



FABRICS GO LOCAL

The fabric story at Lakmé Fashion Week Summer/Resort 2018 was varied and innovative with designers pushing their creative limits and ensuring that besides the designs for their own collections, the fabrics too made an impact, reports **Meher Castelino**



The importance and rise of local fabrics in the country have provided an impetus to different regions, bringing the beauty of their various weaves to the forefront. The New Age fabrics and the texturing along with fabric dyeing and weaving have added an innovative direction to the textiles.

All this dominated Lakmé Fashion Week Summer/Resort 2018. In addition, the crafts that were used to enhance the beauty of the garments complemented the collections and ensured that each piece had a distinct identity. Among others, the Northeast, which is rich in textile heritage and crafts, caught the fancy of fashion followers as the fabrics were turned into contemporary styles to suit global markets.



The highlights

- ▶ On the Northeast front, Daniel Syiem promoted the ryndia fabric of Meghalaya, while Sonam Dubal worked on the gamcha of Assam, his home state. Manipur's Richana Khumanthem emphasised the Wankhei Phee handloom textiles. Karma Sonam gave fabric made from 100 per cent nettle importance, while Aratrik Dev Varman gave the riahhs from Tripura more prominence. Jenjum Gadi worked with fabrics woven with the loom method from Nagaland with some fascinating fashion angles.



- ▶ Then, Maku by Santana Das showed for his collection In Transit fabrics that were woven in far away Bengal villages and included khadi and jamdaani in a mix of yarn-dyed options with lots of linear weaves and indigo treatment. Hemang Agrawal's experiments revolved around the Benaras weavers when he encouraged them by bringing in modern techniques and motifs with tartan checks, houndstooth, polka dots and contrasting stripes woven into a single fabric along with precious metals and natural fibres.



- ▶ Also at the forefront were Odisha weaves brought to the ramp by Pankaja Sethi who had stripes cleverly blended with the checks, while extra weft patterns created a kaleidoscope of designs. The raw nature of the weaves was the highlight of the collection in earthy tones.



RAJESH PRATAP SINGH

► The Tencel fabric came alive on the ramp for the Rajesh Pratap Singh creations. The 100 per cent Tencel yarns were blended with silk and stainless steel in eye-catching weaves like hopsack, waffle and herringbone. The fabric presented Tencel in an amazing array of options by using hi-tech, airjet shuttle-less and powerlooms to traditional handlooms.



ANITA DONGRE

► Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) unveiled a new fabric brand—R | Elan, where innovation was at the core of warp and weft of the fabric, and the medley was the first-of-its-kind design-and-craft collection. It was for Anita Dongre, India's couturier par excellence, and the garments were conceptualised to envisage and demonstrate fabrics of the future. The outfits could therefore only be referred to as Future Couture.



HELENE BAJAJ LARSEN

► Franco-Indian-Norwegian designer, Helene Bajaj Larsen showed exclusive one-of-a-kind pieces since the print was manually done. Hers was a collection that highlighted hand painting with acid and pigment dyes that made an impact on the ramp.



RAGINI AHUJA

► For the Lakmé Salon show, Ragini Ahuja brought in her trademark relaxed fits in natural textiles and played creatively with denim as she distressed it to perfection for pants, dresses and jackets. Adding Indian techniques to the fabric, there were intricate appliqué, worked with sheep napa leather and shibori.



► Padmaja Krishnan was inspired by artist Paul Klee; so, there was an intelligent use of fabrics; prints and colours to make the collection a talking point at most functions. Mud-resist techniques were fused along with natural dye shades that came alive on the ramp in myriad hues of natural colours. Her specially woven, dyed, organic cotton and linen were highlighted with line spaces and dashes, and created with a million stitches for texturing.



► Nakita Singh worked with pretty pastels like pink, powder blue and white, and wove her collection story around handmade khadi cotton, linen, cotton silk highlights with florals, abstracts and machine and hand embroidery.



► Working with silk, bamboo cotton, crêpe and linen, Naushad Ali remained partial to natural dyes and added interesting new shades of green, which he mingled with indigo, yellow, black, white, grey and red. The print story was varied as stripes, checks and dots worked rather well for the apparel. The result was a play of broad and narrow stripes, as well as checks interspersed by dots that seemed to take a fashionable walk through the garments as they appeared on different segments.



