



Life

Embracing African culture and creativity with the ASA FASHION SHOW



Models performing on stage in traditional clothing. On March 25, UConn ASA held a fashion show at the Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts showcasing African culture. PHOTO COURTESY OF @CAPTURED_BYNICK ON INSTAGRAM

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The University of Connecticut African Students' Association (ASA) held its annual fashion show on Wednesday, March 25th at the Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts. The ASA's goal is to reach out to the African and diasporic communities at UConn and abroad to show the community that they are here and that they care. "Hailing from many different countries, we are here to promote culture, create fun, educate and support our African community on campus," ASA said in a post on its Instagram. In this year's fashion show, the theme was "Threads of Time: A Legacy Unfolding." ASA described the event on its Instagram as "Fashion meets storytelling and the runway becomes a time machine." Doors opened on Friday at 7 p.m. Hosted by emcee Tsagli and sounds provided by Dj Seyi, the night was a mix of afrobeats that shook the stage and got people dancing. AfroBina, ASA's dance team, performed throughout the night. The team's name comes from the word "bina," meaning dance in Lingala, a language from Congo. The team performed several times throughout the night, with choreography from UConn student Kayla-Audrey Njoh-Sam. The show opened with a market scene, which told the

story of a marketplace filled with vibrant patterns and colors. Then, models stepped out holding the flags of each of the 54 states in Africa. As models stepped down from the stage and filled the aisle, the theatre was filled with colorful flags. Next, men and women walked the stage in traditional clothing, all designed and created for the models by Obioma Fashion. The bright colors of kente and ankara cloth, African patterns, dominated the stage. Afterwards, the models walked in modern streetwear fashion from African vendors. Some of the vendors included Khenny, KAPEND and more. Emcee Tsagli kept the energy going between acts with audience interaction: playing "guess the song" with the audience, hosting a Best Dressed competition and showing off his own dance moves on stage. Models then walked the stage in modern formal clothing. Finally, the lights turned low for the fiery swimsuit section. The walks for the fashion show were carefully choreographed. Models either walked solo or with a partner and made full use of the stage. Ikechukwu Ugwa, a second-semester statistical data science student, was one of the models of the fashion show. "We had complete freedom to create our walks," Ugwa said. "We were able to see what we were comfortable with." Walks ranged from elegant to powerful to surpris-

ing, with each model showing their own personality. "Over time, walks changed, especially in the last four weeks, because everyone was trying to one-up each other," Ugwa said. The fashion show wrapped up with a thank you to the E-board of ASA, as well as all the people that made the night a success. The models beamed with joy for their hard work. Krista Bamfo, a fourth-semester biology student at UConn, is the fundraising chair for ASA. "I'm the proudest of how everything came together. We had to go through a couple obstacles; we had to push the show to a month later. We were still able to overcome those obstacles to make a great show," Bamfo said. Teangeley Centeno, a fourth-semester physiology and neurobiology student, attended the fashion show. "I wanted to go because it's one of the fashion shows that UConn has. I think it's important to attend events like this because it encourages people to get out of their comfort zone, and it inspires people to want to get up on stage and try modelling," Centeno said. The night was filled with cultural exchange and celebration. "Even in the show itself we had some people who weren't African. The whole part is to show off our culture. There's no gatekeeping with us — we want everyone to experience it," Bamfo said.



Kayla-Audrey Njoh-Sam performing on stage with AfroBina. This year, the ASA's fashion show's theme was "Threads of Time: A Legacy Unfolding." PHOTO COURTESY OF @CAPTURED_BYNICK ON INSTAGRAM

GLAM and Glory: UConn Modelverse debuts first fashion show



Akuchukwu Oputa walks at the ModelVerse Fashion Show in the Student Union Ballroom on March 30, 2026. This event gave students the opportunity to showcase their talents in modeling and design. PHOTO BY MORGAN BLANCHARD/GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER

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The University of Connecticut's Modelverse took viewers out of this universe and into the Model Verse. The organization hosted its first fashion show on Monday from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Student Union Ballroom. It was the club's first ever fashion show, and the energy in the room radiated with the smell of fun and the feeling of confidence. The show's theme was to showcase confidence, and the models did that and much more. Models showed looks from seven brands, including Selfmade-maverick, fitsforthe culture, Amanda, State of Mind, Flight Girls, blumenclotting and Royal Clothing. Each brand contributed a distinct style, ranging from bold streetwear to more refined and statement pieces. Some looks leaned into vibrant colors and textures, while others embraced minimalism. The atmosphere felt electric and was filled with support, excitement and a shared appreciation for creativity. With the central theme being confi-

dence, that concept was not only seen in the clothing but also embodied by every individual who participated. Each model brought their own personality to the runway, proving that confidence is not a one-size-fits-all, but something that can be expressed in countless ways. For many, stepping onto the runway was an act of self-expression, and in some cases, personal growth. "So, we had one practice a week...we started off with an icebreaker, and now all the models are really friends which made it easier when we did group work," said Modelverse President Dayna Mbugua. The confidence theme also came alive through the community and togetherness that was crafted behind the scenes. Music pulsed through the ballroom, guiding the pace and energy of the show. The audience played an equally important role in shaping the experience. Cheers erupted when familiar faces took the stage and applause followed standout looks. Even during intermission, selected groups showcased the runway walk,

with Group A as the crowd-selected winner. The sense of community in the room was clear, as students came together not just to watch the show, but to support one another. A particular brand that has been consistently supporting UConn's fashion scene, especially through its pop-up shops, is Flight Girls. Flight Girls is based out of New Haven, Connecticut and for about nine years has been curating looks from the 80s, 90s and 2000s scene. "We've kinda already been doing this, so it just feels natural," said Amber Jackson, the owner of Flight Girls, when reflecting on the brand's continued presence in student and fashion culture locally. Jackson's remarks illustrates the broader theme of the evening, as Modelverse's first fashion show brought together designers, models and students in one space to center both confidence and creativity. The event marked the club's debut runway showcase and drew upon strong audience engagement through the evening.