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Catwalk enchantment at Miami Beach International Fashion Week



Aside from the strange Scottish music playing in the background, the paramount show at Miami Beach International Fashion Week recently was the product of designer Damaris Rubio. A gang of romper-wearing models showcased Rubio's collection, five models at a time gracing the catwalk in complementary outfits, each in a different hue and each embellished with a different sewing technique, including petal and ruffle accents, perfect for this springtime weather.

The finest collection of menswear came from Girbaud, the most functional and gratifying assortment of men's clothing, very similar to Lucky Brand ensembles. Complete with button-up plaid shirts in all sorts of colors, layered to precision, the majority of Girbaud's designs had the worn look, with distressed sweat shirts and roughed up high-tops, for the ultimate laid-back appeal.

The most practical collection came from Jamaica's Mission Catwalk Designers Challenge participant, Ayanna Dixon. The garments were simple — straight-legged trousers and crewneck blouses — but it was the work of vivid colors that transformed the garments into timeless pieces.

With a beachier feel, designer Boston Proper grabbed all the attention with abnormal prints. Even though the general design of the garments was average, without a doubt Boston Proper was the most successful designer at Miami, with great diversity to appeal to all women, from white power suits to gowns fit for soirees in the sand.

Model diversity

A peek backstage quickly dissolved the serenity of perfection evoked by the spotless catwalk at Miami Beach International Fashion Week. Despite the aesthetically pleasing appearance of everyone there, the grueling work of putting on a fashion show was on frenetic display through a haze of aerosol hair spray.

Even in such a stressed environment, charming personalities shone through. I placed myself within the sea of models and it was like visiting the countries at Epcot, my ears trying to discern so many accents at once.

Two modeling giants from Serbia, Nemanja Lisov and Igor Mladenovic, were imported from New York for MBIFW, Lisov being the spokesman for award-winning Serbian designer Bata Spasojevic.

Mladenovic, a member of the St. Francis College nationally ranked water polo team, was clearly just as much at home among the sweet aromas of body oils and sprays as the scent of chlorine.

A majority of the models were scouted while playing a sport; Rian Buckley majored in political science and Chinese on a swimming scholarship until she was discovered three years ago. Since then, Buckley debuted at the recent New York Fashion Week, modeling for top designers such as Vera Wang.

All the models I met were extremely educated. All either were attending a university or had graduated with some sort of stupendous degree. Russian model Masia completed a degree in engineering; for her, wearing gorgeous gowns is only a (very profitable) hobby.