THE PAN-AFRICAN FABRIC

PRESS KIT

The Pan-African Fabric & Fashion Showcase

Smithsonian National Museum of African Art
Washington, D.C.

26 September 2026





“The Pan-African Fabric is my visual love letter to Africa—
a celebration of the continent's unity, diversity, and creativity,
and an invitation to the world to discover the many African stories woven into its fabric.”

— Shiri Achu
Founder, The Pan-African Fabric Initiative

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

The Inaugural Pan-African Fabric & Fashion Showcase to Debut at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art

WASHINGTON, D.C. — July 2026 — For the first time, contemporary fashion designers representing all five regions of Africa will present original fashion interpretations created from a single Pan-African textile during The Inaugural Pan-African Fabric & Fashion Showcase at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art on Saturday, September 26, 2026.

Created by Cameroonian-born artist and architect Shiri Achu, Founder & Creator of The Pan-African Fabric Initiative, The Pan-African Fabric is the first contemporary Pan-African textile intentionally designed to unite cultural symbols from North, East, West, Central, and Southern Africa into one shared fabric. Each participating designer begins with the same textile, yet each collection tells a completely different African story—demonstrating how one fabric can celebrate many African stories.

The inaugural showcase brings together designers representing Cameroon, Central African Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, and South Africa. It represents the culmination of more than a year of international collaboration involving embassies, museums, educational institutions, designers, competitions, workshops, public engagement, and cultural partnerships across Africa and the United States.

The Pan-African Fabric Initiative has already engaged thousands of participants through museum workshops, designer competitions, public voting, educational programmes, exhibitions, and community collaborations, demonstrating how fashion can become a platform for education, cultural diplomacy, and international dialogue.

“The Pan-African Fabric is my visual love letter to Africa—a celebration of the continent's unity, diversity, and creativity, and an invitation to the world to discover the many African stories woven into one shared fabric,” says Shiri Achu. “Each designer begins with the same fabric, yet every collection tells a completely different African story. One fabric becomes many stories, each expressing a unique cultural voice while contributing to a shared vision of Africa.”

Presented as part of the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art Community Day, the showcase invites visitors to experience contemporary African fashion through collaboration, storytelling, and cultural exchange. More than a fashion showcase, The Pan-African Fabric is a growing cultural initiative connecting artists, designers, museums, embassies, educators, and communities through creativity, cultural diplomacy, and one shared vision for Africa.

ONE FABRIC. MANY AFRICAN STORIES.

EVENT DETAILS

Event: The Inaugural Pan-African Fabric & Fashion Showcase
Date: Saturday, September 26, 2026 / **Time**: 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM
Venue: Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington, D.C.
Media Contact: Shiri Achu | info@shiriachuart.com | www.shiriachuart.com | @thepanafricanfabric

THE PAN-AFRICAN FABRIC INITIATIVE - AT A GLANCE

FAST FACTS

1 Original Pan-African Fabric (Edition One)
5 African Regions Represented
9 Participating Countries
2 National Competitions (Cameroon and Ethiopia)
9 Contemporary Fashion Designers
1,000+ Museum Workshop Participants
3,240 Votes Cast Across the Live and Online Components of the Cameroon and Ethiopia Designer Competitions
19 Judges Across Both National Designer Competitions
2025 Official Launch Embassy of Cameroon, Washington, D.C.
2026 Smithsonian Fashion Showcase Debut National Museum of African Art, Washington, D.C.

THE INITIATIVE

Founder and Creator Shiri Achu

Profession Artist • Architect • Interdisciplinary Cultural Practitioner • Founder

Mission Celebrating African unity through culture, creativity, and collaboration.

Tagline ONE FABRIC. MANY AFRICAN STORIES.

THE SHOWCASE

Event The Inaugural Pan-African Fabric & Fashion Showcase

Venue Smithsonian National Museum of African Art Washington, D.C.

Date 26 September 2026

Time 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

WHY IT MATTERS

• The first contemporary Pan-African textile uniting symbols from all five regions of Africa.

• Nine designers begin with one shared fabric, each creating a different African story.

• Connecting fashion, art, education, museums, and cultural diplomacy through one shared creative vision.

Email info@shiriachuart.com **Website** www.shiriachuart.com **Instagram** @thepanafricanfabric

THE STORY OF THE PAN-AFRICAN FABRIC

Africa is home to thousands of remarkable textiles, each reflecting the history, traditions, and identity of individual nations and communities. Yet there was no single fabric intentionally created to celebrate Africa as a whole.

Inspired by this vision, artist and architect **Shiri Achu** created **The Pan-African Fabric**—the **first Pan-African fabric intentionally designed to unite symbols from North, East, West, Central, and Southern Africa into a single contemporary textile**, celebrating the continent's unity while honoring the rich diversity of its cultures, traditions, and identities.

The fabric's distinctive color palette has its origins in **Long Live the Art of Service (LLTAOS)**, a creative initiative developed by Shiri Achu throughout 2023 that explored twelve colors as symbols of service, purpose, and human values. These colors later became the foundation of **The Pan-African Fabric**, where color, symbolism, and storytelling came together to create a contemporary textile celebrating African unity.

The Pan-African Fabric, the contemporary textile, is the centerpiece of **The Pan-African Fabric Initiative**—an international cultural platform dedicated to celebrating African unity through culture, creativity, and collaboration. Inspired by authentic cultural symbols from across the continent, it tells a much larger story—one of unity, diversity, creativity, and shared identity. Each symbol reflects the histories, traditions, cultural expression, and shared aspirations that connect the African continent while honoring the uniqueness of every region, every nation, and every people.

