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Supplement

L'Oréal
New
Zealand
Fashion
Week
special

The most
in-depth look
at the most
stylish shows



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THIS PAGE: Leiana Rei's paua swimwear (left) was the most talked-about during Style Pasifika; Rei took home the Deutz Fashion Design Ambassador award later in the week. Her other designs proved as strong. BOTTOM: King Kapisi—from the Newtown posse to the Hot Gloss Seat in the L'Oréal Paris Powder Room.

MICHAEL NG/LNZFW; KING KAPISI PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY L'ORÉAL PARIS

Let the music play

Alice Goulter, Sally-ann Moffat and Jack Yan review the first day's shows, finding Style Pasifika's passion one of the strongest—but Vertice's violinist bored audiences

THE LONG-AWAITED L'Oréal New Zealand Fashion Week began October 20, 2003 at midday with the **Westfield Style Pasifika** show, presenting a triumvirate of designers encompassing the authentic styles of New Zealand Maori and the Pacific Islands, interpreted into modern, wearable clothing.

With music ranging from a soulful ballad with shades of hip-hop to rap, there was a lively beat throughout Style Pasifika.

First to present was designer Sera Mitchinson, with her label **Selector**. Mitchinson presented garments primarily in denims and fleeces, localized with prints of birds, assumably native to New Zealand, in historical, linear style illustrations.

Wellington-based Leiana Rei Perawiti of **Leiana Rei** revealed her much-publicized paua-shell swimwear, which utilizes the innovation of digital printing on fabrics to create a range reminiscent of the vibrant colours of the paua shell. Collaborating with Kapiti-based Minx Shoes, Rei highlighted her pieces with matching ankle boots and strappy slides.

It was not only Rei's swimwear which was impressive: her clothing range encompassed a variety of fabric manipulations mimicking classical Maori patterns.

The début of label **Overstayer**, most notably accredited to Bill Urale—better known as local hip-hop artist King Kapisi—promoted a strong Pacific Island theme featuring denimwear, highlighted with woven flax pockets. The range demonstrated an excellent sense of culture and history, modernized with urban styled graphic artwork such as tagging and distressed prints, à la Phat Farm or Lady Enyce. However, the Pacific Island feel was apparent—even New Zealand visitor's permit stamps from the Immigration Department were incorporated into one outfit.



The audience were fortunate enough to experience the accompaniment of King Kapisi himself performing on the catwalk during the show. The Style Pasifika group, therefore, closed on a particularly high note,

leaving the audience with nothing but to think that it will not be long before we experience these garments and many more, on the streets.

Kapisi said in an interview that he sensed a globalization of hip-hop cultures. The quality of New Zealand hip-hop, for example, had become closer to that in other countries. Therefore, it was probably no surprise to see shades of other nations' hip-hop graphics—such as the different appearances of the Overstayer logo—although the overall effect of the Overstayer range was original.

SHARON NG PREP-ARES The second show to grace the catwalks was **Sharon Ng**, titled with a postmodernist '@Home' tag. It was inspired by the ideal of being at home—both Ng's perception of her own home and the New Zealand ideal.

Most memorable was the inclusion of wallpaper-inspired prints, linear illustrations of kowhai flowers and ferns. They demonstrated not only a theme, but Ng's continued work with local artists. The images appeared not only as placement prints on garments, but as continual yardage prints on classically styled woven shirts.

The collection embraced a "preppy" mood but had a feeling of old-fashioned school-yard clothing with honeycomb-knitted sweaters and knee-length pleated skirts. An element of deconstruction was also evident throughout the range with raw edging and half-stitched sleeves. Ng's colour palette was primarily neutral shades of beiges, khakis and chocolates, highlighted with flashes of mustards, bright blues and reds.

The silhouette was focused at a top-heavy level with cropped cardigans and boléro-style jackets. Oriental-style dresses seemed to promote this ideal also, with mandarin collars and capped sleeves.

Ng closed on a high with outfits that reflected her southern Chinese ancestry. Fortunately, none of these dresses, featuring adaptations of Chinese paintings in faded form, had a stereotypical feel. Instead, the cuts were westernized and restrained, reflecting well a New Zealand-Chinese blend without revisiting Ng's Chinoiserie collection from last winter.

The essence of the collection was apparent right until the close of the show, demonstrating her charming commercialism and confident use of theme to portray a very impressive range.

THE MUSICAL CANTABRIANS Christchurch designers grouped together for a following show, starring the much-talked-about **Takaaki Sakaguchi**.

While the three labels (and four designers) in this part of the show received equal billing, Sakaguchi arguably generated more pre-show anticipation—not least in this publication with a cover story.

