

2021 'Yumi Gat Style' Vanuatu Fashion Show



Sista

Sista is a local organization that believes in using arts, media and communications as a platform to empower women and girls. One of its ongoing projects is producing a fashion photo spread called 'Sista Gat Style' which is featured every month in the Vanuatu Daily Post's Life and Style magazine. The fashion feature has celebrated a diversity of Ni-Vanuatu women and is a playful but powerful space for women to be visible and celebrated. Through fashion, Sista has been able to generate discussions on self care, gender norms, body positivity and women's leadership while promoting ongoing visibility of strong, diverse women in our society.

On Thursday 23rd September 2021, Sista will hold its first ever fashion show with the support of Ambassade de France. The Sista team is collaborating with Vanuatu Skills Partnership, a co-investment between the Australian Government and the Government of Australia, to produce this event. They will be showcasing handicraft accessories such as jewelry, bags,

fans and hats from Malampa, Sanma, Tafea and Torba Skills Centers, that meet both international and domestic demand and quality standards, while maintaining respect for culture and tradition. Sista is excited to work with VSP to achieve the objectives of the fashion show which are to build the capacity of local fashion designers, celebrate Ni-Vanuatu culture through fashion and accessories, showcase local handicraft products and diversify market access, to empower women and men and promote body positivity and to transform perceptions of fashion and beauty.

In the lead up to the show, Sista has been working with a diverse range of young people and local fashion experts to support the objectives of the 'Yumi Gat Style' fashion event. On August 10th, JoJo Vanuatu led a workshop with 10 designers from Port Vila, 1 from Tanna and 10 from Santo from VSP's textile group Sannma Creative Industries Community Company' (SCICCL), who have asserted that they want to take their fashion designer skills to the next level.

The purpose of the workshop was to support and prepare the designers in producing their designs by providing guidance and knowledge of technical

and design skills, as well as give insight into the fashion industry in the Pacific and beyond. JoJo Vanuatu is the founder of the Galavanting Goddess boutique fashion label and is based in Vanuatu. She has travelled to Paris, Greece and Fiji for her work in the fashion industry and her expertise has prepared the designers for the fashion show and dared them to dream big!

On August 14th, Sista worked with a diverse group of young people who will be modelling in the fashion show. Zoe Macfarlane, a former model who has years of experience in the fashion industry in the Asia-Pacific region, guided the models on how to catwalk and feel confident in their bodies, and Sista used the opportunity to use fashion as an innovative entry point for the models to touch on gender inequality in Vanuatu in a safe space and promote body positivity by exploring how beauty is defined in Vanuatu through the female and male lens.

The 'Yumi Gat Style' fashion show will be held on Thursday 23rd September 2021 at Fondation Suzanne Bastien. Seating is limited but the show can be viewed through live stream via Sista's Facebook page on: www.facebook.com/sistavanuatu/



'YGS' - DESIGNERS



Anna Issachar

Anna came to Vanuatu at the age of two from Fiji with her parents who were missionaries in 1966. Designing for the past 30 years, Anna started out by designing clothes for her first born daughter.

Issachar has always loved to dress up, so she started designing clothes that she wanted to wear that she couldn't find in Vila.

Soon other women showed interest in what she was wearing and began to ask her to make them clothes. Before she knew it she

Anna lives by the quote
"Whatever you do, do it with your heart"

had a booming little business and opened up her own shop next to where she lives.

She says she does not have a particular aesthetic as her designs are all quite diverse. She also looks around at what's trending, takes it and adds her own flare to it. Anna's clients are mostly young women who are constantly looking for a new outfit to wear to a particular event, young men and couples who like to match when going to weddings and so on.

Her brand is currently called 'Anna's Creation' but she is officially changing it to 'Anna Couture'.

Her main goal these past years was to open up a proper shop, she has now achieved this. Today she would like to employ tailors & designers to work with her at her boutique. Issachar hopes that the 'Yumi Gat Style' fashion will broaden her networks and gain more customers for her business.

Anna's advice to young upcoming designers is to "Never be afraid of letting your creativity and imagination run wild, believe that there is no limit and keep wanting more!"

Anna lives by the quote:

"Whatever you do, do it with your heart."



Eliane Thomas

45 years of age, Eliane is from the island of Ambae, Penama province.

Inspired by her mother who was a tailor, Eliane started sewing when she was a young girl. She started up again four years ago when she realized that it was quite difficult to find clothing that is suitable for her. Since then she began to sew for herself and her family.

Eliane took up sewing to help with household needs and more

importantly keep food on the table for her family, and from there it eventually turned it into a business.

