

New York exhibition plots rise of global fashion

NEW YORK: Paris, Milan, New York and London may reign in world fashion, but Asian and South American cities are ones to watch, according to an exhibition at one of the world's best design schools...



A Spring 2006 design from Manish Arora, based in New Delhi.

Image credit: [Courtesy of the Museum at FIT](#)

Dubbed "Around the world in 80 Items" by Style.com, the museum at New York's Fashion Institute of Technology is charting a new generation of fashion-forward cities eyeing global prominence.

The exhibition displays dozens of outfits and accessories ranging from a 1890 couture cape by the then-toast of Paris, Charles Frederick Worth, to a 2015 beaded dress by Nigeria's Lisa Folawiyo.

It showcases the likes of Chanel, Prada, Alexander McQueen and Ralph Lauren with emerging talent from as far afield as Antwerp, Istanbul, Kiev, Johannesburg, Mexico, Mumbai, Sao Paulo, Shanghai and Tokyo.

The exhibition calls itself "Global Fashion Capitals" and identifies 19 emerging cities, showcasing the work of many designers not well known or who have never shown before in the United States.

In the last 10 years, there has been an explosion in hundreds of "fashion weeks" where designers display their latest collections to attract buyers and the media in a multibillion-dollar industry.

But if the four most important fashion destinations are Paris, New York, Milan and London, then who comes next?

"There are a lot of people vying for that fifth and sixth place," exhibition co-curator Ariele Elia told AFP. Her picks are Sao Paulo, Seoul and Shanghai, with a special mention for newbie Istanbul, which started a fashion week in 2009.

Interest in couture in Brazil's business capital dates back to the 1950s. The city also has very strong clothing and manufacturing industries, and since the 1980s has been creating its own designs.

A contemporary silhouette

The exhibition's flag bearer for Brazil is Alexandre Herchcovitch, whose 2007 jumpsuit fuses tribal-style beadwork and Brazilian colors into what the exhibition calls "a contemporary silhouette."

Sao Paulo Fashion Week - the largest fashion show in Latin America - was where Brazil's Gisele Bündchen, the world's top earning model, retired from the catwalk in April, and made her debut.

Seoul, with its vibrant street style, and Shanghai, as the commercial capital of China, is attracting increased interest.

But Shannon Bell Price, assistant dean at Pratt Institute - another of New York's leading design schools - who has not seen the exhibition singled out Tokyo and Antwerp.

"Globalisation has made manufacturing less important as a locale but the creative class and financial resources are essential," she told AFP by email.

Antwerp and Tokyo's emergence in the 1990s were spurred by "creativity and specific designers gaining global recognition," she added, naming Rae Kawaakubo and Issey Miyake, and the Antwerp Six.

Emerging designers can "make it" without basing their businesses in Paris, Milan, New York or London but Price says "it is harder as the financing is in these places."

Among those on show at the exhibition, Shanghai's Masha Ma also has offices in Paris. India's Manish Arora presents his collections in Paris and Nigeria's Folawiyo has shown her work in Milan.

Russian designer Alexey Sorokin, whose dresses are also featured, also visited New York to meet buyers. He told AFP his inclusion was a "very good promotion."

Slightly surprisingly, the curators also included Kiev, despite the Ukrainian revolution, with a special nod to Daria Shapovalova, who has worked tirelessly to put her city on the fashion map.

"They still have a very strong fashion industry despite the revolution and fabric shortages," Elia said. "Despite a lot of political or economic difficulties, fashion can still exist."

Source: AFP

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