

Lucire

Cozmo
Jenks
is *not* an
"it girl"

Inside the
Powder
Room

NOVEMBER 2003
Supplement

L'Oréal
New
Zealand
Fashion
Week
special

The most
in-depth look
at the most
stylish shows



Official internet partner



LEFT, TOP ROW: Sidewalk is ready for the street. LEFT: Cybèle's Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil. ABOVE AND RIGHT: Helen Talbot. BOTTOM: Kristen.



A day of Cult-ure

Thursday was a day of culture, from a stirring spiritual summoning at Ngati Babe to 1930s Shanghai at Liz Mitchell. **Alice Goulter** and **Jack Yan** review proceedings on the final day of shows

THE FUTURE of New Zealand fashion was presented on the fourth and final day of catwalk shows at L'Oréal New Zealand Fashion Week. The New Generation shows of 2002 showcased such labels as Christina Perriam and Doosh, both now prominently stocked throughout the country; with this in mind this year's New Generation shows were eagerly awaited, both by media and the designers themselves, whose careers could be properly launched.

Designer **Helen Talbot** commenced the New Generation collections with a variety of military-inspired garments, elaborately trimmed with brass buttons and regimental styling. In addition, Talbot included a variety of crisply tailored pinstripe suits. Draped floor-length skirts were also a notable feature of the collection.

Streetwear label **Sidewalk** was second to present. Already stocked in a variety of stores throughout the country, siblings Campbell and Valeria Bevan along with cousin Austin Moncrieff presented a variety of intricately printed garments. Most impressive was their bold use of floral screen prints on black men's shirts and ties. The range also featured biker-style jackets with stand collars, angled placket shirts and gathered seam features on trousers.



Kristen, designed by Kristen Walker, appeared more established than new-talent. Due to be a mother of three in the New Year as twins join her household, Walker evidently delights in the feminine, with a collection that featured items in pink, including a skirt and velvet coat over a lace top. Green, red and gold were among Walker's colour palette.

Cybèle's winter 2004 collection was based around the theme of midnight in the garden of good and evil. It encompassed the symbolism of a snake, often scattered throughout the collection in sequined gold motifs, similar to Sidewalk. Designer Cybele Wiren presented a range was commercially appealing, encompassing low-waisted bubble skirts, floral linings and velours.

Ink'd certainly impressed the general public and more than a few fashion industry people with its range of men's underwear, but the energetic show with little stylistic variety almost came off as a cheap shot. The dance routines with multiple male models on the catwalk at once were novel, while the designs themselves had some merit: the Pacific-inspired patterns on the waistband and the Ink'd logos on cropped tops were worthy of note; but the black-and-white palette could be said to be dull.

Wayne Goldsmith, designer for **IDXU** (pro-



nounced 'zu'), referenced his Spanish heritage for his collection, titled 'Perla Negra'. The brief but comprehensive range, consisting of a variety of delicately tailored pieces using an array of fabric manipulations, included layered bias bindings to create skirts, roule loop fastenings and contrast stitching details. Probably most notable in the collection was the hand-painted geometric matador image emblazoned across the front panels of a full skirt. There was a hint of classical suiting from the 1930s, though Goldsmith's coats were more 1960s in style.

The **Zya** winter 2004 collection reflected the sharp tailoring and elegance of the 1940s. Designer Nadine Freundlich included fur shawls, masculine suiting details on womenswear and clean crisp business shirts with elegant features such as four-button cuffs. Freundlich's bold colour palette consisted of black, red and white, used in suitings, knits and shirting.

Ngati Babe, possibly one of the most memorable performances of the whole week, closed the second and final New Generation show on a particularly high note.

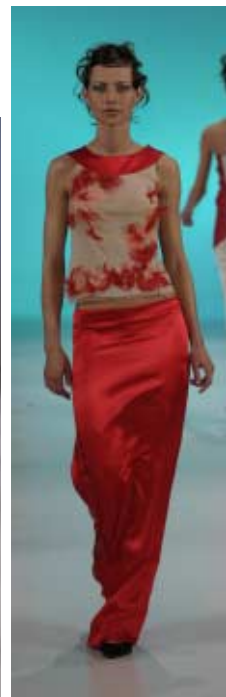
After a prayer from *whanau* summoning good spirits, designer Te Kaihou Ngarotata, at only 13 years old, presented a variety of classic streetwear pieces, including denim, cargo pants and T-shirts. Ngarotata noted the return of the puffa vest to the streets, but with an original element: the khaki puffa vest was quilted with a koru-inspired wave symbol. Ngarotata also used silhouetted images of traditional Maori figures, some from old photographs, in her prints. There was cultural significance in her choices: they were to signify the determination of the Maori culture, especially after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. Hence, in hip-hop style, '18' and '40' were featured on an off-shoulder black top. In a similar style, 'Ngati' was printed on the back of a black trouser. The traditional necklace was reinterpreted.

