



## New York Fashion Now

17 April – 2 September 2007

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This spring the V&A will display the work of the latest generation of New York fashion designers. **New York Fashion Now** will bring together designs by 20 of the most talented and innovative designers from the numerous independent fashion labels launched between 1999 and 2004. The display will include work by Duckie Brown, Cloak, Derek Lam, Mary Ping, Zac Posen, Proenza Schouler and Behnaz Sarafpour.

In New York, where a handful of branded empires have dominated the fashion scene, it has often been difficult for younger talents to flourish. In recent years, with focused support from fashion press, retailers, manufacturers and funded design competitions, dozens of young designers have started their own fashion businesses. This explosion of design productivity has reinvigorated fashion in New York and made an impact on the city itself as new designers have established their businesses away from Fifth Avenue and the traditional 'garment district', forming new areas of creativity.

The display will feature around 60 outfits together with accessories. The designs range from sporty daywear to glamorous evening wear and will be arranged in five themes: *Sportswear Chic* – showing practicality combined with ornament and luxury, *Atelier* – couture designs that reveal highly accomplished craftsmanship and techniques, *Avant-Garde* – the more radical side of New York fashion, *Menswear* and *Celebrity* – looking at the role celebrity has played in the success of some of the labels.

Sonnet Stanfill, the curator, said: “*New York Fashion Now* attempts to capture a significant moment of design productivity and innovation. These emerging fashion designers have revitalised fashion in New York and this display will demonstrate the talent and diversity of the New York fashion scene now.”

**ENDS**

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

Entry to New York Fashion Now is FREE, as is entry to the V&A.

For public enquiries: 020 7942 2000 or [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)

A new book from V&A Publications will be published to accompany the display.

*New York Fashion* by Sonnet Stanfill (£30 Hardback) explores the reasons behind the rise of the city as a twenty-first century fashion capital and features examples of the work of 20 of New York's new generation of fashion designers.

**For further information on the book contact Claire Sawford PR on 020 7722 4114 or email [cs@cspr.uk.net](mailto:cs@cspr.uk.net) (not for publication).**

**For further PRESS information please contact Olivia Colling or Abigail Jones in the V&A Press Office on 0207 942 2500/2502 or email [press.office@vam.ac.uk](mailto:press.office@vam.ac.uk)**

**A selection of high resolution images can be downloaded from [www.image.net](http://www.image.net)**

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## INFORMATION ON THE FEATURED DESIGNERS

### **Miguel Adrover**

Majorcan-born designer Michael Adrover (b. 1965) set up his fashion label in 2000, nine years after he arrived in New York. Adrover incorporated found objects and recycled clothing into his carefully constructed garments. His collections were often provocative and politically themed, referencing such things as the Vietnam War and Native American culture. Despite Adrover's evident creativity he was forced to discontinue his fashion label in 2005 due to the financial failure of his backer.

### **Lost Art by Jordan Betten**

Jordan Betten (b. 1970) founded his fashion label, Lost Art, in 1997 at the age of 27 after several years of modelling. With encouragement and patronage from established designer Anna Sui, Betten taught himself the techniques of working with leather and other animal skins. Under the label Lost Art, Betten creates hand-crafted, bespoke garments from specially chosen hides and pelts. Lost Art is deliberately small-scale to ensure individual client attention and quality of craftsmanship – all his garments are hand-stitched. The studio creates just over 100 garments per year in addition to larger orders from high-profile rock and country-and-western musicians.

### **Duckie Brown**

The menswear label Duckie Brown was founded by Steven Cox (b. 1967) and Daniel Silver (b. 1958) in 2001. Cox, the lead designer, is British and studied design in Liverpool before working in New York for over 15 years for other designers including Tommy Hilfiger and Ralph Lauren. Silver, from Toronto, started as a glove designer before becoming a television producer. He contributes to Duckie Brown's designs, and serves as its business manager. The label combines classic hand tailoring with ornament and amusing accessories to create wearable clothes that are more adventurous than traditional menswear. Duckie Brown collections are successfully sold through some of the best men's stores around the world.

### **Thom Browne**

Thom Browne (b. 1965) started his label in 1999 after a decade working as an actor in Los Angeles followed by a move to New York where he worked as a designer for Armani and the retail chain Club Monaco. Inspired by the sensibility of the 1950s Browne wants to encourage a younger generation to adopt the suit as an all-occasion uniform. Browne's suits are recognizably unique – characterized by short jackets, narrow trouser legs and trouser hems which graze the shoe top.

### **Cloak**

Russian-born Alexandre Plokhov (b. 1967) launched his menswear label 'Cloak', in 1999. After studying and working in Chicago, Plokhov moved to New York in 1998 to work as a men's pattern-maker for Marc Jacobs. Plokhov chose to design for men because he felt it was more constant and less wasteful than the cycle of women's fashion. His somewhat severe designs often romanticize a tough masculine ideal inspired by a range of male costumes from military uniforms to safari suits.

### **Sean 'Diddy' Combs for Sean John**

Celebrity musician-turned-designer, Sean 'Diddy' Combs (b. 1969), founded his Sean John label in 1999, setting a precedent for what soon became a stream of fame-to-fashion ventures. What is significant about Combs' line is that he has done so within the confines of the mainstream fashion industry, presenting his collections on the catwalk during New York Fashion Week and selling in both his own retail store and through mainstream department stores.

