

EDCON SHOWCASES YOUTH EXCELLENCE IN FASHION AND DESIGN

June 2018: The Edcon Design Innovation Challenge is an initiative that was launched in September 2016 by Edcon, South Africa's largest non-food retailer, to advance skills development and training in the fashion design sector. The initiative, which is now in its second year, allows young, aspirant designers a platform to showcase their work.

To celebrate the designs of the second cohort of talented young students, a fashion show was held at the George Bizos Hall at the Apartheid Museum in Ormonde on 27 June 2018.

Zahnri Gertse was announced on the night as the winner of the 21 Steps to Retail programme, a component of the Design Innovation Challenge. Neo Rangaka was awarded second prize, and Cordelia Mopanya placed third. The 21 Steps to Retail programme has been facilitated by Runway Productions, which also organises the annual SA Fashion Week South Africa Premier fashion show.

The event began with a special fashion show wherein each of the 13 designers showcased a portfolio of their work comprising a full eight-piece collection. Prize money to the value of R20 000 for the winner, R15 000 for the second-placed designer and R10 000 for third place was awarded during the event.

A total of 13 post-graduate students from design colleges around the country were chosen as finalists this year. Nine of the finalists have been admitted on a 12-months internship at Edcon in Edgars and Jet, where they will gain valuable experience in areas such as buying, merchandising and quality assurance, ladies and men's wear, kiddies and active wear.

Elelwane Pahlana, Divisional Executive Group Transformation and Government Relations at Edcon, describes how this initiative forms part of Edcon's transformation journey: "We have undertaken a number of initiatives by leveraging our expertise and using our platforms to empower women and youth. As the largest non-food retailer in the country we see it as our duty to drive such initiatives and share our expertise to better the industry as a whole."

Pahlana added that the first year of the Edcon Innovation Challenge showed the depth of talent, dedication and resourcefulness that young people possessed. "It is also worth noting that the show will be held during Youth Month, which will form part of a theme to celebrate youth and encourage them to reach for their dreams."

The Edcon Design Challenge is a learning programme that seeks to enhance the skills of young designers, teach them entrepreneurial proficiency and generally

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increase the number of local designers from which Edcon can source its merchandise in keeping with its strategy to buy from local manufacturers. Edcon is the only retailer to be a Proudly South African partner. This partnership has led to past participants of the challenge showcasing their working at the Proudly South African Summit, as well as working with top designers such as David Tlale.

One of the primary objectives of the programme is to bolster Edcon's supply chain and give young designers an opportunity to see their designs sold in Edcon stores. Of the first cohort of Design Innovation Challenge participants from 2017, five were chosen by Edgars buyers to have their ladieswear collections sold in stores from last year, and six more menswear collections will be sold in Edgars from August 2018. In addition, Edcon has employed five of the 2017 intake of young designers while the remainder have secured other employment or are pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities.

Mercia Maserumule, Executive: CSI & Sustainability, explains how the selection of the young designers for inclusion in Edgars stores is a validation of the goals of the programme: "The results achieved thus far resonate with what we aimed to achieve, which was to adopt a diversified approach integrating CSI, skills and entrepreneurial development in order to drive local talent development and support the business supply chain. The result has been the creation of a pool of talented young designers who are equipped to succeed on their own terms."

The outcome is a locally sourced, designed, manufactured and available product – a Proudly South African initiative.

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About Edcon

Edcon is South Africa's largest non-food retailer. We have been in operation for more than 80 years and have expanded our footprint to 1292 stores as at 23 December 2017

For more information, please visit the Edcon website: www.edcon.co.za