THE PAN-AFRICAN FABRIC

OFFICIAL PRESS & MEDIA GUIDE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

WASHINGTON, D.C. — August 2026 — For the first time, contemporary fashion designers representing nine African countries across all five regions of Africa—North, East, West, Central, and Southern Africa—will present original interpretations created from a single contemporary Pan-African textile during The Inaugural Pan-African Fabric & Fashion Showcase, taking place 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 authentic cultural symbols from across Africa into one shared fabric. Inspired by the continent's rich cultural heritage, the fabric invites designers from different countries to interpret a single textile through their own creative traditions, demonstrating how one fabric can celebrate many African stories while expressing a shared vision of African unity.

The showcase marks the first public presentation of all nine national interpretations of The Pan-African Fabric together, representing all five regions of Africa.

Participating countries include Cameroon, Central African Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, and South Africa, with each designer presenting a unique interpretation of the Pan-African Fabric inspired by the traditions, craftsmanship, identity, and contemporary creativity of their nation.

The showcase represents the culmination of more than a year of international collaboration involving embassies, museums, educational institutions, cultural organisations, fashion designers, artists, public voting, live competitions, workshops, and community engagement activities across Africa and the United States.

Since its official launch at the Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon in Washington, D.C., in April 2025, The Pan-African Fabric Initiative has grown into an international cultural platform celebrating African unity through culture, creativity, education, and collaboration. Through museum workshops, exhibitions, designer competitions, educational programmes, public engagement, and cultural diplomacy, the initiative has brought together thousands of participants while creating new opportunities for dialogue, partnership, and creative exchange.

"The Pan-African Fabric is my visual love letter to Africa," says Shiri Achu, Founder of The Pan-African Fabric Initiative. "Each designer begins with the same fabric, yet every collection tells a completely different African story. Together, they remind us that while our cultures are wonderfully diverse, we are also connected by a shared history, shared creativity, and a shared future."

Presented as part of the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art's Community Day, the showcase invites visitors to experience contemporary African fashion through storytelling, artistic collaboration, and cultural exchange.

A Day of Celebration

The celebration will continue into the evening with The Pan-African Fabric Cultural Reception, officially hosted by the Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon in Washington, D.C.

Bringing together participating designers, embassy representatives, museum professionals, cultural leaders, educators, artists, media representatives, partners, and invited guests, the reception reflects the initiative's commitment to strengthening cultural diplomacy, fostering international collaboration, and celebrating African unity beyond the museum walls.

Together, the Smithsonian showcase and Embassy reception create a full day of cultural celebration, demonstrating how art, fashion, museums, and diplomacy can work together to build meaningful connections across Africa and its global diaspora.

More than a fashion showcase, The Pan-African Fabric Initiative represents a growing international cultural movement connecting artists, designers, museums, embassies, educational institutions, and communities through a shared vision of African unity, creativity, collaboration, and cultural diplomacy.

EVENT DETAILS

The Inaugural Pan-African Fabric & Fashion Showcase

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

Date
Saturday, September 26, 2026

Time
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Venue
Smithsonian National Museum of African Art
950 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20560

Evening Programme

The Pan-African Fabric Cultural Reception

Hosted by the Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon
Washington, D.C.

By Invitation

Media representatives interested in covering the Cultural Reception are kindly requested to RSVP by **Friday, September 18, 2026**, by contacting **info@shiriachuart.com**.

ABOUT THE PAN-AFRICAN FABRIC

The Pan-African Fabric is the first contemporary Pan-African textile intentionally designed to unite authentic cultural symbols from across North, East, West, Central, and Southern Africa into a single shared fabric. Founded by artist and architect Shiri Achu, The Pan-African Fabric Initiative celebrates African unity through culture, creativity, collaboration, and cultural diplomacy.

Officially launched at the Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon in Washington, D.C., in April 2025, the initiative has grown into an international platform bringing together artists, fashion designers, museums, embassies, educational institutions, cultural organisations, and communities through exhibitions, workshops, designer competitions, educational programmes, public engagement, and creative collaborations.

Through the language of art and fashion, The Pan-African Fabric continues to celebrate the richness and diversity of African cultures while strengthening connections across the continent and its global diaspora.

MEDIA CONTACT

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Founder
The Pan-African Fabric Initiative

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AFRICA. UNITY. CELEBRATION.

ONE FABRIC. MANY AFRICAN STORIES.

