

Fashion

NEW LOOKS FROM NEW TALENT

*Fashion Incubator class' styles
hit runway at Junior League show*

By Sylvia Rubin

As midnight rolled around, five adrenaline-fueled fashion designers did what comes naturally after a big runway show. They partied, and put off thoughts of fabric and fit, at least for a little while.

They're unknowns now, but not for long, they hope. The inaugural class of the Fashion Incubator of San Francisco officially said hello to the society set at the 87th annual Junior League fashion fundraiser held at Fort Mason on March 1. This is the first time the league has included new designers in the lineup. There were several other firsts as well: a new venue, on-site shopping events and a new buzz.

"I'm happy the fashion show tradition has new life breathed into it," said interior designer Jean Larette, a longtime league supporter. "They did a wonderful job of turning the cavernous Fort Mason space into an intimate venue. It felt fresh and polished, and there were plenty of great deals from the local vendors."

The five fledgling designers created both spring and fall collections in the year they spent at the incubator program, sponsored by Macy's San Francisco. They all "made a quantum leap from spring to fall," said Executive Director Jeanne Allen. Her husband, Marc Grant (they formerly ran the fashion apparel company Jeanne-Marc), took on the Tim Gunn role.

"We were all over them about styling, fit, fabrics, cost and produc-

tion. Now they all have orders and can go into small production runs. I guess it's time to let them loose."

Justin Jamison, Tamara Jaric, Tony Sananikone, Sabah Mansoor and Bethany Meuleners (the latter two of whom who work as Mansoor Scott) are amateurs no more. "We need investors!" they yelled in unison, the day before the show featuring their spring lines. (Missing from the show was Paloma Broadley.) The five are also slated to present their fall collections at the Conservatory of Flowers at the end of April.

The show, produced by longtime runway show producer Natalie Smith, had plenty of sass. There was something for everyone, from work-out wear to wedding gowns.

Jamison's hipster-slim menswear

Incubator continues on L8

Tony Sananikone brought a floaty black dress out onto the Junior League runway.

Sandra Garcia /
Drew Altizer Photography

Fashion



A vivid spring look from the energetic newcomers who are teaming up under the name Mansoor Scott.



Mansoor Scott goes sleek and fitted in knitwear — “taking the San Francisco sensibility and ‘New Yorkifying’ it.”



Fashion Incubator designer Tony Sananikone showed a tuxedo-inspired look with sheer impact.



Intriguing detail is Tamara Jaric's signature, and she worked it into a minuscule dress of glamorous gold.

Photos by Sandra Garcia and Drew Altizer / Drew Altizer Photography

Incubator from page L7

includes micro-climate-ready waxed cotton jackets and an updated white Ultra suede shirt with a contrasting black panel. “I’m continuing with the waxed cotton and moving into much stronger color blocking for fall,” he said. Like most just starting out, he’ll continue to work out of his home. “I have to save money for fabric.”

Sananikone’s version of

the women’s tuxedo, with wider pants, shorter jacket and sheer chiffon blouse, is now his signature. “I was scared of tailoring before I started at the incubator,” he said, “but now I pay attention to fit like never before.”

The first item of business this week for the knitwear duo behind Mansoor Scott is to work on their marketing and PR, “updating the website and doing more truck shows,” Mansoor said. For fall, they created knit, woven

and felted bombers, pencil skirts, and coats embellished with rubberized lace and tiny embedded sequins. “We’re taking the San Francisco sensibility and ‘New Yorkifying’ it a little bit,” Meuleners said.

On the runway, Jaric’s signature asymmetrical pleats and tucks on black blazers, skirts and dresses impressed Larette. “I loved her black pleated blazer with the rough unfinished edge. I could see wearing her

black dress and blazer both day and night.” The incubator segment, she said, “had a ‘Project Runway’ energy to it.” Jaric’s also taken her work further for fall, working with neoprene and adding a more origami feeling to her pleating. “I really perfected my technique this year. I know who I am as a designer now,” she says.

Sylvia Rubin is a Berkeley freelance writer. E-mail: style@sfgchronicle.com

Meet the Incubator’s sophomore class

Starting Monday, a second group of fashion designers begins a yearlong residency with Fashion Incubator San Francisco at Macy’s. They’ve toured the workshop and met their predecessors, and now the work begins. Jeanne Allen, the incubator’s executive director, is impressed that “they’re all in business already, and each speaks to a specific customer.”

Michelle Byrnes: Swimwear is tricky, says Byrnes, who studied fashion at City College of San Francisco and whose revealing Saga Swimwear suits were featured in SFIS Style in 2011. “There’s a lot of emotion that goes into swimwear for women — there’s so much joy in the idea of summer and vacations — but also it brings up how much most women hate their bodies. But I want to glorify and empower women.” www.sagaswimwear.com

Jake Wall: With his Artful Gentleman brand, Wall comes into the market at a time when men are sick of khakis. “Men usually trade off comfort for quality and fit,” says Wall, who has a business master’s degree and apprenticed with bespoke tailors in Hong Kong. His company is on the radar (they dressed the Lumineers for the Grammys), and, says Wall, “I’m ready to make this cute and quaint San Francisco business into a really strong presence.” www.artfulgentleman.com

Sarah Liller: Her line of mesh wrap and lace-embellished dresses and peplum tops is available at Loft 1513 in Noe Valley. She also does custom bridal. “I’m doing everything by myself now — the patterns, the grading the sourcing, the sewing,” says Liller, who went to Parsons in New York. “I want to learn how to source and produce, so I don’t go so crazy anymore.” www.sarahliller.com

Bree Hylkema and Kyra: Curvy women are still the orphans of fashion. With Kyra’s business master’s and considerable financial experience and Hylkema’s longtime costume design expertise, the two teamed up to address the issues of contour darts, seam allowances and flattering silhouettes, in their Vermeulen line named after Hylkema’s great-grandmother. www.vermeulennandco.com

— Sylvia Rubin