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Fashion Week Cleveland -- The final show

Posted by [kcrow](#) May 11, 2008 17:18PM

Fashion Week Cleveland ended Saturday night with a gala runway show at the Galleria downtown. Fourteen designers, both student and professional, showed to an enthusiastic crowd of nearly 400. This capped nearly 8 straight days of fashion-related programming, ranging from runway shows to lectures to movies and documentaries that both celebrated fashion and put it under a microscope.

Held on two levels in the former Limited space at the Galleria, the black-tie Fashion Week Cleveland gala finale democratically featured seven student designers and seven professional designers. The show made definite progress in terms of organization by introducing each collection separately, courtesy of a most startlingly enthusiastic signage-wielding model, who at times generated more crowd conversation than the actual clothes.


Headliner Tad Boetcher, a KSU fashion school alum who's found success in major New York design houses, unveiled his first solo line, dubbed tad b., to universal raves. Boetcher is well-known in fashion circles for his sure hand with knitwear, and he ably showed the crowd how that reputation was made, with sophisticated, well-cut separates that make the most of artful embellishment and a muted, wearable palette. These are the clothes that readers always complain are missing from their wardrobes. But luckily for us, Boetcher confided that they'll be at the Dillard's Beachwood location come fall.

Another standout was Brittany Rucella's Ccella Bottega collection, which showed a real progression in design maturity from her debut during FWC last May. Rucella works only with organic or repurposed fabrics and vegetable dyes; her sparkling palette of celadon green and periwinkle purple is a revelation in an environmental-chic movement in fashion that seems to be all boring shades of cream and beige. Rucella gives credit to her new design partner Irene for the primly sexy vibe of the collection. Particular highlights include Peter Pan collared tops paired with hip-slung pencil skirts -- business fabulous indeed.

My seatmate and I also enjoyed the rock-and-roll fur and leather collection from Tanya Seals' Glam Furs label, which were not only glamorous but multi-purpose



Brynne Shaw/Plain Dealer
Britini Brocker of Kent State University showed three dazzling gowns.




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--a hip-length coat unzips to motorcycle-jacket length, collars and trim that detach to become fur scarves and muffs.

KSU's Linda Ohrn-McDaniel and Sherry Schofield-Tomschin showed impeccable craftsmanship in their respective lines of primarily eveningwear, while Vince Quevedo of XXXX showed a handful of the lone menswear looks though he, too, loves the dramatic qualities of women's evening gowns.

The students themselves weren't immune to the siren call of formal gowns. KSU's Britini Brocker showed three magnificent gowns, perfect for a cathedral wedding or a Grand Opera Ball, showing a Zac Posen-ish workmanship far beyond her years. Anne-Marie Gurko of Ursuline College spanned the mid-20th century with a cheerful series of polka dot sundresses, while Maggie Hill, also of KSU, offered sleek, cool sportswear line of updated puffer coats and hoodies that would look perfectly in place at the local Urban Outfitters store.

All this positivity is not to say that the evening was hiccup-free. A fitter would have been gainfully employed here, as most of the clothes seemed to be made for models a size or two bigger. Or perhaps it was the models who were too small --I swear my purse weighed more than several of the gorgeous gals. The music was alternately too loud and too quiet -- or perhaps that was more the fault of the raucous, rowdy, well-liquored crowd, which freely shouted its opinions on clothes, models and shoes to pals seated across the runway.

One way in which Cleveland fashion totally has it over on New York? The diversity of our runways, which featured beautiful women of wide-ranging ethnic backgrounds and body type, where New York's feature uniformly blond, pale Eastern-European teenage waifs.

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