THE PAN-AFRICAN FABRIC INITIATIVE - AT A GLANCE

FAST FACTS

ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

Initiative
The Pan-African Fabric Initiative

Founder
Shiri Achu

Profession
Artist • Architect • Interdisciplinary Cultural Practitioner • Founder

Color Foundation
2023 – Long Live the Art of Service (LLTAOS)

Fabric Created
2025

Official Launch
25 April 2025

Launch Venue
Embassy of Cameroon
Washington, D.C.

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

Vision
To build a lasting platform for African cultural exchange through art, fashion, education, and collaboration.

Tagline
ONE FABRIC. MANY AFRICAN STORIES.

THE FABRIC

What is The Pan-African Fabric?

The first Pan-African fabric intentionally created to unite symbols from across all five regions of Africa into one contemporary textile.

Inspired by

• Authentic African cultural symbols

• Shared heritage

• African creativity

• Pan-African unity

Regions Represented

✓ North Africa

✓ East Africa

✓ Southern Africa

✓ West Africa

✓ Central Africa

EDITION ONE

Participating Countries (9)

Cameroon

Central African Republic

Egypt

Ethiopia

Ghana

Kenya

Morocco

Nigeria

South Africa

WHY IT MATTERS

The Pan-African Fabric is unique because it:

• Brings together symbols from all five regions of Africa into one contemporary textile.

• Invites designers from across the continent to interpret the same fabric through their own cultural perspective.

• Brings together art, fashion, education, museums, cultural diplomacy, and community engagement within one initiative.

• Celebrates both the diversity and unity of Africa through creativity.

• Creates a lasting cultural archive through fashion, storytelling, and international collaboration.

THE SMITHSONIAN SHOWCASE

Event

The Inaugural Pan-African Fabric & Fashion Showcase

Date

26 September 2026

Time

1:00 PM–5:00 PM

Venue

Smithsonian National Museum of African Art

Washington, D.C.

Presented as part of

Smithsonian Community Day

IMPACT

Countries represented

9

African regions represented

5

Original Pan-African textile

1 original Pan-African fabric (Edition One)

Professional designers

9

Original Fashion Interpretations

9 national interpretations • 23 garments • 3 accessories • 26 original fashion pieces

Educational workshops

- Smithsonian National Museum of African Art – "Africa, With Love" Workshop (February 13, 2026): Approximately 1,000 participants.
- Bukom Café DC – International Women's Day Workshop (March 2026): Nine women representing the participating countries.

Participants engaged

Thousands

Public votes cast (Cameroon and Ethiopia Competitions)

Live audience votes cast across the Cameroon and Ethiopia designer competitions: 155 + 184 = 339

PollUnit online votes cast across the Cameroon and Ethiopia designer competitions: 604 + 2,297 = 2,901

3,240 votes cast across the live and online components of the Cameroon and Ethiopia designer competitions.

Museum Presentations

President Woodrow Wilson House Museum — *Fashioning Power, Fashioning Peace* (April 27–May 9, 2026)

Smithsonian National Museum of African Art — Inaugural Fashion Showcase (September 26, 2026)

SELECTED INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

- **Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon** — official launch, letter of support and Cultural Reception host
- **Smithsonian National Museum of African Art** — *Africa, With Love: The Pan-African Fabric Art-Making Workshop with Shiri Achu* (February 13, 2026) and Inaugural Fashion Showcase (September 26, 2026)
- **President Woodrow Wilson House Museum** — *Fashioning Power, Fashioning Peace* exhibition (April 27–May 9, 2026)
- **Next Fashion Design College, Ethiopia** — competition partner
- **Egyptian Cultural and Educational Bureau** — letter of support
- **Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria** — letter of support

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PROJECT TIMELINE

2023
Long Live the Art of Service (color foundation)
↓
2025
The Pan-African Fabric created
↓
25 April 2025

Official Launch
Embassy of Cameroon
↓
2025 / 2026
International Designer Collaborations
↓
26 September 2026
Inaugural Smithsonian Showcase

BY THE NUMBERS

- **1** Pan-African fabric (Edition 1)
- **1** inaugural Smithsonian fashion showcase
- **5** African regions represented
- **9** participating countries
- **9** designers
- **19** judges
- **339** live fashion-show audience votes
- **2,901** online public votes
- **1,000+** museum workshop participants
- **3,240** votes cast across both national designer competitions
- **One Fabric. Many African Stories.**

FOUNDER AT A GLANCE

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.