Eliane's aesthetic is anything African. She designs different types of outfits; dresses, pants, skirts, you name it! She's also created a Facebook page entitled "Eliane Passion Sewing and Designs", which attracts young people, families as well as designers and tailors for weddings.

Eliane hopes to one day acquire a piece of land to build both a house and boutique to display her unique designs and creations.

She believes that this fashion show is an opportunity to grow her network of fashion designers, expand her skills and step out of her comfort zone and continue to be inspired by diverse and unique designs.

A firm believer that "GOD GIVES THE TALENT". Eliane encourages upcoming designers to "Never think less of yourself, in whatever you aspire to do, if you put God at the center of it, he will give you wisdom".

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Gilbert Mermer Iata

Gilbert (better known as 'Kiki') first appeared publicly when he amazed the audience at the 2020 V-Pride fashion show with his beautifully designed pieces, especially when he showcased his 'modern' island dress which took the internet by storm!

He now has his own brand name 'G&M' meaning 'Gilbert & Mermer', Mermer being his mother's maiden name.

Gilbert went from designing for a fashion show to getting orders from many clients from diverse backgrounds and ages.

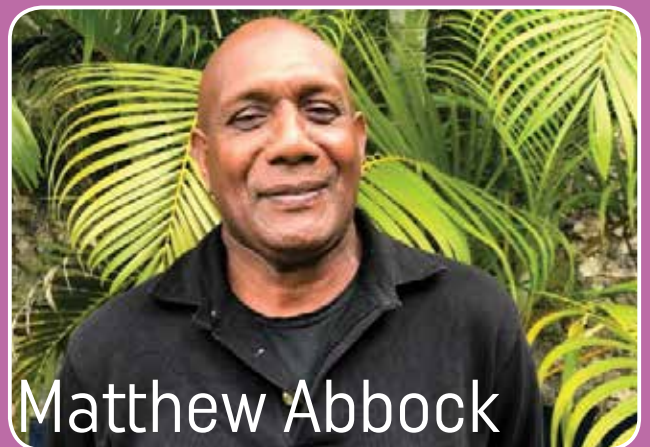
With goals to see his brand name thrive, Gilbert aims to see

more of his outfits worn by Pacific islanders as a way to see his brand name become reputed throughout the South Pacific!

In regards to joining the 'Yumi Gat Style' fashion show, Gilbert expresses "I want to share my passion for this art with everyone and put my brand out there a little more if I can, Sista is an amazing platform and the 'Yumi Gat Style' fashion show is a great opportunity for all of us designers. I want people to see what I can do, I want people to know that they can dress however they please - that not only others can wear 'that dress' or carry 'that bag' that they would secretly love to but are too afraid to do so...no you can too!".

Gilbert also stresses the importance of positive affirmations as a way to start off the day. He practices kindness, respect and being understanding as a way for self growth.

Kiki believes that :
 "Everything happens for a reason, being 100% true to yourself wherever you are, whoever you are with and whatever you are doing, because if you're not being yourself then who will?"



Matthew Abbock

Aged 54 hailing from the island of Pamma and Ambae, is a both an artist and a designer.

Matthew started designing around the age of 16. He went from doing maintenance and gardening work after dropping out of school, to being asked to start sewing for the renowned artist Aloï Pilioko at the renown 'Michoutouchkine & Pilioko Foundation - Art Gallery' where his dad worked. Abbock was given a machine that he taught himself how to use and how to sew.

He went on to attend a textile college in Australia, where he took part in fashion shows & painting courses. That's when Matthew's fashion design journey began after he was inspired by the fact that most of his college peers were men. He came back to Port-Vila with the confidence that men too can be top designers and started his own business known as 'Matthew's Creations' at the time.

His regular clients consisted of the Vanuatu Tourism Office where he designed and painted the staff uniforms, government departments, the local private sector and sports teams who

"Sapos mi mi saveh mekem, yu tu yu saveh mekem. Hemi stap long yu nao blong yu statem, taem yu stat, tingbaot seh rod blong yu e longwan yet, mo u tekem everi experience olsem wan step iko long future blong yu" - Matthew Abbock.

were travelling overseas for their games.

Today Abbock specializes in creating unique prints and paintings. He gets inspired by the new fashion trends where he recreates the pieces he sees into his own 'Matthew' way. With his paintings, he has unique ways to create different designs and ensures his paintings are to the highest quality standards using robust material. The designer also ensures each of his outfits have a unique pattern, making it an original piece!

