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Inside the
Powder
Room

NOVEMBER 2003
Supplement

L'Oréal
New
Zealand
Fashion
Week
special

The most
in-depth look
at the most
stylish shows

L'ORÉAL
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FASHION
WEEK III

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FAR LEFT, TOP FAR LEFT AND LEFT: Catch's space theme had a '60s retro feel. TOP LEFT AND ABOVE LEFT: Paula Sim. TOP RIGHT AND ABOVE RIGHT: Jane Rhodes. RIGHT: Roisin Dubh's butterfly wing skirt.

Street to chic

Day Three of LNZFW proved to be 18k gold. While not every collection was a winner, at least three left **Alice Goulter**, **Jack Yan** and **Sally-ann Moffat** gobsmacked. Streetwear kicked off the day, while Sabatini White was pure icing on the cake

DAY THREE of L'Oréal New Zealand Fashion Week was the day of falls and near-falls literally, though not with the fashion itself. IPG (covered separately) was talked-about because Turet Knuefermann showed that one only needed two celebrity names to get headlines, rather than half a dozen, and Trelise Cooper was talked about for the simple reason that autumn-winter 2004 was her best-ever collection.

However, after the first inter-show Powder Room break,

the whisper we heard from the Sky tv cameraman was that an unnamed designer had fallen and broken her leg pre-show. Unlike other rumours that day—Day 3 seemed to be full of them—that one was confirmed correct as news spread that Roisin Dubh had indeed fallen. By mid-afternoon a model *almost* fell at IPG, but in comparison to Dubh's accident, only the most ill-minded wanted to see another fall. Psychic transmissions to the catwalk kept her standing.

Falls or no falls, as they say in show business: the show must go on. And it did.



BIKERS AND SPACEMEN The day opened with streetwear labels Catch and Sim in a joint show.

Sim designer, Paula Sim, presented a medley of '80s-styled garments in warm browns and creams with highlights of musk and khaki. The collection featured slim-legged trousers, wraparound coats and fleece "sweater dresses". Checks were also a highlight of the range, manipulated into biker-style jackets and mini-kilts. Though some of these items were unremarkable, Sim pushed her stylistic envelope on numerous occasions: a floral print skirt, cut diagonally, featured a delightful pink and gold pattern, while cutouts from the side of a charcoal-coloured top signalled daring. Her use of lace and sheer materials played on shapes and skin.

Second to present was Auckland-based label **Catch**. Designer Jason Burrows explained his lunar '04 range as having a "60s feel, combining retro futuristic touches with modernist simplicity". The range, which was primarily based in black tones, reflected the ever-popular mod look, especially relevant to the menswear portion of the show, with thin white ties set off by fitted black shirts. The image of a sparkling solar system was glittered throughout the range, most impressively on a slim-fitting black velvet blazer.

FIRST-HAND SMOCKING Prominent New Zealand womenswear labels Glory, Jane Rhodes and Rosin Dubh presented the second group show of the day.

Glory, designed by Teri Johnson, embraced a relatively preppy look to the range with tailored walk shorts and structured boléro-style cropped jackets, accessorized by oversized buttons. Knickerbockers were also a feature of the range, finished with strapping details at the hem.

This classic, more structural element of the range was then contrasted by a lighter, more bohemian styling influence; paisley prints were used throughout the range styled in bell-shaped sleeves or hidden under dark velvets as linings. The eclecticism created by the use of the two such opposing influences created a pleasantly refreshing overall look to the range.

Jane Rhodes, with her Reveal winter 2004 collection, was in some ways overshadowed by Roisin Dubh's accident. In this collection, there were some wonderful items such as her green pinstripe wool bustière and the black Toulouse suit with oversized pockets. Beading at the bottom hem of Rhodes's Hannah dress and flaring on another ensured variety, as did the military feel on a blue cotton-velvet coat. If criticism were to be levelled at Rhodes, it was that this collection had no single stylistic direction other than the early appearance of underwear as outerwear and several marketable coats and jackets. That is not to say the items will not be individually strong sellers; just that it makes a writer's attempt to divine the designer's initial impetus a difficult task.

Roisin Dubh, who unfortunately was unable to attend her show due to injuring herself during a rehearsal that morning, created a range of intricately detailed garments which appeared to reference the notion of organic versus inorganic. With a Celtic singer and a historically themed solo ballad, the show opened with a delicate knee-length layered skirt, memorable as each layer of chiffon on the skirt was detailed with the veins of a butterfly wing—a concept that

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Roisin Dubh. Pacifica influenced Miranda Brown. Turquoise and blue gave a distinct New Zealand flavour in Miranda Brown's collection. Roisin Dubh brought tradition mixed with *art nouveau*. The fern was prominent at Miranda Brown's collection.

