

Much inspiration expected from Mammoth Festival

National Beauty School hosts competition for designers, as part of 12th Festival of Avant-Garde Fashion

By Vika Presnova

The forum's guests were astonished at least three times. During the Festival, it became clear that the latest looks for men are somewhat lacking in masculinity; in fact, many of male models had legs just as beautiful as the girls! In addition, their movements were quite feminine. Meanwhile, festival guest Vladimir Chekasin — a jazz musician — considerably enhanced the status of the event with his wonderful performance during the two-hour show. One member of the InZhest Plastic Theatre shockingly burst into flames, as if from a firework spark, obliging her to disappear promptly behind the curtains. It was rather like being in Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland!* Certainly, the performance of avant-garde art can burn your fingers.

Speaking personally, I'd love for designers to be more relaxed in their ideas, applying non-standard approaches and pure fantasy. They still seem to be inspired by what already exists in magazines. Additionally, the

method of making hats from melted discs needs improvement. Many are inspired by the theme of the cosmos, with fantastic winged creatures moving sadly among the audience. High-heeled boots also seem to reign supreme; they may not be suitable for walking to the shops, but they look great on the catwalk. Designers also continue to draw on Soviet motifs, with pioneer ties and forage caps evident at almost every festival.

A single leader was chosen from the 10-15 finalists: Gomel's Yevgeny Ivanchik. He received the heavy Grand Prix mammoth figurine, being acknowledged the undisputable winner of the avant-garde fashion contest. Yevgeny, from Gomel's Crystal Nymph Centre of Fashion and Beauty, has previously shown his talent at the *Fashion Mill Festival*. His 'Good Morning, My Emperor' collection sold out and his fans rave about his hats made from sofa cushions and brushes.

Mr. Ivanchik brought his 'Crisis Production' collection to *Mammoth*, explaining, "The theme came to me by chance, as the crisis and rising

food prices were becoming the most topical issues. I've been inspired by buckwheat, butter and sugar, with my designs based on food and money associations — such as sunflower seeds and printed banknotes. Fashion can draw inspiration from anything."

Yevgeny came on stage wearing a triumphal t-shirt of his own design to receive his award from prominent designer Ivan Aiplatov. The latter noted, "*Mammoth* remains a developing game for young designers. The Festival has a history of disappearing, then being organised again, which is not to its benefit; it may need to contact western design schools. If our *Mammoth* dies, our designers will lack a venue for demonstrating their mastery, with no goals for the future."

Designer Natalia Potkina was a jury member for the third year in a row. She shares Ivan's fears regarding the future of this previously wonderful holiday of avant-garde fashion, saying, "Sadly, few believe in this Festival. However, this competition inspires me. After it ends, I always feel inspired to create something fascinating."



Festival collections impress with originality

Landscape of textile artworks richly decorates exhibition halls

Modern Art of Chinese Textiles on show at National History Museum of Belarus

By Irina Svirko

The exhibition showcases works by famous masters, teachers and students from 18 leading Chinese art universities — using wool, cotton, flax and silk fibres.

Weaving was invented by the Chinese back in the Neolithic era, spreading worldwide via the Great Silk Road. Tapestries portray the spirit of the time and each artist's understanding of Chinese history, culture and their surroundings.

The central place is occupied by *Purity, Distance, Silence* — an original composition made from three fine organza pieces, portraying rivers, lakes, high mountains, sea and endless sky; it cre-



Works full of spirit of time

ates the impression of space and solemnity and won a gold medal at the 6th *From Lausanne to Beijing* International Fibre Art Bien-

nale, organised in China since 2000. Other works on show in Minsk have also been awarded prizes at Beijing biennales over

the years.

Specialists stress that it's impossible to speak of contemporary Chinese textile art without mentioning the *From Lausanne to Beijing* Biennale. Swiss Lausanne is home to contemporary textile art, having organised 15 biennales from 1962 to 1995. After it ceased its work, Beijing took over. Last year, over 300 textile artworks, created by 300 masters from 30 countries worldwide, were exhibited at the 6th *From Lausanne to Beijing* International Fibre Art Biennale.

The *Modern Art of Chinese Textiles* exhibition is part of the Days of Chinese Culture in Belarus, organised with assistance from the Chinese Embassy.

Nesvizh takes the baton

By Victor Terekhov

Culture Ministry determines Belarus' cultural capital for 2012 — Nesvizh

Bobruisk, Lida, Molodechno and Nesvizh gave presentations, supported with audio and video materials, before answering questions, to allow the judging panel to select the country's next 'Cultural Capital of the Year'. The title was launched in 2010, with Polotsk and Gomel already boasting the title and having gained major facelifts as a result. The major aim is to stimulate cultural and tourist infrastructure, which always brings benefits.

Throughout the year, the cultural capital is visited by professional dance and musical groups. "It's vital to create conditions to allow Belarusian citizens, regardless of their place of residence, to gain access to their cultural legacy, as Minsk can," notes Belarus' Culture Minister, Pavel Latushko. "We want to activate regional cultural institutions. However, the most important aspect is to create a love of culture, encouraging self-education. We primarily aim to enhance human souls, rather than infrastructure!"

Belarus' candidate for the 'Cultural Capital of the CIS-2013' title was also chosen, with applications submitted from Brest and Mogilev. After long discussions, the city on the River Dnieper 'defeated' the city on the River Bug.

Virtuosos of combs create beauty

By Kristina Lanets

Belarusian team wins 73 medals at International Neva River Banks Beauty Contest, ranked first among 15 teams from ten countries

St. Petersburg's prestigious competition brought together over 4,500 masters from Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Uzbekistan,

Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Latvia, Finland, Italy and Japan. Belarus was represented by students from the Minsk State Technological College and, despite being the youngest, they were acknowledged best in almost all nominations, capturing the contest's Grand Prix (on points).

Anastasia Yatkova, an international master and absolute

champion of Belarus and Russia, was responsible for gathering the talented team of young people, creating a national squad of hairdressers. "Our youngsters caused a stir at the contest," she tells us. "Honestly, this was unexpected, as our rivals were strong."

The virtuoso hairdressers — led by Ms. Yatkova — are next to head for Italian Milan, which is

hosting the World Championship for Hairdressing, Decorative Cosmetics and Nail Design. They'll also take part in the Ukrainian Open Championship, in Kiev.

Our make-up artists also did well at the International *Neva River Banks* Beauty Contest, with one young Belarusian taking first place, becoming junior champion.