Fashion students place unique spin on annual show

Apparel design majors draw inspiration from France, Audrey Hepburn

By Amanda Hart

Published: Monday, April 11, 2011 Updated: Monday, April 11, 2011 02:04



Designing Muchness, a fashion line designed by apparel design major Lynn Morehouse, is shown off during the All Dolled Up fashion show Sunday evening. The show featured nine Ball State apparel design students. DN Photo Kellan Deam

People may have expected to see a traditional runway show when they arrived for the fashion department's spring show "All Dolled Up," but they didn't find a runway walking into Cardinal Hall Sunday night. Instead, they found a gallery of living fashion.

Models wearing the clothes designed by senior apparel design majors lounged in detailed sets, thoughtfully crafted to highlight the theme of each designer. Attendees wandered through a neon jungle to a café in Paris, from a high class bar, to back in time to the glamour of the 1920s. Benches scattered throughout the room allowed guests to sit and more closely examine the black dress with the light-up bodice or the ballet inspired frocks worn by child models, among many other designs.

Nine designers contributed to the event, which also featured artwork by photography major Karla Hughes and two televisions that played video footage of fashions created by members of the Fashion Design Society, a student organization mostly comprised of underclassmen majoring in apparel design or fashion merchandising.

Mallory Thomas' French inspiration was portrayed in the colors and the casual style of her garments. The senior apparel design major created a Parisian café for her models, who wore feminine pinks and whites with perfectly coiffed hair. In keeping with the theme of the evening, the models looked just like Barbie dolls as they sat at a small table surrounded by plants with an umbrella carelessly tossed on the ground as though they had just escaped a spring rain.

Kathleen Stemmer created a line of clothing reminiscent of Audrey Hepburn. The glamorous and timeless clothes were classic and tailored with strong, yet simple shapes. Her color palate was monochromatic with muted grays, black and white.

"My inspiration was my cousin Jordan," she said. "She had her senior pictures as 'Breakfast at Tiffany's."

One gray dress had a ruffle running from the shoulder across the chest and around the side which took Stemmer five hours to hand stitch. Another piece was a sleeveless gray dress with a black pleated hemline that fell just below the knees, which Stemmer said was inspired by the 1920s.

Stemmer said all her hard work was worth it to see her designs completed and finally on display.

Pins and Needles, a fashion promotions class led by professor Trenton Bush, hosted the exhibit. The class knew they wanted to do something different from shows in the past.

"I'm very, very pleased with my students," Bush said. "They knocked it out of the park."

Ball State graduate Leah Burton and her husband Kyle said they were impressed because the show wasmore professional than they expected from of a college event.

"It wasn't at all what I thought it would be," Leah Burton said. "The setup was really cool."

Kristina Blevins, 31, a homemaker, came to support her brother Nicholas Salmon, who contributed a line of clothing with a luxurious and high-end travel theme. She said she had no expectations coming into the event because Salmon kept the details a secret. "My first impression was 'Wow," Blevins said. "I was in awe."

Cat Metcalf, a member of Pins and Needles, has been working on the event since January. The event, which had more than 350 attendees, ran smoothly thanks to all the hard work and many hours of planning put in by everyone involved. Now that it is over, she said she has mixed feelings.

"I'm sad, but I'm thrilled," she said. "It's bittersweet."