Along with *whanau*, Ngarotata performed a closing haka that was soul-stirring and arguably the most meaningful and spiritual experiences in all three L'Oréal New Zealand Fashion Weeks.

The direction and quality of the range left the audience doubtless on Ngarotata's future: if she can achieve such a credible performance at such a young age, what limits can the future possibly hold for her?

ASIAN ORANGE Thursday was proving to be quite a day for showing the many sides to New Zealand culture. Thank God fashion is not monocultural like the English-only New Zealand banknotes (we're not going to rest till we see them with Māori).

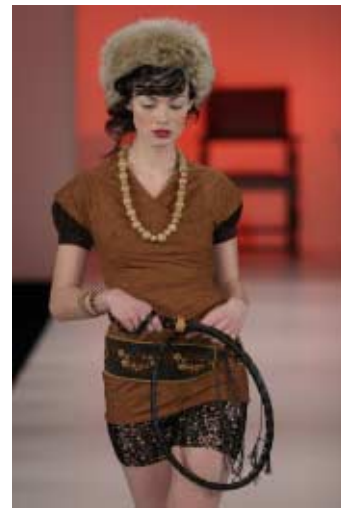
Earlier in the day, away from the catwalks, one of the co-authors of this review joined commentators including Paula Ryan (*Simply You*) and Annie Dow (*Annie Dow Design*) at Fashion Lab—at which it was mentioned that New Zea-



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Glamour from IDXU. New Zealand hip-hop style from Ngati Babe. Alan Mok. Haka featuring designer Te Kaihou Ngarotata (in centre of group). The men of Ink'd. IDXU. Zya. ABOVE FAR RIGHT: Alma Jung.



CATWALK DAY 4



LEFT: Alma Juong. ABOVE LEFT AND ABOVE RIGHT: Avissuar. OPPOSITE PAGE: Liz Mitchell and her 1930s Shanghai-inspired collection.

land's population would be 16 per cent Asian in over a decade. Certainly down Symonds Street, near the university, and Queen Street, that was fast becoming evident. So there should have been little surprise that one group of designers was comprised of east Asians hailing from Hong Kong, Malaysia and the Republic of China.

With some glitches—only one designer's name ever showed on the wall and post-show, there was a hiccup in the official LNZFV web site preventing the right web page to be seen—the show did go on, frequented not only by family members of and suppliers to the designers, but network tv show *Asia Down Under*. This was not tokenism: Sharon Ng had, after all, shown on Day 1. There seemed to be sense in grouping three talented Chinese-ethnicity designers together; at least from a media point-of-view, it allowed us to consider if there were an expatriate flavour.

Alma Juong's collection was about opulence—again cementing that amongst New Zealand designers there was a sense of 'What recession?' This was a largely traditional Chinese collection with plenty of sequins, jewellery and gold (the colour). Remember that these designers aren't Maoists: they hail from Chinese countries that followed their souls, not post-'49 Politburo diktats. *This* could be what east Asian overstyle is about, but God bless Joung for tempering it.

Even when venturing away from gold, blacks and blue-greys were executed with Chinese style. There were departures from silk, with lace—we enjoyed Juong's vision with her mini-dresses and lace dresses; while sheer, they were consistently accentuated with gold and jewelled details.

Toward the end of the collection, Joung returned to reds but made use of layers in one dress, accentuating the principal colour with yellow and orange. A white silk satin dress and a wrap with sequined lapels built up to the most memorable finalé of the week: an ice-white dress with scalloped wings formed an angelic vision down the marquée runway.

Alan Mok was a designer who had received plenty of hype within *Lucire*, thanks to a classmate of his who thought very highly of his work. And we found him gentle and personable, with his hand-lettered business cards. So we didn't expect staple items to come down the catwalk, especially after the hinted intent that the collection would be about angels and fallen angels.

