

# Designer shines



**LINCOLN PHILLIP**  
REAL STYLE

**Y**ou may not be able to pronounce her name correctly the first time you hear it, but Adejoke Taiwo is familiar to most Canadian stylistas.

This Calgary-based fashion designer was a contestant on the second season of the fashion reality show Project Runway Canada; she made it to the final four.

"Every challenge on the show is a surprise," she says, confessing she hates not being in control of her schedules and creative process. "But with that much pressure, it definitely made me think more creatively, and built my confidence."

Now, out of the TV spotlight, Taiwo continues to keep her star shining. Recently, she presented the Spring 2010 collection for her line Alala, which means "dreamer" in the native Yoruba language of Nigeria, at Alberta Fashion Week.

This past Friday, Taiwo launched an exclusive collection for ARTwear, a fundraising event for the Art Gallery of Calgary's art education programs for children in kindergarten to Grade 12, as well as the AGC's public programming.

(If you missed the events, you can view and buy Alala online at [www.adejoke.com](http://www.adejoke.com).)

**Spring forward:**

Next year, it's full bloom for Alala, when Taiwo reinterprets flower shapes for her garment silhouettes. Traditional African prints (in bright colours like fuchsia and green, anchored with black) come in natural fabrics like cotton, silk and bamboo.

**Reality check:**

"I felt that being on a reality show could either make or break you," she says.

"The media coverage is an added benefit, because they want to see what I've been up to since the show."



Leah Hennel, Calgary Herald

**Designer Adejoke Taiwo showed her Spring 2010 collection during the recent Alberta Fashion Week.**

parents are from Nigeria and, unlike the Canadian culture, it is expected to dress up wherever you go, so we were always styled to the nines."

and soul divas Rhiana and Beyonce.

**Style icon:**

Grace Jones and Josephine Baker motivate Taiwo to continue creating her line.

**Favourite places to shop:**

Leo Boutique and Purr in Calgary, and Chasse Gardee and Pho Pa in Toronto.

**Make it go away:**

Women wearing tights as pants.

**Bring it back:**

"Modern padded shoulders like what Balmain presented on the runway this season."

**Dominant labels in her wardrobe:**

**Regrettable purchase:**

Designer denim. "I continue to spend money on high-priced jeans, but it's justified because I can't make them myself."

**Most desired fashion item:**

Taiwo wants to get a leg up on the thigh-high boot trend this season.

**Guiltiest shopping pleasure:**

Shoes. Taiwo blames her footwear weakness on her family. "We all have tons of shoes; I think I have around

**She would best describe her style as:**

Simple, classic and streamlined, with only one surprise. "I love adding an embellishment to my outfits," she says, sporting a T-shirt with attached chunky silver chains.

**Style sparks:**

Taiwo's interest in style started in childhood. "My

50 or 60 pairs."

**Signature accessory:**

Scarves.

**Signature fragrance:**

Burberry Brit.

**Style influences:**

New York fashion designers Rachel Roy, Kate and Laura Mulleavy of Rodarte

Marc by Marc Jacobs, and jeans by Fidelity and Seven.

**Style Statement:**

Taiwo loves to show off her legs in short dresses and skirts.

**Look of the season:**

T-shirts with chain embellishments, jeans, a buffalo-check scarf and those thigh-grazing boots.

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