

NWSD NEWS

NORTH WEST SCHOOL OF DESIGN'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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**A FUTURE IN FASHION: GERT-JOHAN COETZEE FASHION
BURSARY 2026**



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A FUTURE IN FASHION: GERT-JOHAN COETZEE FASHION BURSARY 2026

Applications are now open for an opportunity that could change the future of one aspiring fashion designer.

NWSD is proud to once again partner with renowned South African fashion designer Gert-Johan Coetzee to offer the Gert-Johan Coetzee Fashion Bursary 2026 — an opportunity designed to support the next generation of South African fashion talent.

For an aspiring designer, access to quality education, industry experience and the right tools can be the beginning of an extraordinary career. This bursary aims to provide exactly that, giving one talented student the opportunity to study Fashion Design at NWSD while gaining valuable exposure to the professional fashion industry.



WHAT DOES THE BURSARY INCLUDE?

The successful recipient will receive a comprehensive package of support throughout their studies, including:

- Three-year Fashion Design tuition at NWSD, valued at R200,000
- A laptop, sponsored by Gert-Johan Coetzee Studios
- A Bernina sewing machine, valued at R11,000
- Two annual internship opportunities at Gert-Johan Coetzee Studios

The combination of formal fashion education and practical industry experience gives the recipient an opportunity to develop both their creative and professional skills while building a strong foundation for a career in fashion.

TELL US YOUR STORY THROUGH FASHION

This year, applicants are invited to think beyond fashion as simply clothing and consider its ability to communicate, inspire and tell stories.

As part of the application process, applicants must submit a short video of no more than 1 minute and 30 seconds, introducing themselves and answering:

“If you could tell any story through fashion, what story would you tell, and why?”

The question gives applicants the freedom to showcase their personality, creativity and perspective — offering a glimpse into the designer they hope to become.

Applicants must also post their video to TikTok or Instagram, tag @nwsdfashion and @gertjohancoetzee, and use the campaign hashtags.



IMPORTANT DATES

- Applications Open: 7 August 2026
- Applications Close: 7 September 2026
- Finalists Announced: 11 September 2026

Aspiring designers are encouraged to make the most of this opportunity and share their unique vision with us.

Please note that the bursary does not cover transport, accommodation, meals or fabric required for student projects.

For someone with a passion for fashion and a dream of turning that passion into a career, this could be the first step towards an exciting future.

HOW TO APPLY:

1. Follow @nwsdfashion, @gertjohancoetzee and @berninarsa on Instagram
2. Complete the online application form:
3. Upload a short video (maximum 1 minute 30 seconds) introducing yourself and answering: "If you could tell any story through fashion, what story would you tell, and why?"
4. Post your video on TikTok or Instagram, tag @nwsdfashion and @gertjohancoetzee, and use the hashtag: #GertBursary2026
5. Share this post to your Instagram Story and tag @nwsdfashion





THANDO LUDIDI

NWSD FEATURE
#NWSDALUMNI

WWW.NWSD.CO.ZA

NWSD FEATURE: FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE SEWING ROOM - THANDO'S JOURNEY WITH AUTUMN LEAVES COUTURE

In a country where fashion often tells a story of resilience and reinvention, Thando's is one worth following. As the founder and designer behind Autumn Leaves Couture, she has spent the past two years turning fabric, thread, and beadwork into a growing bespoke fashion label — one dress, one client, and one lesson at a time.

A FOUNDATION BUILT ON TEACHING

Thando's path into the fashion industry began at Northwest School of Design, where she graduated in 2023. Rather than stepping straight into business, she was offered the chance to stay on as a second-year lecturer at the same institution — an experience that sharpened both her technical skill and her ability to guide others through the craft she loves.

That grounding in design fundamentals and mentorship would go on to shape the brand she built next.

BUILDING AUTUMN LEAVES COUTURE

In 2024, Thando launched Autumn Leaves Couture, a made-to-order label specialising in bridal gowns, wedding guest attire, birthday dresses, and matric farewell dresses. Working directly with clients across a range of occasions, she has built a business rooted in personal connection — understanding not just measurements, but the moments her clients are dressing for.

"It hasn't been an easy journey," Thando admits, "but it has been fulfilling — working with different characters, learning different techniques one dress at a time."

