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Supplement

L'Oréal
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at the most
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From Fix to fab

A day which begins with dramatic indoor rain at Insidious Fix and ends with Margi Robertson's strongest Nom D collection ever has to be one for the record books: **Alice Goulter, Jack Yan and Sally-ann Moffat** recollect

DAY TWO of L'Oréal New Zealand Fashion Week kicked off with the **Insidious Fix** autumn-winter 2004 range. Designed by Kylee Davis and Jason Crawford, the Auckland-based label had not shown on the LNZFW catwalk since its memorable sheep-shearing show in 2001.

Without failing to impress again, Fix—as the label is colloquially known among the cognoscenti—began its show on a raining catwalk with the rolling sounds of thunder and flashes of strobe-assisted lightning. Models slugged down the puddled catwalk amongst ice sculptures accompanied by the warming aroma of mulled wine, served prior to the show.

The range showed an impressive maturity which Fix appeared to have developed since its last show. Wool and knit structures appeared to be finer and more intricate, subtly patterned with cable configurations. The knit garments were accompanied by an impressive woven range consisting of woollen pinstripes, denims and PVCs. These garments complemented the range superbly, most notably, the inclusion of mini-length PVC bubble skirts and old-fashioned striped mid-length walk shorts.

The show's mood aptly supported the colour palette: deep chocolate browns and rich maroons and wines, complemented by lighter shades of pastel pinks, ivories and pale blue. Other notable pieces included a knitted pink strapless mini-dress as well as knitted brown hot pants. Wovens were also integrated with knitted side seam panels, again in hot pants, and miniskirts.



THIS PAGE: Insidious Fix matures in its design for autumn-winter 2004; rain effects and strobe-light lightning made this one of the most memorable LNZFW catwalk shows.



TOP LEFT AND CENTRE: Holic. TOP RIGHT: Madcat. ABOVE AND RIGHT: A true delight: Annah Stretton's self-named range. BELOW RIGHT: Claire Kingan-Jones combined from Robin Jones, RJC and Edge into her show.

FIRST-HAND SMOKING First to show in Group 2 was **Holic**, where designer Sarah Hewlett presented a collection of extremely wearable garments with intricate fabric manipulations. Probably most impressive in the range was Hewlett's use of the old-fashioned technique of smocking, applied to bodice areas of dresses and other suppression points, around waist areas and hem points.

Second in the show was Nelson-based label **Madcat**, who showed a variety of styles. A French inspiration was suggested with Madcat's gamines down the catwalk; horizontal stripes in black and grey and ribbons played on stereotypical ideas of postwar Gallic culture.

Annah Stretton, best known for her label Annah.S, told *Lucire* on the Sunday before the first shows that her rebranding to her full name suggested a maturity—but we need not have worried.

Stretton presented an eclectic range, appearing to be inspired by a punk theme with a pirate element. All garments

were lavishly adorned with rich embroideries, floral appliqués, safety pins, pearls and jewels, creating a feeling of buried treasure. Stretton's colour palette included creams, browns, oranges and purples with pale blue highlights. The collection spoke of Stretton's love of vintage clothing that she had come by on London and Paris back streets, essentially crossing time—hence the 'Time Pirates' tag for this collection.

IT'S NOT THE CHATTANOOGA CHOO-CHOO Two years ago, we said Kingan-Jones should be doing a show on her own: this year, we got our wish. **Claire Kingan-Jones** presented her three labels, RJC, Robin Jones and Edge. The three labels were merged together to create one show alternating the labels between outfits.

Beginning with the sound of trains, we were tempted to think that 'Chattanooga Choo-choo' would be the musical accompaniment, but we were happily spared that. The train sounds, accompanied by dry ice, were clever touches in a show entitled 'Off the Rails', a theme that Kingan-Jones followed with the appearance of train tracks across waistlines or down fronts, and buttons that suggested railway switches and lights.

As a whole, garments throughout the show appeared to have a military influence, contrasted with Kingan-Jones's typical lightweight satins and chiffons. Another point of contrast to a silk top in white-grey was a black trousseau on one model, Chloë Alexa. Fabric details included polka dots and florals, again consistent with Kingan-Jones's love of browsing through vintage fashion.

Stand-out items in this collection included Kingan-Jones's "film star" orchestra dress in red, which moved away from the military structure in favour of glam—though not quite red-carpet, it would not have looked out of place at several LNZFW functions.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS After a stellar show at L'Oréal New Zealand Fashion Week in 2002, the Nicholas Blanchet winter 2004 collection, entitled 'Shelter', was an eagerly awaited part of Fashion Week, presenting to a full, three-storeyed audience at Auckland Town Hall's Grand Hall. Blanchet did not fail to maintain his credibility as one of New Zealand's most prominent designers.

The Shelter range was inspired by the structural elements of buildings in our past and present. The range embraced the juxtaposition of gothic-styled buildings and the sleek minimalism of today's architecture. This inspiration was translated through the use of delicate brocades



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MICHAEL NG/LNZFW



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:
 R/c. Architecture-inspired outfit from Nicholas Blanchet. Draping from Nicholas Blanchet—a trademark feature from the designer. Saga Soulo. FAR RIGHT TO NEAR RIGHT: Nicholas Blanchet.

and sequin-embellished separates coordinated with crisp, structured pieces.

