

Beauty has no borders

Belarusian fashionistas do not imitate Italians but attentively follow them

By Viktor Andreev

Almost no Belarusian designers have attended Milan Fashion Week, but the same could be said of the Italians and French. It gathers the elite. However, the host of Belarusian TV's 1st Channel, Alina Kravtsova, managed to approach the catwalk and explored backstage.

Alina, how did you manage this?

Fashion is too complicated to understand in its entirety at first sight. It's not hard to look fashionable; it can even take little money. Of course, a girl with great taste and a small budget can look much more delicate and fashionable than someone wearing prominent 'brands'. Kate Moss has an understated elegance and a relaxed attitude, which allows her to wear the clothes, rather than them wearing her. She never looks as if

their favourite colour is black. Red nails are an absolute no-no. Before going to Milan, I carefully thought about my wardrobe. Prada's black dress was essential, meaning 'I'm an insider'. However, the fashion world has become more accessible in recent years.

What did you see backstage at Milan Fashion Week?

Firstly, I discovered that even some of the most famous fashion

at Milan Fashion Week, I was much surprised to see that everyone disappeared just 10-15 minutes after the show. The models have a tough schedule, with no time to talk or entertain. I had thought there would be a party, with chatter and drinks afterwards. I was mistaken! Afterwards, they hurry to their next job. At the Gianfranco Ferré show, where the most expensive models were employed, they disappeared within three minutes: the more expensive the model, the more valuable their time.

How much does their time cost?

Belarusian model Katya Kosushkina, with whom we chatted in Milan, told me that, last year, she opened a Prada show in Milan, which paid \$700-2,000 for one catwalk. A photo-session pays from several thousand dollars up to \$50,000 (for a top model). At present, there are quite a few Belarusian top models, including Tatiana Dyagileva, Olga Sherer and Marina Linchuk. In Milan, I met many girls from Eastern Europe.

How do girls gain access to this work?

It's easy if you fit the mould: it's all mathematics. If you meet the criteria, you have a chance. The girls' appearance behind the scenes shocked me. I knew they would be tall and slim but I did not realise to what degree. They are unreal, as if from outer space. Their figures are perfect for demonstrating clothes on a catwalk though; it's a feature of our time. Top models from the 1990s — Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford and Claudia Schiffer — were more plump.

Does Belarus have its own national fashion?

We have our own fashion but lack a fashion industry. There are talented people, who make beautiful clothes; however, new designers often lack the chance for self-expression. They may lack the money to buy good quality fabrics, employ good seamstresses or go abroad for training. Moreover, the sales system is



Alina Kravtsova

underdeveloped in our country. Only recently have shops selling Belarusian designer clothes opened...

What is most important in the Italian fashion world? How can you become as famous as, for example, Dolce and Gabbana?

Contacts are the key in the fashion world. Funnily enough, Italians call Dolce and Gabbana 'Docce & Gabinetti' — 'shower and toilet rooms'. I failed to attend their show as I lacked contacts but hope to succeed next time. It's even harder to attend a show by Giorgio Armani, who is very much respected in Italy. Armani is like a God for Italians.

How do Italian women prefer to dress? Do they choose clothes from the catwalks?

A classical Italian lady prefers shoes without heels, with clothes mostly in black and grey; beige has recently been added. She always wears a scarf and has a bag by Prada or Louis Vuitton.

Black and without heels? Our fashionistas would be much surprised...

I'm not saying that heels are bad, while their absence is good. However, it's evident that Belarus and Italy have different traditions regarding clothing. I recently entered a Minsk bistro — a fast food cafe, not a restaurant — and saw one girl wearing a blouse with an open back. Another had a low neckline and a third was dressed in a mini-skirt, with high-heeled shoes. You'd never see this in Italy. However, our men love it; let them enjoy!

Do you think we should copy the Italians or form our own Belarusian style?

It's necessary to combine clothes so that they flatter your figure and give you an individual image. I personally love dresses, skirts and heels. A girl dressed in a short coat, leather shorts and thin tights in a 10 degree frost arouses nothing but pity...