White, teal and black were his main colours, while there were clever touches such as a circular clasp for his scarf and a winged effect on the back of one white dress (quite different from Juong's splendid finalé). Cleverer details consistent with Mok's theme included the appearance of flames and the devil's pitchfork as patches on one dress and the ruching on another, but numerous items remained unresolved.

The delightful Malaysian designer Avis Sim of **Avissuar** presented more feminine offerings, including a gold cape with white trim, a navy dress with fur collar, another dress with a jewelled peacock on the front, a burgundy wrap with gold diamond patterns and a white silk satin dress with beading—which in many respects confirmed the east Asian love for wearing one's riches on one's sleeves, literally. Fortunately, like Joung, Sim kept from going overboard with this principle, tempering her designs with the necessity of retailing domestically.

The difficulty in all three cases is putting the garments into a global context. Asian buyers would probably be more impressed than those selling domestically—for them, the determination of New Zealand designers to find a signature style, such as Liz Findlay has done at Zambesi, is not always understood (despite Findlay's exporting success in every



market Zambesi has entered). Rather, change and grandstanding can sell instead—and this trio went as closely as possible to that without throwing away the knowledge that they are expatriates working in the antipodes and sometimes needing an antipodean mentality.

THE OTHER CHINESE DESIGNER **Liz**

Mitchell and her *Kiss of the Dragon* collection for autumn–winter 2004 was unashamedly Chinese-inspired, taking its inspiration from 1920s' and 1930s'—read post-Republic, pre-war—Shanghai. Prior to the show, media had been given chopsticks with their invitations. With Mitchell's background in costume design, this was an inspired choice and minor cultural *faux pas* aside, it was beautifully executed. Construction on every piece was top-notch, while Mitchell injected proceedings with celebrities on the catwalk including Brigitte Berger, Geeling Ng, Jennifer Ward-Lealand and Susan Wood.

We should devote some very brief time to the *faux pas*. This may be the world of fashion, where cultural symbols are borrowed. Certainly, there were no problems seeing longevity symbol appear; nor were there issues with some hand-lettering on stockings that could have been done better. But a white wedding dress is not, especially if it were to feature a celebratory symbol on its lace. White, the colour of mourning and funerals in the Chinese culture, had little place here.

But we should focus on the rest of the collection—which was exquisitely beautiful.

Mitchell, according to her company, had been fascinated with *Flower World of the Courtesans* and pre-war Shanghai. As one of the few couture designers at LNZFW, Mitchell



triumphed with beauty and tradition.

Her initial garments were very traditional, but showed off a new foray for Mitchell: underwear.

Slips, French knickers, slips and bras were decorated with hand-painted peonies and chrysanthemums, showing from beneath traditional coats. We adored her black silk and lace wrap and the modern twists—initially thanks to colour—that Mitchell injected into the 1930s style. Her hand-painted silks, used on dresses, were among the best all week.

She logically moved to whites and golds with white lace trim for dresses as the show departed from the initial Chinese inspiration, and included, expectedly, modernized cheongsams. Top marks to Mitchell for her black corset dress under an olive coat and her second-to-last deep purple sleeveless cheongsam with an obi, with the longevity symbol repeated on each collar.

To stress the couturière background, the red used on a silk wrap and a velvet dress was more regal than the typical Chinese shade, helping stress the Liz Mitchell brand as a high-end one—a clever combination of her initial inspiration with modern sensibilities.

Her obis were to die for, complementing her designs

CATWALK DAY 4



THIS PAGE: Karen Walker.



beautifully. In addition, bias cutting à la Vionnet, fur collars, hand-painting, fans and parasols and other accessories contributed to the bridging between 1930 and 2003.

Betjemans Salon's John Waring was as remarkable, if not more so: we adored his fan-inspired hair pieces which aimed to re-create stylized Chinese hair-styles from the period. Deb Tan, the only Chinese-sounding name we recognized from the Liz Mitchell show team, produced an admirable, updated make-up style, using pale gold base tones and terracotta over and under the eyes, according to the company.



There is some truth that last impressions last, so rather than revisit the finalé, we'll leave readers with this thought: of all the collections at LNZFW, this was a fine one to close the on-site shows on. Liz Mitchell is going to go far with this collection, which we noted was favoured immensely by buyers and the many gathered celebrities in the audience. Of all the collections, this was the best suited for the Oscar red carpet and cemented Liz Mitchell as a brand of quality for a very discerning eveningwear—not to mention underwear—buyer.

