

PRESENTED BY FASHION **AFRICANA** x MOONLOOK

FESTIVAL **AFRICANA**

A MULTI-DAY VIRTUAL, GLOBAL CELEBRATION OF AFRICAN STYLE, BEAUTY, DESIGN & CULTURE

FESTIVAL DATES: OCT. 17-18, 2020

PRIVATE V.I.P. & MEDIA BROADCAST: OCT. 16, 2020

PARIS, France, x PITTSBURGH, Pa. (October 2020) — FashionAFRICANA and MoonLook have teamed up to present the inaugural FestivalAFRICANA, a series of programming created to magnify the talents of African creatives and to give audiences an up-close-and-personal look at African culture through fashion and design.

The first of a four-part event series will take place Oct. 17-18 in a virtual format at FestivalAFRICANA.com. Highlights will include:

- The premiere of “There is No Place Like Home,” a stunning fashion editorial short film showcasing the best established and emerging Ghanaian designers -- shot along the narrow streets and the most beautiful shore of Cape Coast, Ghana
- Conversations focused upon Black women shaping the fashion, beauty and lifestyle industries
- Live performance by Ghanaian artist and singer, Worlasi
- Master classes in African dance

The virtual festival will open with a private broadcast for V.I.P. patrons and members of the media on Oct. 16. The plan is for future installments to be held in person when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted and it's safe for large groups to gather together again.

The FestivalAFRICANA series will kick off by spotlighting creatives from Ghana and will continue in 2021 by celebrating African and Black creatives from Senegal, Nigeria, South Africa and North America (USA). Many of them have outfitted celebrities such as Beyonce, Tracee Ellis Ross, Zendaya and Angela Bassett and have been featured by major fashion media outlets, including Vogue, Essence, Harper's Bazaar, Nylon and Refinery 29. The virtual celebration aims to share unapologetic Black joy, along with the authentic stories and design process behind each creative.

Curated collections of the looks presented during the festival will be exclusively available for purchase via MoonLook (moon-look.com), which specializes in ethical and sustainable African fashion.

FestivalAFRICANA is spearheaded by three Black women from Africa and the African diaspora: Demeatria Boccella, global philanthropy professional and founder of Pittsburgh-based FashionAFRICANA; Nelly Wandji, a Paris-based Cameroonian producer, gallerist and branding/retail specialist; and Saran Koly, a London-based Pan-African multifaceted artist, writer and creative director. Their theme for the first FestivalAFRICANA installment is “There is No Place Like Home.”

“My prime goal as a cultural entrepreneur has always been to create a safe place for interactions between nations and continents, because when we share our culture and creativity with others, we celebrate our authenticity as storytellers and solidify our singularities,” Wandji said. “That is exactly my summary for our selection of these creatives. They are part of global conversations, yet they remain authentic and proud of their heritage, traditions and they revive centuries-old know-hows into the DNA of their brands.”