MICHAEL NG/LNZEWF; LOWER MIRANDA BROWN PHOTOS COURTESY L'ORÉAL



THIS PAGE: Angeline Harrington's 'confidently individual' range was 1960s-sharp.

allowed for colour to relieve audiences from an overuse of black at the LNzFW collections.

Other organic images of flora and fauna were used throughout the heavily patterned collection. This ideal was then contrasted by tessellating leadlight patterns and gothic-style symbols, almost giving reference to the *art nouveau* design movement.

Dubh's almost-literal translation of her inspirations was apparent in her continuous attention to detail throughout her range; hand-painted skirts featured scallop-edged hems, according to the shape and constraints of the primary image.

One notable Aquarian-age feature was the bold black lettering, reading 'Uranus Illuminary', on a yellow singlet, one modern interpretation of Celtic astrology that also seemed to play a part in this collection.

THE RETURN OF M&A ACTIVITY **Miranda Brown's** part of the next group show was influenced by Pacifica, but not to the point of stereotype. Instead, Brown wisely tempered her designs, showing Pacific motifs on accessories while blending other aspects of New Zealand style into her work.

Her all-white dancer—including face-paint and white feet—opened the show wearing a white, ribbed sleeveless top and a full skirt. The connection was not completely clear, considering that Brown chose some of the brightest fabrics for ready-to-wear during the week.

Clever airbrushing techniques distinguished her autumn-winter 2004 collection, giving dresses and scarves a gentle cascade of colour rather than the prints we had seen during the week. White stripes on a black skirt—using the same technique—complemented rather than contrasted the foundation colour, giving Miranda Brown's designs a calmer feel. Turquoise and green—especially a bright shade for her finalé—appeared on the catwalk alongside reds, greys and whites.

Wellington-based designer **Angeline Harrington** presented a range which reflected the sharp styling of the 1950s. Waistlines were sharply pinched in slim-fitting pencil dresses with bold but minimal draped panels in crisp delustrated satins. The waist was a continual focal point of the range, notably with waist-length wraparound shirts in floral prints.

Harrington demonstrated a sound knowledge of fabric handle, with exquisite fabric manipulations throughout the range, including knee-length swing coats and satin shirt dresses. The collection was confidently individual, embracing a unique silhouette and overall look which enabled her first appearance at L'Oréal New Zealand Fashion Week to be very memorable.

SABATINI SUPREME Near the end of Day Three, those in the media attending all shows get a tad weary. By this stage, they have seen at least 22 shows, some with more than one collection in them.

Their feet are sore; their Saben delegate's bags are about to burst heavy with goodie-bag offerings and a nice long soak in the tub is beckoning. So it was with the sense of humour that only the lack of a full night's sleep and standing all day can give you that those who arrived at the **Sabatini White** show laughed, when told upon arrival and presentation of their media passes, that there were no seats.

The sense of humour remained long enough to realize the

MICHAEL NG/LNZFW; COURTESY L'ORÉAL PARIS



THIS PAGE: Jo Chambers's Sabatini White collection showed her capability and imagination.

following: if they weren't seated they would be unable to take notes. If they were unable to take notes, they'd be unable to write anything. This knowledge encouraged them to reach for yet another glass of wine and prop themselves up against the nearest column in Auckland's War Museum.

Eventually they ushered themselves into seats that had been sitting empty for far too long to enjoy the last collection of clothes for the day: that of opular knitwear label Sabatini White, showing in the museum foyer.

The grandiose venue, which was transformed into an impressive three-pronged catwalk, suited the exclusively feminine and delicate knit pieces from Sabatini White's autumn-winter 2004 range.

A large sketch by French artist Marc Chagall of a woman astride a horse claimed the top of the catwalk and made for a stunning backdrop as the models strode deftly past.

Inspired by Chagall, the pale pinks and sage greens, amongst many other lighter hues, were representative of his dreamy artwork. Fur and feather trims were featured throughout the range of lightweight pieces along with fringed edges and pom-poms.

In line with previous seasons, designer Jo Chambers demonstrated her remarkable ability to translate knitwear into formal eveningwear pieces, including knitted halter tops, plunging V-necks and saucy knitted miniskirts.

