

10 July 2012

Africa on the Catwalk

A fashion show in collaboration with creative director and show producer Ola Shobowale of *infinite beauty factory* and Sabrina Henry, fashion director at *Arise Magazine* showcase six, talented designers who originate from the continent or are inspired by its rich cultural heritage.

Southbank Centre is pleased to present Africa on the Catwalk as part of the month-long Africa Utopia festival. Africa on the Catwalk is a fashion show in collaboration with creative director and show producer; Ola Shobowale, infinite beauty factory and Sabrina Henry, fashion director at Arise Magazine taking place on **Saturday, July 21, 2012 at 1:30pm** in the Clore Ballroom of the **Royal Festival Hall**. The show brings six, talented designers who originate from the continent or are inspired by its rich cultural heritage as part of Southbank Centre's [Festival of the World](#) with MasterCard. This four month festival includes inspirational projects from the UK and around the world that showcase the power of how the arts changes lives of individuals, communities and whole societies.

African fashion has somewhat seen a renaissance of late with well-known, global brands borrowing concepts, designs and energy from the colourful continent to inspire their SS12 collections up and down catwalks in Europe, the Middle East and the Americas. Africa on the Catwalk brings you a few designers who live and breathe the culture and are at the forefront of showing the world the many creative takes on a continent and its culture that is varied, exciting and life defining.

[Bestow Elan](#) (Ghana/UK)

The designer behind this label; **Erzumah Ackerson**; is a former **London College of Fashion graduate** and assistant to fashion designer; **Jonathon Saunders**. She draws her inspiration from both classic and vintage stimuli, as well as influences from her **Ghanaian heritage**. Her garments are often described as timeless, feminine and chic. Having showcased at the **V&A museum, La Geneve North**, the much coveted **Arise Magazine fashion week** in Lagos, Nigeria and featured in **Grazia Magazine**, US based lifestyle website **Clutch Magazine** and Africa's largest TV network **Studio 53**. Bestow Elan is quickly rising as one of the UK's and Ghana's prominent fashion stars.

[Eki Orleans](#) (Nigeria/UK)

A self-taught designer and the creative force behind the brand; **Hazel Aggrey-Orleans** was born in Germany, raised in **Nigeria** and educated in London where she currently resides. This diverse mix of cultures has strongly influenced Hazel's design aesthetic as she draws inspiration from all of her cultural experiences, but the most notable from her West African heritage. This forms the foundation of her brand's identity and spirit, which are vivacity, elegance and sophistication. In Nigeria, the name 'Eki' means 'centre of attraction' which is a natural consequence of wearing an Eki Orleans creation. Hazel's fondness of West African

prints has made her reinterpret the traditional designs that are typically printed on cotton, to create more unique prints on silk fabric. The result is a design aesthetic that appeals to the international market.

Kezia Frederick (UK/St Lucia)

Kezia Frederick is a London based fashion and textile designer, specializing in silk screening and digital print. Being of mixed heritage **British and St. Lucian**, Kezia is interested in relaying this fusion of cultures in her work by continually exploring the theme of 'dual heritage.' A Central Saint Martin's graduate of Fashion Print it allowed her to express her creativity through designing and printing her own fabrics and clothing. Having worked with Jeremy Scott in LA, Suno in New York, Zandra Rhodes and Goodhood in London she is hoping to officially launch her own brand in 2012, specialising in unique and limited printed pieces. Since graduating she has shown her AW12 collection at the recent Arise Magazine Fashion Week 2012 in Lagos. Her debut collection was greatly influenced by the mesh of London cultures especially Nigerian.

Chichia London (Tanzania/UK)

London based designer **Christine Mhando** a graduate from Kent University launched the label that bears her childhood nickname, Chichia in 2007 and has been recognised as an international African designer who modernises and transforms traditional illustrative East African textiles into stylish and considered fashionable women's wear. Tanzanian-born Mhando, created a ready-to-wear range that is an amalgamation of both continents and cultures from which the designer was raised. The label's signature transpires from the artful application of the 'Khanga'; a traditional east African, cotton printed fabric used by local women as wraps. Each collection consists of an eclectic range of dresses and separates in modern wearable silhouettes and styles in a variety of succulent colours. Chichia's intelligent use of eye-catching colourful prints in natural fabrics intermixed with beautiful embellishments and intricate detailing makes every piece uniquely innovative and a timeless addition to anyone's wardrobe. The brand has been shown during London Fashion Week (off-schedule) in 2008 and 2009, Swahili Fashion week, 2009 and 2010, and ARISE Magazine fashion week, 2011.

