

African-Caribbean creations to adorn London Fashion Week

Traditional African and Caribbean fashion wear will take to the catwalk during London Fashion Week, which runs from the February 14-18.

The organiser of the African and Caribbean production, Reuben Joseph, explains that he wants to use the event to help drive home a very poignant message. He says he aims to heighten the awareness of African and Caribbean cultures and how they have influenced contemporary fashion. "The younger generations in particular are failing to grasp the impact of the contributions made by people of African and Caribbean descent to the fashion scenes in Europe, North America and other parts of the world," he said. "I want them to realise that a lot of the trends that they see today have their origins in our cultural roots." Joseph says he hopes that by creating this awareness, young people will be inspired to make their own contributions and encourage future generations to embrace the creativity of our fore-parents. The African and Caribbean fashion production dubbed L'art de La Mode (The art of fashion) is where paintings and costumes will meet. The production will be depicted through tribal clothing, natural plaits, cornrows, weaves, tribal make-up, beads, carvings from wood and stone, body art, poses with drums and other traditional and unique styles. Outlining the arrangement of the production, Joseph boasts that it will revisit the journey of the people of African and Caribbean descent, from slavery to freedom, through the eyes of fashion. He notes that although the underlying message is a profound one, he feels compelled to make the concept light and fun but very creative. "By taking this approach, I think the production will stand out as it will hold the attention of the audience and provoke open admiration yet subtle private and positive reflections," he reveals. Joseph acknowledges that the mention of slavery can be a sensitive issue that conjures up unfavourable images and thoughts in the minds of many people. But, he defended his decision to choose this theme. "Depending on the perspective being portrayed, the issue of slavery can be quite easy to deal with on a public platform. These displays will not be projecting any unpleasantness. In fact, they will emphasise positive thinking, hope, faith, individuality, determination, self-control, team spirit, cultural identity, creativity, music and the embracing of things that are novelty." He adds: "For anyone to survive the realities of slavery they must have lived these characteristics day and night. So, if we can convey this message at such a huge and popular event, I think we can help to promote greater acceptance of our fashion among younger African and Caribbean generations, as well as among people in mainstream fashion." Joseph is imploring the African and Caribbean communities to spread the word and support the production, which will take place on February 16 at the Tabernacle in London. Joseph adds: "We will also be staging our official London Fashion Week closing production at the Yaa Asantewaa Arts Centre on February 21 and 22." For more information email rjconsortium@gmail.com