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Miami Beach International Fashion Week 2011



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Miami Beach International Fashion Week was held on March 3 to 6th at the Miami Beach Convention Center. The event, produced by MBIFW president Beth Sobol and managing partner Aaron Perry was held for the 13th consecutive year bringing together a wide range of designers. According to Beth Sobol, when she first started MBIFW , “ it was to introduce the Latin American designers to the US market but then even in the first couple of years it grew so much we had designers from all over the world asking to be part of the event so we opened it up and we have designers from Dubai, Malaysia, all over the Middle East, Asia, Central America, South America and the Caribbean.”

The Miami Beach Convention Center offered ample space for the all black set up with a white center catwalk. A jewelry and accessories show case, culinary lounge with food and wine and champagne sampling (as well as some Stella Artois for the gentlemen in the building) and a special lounge introducing Moroccan Oil (I have to try the sample and let you know if it works!) set the ambience and leave enough space to move around comfortably and avoid the fleet of journalists, photographers and cameras moving through the venue to interview Miami celebrities, models, designers and sponsors.

Welcome to Miami!

Miami Beach of course has a strong Latin American and Caribbean Diaspora and those influences were prevalent throughout the events. Miami Beach also evokes imagery of bronzed beach goddesses, luxurious yachts, glitz and glamour and over the top South Beach parties.

Let's check out the collections day by day!

THURSDAY

On Thursday Miami Beach International Fashion Week officially kicked off with the first models on the runway at the Miami Beach Convention Center. Thursday started off with Lingerie and Swimwear followed by the "Miami Style Showcase", the real highlight of the day.

THE EMERGING

So-me designs for the No More Tears Organization is a socially conscious clothing company. Each shirt has a different design such as gay rights , equality , war etc. Each time you buy a shirt 10% of the profit goes to a non-profit organization called "No More Tears" which helps fight against domestic violence for women and children. The designer is Somy Ali is a former Bollywood actress, model and journalist. The designer says " Can you save the world one shirt at a time? Yes! By making choices that are good for the Earth and its people, you can make a difference every day. Our designs support sustainable manufacturing, foster ideas of peace and harmony, create awareness about global issues and help to empower the powerless. I have seen mankind at its very best and very worst. I promise you together we can make a difference."

Miami Fashion Week also showcases children's wear and GooRoo Baby showed a collection of cute t-shirts for boys and girls with some additional fancy tulle skirts for the sweet little ladies in red and pink. Four different young Miami designers showcased dresses ranging from club dress to evening wear. Sophisticated with masked models at Erin Healy, ruffled evening wear with tulle in nude, gold and black at Cezar Rosario and a compact dress collection in silk and jersey at Arefeh Mansouri and finally dresses with interesting details reminiscing of trees at Zula Khramov. Art of Shade mixed rock chic style with sportswear inspired pieces in white and black with sheer details and zippers, creating a feel of clubbing in the psych ward.

MIAMI'S TOP

Julian Chang is known as one of Miami's finest, mixing glamour with sexiness and confidence. His new collections incorporating men's and women's wear included tailored pants with bondage- inspired shirts for men and for the ladies real Miami chic, floaty with glitz and gold details accessorized with floppy sun hats.

The Parsons New York alumni Viviana G, designer of Petit Pois is of Venezuelan background and produces her line 100% in the USA on site in Miami. Of her work she says "My designs are made of special fabric I create with mesh. We produce our own fabric and do our own colors and do a lot of beautiful prints. We create everything in our own factory here in Miami Beach. This fabric is fabulous for traveling . It has a resort feeling but at the same time you can dress it up or dress it down. It is easy to take care of it. Our colors and prints are so unique and they have this feeling of eclectic and vintage and of my travels around the world. We do a full collection- tops, dresses, bottoms. We do 4 collections a year. Right now we produce over 6000 pieces a month out of the factory in Miami and we currently have the collection in 1200 stores in the US - New York, California, Dallas, Atlanta." When asked about the significance of Miami Fashion Week Viviana states "First of all it is my home. Now I am trying to devote more time to Miami Beach because everybody has been asking me 'Viviana, you do so many shows around the USA, we want you to be part of Miami.' Miami has grown so much and we have so much beauty and so much energy here and now I need to translate that to all my fans and everyone who loves my collection."

Samy Gitcherman sent doll-like models down the runway. They reflected the theme and the make up, accessories and ambience complemented the fashion on show. The collection was very 40s inspired, Charleston-style with flapper dresses, slightly boxy shapes, frills, lace, headbands and tassels. Venezuelan designer Nicolas Felizola presented a collection of tailored suits for men and cocktail dresses for women. The designer, who is also a photographer and attorney, is consider among the top 10 of Latin American Designers.

