

**Topic: Black Designers In The Fashion Industry**

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## **Black Designers in the Fashion Industry**

**Topic Sentence:** Black fashion designers lack recognition in the fashion industry.

The fashion industry can be censorious to the black community and not give enough credit when it's due. That is why in this paper, I will be discussing two black designers' that influenced me the most from the FIT Online Exhibition.

The designers that resonated with me the most were Patrick Kelly and Stella Jeans. Both of these designers are Black designers, and in their pieces, they incorporate traditional African attire, with a hence of modern-day casual styles. What catches my attention the most about these pieces are the African fabrics that are used to create them. Their materials are very vibrant, and they often reflect religious beliefs, common motifs, and political interpretation. As a result, each color has significant use to interpret the purpose of the pattern. African fabrics are illuminating and historical to the world.

Black designers in the fashion industry have gone unnoticed and find it very difficult to create a name for themselves in an industry that lacks racial diversity. There is a small number of successful black designers, due to the insufficiency of arts and designs education and the lack of social and financial support in the black community. However, Patrick Kelly and Stella Jeans both made a name for themselves in the fashion industry. The theme of Patrick Kelly's work is very astonishing, he infiltrates the importance of history and African culture. Patrick Kelly designed the apparel that is shown on the left. In his creation, he made leggings that have a unique Ghanaian kente pattern and a head wrap as well to compliment the look. The fabric that he chose to use to create this look is a well-known cloth that

symbolizes the African diaspora. The Kente cloth is a representation of West African culture. Its bright, vibrant colors and patterns each portray numerous mythologies and meanings. For example, according to Alistar Boddy- Evans article on "West African Kente Cloth," he explains how every color has a meaningful purpose to it. For instance, the fabric that Patrick Kelly used has various colors, such as blue, which resembles love; green, which means growth and energy; yellow (gold) is wealth and royalty; red, which represents violence and anger and lastly, orange which symbolizes warmth and spiritual purity. The combination of the leggings and the yellow blouse gives a feel of African empowerment and casual, formal everyday attire. The hat that he incorporated in the outfit also represents the traditional wear; African women embrace every day. Overall, in my opinion, the outfit looks very graceful and lively.

Furthermore, Stella Jeans is also a Black (Italian) designer, whose work implicates multiculturalism and women empowerment. Her work, which is shown on the right side of the image, has a very business formal and aesthetic look. The fabrics that she used to create this look indicate liveliness and femininity. The dress itself outlines the frame of women's body, while also being very modest by not exposing that much skin. Also, the socks and the collar sleeve button-down shirt gives the outfit a very business casual feel. The colors you see in this apparel are, orange which resembles spiritual growth; gold represents wealth; black represents maturation; white means purity and healing; green is harvest, blue is love, and lastly, maroon, which represents mother earth. The outfit combination she chose has various patterns and speaks magnitudes of women empowerment. What I admire the most about Stella Jeans is that she uses her platform to help create clothing that embraces cultural diversity and femininity according to "The Fashion Industry and Gender Equality" article. Many

of her designs are bold and colorful and are worn by large Icons, such as Beyonce and Rihanna, who advocate for cultural diversity in the fashion industry. Overall, both of these Black designers' goals are to assist in making a mark for black designers and generate enterprise that focuses on black empowerment.



Figure 1. Patrick Kelly's creation (**left side**) and Stella Jeans creation (**right side**)

### References

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