Milan Fashion Week among the centres of fashion industry

Anyone who cares for their appearance dreams of visiting this event. With the help of my acquaintances, I've established ties with Italian fashion houses. On visiting Milan, I realised that not everyone understands the world of fashion. Many believe that it's pure glamour but the fashion we see on magazine covers and in TV programmes and the fashion business are two different things. A fashion in TV programmes is a picture of an artist designed for a show, but much hard work of many people is needed to make this beautiful picture.

Do you feel like a fashion expert after visiting Milan?

she's trying too hard. True fashionistas would never co-ordinate their shoes and bag, with perfect make-up and hairstyling. It's evidence of seeking approval. Fashion is a secret and clothes should make you look mysterious...

Did you especially prepare your clothes for the trip to Milan, to look mysterious?

I have good clothes, including those designed by Prada, which helps. The world of the fashion industry is closed. The people involved have refined sensibilities, able to distinguish everything: watches and diamonds must be separated, since watches should not contain diamonds, and

houses do not have haute couture (translated from French as high fashion). Only a few designers in the world boast haute couture lines, where each article is a true piece of art, produced as a single copy. These later appear in museums or are sold at auction. For example, famous Gucci and Prada have no haute couture clothes; Alexander McQueen and Dior do. Haute couture catwalks differ from prêt-à-porter shows, since the girls are given more complicated make-up and an eccentric image. You are unlikely to wear such clothes, ever; they are fairy-tale clothes, suitable for catwalks alone. However, all rules have exceptions. Backstage

Paintings take creative tour from Abu Dhabi to Minsk

Exhibition of 12+ contemporary Belarusian paintings on show at National Library's Panorama Gallery

The works were exhibited in Abu Dhabi in late September as part of the Days of Belarus in the United Arab Emirates and are now on show at the National Library of Belarus. Twelve painters have

revealed the diversity of creativity, with various genres on display. These include native landscapes by Yegor Batalyonok and Alexander Grishkevich, filled with purity and light, the associative canvases of Alexander Zabavchik, and a modern interpretation of myths and historical events by Fiodor Yastreb and Vladimir Kozhukh.

Everything at top level

European Broadcasting Union thanks Belteleradiocompany for perfect organisation of Junior Eurovision-2010

In the letter, sent to Belteleradiocompany, the Executive Supervisor of Junior Eurovision Song Contest, Svante Stockselius, and Eurovision TV Director a.i., Jørgen Franck, on behalf of Chairman of the EBU Junior Eurovision Song Contest Steering Group, Steve De

Coninck-De Boeck, and EBU Director General, Ingrid Deltren, extend thanks for the first-rate show, excellent organisation and fruitful co-operation.

"The show was fantastic in every respect and the organisation was excellent. We saw that the children had a real holiday," the letter says. EBU representatives also noted with satisfaction that public interest in the contest was extremely high.

City honours its past

By Diana Kurilo

Grunvaldskaya Street appears on general development plan of Polotsk's new residential suburb

After public discussion, the deputies of Polotsk's City Council have decided to name the street Grunvaldskaya. According to Nikolay Ilyushonok, the Deputy Chairman of Polotsk's City Executive Committee, development of Grunvaldskaya Street will begin in 2011.

The idea was initiated by the Polotsk Zemlyachestvo association to mark the 600th anniversary of the famous battle, celebrated in 2010. In that remote battle, the united troops of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish Kingdom defeated an army of the Teutonic Order. Belarusian soldiers greatly contributed to the victory, with



Polotsk street

the Polotsk regiment being one of the largest and best equipped. The bravery of the Polotsk regiment was marked by historians and remains noteworthy today.

Remarkably, all the streets in the new residential suburb are connected with Polotsk's history. Recently, a street appeared named after Ivan Khrutsky — a prominent artist who was born in Polotsk. Brigade Commander Alexey Zygin, who commanded Soviet soldiers during their heroic defence of Polotsk in summer 1941, is also commemorated with a street name. Architect Ioann Avenue, who created Saviour Transfiguration Cathedral in the 12th century, is likewise remembered.

According to Mr. Ilyushonok, ancient Polotsk relies on European principles of naming streets, assigning the names of those who are notable in having attracted glory. "We're promoting Polotsk as a city which remembers and honours its past, while being proud of its present."