THE ORIGINAL To close L'Oréal New Zealand Fashion Week for 2003, one of New Zealand's most famous designers, Karen Walker, presented her 'Queenie was a Dog' collection at an Auckland recording studio.

The collection opened to the early '80s Joy Division hit, 'She's Lost Control', with models sitting on a rotating raised platform. The collection, inspired by the fairgrounds of the early 1930s, contained a variety of colourful pieces emblazoned with cute circus prints.

As predicted by one *Lucire* correspondent, Walker would pay tribute to New York punk band, the Ramones; T-shirts featured well-known slogans 'Gabba Gabba Hey' and 'Hey Ho, Let's Go'. The collection upheld an essence of the '80s with skin-tight tapered jeans, ruffled collars and velvets. Drapy fabrics such as satins and chiffons were crafted into



carefully beaded kimonos complemented with suspender belts.

Walker's chosen colour palette consisted of muted greys and browns, contrasted by candy brights such as peaches and aquas. Models wore the recently re-released Reebok Classic high top basketball boots, also a tribute to the 1980s.

Walker also released her range of jewellery at the show, which uses a variety of gems, customized with

her ironic sense of humour. The jewellery range features diamond-encrusted skulls, monogram rings and charms, with icons of Walker's previous 10 collections.

While the venue was criticized by some for its absence of seating, *Lucire's* view remained: as long as we get to see her collections in London as well, and as long as the clothes are this good, did we really need pampering? It was not a view widely shared, not least by two foreign buyers to whom we spoke.

One could not say this ended LNZFW on a low note—there was plenty of free Bollinger and parties to attend after Walker's show. And venue aside, Walker is sure to secure plenty of buyers on sheer quality and great design. She delivered on the things that were important to fashion. It's a useful reminder to those who let personality get in the way.

For those still down come Friday morning, the Stella Artois Fashion Wrap party at St Matthew's in the City that night would raise any mood with its house music and video installation by Andrei Jewell. It was a fitting end to another L'Oréal New Zealand Fashion Week.

It's getting hot in here

The southern summer sees swimwear take on a more exciting feel as antipodean designers break out of conservatism

GO SHELL, GO WELL Leiana Rei deserves a mention additional to her successful LNzFW show. She took home the Deutz Fashion Design Ambassador Award—and we managed to fit in half an hour to check out her paua shell-inspired collection at the Auckland City Art Gallery before dashing off to Nom D on October 21. Leiana won a return trip to the UK for a design-related programme and NZ\$3,000 toward expenses and inclusion in the D&AD Getty Images Bloodbank database of the very best new creative talent (www.dandad.org/gettyimages/bloodbank). For more information on the Leiana Rei range, call 64 4 802-5074, 64 25 511-766 or email leianarei@ihug.co.nz.



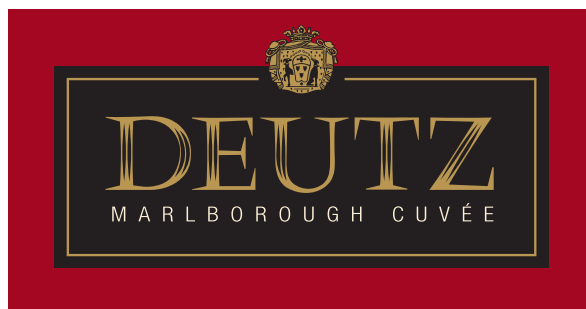
DIAL MMM FOR MOOCHI Moochi's founders have swimwear roots, so it's a welcome sight for the southern summer that we see eight separate pieces, based around the idea of Freedom, from the hot label. Visit Moochi at www.moochi.co.nz or at the flagship store at Moochi Corner, corner High Street and Vulcan Lane, Auckland (64 9 373-9823).



JETS JETZT Next month in *Lucire*, we'll profile Jessika Allen, the designer behind Australian label Jets. As an Australasian brand, it's one of the most successful—at Harvey Nic's, it's the retailer's number one, sold without any marketing. Fit, fabrication and quality are behind this range; visit www.jets.net.au.

COURTESY MONTANA WINES





proud sponsor of new zealand fashion