announced at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre and the Durban Exhibition Centre in KwaZulu-Natal. It was themed Afrofuturism and hosted by much-loved radio and television personality Anele Mdoda.

The highlight of this four-day fashion event celebrated the talents of the future and recognised the maestros of the present. The DFF ran alongside the Durban Business Fair, which also celebrated its 20th anniversary.



#DFF2018 winners: Aldytha Da Silva (Business Award: Kryolan); Nando Shandu (New Face); Martin John Steenkamp (Fashion Innovator & Next Generation Emerging Designer Awards); Samuel Quame Owusu (Best African Menswear Collection); Nassim Samma (Best African Ladieswear Collection); Zama Mathe (DFF Durban Designer of the Year 2018); Brenda Quin (Best Ladieswear Collection); Zambhele Ntshangase (Rising Star); Chu Suwannapha (Best Menswear Collection); Khulekani Sithole and Sicelinhlanhla Ngcobo (Rising Star); Nandile Mkhize (New Face); Cari St Quentin (Rising Star); Insert: Muzi Innocent Mhlambo (Collection of the Week).

The most coveted award of the evening - the Durban Designer of the Year 2018 - went to Zama Mathe, head designer of the brand Zarth.

Mathe is a protégé of the DFF and head of a growing and successful business. Founded in 2009, Zarth has evolved into a creative design house employing a fully qualified team of professionals. The fledgeling brand made its DFF debut in 2013, earning Zama Mathe an internship to Milan, Italy. She has participated at the DFF every year since then. This is the second year she has clinched the award, having also being chosen as the DFF Designer of the Year title in 2016.

The Collection of the Week award went to Muzi Innocent Mhlambo who launched his brand Mita-N Dzys in 2010. Self-taught and ambitious, he has honed his career and grown his passion for fashion through the DFF.

This year's Best Ladieswear Collection 2018 Award went to Diva Designs' Brenda Quin for a stunning collection that perfectly encapsulates her combination of combining boldness with femininity, while the Best Menswear Collection went to well-known fashion writer and award-winning designer Chu Suwannapha and his brand Chulaap. Trained in Paris and resident in South Africa for 18 years, Chu was raised in Thailand but boldly celebrates the diversity of Africa through graphic, print-oriented designs.



## Durban Fashion Fair 2018 rallies support for local designers

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Deputy mayor councillor Fawzia Peer, who opened the Durban Fashion Fair Recognition Awards, declared that the entire endeavour was a noble cause. Peer noted that the eThekweni Municipality had invested approximately R40m in various fashion development programmes over the past six years, which had enabled it to touch the lives of more than 1,800 designers, many of which had gone on to not only showcase their creations internationally but had also built businesses and created jobs.

She noted that fashion had an important part to play in the economic development agenda of the city and said that the DFF was an important foundation for the creation of sustainable businesses in the city of Durban.

## Supporting local designers

While the theme of Afrofuturism focused on the creation of an African fashion culture, this needed to be moved into the future with patriotism. She urged both the audience and Durban as a whole to do this by supporting local designers and buying their clothes.

"The DFF must be viewed as a symbol of greatness, of what we can achieve when we work together and we are grateful to all of those who have played an active role in making this event such a success," she said.

The DFF Recognition Awards not only recognises local excellence but also commends those who have travelled from across Africa to participate.

The Best African Menswear Collection went to Ghanaian designer Samuel Quame Owusu and his label Quame Owusu for the second year in a row. The Best African Ladieswear Collection Award was collected by Nassim Samma from Burundi, who launched Samma Collections in 2015.

Martin John Steenkamp, whose label Martin John encapsulates androgynous design with menswear pieces that channel into women's wear, took home two prestigious awards - Fashion Innovator Award and the Next Generation Emerging Designer Award.

The Durban Fashion Legend 2018, which is based on nominations from within the local fashion industry, went to Amanda Laird Cherry while the Fashion Business Award went to makeup house Kryolan.

The Rising Stars Awards – which pick out the three top-performing mentees that participate in a year-long designer mentorship programme in the run-up to the DFF – were Cari St Quentin, Zamabhele Ntshangase, and the label Black Rose which combines the talents of Khulekani Sithole and Sicelinhlanhla Ngcobo.

Five years ago, the DFF introduced a model search, providing an opportunity for youngsters from disadvantaged

communities to not only get themselves on the DFF ramp but also to begin to build a modelling career.

This year's DFF New Face of the Year (ladies) was Nandile Mkhize, while the New Face of the Year (men) was Ntando Shandu.

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