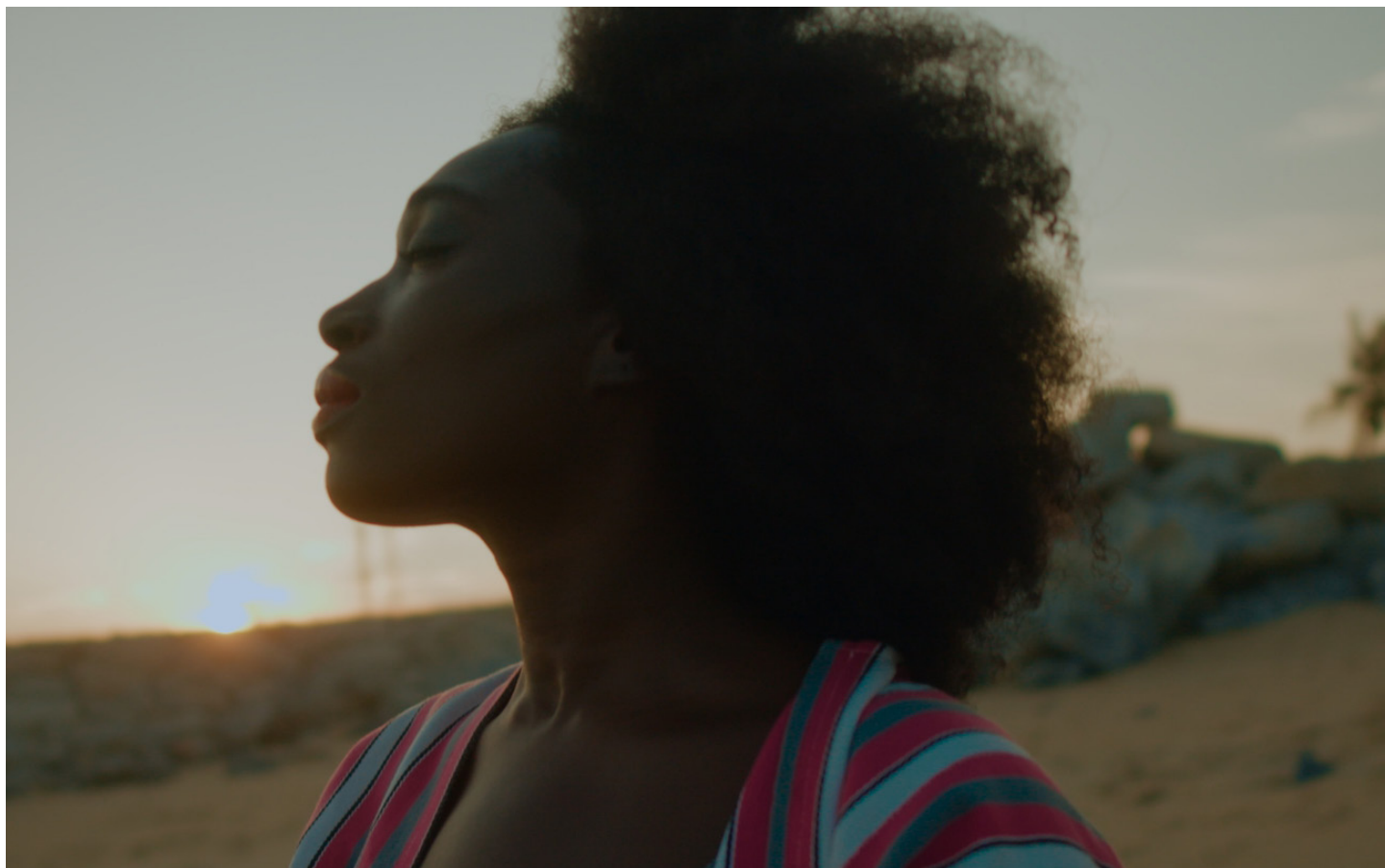
Koly hopes the film, in particular, will help connect audiences with the beauty of Ghana. Its production was led by some of the country’s top creatives and centered entrepreneur, yogi and vegan activist Nana Konamah as its muse.

“For having homes scattered around the world, I know how longing for Africa — my home — feels. From the familiar sounds to the exhilarating smells and the explosion of colors, I wrote a story where Africans make fashion by merely being beautifully, unapologetically themselves,” Koly said. “The short film ‘There is No Place Like Home’ is an invitation to Ghana.”

Boccella believes design is a way for people to learn about and connect with African culture.

“The late playwright, August Wilson, taught us, ‘There is an Africa in each of us that we have to get in touch with to understand our relationship to this society.’ This festival is a celebration of that individual and collective journey, and all African creatives and creativity,” Boccella said. “My journey back to self has been fed by the beauty and vibrancy of the Diaspora, especially the union of fashion and art. I grow a little each day by sharing that union with the world, and I would like to continue connecting to culture through design.”

