

Austria Pavilion Connects Cultures Through Fashion at Expo 2020 Dubai

The pavilion hosted a fashion show for designers from Austria and Rwanda

Images library:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3vbx2lctsm2moxk/AACOapWSLkj6gbwFQAush-oba?dl=0>

Dubai, 29 Mar, 2022: The Austrian Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai recently hosted a fashion show that proved how distinct cultures can meet and create astounding outcomes. The programme called Austria-Rwanda Fashion Connect Project was the result of a two-year collaboration between Austrian and Rwandan designers and culminated in a much-awaited fashion show at Expo 2020. Expo 2020 and its theme ‘Connecting Minds, Creating the Future’ was the inspiration behind the project and Expo set the perfect stage for the event to manifest.

The show featured elements of music, art, and culture, and offered a unique fashion experience, complete with AI-generated show music, nicely choreographed runway walks, and lots of content and entertainment.

The project was a concept of Advantage Austria in close cooperation with Expo Austria and was borne out of a robust alliance between the six participating designers - three from Austria and three from Rwanda. Together, they brought forth a stylish and thoughtfully designed collection of 36 unique pieces. The collection was an ode to the cultural beauty and unique fashion sensibilities of the two participating countries and fused juxtaposed ideas that took from the cultural backgrounds of the designers and used a myriad of weaving, designing, and regional handicraft techniques.

On this occasion, Emmanuel Hategeka, Rwanda's Ambassador to UAE said: “Expo 2020 Dubai proved on many occasions its important role as a bridge that brings different cultures together on the land of UAE. When minds connect, a new future is shaped, this is why the Austria-Rwanda Fashion Connect Project set an example of how the Expo motto "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future" comes to live. The designers used creativity as a language, relied on cultural influences, and brought forth unique and beautiful pieces that celebrated diversity, inclusion, and openness.”

On the conclusion of the project, Commissioner General of Austria, Beatrix Karl, remarked: “The fashion show gave the message of unity, strength, and showcased the value of collaboration. Going beyond the pieces and what each one stood for, I believe the strongest message is the understanding that the future of our world depends on human collaboration, inclusivity, tolerance, love, and appreciation for different cultures. The fashion show also highlighted that beautiful results can transpire when people join hands and work together. Expo 2020 gives the very same message to the world. It is truly the place where collaboration, partnerships, and team-work can set the stage for great things.”

The six designers involved in the project were Bettina Reichl from Austrian Label Odrowaz, Jean-Vainquer Munezero from Rwandan label Munezero, Karin Wintscher-Zinganel from

Austrian label Kay Double U, Mathew Rugamba from Rwandan label House of Tayo, Pierra Ntayombya from Rwandan label Haute Baso, and Thang De Hoo from Austrian label Thang De Hoo.

The designers were carefully chosen to come from diverse backgrounds and included more established names along with upcoming labels looking to break into the world of fashion. The resulting catwalk and exhibition saw models from the two countries participating and showing off the exquisitely crafted pieces.

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Austria at the World Exhibition – www.expoaustria.at

The Austrian Pavilion at the Expo 2020 in Dubai – which retained its name despite being postponed to 2021 – makes creative use of digitalisation to present Austrian innovations as part of the exhibition curated by Ars Electronica Solutions and büro wien. The team of architects from the firm querkraft has realised a pavilion that combines traditional Arab wind catchers with contemporary climate technology to send an appealing message against the waste of energy that is so harmful to the climate. Funding for the Austrian contribution is provided by the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs, and the Austrian Federal Economic Chambers.

Photo download: <https://www.wko.at/site/expoaustria/en/start.html>

Further information on the companies and research institutes in the iLab:

<https://www.wko.at/site/expoaustria/en/ilab.html>

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