Madam Wokie (Sierra Leone)

Madam Wokie is an emerging African brand created by **Mary-Ann Kaikai** in 2009 to design exclusive yet stylish, durable and affordable garments for Sierra Leoneans. The brand fuses the country's heritage and aesthetics with elegant modern designs where **all the clothes and accessories** for the brand are **manufactured in Africa**; with the majority being produced in Sierra Leone. Having started with a ready-to-wear line; the brand has now expanded to include bags, jewellery, footwear and fabrics. The brand name Madam Wokie is inspired by Mary-Ann's maternal great-grandmother; Madam Wokie Massaquoi - a beautiful, strong and super stylish lady who loved expressing herself through fashion. Madam Wokie, a Paramount Chief who was presented with a crown by the Queen of England in 1961 which to this date; the location of the crown, remains a well-guarded family secret. Having shown at Arise Magazine Africa Fashion Week 2011 in Lagos, Nigeria and most recently Africa Fashion Week in New York. The Madam Wokie shop is located at Number 14C Syke Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

MO SAÏQUE shoes (Ghana/UK)

MO SAÏQUE was created in 2010 by former banker; **Afua Dabanka** who was born and raised in Germany to Ghanaian parents who were both doctors. Key to the design philosophy is a bold, androgynous sense of style with classic, feminine German silhouettes that beautifully show the interesting mix of Afua's influences. Her love affair with shoes started as a young girl; in 2006, Afua took her first course in footwear design at the London College of Fashion and the rest, they say; is history. MO SAÏQUE has been seen on the red carpets at

the **Cannes Film Festival**, **F1 Amber Lounge Fashion Show** in **Monaco**, the **V&A Museum Afropolitan Fashion Show** and the **Vertu Vogue Festival** in **London**. Most recently, MO SAÏQUE heels were the **first choice of Noisettes** leading lady, **Shingai Shoniwa** for her promotional shoot for the Noisettes new single; 'Winner'; in time for the London 2012 Olympics.

The collections will be matched with the following selection of accessory designers:

[Ugo Boutique](#) (Nigeria/UK)
Bags

[Mifani](#) (Ghana/UK)
Shoes

[Maya Antoun](#) (Sudan/UK)
Jewellery

[Aiyda](#) (Eritrea/UK)
Bags and jewellery

[Joansu](#) (Ghana/UK)
Jewellery

[Zebra Living](#) (Nigeria/UK)
Jewellery

To complement the Africa Utopia festival the **Southbank Centre Terrace Shop**, will sell a selection of accessories, greeting cards and home ware from African brands such as: [Eva Sonaïke](#) (Nigeria/UK), [La Petite Congolaise](#) (Congo/UK), [UrbanKit](#) (Nigeria/UK), [Chiji](#) (Nigeria/UK), [Sweet Design Studio](#) (Nigeria/UK) and [Choolips](#) (Germany/UK).

Ola Shobowale, creative director and show producer said: "Africa on the Catwalk at the Southbank Centre is a unique opportunity for the wider public to come and experience, first-hand, the emerging renaissance of African design and creativity sweeping across the world."

Sabrina Henry, fashion director commented: "What an amazing opportunity to showcase the most exciting and vibrant fashion of the moment. My work at Arise has broadened my outlook past the established fashion capitals, to a wealth of new and well recognised talent from the continent and I'm excited to be part of this pioneering London festival."

Hannah Pool, author, journalist and co-curator of Africa Utopia said: "With labels such as Gucci, Burberry and Balenciaga being so obviously inspired by African designers, Africa on the Catwalk and the pop up boutique, are about bringing the very best of contemporary African fashion to London."

Africa Utopia is a month-long festival of music, theatre, film, literature, dance, fashion, talks and debates that kicked off on 1 July. It is programmed by Southbank Centre in conjunction with revered musician, human rights champion and Oxfam global ambassador **Baaba Maal**. There is an extensive program of talks and debates curated by author and journalist Hannah Pool (Guardian, Grazia, Arise Magazine) that looks to shed an illuminating light on the reality of contemporary Africa.