Matthew aspires to have his own 'Natangora house' as a boutique where he can display and sell his creations. He wants to inspire more the youth to explore their talents and put their creativity towards building a career for themselves.

Matthew encourages more young people to take up designing, create quality products and to see the passion in designing and for it to not only be about the about money. "Exploring the art of painting and creating unique designs is great a way to both generate sales and enhance creative capacities." As someone who has been in the fashion design industry for years, Abbock advises any upcoming designers to "Find inspiration in the natural creations around us, as God is the greatest designer! He who designed the world and everything within it and around us."

"Sapos mi mi saveh mekem, yu tu yu saveh mekem. Hemi stap long yu nao blong yu statem, taem yu stat, tingbaot seh rod blong yu e longwan yet, mo u tekem everi experience olsem wan step iko long future blong yu" - Matthew Abbock.



Joyline Abed

Having already led her own fashion show at the 'Malapoa Music Night' last month where she showcased 56 of her own unique pieces, Joyline is an 18 year old upcoming designer with prominent potential.

Originally from the small island of Makira, SHEFA province, Abed is a driven young woman who started learning to tailor from her mother, a tailor & designer at the young age of 10, where she gained her inspiration from.

Joyline lives by the quote : "Don't let society define you, you define yourself and be who you aspire to be".

Joyline pursued her designing skills and began taking orders in her first year of high school.

Coming from a background of island dress makers who motivated her, Joyline states that her mother is her main inspiration as she is considered as one of the best tailors & designers in her community. Abed adds that seeing her mother participate in fashion shows in the past years has pushed her to move forward and be like her mother, a tailor & designer that can produce a wide and versatile range of items.

Joyline goes on to say that she does not really have a particular aesthetic at the moment as she is still discovering what her style really is. Right now she mostly goes along with whatever is the latest trend and adds her own creativity to it, she also believes this is why she has a good clientele as she is able to cater to all their

requests.

With dreams to become a fashion design teacher one day and sell garments with her own brand, Joyline has already begun laying down the foundation for her aspirations by putting her name and designs out to the public through her Facebook page, 'Joy Dezigns', which is the platform where she takes most of her orders. Motivated to use the 'Yumi Gat Style' fashion show to showcase her designs and using it as a step forward in growing her small business, Joyline hopes it will thrive into its full potential.

Joyline's advice to others like her is "If you want success, you have to go and get it, it won't just fall on your lap. Never Give up on your dreams, because it can take you to great heights in life and open the doors for you. Practice doesn't make perfection, practice makes improvements."

Joyline lives by the quote : "Don't let society define you, you define yourself and be who you aspire to be".



Rosanah Kaio

"Made to create, share to inspire. Believe in God and believe in yourself!"

Born on Efate island, Rosana currently resides on Tanna island, TAFEA.

Kaio has been designing and tailoring garments since highschool with her mother who is her biggest inspiration and supporter and is who she got her first sewing machine from. Having the equipment, support and passion, the designer could finally step into her full potential.

Today motivated by her kids, Rosannah finds inspiration through arts, films, nature and culture.

A young woman who expresses herself through her designs, Kaio enjoys creating dresses with additional accessories that match the colour and style of the outfit.

Her clients consist mostly of women of all ages and sizes. She has her own brand name:

'KaiTil' where she continues to stun her clients with her designs and creativity. Rosanah wishes to start her own clothing line and make her name renown through out the Pacific, after all, they say 'the sky's the limit'.

The 'Yumi Gat Style' Fashion show is an opportunity for this talented young woman to push her limits and creativity and promote her designs to a larger platform.

To others with the same aspirations, Rosanah says "Take time and patience with your career. Remember it's a marathon, not a sprint. Hard work and responsibility will get you to where you want to be. Believe in yourself and make it happen".

The quote that this talented designer lives by is the following: "Made to create, share to inspire. Believe in God and believe in yourself!"



Rosana Kiel

"You only live once, so wake up everyday as if it's your last" - Rosana Kiel.

Rosana is a 22 year old upcoming designer. Originating from the island of Tanna, TAFEA province.

Kiel began designing 3 years ago, she started off by drawing designs and then later brought them to life.

Inspired by her father who is a graphic designer, Rosana describes her aesthetic as a mixture of both Vanuatu culture and her home provincial culture.

Still discovering her brand name, Rosana aims to start her own fashion design business and set up her own boutique - a young woman

with big dreams!

The 'Yumi Gat Style' Fashion show is just the right push for this young woman in the fashion industry. She sees this as an opportunity for her to learn from other designers and to get a feel of what is reality of the fashion industry.

