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July 09, 2010

Ichinomiya Calling: Nord-Est\Far-East



Located in the north east of Italy, Treviso is definitely miles away from the Japanese city of Ichinomiya, yet there is something that strongly links the two places.

Both the towns are surrounded by vitally important textile districts and Ichinomiya is also the head quarter of the Fashion Design Centre and the Owari Textile Research Institute.

Besides, for the last four years the Treviso-based Faculty of Design and Arts of Venice's [IUAV University](#) and the Ichinomiya Fashion Design Centre (FDC) launched a special project to strengthen the links

between the two districts and promote Japanese fabrics.

Every year the FDC sends to the Treviso-based fashion design students selected textiles that are then employed by the students to create exclusive designs.

The textile tradition in the Ichinomiya district can be dated back to the Nara period, around 1300 years ago.

From the 1800s on, the district turned into an important player of the Japanese textile industry, becoming famous for its production of wool-based fabrics.

This year Treviso decided to celebrate this partnership with a special project, an exhibition entitled "Nord-Est\Far-East" (North-East\Far-East), presented during the IUAV Open Day, "Collecting Connecting :: 4".



Located in the Exchange Hall of the Treviso Chamber of Commerce, curated by [Judith Clark](#) and with assistance from Francesco Casarotto and Sofia Hedman, the exhibition featured designs by the students of [Angelo Figus](#) and [Cesare Fabbri](#)'s workshops.

Some students reinterpreted in modern and conceptual ways Japanese styles and traditional costumes; others integrated architectural and avant-garde elements into their works or tried to create clashes and contrasts between Western and Eastern styles.

There were references to kimonos, obis and origami, but also echoes of Comme des Garçons and Issey Miyake's works filtered through the Italian tailoring tradition. "After installing the degree show for 4 years I have started to recognise a 'IUAV style'," Judith Clark stated.

"The designs exist within the rules of the workshops and their preoccupations but are also very explicitly experimental and I am always delighted to see them. I think the students are getting more and more confident as they are now in internal competition with earlier graduates and push themselves a lot more."

Clark also curated another exhibition during the IUAV Open Day, "In the Making", developed around the classrooms and working spaces of the university and showcasing pieces created by the students of the fashion and accessory workshops.

"It is always more challenging installing works by students than pieces by confirmed practitioners as you feel even more the responsibility to showcase their work in the way they intended," Clark said.



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“With experimental work you do not necessarily know what goes where, so you can't pretend it is a museum show and you need to show a certain degree of 'work-in-progress' which is the point of a school, but you must also be able to show off designs that have been worked on with such care. It can be hard as some of the pieces are finished moments before the show is installed.”



According to Clark the IUAV Open Day – a sort of Degree Show with an emphasis on the more arty side of fashion – was a great opportunity for the students as it allowed them to reflect on their work both individually and as part of a group.

“It was their chance to have a window on the world and, given Treviso is in the heart of the Italian manufacturing district, this is even more important. Maria Luisa Frisa, the Director of the Fashion Design course, works tirelessly to promote her students and to fund-raise for them and this is a chance to show her supporters what they are working towards. The school tries to show what is Italian fashion, tackling also the changes and revolutions it's going through, so it holds out for Italian identity while looking out at a certain degree of experimentation.”

All photographs by Francesco De Luca

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