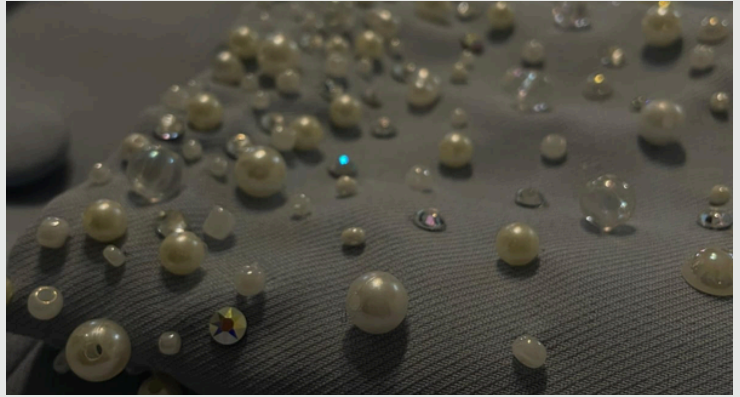


MASTERING THE CRAFT

Over the past two years, Thando has focused on refining her skill as a designer, taking on increasingly complex commissions and expanding her technical range. Among all the techniques she has developed, one stands out as her favourite. “The one thing I love most is beading,” she says — a detail that has become something of a signature in her couture pieces, adding texture, light, and intricacy to garments built for once-in-a-lifetime occasions.

LOOKING AHEAD

From lecturing at Northwest School of Design to dressing brides, matriculants, and guests across Gauteng, Thando’s story reflects a broader shift in South African fashion — one where small, independent designers are building meaningful, client-centred brands from the ground up. As Autumn Leaves Couture continues to grow, its founder remains focused on the same principle that started it all: craftsmanship, one dress at a time.



NWSD STUDENT FEATURE: A VINTAGE TEA PARTY - CELEBRATING THE WOMEN OF NWSD

This year, NWSD took a moment to celebrate the remarkable women who form part of our community — from students discovering their creative voices to staff members who guide, support and inspire them along the way. In honour of Women's Month, we hosted a Vintage Tea Party, creating an afternoon centred around elegance, sisterhood and the strength of women in design and creative spaces.

The vintage-inspired theme brought a touch of timeless glamour to campus, with students and staff dressing in elegant looks, complete with beautiful hats and gloves. At the heart of the celebration was a beautifully styled tea table, filled with delicate pastries, freshly baked croissants, cakes and, of course, plenty of tea.

More than just a beautiful gathering, the tea party created an opportunity for the women of NWSD to pause from the busy rhythm of student life and creative work, connect with one another and share stories and experiences. It was a celebration of the friendships, mentorship and sense of community that make NWSD such a special space.

Fashion has always been about more than clothing. It is a form of expression, a way of telling stories and a powerful creative space where women can challenge ideas, build careers and shape the future of the industry. The Vintage Tea Party celebrated the women who are doing exactly that — each contributing in her own way to the creative spirit of NWSD.



Best dressed: Reotshepile Scheepers

With laughter around the tea table, beautifully styled vintage looks and meaningful moments shared between students and staff, the day was a reminder of the importance of celebrating one another. Here's to the women of NWSD — past, present and future — and to the creativity, courage and sisterhood that continue to shape our community.

FROM BLOEMFONTEIN TO THE FARM: REIMAGINING FASHION DESIGN AT NWSD

This year, NWSD set out to do something a little different with our Full-Time Fashion Design campaign. Instead of the usual fashion education imagery of sewing machines, pattern pieces and students working at their desks, we wanted to show something bigger: fashion as creativity, expression and a career that can take you anywhere.

To bring this vision to life, we welcomed NWSD alumna **Milan Jordan**, who travelled all the way from Bloemfontein to Potchefstroom to be part of a three-day campaign shoot. Milan returned to the school where her own fashion journey began, this time stepping in front of the camera as the face of our Full-Time Fashion Design campaign. Her journey as an NWSD graduate made her the perfect person to represent what is possible when creativity, technical skills and a passion for fashion come together.

FASHION BEYOND THE SEWING ROOM

One of the key ideas behind this year's campaign was to move away from the expected. Fashion education is often represented through images of sewing machines, fabric, patterns and students working in studios. While these are an important part of studying fashion, they are only one part of the story. For this campaign, we wanted to present fashion in a completely different environment.

We took our shoot outdoors, using the natural landscape of a farm as the backdrop for a series of high-fashion images. Fields, open skies and the textures of the natural landscape created a striking contrast with Milan's fashion-forward styling.

The result was a visual story that connected fashion, nature and creativity – showing that fashion doesn't exist in isolation. Inspiration can be found everywhere, and a fashion designer's environment can become part of their creative language.

BRINGING BERNINA INTO THE STORY

We also wanted to incorporate the practical side of fashion design in a fresh way. Working with Bernina sewing machines, we created imagery that still acknowledged the technical foundation of the course, but presented it through a more editorial and aspirational lens.

