

[FASHION MOMENT] - THE AFRO

A symbol of unity or segregation? Empowerment or rejection? Culture or ignorance? The Afro has had its own turbulent journey throughout the years, but who would have thought one hairstyle could be both trendy and political.

Not just a round-shaped, tightly coiled hairdo, like many know it to be, it comes in many different forms and sizes. Predominately popularized in the 1960s and 70s, when teenagers began to have their own identity, the Afro was a statement of confidence and freedom for many black people to express their historical roots. This was the time when the African-American civil rights movement were making groundbreaking history.

As we look in awe, at some of the most influential stars to grace the planet, we see Diana Ross with her halo-shaped hair and equally wonderful attire to match. The Godfather of Soul, James Brown began a new groove when he opted to wear his pressed locks natural. However, the most iconic endorsers of the textured do, has to be, everyone's favourite musical family, the Jacksons. Dancing into the worlds musical hearts in the 60s, resembling an array of brightly dressed disco lights, they definitely showed how modelling the 'fro was as easy as ABC. Even Jimi Hendrix's fluffy mane brought a sense of admiration and oozed coolness.

It seems that now, a new revolution has begun in the form of the 'TWA' (Teeny Weeny Afro). Fierce and stylish A-listers like Jill Scott, Viola Davis, Kelis, Willow Smith and Lauryn Hill, have all took the bold statement of not conforming to the norm and liberated themselves from the social stigma surrounding black hair. Even Prince has recently been seen exchanging his processed tresses for rocking his natural coils. Halle Berry and Solange Knowles have taken a much more wilder route and unleashed to the world the 'Undefined Afro'.

The kinky do has also recently been spotted at London Fashion week. Mark Fast sent his models down the runway sporting angular bleached 'fros for his S/S 2013 collection. Once an unaccepted style, to a political declaration and now has become an object of self-discovery. The Afro is the hairstyle for everyday, every season all year round. It's not just a hairstyle, it's a testimony.

By Deborah Williams

