

TRENDS & PEOPLE

Classic look prevails at Tokyo Collection

Playful mix of old, new styles taking center stage during autumn/winter fashion show

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The clothing being modeled across the capital during April for the Tokyo Collection fashion show for the 2005-06 autumn/winter seasons is dominated by classic designs peppered with light and novel touches, reflecting the youth of the world-class designers.

Many items hitting the catwalk are unique twists on styles that flourished in 18th-century France and Victorian England as well as in the early 20th century up to the 1960s. A good number riff playfully on formal wear, such as voluminous skirts, including a petticoat similar to the kind worn by women in the Middle Ages, jackets sporting coat tails and refashioned cocktail suits. A common feature among these outfits are long, slim torsos accented with puffy sleeves or paired with bulky skirts.

Tweed, smooth velvet, antique lace, and Gobelins and gold-thread jacquard woven fabrics are some of the favored materials for this collection. Fabrics and patterns typically used in interior decor or furniture, such as wallpaper and chairs, are also in abundance. Dominant colors include black, white and vermilion as well as chic shades like gray, moss green, purple and navy. Shiny golds and silvers are also a common feature.

Limi Yamamoto unveiled velvet outfits dominated by blacks and reds with stuffed collar and collars and hemlines under the Limi feu brand. Her collection included collarless tweed jackets reminiscent of Coco Chanel's designs. However, she offset the more glamorous and classical aspects of her pieces with flourishes of Tokyo street fashion, such as wallet chains of big pearls and gold high-top sneakers.

Yasuko Furuta held a cozy floor show to showcase her new clothing for her Toga brand that included patches of Gobelins or velvet fabrics. With necklines embroidered with antique-looking beads, her designs were redolent of

the highly decorative garments popular in the rococo era of the early 18th century. The heavy use of decoration was paired with unhemmed and asymmetrical skirts.

Harumi Fukuda, designer for the Triptych brand, found success with an interpretation of "classic" that was more familiar to her. The theme of her collection was her own grandmother, whom Fukuda said lived wildly for a Japanese woman of her generation, traveling the world and always dressing stylishly. Fukuda's chic and feminine clothing included a black jacket interwoven with gold thread and a dress embroidered with spangles.

Toshikazu Iwatani presented a gorgeous collection for the Dress Camp brand that included a hand-embroidered wedding dress and an evening dress embroidered with a crane motif designed by a Japanese-style painter.

Clothing in the Theatre Products line designed by Akira Takeuchi and Tayaka Nakanishi adopted an orthodox, classic style, such as a tweed suit with flounce on the waist and a blouse with frilly cuffs. Light colors and soft fabrics made the clothes look fresh and youthful.

Male designers have been making a name for themselves at the Tokyo Collection in recent years. Taishi Nobukuni, who replaced Takao Kikuchi as the chief designer for the Takao Kikuchi brand in last year's spring/summer season, transformed the British classic style into a contemporary fashion. The surface of a houndstooth check jacket was processed to give it a metallic sheen. A frock coat paired with slim trousers featured finely tucked elbows and knees, much like clothing worn by bikers.

Interplays of traditional and futuristic touches — such as the use of black light to bring out features in the clothing, or the combination of a glen check suit and a fluorescent pink clothes — have created a fresh impression at some shows.

Hidetaka Fukuzono, whose Whereabouts brand is marking its third season in the Tokyo Collection, dreamed up a charming classic style, inspired by early 1990s black culture.

Atsuko Kobayashi is a freelance fashion writer.



Clockwise from below left: Limi feu by Limi Yamamoto; An unhemmed, asymmetrical dress from Toga by Yasuko Furuta; Dress Camp by Toshikazu Iwatani; Whereabouts by Hidetaka Fukuzono; Houndstooth jacket with metallic sheen from Takao Kikuchi by Taishi Nobukuni as chief designer; Theatre Products by Akira Takeuchi and Tayaka Nakanishi.