Rather than simply showing a student sitting behind a sewing machine, the campaign aimed to communicate the idea behind it: the sewing machine is a tool that turns an idea into something tangible.

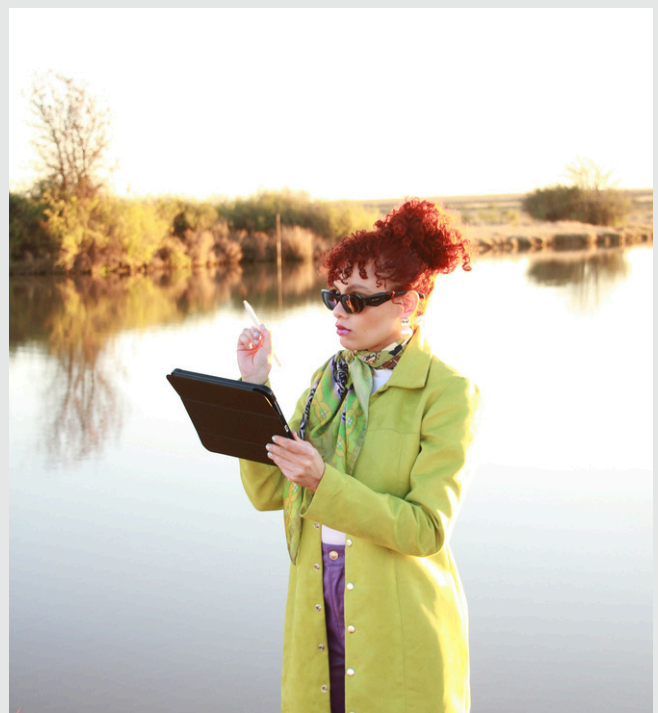


THREE DAYS OF CREATIVITY

Over three days, the team captured a wide variety of photographs and campaign content, creating imagery that will be used to introduce prospective students to the NWSD Full-Time Fashion Design course. Having Milan return as an alumna added another meaningful layer to the campaign. She is not only modelling – she represents the journey that begins when a student chooses to study fashion at NWSD. Her return to Potchefstroom served as a reminder that the three years spent at NWSD can be the beginning of a much bigger story.

This year's campaign is a celebration of fashion without boundaries – bold, creative and connected to the world around us.

Because studying fashion isn't only about learning how to sew. It's about learning to see differently, to create with purpose and to turn your ideas into a career. Your fashion career could start here.





MASTER THE SKILL OF FASHION

VISIT WWW.NWSD.CO.ZA FOR OUR 2027 PROSPECTUS

STUDY FASHION - HOW TO APPLY ONLINE



Future designers and creatives looking to join NWSD can now enjoy a hassle-free application process through the institution's online platform. Here's how you can secure your spot and start your journey toward a career in fashion design:

1. **Visit the NWSD Website:** Go to NWSD's official website to begin your application process.
2. **Locate the Online Application Button:** On the Home Screen, look for the "Online Application" option in the right-hand corner and click on it.
3. **Fill Out and Submit Your Application:** Complete the required fields on the application form with your personal and academic details. Double-check your information for accuracy before clicking "Submit".
4. **Await Contact from Admissions Office:** Once your application has been successfully submitted, NWSD's admissions team will review it. An admissions officer will then contact you directly to guide you through the next steps.

CALL US! 018 462 5149 | admin@nwsd.co.za

NORTH WEST SCHOOL OF DESIGN

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FULLTIME COURSE APPLICATION

- ☒ Download and read the Course Prospectus for the course you are applying for.
- ☒ Only once you are familiar with the admission criteria, course content, class hours, subjects and fee structures, can you continue with this application process.
- ☒ Please complete the following application form and submit this online. Please ensure you complete the form in full before submitting.
- ☒ You can also download an application form for printing. Once the printed form is completed you can scan and email to charles@nwsd.co.za

If you have any queries regarding this application, please contact us telephonically on +27 18 462 5149 or email Charles Once the application has been accepted by NWSD, the student & for parent will be notified telephonically and by email. The Registration Contract and Student Number will only be issued once the registration fee has been paid.

STUDENT DETAILS

Prefix (required)
Mr. ▾

Your First Name (required)

Your Last Name (required)

Cellphone Number (required)

With its seamless online application process, NWSD ensures a convenient and efficient experience for prospective students.

Don't wait—apply now and take the first step toward an exciting future in fashion design!

Visit <https://nwsd.co.za/online-application/>

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