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Africa to the World

President Woodrow Wilson House Museum, Washington, D.C.
Fashioning Power, Fashioning Peace
April 27 – May 9, 2026

This inaugural Pan-African Fabric dress, designed by Muks' Couture, winner of The Pan-African Fabric: Cameroon Designer Competition, was exhibited as part of *Fashioning Power, Fashioning Peace* at the President Woodrow Wilson House Museum.

As one of the first public presentations of The Pan-African Fabric, the exhibition marked an important milestone in the initiative's journey, introducing its vision of African unity through contemporary art, fashion, and cultural storytelling.

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*.**



THE DESIGNERS – EDITION ONE

Cameroon — Muks' Couture
Winner of The Pan-African Fabric: Cameroon Designer Competition, Muks' Couture brings a distinctive Cameroonian interpretation to Edition One.

Central African Republic — Diana-Melissa Ngoumape
Designer, model, and Miss Africa USA 2025 Diana-Melissa Ngoumape represents the Central African Republic through her interpretation of The Pan-African Fabric.

Egypt — MOJA Design Studio
MOJA Design Studio represents Egypt, bringing an Egyptian creative perspective to the shared Pan-African textile.

Ethiopia — YYASMINA STAR
Selected as the winner of The Pan-African Fabric: Ethiopia Designer Competition, YYASMINA STAR represents Ethiopia in the inaugural showcase.

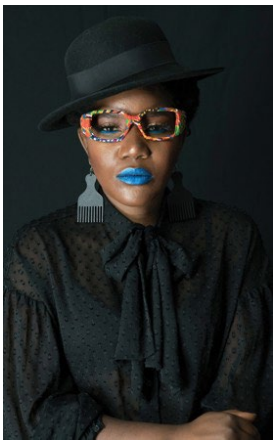
Ghana — Afua Sam / Studio D'Maxsi
Ghanaian designer Afua Sam of Studio D'Maxsi brings her creative vision and Ghanaian perspective to Edition One.

Kenya — Amos Onyango / LAWY Afrik
Amos Onyango of LAWY Afrik represents Kenya through an original interpretation shaped by his contemporary African design perspective.

Morocco — Naima El Messaoudi / Caftan Joujou
Naima El Messaoudi of Caftan Joujou represents Morocco, interpreting The Pan-African Fabric through the artistry of Moroccan fashion.

Nigeria — Goody's Stitches
Goody's Stitches represents Nigeria with original interpretation celebrating the country's vibrant fashion creativity.

South Africa — Fatima Barnes
Fatima Barnes represents South Africa, bringing a distinctive South African perspective to the shared fabric and its continental story.



ABOUT SHIRI ACHU

Artist • Architect • Interdisciplinary Cultural Practitioner

Founder & Creator, The Pan-African Fabric Initiative

Shiri Achu is an internationally exhibited, award-winning artist, architect, and cultural practitioner whose work explores how creativity can strengthen cultural identity, foster international collaboration, and build lasting connections between people, communities, and nations.

Based in the Washington, D.C. area, she develops interdisciplinary projects that bring together visual art, architecture, fashion, museums, education, cultural diplomacy, and community engagement. Her work is guided by the belief that creativity has the power not only to inspire, but also to connect cultures, preserve heritage, encourage dialogue, and build meaningful relationships across borders.

In 2025, Shiri founded The Pan-African Fabric Initiative and 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 has grown into an international cultural platform that brings together artists, designers, museums, embassies, educational institutions, cultural organisations, and communities through exhibitions, designer competitions, museum programmes, educational workshops, public engagement, and creative collaboration.

Officially launched at the Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon in Washington, D.C., the initiative has expanded through partnerships across Africa and the United States, culminating in The Inaugural Pan-African Fabric & Fashion Showcase at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art and the official Pan-African Fabric Cultural Reception hosted by the Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon.

Alongside The Pan-African Fabric Initiative, Shiri is recognised for her contemporary African-inspired paintings and for creating *InPrint*, the long-running international exhibition series showcasing her African-inspired artworks in print form. Developed to make her work more accessible, affordable, and transportable, *InPrint* has introduced audiences around the world to contemporary African-inspired art while celebrating the richness of African cultures through a growing body of work. Throughout her career, she has consistently developed projects that extend beyond traditional artistic practice, creating opportunities for participation, education, cultural dialogue, and international collaboration.