Other highlights of the range included variegated striped tops, often detailed with leather trims, elongated knit cardigans with oversized rolled collars, floral jacquard style knits, and innovative use of textured yarns. The honeycomb knit construction was used in a variety of garments which were often styled with matching knit underpants. Some designs were teamed with lingerie.

The must-have in every colour was the cardigan, which reigned supreme.

As always, Sabatini's attention to detail, which has placed them in a variety of international stores, was a prevalent feature throughout the collection, aptly titled Seduction. Cardigans were lined with lightweight ruched knits, visible only around the neck area. Pearl buttons were featured on short, layered ra-ra skirts.

Jo Chambers is an accomplished designer blossoming under the maturity, reputation and guidance of Tony Milich, the helmsman of Sabatini. White showed her diversity and courage to push the boundaries of traditional knitwear.

Chambers was true to her shy reputation and had to be coaxed out from backstage for her turn on the runway at the end but she shone under the audience's applause.



Playgirl du jetset

Turet Knuefermann's *19G* collection divided opinions, but certainly got the most press mileage. However, the appearance of E!'s Cindy Taylor was not as cynical as some might have thought: she was perfect for the brand, writes **Jack Yan**

COURTESY L'ORÉAL PARIS; AND BY MICHAEL NG/LNZFW



THIS PAGE: IPG had the services of E!'s Cindy Taylor, already established as part of LNzFW, and to counter criticisms, showed plenty of garments that were elegant and considered.

TURET KNUEFERMANN'S IPG (International Play Girl) label drew a reaction—audiences either loved it or criticized it. Amongst the *Lucire* team, opinions were initially divided on how appropriate "being revealing" was, even if we did have a good time with red and orange pieces of tape being blown into the audience and dry ice which seemed to have cleaned our shoes in the front row.

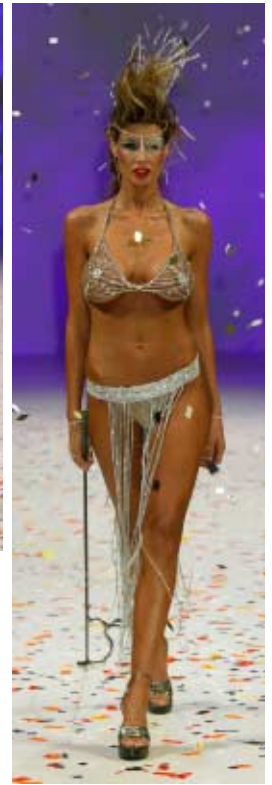
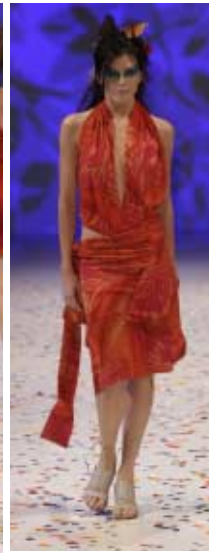
Granted, Knuefermann was braver in showing off skin and with both E! Entertainment Television's Cindy Taylor and New Zealand's own Nicky Watson modelling, she could not have had better models.

Taylor, with her Paraguayan heritage, was particularly suited to the International Play Girl image of a strong, well-

travelled, independent woman, walking confidently down the catwalk several times. (It was a frenzied experience in make-up moments before, with Taylor's producer Chad Gajadhar describing a mini-'crisis'; Taylor, with a sense of Paraguayan *jugársela frío*, took it all in stride, with aplomb—again such an ideal for IPG.) Watson, meanwhile, relied on sheer spectacle, Knuefermann's sexy outfits and local recognition for her effect. Both approaches were winners as far as the media were concerned.

In fact, IPG (whose sister label IPB also appeared on the screen, though no garments were shown, helping with the collection's tightness) generated so much buzz that false rumours about one model's lateness circulated—but were rapidly confirmed by this magazine as being nasty fabrica-

CATWALK DAY 3



COURTESY L'ORÉAL PARIS; AND BY MICHAEL NG/LN2FW

tions. These were probably from the same people who, spotting the water left by one model who poured it over her body on to the catwalk, willed the next one to fall (and almost got their wish—but for a quick recovery from the young lady).

This season, *jantelagen*, as one says in Scandinavia, hung around the designer, who actually did put on a great show with clothes that could stand up to critical analysis.

