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First Saturday at The MAX: A celebration of urban fashion and art

'From Couture to da' Streets: The Fashions of Patrick Kelly + Cross Colours' comes to life during local fashion show

MERIDIAN, Miss. (November 2, 2021) –The Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience celebrates urban fashion and art during the first weekend of November. On Saturday, November 6, “From Couture to da’ Streets: The Fashions of Patrick Kelly + Cross Colours,” will come to life during the Walk dat Walk Fashion Show.

Walk dat Walk is more than just a fashion show. It’s a curated couture-hip hop experience. Guests will have a front row seat to the creative accomplishments of Thomas “TJ” Walker, one of the designers featured in the Cross Colours exhibition. Walk dat Walk will showcase hip hop performances and the newest Cross Colours collection, modeled by people from the community. The show will begin at 7 p.m. on November 6.

Museum guests can also attend an Illustrated Talk at 11 a.m. on Saturday, November 6. Curator Stacey Wilson will be leading a discussion on the origins of Black fashion within African American churches. This is free with museum admission. Registration is recommended as there is a limited capacity.

Cross Colours is on display until January 8, 2022. The exhibit features various clothing, sketches, and relics of Mississippi designers Patrick Kelly and TJ Walker.

Walker moved from Toomsaba, near Meridian, to Los Angeles with the dream of becoming a fashion illustrator, but once he teamed up with Carl Jones, they accomplished far more. Walker and Jones co-founded Cross Colours, an urban clothing line that uses bold colors and designs to celebrate Afrocentrism while also working to break social prejudices. In just five years, Cross Colours became a household name that revolutionized not only the fashion industry, but also African American street culture, while uplifting the Black community through positive messages and economic support.

A Vicksburg native working in Paris, Kelly found a way to create fashionable clothing that also worked to destigmatize – and give a fresh, positive interpretation to – racist Black iconography. Before his untimely death in 1990, Kelly created 10 collections, dressed celebrities such as Bette Davis, Isabella Rossellini, and Grace Jones, and in 1988, was the first African American accepted into Chambre Syndicale du Prêt-à-Porter, France's prestigious organization of fashion designers.

“While Kelly worked to destigmatize racist iconography, Walker worked to uplift the Black community through positive messages. In tandem, both men changed the world, and that’s why people should come see this exhibition,” said Stacey Wilson, Curator of Exhibitions at The MAX. “They inspire and encourage others to

make their own mark on the world.” Today, both designers are seeing a resurgence in popularity because the message behind the clothing resonates with many in the current racial and political atmosphere.

To assemble this unique exhibition, Wilson borrowed artifacts and other materials from Jackson State University, the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture of the New York Public Library, and the Los Angeles-based Cross Colours enterprise. A robust schedule of programs will support the exhibit, as The MAX engages diverse audiences. Any required registration can be done through www.msarts.org.

Exhibition-Related Programming

Illustrated Talk: Origins of Black Fashion in Church with Stacey Wilson, November 6, 2021, 11 am-noon
Curator Stacey Wilson will lead a discussion on the origins of Black fashion in African American churches. Free with museum admission.

Walk Dat Walk: Fashion Show at The MAX, November 6, 2021, 7-9 p.m.

Not just a fashion show, but a curated couture/hip-hop experience. Come enjoy a night of hip-hop dance performances and view the newest collections by Cross Colors, modeled by people from the community. Stay tuned for updates and more information regarding model casting calls.

Visitor Information

Admission to the “From Couture to da’ Streets: The Fashions of Patrick Kelly + Cross Colours” exhibition is free. To view the entire museum, visitors are required to pay regular museum admission prices. The MAX is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. The museum is located at the corner of Sela Ward Parkway (22nd Avenue) and Front Street, overlooking the railroad at the edge of Meridian’s historic downtown. Street parking is available, with shops and restaurants within walking distance. For more information visit www.msarts.org or call 601-581-1550.

About The MAX

The Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience explores the state’s creative legacies in one immersive attraction. Come discover the Mississippi roots of some of the world’s arts and entertainment icons – Elvis Presley, Oprah Winfrey, B.B. King, Faith Hill, Morgan Freeman, Margaret Walker, Eudora Welty, and Jim Henson, to name just a few.

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