Registration is free and open now at [FestivalAFRICANA.com](https://www.festivalafricana.com). Follow along on social media (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) for festival updates and behind-the-scenes photos and video.



MEET THE PRODUCERS

FASHION **AFRICANA**

ABOUT FASHIONAFRICANA

Established in 2001 by Demeatria Boccella, FashionAFRICANA is a multimedia event series and educational platform that explores Black beauty, culture and history through fashion and art. FashionAFRICANA advances the cultural equity of the African diaspora through the lens of quality programming that illuminates our artistic and cultural history. Its programming reflects the vitality of the creative human spirit and has brought to Pittsburgh and celebrated the work of renowned designers and artists from around the world.

MOONLOOK

ABOUT MOONLOOK

[MoonLook](#) is the go-to destination for African curated immersive experiences of creativity. It showcases brands and creatives from the continent and the diasporas with authentic signatures and a DNA celebrating culture and heritage through fashion, beauty and design items. MoonLook's consultancy department provides strategic partnerships to creatives that combine branding, marketing and communication to help them take their ideas from production to retail.



DEMEATRIA BOCCELLA, FESTIVAL PRODUCER

Demeatria Boccella, an independent global arts and philanthropy professional, supports creative excellence by pursuing fresh ideas and programmatic innovation. She instigates, commissions, convenes and otherwise seeks to build communities at the intersection of arts conceptualization, funding, management, performance and education. As founder of FashionAFRICANA, Boccella is focused on broadening the standard of beauty and cultivating a more life-giving and globally aware approach to African-inspired fashion and culture. She provides the artistic vision for FashionAFRICANA, which has grown from a regional event to one with national and international reach and appeal. She shared her work with FashionAFRICANA as a speaker at the 28th Annual Dynamic Women in Business Conference at Harvard University in 2019. Her most recent work includes the production of "Heroes & Sheroes: The Art and Influence of Ruth E. Carter on Black Cinema" in 2018 at the Heinz History Center and the curation of "Costumes of The Wiz Live" exhibition celebrating the work of Tony Award-winning costume designer Paul Tazewell. Designers, photographers, musicians, filmmakers and many other artists have joined the FashionAFRICANA fold.

MEET THE PRODUCERS



NELLY WANDJI, FESTIVAL PRODUCER

Nelly Wandji is a cultural curator and advocate of Africa's creative industry. She's the founder and managing director for MoonLook. She also has more than 14 years of management experience in selective distribution for international luxury brands, including Omega, Chopard, Dior and Tiffany & Co. In 2014, she started a new path to further explore her African heritage and uses her professional experience and passion to improve the African narrative. She strives through her work to create a bridge between continents and people and to enable impactful business opportunities in global creative spaces. From 2016 to 2019, her multidisciplinary gallery based in the Paris golden triangle — walking distance from Avenue des Champs Elysées — curated and shared with global collectors a range of collectibles from renowned artists and creative such as Barthélémy Toguo, Aissa Dione and Imane Ayissi. With her team, she curates nomad exhibitions and produces immersive experiences to celebrate culture, creativity and craftsmanship.



SARAN KOLY, CREATIVE DIRECTOR AND STORYTELLING

[Saran Koly](#) firmly believes the world cannot be told solely through a Western perspective. She is a Pan-African multifaceted artist, writer and creative director. From 2006 to 2011, as a reporter for the French national newspaper Liberation, she covered fashion weeks in New York, Paris and São Paulo. Koly led advocacy and communications campaigns in Europe, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean for the United Nations for over a decade. She also is the founder and publisher of the global print magazines "FIELDS," which highlights activists and changemakers and discusses global issues through a multicultural perspective, and "PERFORM!," a colorful journal and an itinerant cultural space for the documentation, preservation and dissemination of African performing arts. She launched in 2020 "[Subtile](#)," a media company with an innate understanding of cross-cultural energies within communities.

