

Night of music, dance, fashion will celebrate black women

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(Photo: Cliff Duterville/provided by Shauta Marsh)

In 2013, Kandis Isom and Sarah Hairston dreamed up an idea to bring emerging artists, models, photographers, designers and boutiques in Indianapolis together to collaborate, grow and launch into further success in their respective industries.

So they created [Fashion Forward \(https://www.facebook.com/FashionForwardIndy/\)](https://www.facebook.com/FashionForwardIndy/), which unites local creatives and also puts on arts and culture events in Indianapolis.

Inspired by the social media movement #BlackGirlMagic, Isom and Hairston are hosting Black Girl Majestic, a night of music, dance and fashion to celebrate black women. The event will be Feb. 26 at Tube Factory Artspace, 1125 Cruft St.

The event will feature hair designs from local salon Naturally U and models from Indy talent agency LModelz. Attendees will be able to create their own jewelry after the show.

Isom and Hairston discussed black female identity, glass ceilings and what Black Girl Magic means to them.

Question: Can you tell me a little bit about Black Girl Majestic?

Sarah Hairston: Black Girl Majestic the concept came on a whim. Kandis and I were talking about how Black Girl Magic is such a movement. It started out being a small social media thing, but then it really became a movement. In every aspect of entertainment or politics, women are emerging. Then we were talking about how women from the past did not get the proper acknowledgement and recognition for all of the things that they've done. So we really wanted to just have a show to celebrate black women. Showing that we are the creators. We are the originators. We want it to be an experience. So it's going to be a celebration of music, dance and fashion. We're trying to throw a little history in the mix too.

Q: Black female identity and the way pop culture portrays black women have evolved over the past several years. How will the event showcase this evolution, if at all?

SH: There will be scenes. We're going to do a journey through hair. The first scene is called "Don't Touch My Hair," and it's going to show how hair is our crown and how important it is to black culture. Through that, though, it's going to show hair throughout the decades. So we're going to go all the way back to Harlem Renaissance hair, and to Africa with the braiding and then updated looks as well. The second scene is called "I'm Every Woman," so it's showing how the black woman has a hand in all cultures. So we're showing African, Afro-Latina and different types of black women because we really can't be stereotyped. There'll be your Afro-punk girl, your worldly girl, your professional woman and your earthy woman — different types of black women. The third scene is just all about queendom. So celebrating our interpretation of being a queen. It's going to be kind of edgy but very regal.

Q: Why now?

Kandis Isom: I would say now because obviously with what's happening in politics. Black Lives Matter, yes, and black women matter as well. We're just killing it in every aspect, but we don't always get the positive limelight. But we're very fortunate that we have movies and shows like "How To Get Away With Murder," "Scandal," "Hidden Figures" and "Black-ish" that do show black women in a positive light. So now is just the time.

Q: What do you think the current political climate means for the black woman?

KI: I think it's going to be a positive climate change because there's so many supportive groups, so many social hashtags that put us in a positive light. I think we're headed in the right direction. Two things that I was really tired of seeing is that black women are seen in a sexual sense and that black women aren't worthy and deserving of real true love. Those are things that irritate me so much in pop and social cultures. So I think this show will definitely be a step closer to a positive change. We deserve a seat at the table.

SH: It's so cool to see how so many women have found their voices and don't seem to be afraid to be at the forefront anymore. Politically, let's shout out to Michelle Obama real quick. She's so amazing and she's just a good, positive representation for women. I don't know with (Donald) Trump in office what's going to happen about inclusion, but I can definitely say looking at social media that there are so many more people speaking up, especially with

the Women's March in D.C. I feel like other women are starting to notice black women. Even in feminism, there's separation and it's nice to see that we're here for this cause together. Black women and immigrants don't have the same privileges or concerns that other feminists might have. I would like to see more connection, more women speaking up and more black women in office.

KI: We have two glass ceilings. We're black and we're female. So we're kind of hitting those odds there.

Q: What conversations do you hope the event will spark amongst attendees?

SH: I just want people to feel really good. I want them to feel informed and valued. We do have a segment called "What is Black Girl Magic to You?" So that's something that will spark conversation.

KI: I really want it to be a self-awakening kind of event where they go home and say, "Yeah, I am a queen. I am majestic in my own right." I fully believe that all women are queens. And there's just something about black women. We have so much power that is just neglected at times because what we see isn't always positive in pop culture. I want it to be very therapeutic and positive.

SH: Kandis and I are inspired by black women so much. I think that's really what sparked the show.

KI: I get inspired by the woman walking down the street with her Bantu knots. I saw this woman on the train and she had a bald fade and blonde hair. And I was just like, "Oh my gosh. You are just so awesome." Every single woman is. She can be patting her hair and I'm like, "You better pat that hair."

Q: You mentioned you want people to walk away asking what "black girl magic" means to them. So what does "black girl magic" mean to you?

SH: I feel like as a black woman you are always told you should be strong, but that's literally what we naturally know how to do. I feel like within our strength, we're so much more. Black girl magic to me is endless. It touches all things. I feel like everything we touch, we make better. It's funny how black women have a language that's so unspoken. It's just beautiful to see how much we cultivate culture.

Q: What are your thoughts on the natural hair movement in Indianapolis?

KI: When our hair is right and on point, our whole demeanor changes. Being natural is more of an intuitive hair movement where you are cautious about what you're putting in your hair. So therefore, you're cautious about what you're feeding your spirit and body. Hair is our epicenter. If we feed that and get that right and together, then everything else is pulled together within mind, body and soul. I definitely think that's it's a big movement happening in Indy.

Q: What can people outside of the black community learn from attending the event?

SH: I think it's a nice peek into black culture, especially starting the scene off with hair. I would like them to know that you don't have to be a black woman to celebrate black women. I feel like some people are offended by black girl magic or when black women celebrate each other. It's not something that's always understood. And I feel like coming from the place of struggle that black women have, honestly we just celebrate all the facets of ourselves. Know that it's an inclusive thing. You don't have to be black to celebrate black women or women in general.

Follow Alexa Goins on Twitter: [@AlexaGoins \(https://twitter.com/AlexaGoins\)](https://twitter.com/AlexaGoins).

If you go

- **What:** Black Girl Majestic.
- **When:** 7 p.m. Feb. 26. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.
- **Where:** Tube Factory Artspace, 1125 Cruft St.
- **Cost:** \$15. Tickets will be on sale at the door and on [Eventbrite \(https://www.eventbrite.com/e/black-girl-majestic-tickets-31265009485\)](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/black-girl-majestic-tickets-31265009485).

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