After all, the above immediately suggests that there was not much more than skin when in fact Knuefermann sent down a gold Oriental-inspired gown with butterfly patterns, an orange strapless dress, a hat with bird motifs and a hooded white top with contrasting brown bodice area. We liked her use of draping; but we also liked her white linen trouser. Her colour palette ranged from black, principally, to oranges and greens. This was the most brightly coloured show all week, up to this point.

Compared to earlier IPG efforts, this was hardly a collection centring around sexiness: Knuefermann has matured as a designer and injected plenty of elegance, from a red satin dress worn by Taylor to a hot pink–green–purple striped top, worn by the same. There was a touch of Halston to her work, an observation with which Brian S. Long of Apropos

Press and Showroom of New York—a long-time *Lucire* friend—agreed.

There is a sexy tradition at IPG which Knuefermann had not betrayed: Watson did come out with a jewelled bikini set that stunned audiences. However, there was plenty for the real fashionistas to sink their teeth into, and *Lucire* has heard more than favourable comments from at least one buyer. The proof of the pudding is in the eating—and in this business, those comments that will ensure IPG's return next year.

JACK YAN

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Heroine addiction

Trelise Cooper deserved—and got—a standing ovation at the close of her autumn–winter 2004 catwalk show. **Alice Goulter** and **Jack Yan** explain why

EVERY L'ORÉAL NEW ZEALAND FASHION WEEK, we look forward to several designers' collections. Trelise Cooper is consistently on our must-see list.

As any well travelled fashion writer knows, it is rare to find talent that dares push the envelope on design; rarer still to find a designer who does not mind being glorious in her approach and executes it impeccably. Even at the couture shows in Paris, the balance is not always found. For autumn–winter 2004, it was found at Trelise Cooper.

Overstatement? We do not think so. This magazine has publicly—most recently in the publisher's guest editorial on the web site—been a fan of Philippe Dubuc of Montréal, Québec, the first Canadian designer to show at the couture collections in Paris. Dubuc has an edge, to even seasoned journalists indefinable, in the way he uses his fabrics and employs his cuts, but most of his work—certainly what we see in his rue St Denis shop—is prêt-à-porter. Trelise Cooper treads this same line: we find lovely details that are filled with expensive pizzazz and are surprised at the price tag, so much so that hers was the first label that sprang to mind when we were quizzed about us-export-ready designers (not counting those that have more established connections Stateside).

For the Cooper *je ne sais quoi* includes that geographically transcendent factor: a woman wearing Trelise Cooper will look good regardless of which city the door she exits is located. People have been known in London to stop Cooper wearers—there is even a story about an Englishwoman stopping a Kiwi and offering to buy the clothes off her back. A tapestry-style scarf in her latest collection was worn by the publisher of this title on Day 4 of LNzFW—and he was stopped several times during the day and had his sartorial good sense commented upon. Cooper transcends classes, and it seems with her scarf at the least, gender.

We should not have been surprised when we learned a week before LNzFW that Cooper already had a deal in the United States. When we asked buyer Dominique Strauss of Access USA to comment, he was proud to say that he took a great deal of the Trelise Cooper and (its sister) Cooper by Trelise output to the us, where it is lapped up. The Frenchman was justifiably thrilled with his find. And he wasn't about to let anyone else in on this treasure.

Based in Auckland, Cooper herself was the star designer of the week—by that we mean she is as much a celebrity in her own right as the clothes she creates. Karen Walker is the only other designer who generates this level of buzz; Zambesi, World and Nom D create excitement in the clothes



THIS PAGE: *Lucire* staff and other journalists are calling this Trelise Cooper's strongest collection ever—a sentiment echoed by American buyer Dominique Strauss.



but retain a level of privacy that the more public Cooper relinquishes to some extent.

Thus, the Auckland Town Hall auditorium was packed on the Wednesday evening with celebrities, media and buyers. You know a Kiwi has made it when one is claimed by another country: Cooper has been titled as an Australian designer on many occasions throughout the past year.

This collection, titled 'Powerful Women of Myths and Legends', fully embraced and elaborated on Cooper's well renowned style of colour, pattern and texture, using knits, satins, jacquards, silks and tapestries to name a few.

The collection travelled from strength to strength, beginning with Cooper's more casual element of the range, including denims, checks and printed knits. Elastic suspenders were revealed under loose-fitting crushed satin singlets, contrasting the image of regimentation with Cooper's overtly feminine look. The range progressed into more formal clothing, with floor-length coats, over delicately layered skirts—another classic Trelise Cooper styling detail.

