

Rahima Orchient Yayah

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A burning PASSION for women's FASHION

In 1997, Malaysian religious authorities released a fatwa which banned all Muslim women from entering beauty pageanties. It marked the end of an era for the Muslim-majority nation, thus making Miss Malaysia World 1994, Rahima Orchient Yayah, the last Muslim woman in the country to emerge victorious in such a contest.

But, Rahima's unique story doesn't end there. During the Miss World finals that year in Sun City, South Africa, this lanky beauty managed to secure a spot in the Top Ten. It was one of the highest placings ever achieved by a Malaysian. With many online forums labelling that particular edition of Miss World as one of the most competitive ever, the level of Rahima's accomplishment has been propelled to a much higher degree. One fact they used to back this claim up is by pointing to the calibre of the eventual winner -- current Bollywood megastar Aishwarya Rai.

Fast forward to 2016 and *HMAG* met Rahima at Malaysia Fashion Week where she was promoting her Muslimah clothing brand. Just a short glance in her direction and people would instantly be able to acknowledge her exquisite beauty and grace. This similar elegance is what she hopes to transfer to *Orchient*, a brand clearly inspired by her very own name.

Despite being relatively new (they only started out in March 2016), *Orchient* already has four boutiques in Malaysia with a few more expected to be up and running in the near future. They have also been part of multiple

fashion and trade events such as Malaysia Fashion Week 2016, IMAGO Clap for Joy, and Wanita Kreatif Fest 2016.

Specialising in haute couture, day wear, and hijabs with customised slips, her designs take inspiration from Balkan culture and Borneo heritage.

"Among the major challenges in my career right now is finding committed workers and the lack of experience I have in marketing my products," this graceful woman from Tawau in Sabah revealed. "One of my goals is for *Orchient* to have its own institutes in Kuala Lumpur and Kota Kinabalu. They will

offer fashion designing, patterning, product knowledge, dressmaking, sales and marketing via multimedia, a modelling agency, and grooming for personalities, confidence, and discipline," she added.

With her experience in pageantry and modelling to add to her MBA Degree from Wyoming Preston University, it seems the necessary tools for making *Orchient* a success is already in place. If her past in pageantry is anything to go by, triumph is not a foreign concept for Rahima, so we at *HMAG* would definitely not bet against her! 

