

**NOW MAGAZINE**

**TORONTO FASHION WEEK FALL 2008 RUNWAY REPORT: DESIGNING FOR DOLLARS**

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Hasn't the American dollar been stomped on enough lately? Menswear label Bustle, known for never scrimping on elaborately staged fashion shows, sprinkled their Casino-themed runway with real U.S. greenbacks last night and let their models walk all over the currency. Pushing the gambling motif further were cropped blazers pinned with metallic poker chips and waistcoats lined with playing card print silk.

Earlier in the day, money also talked at a press conference held between the Fashion Design Council of Canada, the Italian Chamber of Commerce and the city of Milan announcing four bursaries that will allow Canadian fashion students to travel to our twin design city to study and soak up Milano's style culture. A team of Milan's own student designers followed the scrum with a polished presentation of modern looks highlighting how quality craftsmanship and an understanding of what true, luxury means to fashion is emphasized in their couture curriculum.

It's a lesson Vancouver label Evan & Dean should take to heart. After interviewing the duo for NOW's fashion week preview and hearing about their attempt to bring a luxe quality to the B.C. scene, the second rate fabrics featured in their fall collection felt hopelessly off-message. Materials like "Lacquered Lambskin" looked more like rain poncho nylon and plush, scaly "Featheresque" seemed more suited to stitching together a stuffed carnival prize than a high end evening gown. Evan & Dean definitely has the cut down but designers Raymond Boutet and Lyle Reimer need to switch up the cloth.

The day packed in two sentimental moments. The first was Preloved presenting a tight fall collection despite the loss of its Toronto shop in the Queen and Bathurst fire. Secondly, the Heart Truth fashion show featured celeb models like Catherine O'Hara (who tumbled not once but twice; hopefully, on purpose, for comedic effect) Jeanne Beker and the FDCC's Robin Kay parading crimson gowns for the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

In the evening, Lucian Matis paired back the overly detailed looks of season's past to a chic, all black collection. It was when he simplified things to the max like a long-sleeved, crew necked, full length sequin dress that I started to believe some of the Matis hype.

Nada's Dynasty collection delivered teased blondes and up-done brunettes in svelte 80s-inspired looks that didn't miss any brass studded or stirrup pant references. Joeffer Caoc's fabrics were swish and liquid. In previous collections, he's cinched in signature back volume on dresses with oversized elastic bands. For fall, extra wide bra strap clasps do the trick.

The evening ended just past 11 pm with Philip Sparks (my boyfriend so I'll avoid all gushing) presenting tailored men's looks like oversized plaid coats and sharp suiting inspired by vintage mug shots.