Sakaguchi's part was particularly well coordinated, expertly done so that no one would know that this was his first LNZFW show. The international feel was apparent, reflecting well on Sakaguchi's experiences in Japan and with Paris catwalks.

Sakaguchi demonstrated an astounding amount of



TOP: Overstayer, with its hip-hop influences. ABOVE LEFT: Selector. ABOVE AND RIGHT: Sharon Ng.

techniques throughout his portion. He revealed an obviously in-depth knowledge of couture finishing techniques with rich and illustrious fabric manipulations including beading, rouching, gathering and embroideries. The collection also included a slight Asian influence including what appeared to be printed cottons along with deep Chinese brocades. Feathers were featured as well as a tribute to the Dior 1940s dressing revolution, the New Look: a short-waisted peplin jacket with oversized rolling collars was tightly coordinated with a richly decorated full skirt.

Tango's collection may be summarized as 'stars and stripes'—but not what readers might think. There were no American flags around—the collection was based around a

CATWALK DAY 1



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Tango's '99 Luftballons' dress. Sakaguchi. How to make an exit: Sakaguchi. Return of the beret and tie at Barbara Lee. The Parisian showgirl from Barbara Lee. Barbara Lee. Sakaguchi demonstrates more techniques. Starbursts at Tango.

welcome futuristic theme of space travel, beginning with Wagner's 'Also Sprach Zarathustra' and fluorescent lighting. Images of stars, galaxies and the Milky Way were complemented by green, red and black stripes, including a sleeveless black top featuring the words, in an angular typeface, 'HAL hath no fury'.

The collection changed direction toward the end as 'Neunundneunzig Luftballons' began playing. Simplicity entered the arena, with the final white dress featuring an embroidered star print, with model holding helium-filled balloons that floated to the ceiling of the Great Hall in the Auckland Town Hall.

Barbara Lee signalled the return of the tie and the beret—mimicking the styles of the old girls' college uniforms in crisp blacks and whites. Drop-waisted mini-tunics presented a flirty feel to the show, accompanied by old-fashioned PE tunics with ties. The appearance of model Nicky Watson thrilled local audiences, donning some of Lee's more dramatic designs in her return to wholesale and her first LNFW show.

The Parisian showgirl ideal was also present near the end of the range, with feathered miniskirts and embroidered mesh bodices.

MORE AT MOORE **Caroline Moore** hit back against less-than-accurate quips referring to leather fetishism with an autumn-winter 2004 collection called Hard Core. Instead of



taking the obvious, salacious route, Moore attempted garments that were more tasteful—and left the models, accessories and the show to provoke, with "whips", red gloves and fishnet stockings. Leather never looked more desirable.

She succeeded more than admirably with her use of suede, nappa and broadtail lambskin. That was hardly a surprise, since Moore has more than established herself with her use of leather. More enticing were the colours—bright reds, flame oranges, mandarins, apricots and blacks, on such items as lambskin bustiers (sometimes ruched), the ra-ra skirt and memorable slink-skin coats.

Moore's "fresh and fruity" shades



FAR LEFT AND ABOVE LEFT: Caroline Moore. LEFT: Obi's opulent brocade jacket and delustrated satin skirt. ABOVE AND RIGHT: More from High Society. BELOW: Tv host Mary Lambie in Chocolat.

had audiences hungry for more—it will be a challenge in winter to decide between the two shades.

A dark apricot suede ra-ra skirt with matching bustier got deserved applause. The ra-ra skirts almost made us forget that they were made of leather: they looked so light and had a sensual drape to them.

This season also sees nappa leggings—with her coats must-haves for the season—plus the additional colour of 'blush', a nude tone that played to the Hard Core theme. Fishnets over opaque tights and high-top sneaker heels juxtaposed the styling beautifully, never overpowering the craft of the leather.

Finally, the chaps weren't ignored, with a suede lambskin jacket, suede trouser and a 'clubbing coat'—not to mention the rare appearances of the Radio Active logo, representing an FM station that began as a student service.

Judging from the smile on her face, front-row Kiwi singer Carly Binding seemed to be a Hard Core fan.

It was a pity that **Vertice** began its show with a violinist who played for too long—according to several audience members to whom we spoke—which may have dulled the rest of the range. While the musician was excellent, the wait for the fashion seemed endless (and for six minutes or so, it was).