### **Tess Giberson**

Giberson (b. 1971) graduated from Rhode Island School of Design and, aged 29, set up her own fashion business in 2000. Giberson's collections each started with an intellectual preoccupation and her clothes were designed to deliberately transcend trends. Her conceptual design approach, together with her staged, choreographed presentations attracted the attention of the international arts community. At the end of 2005 Giberson closed down her label and became head designer at TSE, the luxury knitwear label.

### **Christian Joy**

With no previous experience of designing clothes Christiane Joy Hultquist (b. 1973) started her own label in 2000, at the age of 26, after working in a boutique specializing in avant-garde clothing. Joy began creating unique pieces by customising old clothing. Joy came to prominence through designing the stage wardrobe for Karen O, the lead singer of cult band the Yeah Yeah Yeahs.

### **Derek Lam**

Derek Lam (b. 1966) spent over a decade working for other fashion designers, including Michael Kors, after graduating from Parsons School of Design. He launched his own label in 2003, at the age of 35. Once launched, Lam's designs achieved swift prominence with influential retailers placing orders. Lam's vision for his label is to create clothes that are both luxurious and wearable. While unfailingly feminine, Lam's designs reflect the informal spirit that epitomises New York's fashion tradition.

### **Maggie Norris**

Maggie Norris worked for 14 years at Ralph Lauren before starting her own couture-centred fashion label in 2000. Norris focuses on the details of her craft, creating tailored daywear and elegant eveningwear that feature rarefied construction techniques, historic references and vintage textiles. Norris works closely with a team of technically skilled specialists to realize her designs.

### **Mary Ping**

Mary Ping (b.1978) started her fashion label in 2001, aged 23, with little formal fashion experience. Ping designs two collections a year and sells her clothes through a handful of shops in America and Japan. Her aim is to create a timeless, simplified wardrobe, using pared-down versatile shapes while featuring interesting construction details.

### **Zac Posen**

Zac Posen (b. 1980) started his own fashion label at 21, only weeks before the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. In spite of such timing Posen entered quickly onto New York's fashion scene, winning several key awards soon after he established his label. Posen now sells his designs internationally and has a celebrity-studded client list.

### **Craig Robinson**

Craig Robinson (b. 1972) established his bespoke tailoring label in 2001, at the age of 29, out of the private client business he had been running for five years. Robinson creates sharply tailored three-piece suits, often with exaggerated lapels and combines them with brightly coloured shirts and 'tough guy' accessories, such as a gun holster. His dedication to craftsmanship and fine tailoring has earned him a loyal client base of musicians and actors.

### **Behnaz Sarafpour**

Iranian-born Sarafpour graduated from Parsons School of Design in 1992. She worked for a number of prominent designers, including Anne Klein and Isaac Mizrahi before launching her own fashion label in 2001 at the age of 30. Sarafpour's clothes are feminine, but also practical and versatile. She describes the woman who wears them as "someone who has an appreciation for luxury and who wants something that's going to be different".

### **Proenza Schouler**

The fashion label Proenza Schouler was launched to much acclaim in 2002 by Jack McCollough (b.1979) and Lazaro Hernandez (b.1979), who met while studying at Parsons School of Design. Barneys purchased their jointly made graduation collection and in under three years 100 shops across the United States, Europe and Asia stocked their designs. They were the 2004 winners of the CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund.

### **Slow & Steady Wins the Race**

The conceptual clothing line, *Slow and Steady Wins the Race*, was founded anonymously in 2001 by a designer (b. 1978), aged 23, fresh from university. She designs according to an anti-consumerist manifesto and aims to create compelling garments from the most inexpensive fabrics and materials. To minimize the waste of the fashion cycle Slow and Steady's designer severely limits her collection's production and concentrates on affordable, timeless pieces.

### **Costello Tagliapietra**

Jeffrey Costello (b. 1962) and Robert Tagliapietra (b.1974) founded their womenswear label in 2003, after a number of years spent designing stage clothes and bespoke ensembles for private clients. The clothes sold under the Costello Tagliapietra label have no surface pattern or embellishment, creating a very minimal, pure look. The designers pay special attention to hidden luxuries of quality fabrics and they incorporate time-consuming dressmaking features such as rolled edges, interior belts and zips with vintage lace trim – details the designers refer to as “treats inside”. The quality of their garments has received wide-ranging praise and the designers have been given a number of prestigious awards.

### **Three As Four**

This design collective is an international mix: Gabi (b. 1966) is a Lebanese-born Palestinian, Adi (b. 1971) is Israeli and Ange (b. 1974) is from Tajikistan. The label was originally set up by four designers in 1998 under the name “As Four” and was renamed to Three As Four when Kai left in 2005. The Three As Four client is an urban individualist who appreciates the label’s unusual cut and offbeat silhouettes and who enjoys being noticed.

### **John Varvatos**

Varvatos (b. 1955) studied at New York’s Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT). He worked for 15 years at Calvin Klein and Ralph Lauren before starting his own menswear line in 1999. Varvatos’ label is owned by VF Corporation – this secure financial backing has enabled him to open his own independent shops and have a strong brand presence in department stores. Varvatos has twice received the American Council of Fashion Designers award for Menswear Designer of the Year.

### **Jean Yu**

Korean-born Jean Yu (b. 1968) opened her shop, *Atelier=37* in December 2001 after studying fashion design at FIT and spending a number of years designing high-end fashion lines for department stores. Yu makes carefully constructed dresses, separates and lingerie using fine, translucent silks, chiffons and jersey fabrics in a palette of black and white with an occasional splash of colour. With her shop located only two miles from the site of the World Trade Centre, Yu’s business initially struggled, but she has built up a loyal client base and now designs two collections a year and attracts much press attention.