Rosana is a firm believer that "If you find what interests you, it is definitely worth giving it a try".

"You only live once, so wake up everyday as if it's your last" - Rosana Kiel.



Sean Thomas

A dashing 31 year old designer from a diverse background: half Emau, Shefa province and half Fijian.

Sean's interest in sewing began at 12, but he only started taking it seriously two years ago. Growing up with an amazing tailor, his own mother, Sean says his mother is his biggest inspiration when it comes to fashion.

Thomas describes his aesthetic designs as more 'semi formal outfits'. Something you can wear that's at the same time a formal and a casual outfit. Focusing more on the current fashion trends, Sean is passionate in capturing the interest of young Ni-Vanuatu women and men by inspiring them to step into that space where they're comfortable dressing in whatever they feel like wearing,



Sylvia Mansale

A 35-year-old aspiring designer part of the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce (VCCI)'s Phoenix Program, Sylvia originates from the island of Efate, Mele Village and has also Japan heritage.

Having just started designing and tailoring since December 2020, Mansale has already opened up her own shop located on Mele road and is called "Sylvia's Shop and Tailoring"

Her clientele consists of individuals in and around Mele village, as well as in town and even has a few overseas. She knows she still has much to learn on her designing journey and intends on

Sean lives by the mantra:
"Make your life a Masterpiece; Imagine no limitation on what you can be, have or do"
-Brian Tracy

no matter how bold and brave that may be !

Although he tailors for both women and men, Sean's curiosity leans towards creating more menswear, seeing that women do have a wider variety in choice of clothing in comparison to men. Still discovering his brand name, Sean uses his Facebook page 'Island Brother (Tailoring)' as a way to advertise his designs and connect with clients.

With goals of owning his own boutique shop and a brand name that will be known throughout the Pacific region's fashion industry.

Sean expressed how being a part of the 'Yumi Gat Style' fashion show is already a step forward into attaining his goals which is to promote his business, come out as a professional fashion designer, increase his customer base and expand his knowledge and experience.

As an upcoming male designer himself, Thomas encourages more female but especially male designers to step out of their comfort zone, write their goals down and put in the work to achieve them -"You won't know you're good until you give it a try".

Sean lives by the mantra:

"Make your Life a Masterpiece; Imagine no limitations on what you can be, have or do".
-Brian Tracy

"If you have a goal, make sure your goal is SMART. Specialize on your goal, measure your goal, achieve your goal, make sure your goal is realistic, and you have a set time-frame. When you have a passion to do something, go for it! No one is going to do it for you. Find your path, challenges will occur, but have faith in your journey."

taking more classes to better her skills.

As an aspiring fashion designer and businesswoman, Sylvia's goal is to one day display her designs in a retail shop that she would like to open, and with that said she also wants to set aside a space for other women to sell their products as well.

She hopes to one day see more and more people wearing her designs in Port Vila and overseas. The aspiring designer wants to show her children that they can do whatever they aspire to do if they put their mind to it.

Sylvia's advice to other upcoming designers:

"If you have a goal, make sure your goal is SMART. Specialize on your goal, measure your goal, achieve your goal, make sure your goal is realistic, and you have a set time-frame. When you have a passion to do something, go for it! No one is going to do it for you. Find your path, challenges will occur, but have faith in your journey."

'YGS' - VSP'S HANDICRAFT PRODUCERS & DESIGNERS

Vanuatu Skills Partnership, a co-investment between the Government of Vanuatu and the Government of Australia, is a skills system for inclusive prosperity. The Vanuatu Skills Partnership integrates cross-cutting issues into its work streams, with a focus on gender equality, disability inclusion and climate change resilience. The Vanuatu Skills Partnership with its partners promotes and mainstreams gender equality through all activities such as promoting women's leadership across the skills systems.

• Malampa Handicraft Centre



The Malampa Handicraft Centre Ltd (MHC) is Vanuatu's first ever Community Company. It was established in 2015 and registered in 2019, to link rural handicraft producers in Malampa Province with market opportunities. The Centre has a rapidly growing membership of more than 300 producers, 90 percent of whom are women, including women with disabilities, across Malekula, Ambrym and Paama.

MHC members are well known for their pandanus woven products and recently began an initiative to replant pandanus to ensure they have sustainable supply of raw materials, with the support of the Vanuatu Skills Partnership through the Malampa Skills Centre. The income that is generated through sales at their Lakatoro shop in Malekula, and from customers and events around Vanuatu, has transformed the lives of these rural families, while at the same time promoting environmental and cultural resilience.