It was not to say that Vertice's work was not competent: we liked the tartan trouser, the leather jacket with black hood, the noticeable purple blouse and embroidery—but Vertice's complex belts and its shade of green seemed slightly out of place. Of course, not even experienced fashion writers can predict tastes in six months' time—*Lucire's* best forecaster Susan Kelly foresees a return to complexity, proving some of Vertice's thinking right. On review, it's a relief that the label attempted something different, but at the time of the joint show, Vertice was overshadowed by Moore.



FEELING FRESH High Society showed its four labels—Catalyst, Chocolat, Mosaic and Obi. One of the country's strongest exporters, with half its volume going overseas, the company positions each labels to distinct markets. As the show demonstrated, there is little overlap.

Catalyst's use of magenta shades took audiences back to the 1980s—one of the aims of design director Laurinda Sutcliffe—mixing them with the mod-rocker 1960s' look.

The mod-rocker look emerged less so with the cuts but with historically later techniques such as Old English lettering. Other techniques seen often at Catalyst's autumn-winter 2004 range include pleating.

While retro sometimes kicks in during times of recession to give consumers a sense of comfort, Catalyst's collection was not a continuous reference to the past. There were influences, but what we saw was not overly derivative. The way the influences were combined for autumn-winter 2004 ensured a fresh look and upbeat mood for Catalyst—something that we definitely wanted to see.

Chocolat promised New Zealand celebrities on the catwalk, proving a hit with the crowd. New Zealand personalities Mary Lambie and Anna Thomas joined divas Jo Cotton, Jackie Clarke and Betty-Anne Monga (Adijah).

Fuller silhouettes with French influences were hallmarks of this collection. In comparison to Catalyst, Jane Mabee's designs were more retro with its use of lace, greys, blacks and notions of French "romance". However, American buyers sitting with *Lucire* were not totally aware of the Kiwi celeb angle.

Mosaic contrasted its sister labels once again, with lighter and subtler approaches to its designs. Anne Mardell's work took flowers from prints and into three dimensions, while fabrics included boiled wool, brushed lace and soft gabardine. We spotted icy shades of light mauves and greens on the catwalk; the brushed lace contributed to a slight brightening to set off the paler colours.

Obi's autumn-winter 2004 collection was based

CATWALK DAY 1



CENTRE TWO PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL NG/LNZFW; OTHERS COURTESY L'ORÉAL PARIS

THIS PAGE: The glamour of State of Grace and its sea-based theme for autumn–winter 2004. BELOW RIGHT: L'Oréal Paris make-up artists work on State of Grace models backstage.

around the idea of exploration. *Lucire* would go more specific and say that it conjured up the idea of the golden age of exploration, with the flyer cap present and the sherpa look represented by sand-coloured crocheted tops. The collection suggested Amelia Earhart, recalling the early flight age and female independence.

The evening approach was partly military, but contrasted with brocades, satins and silk velvets. It continued the military themes with the belt worn around the waist and diagonally, and strong jackets. Ruching on a red, zipped jacket impressed the Americans, who applauded its presence.

Obi was creatively the strongest of the four High Society brands, with a strong silhouette enhanced by lapels, waistbands and belts.

SEA OF GRACE *State of Grace* evolved, but retained a strong feminine flavour—and the principle that they make clothes that they themselves want—that designers Sherilyn Catchpole and Caroline Church are known for. A glorious autumn–winter 2004 collection, the pair showed a water theme recalling mermaids, nymphs and sirens, as well as seaweed and coral reefs.

As the worlds that Catchpole and Church are exposed to change, so has their design style. There is a softness to this collection, more so than an earlier range on heroines that we recall, with motifs of leaves in print and lace. Lighter shades in coral and pink were contrasted with opulent reds and blacks; we saw them on glamorous aprons and wraps, jewelled tops and a glorious red silk coat. It was perhaps one collection where the designers did not balk at showing backless garments—and stayed well in tune with the tastes of 2004 in doing so.

Our highlights included simple items such as a pinstriped trouser and striped white shirt; while on the other end of the continuum a cowl-front dress in burnt red. We approve of the emphasis this season on jewellery, lace, glitter and embroidery.

The bottom part of Queen Mary's diamond stomacher, made for Queen Victoria, was reproduced as a screen-print; continuing the sea theme was a reproduction of an c. 1880s carved shell cameo brooch, this time embroidered on to fabric.





MICHAEL NG/LNZFW

Post modern

Alice Goulter reviews the Zambesi autumn–winter 2004 collection and believes that Elisabeth and Neville Findlay have earned the accolade of being modern Kiwi fashion’s “parents”

ZAMBESI’S AUTUMN–WINTER 2004 show took place off-site, at the construction site of the old post office by the Auckland waterfront. A classic Zambesi ambience was created amongst half-stripped stone walls, unpolished wooden floorboards and dusty, half-revealed mosaics—not unlike the frequently appraised Zambesi retail stores, designed by Neville Findlay, the husband of the label’s celebrated designer, Elisabeth Findlay.

