

## Cultural connections...

The PlatAfrica Jewellery competition once again provided the impetus for South African designers to get creative with platinum ... Now in its eleventh year, PlatAfrica, sponsored by Anglo Platinum, Johnson Matthey and Metal Concentrators continues to grow from strength to strength showcasing the abundance of innovative local talent.

In Southern Africa, there are many different courtship and wedding traditions and no two are exactly alike. For many, a cultural tradition is a practice inherited from the past but, in fact, traditions gradually evolve over time and are constantly reinvented by those who use them. This year, PlatAfrica took a new look at the different courtship and wedding gift-giving rituals of our diverse and ever changing society.

Professional and students designers were challenged to use their ingenuity to create symbolic platinum jewellery celebrating the many courtship and marriage traditions of the new and evolving South Africa. This year, 126 entries were received with designers submitting fresh, new creative designs inspired by over 26 diverse Southern African cultures.

The format of the competition has also continued to evolve and this year, students could elect to work in teams together with a professional designer or on their own. The collaboration has proved inspirational for both students and professionals and the judges were delighted with the improved standard of workmanship and creativity.

“So often we talk about the need to differentiate through design – by providing jewellers the opportunity to work with this precious metal and inspiring and harnessing the creativity of our local talent, PlatAfrica has produced a collection of really unique jewellery. Jewellery that may very well evolve cultural gift giving whilst still upholding traditional values,” said Michael Joseph of Anglo Platinum.

The winner of this year’s professional category Durban based designer, **Vijay Shah** commented, “Working with the students from the Durban University of Technology provided me with fresh insights and inspiration – their enthusiasm was infectious. Although my heritage is Indian, my work as a professional designer is generally very ethnic and South African, so creating this collaborative collection was a wonderful challenge! The students were inspired by the filigree designs found in traditional Indian jewellery and each design was their own unique creation. It was wonderful to help them tweak their ideas to maximise each piece’s commercial potential. ”

Students opting to participate as part of a collection had to produce a piece of jewellery that fitted into the collection as well as being able to stand on its own.

**Vernon White** took second place in the professional category but it was his team’s “Zulu Symmetry” that took first place in the student collection category. “This year’s competition immediately caught my attention because it allowed professionals to work with young student designers in a collaborative way. Our collection was inspired by the beaded necklaces worn by the Zulu people. Personally, I was thrilled to be able to explore my own interest in art deco jewellery design which complemented the strong geometric shapes favoured by Zulu culture perfectly. My hero piece takes the traditional Zulu love letter to a new level as it incorporates a locket into the design. The team worked so well together in creating this contemporary bridal collection and it was often simply a matter of guiding their talents to create saleable pieces,” says Vernon.

It was a double win for Kirti Jewellers, as **Pritesh Soni** and **Kirtikumar Devjee** took both third place and best ramp piece in the professional category.

In the student category, apprentice **Absalom Khumalo** of Magda Nieman Jewellers took top honours with his striking earrings inspired by Nguni culture and in particular Zulu and Xhosa traditions. The

earrings formed part of a collection called "*uthando*" which is Zulu for "love". This wasn't the only award for the team as the regal wedding trio also took second place in the student collection category.

Anneke Pienaar, last year's student winner once again did Tshwane University of Technology proud taking second place in the individual student category with her Italian inspired ring. In third place was Jackie Hahn from the University of Stellenbosch with a Himba inspired neckpiece.

Platinum remains the metal of choice for bridal and gifts of commitment across the globe. Timeless and contemporary, platinum is astonishingly versatile and, for those who create platinum jewellery, a challenge demanding consummate skill and craftsmanship.

To enjoy the full range of unique South African platinum jewellery designs, log onto [www.angloplatinum.com](http://www.angloplatinum.com)

Pure platinum, pure commitment, pure design!

## **PlatAfrica 2009 winners:**

### **From the professional category**

**Vijay Shah - Vijay Shah Jewellers** - 031 564 2948

Theme: Indian Intricacy – neckpiece

First place – professional category

**Vernon White - Vernon White Jewellers** - 082 659 1505

Theme: Zulu Symmetry - neckpiece

Second place – professional category

His team of students took first place in the student collection category

**Soni Pritesh - Kirti Jewellers** – 012 374 0873

Theme: Asian inspired European necklace and earrings set

Third place professional category

**Kirtikumar Devjee - Kirti Jewellers** - 0123740873

Theme: Asian - headpiece

Best ramp piece

### **From the student category**

**Durban University of Technology** – 031 373 6673

Working in collaboration with professional designer Vernon White:  
Mluleki Mchunu, Dianne Turner, Tracey-Leigh Bertinotti, Lungelo Myeza  
and Daniela Farinha-Ferreira

Theme: Zulu Symmetry

**First place in the student collection category**

**Absalom Khumalo** - Magda Nieman Jewellers - 012 335 6475

Theme: "Uthando Collection" Zulu/Xhosa - earrings

**First place – student category**

**Anneke Pienaar** - Tshwane University of Technology – 012 318 6006

Theme: Italian - ring

**Second place – student category**

**Jackie Hahn** - University of Stellenbosch – 021 808 2885

Theme: Himba - neck piece

**Third place – student category**

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