

# African Fashion Council Student Showcase, Curated by Chuks Collins, Highlights the Next Generation of Diaspora Designers

*Student Designers Bring Eatonville's Legacy to the Runway*

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, November 16, 2025 / EINPresswire.com/ -- The [African Fashion Council](#) (AFC), led by multidisciplinary designer [Chuks Collins](#), in partnership with Eatonville Rising and the [Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community \(P.E.C.\)](#), successfully presented the African Pavilion NYC Student Designer Competition at Bryant Park Grill. The activation celebrated emerging design talent, cultural preservation, and the powerful role of fashion in honoring Black heritage.

Supported by Orange County Florida's Arts & Cultural Affairs Program, the showcase highlighted capsule collections inspired by Eatonville, Florida -- one of America's first self-governed Black towns and a cornerstone of African American cultural history. All finalists received a \$500 production stipend in recognition of their outstanding work. Young designers Alma D. Torres, Shallisa Ebanks, Keiara Lewis, and Louis Candelario were selected as the student finalists. Their collections



Chuks Collins and Student Finalists



Winner Alma Torres

explored Eatonville's past and future through textured storytelling, innovative textile application, and thoughtful craftsmanship.

Alma Torres was announced as the winner of the competition, earning top honors for her deeply researched, emotionally resonant capsule collection. Judges commended Torres for narrative cohesion, material experimentation, and technical excellence. As the grand prize recipient, Torres will receive a runway presentation slot at the 2027 Pan-African Fashion & Food Expo (PAFFE), a dedicated mentorship from leading industry professionals, and a feature placement within PAFFE's global marketing campaign.

The competition was evaluated by a panel of respected industry leaders, each representing the African Fashion Council and the wider global creative community. Their expertise ensured a rigorous, thoughtful evaluation grounded in craft, cultural integrity, and forward-looking design thinking. The judges panel included Constance C.R. White - Journalist, author, and longtime champion of Black fashion history; Jalil Johnson - Creative director and multidisciplinary strategist; Robyn Mowatt - Acclaimed cultural critic and fashion editor.

#### AFC & P.E.C.: Partners in Cultural Preservation and Talent Development

The activation underscores the AFC's mission to uplift emerging talent across the diaspora and expand global visibility for African and African American creative narratives. Together with P.E.C., this initiative demonstrates how design can both preserve legacy and inspire new generations.

#### About the African Fashion Council (AFC)

Founded in 2021, the African Fashion Council is a nonprofit organization dedicated to positioning Africa's fashion industry as a global leader. Through mentorship, innovation, sustainability, and cultural preservation, AFC supports designers across the diaspora in building economically viable and globally resonant brands.

#### About the Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community (P.E.C.)

P.E.C., established in 1987, is a 501(c)(3) organization committed to celebrating and preserving Eatonville's considerable cultural, historic, and artistic legacy. Through initiatives like Eatonville Rising, P.E.C. promotes educational excellence, heritage pride, and arts programming that advances community revitalization.

#### About Chuks Collins

Chuks Collins is a Multidisciplinary Artist, Designer, Educator, Curator and philanthropist. He is known for blending intentional craftsmanship with contemporary innovation in the creative sector and engaging in social entrepreneurial endeavors. A sustainability advocate and member of the African Fashion Council, Collins champions ethical practices while celebrating cultural fusion and forward-thinking design.

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