Amongst such a juxtaposed environment, the show was styled with an almost early ’70s British mood: models graced the catwalk with seemingly ungrouted hair, dark eyes and a slow and casual streetwise strut. Most models wore knee-high black equestrienne boots, made of rubber, almost suggesting an element of Wellington boots. Art direction for the show was carried out by a third Findlay family member, daughter Marissa, who presented an oval-shaped catwalk with the audience seated around building pillars, models circulating around the venue.

The Zambesi silhouette conformed tightly to two main shapes. Firstly, and most prominently, in womenswear was a dropped-waist shape with flare developing subtly





from the hip area. Skirts were awkwardly cut at the knee length and were made from eye-catching checks and sheers, often adorned with a Zambesi trademark of square, low-sheen sequins.

The second silhouette was primarily form-hugging right down to the tapered legs of elongated trousers and denims. Again, the waist area was dropped to the hips. Bomber jackets were present; rib cuffs stretched around the body again, to the hip point. This was particularly refreshing to see on the men's portion of the show.

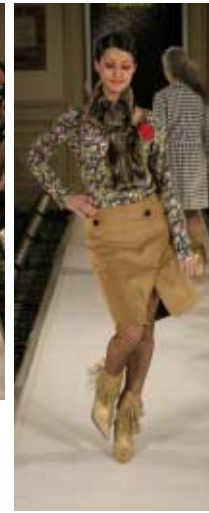
One of the most celebrated idiosyncrasies of Findlay's design ethic is, of course, her fearless and immaculate use of drape, not only on classic sheers, but also in collaboration with raw-edge finishings on wool suitings and leathers. Findlay did not fail to impress this season, incorporating colour-contrasting gussets and panelling throughout her womenswear, contrasted with the structural forms of basic biker-style, safari and cropped tailcoat suit jackets in both men's and womenswear.

The colour palette consisted of primarily dark basics—of navies, blacks and deep charcoals—a light relief from the onslaught of neutral beiges present in many other ranges. Highlight colours of the range included mustard yellows, pale lemons, tans, creams and deep purples.

The show was, to date, a highlight of the week, initially offset by ambient venue and completed by an almost technically flawless range—a sincere complement to Zambesi, who after over two decades of trading, can rightly be named the "parents of New Zealand fashion".

ALICE GOULTER

Findlay did not fail to impress this season, incorporating colour-contrasting gussets and panelling throughout her womenswear



Grand and grander

The media and public can consistently depend on World for sheer spectacle—great fashion, candyfloss hair and nz\$20,000 worth of Swarovski crystals did just the trick

MEDIA ARE ALWAYS DELIGHTED by World: not just because of the famous spectacle of each catwalk show, which somehow manages to balance excess with true style, but because the label overcomes cynicism. None of us can ever be attacked for gushing about the label—because even when you take away the theatrics: viz. this season’s candyfloss hair and the nz\$20,000 worth of Swarovski crystals on one model’s legs, World still stands up.

Couture from designers Francis Hooper and Denise L’Éstrange-Corbet demonstrated that invention remained strong at World: a harlequin, sequined gown and a layered, pink silk dress among the two eyebrow-raisers.

World pursued a partly nautical theme: its menswear was made up of glittering suits, worn by models who were supposedly meant to be “sleazy” Cuban sailors.

Of the *prêt-à-porter* items, world denim re-

turned for the season with clean lines, contrasted with what the pair call ‘candy colours’. Draping on knits was notable.

Entitled ‘I Don’t Like Sport, but I Can High Jump’, the combined collection emerged in an abstract fashion, according to Hooper.

Hooper and L’Éstrange-Corbet had collaborated with artist Reuben Paterson to create some of the glitter and glitter-dust-covered garments. Before the week was up, it was reported that one of the nz\$10,000 sequined suits had been put on hold by a collector impressed with the collaboration.

Expatriate Brent Lawler—based in Paris and Sydney—was responsible for the make-up and was, again, creative in applying it on faces and bodies. Colours reminiscent of Mondrian and a porcelain effect helped with the spectacle.

Finally, World proved that its fashion transcends age by using three mature models, Pamela Farry, Barbara Brinsley and Ruth Coghill, known as Dunedin’s “society girls”, and who appeared in an earlier *Lucire* report from that city.



Horisonten ska inte skilja oss åt, den suddades ut i Sappfos dröm

... fortsättning följer under vintern 03 och våren 04.
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