► Urvashi Kaur worked with monochromes like grey and ecru and then moved to black, as she mingled these with shades of blue. Bringing in interesting engineering techniques, she ensured that handwoven khadi and the transparent kota-doriya had linear patterns. The signature Urvashi Kaur touches of hand tucking and micro-pleating were very much present along with block printing, shibori and leheriya dyeing.



- ▶ Akshat Bansal for his Bloni label brought a deconstructed mix of linen, delicate Japanese lace and the amazing sustainable fabrics made from 100 per cent regenerated marine plastic waste that cause havoc in oceans.



- ▶ Gaurang's labour of love for the Neel range lasted nearly 18 months as he merged his textile expertise with the timeless indigo hues, which have been in existence since 1750 BC in Mohenjo Daro. Over the centuries till date, the indigo dye has been a fashion symbol in Indian textiles. Working tirelessly with the intricate process of indigo dyeing in the interiors of Gujarat, Gaurang at times spent 30 days to get a correct single shade.

- ▶ With the hand-spun yarns procured from different clusters in India, Gaurang innovated on his favourite weaving technique of jamdaani and incorporated indigo in kota, benaras, patan patola, paithani, khadi, kanjivaram and dhaka weaves. Gaurang then added a profusion of the most gorgeous block prints like ajrakh, dabu, bagh, bandhani, shibori, leheriya and batia. The final touch was provided by stunning embroidery starting with chikankari, kashidakari, aari, rabari, kasuti, parsi gara and ended on kantha.



- ▶ Keeping her philosophy of zero waste firmly under control, Karishma Shahani Khan for her Ka-Sha label embellished her attire with fabric knots, gold/silver hand painting, floral tassels; ombré dyes and then rounded off with clamp dyes and macramé. The fabrics moved from pure cotton like mulmul and medium weight khadi to chanderi.



SANJUKTA DUTTA

► Sanjukta Dutta worked with rich, luxurious handloom fabrics that comprised silk, cotton, silk blends, silk yarns, mulberry silk and brocade that are native to the Northeast, and were the highlight of this collection.



PAYAL SINGHAL

► Payal Singhal's ensembles had inspirations of Islamic art from Turkey, Morocco, Persia, Mughal India, Iran and Afghanistan. The beauty of the popular jaali, filigree and antique embroidery was cleverly splashed on the regal garments. The stylishly constructed lehengas, dhoti saris, kurtas and jackets glistened on the catwalk with kasav, mukaish, fardi, zardosi and filigree work. Payal opted for luxurious silk, jamavaars, brocades and then added sheer organza and tulle for a feminine, seductive accent.



SAAKSHA KINNI

► The Saaksha and Kinni label by Saaksha Bhat and Kinnari Kamat offered an Indo-Western look to the stylish woman. The pair worked with traditional Gujarati nandhani and batik prints and merged them stylishly with abstract floral designs. Mirror work played a major role, along with the designers' metal and thread work techniques.



AMIT WADHWA

► Amit Wadhwa used khadi and mulmul with touches of yesteryears, and splashed them with contemporary, hand embroidery along with interesting screen-printed details.



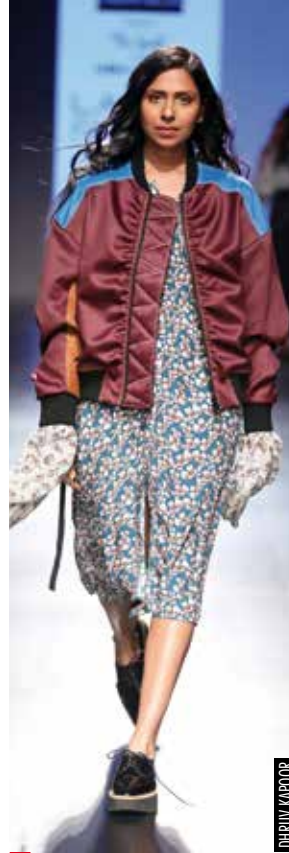
NARENDRA KUMAR

▶ The international Burgoyne linen brand has a fashionable history dating back to 1912 and its stylish and exquisite fabrics have been admired and used by top haute couture brands and celebrities around the world. Burgoyne's The Original Linen represents fashion, which is indulgent, individualistic and modern. Narendra Kumar used the Burgoyne linen fabrics for his collection called The Fake Show and blended it with neoprene and knitted ribs.