Over the course of her career, Shiri has received more than thirty national and international awards and recognitions for her artistic practice, cultural leadership, and community engagement. In 2026, she was named

one of the Top Investable Artists by Art Market Experts, recognising both the strength of her artistic practice and the growing international significance of her work.

Whether creating paintings, curating her own exhibitions, designing cultural programmes, or building international partnerships, Shiri approaches every project with the conviction that meaningful ideas can be intentionally designed, thoughtfully nurtured, and transformed into lasting cultural movements.

Through art, fashion, architecture, and cultural diplomacy, she continues to create platforms that celebrate African creativity while strengthening connections across the continent and its global diaspora.

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 long-running InPrint international exhibition series.
- Founder and Creative Director, The Pan-African Fabric Initiative.



EVENT GUIDE

THE INAUGURAL PAN-AFRICAN FABRIC & FASHION SHOWCASE

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

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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 fashion interpretations created from **The Pan-African Fabric**—the first contemporary Pan-African textile intentionally designed to unite authentic cultural symbols from across North, East, West, Central, and Southern Africa into one shared fabric.

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

Presented as part of the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art's Community Day, the showcase represents the first public presentation of all nine national interpretations together and the culmination of more than a year of international collaboration involving museums, embassies, educational institutions, designers, artists, and communities across Africa and the United States.

REPRESENTED COUNTRIES

- Cameroon
- Central African Republic

- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Morocco
- Nigeria
- South Africa

WHAT VISITORS WILL EXPERIENCE

Visitors can expect:

- A live Pan-African fashion showcase featuring original interpretations from nine African nations.
- Contemporary interpretations of one shared Pan-African textile by designers representing all five regions of Africa.
- The stories behind The Pan-African Fabric through fashion, art, storytelling, and cultural dialogue.
- Opportunities to meet participating designers *(subject to travel confirmations)*.
- An opportunity to discover authentic cultural symbols from across Africa.
- A celebration of African creativity, collaboration, cultural exchange, and unity.

WHY THIS EVENT MATTERS

- First public presentation bringing together nine national interpretations of one shared fabric.
- Demonstrates the power of fashion as a platform for cultural diplomacy.
- Celebrates both Africa's cultural diversity and its shared identity.
- Brings together museums, embassies, artists, designers, educators, and communities through creativity and collaboration.
- Highlights the role of art and design in strengthening connections across Africa and its global diaspora.

EVENT AT A GLANCE

Initiative

The Pan-African Fabric Initiative

Founder

Shiri Achu

Edition

Edition One

Countries Represented

9

African Regions Represented

5

Designers

9

Venue

Smithsonian National Museum of African Art

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMME

The Pan-African Fabric Cultural Reception

Following the Smithsonian showcase, invited guests, participating designers, embassy representatives, museum professionals, cultural leaders, educators, artists, media representatives, partners, and special guests will gather for **The Pan-African Fabric Cultural Reception**, officially hosted by the **Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon** in Washington, D.C.

The reception extends the day's celebration of **African unity through culture, creativity, collaboration, and cultural diplomacy**, providing an opportunity to strengthen relationships, continue conversations inspired by the showcase, and celebrate the international partnerships that have helped bring The Pan-African Fabric Initiative to life.

Media representatives interested in covering the Cultural Reception are kindly requested to RSVP by Friday, September 18, 2026.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

Media representatives may have opportunities to:

- Interview **Shiri Achu**, Founder of The Pan-African Fabric Initiative.
- Interview participating designers *(subject to availability)*.
- Photograph and film the showcase *(subject to Smithsonian guidelines)*.
- Capture the original designer interpretations and Pan-African Fabric garments.
- Cover a unique international story of African creativity, collaboration, cultural diplomacy, and unity.

MEDIA RESOURCES

Available upon request:

- High-resolution images of The Pan-African Fabric
- Official founder photographs and biography
- Participating designer information and official garment images available following the showcase
- Approved image captions and photography credits
- Press release, fact sheet, and event artwork

PRESS CONTACT

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Founder, The Pan-African Fabric Initiative

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Social Media: @thepanafricanfabric

ONE FABRIC. MANY AFRICAN STORIES.



The Pan-African Fabric in Rome, Italy. Courtesy of The Pan-African Fabric Initiative. Photo: Shiri Achu Art