

Bairbre Power picks out those emerging stars of Dublin Fashion Week who will be filling the boutique rails next spring

Dublin Fashion Week has done a lot for the industry here in a remarkably short space of time. Nourishing fledging home-grown talents, DFW made an immediate splash two years ago by showcasing the design genius of Joanne Hynes to an audience that was unaware of just how well the young Galway woman was honing her design skills in England.

In its second year, the fashion fest confirmed the international flair of Artane-based designer Jennifer Rothwell. (Indeed, this year she's been invited by Brown Thomas's savvy buyer Shelly Corkery to be part of the store's mentoring scheme, giving her designs rail space along with Tim Ryan and Vivien Walsh.)

Now in its fifth season, this week's DFW will undoubtedly consolidate the reputation of Deborah Veale and Aideen Bodkin who are holding a joint fashion show at the uber cool restaurant Fallon & Byrne.

But it is on the corridors of the Fitzwilliam Hotel on St Stephen's Green that trade buyers and small boutique owners will zone in, searching for those emerging talents who can deliver cutting edge fashion for the forthcoming season.

So who will cut the style?

My money is on Ellis Boyle, a petite woman from Clonca, Co Meath who is a tall talent when it comes to producing winning looks for every season. The collection for spring-summer 08 that she shows at DFW has a strong palette of creams, tans and blacks with an attractive, contradictory angle - fine gauge knit tops with structured, heavy cotton dresses and chunky knits with flowing dresses.

"I've ventured into a little tailoring, and I'm really excited about that," said Ellis, who opted for very earthy, organic colours for her autumn-winter 07 collection, which goes into the shops shortly. That includes her black dress, which features on the left and sells for €650. Also noteworthy are her textured knits with a lot of crochet and hand knitting in chunky yarns and open knits. The colour palette features taupe, brown, beige, off-white and neutrals.

Ellis said: "I've been selling very well in Japan for the last five or six seasons. At 5' 1", I am small myself, and clearly they liked the proportions. I actually lived in Asia for a while, so maybe the aesthetics in some way have influenced me."

One fan of her work is former supermodel Yasmin le Bon, who wore one of Ellis's fine gauge cotton dresses and structured knitwear when she judged Best Dressed Lady at Punchestown in May.

This is the kind of commercial accolade that a young designer can only dream of.

If you're interested in breaking into the fashion world, the Dublin City Enterprise Board is hosting the DFW talk 'Ten Steps to starting your own Fashion Business', Wednesday, 6pm, at the Fitzwilliam Hotel

IMAGES:
TOP ROW
(L-R) - MoMuse, Caoimhe O'Dwyer, Hope & Benson
LEFT - Jennifer Rothwell
OPPOSITE, MAIN IMAGE - Ellis Boyle, €650
OPPOSITE, FAR LEFT - Unconditional

For further details of events, click on dublinfoashionweek.com

