

Press release

____ FASHION IN MUSEUMS SYMPOSIUM

06 September 2025 10:00 - 16:00

Museum Africa, Newtown, Johannesburg

Fashion in Museums is a one-day symposium convened by the African Fashion Research Institute (AFRI) on 06 September 2025 at Museum Africa, Johannesburg from 10am till 4pm. With a focus on contemporary creative methodologies and radical strategies for curating African fashion in museums, the symposium welcomes local and international designers, curators, academics, fashion students and researchers with a series of roundtables, paper presentations, film screenings and a curator-led walkabout of the *Fashion Accounts in Museum Africa* exhibition.

"It is in the gaps, the absences, and the fragments of fashion in museum collection that we need to look to find ourselves when our stories are not acknowledged in the record" says co-curator Wanda Lepphoto.

Key questions include how can curatorial practices intervene, rewrite and reshape fashion narratives and imaginaries on and from the continent, and how can designers, film-makers and curators restore lineages of fashion that reflect indigenous meaning-systems, black urban experiences, and afrocentric maker-histories? The symposium invites debate and discussion on new media approaches, decolonial strategies, and multidisciplinary methodologies that invite us to rethink, reimagine and reshape the fashion histories embedded in museums and their collections and beyond.

Fashion in Museums coincides with the closing of *Fashion Accounts in Museum Africa*, an exhibition which challenged the practices and rituals of archiving and remembering through dress, both inside and outside of museum collections. explains Co-curator Dr. Erica de Greef explain, *"We are curious to explore visual, spatial, sonic and cultural strategies that offer pathways towards rethinking archives and their gaps in relation to decolonial futures."*

The exhibition *Fashion Accounts in Museum Africa* (November 2024-September 2025) offers a series of installations with new commissions by The Sartists and Mimi Duma alongside works by Thebe Magugu and Sindiso Khumalo. *"The exhibition addresses the legacies of colonial museum practices and is both an account of fashion practices, historic and contemporary, which represent resistance and liberation, and a stage to hold fashion to account as a tool of colonialism"* says co-curator Alison Moloney.

The *Fashion in Museums* symposium is supported by the French Institute (IFAS) and the African Fashion Research Institute (AFRI). The symposium is free to interested students, researchers, academics and the public. Please note that reservation is required. [RSVP HERE](#)

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Museum Africa: 121 Lilian Ngoyi St, Newtown, Johannesburg.

Entrance is free. Parking available at Newtown Junction.

For further information and images please contact:

info@afri.digital

About the Symposium Convenors

Alison Moloney is an independent fashion curator, writer, lecturer, and consultant based in London. Her research and curatorial practice are driven by community-led and collaborative initiatives as a

means of thinking together to develop new forms of knowledge which brings into focus often overlooked material culture or hidden narratives.

Erica de Greef is a lecturer at the Curatorial, Public and Visual Cultures department at the Wits School of Arts, a curator and writer, and the co-founder of the African Fashion Research Institute (AFRI). She works collaboratively with projects spanning museums, creative platforms, educational institutions and grassroots spaces. She holds a PhD in African Studies from the University of Cape Town with a thesis titled 'Sartorial Disruptions'.

Wanda Lephoto is a Johannesburg-based ready-to-wear designer whose brand redefines luxury using the plurality of culture, tradition, identity and history through storytelling as a way to create new worlds of beauty in fashion.

About the Institutions

As part of the Embassy of France in South Africa, Lesotho and Malawi, the **French Institute of South Africa** (IFAS) strives to strengthen the bond between France and South Africa by supporting innovative cultural, audio-visual, academic, educational and linguistic initiatives. Throughout the year, the Institute supports artistic, cultural and festival events and programmes all over the country, offering a platform for cooperation in these areas. IFAS aims to encourage cultural diversity and creative exchanges between South Africa, France and the rest of the African continent.

The African Fashion Research Institute (AFRI) was founded in 2019 by Dr Erica de Greef and Lesiba Mabitsela as a platform to remember, rethink, and rewrite Afrocentric fashion histories whilst addressing the gap in critical fashion studies and education on the African continent. We work collaboratively in order to engage and support local fashion knowledges on and from the continent through virtual and real exhibitions, podcasts, talks, workshops, papers, zines and performance interventions.