

fashion | **Fresh in the city**

Tami Yu looks at Gen Art's Fresh Faces in Fashion show for spring 2005 in San

Francisco

PHOTOGRAPHED BY **CHRISTINE LUONG**

WITH SAN FRANCISCO MAYOR Gavin Newsom as one of the special guests in attendance, the Gen Art "Fresh Faces in Fashion" show began with a formidable and solid start on October 15 at the Regency Center in San Francisco. The twice-yearly fashion show presented four emerging designers chosen from over 150 entries submitted to the non-profit arts group which showcases up-and-coming talent in fashion, film, art and music. Featuring their respective spring 2005 collections, here are this fall's selected rising stars within the fashion realm.

Oligo Tissew

Kicking off the show was none other than Christopher Enuke's Oligo Tissew spring 2005 collection. A Gen Art alumnus, Enuke is famous in the LA fashion scene with his Oliver Twist line, dressing for stars like Lenny Kravitz. Ever the eccentric, passionate artist that he is, Enuke's designs were definitely wearable in the casual-chic mode, with his red signature back pocket stitching branding some of his denim pieces.

Paired with slinky knit sweaters, his unusual detailing stood out in strategic areas, such as placing slimming darts in the knee area or contrast stitching on the jeans cuff. One interesting piece that Enuke featured was a denim miniskirt that had a thin layer of tulle underneath to put a girlish yet punky twist to the overall look. All in all, the spring collection is a refreshing departure from all the deep dark hues we've been used to seeing for the current season.

Latifa

Latifa's spring 2005 designs pays homage to an organic, natural world that inspired the volumes and silhouettes of the hand-finished silks and finely felted wools of her collection. Self-described as an extended reflection on our relation with the natural world her pieces also serve as a formal interaction between nature and the human physique.

One great example of that is the sumptuous



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Peacock hand-painted felted merino skirt with the matching Shantung silk bustier. Another beautifully wrought dress was Latifa's dramatically black Decoupé dress, made with felted, laced cut-out merino and taffeta silk. The showstopper of her entire collection was the felted merino ivory wedding dress. Its clean, simple lines with a laced découpé effect conveyed an elegant image of soon-to-be matrimonial bliss. If I were to wear such a dress, I'd totally want to get married in a redwood forest, pretending to be a fairy princess bride. As a newcomer, this designer is definitely one to watch for in the near future.

Fierce Couture

One of the best surprises of the evening was the raw yet refined presentation of Tressa Williams' Fierce Couture collection. Not just for fetish fashion connoisseurs, Williams' designs are actually quite wearable for the fashionista seeking an edgy look to complete her wardrobe. Her dramatic evening gowns, skirts and dresses focused on sweeping graphic lines and bold colour contrasts.

Using asymmetric designs in the vivid palette of black, white and red Latex, they are truly sexy garments that are made to draw attention to the wearer. One of my favourite pieces was her black and white Latex floor-length halter gown. The tailored cut of the entire piece clung to every curve of the model's physique, oozing sensuality with each step she took down the runway. Another great piece was the red and black diamond detail gown. I am not a real fan of latex-based garments, but after watching the Fierce Couture show, Williams gets a big thumbs-up from me.

Hieros

Well-known in San Francisco's fashion industry, Roger Alan's Hieros line was the only menswear collection being presented for the entire show. Having mentored many local designers in the past, Alan finally decided to focus on his own creations, which became his Hieros spring 2005 line.

Consisted of fitted shapes to put an edgier spin on the casual-sporty theme, his stretch button-down shirts were sharp and bold with contrast details. The lavender stripe shirt with contrast placket was really smart-looking paired with a lavender shirt with a super collar and cuffs, which was then completed with herringbone denim jeans. The pink stripe cowboy shirt was another new look, which was nicely contrasted with white pants with besom welted pockets. For a snazzier look, the tan gabardine jacket and pinstripe wool pant ensemble worked very well to create a slightly more dramatic aura. With such creative vision, I am hoping Alan will continue to be an influence in the local fashion scene.

Cari Borja

Following the Hieros show was newcomer Cari Borja. A believer in adding an element of drama to each of her creations, Borja's theme for the spring consisted of combinations of slinky satins and heavy brocades.

Her pieces had just the right splash of colour by incorporating contrast stitching in a few of her garments. This is evident in Borja's cloud blue *peau de soie* double ruffle skirt with brown contrast stitching and rosettes. It is dramatic enough to go partying, yet functional enough to also wear it to a soirée beforehand. The bronze satin gown with quince satin jacquard godets was another standout from her line, shimmering with flowy lines of fabric. The winner of her collection was the gorgeous



PAPARAZZI IMAGES, ABOVE: Erika Gessin of Mystery Girl Productions and friend; Mayor Gavin Newsom with the author.

Bell by Alicia Bell

Rounding out the stellar ensemble of designers was Alicia Bell, who put a feminine and elegant finish by presenting her Bell spring 2005 line. Another Gen Art alumna, Bell featured French tulle and laces, evoking girlish daydreams of romance and whimsy. One truly feels like a modern-day princess when you slip into one of Bell's rich silk tweed suits, which consisted of a tailored jacket paired with an A-line skirt. A sexier variation of that ensemble had a mini-skirt instead of the chaste A-line. Bell's line also featured a girlish French cotton tulle and lace evening dress with a butterfly brooch, which was by far my favourite piece from the entire collection. With a vintage twist to her look, Bell's fabulous creations made me want to flirt and dance all night ...*

Tami Yu is a special correspondent for *Lucire*, working with San Francisco editor Catherine Rigod.

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by red satin gown with amethyst plaid jacquard panels, which had a smoky glamour to the entire piece. With all these beautiful gowns, one can hardly wait for Borja's next season's offerings.

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