



# UJIMA

## Fashion Show

by Gwendolyn Plummer

**T**his year's Ujima Fashion Show, the club's 24th annual, was an impressive, exciting event that exceeded all expectations. Titled *All the Way Home*, focusing on celebrating and honoring the African and Caribbean cultures that Ujima members call their own; the show was a breathtaking combination of fashion, performance art, and social activism.

Ujima transformed the Janet Kinghorn Bernhard stage into a genuine runway for the show, creating an excitingly authentic atmosphere. Walking into the JKB theater and taking a seat on the side of the catwalk, one felt less like they were in snowy Saratoga Springs and more like they'd been transported to New York Fashion Week, all in a matter of seconds. The runway was graced by a diverse group of models; men and women, all body shapes and sizes, and numerous ethnicities and backgrounds were represented. The models exuded confidence and, most importantly, excitement that blew any NYFW show out of the water. Loud, supportive, and animated, the audience shouted and clapped for their friends as they made their way down the runway. It seemed as though a community was being showcased alongside the fashion.

The show featured fashion that was both student created and commercial, with designers from the lines Tinzclothing and Numbers Don't Lie in

attendance to watch as their collections came down the runway. Colorful, lively, and tapping into African and Caribbean cultures, the fashion itself echoed the happiness and excitement of the models and the audience.

There were dance performances, spoken word, and a rap duo from Cleveland, as well. There were moments of education, where videos highlighting issues plaguing African and Caribbean nations were played for the audience. These videos emphasized heroes, victims, tragedies, and triumphs – all to remind us why it we had come out that night. There was a brief intermission, where we all transferred from our flight to the African continent onto our flight to the Caribbean, and there was a genuine sense of enchantment and community. This is what the show was characterized by.

The Ujima Fashion show went so far beyond fashion. The three directors—all Freshmen—the models, the designers, the performers, the crew all went above and beyond to create a hybrid experience that felt unparalleled at Skidmore. I left that show with sore cheeks from smiling and the lingering sense that I had, as a member of the audience, gained something important that transcended fashion. ■

*Image courtesy of Wilson Espinal*