

Fashion week: final Bryant Park show

By CHRISTINE BEAL DUNST

NEW YORK—From Feb. 11 to 18, Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week, after 17 years, 31 seasons, and close to 2,500 fashion shows, will celebrate its final season in Bryant Park, moving in September to its new home at Lincoln Center's Damosch Park, in New York. It is a location move that defines its place as a true cultural landmark among other Lincoln Center staples such as the NYC Ballet and Opera. Starting off a New Year and new global fashion cycle, the editors, retailers, buyers, press, and of course the fashionistas and celebrities are eager to see the collections of the world's premier and emerging designers and how this creative community sets the tones and trends for what

many of us will wear in Fall/Winter 2010; stores from Neiman Marcus to Target and Payless derive inspiration from the runways.

Over the course of the eight days, approximately 100,000 people will grace the iconic Bryant Park tents. However, two forces of nature got Fashion Week off to a tough start—the blizzard on Wednesday, Feb. 10 that pounded the eastern portion of the United States, and the shocking death on Thursday, Feb. 11 of acclaimed fashion icon Lee McQueen, designer of the Alexander McQueen line.

Two noteworthy events during this week brought attention to worldwide issues—heart disease and the tragedy in Haiti: The Heart Truth's Red Dress Collection 2010 and Fashion For Relief—



HEART AWARENESS: (L-R) Bethanny Frankel, Pauley Perrette, Estelle, Robin Roberts, Elisabeth Hasselbeck, and Valerie Harper attend backstage during The Heart Truth Red Dress Collection Fall 2010 during Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week at Bryant Park on Feb. 11 in New York. DIMITRIOS KAMBOURIS/GETTY IMAGES FOR HEART TRUTH



RUNWAY SHOW FOR HAITI: Super model Naomi Campbell at her "Fashion For Relief Haiti NYC 2010" show during the fall 2010 Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in New York, Feb. 12. TIMOTHY A. CLARY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Haiti NYC, 2010.

THE HEART TRUTH'S RED DRESS COLLECTION 2010

"Heart disease doesn't care what you wear—It's the number 1 killer of women." The Red Dress, the national symbol for women and heart disease awareness, was created by The Heart Truth in 2002 to deliver an urgent wakeup call to American women.

On Thursday, Feb. 11, The Heart Truth brought The Red Dress to life once again on the runway at New York Fashion Week. Several celebrities strutted down the runway for this noteworthy event that reminds women of the need to protect their heart health and inspires them to take action.

FASHION FOR RELIEF—HAITI NYC, 2010

Supermodel Naomi Campbell summoned her famous friends to put on a star-studded fashion show to raise money for earthquake-ravaged Haiti. Celebrities such as Kelly Osborne and designers Diane Von Furstenberg and Donna Karan took to the catwalk for this important cause.

Tickets were \$100–\$150 a pop and sold out in a matter of days, but fashion lovers around the world logged on to AOL to watch a live stream and donate to CARE via a dedicated Fashion For Relief link at www.CARE.org/FashionForRelief.



Cynthia Steffe. JEMAL COUNTESS/GETTY IMAGES FOR IMG

Funds raised across the overall event will be used directly to help rebuild the Haitian health care system for mothers and babies.

'FIERCE' FASHION HIGHLIGHTS

Christian Siriano is the talented "Project Runway" winner who brought the "Fierce" back into fashion. His show-closing fuchsia tulle ball-gown exemplified his collection's focusing on old-school glamor.

Jason Wu once again gained acclaim from the fashion dignitaries from Vogue to Neiman Marcus. Paint splattering on intriguing textiles, cashmere, extravagant feather dresses, and winter overcoat lay-



Nicole Miller. FERNANDA CALFAT/GETTY IMAGES FOR MERCEDES-BENZ

ering were themes. We'll see if Michelle Obama picks Wu's fashions again for next season.

Cynthia Steffe's sweet dresses layered over white shirts nod to classic uniform style (knee socks and all), made modern with cool wardrobe staples like cropped parkas. Her style is still feminine and playful, but polished.

Yigal Azrouel gave the business power dress an added kick this season. A pale gray, sheer, one-sleeved gown was an elegant standout.

Nicole Miller's inspiration this season was Bright Lights, Big City, and women who want to conquer their urban landscape. She rocked all kinds of blacks—wool hooded coats, minidresses, and denim. Legwarmers and skull knit caps were the accessory of choice—and, yes, they were BLACK.

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Speaking of Fashion



Some Memorable Designers From New York Fashion Week

By MIRIAM SILVERBERG

During Fashion Week, I always try to catch the shows of the more unknown or obscure designers. Some are ready for prime time and some, unfortunately, are obscure for a very good reason.

I caught Indian designer Sushma Patel's show. When I looked at her Fashion Week offerings, I thought of "The Arabian Nights." All the models wore high, cone-shaped peaked hats. Everything was a costume. The clothes were spangly with neon-bright sequins, cut in such a way you could not possibly wear underwear, and gimmicky (for example, an overt untying to become an apron).

