

The Art Institute of California – Inland Empire Beamed its Futuristic Fashion Collection at “UTOPIA” Red Carpet Event

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By Natasha Simone Ferguson

The Art Institute of California - Inland Empire (AI) recently blasted off to another dimension with its futuristic fashion show put on by its fashion design students. Utopia – the look of tomorrow – made you feel like you were on another galaxy or on the set of a popular sci-fi movie. AI's Creative Director and Executive Producer of Utopia 2012 fashion show Sherry West explained where the concept came from. Her son Rex Armstrong who is a huge sci-fi movie buff was the inspiration behind the theme for the show. “After going to see Disney’s animated sci-fi movie TRON with my son Rex, it sparked the idea for Utopia,” said West. She then went to AI’s graphic design department who immediately went to work on the futuristic-themed concept.

The creative graphic design team; known as the fantastic four led by Kim Schaffer, Stephen Cordoza, Karla Soza and Jennifer Pena helped to create the theme of the show. In addition, the AI Fashion Department faculty including Dawn Knapp as lead facilitator, Morrison Jackson, Ninz Sangha, JC Canedo, Ceclia Ng, and Phyllis Clark were instrumental in working behind the scenes to help Utopia come to life.

AI’s President Emam El Hout and his wife were among the special guests present at Utopia fashion event. The futuristic theme of the show was carried out throughout the program from the set design with its black backdrop and twinkle lights, along with elaborate special effect lighting, galactic sound effects and music.

The Master of Ceremony was KGGI radio personality KC Morris. The models took flight down the runway like galloping thoroughbred horses, strutting their stuff to the electrifying sounds of DJ Snipez and his sound crew. Models in Utopia’s opening segment, titled “Drama Queenz” were decked in metallic and aluminum-like fabrics and textures. The styles presented were flashy, innovative, chic and eccentric all rolled into one. Fashion show segments included evening wear (Galaxy Glam), swimwear (Techno Beach), Lunar Lingerie and more. The fashion show was interspersed with intermissions of entertainment from singing Pop duo ‘Perfect Harmony’, as well as ‘BJ Brasier and Serious Effect Dance Crew’.

Fashion Design Stylist of the stars John Arguelles, president of Lloyd Klein Couture was a special guest who helped present awards which were handed out at the end of the show in various categories. Arguelles told the audience he attends lots of professional and student shows worldwide and themed-shows are always a challenge. However, he noted that Utopia was an excellent show and very well put together.

“All of the student designers have a great future ahead of them,” said Arguelles as he introduced the fashion categories and winners. The first recipient was the Fantastic Four design team who won a \$1,000 scholarship to the leader Schaffer, and \$500 each to her crew. Other awards given out along with scholarships included: Roxanne Sias who won for ‘Most Futuristic Design’; Daniel Bolt for ‘Most Creative’; Nikki Patterson for ‘A Rising Star’; and Saleemah Lewis in two categories ‘Senior Collection’ for her lingerie, and ‘Director’s Critic Choice’.

This red carpet event was well attended and delicious hors d' oeuvres flowed throughout the evening courtesy of AI's International Culinary Department. The evening concluded with a reception and after party on the patio immediately following the show. Proceeds from the event will go towards The Education Foundation scholarships, for the Fashion Design and the Fashion & Retail Management programs at The Art Institute of California – Inland Empire. For more information about AI call 909-915-2100 or 1-800-353-0812 or visit www.artinstitutes.edu/inland-empire.