Blanchet's work is commonly identified by his unique garment prints and explorative use of positive and negative space between the garment and artwork. Confirming this skill for yet another season, the range included prints on satin, most memorably a full-panel print of the Empire State Building, gracing the whole lower hem of a dress and creating the illusion of the building's texture.

Dark charcoals, black and grey were used as base colours for the range, reminiscent of urban cityscapes, highlighted with tones of reds and winter whites. The tight colour palette enabled Blanchet's ideas and inspirations to be clearly communicated to the audience, aided with innovative jewellery pieces which almost encased the garments in wire, crafted by Octavia Cook.

Blanchet also presented his recently founded Nicked range, which appeared to be more casual and irreverent in comparison to Shelter. Again, the use of graphics took a clear dominance in the range with stylized gargoyle images embroidered on fleece garments, with almost a rock metal reference. Without competing with the Shelter range, Nicked has enabled the brand, Nicholas Blanchet, to be seen as a not only as a meticulously tailored high-fashion label but also as producers of high quality, original streetwear.

GIRLS IN A. HOOD Saga Soulo showed a collection that

was beautiful, but in some cases slightly more mainstream than previous years. The promise was grand: 'a passion for play with a suggestion of modern vintage—epitomising fine tailoring with a sensual twist.' It was there on some items: designer Angela Hood produced some shining garments.

The initial contrast was more between masculine and feminine. The collection included Hood's Rough Rider jackets and skirts in a chocolate shade, with a rugged western look though made more softer with the pencil waist and a thin red belt. Her favouring of browns, yellows and blacks also helped with contrasts at the beginning of the catwalk show.

A shining example of Hood's 'passion for play' came with her Mod Bod tunic, cut beautifully, allowing the shirt beneath to reveal itself through the arm areas. Her Top Heavy top was a delightful off-the-shoulder design, in black with bold, octagonal, red and silver patterns—the stand-out piece from this collection. The Stitchin' Time shirt had loose stitches in black at the back; Saga's Flirt Mesh singlet was sheer, bright yellow, with thin stripes, creating a sensual effect. Our principal dislike was a plaid coat that seemed out of place and was more vintage than passionate.

There was passion in the music throughout: a Saga Soulo CD was complemented by live music on the catwalk, by DJ Rob Salmon, a New Zealander who recently returned from a stint in New York.

CATWALK DAY 2



MICHAEL NG/LNZFW

Mod medley

It was music for the eyes as Nom D's Margarita Robertson took audiences back to the mods in a memorable collection—one that **Alice Goulter** believes captures the mood of the now and was her highlight of Day 2 at LNZFW

THE FINAL SHOW for Day Two of L'Oréal New Zealand Fashion Week was that of Dunedin-based label Nom D. Held at the unlikely venue of the Auckland Showgrounds in Greenlane, a catwalk had been created on the stadium floor, and the audience seated in tiered grandstands either side of the catwalk.

Designer Margi Robertson introduced the audience to her autumn–winter 2004 range with a medley of brightly col-

oured track wear, grounded with basic white and black hoodies, track pants and singlet tops. Striped leggings and long sleeve tops were layered under the raw-edged garments in the bold—but harmonial—combination of oranges, maroon and teal. The ensembles were finished with a classic white Converse trainer.

The range developed further into a primarily black and white medley. While still incorporating the stripes, Robertson styled the range further with the addition of low-slung

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suspenders hanging from shorts, trousers and skirts. She appeared to draw inspiration from the late '70s–early '80s independent music scene by incorporating the idea of pop badges, again in basic blacks and whites. As at Zambesi, this was a family affair, with Chris and Margi Robertson's son having worked on some of the prints, notably the 45 rpm records.

Badges were dispersed throughout the range and added on the lapels of jackets and fitted tops. The range also gave reference to the British mod rockers of the late '60s and early '70s, with crisp styling with slim fits and traditional knit shapes such as plunging 'V' necklines and slim-fitted polo-necks. Other features referencing this ideal were the presence of oversized self-covered buttons.

Slim-legged trousers were a common feature throughout the collection, often contrasted with bulkier upper-body garments. Fullness was often attributed to the upper arm with oversized puffed sleeves attached to long slim fitted sleeves in knitwear, the medium in which Nom D is most commonly associated with. The continual use of the bold black and white stripes maintained a consistent look and feel to the range.

An element of semi-deconstruction was also present as Robertson included sharply tailored waistcoats, jackets and trousers. She added the technical insides of other garments, such as the inside of tailored trousers, including pocket bags and waist banding to the lower hem of a waistcoat. Sharp blazer jackets were slashed in half and worn almost as an accessory, again laden with pop badges, branded with peace signs and other social comments.

Robertson also embraced the slogan 'Don't Shoot', emblazoned across printed tees and tops, appearing almost as a political comment of the present day.

To date, this range has been the one of the most impressive to show at L'Oréal New Zealand Fashion Week, and will, without a doubt, follow through internationally to make a mark for Nom D—and Dunedin—globally.

ALICE GOULTER



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