Her designs looked cheap except for one: a black one-piece with loosely draped pants, spaghetti straps, and a thin line of sequins at the waist.

Clothes by American Adrian Alicea were more of the same—cheap, spangly, and unwearable. The first look he sent out (a long leopard-print skirt and gold print coat with fur trim) made me hope for something better. But everything else was fit for a Las Vegas showgirl. He showed lots of gold lamé, very low-cut backs, and tiny tulle skirts that looked as if they should be accessorized with lollipops for Lolita.

His costumes were a sorry parade of neon sequins, ruffles, leopard-print skirts as short as short shorts, and tulle—sometimes all together. Some of his things are so short that they barely cover the crotch. He's capable of better. He sent out one lovely, long, turtleneck black velvet

dress. It was so lovely that I wondered where it came from.

Catalin Botezatu from Romania sent out costumes too. Some were black and Gothic, and some looked as if they wandered off a Cecil B. DeMille film. They were glitzy and completely over the top. All the costumes had long trains, and some had sheer wraps of chiffon with fur pompoms. They were made so cheaply that as models just walked down the runway, some pompoms fell off.

But I finally found two designers from Nigeria who design for real women.

The first, the House of Jola, is doing some beautiful things. There were sweaters and loose pants fitted at the knee, kind of like bloomers but not overwhelming, and eminently wearable. There was a loose smock dress that was lovely. I didn't care for the long shirtwaist dresses. From where I was sitting, they seemed to be made of a cheap satin.

The other Nigerian designer is "Ouch." What a name, but what beautiful clothes. He does both men's and women's clothes, and there was a man's blue blazer that I would have loved for myself. He sent out marvelous leggings with loose shirts. I dress like this, and most women do today. His sportswear is superb.

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Donna Karan gathers help for Haiti

By DIANA MATHIAS
Epoch Times Staff

The Mercedes Benz New York Fashion Week opened Thursday, Feb. 11, with New York's designers focusing their attention on this high point of the season. But in the midst of the hustle and bustle before the week opened, Donna Karan rallied people from the fashion, art, music, and entertainment industries to hold an auction to raise money to help Haiti in the Hope Help & Relief Haiti (HHRH) event, "Night of Humanity," held on Monday, Feb. 8, at the Urban Zen Foundation.

And what did they auction? Bidders paid for tents, water treatment devices, and cooking stoves, supplies desperately needed by the earthquake survivors, in a campaign called "Tents Today, Home Tomorrow."

Karan's Urban Zen Foundation is working with other organizations, Partners in Health, Yele Haiti, and Habitat for Humanity, which will partner with the New York City Housing Authority to source volunteers and raise additional funds, according to a press release. The long-range goal is to help rebuild and revitalize a permanent, sustainable community in Haiti.

Combining their efforts with Karan's to present this event were music executive Andre Harrell, hotelier André Balazs, and The Mary J. Blige and Steve Stoute Foundation for the Advancement of Women Now (FFAWN). The entertainment for the evening was by Wyclef Jean and Mary J. Blige; Whoopi Goldberg was the auctioneer, and Soledad O'Brien of CNN was Master of Ceremonies.

The event raised \$1 million, Linda Gaunt Communications, press and media contact for Urban Zen Foundation, announced.

The "Night of Humanity" event

was the first in the HHRH series to raise support for Haiti. It was followed by "The Relief Party," an after-party at André Balazs's Standard Hotel, which included a live performance by Wyclef Jean and music by DJ QTip.

Future events for HHRH include a Haitian art exhibition and setting up "Haiti tents" to be on display during Fashion Week at Bryant Park and on the plaza in front of The Standard Hotel. T-shirts will be sold through the HHRH and Urban Zen Web sites as another way to raise funds for the cause.

According to a press release, Andre Harrell said: "The people of Haiti need to know that hope, help, relief, and empowerment is on the way. What better way to show Haiti that love is out there than to create this organization, and I cannot think of a better person to symbolize the idea of hope and rebirth than Mary J. Blige, who has more integrity and humanity than anyone I

know." And Urban Zen founder Donna Karan followed, saying that the aims of Hope Help & Relief Haiti mirror that of her own organization: "We are both committed to the philosophy of

past, present and future." They are working to preserve the rich Haitian culture of the past, provide for the physical needs right now, and as a final step, look to the future to build a sustainable community.



HELPING HAITI: Part of the organizing team for the Hope Help & Relief Haiti event "A Night Of Humanity," André Balazs (L) and Andre Harrell (R) applaud with Veronica Webb. LARRY BUSACCA/GETTY IMAGES



FASHION SHOWS COMPASSION: Donna Karan speaks onstage at the Hope Help & Relief Haiti event at Urban Zen in New York City. LARRY BUSACCA/GETTY IMAGES