FRIDAY

Friday was the most exciting day in terms of the collections and the highlight of Miami Beach International Fashion Week with the "Jamaica Showcase", the "Men's Showcase" and the "International Eveningwear Showcase"

THE JAMAICA SHOWCASE

It was the evening of the Jamaican designers: Camesha Powell, Juliette Dyke, Keneea Linton, Barry Moncrieffe, Sandra Kennedy, Carlton Brown, Ayanna Dixon and Shenna Carby

Poshe by Camesha Powell was my personal favourite with the "Jamrock Glam"-Collection, dresses, pants, skirts and jackets in black, red, yellow and green. Described as a "vibrant, sexy and effervescent stylish" designer Camesha Powell delivered everything a young stylish fashionista would want to wear - with an extra edge of Jamaican rude gyal.

Julan by Juliette Dyke was all about resort wear and Carlton Brown demonstrated why he is at the forefront of Jamaican menswear designers with perfectly tailored pants and shirts in red and black as well as stylish logo t's paired with knee length cropped pants for the more fashion forward male. Keneea Linton, Sandra Kennedy and Barry Moncrieffe, all household names in Jamaican fashion design teamed up as the "Jamaica Collective" for a collection reflecting their sensibilities in combination, creating a mix of black and red dresses screaming sophistication and style. The winners of the Jamaica's Mission Catwalk Designers Challenge, Ayanna Dixon and

Shenna Carby showed bright tailored pants and bodysuits in pink, orange, lime and blue as well as summer dresses in fuchsia, yellow and sky blue respectively.

THE MEN'S SHOWCASE and THE INTERNATIONAL EVENINGWEAR SHOWCASE

On show for the stylish man were linen pants and shirts in pastel colours and red and lime green jackets at Alberino, gray and pewter suits and studded European -cut swim briefs at Flores, casual wear consisting of cuffed jean, flannel shirts, hoodies and cotton t-shirts at Girbaud and the competition winner Bata brought a S&M theme alive on the runway with models clad in black leather and black mesh vests.

In the International Eveningwear Showcase we saw ultra-feminine silk dresses with ballooning sleeves and flower-like girlrands at Damaris Rubio, chiffon dresses at Patuna Bushyhead and handbags at Montenero. The most dramatic of the night though were Rocky Gathercole and Baron Levon Siamanto. Gathercole's collection was carnival and theatre live on the runway with models resembling fairy tale creatures covered in glittery iridescent bodysuits, feathers and angel wings. Baron Levon brought a different kind of art to the catwalk with elaborately painted dresses a la haute couture.

SATURDAY

PRET-A-PORTER STYLE

The shows started off with Eccentric Apparel showing the latest bows and blankets for your coiffed pooches, followed by the collection of Luxxe™. The designer Nicolette Mayer's models sashayed down the runway in Miami-style outfits made of the trademarked body enhancing "supreme comfort slimwear". Argentina's Mariela Allaix presented beautiful loom woven and crochet dresses and beach covers and the Marina Marakon Moscow collection stood out for its unique bold and brightly printed scarves, tops and dresses. When asked about MBIFW, the designer Marina Marakon said "My experience at MBIFW reminded me of a jubilant ride down a water slide, refreshing, speedy and breathtaking."

THE COPA AIRLINES SHOWCASE

After an opening with a dance performance the showcase featured women's wear by Peruvian designer Claudia Bertolero, an equestrian-inspired collections of black and brown dresses and pants in velvet and leather, one of Saturday's best. Federico Visuetti of Panama showed men's suits and evening gowns, as did Eduardo Gonzalez of Colombia. Giovanni Scutarò's Fall/Winter 2011 collection "Back To Roots" featured extravagant evening wear in blue, purple, rose and lime featuring special guest "model" Adriana de Moura-Sidi of the TV show "the Real Housewives of Miami", while Marcelo Quadros from Sao Paulo in Brazil stayed true to his concept of "glamorous, quintessential and chic".

THE LATIN FASHION COUNCIL SHOWCASE

Featured on this final showcase were childrens wear label Blue Island by designer Madelaine Morel from the Dominican Republic with fun beach and summer wear for boys and girls. Ecuadorian Paulina Anda was the only shoe designer of the night with some interesting pieces. Ana Carolina Valencia incorporated Latin American ethnic details into her designs while Paulina Bedoya of Ecuador closed of the show with her women's wear collection.

Time to enjoy some drinks at the after party! Until next year again!