MEET THE CREATIVES

FASHION + DESIGN



AISHA AYENSU, CHRISTIE BROWN

Christie Brown is a Ghanaian luxury fashion brand that offers a stylish taste of true neo-African culture. It's set apart from other fashion labels because of its uniqueness and originality, giving confidence and class to the women who wear its apparel. The pieces range from exquisite tailor-made dresses and gorgeous gowns to ready-to-wear accessories that speak louder than words.



SANDI OWUSU, TALENSI

For Talensi, fashion can be ethical in an unexpected way. Talensi mixes contemporary vibes with traditional motifs on raw materials made in Africa — perfect for today's woman. The brand has collaborated with local artists and producers and is rooted in Ghanaian art and culture. It's passionate about giving audiences the tool they need to stand out among the crowd.



GEORGE TETTEH, ATTO TETTEH

A luxury menswear brand based in Accra, Ghana, it specializes in trendy clothes that exude color, warmth, energy and sophistication — with a touch of African culture. Atto Tetteh wants to tell Africa's untold stories. Standing opposite to misconceptions and popular beliefs, Atto Tetteh knows that African men have always been fashionable. Their energy, color, warmth and elegance display this fashion sense. Atto Tetteh has one main goal, and that is to make the African man look exquisite.



LARRY JAFARU MOHAMMED, LARRY JAY

A unisex Ghanaian brand of ethical fashion clothes and accessories founded by Larry Jafaru Mohammed. It's inspired by nature, various African cultures and the arts, with a strong '70s influence. He started by patching his T-shirts with old wax prints and creating accessories for himself and his friends. That led to the birth of the fashion accessories brand in 2012 and the expansion to clothes in 2016. Since then, Larry Jay has released four significant collections and has organized influential fashion shows in Ghana and Nigeria.

MEET THE CREATIVES



JOHNSON MARTEY JUNIOR, OHENE MANTSE

A Ghanaian brand created by Johnson Martey Junior. The brand's name *Ohene Mantse* means "king" in both the Akan and Ga tribes. It uses vibrant colors to celebrate Africa. The brand emerged out of its founder's trying times, which is why the designs and quality are exceptional and eye catching. This label's designs are inspired by everything Ghana — from the vibrant communities and rich cultures to the freedom of landscapes and sunny views. Beyond being a fashion brand, *Ohene Mantse* is a statement of Ghana and all that it is.



JASON JERMAINE ASIEDU, JERMAINE BLEU

A Ghanaian fashion brand by Jermaine Asiedu known for edgy-yet-modern looks, including high slits, bold colors, unique patterns and flared pants. Jason Jermaine Asiedu, the founder of *Jermaine Bleu*, grew up surrounded by fabrics, and his mother was a seamstress. Captivated by fashion, he fell in love with style when he studied textiles in school. *Jermaine Bleu* focuses on working with textiles, motifs, materials and designs that speak volumes about Ghana and African history. All the tiny details of the pieces are carefully selected, right down to each stitch, to ensure they tell a story.



NEAL DAVID DODOO, CHIIP O NEAL

A versatile fashion brand that's proudly made in Ghana. *Chiip O Neal* blends contemporary flair with cultural aesthetics that are created with people from a variety of walks of life in mind. All of the brand's clothing is designed, sourced and made in Accra, Ghana, in the hands of passionate fashion designers, artists and producers who use their innovative designs and aesthetics to produce pieces that bring out the wearer's confidence.



SEANU ARKUTU, DAAR LIVING

Although Senanu Arkutu was born in Dar es Salaam to Ghanaian parents, she grew up in Swaziland, Nigeria and Zimbabwe. Arkutu always wanted to express herself more artistically and colorfully than what she usually saw. *Daar Living*, her African-inspired interior design brand, was born in 2013 for those not only living in Africa but also beyond. *Daar Living* transcends your average interior styling service. The furnishings are sourced from all over Africa and are designed in Ghana by a team of passionate artisans.