To identify a colour palette for a Trelise Cooper collection would be almost impossible; however, strong colour references were made to bright aqua blues, teals, reds and browns. Fabrics were lavishly illustrated with bold floral prints, polka dots, stripes and sequins. Other styling details

included the additions of corsetry on jackets and dresses, woollen embroideries and nettings. Near the close of the collection, the audience was left speechless by Cooper's formal dress range, which was carried an slight mediæval influence in full skirts, sharp waist definition and sheer flared sleeves. Her Grecian gowns, with the idea of goddesses and muses, and her coin detailing, were beauty itself—we were elated to see these at the Great Hall as a confident step into a more stylish 2004.

Cooper, whose increasing global profile positions her amongst designers such as Melbourne's Alannah Hill and Scanlon & Theodore—and in our view, labels even further afield—fully justified her place as one of New Zealand's most feminine and elaborate designers, as she gained a standing ovation at the close of the show, a very rare achievement in New Zealand catwalk history. Members of the *Lucire* team would have been the first to stand, but for the notes on our laps about what we feel is Cooper's strongest collection.

Writing is a challenge, however. At Trelise Cooper, the fashion journalist tries not to allow one's jaw to drop as one is absorbed into the beauty of the clothes, balancing that with one's professional obligation to readers. This season, Trelise Cooper's designs made the task harder. This is not a bad thing; we demand more such challenges!



Let's gather here

Doris de Pont—formerly DNA—had more than a name-change to deal with: she had high expectations after a successful LNZFW show last year. By all accounts, she surpassed them, writes **Sally-ann Moffat**

DORIS DE PONT and her team caused a sensation at last year's LNZFW with their Wild Things range and expectations amongst the media in the audience for this year's show were high. We needn't have worried.

With her name reclaimed for exporting reasons—DNA was not available in every country—de Pont had more at stake: this was an opportunity to show that the high standards we had grown accustomed to remained.

From the arrival at St Kevin's Arcade on Karangahape Road, where we were welcomed by the rhythmic sounds of Pacific Island drummers, served sushi from St Pierre's and invited to imbibe organic wine from Milton Wines near Gisborne, New Zealand, the show was seamless.

A grass matting flat-floor catwalk imbued the air with a Pacifica scent and anticipation was high as we were expertly lead to our seats. The lights went out and the drumming increased in intensity and volume as the rhythmic beats welcomed a fire dancer onto the catwalk with great enthusiasm. Then the catwalk show began.

The skill of subtlety is not one to be overlooked in the world of fashion and style and this whole show and range was perfectly, stylishly subtle. The exquisite cut of the opening Ballonski Skirt and the Taboo Tank allowed the observer to enjoy the richness of John Pule's artwork. His *Let's Gather Here* has been adapted from his limited edition works as the Doris de Pont print for winter 2004.

Well loved for their innovative screen-printing Doris de Pont and her team's strength lie in their ability of combining



bold prints with carefully designed and cut pieces of clothing that do not try to compete with one another. The print and the cut complement, and each piece of clothing is subtle and bold at once.

Slim-cut pants, pleated wrap skirts, tulle halters, hoodies worn under sensual silk-fitted jackets and plaid pants with printed fringed belts kept the emphasis on the waist for winter 2004. In addition, feather and leather belts were made to look like a *titi*, a Polynesian term for a style of waist adornment. Neutral colours—tapa, marmite, toffee, ochre, and gorse—created tones reminiscent of an island beach paradise at dusk and were affronted by a bold red. Black and white were ever-present and always necessary as the backbone of any range.

Canny catwalk styling came in the form of covetous mother-of-pearl jewellery and an innovative use of Perspex.

It was printed with colourful feathers, heated and then moulded into Polynesian crown headpieces and tattoos reflecting both our diverse multicultural heritage, with its strong Polynesian, Asian and European influences, and our ingenuity and creativity.

The range has a strong Poly-Eurasian structure and tone and the music for the show reflected this: Many Hands (an Auckland band) mixed highland bagpipes, Rarotongan log drums, electric and acoustic guitars, flute and many other instruments to create a sound perfectly suited to the Doris de Pont winter range and giving a true “melting pot” identity.

An ecstatic Doris said after the show, ‘When the fire dancer came onto the catwalk and the crowd roared then I knew it was a success—we gave them a bit of a scare! It was everything I hoped it would be.’

SALLY-ANN MOFFAT



ELLE MACPHERSON
INTIMATES



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