LFW: Nensi Dojaka, Eudon Choi, Eftychia and Molly Goddard

By Godfrey Deeny  -  20 February 2022

A busy and blustering Saturday in London Fashion Week where a duo of young women designers - Nensi Dojaka and Molly Goddard - issued striking fashion manifestos in two powerful shows.

In a day and season that marked a yearning for a far more put together look, notably at Eudon Choi and Eftychia.

Nensi Dojaka

The day opened with Nensi Dojaka, the most recent winner of the LVMH Prize, whose latest expression of innerwear as outerwear was concise and cool.
Devoid of any prints and made in a monochromatic palette of black, flesh, dark rose and rust – the collection had tremendous polish and precision. Last September, her debut show in London, staged a week after she won LVMH’s award, was something of an anti-climax, since most of the collection was made of looks she had already shown to win the award.

Not this morning in this show, staged in semi darkness inside the nerve center of the London season, a disused concrete storage space known as the Old Selfridges Hotel.

Dojaka also revealed herself to be a fine tailor, cutting spruce fresh suits and blazers finished with padded back belts and worn with refined semi-sheer bustiers in blends of silk, stretch and chiffon.

While her holed stretch lycra cocktails interspersed with mesh and finished with thin straps all looked great on the plus-sized models in an inclusive casting. All of whom had to carefully dodge past a faintly crazy steadicam operator who filmed the whole show walking up and down the catwalk.

Dojaka skillfully broke new ground with some tough chic zippered tunics and a perfectly cut mini puffer for clubbing. Like most of her looks finished with strings, straps and tags. Though the heart of the matter were the lingerie dresses, a tricky balancing act, which Nensi delicately addresses – to make clothes that are sexy and suggestive, without ever being cheap.

“I wanted to extend the wardrobe and make my woman and her universe more complete. My first outerwear, more wintery fabrics, and a wider concept of what this woman can be,” explained Dojaka, who greeted her mother first in an emotional embrace backstage after the show.

Molly Goddard

Even in a UK downpour, there are few sunnier moments in the London season than Molly Goddard, the reigning champion of cool eccentricity.

Harking back to the London markets in the 80s and 90s, and inspired by her mum’s best friend, whom Goddard recalled as a “cross between Marilyn Monroe and Mick Jones."
The result was a collection that had all the glamorous kick and rock’n’roll attitude one associates with the street markets of Portobello and Camden.

Marching on a white elevated catwalk inside a fantastic light-filed 1930s modernist art deco leisure center. The cast appeared in Molly’s signature big bustling silhouette. Starring twisting tulle gowns paired with army surplus jackets or the best knits in London. Fab’ cable sweaters; mock aran cardigans; grandads striped pullovers and sequined covered chenille tops.

Though the most beautiful looks were the body con flamenco dresses finished in acres of puckered tulle from the waist down. Just a couple of prints, though great ones: a fairy tale of cherubs attempting to jump on a bucking horse; or a floral rose seen on a great frayed aristocratic rock goddess denim dress worn over a red top.

An overall look often completed with tulle covered bags with metal chain straps or bowling sneakers.

Goddard has been showing men and women together for several seasons, and generally the guys appear in the same fabrics, colors and kilts one finds on the girls. Argyle type sweaters, fabric bags, rose-printed denim, and even the aforementioned naïve kid’s print.

Remembering mother’s pal as “big bleached blonde hair with a flower in it, red lipstick, a 50s dress with an army jacket and trainers,” Goddard whipped up a great collection and show, after two years of videos shot inside white box art galleries.

Few designers in Britain are as worthy of a great show space as Goddard, whose oeuvre is the most instantly recognizable of her generation. Quite a feat if you think about it.

Eudon Choi

Michelangelo Antonioni has been inspiring fashion designers for the past half century and the latest expression was in east London at Eudon Choi.

Presented inside the early 17th century Charterhouse, whose outside park as littered with broken branches from Storm Eunice. Entering this Harry Potter-like territory, the collection riffed on Red Desert, Antonioni’s brilliant tale of existentialist angst.
One suspects Michelangelo would have been pleased with the results – especially the all-red opening. Whether the refined rosso corsa oversized six-pocket coat or the crimson silk matching pants and blouse or the beautifully draped barn red society hostess satin rippling cocktail – sensational when seen before the aged red brick walls.

Choi has innate good taste, seen in the self-assurance with which he blends ribbed woolen jumpers with raffia and frayed cotton mini-skirts or khaki pants. Everything looked very spruce and empowering.

Add in a series of sculptural bags in abstract shapes of flowerpots and bell jars, courtesy of a link-up with Louis Quatorze, and you have a smart and optimistic fashion statement.

Eftychia

The heart of the matter at Eftychia was the soft, yet somber tailoring, from a designer known for creating stylish office work wear.
This season, designer Eftychia Karamolegkou – an ex-intern of Mary Katrantzou and Antonio Marras - concentrated on the classic tuxedo, though finishing them all with velvet trim and stripes – often down the front pleat rather than the side. She’s also a stylish tailor, cutting flattering pants suits in fine wools.

Plus, Eftychia knows how to use felty wool, notably in some finely shaped funnel neck boleros. Working with a late-night color palette of anthracite, mud and steely gray, she also showed some fine velvet dresses for evening.

Nothing terribly revolutionary, but polished dressing for the professional lady, very in synch with the current mood in London. Enough of working from home, let’s get back to work, looking good.

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