

Wear Art on Your Sleeve

RICHA BHATIA Tuesday , Apr 21, 2009

Young designers find inspiration in architecture and mobile phones to come up with quirky wearable art

Vibrant, quirky and original. That, in a nutshell, describes the entries of Indian students for this year's World of Wearable Art (WOW) show. On Saturday evening, New Zealand High Commissioner Rupert Holborow threw open the lawns of his lavish residence at Chanakyapuri for socialites and designers to witness a show that has no "commercial intent attached and celebrates unadulterated originality with designs". While a few diplomats, including Egyptian Ambassador Dr Mohamed Abdel Hamid Higazy, waxed eloquent about the concept, designers Rina Dhaka, Manish Arora, Varun Sardana and Gaurav Gupta tittered about the remarkable garment constructions.

Blurring the boundaries between art and fashion, the 10 sculptural garments unveiled by 12 designers proved something to be lusted after; and Dhaka was heard crooning over a yellow bumblebee hat. From the entries, three will be chosen for the 10-day WOW show to be held at Wellington, New Zealand, in September.

The show began with a creation titled 3D Utopia inspired by futuristic buildings, with a model striding down the ramp juggling pink triangular building blocks on her tunic by KB Prashant Nair. What was more impressive was Vikram Chavan's The Beautiful Door inspired by old, rusted doors. The model swayed down the ramp encased in a gown crafted out of plastic foam that looked like wooden panels that were fastened with rivets and with a sprawling hemline that boasted a five-foot circumference. And it wasn't as if the show lacked colour.

Lavina Mahbubani, a NIFTian, cranked out a funky line inspired by skewed primary colours that reminded you of the bold, exuberant outfits of Arora, who surveyed the show from the sidelines.

The show even had a "vampire" gliding down the ramp covered in a frame of white wool and a mythical creature with a dragon's head and a tortoise's body. The piece-de-resistance came in the end when a model, her head encased in a giant mobile charger, swaggered towards the audience in an outfit crafted out of 3,000 charger pins scoured from Chandni Chowk. "The idea was to show the urban youth's preoccupation with mobile phones," said Rishab Rhode, one of the designers.

"These pieces can find a place in a museum," said Dhaka, sporting a tee from her upcoming spring-summer collection. And Holborow exclaimed, "It's just like taking art off the wall and putting it on the body."