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For Africa on the Catwalk press information please contact:

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Southbank Centre Ticket Office – www.southbankcentre.co.uk / 0844 847 9910

The following high res images are available to download from [Dropbox](#)

<p>Bestow Elan (Ghana / UK)</p> 	<p>Chichia London (Tanzania / UK)</p> 	<p>Eki Orleans (Nigeria / UK)</p> 
<p>Madam Wokie (Sierra Leone)</p>	<p>Kezia Frederick (St Lucia / UK)</p> 	<p>Mo Saïque (Ghana / UK)</p> 

Notes to Editors

Ola Shobowale,

Creative Director at Infinite beauty factory, he trained as a graphic/interior designer and worked for various media and advertising companies the best known being Saatchi & Saatchi. He briefly went into banking before moving on to do an arts management course at the Bernie Grants Arts Centre. Ola previously worked with Untold London, a collective established by Maame Baryeh to provide a platform for emerging designers to show case their collections off-schedule during London Fashion Week. He also does other freelance work as part of a team for various magazines including Pride, BlackHair, Sublime, New African Woman, Fashizblack, DivaScribe. He has also worked on the production of various fashion shows/events such as Noir at Somerset House, Untold at the Design Museum, Afropolitans at the V&A Museum, Fashion Diversity at the Museum of London, FashionMist at the Russell Hotel and Clothes Show London. infinitebeautyfactory@gmail.com

Sabrina Henry sabinajhenry.com

Sabrina Henry is fashion director of Arise Magazine and also a freelance fashion stylist. She started her career at Dazed & Confused and over the years clients have included Nike, Office, House of Fraser and Selfridges. She has also worked with musicians Florence and the Machine, Alicia Keys, Janelle Monae and The Noisettes. Sabrina regularly contributes to independent fashion titles and works on TV projects

Hannah Pool

Hannah Pool is a journalist, author and commentator who writes regularly in the national media on gender, race and identity. A Guardian journalist for over 14 years with stints as the Guardian Weekend's Beauty editor for five years; during which time she wrote the hugely successful 'New Black' column which was the first beauty column for women of colour in a mainstream newspaper. Hannah penned her debut book; 'My Fathers' Daughter: A story of family and belonging'; a memoir of her journey back to Eritrea to find her birth family.

Bresi-Ando consults

A global, boutique PR consultancy specialising in growing awareness, positioning and connecting brands with talent for a variety of clients in the luxury, arts, consumer tech, entertainment and music industries. One arm of Bres-i-Ando consults' is to promote brands that have their roots in Africa or have an African focus. Past clients such as Helen Jennings (editor of Arise and author of New African Fashion), Mo Saïque Shoes, Joansu jewellery, Christie Brown, Villa Monticello, Ghana, have all benefitted from the insight, expertise and connections of the consultancy. www.bresi-ando.com.

Southbank Centre's Festival of the World

1 June to 9 September 2012

Southbank Centre's summer 2012 site-wide Festival of the World with MasterCard opens on 1 June 2012 for the Diamond Jubilee Weekend, and closes on 9 September 2012. As London welcomes the world this summer, Southbank Centre's Festival of the World will include inspirational projects from the UK and around the world, which showcase the power of the arts to change the lives of individuals, communities and whole societies. The site will be transformed with art installations including a giant 'robot' sculpture; a colossal baobab tree made from fabric; 'Rainbow Park', a multi-coloured beach; and an exhibition in the Royal Festival Hall of the thinkers, artists and communities who have inspired and contributed to the Festival. The reopening of the Queen Elizabeth Hall Roof Garden, weekly food markets, and a pop-up cafe complete the Festival landscape. www.southbankcentre.co.uk/world

Southbank Centre

Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre, occupying a 21-acre site that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 *Festival of Britain*. Southbank Centre is home to the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and the Hayward Gallery as well as The Saison Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. www.southbankcentre.co.uk.

About MasterCard

MasterCard cardholders can enjoy exclusive experiences and privileged access to the very best the Festival of the World has to offer by visiting southbankcentre.co.uk/MasterCard.

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Arts Council England

Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art,

reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2011 and 2015, we will invest £1.4 billion of public money from government and an estimated £1 billion from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. www.artscouncil.org.uk.

The London 2012 Cultural Olympiad is the largest cultural celebration in the history of the modern Olympic and Paralympic Movements. Spread over four years, it is designed to give everyone in the UK a chance to be part of London 2012 and inspire creativity across all forms of culture, especially among young people. The culmination of the Cultural Olympiad will be the London 2012 Festival, a spectacular 12-week nationwide celebration bringing together leading artists from across the world with the very best from the UK, from Midsummer's Day on 21 June and running until the final day of the Paralympic Games on 9 September 2012. The London 2012 Festival will celebrate the huge range, quality and accessibility of the UK's world-class culture including dance, music, theatre, the visual arts, fashion, film and digital innovation, giving the opportunity for people across the UK to celebrate the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Principal funders of the Cultural Olympiad and London 2012 Festival are Arts Council England, Legacy Trust UK and the Olympic Lottery Distributor. BP and BT are Premier Partners of the Cultural Olympiad and the London 2012 Festival. For more details on the programme, to download the London 2012 Festival official guide, and to sign up for information visit www.london2012.com/festival.