VINEET RAHUL

▶ The VineetRahul label by Vineet Kataria and Rahul Arya used specially woven chanderi lovingly created in Madhya Pradesh and the beautiful Kota from Rajasthan along with fine linen and mulmul as the basis of the garments. Visualising a modern take on the lehenga and skirt were a range of semi-formal wear. Dusty aqua, sorbet pink, blue and neutral ivory came alive for the gulaab, champa, rajniganda and bougainville bouquets strewn on the ensembles. Hand-block printing, hand embroidery, machine texturing and appliqués added to the visual glamour of the creations.



DHRUV KAPOOR

▶ Dhruv Kapoor brought a clever mix of African tribal patchwork and the feminine costumes of Japanese geishas. His oriental/tribal blend for the ensembles ensured that they were perfect DIY creations that allowed the wearer to make a personal style impact. Vintage florals appeared in quick succession to hit fiery stripes and waxed Napa came forth to add an individualistic flavour to the garments. Crêpe proved popular in multiple weights, while exclusively made, double-faced, techno jersey and fine merino wool were merged to classic stone-washed poplins.



AMRICH

▶ The Amrich label by Richard Pandav and Amit Vijaya once again made a striking impact with their hand-crafted shibori collection. Called Ties That Bind, there were separates in hand-made, khadi, silk and silk cotton blends with a metallic feel that gave a shimmer to the garments.



► The Good Loom collection presented by GoCoop evoked the purity of natural fabrics, great weaves and Indian craftsmanship. On the ramp from “the good loom” line with the best fabrics by top master weavers in India. From the city of Benares came the grand chanderi saris for women, which unfurled memorable stories of the beautiful textile. The hand-spun, hand-woven khadi and cotton was turned into very stylish and contemporary menswear for shirts, trousers, waistcoats and shorts.



► Tarun Tahiliani brought a symphony of gossamer fabrics, iridescent embroidery with creative use of ombré and fine embellishments that displayed the beauty of constellations with astronomy charts. Chantilly lace, chanderi, cotton, georgette, crêpe and Italian tulle were enhanced with bead and resham work, as well as the sparkle of crystals and sequins. Detailing like latticework, hand painting and digital textile printing added to the layers of flowing, fluid, shapes brought forth by celestial hues.



► For the Kotwara label, Sama Ali, daughter of Meera and Muzaffar Ali, presented chikankari in a unique manner, which was quite incomparable. The addition of zardosi, aari and muququash to the delicate chikankari embroidery, raised the design sensibilities to a more contemporary level.



► Anamika Khanna's Grand Finale collection for the Lakmé Absolute New Nudes range was created with designs that were influenced by the new generation of millennials, who are bold enough to wear their individuality on their sleeve. The use of traditional zardosi in experimental ways and a mix of various textiles, colours and prints, gave each outfit a personality. This, fused with the 'nudes reinvented' theme resulted in an unconventional look that mixed checks, prints, solids and embellishments.



► The Woolmark Company and couturier Manish Malhotra unveiled a capsule collection using the natural fibre merino wool. Launched at LFW Summer/Resort 2018, the Inaya collection was Manish's first merino wool line which presented this fibre in a way like never before. Capturing the essence of the ongoing sustainable fashion dialogue, Inaya presented wool saris for women and bandhgala and sherwanis for men, throwing the spotlight on merino wool as a natural, biodegradable and renewable fibre. Inspired by the elaborate and traditional art, motifs and the old-world charm of Kashmir, the collection—made with 80 per cent merino wool—brought together the artisans and culture of Kashmir. Classic and bold jewel tone colours including black, maroon and emerald green along with intricate tilla and zari embroidery were used to pay an ode to the timeless beauty of the state.



► A few seasons ago, Looms of Ladakh, the collection by Padma Raj Keshri was created as a sportswear line at the Wool Runway for Woolmark India. Padma's Summer/Resort 2018 look was inspired by organic modernity of Ladakh. Using diverse materials like linen, pashmina and yak wool from the villages of Leh, the ensembles were ideal for travel and stylish dressing. **FF**