



PESTS?: Anti-fur protestors outside Fashion Week on Monday night.

Rookies get official status

by Heidi Sanderson

AUT fashion students presenting their label Rookie at this year's New Zealand Fashion Week have been granted official status for the first time.

The fashion design school was the only school invited to participate.

Fashion Week spokesperson Anna Hood says: "It's an ideal networking environment and a great chance for students to maximise their contacts."

She says it gives the students an opportunity to be involved in a high pressure media environment and is "an excellent opportunity for students to observe journalists at work".

AUT communications adviser Melanie Cooper says it is a great accomplishment for the university's fashion students.

"Three years ago they were asked to participate in Fashion Week. Before that they were working hard behind the scenes being ushers and doing the things that went unnoticed."

Hood says established fashion brands want to see talented student designers.

"It's a natural human instinct to want to see the latest, freshest ideas, especially if it can lead to a business opportunity."

Half of the 60 students in the final year of a Bachelor of Design course will show in the show.

Today's show is divided into three sections - apparel, knitwear and costume design, which are also specialisations offered in the degree.

Last year's student show attracted more than 800 guests, resulting in several students being approached by fashion brands and houses. Cooper says students from 2004 have been successfully placed within the industry since graduation.

Former student Danielle Rollo, who took part in an AUT Rookie show in Fashion Week 2003, won the Deutz Young Designer of the Year last week. She is now working for designer Adrian Hailwood.

Fur flies at Fashion Week

by Jonathan Williams

Anti-fur protesters made pests of themselves at the opening of Air New Zealand Fashion week on Tuesday night.

About 20 members of the group Auckland Animal Action made their presence felt, yelling and whistling as New Zealand

fashion's heavyweights made their way inside.

Rochelle Rees, spokesperson for the group, said their main objection was to the way possums are trapped before they are skinned. They say the use of fur is "unnecessary".

"Many of these animals are left for days until they die or chew off their leg to escape."

Rees says the group is campaigning against specific designers who are alleged to be using possum fur in their collections. They are also campaigning against the fashion event itself, because they say it supports the fur industry.

Smaller protests by the group took place throughout the week. Designers often claim that

using possum fur is environmentally friendly, as it helps keep the number of possums under control.

The MAF website quotes the number of possums in New Zealand as about 70 million.

Management of Fashion Week, and its principal sponsor, Air New Zealand, could not be reached for comment.

Designers 'too scared' to go off-schedule

by Zoe Walker

Off-schedule shows at New Zealand Fashion Week will not increase in number because most designers are too scared to do something different, says fashion publicist Murray Bevan.

"A lot of people don't have the balls to do it because they think they're going to piss too many people off," he says.

Bevan says a lot of New Zealand designers think Fashion Week is the "be all and end all in terms of selling their winter collections and promoting themselves".

He has nothing against Fashion Week - in fact he organised three shows this week.

"You've got to risk it sometimes; you've got to go out on a limb and get noticed. That's one of the reasons you do off-schedule - to create a bit of a stir."

Bevan, publicist for Karen Walker jewellery and the label huffer, organised last year's controversial off-schedule Little Brother show. He also organised the off-schedule Mala Brajkovic show last Saturday.

Off-schedule shows are those not on the official programme during a Fashion Week. Bevan says the decision to show off-schedule depends on what stage a designer's business is at. They may not be ready to export or wholesale, or the high cost of having an on-schedule show

may also put designers off.

Bevan says some of the most exciting shows are off-schedule.

"That's what the fashion buyers and media look for - the young upstarts who are making a mark for themselves."

Last year's Little Brother show drew criticism from some inside the fashion industry. The show inadvertently ended up clashing with the WORLD show.

"It was going to be after their show...but as it turned out, they were running very late, so we had editors trying to leave and go to the Little Brother show."

He was aware some designers expressed concern to Fashion Week organisers before the show.

"There were a lot of people saying, 'These guys are ambushing Fashion Week - all these buyers and media are coming to New Zealand, we're paying for them and Little Brother are going to get access to them.'"

But Bevan says Fashion Week organisers and designers can't do anything about off-schedule shows.

Traditionally this is the time when designers launch their winter collections - so "why not do it when we can ride the wave of fashion publicity?" he asks.

Jo Martin, Air New Zealand Fashion Week media liaison officer, says organisers have no opinion on off-schedule shows.

"It's not Fashion Week!" she says.



FABULOUS: Models in Lonely Hearts Club and Michael Pattison

Mixed bag of new talent

Fashion
Verge Breakthrough Show
Review by Zoe Walker

Four up and coming designers combined forces to present their wares at Fashion Week on Tuesday, and their show was a mixed bag.

Lonely Hearts Club kicked off the show, with sweatshirting and funky dresses. A bright green waistcoat was a noteworthy piece, with various coloured waistcoats featuring throughout. While a bit unoriginal (all the chain stores have waistcoats), they were definitely striking. Cartoonish prints and intense colours were reminiscent of Karen Walker, and as a Karen Walker devotee I felt slightly disappointed by the imitation. But overall, I was impressed, and will be buying many a piece from their new collection.

Strangely, designer Michael

Pattison modelled his own work. As he strutted proudly down the catwalk, I couldn't help but think it was narcissism at its best. A skipping CD didn't take away from the clothes which were clean cut and tailored. I especially liked the menswear, but some of the women's wear reminded me of clothes that sell at the Aotea Markets.

Halfway through the Widdess section of the show, I realised I could see backstage. When I wasn't being distracted by a model desperately throwing on her next outfit, I saw some gorgeous clothes. Simple dresses in delicate fabrics were a stand out feature.

Rayma sent a model down the runway in a fur shrug, and I half expected an anti-fur protestor to pop up and throw red paint on her. The clothes were too embellished for me but quirky music and fog helped make the show more exciting.

Today's shows Friday October 21

11am
2Belles Accessories

Noon
The Deutz Fashion Design Ambassador

1pm
AUT "Rookie" Graduate Show

2pm
Miss Crabb

3pm
Hailwood

4pm
VERTICE/VAMP

5pm
Best of Fashion Week

7pm
Karen Walker