

Q&A with 2019 AFI Fastrack winner Sindi Serape

 By [Meagan Duckitt](#)

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The African Fashion International (AFI) named young designer Sindisile Mbobo as the winner of the 2019 Fastrack programme at the recent Cape Town Fashion Week 2019.

The Fastrack programme is currently in its eighth year, and has seen the likes of Hugo Fleur, Thebe Magugu and Rich Mnisi compete on the platform. As winner of the AFI Fastrack award Sindi Serape will have access to Fashion Week runways in South Africa and Morocco and receives a R50,000 cash prize to start his business.

We were interested in determining what drives and inspires him.



■ **Where are you from?**

I was born and raised in Kimberley, Northern Cape, South Africa. I was raised by my aunt and grandmother.

■ **Why did you decide to move to Cape Town?**

I went to Cape Town for the calmness. I wanted to fully focus on my studies, Cape Town allowed it. And it has beautiful scenery of craftsmanship in respective fields. I merely wanted to take time and learn what I want to do.

■ **When did your interest in fashion start?**

From my toddler years, when I could identify subjects. My grandmother always looked well-dressed and she enjoyed dressing up and understood how clothes can make you feel – I fell in love with that story. Although it was not a popular or supported industry, it also was not encouraged as a field of study. I just had to be bold and make a decision and stand by it through thick and thin. I really enjoy the process of design being brought to life









■ ***What was your fashion journey like?***

It wasn't easy at all. I had to unlearn a lot and learn new tactics. But through the filtration process, I discovered myself. It was an eventful journey. A lot of sleepless nights and sacrifices.

■ ***What is your label name? And why?***

Name Brand. A nameless brand for unnamed people. I wanted to create an awareness of people who make a difference in society, but instead of gaining recognition, they are undermined. I wanted to change that stigma, but dressing people in clothing reminiscent of blue-collar uniforms. It changes perception, now you'll start paying attention to them because you wish to mimic their attire.



■ ***You won one of the most recognised designer awards in SA. How did you feel?***

I've always heard of AFI Fastrack when I started at fashion college. It was something to aim for. Years later, I'm the winner. That's crazy, it felt like your parents giving you the exact gift that you've always wanted. It's breathtaking – I'm over the moon. Hard work pays off.

■ ***Was this the first competition you won?***

The first competition I entered was *Die Burger* Young Designer Competition, which I was a finalist in. I later succeeded in many thereafter.



■ ***What advice do you have for aspiring designers?***

I still feel I need advice myself! But those following, I say stick to your narrative, it's your story, tell it your way and see it. Be cool.

■ ***On your path as a designer, how did you equip yourself apart from completing your fashion qualification?***

I assisted numerous designers, volunteering; our exchange was knowledge of labour. I interned at SA Menswear Week for three years, and also fulfilled other design-related jobs. It was a balance of college and preparing for the industry. I had to learn people skills, which I obtained as a waiter and cashier. It was all worth it because I learned how to conduct myself – small pieces of puzzle adding up to something big.

We are excited about Serape's fashion career and his upcoming ranges. You can follow his journey at about.me/sindiserape

ABOUT MEAGAN DUCKITT

Meagan is a fashion designer, stylist, writer and public speaker. She owns a small clothing business called Calista Clothing and enjoys using her knowledge to empower women.

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