MEET THE CREATIVES

ACCESSORIES



EYIWAA AGYEKUMHENE, KAYADUA

Eyiwaa Agyekumhene founded KAYADUA in 2018 to be a brand built to inspire confidence and freedom of self expression. KAYADUA strives to celebrate uniqueness, which serves as an underlying aesthetic that drives the designs. The production usually takes a slow-fashion approach, where the KAYADUA pieces are often handmade. KAYADUA explores the connection between self and strength through traditional techniques, including weaving, beading and other intricate processes with their team in Accra.

BEAUTY



NANA KONAMAH, PURE PERSONA BY NANA

Nana Konamah is on a mission to help you find your authentic self — and she means it. *Pure Persona by Nana* is a brand with a unique identity that thrives on beauty, confidence and dedication to honor its motto: #SeekYourInnerBeauty. Launched in June 2020, “The Discovery Kit” comes power-packed with the Cleansing Shampoo, the Caring Conditioner and the Everyday Nourisher. In Konamah’s own words: “I’ve put my sweat and tears into creating a lifestyle brand that embodies all the things I stand for: self-love and holistic self-care — starting with your crown.”



FREDA OBENG AMPOF, KAEME (BODY CARE)

Founded by Freda Apomfo, Kaeme is a superior beauty and cosmetics company right from the heart of Africa that continues to live up to its name — literally. It’s named after the Akan phrase that means “remember me” or “forget me not.” With the perfect combination of Ghana’s fine shea butter and 10 years of experience, Apomfo was able to stir up shea butter creams that were light and pure to awaken people’s senses while nurturing the skin. It uses handcrafted natural ingredients, essential oils and experienced makers to create raw shea butter and soap products for Black skin’s beauty.



VICTORINE SARR AWUAH, LYVV COSMETICS (MAKE UP)

Victorine Sarr is Senegalese. She grew up in Dakar, studied in Paris, traveled Africa for work and settled in Accra for love. During one of Sarr’s layovers at the Accra Airport, she overheard a conversation between two women. They wanted to buy locally-sourced, high-quality makeup that matched their skin tone, but they couldn’t find anything. In 2015, she decided to create Lyvv Cosmetics, a 100% organic lipstick brand for women of color that’s committed to providing a blend of the finest natural ingredients sourced from sustainable local farms in West Africa.

MEET THE CREATIVES

CULTURE



POETRY

POETRA ASANTEWA, AMA DIAKA

Ama Diaka's career as a performance poet started when she first attended the Ehalakasa poetry event. She felt like she had finally found her place, and so she decided to perform. Through Ehalakasa, she expanded her fan base, got invites and appearance requests to poetry slams, and launched events while studying business information systems. She never deliberately decided to become a performance poet, but life had different plans for her as she found herself slowly pulled into it. Now that she has completed her master's degree in creative writing in Chicago, Diaka is back in Ghana publishing a fiction and poetry collection. She's also the founder of the journal *Tampered Press* and is working on becoming a visual artist.



DANCE

ELISABETH EFUA SUTHERLAND

Elisabeth Efu Sutherland is a multifaceted artist born and raised in Accra, Ghana. Her performance, dance and theater interests push her to explore new fields as she breaks limits in her life. She experiments with video, texture, interactivity, sculpting and more. She wants to know more about the impact of culture on individuals and societies. As an artist, she was part of Google's 2016 Cultural Institute team in Paris. The next year, she was part of the Harn Museum of Art, Villa Empain and Accra Theatre Workshop season in Florida, Brussels and Ghana, respectively. She is currently Accra Theatre Workshop's artistic director.



MUSIC

WORLASI

Worlasi is a performing artist, rapper, singer, producer, songwriter and figure-painting artist from the Volta region of Ghana. Worlasi is a storyteller. His deep and authentic lyrics leave an imprint on the soul. Worlasi writes and sings in Ewe, Ga, Fante and English. As a natural entertainer, Worlasi's music takes us through the most unexpected and refreshing journey.