Mrs Cindy Kilman, the inspiring new Manager of MHC, is actively expanding the membership base as well as the wide range of products for sale. Everyone is welcomed into the Centre and nobody leaves disappointed!

• Featured Handicraft Producer - Vicky Viasgone



Vicky Viasgone is a producer for MHC, 35 years old and comes from Rano, North East Malekula. A champion craft maker involved in the handicraft industry for almost two decades! Over the years,

seeing her clients' appreciation for her work has given her tremendous motivation to continue to be even more creative with her products. Growing up with a family of weavers, she has been weaving since she was a little girl. Vicky goes on to say, "My grandmother always tells me that money is in our land (mani istap long graon). This motivated me to learn and use my skills to create an income for my family. Thanks to the Malampa Handicraft Centre family for reaching our communities to increase our standard of living".

To place an order please contact Malampa Handicraft Centre on;

Email: malampahandicraft@gmail.com

Phone: +678 5735880 / 7345662

• Torba Handicraft Cooperative



Torba Handicraft Cooperative (THC) represents craft artists from Vanua Lava, Mota Lava and Mere Lava. THC began in March 2018 with 15 members from Vetimboso Craft Association. Now it has a combined membership of 98 members, comprising women and men of all ages, as well as people with disabilities. The Vetimboso community is

renowned for the use of wild cane and vine to create strong, beautiful baskets and homewares. Today their group has doubled and more young people have joined to create contemporary jewellery.

Most recently in 2021, weavers from Mere Lava were welcomed into THC. Their spectacular dark vine baskets add to the increasingly stunning range of Torba craft.

Supported by Vanuatu Skills Partnership, through the Torba Skills Centre, and the Department of Cooperatives, THC offers a pathway to markets and a dignified income generation opportunity for these producers. The members are proud to be both revitalising and protecting their unique cultural, environmental and social heritage, as well as passing on skills and traditions to the younger generation.

• Featured Handicraft Producer - Christina Sirig



Vetimboso, Vanua Lava, Torba

Christina designs and creates beautiful, unique products using cane and wild vine. To add interest, she weaves intricate patterns combining both white

and brown vines with yellow from her natural turmeric dye. Her laptop basket, designed especially for the ‘Yumi Gat Style’ event is her latest creation.

Christina, is the President of the Vetimboso Craft Association and is proud to represent her community and Torba Handicraft Cooperative. Her husband and mother are also members and it won’t be long before her little daughter joins in too! Leading by example, Christina has invested her craft income into another new business - a homestay.

“My craft is very important to me because it makes me proud of my culture. I love making different baskets and now I can pay for my children’s school fees. I can have a nice home and my family is happy and healthy.”

To place an order, please contact Torba Handicraft on;

Email: torbahandicraft@gmail.com | Phone : +678 5253911

• Tanna Jewellery – featuring ‘Malamala Jewellery Group’



Malamala Creative Producers are a group of women from Tanna who have been making jewellery since 2016. They regrouped a month ago, having been inspired by Sista’s ‘Yumi Gat Style’ event to create new designs which they are excited to see on the models.

With natural materials like chicken feathers, pandanus, seeds and shells, the new earrings are fun and colourful. A new innovation is to recycle soft rubber inner tubes from broken bicycle tyres to make jewellery! Previously, these women were known for their unique volcano inspired designs which they continue to develop. They plan to continue to surprise us with creations - not-yet-seen in Vanuatu!

Making jewellery is fun and the Malamala Creative Producers are enjoying getting together again to explore their endless creativity. The income it generates for them is motivating and of course helps their families to improve their standard of living.

• Sanma Creative Industries Community Company Ltd



Sanma Creative Industries Community Company (SCICCL) based in Luganville, Santo - a collective of pandanus weavers, textile and fashion designing creatives. They’ve been operating and working together for a year now to build their business identity, formal production and trading skills.

Their weaving designs are inspired by traditional island techniques in order to produce quality hats for all - made by Ni-Vanuatu women, with love. Their aesthetic is inspired by island lifestyle. Their products are tailored for women, men and children - selling locally and nationally. Their headwear products have also reached international markets such as New Zealand, Australia and Japan.

They believe Sista’s ‘Yumi Gat Style’ fashion show will inspire their expression of contemporary Ni-Vanuatu culture and dress. This will build their confidence in showcasing and telling the story of SANMA province through their creations.

This amazing group of women live by the saying “Be somebody nobody thought you could be.”

To place an order, please contact the SCICC on;

Email: sanmacreativeindustryhub@gmail.com

Phone: +678 771 6405

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