More than a textile, The Pan-African Fabric is an interdisciplinary cultural platform where art, fashion, culture, education, cultural diplomacy, and community engagement come together to celebrate African unity, creativity, and collaboration. Through exhibitions, designer competitions, museum programmes, educational workshops, public engagement, and international partnerships, it demonstrates how one shared textile can connect people, preserve heritage, inspire creativity, and tell the many stories of Africa.

Edition One

The inaugural edition of **The Pan-African Fabric** brings together authentic cultural symbols from nine African countries, representing all five regions of the continent:

Cameroon • Central African Republic • Egypt • Ethiopia • Ghana • Kenya • Morocco • Nigeria • South Africa

Together, these symbols form the first Pan-African fabric intentionally designed to celebrate the African continent as a whole.

Fashion designers representing each participating country have interpreted The Pan-African Fabric through their own unique cultural perspective, creative vision, and craftsmanship. Together, these original fashion interpretations celebrate the individuality of each nation while revealing the unity woven throughout the continent.

Since its official launch at the Embassy of Cameroon in Washington, D.C., in April 2025, The Pan-African Fabric has expanded through collaboration, bringing together artists, fashion designers, museums, embassies, educational institutions, cultural organisations, and communities through exhibitions, workshops, designer competitions, public engagement, and creative partnerships.

The **Inaugural Pan-African Fabric & Fashion Showcase** at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art represents the first time these nine national interpretations will be presented together. More than a fashion showcase, it introduces The Pan-African Fabric Initiative to an international museum audience as a platform for African creativity, cultural diplomacy, and collaboration—demonstrating how one shared textile can celebrate many African stories while strengthening the unity that connects a continent.

ONE FABRIC.

MANY AFRICAN STORIES.

***Celebrating African unity through culture, creativity, and collaboration*.**



ABOUT SHIRI ACHU

Artist | Architect | Interdisciplinary Cultural Practitioner | Founder & Creator, The Pan-African Fabric Initiative

Shiri Achu is an internationally exhibited, award-winning Cameroonian artist, architect, and interdisciplinary cultural practitioner. She is the Founder & Creator of The Pan-African Fabric Initiative—an international cultural platform celebrating African unity through culture, creativity, and collaboration.

Based in the Washington, D.C. area, her interdisciplinary practice brings together visual art, architecture, fashion, cultural diplomacy, education, and community engagement. Through exhibitions, workshops, public programmes, and international collaborations, she explores how creativity can preserve heritage, strengthen cultural connections, and inspire meaningful dialogue across communities and generations.

For more than a decade, Shiri has developed projects that extend beyond traditional artistic practice. Her work combines contemporary African-inspired painting with participatory cultural experiences, bringing together museums, embassies, educational institutions, artists, designers, and communities around shared stories and creative exchange.

In 2025, she created **The Pan-African Fabric**—the first contemporary Pan-African textile intentionally designed to unite authentic cultural symbols representing North, East, West, Central, and Southern Africa into one shared fabric. More than a textile, the initiative serves as a platform for artistic collaboration, inviting designers from across the continent to interpret the same fabric while celebrating the diversity and unity of Africa.

Since its official launch at the Embassy of Cameroon in Washington, D.C., The Pan-African Fabric has grown into an international cultural initiative involving nine African countries through designer competitions, museum workshops, public engagement programmes, educational partnerships, and cultural collaborations. Its inaugural presentation at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art marks an important milestone in the initiative's continued development.

Alongside The Pan-African Fabric, Shiri is recognised for her contemporary African-inspired paintings, long-running *InPrint* exhibition series, and community-based cultural initiatives that celebrate African identity, creativity, and heritage. Her work demonstrates how art can serve as a bridge between cultures while fostering education, dialogue, and international collaboration.

As both an artist and an architect, Shiri approaches every project with the belief that meaningful ideas can be thoughtfully designed, carefully nurtured, and transformed into enduring cultural movements that inspire connection, creativity, and lasting impact.

SELECTED RECOGNITION

- Named one of the Top Investable Artists 2026 by *Art Market Experts*.
- Recipient of 30+ national and international awards and recognitions.
- UCYE African Cultural Ambassador to the United States.
- Internationally exhibited contemporary artist; creator of the annual worldwide *InPrint* exhibition series.
- Creator of The Pan-African Fabric, the first contemporary Pan-African textile intentionally designed to unite cultural symbols from all five regions of Africa.
- Founder and Creative Director, The Pan-African Fabric Initiative.

THE INAUGURAL PAN-AFRICAN FABRIC & FASHION SHOWCASE

Presented as part of Community Day at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art

---

EVENT DETAILS

Date: Saturday, September 26, 2026
Time: 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM
Venue: Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, 950 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20560

EVENT OVERVIEW

For the first time, contemporary fashion designers representing **nine African countries across all five regions of Africa** will present original interpretations created from **The Pan-African Fabric**—the first contemporary Pan-African textile intentionally designed to unite authentic cultural symbols from across the continent into one shared fabric.

Each designer begins with the same fabric, yet every collection tells a different African story, demonstrating how creativity can celebrate both cultural diversity and continental unity.

EXPERIENCE

Visitors can expect:

- A live Pan-African fashion showcase featuring original interpretations from nine African nations.
- The stories behind The Pan-African Fabric through fashion, art, storytelling, and cultural dialogue.
- A celebration of African creativity, collaboration, and unity

---

MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

Media representatives may have opportunities to:

- Interview **Shiri Achu** and participating designers (subject to availability)
- Photograph and film the showcase, subject to Smithsonian media and photography guidelines.

PRESS CONTACT

Shiri Achu Founder and Creator, The Pan-African Fabric Initiative
Email: info@shiriachuart.com **Website** www.shiriachuart.com **Social Media:** @thepanafricanfabric

High-resolution images, designer information, interview requests, and additional media materials are available upon request.

ONE FABRIC. MANY AFRICAN STORIES.