

Fikile Sokhulu: A rising creative talent in African fashion

 By [Lauren Hartzberg](#)

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Through her eponymous fashion label, Durban-based designer Fikile Zamagcino Sokhulu aims to capture the concepts of femininity and a connection to nature, and contribute to the elevation of African fashion on the global stage.



Fikile Sokhulu. Source: Supplied

Striking silhouettes with feminine and romantic details like frills, ruffles, ruching and cinched waists feature prominently across the Fikile Zamagcino Sokhulu (FZS) brand's garments, which are designed to appeal to an ageless contemporary market.

"Fikile Zamagcino Sokhulu is a label with a poetic and gentle interpretation of fashion. The brand can appeal to a girl who is finding herself and slowly changing to become a woman or a woman with an established and evolving identity. Brand aesthetics are inspired by femininity and nature and an aspiration to create an organic aesthetic while adorning the African woman," explained Sokhulu in an interview with *Bizcommunity*.



Source: SA Fashion Week

The brand recently showcased its latest Autumn/Winter collection alongside fellow local labels Artclub and Friends and Micheal Ludwig Studio at South African Fashion Week, as part of the Cruz Vodka-sponsored show The Cruz Collective. The premier fashion platform, held as a hybrid event this year, brings local creative fashion talent to the fore and gives them the visibility needed to grow their brands in the local and global fashion industry.

According to Sokhulu, participating in SA Fashion Week presented an opportunity to showcase the diversity of FZS, build awareness for the brand and align it with organisations that could help stimulate its growth.



Source: SA Fashion Week

Sporting a colourway of neutrals, greens and golds, the FZS collection showcased in October was named Black Diamond.

Sokhulu explained the inspiration behind it: “A woman as rare as a black diamond. You embody a sacred connection with the earth that aligns with divinity and uniqueness. This concept inspired a exploration of bringing life to dark colours with a hint of gold.”

Milestones along design journey

This was hardly Sokhulu’s first runway rodeo. A fashion design graduate from the Durban University of Technology, in 2018 her achievements as a student saw her showcasing for the first time at SA Fashion Week and being part of the Cheers Qingdao Fashion Project in China.

Sokhulu was also a finalist in the 2018 SA Fashion Week New Talent Search and in 2020 she collaborated on a fashion collection with Mr Price.

The next year, Sokhulu was one of four South African designers selected for the [Fashion Bridges project](#), an achievement she lists as a career highlight. The initiative was a collaboration between South Africa and Italy through various trade and cultural institutions including SA Fashion Week, Milan Fashion Week, Polimoda, the Embassy of Italy in Pretoria and the Italian Trade Agency.

The selected crop of talented South African and Italian young designers was given training and the opportunity to work together on a cultural and design exchange. Their teamwork culminated in a joint capsule collection that was showcased at Milan Fashion Week and SA Fashion Week in 2021.



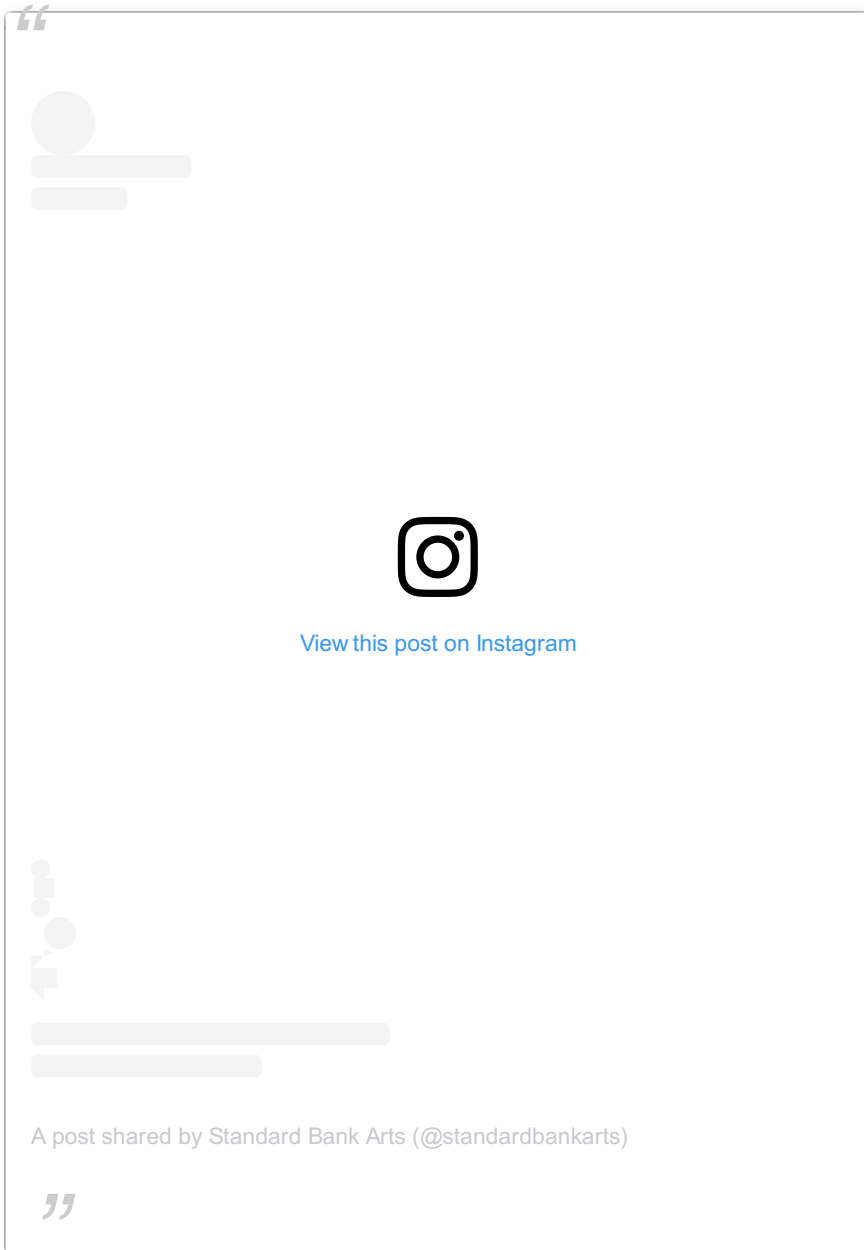
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Since then, Sokhulu has gone on to collaborate with Lukhanyo Mdingi on another collection presented at SA Fashion Week earlier this year, and she was selected to take part in the [Plain Tiger Sustainability Accelerator](#), a development programme aimed at empowering designers with the knowledge, network, community and exposure to become forerunners in the slow fashion space.

Adding to her accolades, and another one of Sokhulu’s career highlights, is her inclusion in the recent Standard Bank Gallery exhibition We Are Culture, featuring 13 young artists and curated by creative visionary Bee Diamondhead. “We exhibited fashion with reference to art, the concept we created was called Mvelo,” Sokhulu explained.



Into the future

Sokhulu aspires to elevate her brand to the ranks of SA fashion frontrunners Lukhanyo Mdingi, Rich Mnisi and Thebe Magugu.

Right now, the designer said she's working on growing her team and building a sustainable business that's more accessible both online and offline in physical retail spaces. Gradually, she'd like to grow her audience outside of South Africa.

Commenting on the legacy she'd like to leave in the fashion industry, the designer said, "Fikile Zamagcino Sokhulu's mission is to be a womenswear brand that will elevate African fashion and adorn African women."

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