



Couture Fashion Week

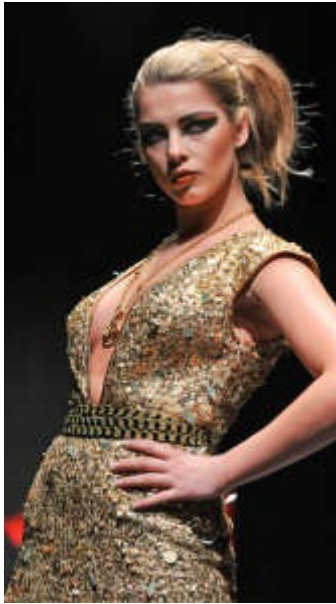
by Meredith Craig de Pietro on Thursday, February 19th, 2009



The “Couture Fashion Week” Fall 2009 Collections kicked off on February 13th, with an audience of bought-and-paid-for ticket holders. A ticket allowed for first come first serve seating at the shows, but in a space like Starlight Roof at the Waldorf Astoria everyone was a winner. A long runway with three rows of seating, and plasma screens promised that there wouldn’t be a bad seat in the house. When the 8:30pm show ran an hour behind schedule, the fashion fans kept composed. And the crisp smell of money successfully masked any odor of a recession.

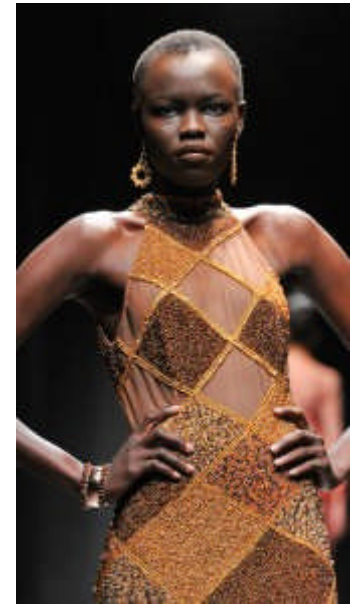
Nina Gleyzer, a Russian born, resident of Atlanta, showed a youthful collection of debutante dresses. The first look of a boucle tweed jacket paired with a bubble gum colored outsized floral hat that exemplified her sense of humor. Black lace and sheer paneling added sex appeal to a bright purple, seafoam green and hot pink feminine collection. One stand out was an asymmetrical gown covered in individual rose petals- a perfectly romantic idea for Valentine’s Day. A blue cobweb dress was completed with butterfly appliqués, which was a little overdone. Gleyzer draws inspiration from nature, from “the softness of a flower petal to the intricacy of a spider web to the billowing wheat in the wind.” This influence was definitely seen in the collection, but the clothes would benefit from less literal translations. Yet, there’s no doubt she knows her core audience, these ardent fans were practically waving their credit cards before she even had a chance to bow.

The show that Catalin Botezatu presented had much more of a rocker edge. This Romanian designer is known for controlling his shows, by designing all of the jewelry, shoes, hats as well as directing and producing his show. This attention to detail showed through in this collection, which was definitely focused. Beaded leggings and fur capes gave a Velvet Goldmine feeling to the collection. Cropped motorcycle gloves were hard-edged accessories for clothes fit for a rock star. Tiny black lace dresses, criss-crossed gowns, and cocktail numbers that tied provocatively in the back would give Marilyn Manson groupies a run for their money. A quartet of shiny, beaded dresses seemed out of place in this collection and would have performed better if the models were on ice. But those small mishaps did not overshadow an otherwise exciting show.



Andres Aquino, the founder of Couture Fashion Week, is also a US based couture designer. On Valentines Day, he took the audience on “a journey of beauty around the world.” That entailed an Epcot Center regalia of international fare: French, Arabian, Chinese, Africa were all represented. There was something for everyone in this collection, which included bubble skirts over gowns, halter dresses with silk scarf trains, brightly beaded necklaces that acted as tops, and ribbon floral cocktail numbers. The Arabian section especially showcased his talents with lavish dresses covered with inimitable paillette patterns, beadwork and threading design. None of the themed sections seemed to correspond with each other, yet they all showed impeccable detailing and embroideries.

Sultry was the buzzword for Jorge Diep’s runway show. This designer is known for creating unforgettable dresses for the Miss Dominican Republic beauty pageants for over a decade. The collection was filled with lovely gowns in bronze, silvers, and golds. Jaws dropped as long sheer dresses covered the model’s extremities only with delicate beadwork. Buckles, fishnet, and nude sheer paneling added to the sexy vibe. The final exit was a knockout: a white tight dress with two embroidered intertwined peacocks. It seems likely that Diep will make his move from pageantry to red carpet in no time.



Designers Norma Allen and Thuy Nguyen entitled their Vocce Couture collection “Modern Elegance.” By the attire they showed, it seems they attempted to put a sophisticated touch on ruffles, detachable trains, boa fringe, and rose sashes. The designers call the collection “a trend-setting array of mix-and-match pieces ranging from chic and opulent eveningwear to statement making designs.” There were some stand out pieces, like a lace panel front gown, but others like a halter mini with sarong seemed more suited for the beach.

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