

# Designers forecast a grey fall

## Sombre palette on the runways at L'Oréal Toronto Fashion Week

By Sarah B. Hood

Traditionally, the kick-off to L'Oréal Toronto Fashion Week is the media cocktail in the gleaming fashion bastion that is Holt's on Bloor. This year, however, the favoured few admitted into the swank style sanctum had already managed to attend five shows before they quaffed their first sip of Perrier.

Media mavens and guest celebs were welcomed by Robin Kay, president of the Fashion Design Council of Canada, who elaborated on this year's theme, Wear in the World. "This is a special season for us in Toronto," she said. "They wouldn't have come if they hadn't heard about the noise that we make in Toronto."

Kay was referring to such visitors as Italian politician Tiziana Maiolo (a champion of Milan's fashion industry), legendary Milane designer Elio Fiorucci, and a delegation of graduates from Milan's top fashion schools. Fiorucci said he considers himself fortunate to have worked during a time of revolution in the world of fashion. Recalling his years in New York with such icons as Basquiat, Keith Haring, Madonna and Andy Warhol (who launched his cutting-edge *Interview* magazine at Fiorucci's Manhattan boutique), he declared that we stand on the threshold of more great change because of globalization, which "brings us all closer together."

The international flavour of the season was balanced with appearances by local heroes. A roster of inspiring Canadian women walked the runway in red dresses to raise awareness of the "Heart Truth" campaign for women's heart health, like Olympian Charmaine Crooks; *Corner Gas* regular Nancy Robertson (cheerfully shoeless in a voluminous Paul Hardy creation), comic Mary Walsh and actor Catherine O'Hara (looking fab despite her catwalk tumble).

Other homegrown favourites were the *Project Runway* alumni (including Evan Biddell's cunningly complex constructions; bead-trimmed elegance by Lucian Matis and Carlie Wong's flirty frock collection). And there was a standing ovation for Julia Grieve and Peter Friesen of preloved, who pluckily ended their show of inventive jackets and dresses cut from old sweaters with the song "Burning Down the House" — a reference to the loss of their flagship retail outlet to the devastating Queen West fire earlier this season.

### KEY COLLECTIONS

**Nadya Toto:** Ladylike lines and astrakhan textures in shades of charcoal with surprising details. A stunning tex-

tured red dress of medieval simplicity.

**Denis Gagnon:** Liquid leathers: elegant William Gibson-esque future-goth chic, a stand-out show of the week.

**Nada:** Cerise and deep blue plus black in '80s-style luxe looks for office-to-nightclub transitions.

**Saniya Khan:** More structure than in past seasons from a designer whose forte is elaborately painted and embellished fabrics.

**Andy Thé-Anh:** The expected body-hugging evening gowns, plus tweedy day looks for Grace Kelly (if she had a desk job), all from a master of exquisite tailoring.

**David Dixon:** Another star. Feminine but practical pieces like graceful yoked dresses with pockets. A cloudlike black lace knit wrap with a generous built-in ribbed turtleneck collar.

**Zoran Dobrić:** Handworked Celtic ornaments in a fashion-forward collection channeling fin-de-siecle icons Gustav Klimt and Aubrey Beardsley.

**Nada Yousif:** More of Yousif's cheerful, youthful bubble minis and some of the week's rare colour: lemon, pink, purple, brown.

**Paul Hardy:** Elegant opulence, restrained excess with sheer overlays; huge sculpted rosette appliques and fur or feather capes.

Meanwhile, menswear was minimal in proportion but not in presence. It exuded timeless appeal in humorously re-imagined classics presented by Philip Sparks and Bustle.

### FALL TRENDS TO WATCH

**Shades of Grey:** To judge by the work on Toronto runways, you'll be able to get away with a monochrome wardrobe next fall, wearing every tone and texture of grey, from palest dove to deepest charcoal. The single must-have colour accent is royal purple. The rest of the palette is strictly sombre: rose, navy, aubergine, teal and olive, with mere touches of fresh blue, green, red or white to relieve the darkness.

**Less Sparkle, More Sheen:** The metallic trend evolves away from silver and gold into shimmering black and charcoal fabrics strewn with jet or crystal beads or bedizened with tiny black sequins. Think of glimmering stars in a winter sky or the gleam of night rain on dark pavement.

**Statement Sleeves:** Raglan sleeves were common, and many extended to the knuckles (Comrags jackets). Montrealers Andy Thé-Anh and Nadya Toto even built fingerless gloves into their pieces; Toto calls them "thumb holds."

**Warm Hands, Warm Heart:** Did this year's challenging weather inspire this quirky runway trend, or is it the increasing interest in luxurious furs? Several designers (Zoran Dobrić, Paul Hardy) resurrected the muff as a chic, embellished, hand-warming accessory. Philip Sparks went one further, and sent his male models down the runway in shaggy, oversized beaver mittens. So there'll be no excuse for chilly fingers next November. ♦



Above from right: a design by Joeffer Caoc; photo by George Pimentel; menswear from Philip Sparks; photo by McKenzie James. Below: another creation by Philip Sparks.



**Joeffer Caoc:** A show about texture: satin, leather, wool and velvet in simple clean lines that emphasized matte versus glossy surfaces. Another standout.



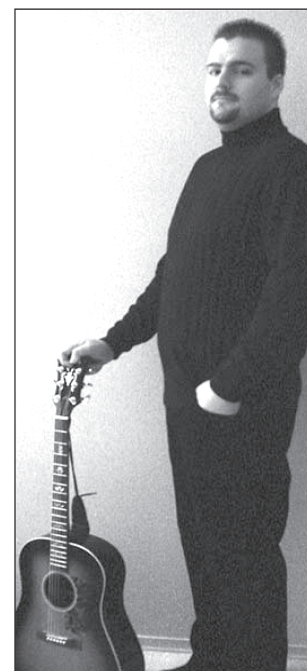
Left and above: fall fashions from Zoran Dobrić, bags by Mirjana Scepanović.

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